

# CV — Luke Elson

June 2025

www.luke-elson.org  
luke.elson@reading.ac.uk

University of Reading  
Philosophy Department

## EMPLOYMENT AND EDUCATION

- 2022– Associate Professor of Philosophy, University of Reading.  
2014–22 Lecturer in Philosophy, University of Reading.  
2014 PhD Philosophy, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (MA 2009).  
2005 BA Mathematics and Philosophy, Exeter College, Oxford.

## RESEARCH

### ***Journal articles and book chapters***

- (Forthcoming) 'The Size of the Universe against Robust Realism' in *Ethics*.  
(Forthcoming) 'Moral Risk in Marketised Medicine' in a *Ratio* special issue on risk.  
2024 'Carbon Offsets and Shifting Harms', *Erasmus Journal for Philosophy and Economics* 17(1), 234–255. Special issue on intra- and interpersonal dilemmas in ethics and rational choice. With a critical comment by Kian Mintz-Woo and a response from me.  
doi: 10.23941/ejpe.v17i1.790  
2024 'No Point of View Except Ours?', *Topoi* 43: 479–489.  
doi:10.1007/s11245-024-10029-8  
2021 'What does incommensurability tell us about agency?' in *Value Incommensurability: Ethics, Risk, and Decision-Making*, edited by Henrik Andersson and Anders Herlitz. Routledge.  
doi:10.4324/9781003148012-13  
2019 'Probabilistic Promotion and Ability', *Ergo* vol. 6, no. 34.  
doi:10.3998/ergo.12405314.0006.034  
2019 'Can Streumer simply avoid Supervenience?', *Journal of Ethics & Social Philosophy* vol. 16, no. 3 (2019). doi:10.26556/jesp.v16i3.508  
2017 'Incommensurability as Vagueness: a Burden-Shifting Argument', *Theoria* 83: 341-363. doi: 10.1111/theo.12129  
2016 'Tenenbaum and Raffaman on Vague Projects, the Self-Torturer, and the Sorites', *Ethics* Vol. 126, No. 2, pp. 474-488. doi:10.1086/683533.  
2014 'Heaps and Chains: is the Chaining Argument for Parity a Sorites?', *Ethics* Vol. 124, No. 3, pp. 557-571. doi:10.1086/674844  
2014 'Borderline Cases and the Collapsing Principle', *Utilitas* volume 26, issue 01, pp. 51-60.  
doi:10.1017/S095382081300023X

### ***Edited volumes, book reviews and other pieces***

- 2022 Edited special edition of *Ratio* in celebration of Brad Hooker's work, with Charlotte Newey.  
2021 Review of *Companions in Guilt Arguments in Metaethics* edited by Christopher Cowie and

Richard Rowland, at Notre Dame Philosophical Reviews.

- 2018 'How a moral philosopher justifies his carbon footprint': a general audience piece on carbon offsetting for *The Conversation*.
- 2018 Review of David Sobel's *From Valuing to Value, Analysis*, Volume 78, Issue 3, pp. 583-586. doi:10.1093/analys/any045.
- 2016 Edited special edition of *Ratio* (with introduction) on Ethics and Indeterminacy.

### UNDERGRADUATE TEACHING

**Introductory (first-year) ethics.** Autumn 2023, Spring 2021, 2020, 2019, 2016, 2015. Chapel Hill: Spring 2010.

**Intermediate (second-year) ethics.** Spring 2024, 2022, 2021, 2020, 2019; Autumn 2015, 2014.

**Advanced (third-year) ethics.** Spring 2024, Autumn 2018 (with Philip Stratton-Lake).

**Writing the philosophical essay**, an end-of first-year 'workshop' on structuring essays module. Summer 2023.

**Mediaeval philosophy.** Autumn 2022, 2020, 2019, 2018. Chapel Hill: Summer 2013.

**Elementary/Intermediate logic (up to predicate calculus).** Summer 2017, Spring 2015. Chapel Hill: Fall 2013, and as Teaching Assistant for Thomas Hofweber in Spring 2013.

**Epistemology.** Autumn 2015.

**Introduction to philosophy (online)** at Chapel Hill: Summer 2014.

**Introduction to metaphysics** at Chapel Hill: Summer 2012.

**A literary introduction to philosophy** at Chapel Hill: Summer 2011, 2009. Also as Teaching Assistant for C.D.C. Reeve in Fall 2008.

**Introduction to bioethics (online)** at Chapel Hill: Summer 2010.

**Philosophy of science** at Chapel Hill: Teaching Assistant for Marc Lange. Spring 2009.

**Supervised BA dissertations** and 'mini-dissertations' each year since 2014.

**Summer Undergraduate Research Opportunity Projects:** 'Nihilism and the emotions' (2021); 'Ought implies can – history and arguments' (2017); 'Climate change and rational choice' (2015).

### GRADUATE TEACHING AND SUPERVISION

Primary PhD supervision:

1. Tommaso Soriani on ethics and personites (2022–).
2. Sister Marielle Cesbron on reasons and emotions (2022–).
3. Ronan Ó Maonaile on fittingness (2021–).
4. Dannish Kashmiri on ontology and ethical objectivity. Viva passed June 2024.

PhD co-supervision:

1. Lanell Mason, 'Moral Agents in a Moral World: A New Account of Moral Realism and Moral Perception', with David Oderberg. Viva passed July 2021.
2. Adam Pearce on the criminalisation of climate change, with Rob Jubb (politics). Viva passed

May 2021.

3. Livia Luzzatto on the scope of climate justice, with Rob Jubb (politics). Viva passed April 2021.
4. Bradley Hillier-Smith on the ethics of responses to refugees, with Brad Hooker. Viva passed January 2021.

### ***Seminars and classes for graduate students***

Convenor, Graduate Research Seminar (workshop). Autumn 2019-Spring 2022, Summer 2015.

Convenor, Graduate Class (seminar) for PhD students:

- Summer term 2021: on my book manuscript 'unsharp choices' and related material.
- Spring 2016: Recent work on Incommensurability and Reasons.

Leader, Reading Researcher Development Programme session, 'you and your supervisor', 2022–.

Staff-Student Reading Group. Spring 2015 on L.A. Paul, *Transformative Experience*.

Supervisor for multiple MRes Essays and Dissertations per year since 2015. Topics include: Presentism and Truthmaker Theory, The Justification of War, Psychological Egoism, Moral Overridingness, Anarchism, Nudge, Sceptical Theism, the Problem of Evil.

PhD examining:

- Externally:
  - a. University of St Andrews. 2024.
  - b. University College, London. 2019.
- Internally at Reading, several times since 2015.

## **PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES AND SERVICE**

Reviewer for: *Analysis*, *Australasian Journal of Philosophy*, *Economics and Philosophy*, *Erkenntnis*, *Ethical Theory and Moral Practice*, *Ethics*, *Journal of the American Philosophical Association*, *Journal of Ethics*, *Journal of Ethics & Social Philosophy*, *Journal of Philosophy*, *Journal of Value Inquiry*, *Kriterion*, *Mind*, *Noûs*, *Pacific Philosophical Quarterly*, *Philosophers' Imprint*, *Philosophical Quarterly*, *Philosophical Studies*, *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, *Review of Philosophy and Psychology*, *Routledge*, *Synthese*, *Theoria*, *Theory and Decision*, and *Utilitas*.

Grant proposal review/assessment for the Leverhulme Trust and the European Union.

Professional Memberships: UK Higher Education Academy (Fellow since September 2016), Mind Association, British Society for Ethical Theory, American Philosophical Association.

### ***Conferences and workshops organised***

2026 (planned) Joint Session of the Mind Association and Aristotelian Society

2025 May Workshop on Motivating Individual Climate Action. Reading.

2025 May Workshop in memory of Philip Stratton-Lake, with Brad Hooker. Reading.

2021 April Workshop in honour of Brad Hooker, with Charlotte Newey. Reading.

2018 March Southern Normativity Group annual Conference, Reading.

2017 Oct Moral and Rational Uncertainty one-day workshop, Reading (with Patrick Tomlin).

2015 April Indeterminacy in Ethics annual Ratio conference, Reading.

### ***Main administrative roles outside home university***

- 2023– Deputy Treasurer, Mind Association.
- 2022– External examiner for taught postgraduate programmes, School of Philosophy, Theology & Religion at the University of Birmingham.
- 2021– Equalities Officer then ‘Cybersmith’ (web), British Society for Ethical Theory.
- 2019– Reviewer for EU Horizon 2020 and Horizon Europe MSCA Fellowship proposals.
- 2019– Moderator for AHRC SWW doctoral training partnership selection process.

### ***Main administrative roles at Reading***

- 2022– Research Cluster/Division Lead for Philosophy.
- 2021–2022 Chair of scrutiny panels for BSc Bioveterinary Sciences (2022) and MSc Climate Change and Artificial Intelligence (2021-2).
- 2019–2022 Director of Postgraduate Research Studies.
- 2018–2022 Part/year 3 (2019-22) and part 2 co-ordinator (2018-19).
- 2021-2022 PPE co-ordinator.
- 2018–2022 Philosophy department representative and core group member for School of Humanities Athena SWAN application. Implemented diagnostic survey of school members and conducted focus group.
- 2014–2021 Website, blog, and social media administrator.
- March 2019 Internal panellist for Periodic Review of Department of Computer Science.
- 2018-19 Philosophy Admissions Tutor and welcome (freshers) week co-ordinator.
- 2014–2017 Convenor, Visiting Speaker series and liaison with undergraduate Philosophy Society.
- 2016 Reading representative at the UK-China Philosophy Programme meetings at Queen’s College, Oxford and King’s College, London.
- July 2015 Member, Interview Panel for Graduate Teaching Assistant.

### ***Impact and outreach***

Panel member, public discussion on carbon offsetting. City Conversations, London. Nov 2019.

Numerous webinars for Ethical Reading, on e.g. moral luck and moral dilemmas.

Recorded ‘A’ Level revision videos for Massolit.

### ***Administrative roles at UNC Chapel Hill***

- 2008–09 & 2013–14 Organiser, UNC Philosophy Work in Progress series.
- 2011–13 External Advisor, Southern Alamance County High School Ethics Bowl Team.
- 2011–12 Philosophy Representative, Graduate and Professional Student Federation.
- 2008–09 & 2011 Graduate Assistant, UNC Philosophy Colloquium.

## **GRANTS, AWARDS, AND PRIZES**

Marie Skłodowska-Curie Individual Fellowship, ‘Austere Reasons.’ Held at the University of Reading,

July 2017 to August 2018. Value: €114,015.30

2020 Research Fellowship (2 terms of teaching relief and £500 travel fund), University of Reading. 2015-16.

Several Travel Awards from University of Reading.

Mind Association Conference Grant (£500) for Indeterminacy in Ethics conference, April 2015.

Prize for best graduate student paper. North Carolina Philosophical Society. February 2013.

Non-teaching Fellowships UNC Philosophy Department. 2007–2008, Fall 2012, Spring 2014.

UNC Richard Brooke Scholarship. 2008–2010 and 2011–2012.

Travel Award (x9). UNC Department of Philosophy and graduate school. 2012–13.

## PRESENTATIONS

‘Inefficacy and Democracy’:

- London School of Economics Choice Group, April 2025.
- International Society for Environmental Ethics meeting, Fribourg, June 2024.
- Debunking Inefficacy workshop, VU Amsterdam, December 2022.
- Value and Agent Relativity workshop at Grandhotel Giessbach, Switzerland, April 2022.
- APA Eastern Division Meeting, Savannah, USA. January 2018.
- Climate Science, Values and Politics workshop, Durham University, May 2015.

‘The end of Human Progress’ at a workshop on human extinction. University of Southampton, September 2024.

‘Meaning for the Error Theorist’ at the 6th International Conference on Philosophy & Meaning in Life. Liverpool, June 2024.

‘How Could Preferences be Incomplete?’ at a value incommensurability workshop. Lund University, May 2023.

‘Structural Rationality Avoids Determinate Substantive Irrationality’ at the German Analytic Philosophy congress (GAP.11), Berlin. September 2022.

‘Another Vagueness Solution to Spectrum Arguments’ at the Rocky Mountain Ethics Congress. August 2022.

‘Kahane’s Wager’ at the Joint Session of the Aristotelian Society and the Mind Association. Summer 2021.

‘Indeterminacy and Agency’:

- Oakland University, USA. 2021.
- Incommensurability: Vagueness, Parity and other Non-Conventional Comparative Relations workshop in Stockholm. 2019.

‘Nihilistic Despair’:

- Moral Philosophy Seminar, Oxford. 2019.
- University of Groningen. 2018.
- Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin Metaethics Colloquium. 2017.
- Trinity College, Dublin. 2017.

‘Choice Under Indeterminacy’:

- University of York. May 2018.
- Hard Cases and Rational Choice conference in Bern. November 2017.
- Choice Group, London School of Economics. October 2015.

‘Ought implies Can implies Moral Rationalism’:

- Morality and Rationality Revisited conference, University of Leeds. September 2018.
- OZSW conference in Groningen. December 2016.

‘Ability and Promotion’ at Lund University. December 2017.

‘The Size of the Universe and Nihilism’:

- OZSW conference in Groningen. December 2016.
- Southern Normativity Group meeting at the University of Sussex. September 2016.

‘How Implausible is Satisficing Utilitarianism?’ at the 14th International Society for Utilitarian Studies Conference at Lille Catholic University. July 2016.

‘A Satisficing Response to Gratuitous Harm’ at the Rocky Mountain Ethics Congress (RoME). University of Colorado, Boulder. August 2015.

‘Satisficing, Arbitrariness, and Indeterminacy’ at the Rocky Mountain Ethics Congress (RoME). University of Colorado, Boulder. August 2013. Commenter: Preston Werner.

‘Tenenbaum and Raffaman on Vague Projects, the Self-Torturer, and the Sorites’ at University of York. October 2014.

‘Self-Torture as Practical Sorites’:

- Harvard-MIT Graduate Conference. Cambridge, MA. April 2013. Commenter: Ryan Doody. (This conference was cancelled due to the Boston bombings.)
- North Carolina Philosophical Society. East Carolina University. February 2013.

‘Incommensurability as Comparative Borderlineness’:

- South Carolina Society for Philosophy. College of Charleston. March 2013.
- Fourth Dutch Conference on Practical Philosophy. TU/Eindhoven. Nov. 2012.