

## *ousia – swissuniversities* doctoral program 2017–2020

Universities of Lucerne (leading house), Geneva and Lugano

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**Overall goal.** For the last 15 years, philosophy in Switzerland has been very successful in several respects: it has massively improved its position in international rankings, trained an unprecedented number of PhD students, many of which have found very attractive positions abroad, and many research projects of international renown have been founded. There still is, however, a sorely felt lack of cooperation, especially across language borders and between philosophers working mostly systematically and historians of philosophy. The proposed doctoral program aims to bridge these valleys (or rather tunnel the mountains of incomprehension by a solid ‘Basistunnel’ – the kind of thing Switzerland is famous for) and to bring together doctoral students from all three language regions and both those working historically and those adopting a systematic approach in Lucerne, right in the heart of Switzerland.

**Applications.** We have submitted two applications to *swissuniversities* and the research commission in Lucerne respectively:

- for a continuation of the existing programme “Philosophie contemporaine”: **60’000 CHF** for 2017;
- for the creation of a new programme: **300’000 CHF** for 2017–2020.

**New formats, innovative methodology.** Activities presently offered to Swiss philosophy students fall generally into one of two kinds: (i) classical conferences, with ‘big names’ as invited speakers and PhD students sitting in the audience, (perhaps) daring to ask a question or two; (ii) a few general-purpose skill-development workshops, typically aimed at helping PhD students to publish or to acquire competence in English. While both types of activities are certainly helpful, a third type is needed to complement them: **thematic workshops**, with just two or three ‘big’ or ‘middle-sized’ names, focussed on a very specific topic and preceded by an intensive, structured and tutored preparation, conducted not just in English, but in German, French and Italian as well, applying the venerable Swiss formula ‘everyone in his own language’. PhD students working on medieval metaphysics, for example, will typically be interested in the contemporary development of their questions as well, and contemporary metaphysicians will certainly come across many references and quotations from historical sources that attract their interest – for non-specialists, it is very difficult, however, to know where to begin, what to read, how to compare different positions or thinkers and in what terms to evaluate them. As a result, forays into the ‘other side’ of the systematic-historical schism often stay at a quite superficial level and do not produce the substantial cross-fertilisation that would be possible in principle.

**Cross-fertilisation through ‘inversion’ of methodologies.** The study of the history of philosophy is usually conducted in a person-centred way, through focussing on one particular thinker at a time. This type of ‘serial monogamy’ will over time allow students to appreciate interconnections and lines of historical development, but it requires a lot of training and expertise to answer thematic questions such as: how did the Aristotelian conception of relatives evolve in the later Middle Ages? what is the scholastic conception of the Eucharist and how does it compare to Frege’s conception of numbers as higher-order quantifiers? how did medieval thinkers conceive of the relation (we now call) reference? Systematic metaphysicians, on the other hand, work primarily on questions, as they surface in clusters of articles inter-related by cross-citations. Through this ‘polyamorous’ focus on several particular arguments and rejoinders, questions of motivation, background, systematic coherence and theoretical ancestry get little attention; students tend to end up with some (tentative) views on some very particular questions, with little or no idea how they could fit into a more general conception of the world. This doctoral program makes the unprecedented move to inverse these contingent, even accidental, links between methodologies and disciplines, to apply a ‘serial monogamy’, people-centred approach to contemporary metaphysics (‘midway’-workshops), and a ‘polyamory’, question-centred approach to the history of philosophy (‘flashlight’-workshops). This will not only make it much easier for the respective practitioners to feel at home in unfamiliar territory, but also be theoretically fruitful for both fields at once.

**Organisation and coordination.** The doctoral program is anchored at the Chair of Philosophy of the Faculty of Theology of the University of Lucerne, occupied by Prof. Giovanni Ventimiglia. Dr. Philipp Blum, who started his job as “Oberassistent” (“maitre assistant”) on the 1st of November 2016, will be primarily responsible for the organisation and implementation of the program:

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Giovanni Ventimiglia has only very recently been appointed professor in Lucerne, but he has already obtained a SNSF research project involving a post-doc and a PhD student. Another large SNSF ‘Sinergia’ application is in the works, and the first steps towards an application to the Templeton foundation have already been undertaken. As the founder and director of the Institute for Philosophical Studies (ISFI) in Lugano and of the Collegium Philosophicum Luganense in Breganzona, Prof. Ventimiglia has a large experience in tutoring philosophy students.

Philipp Blum will closely collaborate, both in the general orientation of the program and the concrete planning of workshops, with Prof. Laurent Cesalli, head of the research group in medieval philosophy at the University of Geneva, and Prof. Kevin Mulligan, Director of Research at the Istituto di Studi Filosofici di Lugano in Lugano and co-director of *eidōs*, the Geneva-Neuchâtel-Lugano Centre for Metaphysics.

Philipp Blum has a large experience in organising PhD workshops, having organised eight very successful SNSF graduate schools (“Lesser Entities” 2013, “The Metaphysics of Representation” 2012, “Fundamentality and Perspectivity” 2011, “The Metaphysics of Time” 2009, “Modalities” 2008, “Properties and Relations” 2007, “Mind and Metaphysics” 2006, “Abstract Entities” 2004), two summer schools in the philosophy of physics (2008 and 2009) and the SUK doctoral program “Philosophie contemporaine” 2013–2016, of which the present proposal is a direct successor (though it counts as new as it is organised through the University of Lucerne).

**Institutional anchorage.** The doctoral program is primarily located at the University of Lucerne, and thus situated at the cross-roads of Switzerland’s three linguistic regions. Its institutional home is *ousia*, the newly founded Centre for the Philosophy and Theology of Being, at the Chair of Philosophy of the Faculty of Theology of the University of Lucerne. The Faculty of Theology of the University of Lucerne has agreed to contribute at least 75’000 over four years in the form of “virtual money”, by providing the infrastructure for the organisation of the workshop, hosting the intra muros workshops in its facilities, and providing for the dissemination of the information, also through membership in [www.philosophie.ch](http://www.philosophie.ch). The attached document details a part of this contribution in virtual money.

**Contribution.** The main contribution of the University of Lucerne lies in the employment of the program’s coordinator, Philipp Blum. This contribution consists of ‘real money’, as the coordination of the doctoral program is part of his employment contract with the University of Lucerne. He will devote 15 % of his time to the coordination of the program and the organisation of the workshops, at a value of approximately 20’000 CHF per year, a duty to be included in his employment contract. This is certified by the attached document.

**Durability.** We plan to make this program permanent, continuing well beyond 2020, partly through third-party funds, partly through having PhD candidates pay for participating in the workshops. Even though this practice is not yet widespread in philosophy, we believe this plan to be feasible for three reasons: (i) it is already customary to pay for the participation in colloquia and summer schools within the sub-discipline of philosophy of physics, in many ways a trend-setter in sociological and practical ways; the two successful summerschools Philipp Blum organised were to a large extent financed by participation fees; (ii) there are important precedents of successful for-profit doctoral programs, as e.g. the summerschools organised at the Central European University in Budapest; in comparison, the Lucerne workshops will be very cheap; (iii) philosophy departments all over the world increasingly recognise the need to help their graduate students acquire international experience, and set apart funds for PhD students to acquire knowledge and experience abroad; Switzerland, and Lucerne in particular, is very well placed to successfully compete in this market, once it has acquired the reputation this programme is designed to win for it. Of central importance in ensuring the durability of the proposed school, will be the *Collegium Philosophicum*, a privately organised not-for-profit organisation, that not only offers an ideal location for a doctoral school, but also allows for running it on a tight budget.

## Continuation of the existing programme in 2017

### 1. **workshop.** The Metaphysics of Appearances (Ligerz, 15.-19.2. 2017)

**CfP.** The distinction between appearances and reality is one of the oldest topics of philosophy. It has recently received new importance, from at least three directions: discussions of grounding, “in reality” and fundamentality; “disjunctivist” theories of perception and new developments in the metaphysics of transcendental idealism. The aim of the workshop is to bring together historical and systematic expertise to afford a fresh look at the metaphysics of appearances.

**Invited Speakers:** Tobias Rosefeldt, Stefanie Grüne, Lucy Allais, Andrew Stephenson, Colin Marshall, Ralf Busse, Mike Martin, Mark Johnston, Don Baxter.

### 2. **workshop.** Philosophy Publishing (3.-4.3.2017)

**CfP.** Ce workshop est entièrement pratique et s’adresse au plus grand nombre possible de doctorants et post-doctorants en philosophie. Le sujet de la discussion, organisée autour de brièves intervenants en forme de tables rondes, est le présent et le futur des revues philosophiques: quelles sont les caractéristiques d’un bon article philosophique? comment une revue idéale devrait-elle être organisée? comment structurer ses pensées, et organiser son travail, pour écrire de bons articles? où les envoyer? Ces questions, et d’autres, seront discutées lors de ce workshop unique, à Genève, pour donner à tout le monde l’occasion d’y participer.

**Interventionen von** Jérôme Dokic, Marcel Weber, Pascal Engel, Manuel Garcia-Carpintero, Carlos Moya, François Recanati, Peter Simons, Gianfranco Soldati, Martine Nida-Rümelin, Marco Santambrogio, Diego Marconi.

### 3. **workshop.** The Cogito - Yes or No? (Ligerz, 19.-23.4.2017)

**CfP.** Descartes’ Cogito is one of the most famous philosophical arguments, of central importance not just to the history of philosophy, but arguably to our modern self-understanding altogether. But is it an argument at all? If so, what are its premisses, what exactly its conclusion? Does it, or anything else Descartes said, shed light on our knowledge of our existence at all? This conference will bring together both defenders and critics of the Cogito, and evaluate its cogency, both within and independently of the Cartesian philosophical system. In particular, it will explore its connection to contemporary discussions of first-personalism and fragmentalist perspectivalism.

**Invited Speakers:** Ben Hellie, Gianfranco Soldati, John Campbell, Joseph Almog, Lilli Alanen, Sacha Bourgeois-Gironde, Christopher Peacocke, Husain Sarkar, Colin McLear.

### 4. **workshop.** Hylomorphism and representation (Ligerz, 6.-9.6.2017)

**CfP.** Despite the surge in interest in the history of the philosophy of mind, its metaphysics has been comparatively neglected. There is, however, much to learn from tradition when it comes to such important, but rarely squarely addressed questions as: how are we to understand the distinction between mental states and processes? are perception, imagination, knowledge and belief relations, and if so, what are their relations? what grounds the representational powers of (at least some) mental states, in virtue of what do they possess intentionality? how does the mass/count distinction apply in the mental realm, to such things as beliefs, odours, mental images? This conference brings together both historians and contemporary exponents of the philosophy of mind, to shed new light on its metaphysics.

**Invited Speakers.** Mark Kalderon, Anna Marmodoro, Howard Robinson, Stan Ebbesen, Simo Knuutila, Henrik Lagerlund, Dominik Perler, Matthew Soteriou und Nicholas Jolley oder Robert Pasnau.

### 5. **workshop.** The fragmentation of being (Ligerz, 29.6.-2.7.2017)

**CfP.** *ousia*, the new Centre for the Philosophy and Theology of Being at the Theological Faculty of the University of Lucerne (Switzerland), organises a four-day conference on the nature of being, its degrees, modes and senses, welcoming approaches both from systematical and historical perspectives. Possible topics include, but are not limited to: the analogy of being, being and activity, being and essence (and essentialism vs. existentialism), degrees, modes and senses of being, being and individuality (stuff), being and number, “existence (not) as a predicate”, being and structure, contemporary and historic accounts of the transcendentals, existence/presence/persistence.

**Invited Speakers.** Robert Trueman, Boris Hennig, Matteo Favaretti Camposampiero, Francesco Berto, Catherine Diel, Jeff Russell, Kris McDaniel, Jason Turner.

### 6. **workshop.** The analogy of being (Lucerne, 14.-17.9.2017)

**CfP.** In what sense do we predicate “exists” of people, chairs, God, numbers and fictional creatures? What senses of being does Aristotle distinguish in *Met. A*? How are they related? Are some prior to others? How, if at all, do these ancient and medieval distinctions match up with contemporary talk about ‘degrees’ or ‘modes’ of being? Related questions concern the distinction between abstract and concrete and between causally interacting and merely ‘intentional’ objects – do they too exist in fundamentally different ways? Of particular interest is the distinction – if, indeed, there is one at all – between (what are now called) the “is” of predication and the “is” of existence, a distinction in our post-Fregean

world almost reflexively made, but which received a lot of critical discussion by Brentano and in the reist tradition. A related, but also independent, interesting and under-researched question concerns the relation between ‘ordinary’ property exemplification and its modalised forms: is there, in addition to the “is” of predication, an “is” of essence, of necessity, of futurity? Can we understand “is necessarily”, “is essentially” and “will be” as separate forms of copulae, in analogy to the syllogistic distinction between a-, o-, i- and e-predications, or are they, as is nowadays normally assumed, higher-order modifications of one basic a-modal and a-temporal ‘is’?

**Invited Speakers.** Laurent Cesalli, Hermann Weidemann, Stephen L. Brock, Roger Pouivet, Godehard Brüntrup, Enrico Berti.

**7. workshop.** Time and timelessness (Lucerne, 19.-21.10.2017)

**CfP.** What relation of metaphysical priority, if any, is there between being and being-at-a-time, or being-for-some-time? How are we to understand, for temporal entities, the connection between their existence and their existing now, then, or in the future? Both within mainstream contemporary metaphysics and in analytic approaches to the history of philosophy, distinctions between manners of persistence and entities (objects, events, processes, states) essentially characterised by them have played important roles. Until now, however, these demarcations suffer from insufficient clarity. Very little work has been done, e.g., on the question how temporally extended things persist through time, i.e. in virtue of what their existence at one time is (at least partly) grounded in their existence at an earlier time, and whether this question receives different answers for particulars, events and processes. This question, largely ignored today, concerning becoming and change was at the heart of medieval ontological investigation.

**Invited Speakers.** Alessandro Giordani, John Marenbon, Can Laurens Loewe, Brian Davies, Cecilia Trifogli, Christopher Martin, Paul O’Grady.

**8. workshop.** Senses of being (Lucerne, 30.11.-2.12.2017)

**CfP.** The Geach/Prior/Kenny tradition interprets the medievals as distinguishing between the operator- and the predicate-sense of “exists”; this distinction, if it can be given a metaphysical underpinning, may shed new light on many questions of meta-ontology, such as unrestricted quantification, quantifier variance, theoretical parsimony and ontological commitment. With respect to the Quinean distinction of ideology and ontology, the predicate-sense seems to side with the first, the operator-sense with the latter. The operator-sense is, while the predicate-sense is not, or at least not obviously, vulnerable to the stock argument in favour of absolutely unrestricted quantification, namely that any restriction will have to predicate some property not universally exemplified in the domain. Similar considerations apply to variance: that of any two existential quantifiers one must be definable in terms of the other is much more plausible on the operator- than on the predicate-view. The two-senses theory may also serve to examine recent attempts to shift theoretical costs from ontology to ideology and to sever the Quinean tie between commitment and quantification. Though it has a venerable tradition, the Quinean criterion of ontological commitment has largely fallen out of favour with contemporary metaphysicians: it is not clear, however, what can take its place, nor even whether any such ontological regimentation is necessary at all. Aside from a lot of waiving of hands, very little constructive has been said about the sense in which things to which we are not ontologically committed may still be said to be, or have being, or at least to be such-and-such. Medieval philosophy offers a very rich menu of candidates, which is waiting to be explored.

**Invited Speakers.** TBD.

## Description of planned activities 2017–2020

**‘Midway’ workshops: ‘mid-term’ assessments of middle-career philosophers.** Let us take, for example, Tim, a student of philosophy who just starts his PhD on a topic in medieval metaphysics. Tim will have a quite general knowledge of different areas of systematic philosophy, and some more specific knowledge in ancient and medieval philosophy as well. His knowledge of contemporary metaphysics, however, will typically be quite limited, and he will not have, at least during the first two years of his PhD, much time to take specialised, semester-long courses. He will also find the research conferences in contemporary metaphysics organised, e.g. by *idos*, quite hermetic and un-understandable, as they are designed for specialists of contemporary metaphysics. He will equally be disappointed by a lack of connection between what he hears at these conferences and the ‘big name’ introductory books (say, an introduction to David Lewis, a general survey of metaphysics by E.J. Lowe).

Tim will find attractive, however, what the doctoral programme promises to offer him: a mid-term assessment of a particular younger, mid-career figure of contemporary metaphysics, such as, to take an example, Ross Cameron (other examples: Ted Sider, Jonathan Schaffer, Kris McDaniel, Jason Turner, etc. etc.). At such a workshop of four days, ideally held extra-muros to improve focus and concentration, contemporary metaphysicians, both PhD candidates and post-docs, will present comments and criticism of different aspects of Ross Cameron’s work, grouped together thematically, offering comprehensive coverage of his ‘intellectual world’. This will make Tim aware of the interconnections of the different themes, of the background of the (often startling) claims made and exhibit a type of approach he is already familiar with. Under the guidance of some teaching personnel, the students, both of history and of contemporary metaphysics, will put together a catalogue of questions, criticism, objections and requests for clarification.

On the third and fourth day, Ross Cameron, together with perhaps two or three of his intellectual peers, will be invited for extensive discussion sessions of these matters, for which Tim will be well prepared and in which he will be able to actively participate. In just four days, he will thus acquire comprehensive and in-depth knowledge of one specific facet of contemporary metaphysics, which he will be able to use in his own work.

**‘Flashlight’ workshops: spotlights into history.** Another PhD student, let us call her Sarah, works on a specific topic of contemporary metaphysics. Given the background in logic, philosophy of science, epistemology and philosophy of language required for the successful pursuit of her thesis, her knowledge of history will be quite scarce, often not reaching far beyond a very general impression of the thinking of some specific figures in ancient and early modern philosophy (a bit of Aristotle, say, and a bit of Descartes). Pursuing her own systematic questions, she will, however, become quickly aware that many, if not all, of them have historical antecedents, that there are important historical developments of, say, non-modal conceptions of essence, primitive identities or haecceities, types of formal distinctions, non-Fregean accounts of the relation between number and existence etc. etc. She will have trouble to find, however, thematically organised accounts of such topics, and will not have time for, and, if she has, rather be confused by, the general introductions to individual thinkers and specific periods.

A ‘spotlight’ workshop, such as those proposed by the present programme, will help her greatly in this respect, with focussed presentations on the narrowly chosen question during the first two days, introductions to the literature and chartings of the intellectual space in which these questions are situated, conducted under the guidance of the teaching personnel, by herself and her historically minded peers. Though valuable (and rare!) as they are, such ‘streamlining’ of historical complexities always risks being falsifying, as the often very superficial and schematic treatment of historical themes in the contemporary literature shows.

This is why Sarah will also receive, on the third and fourth day of the workshop, expert advice to the extant scholarly controversies and exegetical questions surrounding the questions and positions. Sarah will thus, on this particular systematic question, proceed from the stage where she can only uncritically quote one particular interpretation of some historical figure, to a more synoptic view that allows her to autonomously take a stance on interpretational questions, thus enriching her contemporary treatment of her research question.

**Selection of candidates.** The workshops will be advertised through the mailing list of [www.philosophie.ch](http://www.philosophie.ch), the Swiss portal of philosophy, to invite the approx. 320 PhD candidates in philosophy at Swiss universities to submit their applications. For each workshop, we will allocate 20 places fairly and transparently on the basis of a letter of interest describing the candidates’ reasons for their desire to participate.

**Added value.** To achieve the program’s main objectives – to develop scientific competence in research, transversal knowledge and, primarily, scientific socialisation and networking across specialisations and language barriers (cf. “L’excellence par la recherche”, CRUS, January 17, 2014) – no alternative funding model is available. Given the recent

flourishing of Swiss academic philosophy, a very large number of PhD candidates will be able to participate in the program (the CUSO database alone comprises 127 names, to which we must add approx. 200 PhD candidates in German- and Italian-speaking Switzerland). Each workshop will be openly advertised well in advance, and places will be allocated fairly and transparently on the basis of a letter of interest describing the candidates' reasons for their desire to participate.

**Network.** The programme is anchored at the University of Lucerne, but involves the Philosophy Department of the University of Geneva and the Istituto di Studi Filosofici di Lugano. It will take full advantage of the international collaborations of the Research Centres *ousia*, *eidos*, *Inbegriff* and the wealth of personal contacts of Kevin Mulligan. We are confident that the programme thus will allow Swiss philosophy PhD students (as well as those of related fields)

- to foster a host of 'national' connections, by getting to know their peers working in different cities and language regions;
- to acquire an 'international' network of contacts to senior people, on which they may come to rely later for reference letters, job applications, conference invitations and the like.

**Start.** The programme will start as early as possible in 2017 and go on for at least four years.

**Budget.** The Faculty of Theology of the University of Lucerne has agreed to contribute at least 75000 CHF over four years in the form of "virtual money", by providing the infrastructure for the organisation of the workshops, hosting the intra muros workshops in its facilities, and providing for the dissemination of the information. Its contribution in "real money" lies primarily in its employment of the program's coordinator who will devote 15 % of his time to the coordination of the program and the organisation of the workshops.

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2017-20
3 workshops extra-muros:					
4 days of full board for 20 candocs/postdocs (120 CHF)	12000 CHF	12000 CHF	12000 CHF	12000 CHF	
4 days full board for 4 teachers	2400 CHF	2400 CHF	2400 CHF	2400 CHF	
travel costs (60 CHF / person)	1500 CHF	1500 CHF	1500 CHF	1500 CHF	
4 external participants, plus travel costs of 600 CHF each	4800 CHF	4800 CHF	4800 CHF	4800 CHF	
total	62100 CHF	62100 CHF	62100 CHF	62100 CHF	
1 workshop intra-muros:					
accommodation for 10 external candocs/postdocs/teachers (90 CHF)	4500 CHF	4500 CHF	4500 CHF	4500 CHF	
4 external participants, plus travel costs of 600 CHF each	4200 CHF	4200 CHF	4200 CHF	4200 CHF	
24 x 15 CHF / lunch; 23 x 30 CHF / dinner	4200 CHF	4200 CHF	4200 CHF	4200 CHF	
preparation, teaching, honoraria*	15000 CHF	15000 CHF	15000 CHF	15000 CHF	
infrastructure*, publicity*, dissemination*	8700 CHF	8700 CHF	8700 CHF	8700 CHF	
coordination*	51300 CHF	51300 CHF	51300 CHF	51300 CHF	
total swissuniversities	75000 CHF	75000 CHF	75000 CHF	75000 CHF	<b>300000 CHF</b>
total matching funds (* above)	75000 CHF	75000 CHF	75000 CHF	75000 CHF	300000 CHF
<b>total per year</b>	150000 CHF	150000 CHF	150000 CHF	150000 CHF	600000 CHF