

# Travis McKenna

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AOS Philosophy of Science, Philosophy of Physics, Metaphysics

AOC Philosophy of Mathematics, Philosophy of Language

*Employment* **Assistant Professor** 2025 – Present  
*North Carolina State University*  
Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies

**Ahmanson Postdoctoral Instructor in Philosophy of Science** 2024 – 2025  
*California Institute of Technology*  
Division of Humanities and Social Sciences

*Education* **University of Pittsburgh** 2018 – 2024  
PhD in Philosophy  
*Dissertation:* Laws of Nature and their Supporting Casts  
*Committee:* Bob Batterman (co-chair), Mark Wilson (co-chair), David Wallace, Erica Shumener, Gordon Belot.

**University of Sydney** 2014 – 2017  
BSci (Honours) in Mathematics and Philosophy

**University of Sydney** 2008 – 2011  
BA (Honours) in Ancient History and Modern Languages

*Publications* **Laws and their Supporting Casts**  
*The British Journal for the Philosophy of Science*, forthcoming.

**Structure and Applied Mathematics**  
*Synthese*, 200(5):1–31, 2022.

**Lange on Minimal Model Explanations: A Defense of Batterman and Rice**  
*Philosophy of Science*, 88(4):731–741, 2021.

*Talks* \* = invited

*What is an Instance of a Law of Nature?*  
– \*May 2025, Workshop on Method, Theory, and Reality, UMass, Amherst.  
– September 2022, Conceptual Innovation in Classical Mechanics, University of Seville.

*The Coordinating Role of Laws in Empirical Science*  
– \*April 2024, Workshop on Method, Theory, and Reality, UMass, Amherst.

*Fundamental Law and the Methodology of Science* (with Gabrielle Kerbel)  
 – February 2024, American Philosophical Association, Central Division Meeting.  
 – August 2023, Society for the Metaphysics of Science Conference

*Laws of Nature and their Supporting Casts*  
 – July 2022, Summer School on Laws and Chances, Central European University.

*Contextualism and Kripke’s Puzzle About Belief*  
 – July 2019, Australasian Association of Philosophy Conference, University of Adelaide.

*Comments* Ulrich Meyer, “Best Systems in Lawless Worlds” August 2023  
*Society for the Metaphysics of Science Conference*, Dalhousie University

*Awards* Wentworth Medal (University of Sydney) 2017  
 Australasian Association of Philosophy Bursary 2017  
 Honours Scholarship (University of Sydney) 2017  
 Norbert Quirk Mathematical Essay Prize (University of Sydney) 2016  
 GS Caird Scholarship for Philosophy (University of Sydney) 2015  
 Faculty of Science Summer Scholarship (University of Sydney) 2014  
 Dr GAM Heydon Prize in the Philosophy of Science (University of Sydney) 2014  
 Classical Rome Summer Scholarship (University of Sydney) 2011  
 Australasian Society for Classical Studies Undergraduate Essay Prize 2010

*Teaching* PRIMARY INSTRUCTOR  
*California Institute of Technology*  
 Knowledge and Reality Spring 2025  
 Introduction to Philosophy of Science Fall 2024

*University of Pittsburgh*  
 Introduction to Bioethics Fall 2023  
 Introduction to Ethics Summer 2022

TEACHING ASSISTANT  
*University of Pittsburgh*  
 Introduction to Logic (Thomas Berry) Spring 2024  
 Philosophy of Mind (Rachael Driver) Spring 2021  
 Concepts of Human Nature (Greg Strom) Fall 2020  
 Introduction to Ethics (Nandi Theunissen) Spring 2020  
 Introduction to Logic (Dmitri Gallow) Fall 2019

*University of Sydney*  
 Philosophy of Law (Lukas Opacic) Fall 2017

<i>Service</i>	Reviewer for <i>Philosophical Studies</i> , <i>Philosophy of Science</i> , <i>Studies in the History and Philosophy of Science</i> , <i>European Journal for the Philosophy of Science</i> , <i>Theoria</i> , and <i>Topoi</i> .	
	Undergraduate Philosophy Mentor	2019 – 2022
	Graduate Student Representative to the Faculty	2020 – 2022
	Member of the Climate and Liaison Committee	2020 – 2022
	Member of the Student-Faculty Colloquium Organising Committee	2020 – 2024
	Member of Metaphysics and Epistemology Search Committee	2022 – 2023
	Chair of the Pitt-CMU Graduate Conference Committee	2022 – 2024

*References*

**Robert Batterman**

Distinguished Professor of Philosophy  
 University of Pittsburgh  
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**Mark Wilson**

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 University of Pittsburgh  
 mawilson@pitt.edu

**David Wallace**

W.A. Mellon Professor of Philosophy of Science  
 University of Pittsburgh  
 david.wallace@pitt.edu

**Gordon Belot**

Lawrence Sklar Collegiate Professor of Philosophy  
 University of Michigan  
 belot@umich.edu

**Erica Shumener**

Assistant Professor of Philosophy  
 Syracuse University  
 eshumene@syr.edu

**Porter Williams (Teaching)**

Assistant Professor of Philosophy  
 University of Pittsburgh  
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*Updated July 7, 2025*