

Michaela Estelle Rae Manson

Curriculum Vitae

School of Philosophical, Historical, and International Studies

Faculty of Arts
Monash University
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Australia

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AOS: Early Modern Philosophy

AOC: History of Ethics, Feminist Philosophy, Philosophy of Human Sexuality, Philosophy of Education, Aesthetics/Philosophy of Art, especially Film

Employment

2023-24 **Extending New Narratives Postdoctoral Research Fellow**
Monash University, Melbourne, Victoria, Australia

Education

2016-23 **Ph.D.**, University of Toronto, Ontario, Canada
Committee: Donald Ainslie (Supervisor), Marleen Rozemond,
Martin Pickavé
Dissertation: *Mind and Prejudice: Cognitive Improvement in the
Philosophies of René Descartes and Mary Astell*
Defended December 16th, 2022, Awarded June 2nd, 2023

2015-16 **Post- Baccalaureate**, University of California Los Angeles, California, USA
Specialization: Post-Classical Latin

2013-15 **M.A.**, Simon Fraser University, Burnaby, British Columbia, Canada
Supervisor: Lisa Shapiro

2008-12 **B.A.**, Concordia University, Quebec, Canada
Honours Major: Philosophy
Minors: Film Studies, Classical Languages and Literature (Latin)

Publications

2023 "Early Modern European Women and the Philosophy of Education." *The Routledge Handbook of Women and Early Modern European Philosophy*, edited by Karen Detlefsen and Lisa Shapiro, 1st ed., Routledge, 2023, pp. 324–36. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315450001-30>, 2015-16

Under Review

"The Astellian Circle"

"Habitual Minds: Cartesian Cognitive Improvement"

Academic Talks ('i' indicates invited)

- 2024i "Astell's Platonism: Beauty and the Dacier Connection"
• Pacific APA session in recognition of a new translation of Anne Dacier's *Of the Causes of the Corruption of Taste* (forthcoming OUP), Portland, OR
- 2023i "Equality and Elitism: Early Modern Women and Philosophy of Friendship"
• University of Sydney, Sydney, New South Wales, Australia
• Monash University Workshop on Early Modern Women Philosophers, Melbourne, Victoria, Australia
- 2023 "Circumventing the Astellian Circle: Friendship in Astell and an Anonymous Manuscript"
• Reappearing Ink: Celebrating the Legacy of Eileen O'Neill, Amherst, MA
• Austral-Asian Seminar for Early Modern Philosophy, Dunedin, New Zealand
- 2022i "Cartesian Rational Self-Confidence"
• Quebec-Ontario Seminar in Early Modern Philosophy, Toronto, Ontario
- 2022 "A Virtue That Contains all the Rest: Astellian Friendship"
• Friends of Mary Astell Session, APA Pacific, Vancouver, BC
- 2022i "Education"
• Conference for Routledge Encyclopedia of Early Modern European Women Philosophers, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, PA
- 2020 "Cartesian Prejudice and Mary Astell's *Serious Proposal*"
• UPenn Virtual Early Modern, Online
- 2019i "Mary Astell on Governing the Body"
• Canadian Philosophical Association Annual Meeting, Vancouver, BC
- 2019 "Descartes and the Skeptical Challenge of Apraxia"
• American Philosophical Association Pacific Division, Vancouver, BC
- 2018 "Hegel's Criticism of Spinoza's Method"
• Canadian Philosophical Association, Montreal, QC
- 2018 "Mind in Mary Astell's *Serious Proposal*"
• Early Modern Philosophy of Mind Conference, Princeton University, NJ
• British Society for the History of Philosophy, Durham University, UK
• Early Modern St. Louis (missed due to illness)
• Dutch Seminar in Early Modern Philosophy (Accepted, however declined due to scheduling conflict)
- 2017 "Early Modern Women Philosophers and Education"

- Testimony and Authority in Early Modern Philosophy, Saint Norbert College, WI

Comments

- 2022 Comments on Simona Vuciu's "Christine de Pizan on the Moral and Epistemic Harm of Misogyny and Slander"
 • Opening Discussions: An Online Conference, Extending New Narratives, Online
- 2021i Comments on Hassana Sharp's "Buried and Hidden: Servitude in Early Modern Feminism"
 • University of Quebec, Montreal, Quebec
- 2020i Comments on Qiu Lin's "Emilie Du Châtelet on the Representation of Space"
 • Athena in Action, Cornell University, Ithaca, NY
- 2020 Comments on Colin Chamberlain's "A Decaying Carkass? Astell on the Embodied Self"
 • Friends of Mary Astell Session, Eastern APA, Philadelphia, PA
- 2018i Comments on Dario Perinetti's "Perceptions, Objects and Relations in Hume's *Treatise*"
 • Québec-Ontario Colloquium in Early Modern Philosophy, Toronto, ON
- 2018i Comments on Christina Behme's "Descartes on Animal Cognition"
 • Canadian Philosophical Association, Montreal, QC
- 2017i Comments on Shelley Weinberg's "Locke on Faith, Reason, and Miracles"
 • Graduate Research Weekend, University of Toronto, ON

Public Philosophy ('i' indicates invited)

- 2023i "Friendship" The Philosopher's Zone, Australian Broadcasting Corporation
<https://www.abc.net.au/listen/programs/philosopherszone/friendship/102638778>
- 2019i "Thinking Like a Girl: Mary Astell on Mind and Prejudice", Project Vox's Blog
<https://projectvox.org/revealing-voices/revealing-voices-michaela-manson/>

Research Experience

2018, 23 **Archival Research**, England

Over several weeks in both 2018 and 2023 I conducted archival research at the British Library, the Bodleian Library at Oxford University, Pepys Library at Cambridge University, Northampton County Archives, West Yorkshire Archives, Hampshire Archives and Local Studies, and Kent Archives. The focus of these studies is primary sources related to early modern English women philosophers, with a special focus on materials connected with Mary Astell.

2014-15 **Research Assistant**, Simon Fraser University, Vancouver, BC
 Project: "New Narratives in the History of Philosophy" Social Science
 Humanities Research Council of Canada
 Supervisor: Lisa Shapiro

Awards and Honors

- 2016-21 University of Toronto Faculty of Arts and Science Top Doctoral Fellowship (\$12,000 CAD/year)
- 2020-21 Ontario Graduate Scholarship (\$15,000 CAD/year)
- 2016-20 Social Science and Humanities Research Council of Canada Doctoral Fellowship (\$20,000 CAD/year)
- 2018 Journal of the History of Philosophy Jan Wojcik Memorial Prize (\$4,000 USD)
- 2017-18 Balzan Research Project Student Travel Funding (\$1,300 CAD; \$800 CAD; \$1500 CAD)
- 2017 Canadian Journal of Philosophy Conference Grant (\$500 CAD)
- 2015-16 Mellon Scholarship for UCLA's Post-Baccalaureate in Post-Classical Latin (\$18,000 USD/year)
- 2014-15 Social Science and Humanities Research Council of Canada Master's Scholarship (\$17,500 CAD/year)
- 2014 Simon Fraser University Minor Research Award (\$1,050 CAD)
- 2013-14 Simon Fraser University Special Graduate Entrance Scholarship (\$6,000 CAD)

Teaching Experience

- 2023 **Graduate Reading Group Facilitator**, Monash University, Melbourne, Australia
Courses: MA/PhD level - Philosophy of Friendship
- 2019-22 **Course Instructor**, University of Toronto, Ontario, Canada
Courses: 2nd year - Feminism; 1 semester (40 students)
2nd year - Philosophy at the Movies; 1 semester (online, 60 students)
2nd year - Philosophy of Sex and Sexuality; 1 semester (60 students)
- 2017-22 **Teaching Assistant**, University of Toronto, Canada
Courses: 2nd year - Persons, Minds, and Bodies; 2 semesters
2nd year - 17th and 18th Century Philosophy; 3 semesters
2nd year - Law and Morality; 1 semester
2nd year - Later Medieval Philosophy; 1 semester
2nd year - Early Medieval Philosophy; 1 semester
- 2019-22 **Gradership**, University of Toronto, Canada
Courses: 3rd year - Philosophy of Human Sexuality; 2 x 1 semester
3rd year - Environmental Ethics; 1 semester
3rd year - Ethics and Mental Health; 1 semester
3rd year - Ethics, Genetics, and Reproduction; 1 semester

3rd year - Feminist Philosophy; 1 semester

2020-21 **English Language Learner Lead TA**, University of Toronto, Canada
Courses: 2nd year - Philosophy for Scientists; 1 semester

ELL lead TAs meet weekly one-on-one with the program coordinator to learn about effective additional language pedagogy. Thereupon, Lead TAs construct a program, including instruction plans and activities to train TAs in ELL designated courses to incorporate ELL learning strategies into their weekly tutorials.

2020 **Undergraduate Philosophy Essay Clinic**, University of Toronto, Canada

As the essay clinician, I met with undergraduate students one-on-one for half hour appointments to help them plan, prepare, execute and revise in developing their skills of philosophical writing for their course essays

2013-15 **Teaching Assistant**, Simon Fraser University, Canada
Courses: 1st year – Knowledge and Reality, 1 semester
 1st year – Critical Thinking, 1 semester
 1st year – Introduction to Logic, 1 semester

Teaching Development

2021 **Mentoring the Mentors**, the American Philosophical Association, Online

This one-day workshop focused on mentoring skills such as how to support students from underrepresented groups in philosophy, how to help students prepare applications for graduate school, and how to maintain work life balance in meeting the demands of an academic career, including mentoring relationships.

2020 **Course Instructor Training Camp**, Centre for Teaching Support and Innovation, University of Toronto, Ontario, Canada

This two-day, six-hour training camp consists of five modules focused on building skills in the areas of course design and delivery, syllabus and assignment construction, understanding university policy and procedures, and equity-oriented pedagogy.

2017-19 **Advanced University Teaching Certificate**, Centre for Teaching Support and Innovation, University of Toronto, Ontario, Canada

This two-year certificate program trains graduate students for teaching roles in academia. Enrollees attend ten teaching workshops over a period of two years, followed by a teaching practicum, and the submission of a teaching dossier in order to develop pedagogical skills and receive practical peer feedback on teaching practices. For a list of specific workshops attended, please see teaching dossier.

2018 **Teaching in Higher Education**, Woodsworth College, University of Toronto, Ontario, Canada

This is a semester-long course in which graduate students and postdocs learn collaboratively about student learning styles as well as pedagogical theory and practice. Assignments include designing course syllabi and assignments, regular written reflections on teaching practice and experiences, and peer teaching evaluations.

Workshops, Summer Institutes, and Other Academic Experience

2020 "Athena in Action" Cornell University, Ithaca, NY (Online)

This weekend-long workshop brings together graduate women and gender minorities in philosophy to participate in a conference including presentations and comments on select participant papers, followed by mentoring sessions on navigating graduate school, dissertation writing, publishing, conference presenting, entering the job market, teaching, tenure track jobs, and establishing a healthy work/life balance.

2018 "Scholastic and Humanistic Roots of Early Modern Philosophy",
Royal Netherlands Institute, Rome, Italy

This week-long masterclass taught by Lodi Nauta focused on primary sources recent scholarship aimed at understanding the continuity of early modern European philosophy with the thinking, of roughly the two centuries that preceded it (1400-1600), especially in the areas of natural philosophy, psychology, metaphysics, and language.

2017 "Understanding the Past Today: Methodology in the History of Philosophy"
University of Groningen, Netherlands

This week-long summer school provided an overview of different methodological approaches in history of philosophy and their respective justifications, applications, and limitations, with some emphasis on emerging digital humanities projects.

2016 "Feminist thinking in Historical Perspective", Gender and
Philosophy Summer School, University of Jyväskylä, Jyväskylä, Finland

This week-long summer school considered the philosophical roots of feminist thinking from antiquity to the twentieth century. A combination of lectures and discussions centered on primary sources including, but not limited to, Plato, Aristotle, Mario Equicola, Marie de Gournay, François Poullain de la Barre, Catharine Macaulay and Simone de Beauvoir.

Academic and Professional Service

2023 **Referee**, History of Political Thought, <https://www.imprint.co.uk/product/hpt/>

2019-23 **Founding Member**, Society for the Friends of Mary Astell,
<https://friendsofmaryastell.weebly.com>

Activities: Affiliate Group Session, Pacific APA
The Social Philosophy of Mary Astell (online workshop)
Inaugural Meeting of FOMA, Eastern APA
Transcriptions of Astell's works online

2017-23 **Editor**, Philpapers.org, Mary Astell, <https://philpapers.org/browse/mary-astell>

2023 **Judge**, Ontario High School Ethics Bowl <https://www.ontarioethicsbowl.com/>

2021-22 **Member**, Reading Group Slavery and Abolitionism in the History of Philosophy

2020-21 **Organizer**, Online Dissertation Writing Group, University of Toronto

2018,21 **Reading Group Organizer**, Mary Astell's *Letters Concerning Love of God*,
The Christian Religion

- 2019-20 **Treasurer**, Graduate Philosophy Student Union, University of Toronto
- 2016-19 **Chair**, Graduate Philosophy Student's Women's Caucus, University of Toronto
- 2018 **Committee Member**, Department Colloquium Committee, University of Toronto
- 2017-18 **Conference Organizing Chair**, Graduate Student Philosophy Conference,
University of Toronto Theme: Philosophy Meets Psychology

Non-Academic, Volunteer Experience

- 2017-18 Research and Grant Writing, Working Women Community Centre, Toronto, ON

Languages

French (read, write, speak); Latin (read)

References

Donald Ainslie, University of Toronto, Donald.Ainslie@utoronto.ca

Marleen Rozemond, University of Toronto, Marleen.Rozemond@utoronto.ca

Martin Pickavé, University of Toronto, Martin.Pickave@utoronto.ca

Alison Simmons, Harvard University, ASimmons@g.harvard.edu

Jacqueline Broad, Monash University, Jacqueline.Broad@monash.edu

Lisa Shapiro, McGill University, Lisa.Shapiro@mcgill.ca

Teaching Reference

Andrew Franklin-Hall, University of Toronto, Andrew.Franklin.Hall@utoronto.ca

Dissertation Abstract

Mind and Prejudice: Cognitive Improvement in the Philosophies of René Descartes and Mary Astell

This dissertation sheds new light on the philosophies of René Descartes and Mary Astell by answering the question: what makes cognitive improvement possible? Both Astell and Descartes acknowledge prejudice as a significant barrier to such improvement. For Descartes, part of what explains this barrier also explains the possibility of improvement: humans are susceptible to habituation. In chapter one, I argue that Descartes should be read as appropriating a scholastic notion of habitus in accounting for the will's potential for reform. Yet, merely being susceptible to habituation cannot fully explain cognitive improvement. In chapter two, I argue that another significant feature of Descartes's account is what I call rational self-confidence: a subject's confidence in their ability to use and improve their cognitive capacities. Still, recognizing the importance of such confidence suggests another barrier: not all subjects are so confident. In chapter three, I argue that Astell recognizes how a peculiar prejudice can undermine the rational self-confidence of women especially – those subjects that most concern Astell. I call this the Women's Defective Will Prejudice [WDWP]. Significantly, this prejudice leads to what I call the Astellian Circle: the apparent truth of the WDWP stands to undermine a subject's rational self-confidence and inhibit her from pursuing activities that would cultivate her cognitive capacities, thus further reinforcing the apparent truth of the WDWP and so on in circulo. Chapter four argues that Astell's account of cognitive improvement addresses precisely this circle. In particular, in contrast to Descartes's relatively individualistic solutions, I contend that Astell's social solutions in *A Serious Proposal to the Ladies*, particularly her vision of education and friendship, function to promote a subject's rational self-confidence, thereby supporting her engagement in projects of cognitive improvement.