

Nicholas Westberg

Assistant Professor of Philosophy
Grand Valley State University, USA

+1 (507) 358-8864 westbern@gvsu.edu

Education:

PhD in Philosophy	August 2017 – May 2024
Thesis: <i>Descartes and the Metaphysics of Causation</i>	
Director: Jean-Luc Solère	
Boston College, USA	
BA in Philosophy	August 2013 – May 2017
<i>Summa Cum Laude</i>	
Wheaton College, USA	

Academic Positions:

Assistant Professor	August 2026 – Present
Department of Philosophy	
Grand Valley State University, USA	
Visiting Assistant Professor	August 2025 – June 2026
Department of Philosophy	
Bucknell University, USA	
Lecturer	Spring 2023 – Summer 2025
Department of Philosophy	
Boston University, USA	
Lecturer	Fall 2023 – Spring 2024
Department of Philosophy	
Suffolk University, USA	
Teaching Fellow	Fall 2018 – Spring 2023
Department of Philosophy	
Boston College, USA	

Publications:

“John Duns Scotus on God’s Concurrence with Natural Agents: A defense against the charge of causal over-determination.” In *Mind, Soul and the Cosmos in the High Middle Ages*, edited by Jack Cunningham *et al.* (2025)

“Descartes on God and Duration: Revisited.” Co-authored with Jean-Luc Solère. *Philosophica* 32, no. 2 (2024): 91-130.

“Descartes and the Scholastic Theory of *Concursus*.” *Res Philosophica* 101, no. 4. (October 2024): 777-810.

“Reconsidering Francisco Suárez on Logical Possibility.” *Metaphysics* 6, no. 1 (December 2023): 60-74.

“Review: *Causation and Cognition in Early Modern Philosophy*, edited by Dominik Perler and Sebastian Bender.” *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 59, no. 4 (2021): 688-689.

Publications in progress:

“Descartes and the de-Aristotelianization of force (*vis*).” (In progress)

“Margaret Cavendish’s Windowless Bodies: how Cavendish explains perception through immanent causation alone.” (In progress)
 “Allowing the Eternal Truths to shed new light on Descartes’s Laws of Nature.” (In progress)
 “Cavendish’s ‘Eternal Containment’ thesis and her view of freedom.” (In progress)

Teaching:

Philosophy of Time (PHIL 7490), *Co-taught Boston College, USA	Fall 2023
Symbolic Logic [Graduate level] (PH 663) Boston University, USA	Fall 2023, Spring 2024
Independent Study [Modal Logic] (PH 492) Boston University, USA	Spring 2025
Symbolic Logic (PH 360) Boston University, USA	Fall 2023, Spring 2023, 2024
Metaphysics and Epistemology (PH 340) Boston University, USA	Fall 2024, Spring 2025
Modern Philosophy (PH 310) Boston University, USA	Spring 2023, 2025
Modern Political Theory (POLS 276) Suffolk University, USA	Spring 2024
Mind, Brain, and Self (PH 266) Boston University, USA	Spring 2025
Puzzles and Paradoxes (PH 261) Boston University, USA	Spring 2024
Philosophy of Mind (PHIL 226) Bucknell University, USA	Fall 2025
Introduction to Logic (PHIL 2264) Boston College, USA	Fall 2020, 2022, Spring 2021, 2023
Introduction to Ethics (PH 150) Boston University, USA	Fall 2024
Social Ethics (PH 123) Suffolk University, USA	Fall 2023
Mind and World (PHIL 100) Bucknell University, USA	Fall 2025
Introduction to Philosophy (PH 100) Boston University, USA	Spring 2023
Philosophy of the Person 1 [ancient, medieval ethics] Boston College, USA	Fall 2018, 2019
Philosophy of the Person 2 [modern, contemporary ethics] Boston College, USA	Spring 2019, 2020

Presentations:

“New perspectives on Margaret Cavendish’s Natural Philosophy” February 20, 2026
 NCF Department Colloquium
 Sarasota, USA

“Margaret Cavendish on Perception, Causation, and Identity” GVSU Philosophy Lecture Series Grand Rapids, USA	February 3, 2026
“Reflections on the Puzzle of Divine Perfection and Freedom” Winter Meeting of the <i>Societas Ericius</i> Boston, USA	December 20, 2025
“De-Aristotelianizing Descartes” 2025 York University Seminar on Early Modern Philosophy Toronto, Canada	June 12, 2025
“De-Aristotelianizing Descartes: force without causal powers” 2024 ACPA Conference Chicago, USA	November 16, 2024
“Henry More on the real distinction” 21st Annual ISNS Conference Trinity College, Dublin	June 20, 2024
“Henry More against Spinoza: the possibility of creation” New England Philosophy of Religion Colloquium Boston College, USA	October 10, 2023
“Reconsidering Suárez on logical possibility” (*Invited) Colloquium on Medieval Philosophy University of Toronto, Canada	September 23, 2023
“Difficulties with realist accounts of Cartesian Force” Graduate Conference in Early Modern Philosophy University of Texas, Austin, USA	September 8, 2023
“Elisabeth and Margaret Cavendish against Descartes” Underrepresented Philosophy Symposium Boston University, USA	March 24, 2023
“Two Great Women in Early Modern Philosophy” PhilosophHERS Series Boston College, USA	March 23, 2023
“Metaphysical Problems for Natural Law Theory” Eliot Lecture Series (*Invited) Harvard University, USA	October 22, 2022
“Scotus on God’s Concurrence with Non-free Causes” International Medieval Mind Conference Bishop Grosseteste University, UK	July 1, 2022
“Knowledge and Justification in Locke’s <i>Essay</i>” John Locke Conference American University, Bulgaria	June 21, 2022
“Suárez on the distinction between act and potency” Institute of Philosophy: Hylomorphism Conference KU Leuven, Belgium	June 10, 2022
“Suárez’s theory of matter as a partial substance” Society of Medieval and Renaissance Philosophy University of Notre Dame, USA	October 4, 2021

“Cartesian matter and efficient causality: revisited” March 23, 2021
Princeton-Bucharest Seminar in Early Modern Philosophy
Princeton University, USA

Grants:

History of Philosophy Forum, Summer Grant Summer 2024
University of Notre Dame, USA
Ernest Fortin Memorial Fund Grant Summer 2021, 2022
Boston College, USA

University Service:

Senior Thesis Advisor Spring 2026
Advisee: Brooks Barry
Topic: AI and Consciousness
Bucknell University, USA
Faculty Mentor: Undergraduate Research Opportunities Program Summer 2024
Mentee: Rivkah Chaouat-Kelley
Title: “The Mind-Body Problem: Lowe’s Challenge to Physicalism”
Boston University, USA
Faculty Mentor: Undergraduate Research Opportunities Program Summer 2025
Mentee: Hattie Fair
Title: “How Ancient Views of Love Relate to 21st Century Understandings of Addiction”
Boston University, USA
Co-organizer: Methods in the History of Philosophy Workshop Fall 2022
Boston College, USA
Co-organizer: Ancient and Medieval Philosophy Reading Group Fall 2020
Boston College, USA
Organizer: Early Modern Philosophy Reading Group Fall 2019
Boston College, USA

References:

Professor Jean-Luc Solère
Boston College
Philosophy Department
solere@bc.edu

Professor Jason Leddington
Bucknell University
Philosophy Department
jl041@bucknell.edu

Professor Steven Nadler
University of Wisconsin-Madison
Philosophy Department
smnadler@wisc.edu

Professor Daniel Dahlstrom
Boston University
Philosophy Department
dahlstro@bu.edu

Professor Walter Hopp
Boston University
Philosophy Department
hopp@bu.edu

Professor Marius Stan
Boston College
Philosophy Department
marius.stan@bc.edu