

# Chloe Armstrong

## *Curriculum Vitae*

chloea@umich.edu

<http://www-personal.umich.edu/~chloea/index.html>

PO Box 4247, Ann Arbor, MI 48106

734-389-5071

*Citizenship:* Canadian, British

**Area of Specialization:** early modern philosophy

**Areas of Competence:** metaphysics, epistemology, early analytic

**Additional Teaching Interests:** critical thinking, symbolic logic, history of ancient

## **Education**

University of Michigan, Ann Arbor. Ph.D., M.A., (philosophy)

*Dissertation: Modality in Leibniz's Philosophy*

*Committee:* Tad Schmaltz (chair), Louis Loeb, Gordon Belot

*Abstract:* I offer a sustained defense of the view that Leibniz is a necessitarian throughout his career. This is seemingly at odds with Leibniz's development of various accounts of contingency. Instead of understanding these accounts as attempts to retreat from necessitarianism, I argue that they are part of a strategy to make his system more plausible to his interlocutors. By offering surrogate accounts of contingency, Leibniz can capture the distinction between necessary and so-called "contingent" truths within a necessitarian framework. Within this framework I develop Leibniz's criteria for evaluating the proxy-accounts of contingency and argue that ultimately Leibniz's most successful account, moral necessity based on possible free decrees, rests on his view of possible worlds in the mind of God. (*See last page for full summary.*)

University of Western Ontario, London. M.A. (philosophy)

University of Victoria, British Columbia. B.A, Hons. in philosophy, minor in psychology

## **Honors**

### **Teaching Awards**

*Outstanding Graduate Student Instructor*, University of Michigan Rackham Graduate School, 2013.

Awarded to 20 of more than 2000 graduate student instructors university-wide.

*John Dewey Prize*, University of Michigan Department of Philosophy, 2012.

Awarded for excellence in undergraduate teaching.

### **Research Awards**

University of Michigan

*Hough Scholar Fellowship*, Winter 2014

*Doctoral Fellowship*, Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, 2009-12

*Rackham Graduate School Scholarship*, Winter 2012

University of Western Ontario

*Canadian Graduate Scholarship*, Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada  
2006-07

University of Victoria

*Anna-Bertha and Frank Kluge Scholarship*, highest standing entering final honors year, 2005

*John A. Farvolden Book Prize in Ethics*, 2004

## **Publications**

"Bolzano, Kant and Leibniz," (2014) co-authored with S. Lapointe, in *The New Anti-Kant*, eds. S. Lapointe and C. Tolley, Palgrave, 272-290.

## **Presentations**

Symposium organizer: *Methodology and Metaphysics in Leibniz's Theodicy* (Upcoming)

Canadian Philosophical Association 2015 Congress, May 31-June 3

Participants: Adam Harmer (University of California, Riverside)  
Christian Leduc (Université de Montréal)  
David Scott (University of Victoria)  
Chloe Armstrong (University of Michigan)

“The Development of *Per Se* Modality in Leibniz’s Early Work”

South Central Seminar in Early Modern Philosophy, Texas A&M College Station, 2014

“Necessity and Contingency in Leibniz’s *Theodicy*”

First Franco-American doctoral workshop in the History of Modern Philosophy, École Normale Supérieure de Lyon, France, May 2013

“Frege’s Latent Defense of Analytic Existence Claims”

Philosophy Graduate Student’s Association Series, University of Western Ontario, 2007

## **Comments**

“Logical Concepts and Analyticity” by Morgan Tait

Canadian Philosophical Association 57th Annual Congress 2013

“Bolzano, Leibniz & Kant” by Sandra Lapointe

Western Canadian Philosophical Association 49th Annual Congress, 2012

“Why Literal Meanings Still Count” by Paul Curry

PhilMilCog, Graduate conference in the Philosophy of Mind, Language and Cognition,  
University of Western Ontario, 2008

"Concepts and Counterparts: Making Room for Transworld Identity In Leibniz's Early

Metaphysics" by Dave McElhoes Western Canadian Philosophical Association 42nd Annual  
Congress, 2005

## **Teaching Experience**

### **Primary Instructor**

*University of Michigan*

Problems of Philosophy, Fall 2014

Introduction to Critical Thinking, Summer 2013

Introduction to Philosophy, Winter 2013

### **Teaching Assistant**

*University of Michigan*

Advanced Symbolic Logic (Belot), Fall 2013

Introductory Logic (Ruestche), Winter 2012

Early Modern Philosophy (Loeb), Winter 2011

Major Figures in Philosophy (Caston), Winter 2010

Introduction to Philosophy (Curley), Fall 2009

*University of Western Ontario*

Big Ideas, (Robb), Winter 2007

*University of Victoria*

Informal Logic (Johnson), Winter 2006

Symbolic Logic (Simpson), Summer 2006

## **Professional Development & Experience**

Graduate Teaching Consultant, Center for Research on Learning and Teaching (CRLT)

University of Michigan, 2013-present.

Referee: *Noûs*, 2014

Graduate Student Teaching Mentor, University of Michigan department of philosophy, 2013-14.  
Graduate Student Editor, *Philosopher's Annual*, 2011 and 2012.

### **Department Service**

Michigan High School Ethics Bowl coach, 2014-2015.  
Graduate Student Working Group co-director, 2011-2012.  
Graduate Student Representative to the faculty, 2010-2011.

### **Graduate Coursework** (\*Audit)

Early Modern Philosophy

Early Modern and Contemporary Epistemology, James Joyce & Louis Loeb

Early Modern Causation, Tad Schmaltz

\*Hume, Louis Loeb

\*Descartes' System, Louis Loeb

\*Leibniz's *Theodicy*, John Whipple

Early Analytic Philosophy

Frege and Russell, Ian Proops

Early Analytic Philosophy, William Demopolous

Ancient Philosophy

Aristotle, Victor Caston

Aristotle's Logic, John Thorp

Logic and Game Theory

Formal Methods, Sarah Moss

Game Theory, Daisuke Nakajima, Economics

Mathematical Logic, Lawrence Sklar

Philosophy of Mathematics, John Bell

Contemporary Philosophy

Philosophy of Science, Gordon Belot

Philosophy of Language, Eric Swanson

Theory of Knowledge, Anthony Gillies

Rule of Law, Denis Klimchuck

Research Seminar (Project: Frege on Analytic Existence Claims), William Harper

\*Metaphysics of Possible Worlds, Daniel Nolan

\*Egalitarianism, Elizabeth Anderson

Languages: French (reading, writing intermediate) & Latin (introductory)

### **References**

Tad Schmaltz, [tshmalt@umich.edu](mailto:tshmalt@umich.edu)  
University of Michigan, Department of Philosophy  
2215 Angell Hall  
435 South State Street,  
Ann Arbor, MI 48109-1003

Louis Loeb, [lloeb@umich.edu](mailto:lloeb@umich.edu)  
University of Michigan, Department of Philosophy  
2215 Angell Hall  
435 South State Street,  
Ann Arbor, MI 48109-1003

Gordon Belot, [belot@umich.edu](mailto:belot@umich.edu)  
University of Michigan, Department of Philosophy  
2215 Angell Hall  
435 South State Street,  
Ann Arbor, MI 48109-1003

Sandra Lapointe, [sandra.lapointe@mac.com](mailto:sandra.lapointe@mac.com)  
Department of Philosophy  
University Hall 310A McMaster University  
1280 Main Street West Hamilton, Ontario,  
L8S 4K1

Matthew Evans, [evansmatt@me.com](mailto:evansmatt@me.com)  
University of Texas, Austin, Department of Philosophy  
2210 Speedway, WAG 316, Stop C3500,  
Austin, TX 78712

*Dissertation Summary:*

Leibniz analyzes contingency in terms of a range of different notions: hypothetical necessity, *per se* contingency, infinite analysis, possible free decrees of God, and moral necessity. These have been interpreted as attempts to retreat from the necessitarian view he adopts in his early work (e.g., Adams 1994, Sleigh 2005).<sup>1</sup> In my dissertation I defend the view that Leibniz's commitment to necessitarianism—the claim that all truths are metaphysically necessarily—is an important and unwavering feature of his system.

The core of Leibniz's modal theory is the thesis that the denial of a necessary truth is contradictory. Since Leibniz endorses the ontological argument for God's existence, he holds that God's non-existence is impossible because the non-existence of God contradicts God's nature. Leibniz thinks that if we take all necessary truths into account, including the nature of God, God's understanding of essences, and his will to do what is best, then *all things considered* all truths are necessarily true. All truths are necessarily true because the denial of any truth contradicts some necessary feature of God.

Instead of understanding Leibniz's subsequent theories of contingency as abandoning necessitarianism, I treat them as attempts to account for distinctions his interlocutors draw regarding necessity and contingency. In effect Leibniz is offering proxy notions, since, although Leibniz is a necessitarian, he does not eschew all talk of contingency. His treatment of contingency offers some guidelines regarding what counts as a viable surrogate or proxy account of contingency. First, these accounts must divide propositions into necessary and contingent truths in a way that is acceptable for theological and philosophical purposes. For example, it is particularly important that this distinction allows for both human and divine freedom. Second, accounts of "contingency" should not only be extensionally adequate, but should also capture the intuitive meaning of the term. Third, an account must cohere with Leibniz's own system. In this way, he is trying to win over his opponents by showing that his own system has the resources to make the distinctions they aim to draw and that this can be done without Leibniz presenting the more controversial features of the system.

I trace the development of Leibniz's various accounts of contingency from his early to mature work in order to illustrate that they are best understood in a necessitarian framework. I apply the above criteria to develop versions of his various accounts of contingency including *per se* contingency and hypothetical necessity (Chapter 1), infinite analysis and possible free decrees of God (Chapter 2), and moral necessity (Chapter 3). His most successful analysis of contingency, moral necessity based upon the possible free decrees of God, identifies dependence on God's goodness as the distinguishing feature of contingent truths. The outcome of my project is a systematic treatment of Leibniz's surrogate or proxy theories of contingency within a necessitarian framework. It also establishes the character of Leibnizian possible worlds, which are key for the grounding of contingent truths in the goodness of God's will. Instead of possible worlds representing all of logical space, they represent alternative plans for God's world creation, and are thus constrained by metaphysical principles informed by God's nature.

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<sup>1</sup> Adams, R. Merrihew. (1994). *Leibniz: determinist, theist, idealist*. New York: Oxford University Press. Sleigh, R. C.. (2005). *Confessio philosophi: papers concerning the problem of evil, 1671-1678*. New Haven: Yale University Press.