John Donaldson

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Areas of Specialisation & Competence

- **AOS** Philosophy of mind, metaphysics of mind, metaphysics of science
- **AOC** (i.e. have taught at least up to undergraduate level) metaphysics, philosophy of cognitive science, philosophy of science, philosophy of perception, epistemology, philosophy of art, elementary logic.

Education

- **PhD** **University of Glasgow**. Philosophy, 2007 – 2014 (part-time).
  Thesis: *The Super-Overdetermination Problem*.
  Supervisors: Dr David Bain, Dr Stephan Leuenberger, Prof Fiona Macpherson.
  Examiners: Prof Derk Pereboom, Dr Campbell Brown, Prof Michael Brady (Chair).
  Result: pass with no corrections (viva date: January 16th 2015).

- **MSc** **University of Edinburgh**. Philosophy, 2007.
  Dissertation: *Not so clever: Why intelligence research is not a scientific discipline*.
  Supervisor: Professor Matthew Nudds.

- **MA** **University of Glasgow**. Philosophy, 2006.

Selected Employment

2021 - 2024 & 2025 -	University of Glasgow, School of Humanities	Lecturer in Philosophy (LTS)
2007 - Present	University of Glasgow, School of Humanities	Tutor in Philosophy
2019 - Present	University of Glasgow, Student & Academic Services	Warden
2011 - 2021	University of Glasgow, Short Courses	Tutor in Philosophy
2016 - 2020	University of Glasgow, School of Humanities	Lecturer in Philosophy (ad hoc)
2017 - 2018	University of Glasgow, FOCUS West	Widening Participation Lecturer (ad hoc)
2011 - 2019	University of Glasgow, FOCUS West	Widening Participation Tutor
Apr. - Sept. 2016	Centre for the Study of Perceptual Experience, GU	Contributing editor: *Illusions Index*
2014 - 2016	Glasgow School of Art, Forum for Critical Inquiry	Visiting Lecturer
2009 - 2010	University of Stirling, Department of Philosophy	Tutor in Philosophy
2008 - 2010	University of Glasgow, IT Services	IT Tutor

Teaching Overview

- *Postgraduate:* In 2021-22 and 2022-23, I lectured the Mind component for the Conversion MSc. And I lectured and tutored all of the metaphysics module of the MSc in 2016-17 and 2018-19. I supervised dissertation students in philosophy of mind in 2020-21 and 2021-2022. in 2024-25, I taught on the Classic Texts module of the Conversion MSc.

  Since 2023-24, I have been second supervisor (Dr Mike Hicks primary supervisor) of a PhD student, Alexandros Constantinou, who is working on levels of explanation and the nature of reduction.

- *Honours:* I lectured and convened all of JH7 Philosophy of Mind in 2022-23, the latter half of JH7 in 2020-21, lectured the mental causation component of JH7 in 2015-16, and tutored on the course in 2016-17, 2019-20, and 2020-21. I lectured all of JH8 Metaphysics in 2016-17, and lectured half of the course in 2017-18, having major marking responsibilities in both cases, and co-convening it in the latter case. I also tutored on the course in 2017-18 and 2019-20. In 2024-25 I tutored on SH24 Dreams. In 2025-26 I am teaching SH26 Virtue Epistemology.

  I am currently the Senior Honours Convenor responsible for all student-facing aspects of the role.

  In 2021-22, I wrote, convened, and taught all of the lectures and tutorials for SH19 the Unity of Science. And I convened, taught all the lectures and seminars, and did all the marking for SH10 Philosophy of Perception in 2018-19.

  In addition to the above, I have supervised a number of honours dissertations covering diverse topics and had marking responsibilities for a range of junior and senior honours courses, including JH1 History of Modern Philosophy; JH2 Philosophy of Language; JH7 Philosophy of Mind; JH8 Metaphysics; SH2 Mind and Knowledge in the Scottish Enlightenment; SH17 Inquiry, Science and Democracy: the Philosophy of Susan Stebbing; SH21 Consciousness; SH23 Causation; SH24 Dreams.

- *Pre-honours:* I convened 2A 'What am I?' in 2022-23, helping to implement the new collaborative class model fully for the first year back to unrestricted in-person teaching. I have lectured on the 2A component 'Is my mind my brain?' from 2021 to the present. I am lecturing on the 1A component "How do I get knowledge?" in 2025. I lectured the 2B component 'Does science reveal everything?' in in 2022-23. Finally, I lectured all of the philosophy of science component for 2K in 2016-17 and 2018-19, and have tutored across the pre-honours program from 2007-2021.

- *Barlinnie Philosophy Project* – since 2023, I have taught entry-level philosophy classes on a voluntary basis in Barlinnie prison as a part of a project, led by Dr Jennifer Corns and Dr Henry Ivry, to teach philosophy and English literature in Scottish prisons, and have worked on the project as a research assistant for 6 months. In 2025.

- *Introduction to philosophy and aesthetics* – I was the lecturer and tutor for this second-year course which focussed on aesthetics but also covered related topics in epistemology and metaphysics.

- *The art of thought* – I was the lecturer and tutor for this 'informal logic for art-school students' course which was delivered to second and third-year students.

I taught a number of credit bearing, open access courses for Short Courses (all pitched at first-year level). These courses involve small-group teaching (classes are capped at 25) combining lectures and seminars.

- *How to be more rational: An introduction to logic and systemic reasoning* (launched in 2020-21): covers core topics in informal logic, epistemology, and philosophical issues related to the replication crisis.

- *Elementary formal logic: An introduction* (launched in 2020-21): I use a version of Dr Rieger's 2K logic notes as the main text for this course (which Dr Rieger kindly donated for the purpose) on elementary formal logic.

- *Are we alone in the universe? The scientific evidence and the philosophical implications* (launched in 2020-21): covers the Fermi paradox and related issues in the philosophy of science and mind, including the nature of science and its methods, radical translation, and AI.

- *What is consciousness? An introduction to the philosophy of mind and cognitive science* – covers core topics in the philosophy of mind including mind-body theories, cognitive science, and theories of consciousness.

- *Twentieth century philosophy: The dawn of analysis* – surveys some of the history of analytic philosophy.

- *Souls, minds, and matter: An Introduction to the philosophy of human nature* – examines what the issue of personal identity, free will, and the significance of God's existence or non-existence can tell us about human nature.

- *Morality, nature, and beauty: An introduction to the philosophy of value* – examines whether value properties like being good or beautiful are objective alongside topics in normative and applied ethics.

- *Scottish philosophy: An introduction* – examines modern Scottish philosophers' contribution to philosophy focussing on Hume, Smith, and Reid.

- *Life, the universe, and everything: An introduction to philosophy* – covered philosophy of perception, mind, and ethics at an elementary level (ran 2011-17).

- *The philosophy of emotion* – covered the core topics in this area, including the metaphysics of emotion, and the rationality of emotion (ran 2012-13). This course was based on the notes for Professor Brady's honours emotion course, which he kindly donated for the purpose.

- *Philosophy – in Technicolour!* – introduced key issues in the philosophy of art (both high and low), including the origin of art, interpretation, subjectivism versus objectivism, and defining art (ran 2011-15).

I have also taught a variety of non-credit bearing courses for Short Courses, including some 'pop-culture and philosophy' courses which have gained media attention:

- *God, faith, science, and reason: An introduction to the philosophy of religion* – covered core topics in the philosophy of religion, including arguments for and against the existence of the Abrahamic, monotheistic God, the nature of religion, and religious pluralism (day event, 2011-17).

- *It's alive! An introduction to the philosophy of artificial intelligence* – introduced a range of issues in cognitive science related to the development of artificial intelligence, such as functionalist analyses of mental states, the distinction between modular and non-modular processes, the framing problem, and the singularity (day event, 2011-17).

- *Is science compatible with religion?* – addressed the question and attendant issues in the philosophy of science, and religion, including the demarcation problem, the nature of the scientific method, and the epistemic status of natural beliefs (day event, 2011-15).

- *Science fiction and philosophy* – introduced the philosophy of time and explored the issues of time travel, personal identity, and radical scepticism (day event, 2014-15).

- *Westworld and philosophy: artificial intelligence, consciousness, and human nature* – covered the Turing Test, the Chinese Room, and the extent to which human beings are 'natural born cyborgs' (day event, 2017-18).

- *D'oh! The Simpsons introduce philosophy* – addressed issues in normative ethics, moral epistemology, and the meaning of life (day event, 2014-18).

- *Game of Thrones and philosophy: Politics, power, and war* – introduced elementary game theory, political obligation, and just war theory (day event, 2017-18).

- *Star Wars and philosophy: Destiny, justice, and the metaphysics of the Force* – examined the connection between free will and moral responsibility and how moral praise or blame can be justified in a universe in which fates are predetermined (day event, 2017-18).

- *Dr Who and philosophy: Time, time Travel, and the nature of reality* – introduced the metaphysics of time, and classic problems and solutions to time travel (day event, 2017-19).

- *The Wire and philosophy: Drugs, Diogenes, and the death of the American Dream* – examined the relationship between sociology and psychology, how that relationship helps to inform The Wire's message that many of the causes of social ills are institutional, and moral luck (day event, 2017-18).

- *Stand-up comedy and philosophy: It's only funny if somebody laughs* – addressed the issues of free speech and censorship as well as the metaphysics of comedy (day event, 2017-18).

<u>2014, Coursera, University of Edinburgh</u>

- *Critical thinking in global challenges* – I tutored on this course, both online and in person, covering basic concepts in critical thinking and how to apply them to global issues like climate change and public health problems.

<u>2009-2010, Department of Philosophy, University of Stirling</u>

- *Philosophy – What is it all about?* – I tutored on this first-year course, which included topics in epistemology, metaphysics and ethics.

- *Mind, value, and reality* – I tutored on this first-year course which focused on elementary metaphysics and ethics.

Selected Publications & Work in Progress

- <u>Donaldson, J. Mental Causation</u>, *Oxford Bibliographies*. Oxford University Press, 2018.

- <u>Donaldson, J. Vertical Versus Horizontal: What is really at issue in the exclusion problem?</u> *Synthese*, 2019

- Constantinou, A., Donaldson, J., Hornet W., Blomkvist, A., Brown, D., Lyons, J. <u>'Do all brains have neurons? Metaphysics and neutrality in *The Brain Abstracted*</u>. *Philosophy and the Mind Sciences*, 2026

- My main work in progress at present is my manuscript *Causal Exclusion: A problem-first approach*. Four of six chapters completed as of January 2026.

Selected Research Activities

- Co-investigator on Living Proof, a Pre-Programme Discovery Project (December 2025-Feb 2026) led by Dr Kimia Witte, and funded by a £20,000 Advanced Research and Invention Agency grant.

- Founding member of the Scottish Network for Metaphysics and the Philosophy of Science.

- July 2025: Joint Session of the Mind and Aristotelian Societies, University of Glasgow, *open sessions paper presented* – Does the causal exclusion problem rest on a theory of causation?

- December 2024: Metaphysics of Science Workshop, Fribourg University, *invited paper presented* – Does super-causation entail super-exclusion?

- October 2024: International Society for the Philosophy of Sciences of the Mind, *paper presented* – What might a general model of exclusion problems look like?

- September 2024: Philosophy of Science and Metaphysics WIP, *Pre-read discussion of my work-in-progress paper* – What might a general model of exclusion problems look like?

- August 2024: Society for the Metaphysics of Science Annual Conference, Online, *paper commentary* on Will Moorfoot's In defence of indeterministic building.

- April 2024: British Philosophy of Sport Association Annual Conference, Robert Gordon University, *paper presented* – If sport is art, what does that tell us about sporting merit?

- April 2020: Toward a Science of Consciousness, University of Arizona, *paper accepted* (conference postponed due to the global pandemic).

- October 2017: 3rd annual Society for the Metaphysics of Science, Fordham University, *paper presented* – 'Vertical versus horizontal: choosing the best version of the exclusion problem'.

- March 2017: Early Career Network Future Minds Conference, Warwick University, *paper presented* – 'Why reductionism faces an overdetermination problem'.

- September 2016: 2nd International Conference on Philosophy of Mind, University of Minho; *paper presented* – 'Reduction and overdetermination'.

Grants

- *The Emergence Project, University of Glasgow*
  Travel, accommodation, and subsistence grant to visit CalTech and Berkeley for a research trip in March - May 2016.

- *The Network for Sensory Research*
  Travel and accommodation grant to attend and report on the Perceptual Learning and Perceptual Recognition II, University of Toronto: 2012.

- *The Sir Richard Stapley Educational Trust*
  Subsistence grant: 2006-2007; 2008-2009; 2010-2011.

- *The McGlashan Trust*
  Subsistence grant: 2006 – 2014.

- *University of Cologne*
  Travel and accommodation grant to attend the Types of Explanation in the Special Sciences Workshop: 2010.

- *University of Latvia & Kansas State University*
  Attendance grant for the International Summer School in Cognitive Science and Semantics: 2009.

Selected Professional Development

- British Society for the Philosophy of Science annual conference 2025, University of Glasgow, local committee member.

- Since the summer of 2024, I have organised with Dr Mike Hicks the Philosophy of Science and Metaphysics Work in Progress group at Glasgow, and a similarly titled reading group that has met several times and includes researchers at Glasgow and around the UK.

- In 2020-21 I completed the University of Glasgow course: Developing as a Teacher in Higher Education; and Introduction to Learning and Teaching in Higher Education. These courses are aligned to the UKPSF and completion grants Associate Fellowship (RET AF). I am continuing to work towards my PGCAP.

- I have reviewed for *Philosophical Studies, Pacific Philosophical Quarterly, Erkenntnis, Dialectica, Theoria, Analytic Philosophy* and *Wiley*.

- Editor of the *Psychophysical Reduction, Exclusion Problem, Multiple Realisation* and *Nonreductive Materialism* categories of PhilPapers <http://philpapers.org/profile/6926>.

- In 2018, I was trained by the University and Rape Crisis Scotland to be one of the University's 'First Responders' for harassment and sexual assault. In 2021 I completed refresher training and continue in the role.

- University of Glasgow GTA Small Group Teaching Award runner-up, 2017.

Selected public engagement

In my time with Short Courses, I engaged with the public via social media (Twitter/X, YouTube, and Instagram) and a variety of other forums:

- May 2021, Skellig Star Wars Festival, *talk given* – Star Wars and philosophy.

- November 2019, Glasgow Skeptics Society, *talk given* – Are we alone in the universe?

- May 2018, Glasgow Skeptics Society, *talk given* – Star Wars and philosophy.

- April 2018: various media interviews to discuss the ethics of using ethnic stereotypes in comedy, including: The Guardian, BBC Scotland Timeline¸ Newstalk Ireland, and 680 CJOB Canada.

- December 2017: various media interviews to discuss the launch of the online version of the Star Wars and Philosophy course, including: STV's Live at Five, BBC News Online, The Herald, Accessible Media Radio Canada.

- December 2017: long-form interview on Game of Thrones and philosophy for SRF Kultur (Swiss Television).

- June 2017: interview with BBC Radio Scotland Social Media on Dr Who and philosophy.

- May 2017: October 2017, various appearances on STV's Live at Five to discuss news items.

- May 2017: various media interviews to discuss the launch of the Short Courses day event Star Wars and Philosophy, including: Al Jazeera English, STV News, and The Scotsman.

- December 2016: helped launch a social media campaign for the course The Simpsons Introduce Philosophy, which reached 44,588 people, and generated almost 500 Facebook likes, 109 comments and 85 shares.

  Within days of going live, the campaign was reported in major media outlets around the world, including BBC News Online, Time Magazine, The Hollywood Reporter, The Washington Post, BBC Radio, German, Mexican, and Australian radio, Al Jazeera English and STV, among many others. In addition, the campaign trended twice on Twitter and made it into Google's Hot Trends.

  There were five consecutive days of intense news coverage with more than fifty online and print pieces, and I gave over twenty interviews, some of which can be found on my website: drdonaldson.org.

Referees

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