

# ROBERT NORTHCOTT

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Assistant Professor, University of Missouri-St Louis, August 2005–ongoing  
AOS: philosophy of science, philosophy of biology, metaphysics

## Publications

### 1) Journal

- J10) ‘Verisimilitude: a causal approach’  
*Synthese* (forthcoming)
- J9) ‘On Lewis, Schaffer and the non-reductive evaluation of counterfactuals’  
*Theoria* (forthcoming)
- J8) ‘Is actual difference making actually different?’  
*Journal of Philosophy* (forthcoming)
- J7) ‘Natural-born determinists: a new defense of causation as probability-raising’  
*Philosophical Studies* (forthcoming)
- J6) ‘Weighted explanations in history’  
*Philosophy of the Social Sciences* 38.1, March 2008, pp76-96
- J5) ‘Can ANOVA measure causal strength?’  
*Quarterly Review of Biology* 83.1, March 2008, pp47-55
- J4) ‘Causation and contrast classes’  
*Philosophical Studies* 39.1, May 2008, pp111-123
- J3) ‘Causal efficacy and the analysis of variance’  
*Biology and Philosophy* 21.2, March 2006, pp253-276
- J2) ‘Pearson’s wrong turning: against statistical measures of causal efficacy’  
*Philosophy of Science* 72.5, December 2005, pp900-912
- J1) ‘Comparing apples with oranges’  
*Analysis* 65.1, January 2005, pp12-18

### 2) Other scholarly

- S3) ‘Progress in economics: lessons from the spectrum auctions’  
chapter 11 in *Oxford Handbook of Philosophy of Economics* (Oxford 2009, Don Ross and Harold Kincaid, eds), pp306-337  
(co-authored with Anna Alexandrova)
- S2) Review of ‘The Scientific Study of Society’ by Max Steuer  
*Economics and Philosophy* 20.2, October 2004, pp375-381  
(co-authored with Anna Alexandrova)
- S1) ‘Defining causal strength’  
CPNSS Discussion Paper CTR 14/03, September 2003

### 3) Popular

P2) 'Is it bad luck or the ref's fault?'

in Ted Richards (ed), *Soccer and Philosophy* (Open Court, forthcoming)

P1) 'The Irrational Game: why there's no perfect system'

in Eric Bronson (ed), *Poker and Philosophy* (Open Court, 2006), pp105-115

## **Education**

*PhD Philosophy*, London School of Economics, July 2004

Advisers: Colin Howson, Nancy Cartwright

Thesis title: 'Approximate truth and causal strength in science'

*MSc Economics*, London School of Economics

Average grade: 67 (in top six of year, from about 125 students in total)

*Diploma in Economics*, King's College, University of Cambridge

Grade: 1\* distinction (in top three of whole year of economics undergraduates)

*BA Mathematics and History*, King's College, University of Cambridge

Part II History, Grade: 2.1 Part IA Mathematics, Grade: 2.1

*S-levels*, Hampstead Comprehensive School

Subjects and grades: Chemistry 1, Physics 1, Further Mathematics 2

*A-levels*, Hampstead Comprehensive School

Ancient History A, Chemistry A, Further Mathematics A, Mathematics A, Physics A

## **Awards and Scholarships**

-- UM Research Board award, 'Measuring causal strength in biology', spring-fall 2008 (\$20,000)

-- UMSL Research Award, 'Causes in science and philosophy', fall 2006 (\$7000)

-- UMSL Small Grants, spring 2006, 2007 and 2008, fall 2008 (up to \$1000 each)

-- Jacobsen Essay Prize in philosophy, University of London (open to all U of L faculty and graduate students), March 2004

-- Analysis Trust scholarship, October 1999–September 2000 (c 15,000 pounds)

-- Inaugural LSE Department of Economics teaching prize, June 1998

## **Presentations**

(\* = refereed conference presentation)

46) 'Causal strength in social science', Philosophy of Social Science, Birmingham AL, April 2010

\*45) 'Genetic drift', Eastern APA, New York, December 2009

\*44) 'Weighted explanations in social science', Boulder Conference for History and Philosophy of Science, University of Colorado at Boulder, October 2009

\*43) 'Causation, selection and fitness', British Society for the Philosophy of Science, University of East Anglia, July 2009

- 42) 'Experimental philosophy and metaphysics', University of Kansas, May 2009
- 41) 'Causation and fitness', St Louis Area Philosophy of Science Association conference, St Louis, February 2009
- 40) 'Genetic drift', History and Philosophy of Science and Medicine, Washington University in St Louis, January 2009
- 39) 'Apportioning explanatory responsibility, and an application to genetic drift', University of Bristol, December 2008
- \*38) 'Genetic causation and actual difference makers', Philosophy of Science Association, Pittsburgh, November 2008
- 37) 'Experimental philosophy and metaphysics – two cases from the literature on causation', Saint Louis University, October 2008
- 36) 'Genetic drift and apportioning explanatory responsibility', Missouri Philosophy of Science workshop, University of Missouri-Columbia, September 2008
- \*35) 'Innateness and science', Biological Explanations of Behavior, Hanover, June 2008
- \*34) 'Apportioning explanatory responsibility', Pacific APA, Pasadena, March 2008
- 33) 'Innateness and science', University of Pittsburgh, February 2008
- \*32) 'Apportioning explanatory responsibility', Illinois Philosophical Association, Edwardsville, November 2007
- 31) Commentary on Denis Walsh's 'The Pomp of Superfluous Causes', Kline philosophy of biology workshop, University of Missouri-Columbia, September 2007
- \*30) 'Causation and contrast classes', Mind/Aristotelian Society, Bristol, July 2007
- \*29) 'Innateness and science', British Society for the Philosophy of Science, Bristol, July 2007
- \*28) 'Weighted explanations in history', Philosophy of Social Science Roundtable, Tampa, March 2007
- 27) 'Weighted explanations in history', Philosophy of Science WiP, Washington University in St Louis, March 2007
- \*26) 'ANOVA and causal strength in biology', Does Philosophy Matter to Science?, New York, March 2007
- 25) 'What is innateness?', Biology departmental seminar, University of Missouri-St Louis, February 2007
- \*24) 'Innateness and science', Midsouth philosophy conference, Memphis, February 2007
- 23) 'Innateness and science', University of Missouri-St Louis WiP, February 2007
- 22) 'Natural-born determinists: causal judgment in a probabilistic world', Philosophy, Neuroscience and Psychology WiP, Washington University in St Louis, September 2006
- \*21) 'Genes, environment and causation', British Society for the Philosophy of Science, Southampton, July 2006
- \*20) 'Natural-born determinists: causation in a probabilistic world', Causality and probability in the sciences, Kent, June 2006
- \*19) 'Natural-born determinists: ex post versus ex ante judgments of probabilistic causation', Society for Exact Philosophy, San Diego, May 2006
- 18) 'Is causation dispensable?', University of Missouri-St Louis WiP, October 2005
- 17) 'Causation and contrast classes', University of Delaware, January 2005
- 16) 'Intuition reversals and theories of causation', UC San Diego Experimental Philosophy Laboratory, January 2005

- \*15) 'Pearson's wrong turning: against statistical measures of causal efficacy', Philosophy of Science Association, Austin, November 2004
- 14) 'Causation and contrast classes', LSE Causality: Metaphysics and Methods research group, June 2004
- 13) 'Causation and contrast classes', UC San Diego colloquium, April 2004
- 12) 'Pearson's wrong turning: against statistical measures of causal efficacy', UC San Diego Experimental Philosophy Laboratory, February 2004
- 11) 'Commensurability, interaction and causal strength', UC San Diego Experimental Philosophy Laboratory, December 2003
- 10) 'Defining causal strength, and why it matters', UC San Diego Science Studies, December 2003
- 9) 'Causal strength and the analysis of variance', LSE Causality: Metaphysics and Methods research group, July 2003
- 8) 'Causal strength and causal interaction', LSE departmental seminar, June 2003
- \*7) 'Can a causal potency be defined independent of context?', University of London graduate philosophy conference, May 2003
- \*6) 'Defining causal strength', UC San Diego graduate philosophy conference, April 2003
- \*5) 'Two kinds of political philosophy', National Postgraduate Analytical Philosophy Conference, Bristol, July 2002
- 4) 'Two kinds of political philosophy: Rawls versus the biologists', LSE rationality seminar, February 2002
- 3) 'What is genuine altruism?', Darwin@LSE research group, November 2000
- 2) 'Emotional misfires: morality, altruism and self-interest', Darwin@LSE research group, May 2000
- 1) 'A definition of approximate truth', LSE departmental seminar, October 1999

## **Positions**

- Assistant Professor, University of Missouri-St Louis, August 2005–ongoing
- Visiting Research Fellow, Centre for Philosophy of Natural and Social Science, London School of Economics, April–July 2005
- Visiting Scholar, UC San Diego philosophy department, September 2003–June 2004 and September 2004–April 2005
- Research Associate, Centre for Philosophy of Natural and Social Science, London School of Economics, August 2000–September 2005

## **Teaching**

*University of Missouri-St Louis:*

- Graduate: Philosophy of Science, Metaphysics, Darwinism and Philosophy of Biology, Philosophy of Social Science
- Undergraduate: Philosophy of Science, Metaphysics, Darwinism and Philosophy of Biology (including for Honors College), Philosophy of Social Science, Bioethics

- My student evaluation scores are consistently above the departmental average, sometimes far above. (Detailed statistical read-outs available on request.)
- Syllabi and notes for all these courses were developed by me from scratch

*London School of Economics:*

- Winner (the only year I was eligible), LSE economics department teaching prize, as voted for by students (from over 50 TAs in total)
- Four years as a TA in LSE Department of Economics
- Three summers as a TA in LSE International Summer School in Economics
- Selected because of my popularity with students to deliver LSE's external one-week intensive program 'Introduction to Economics', Brunei Investment Agency
- Co-writer of external Intermediate Macroeconomics exam for LSE, 2004–2006
- Private tutoring in mathematics and in economics

**Service**

*St Louis:*

- organizer, co-founder of St Louis philosophy of science reading group (bi-weekly, faculty and students from UMSL, WashU, SLU and SIUE), December 2006-January 2008
- talk at Chaminade Preparatory School, St Louis, February 2008

*UMSL:*

- adviser, graduate school applicants
- supporter of and presenter at Philosophy Forum WiPs
- official judge, Undergraduate Research Fair 'Natural Sciences' category, April 2007
- philosophy department's representative on the Faculty Senate and University Assembly, January 2008-

MA dissertation committees (with dates of defense):

- Colleen Keating, 'Can Cobb integrate Dharmakirti?', December 2006
- John Gabriel, 'Organizing space-time: a causal analysis of spatiotemporal location', April 2007
- Dru Johnson, 'Distinguishing metaphysical from epistemological randomness', December 2007
- Ryan Massey, 'Transfer and the fuzzy-trace theory', December 2007
- Blake Myers, 'Imagination and phenomenal experience', June 2008
- Stuart Reeves, 'Moral concerns in genomic medicine beyond GINA', April 2009

*Reviewer for:*

*Australasian Journal of Philosophy, British Journal for the Philosophy of Science, International Studies in the Philosophy of Science, Synthese*

Oxford University Press, Cognitive Science society, Southern Society for Philosophy and Psychology, University of Missouri Research Board

Chapters from: *Causality and Probability in the Sciences* (Russo and Williamson eds, College Publications 2007), *Causality in the Sciences* (Illari, Russo and Williamson eds, Oxford UP forthcoming)

*Professional Memberships:*

- American Philosophical Association
- Philosophy of Science Association
- British Society for the Philosophy of Science

*Blog:*

Contributor to philosophy of science blog: <http://itisonlyatheory.blogspot.com/>

**Miscellaneous other information**

- Captain, LSE University Challenge TV quiz team (reached grand final, 1996/7 series)
- Successful player (i.e. net profit-maker) in public tournaments in both pool and poker
- Contributed to and co-published two separate Cambridge University 'Virtue Without Terror' poetry anthologies