

Torin Alter

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The University of Alabama
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Area of specialization: philosophy of mind

Areas of competence: philosophy of language, metaphysics, logic, history of modern

Academic Positions

- Professor, Department of Philosophy, The University of Alabama, 2008-present
- Associate Professor, Department of Philosophy, The University of Alabama, 2001-2008
- Assistant Professor, Department of Philosophy and Religion, The College of New Jersey, 1997-1998
- Assistant Professor, Department of Philosophy, The University of Alabama, 1995-2001
- Teaching Fellow (1992-94), Teaching Associate (1988-92), Teaching Assistant (1987-88), Department of Philosophy, UCLA

Education

- PhD: Philosophy, UCLA 1995
- MA: Philosophy, UCLA 1987
- BA: School of Communication and Cognitive Science, Hampshire College 1985

Publications

Articles and chapters

- Physicalism, supervenience, and monism (co-written with Robert J. Howell). Forthcoming and available online) in *Synthese*. DOI: 10.1007/s11229-022-03965-8.
- Physicalism, infinite decomposition, and constitution (co-written with Sam Coleman and Robert J. Howell). Forthcoming (and available in Online First) in *Erkenntnis*. DOI: 10.1007/s10670-022-00582-2.
- Russellian monism and structuralism about physics (co-written with Derk Pereboom), *Erkenntnis* 88, 2023: 1409-28. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10670-021-00408-7>
- Physicalism without fundamentality. *Erkenntnis* 87, 2022: 1975-86. [10.1007/s10670-020-00285-6](https://doi.org/10.1007/s10670-020-00285-6)
- A defense of the supervenience requirement on physicalism. *Thought: A Journal of Philosophy* 10 (4), December 2021: 264-74. <https://doi.org/10.1002/tht3.504>
- Russellian monism and mental causation (co-written with Sam Coleman). *Noûs* 55 (2), June 2021: 409-25.
- Russellian physicalism and protophenomenal properties (co-written with Sam Coleman). *Analysis* 80, no. 3, July 2020: 409-17.
- Panpsychism and Russellian monism (co-written with Sam Coleman). In W. Seager (ed.) *The Routledge Handbook on Panpsychism*, Routledge, 2020: 230-42.
- Concept mastery, social externalism, and Mary's new knowledge. In S. Coleman (ed.) *The Knowledge Argument*, Cambridge University Press, 2019: 141-61.

- Are there brute facts about consciousness? In C. Mekios and E. Vintiadis (eds.) *Brute Facts*, Oxford University Press, 2018: 130-54.
- The structure and dynamics argument against materialism. *Noûs* 50 (4), December 2016: 794–815. [10.1111/nous.12134](https://doi.org/10.1111/nous.12134)
- The short slide from a posteriori physicalism to Russellian monism (co-written with Robert J. Howell), in T. Alter and Y. Nagasawa (eds.) *Consciousness in the Physical World: Perspectives on Russellian Monism*, Oxford University Press, 2015: 277-79.
- Social externalism and the knowledge argument. *Mind* 122, 2013: 481-96.
- Churchland on arguments against physicalism. In R. Brown (ed.) *Consciousness Inside and Out: Phenomenology, Neuroscience, and the Nature of Experience*, Dordrecht: Springer, 2013: 57-68.
- What is Russellian monism? (co-written with Yujin Nagasawa), *Journal of Consciousness Studies* 19, 2012: 67-95.
- A defense of the necessary unity of phenomenal consciousness, *Pacific Philosophical Quarterly* 91, 2010: 19-37.
- Does the ignorance hypothesis undermine the conceivability and knowledge arguments? *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 79, 2009: 756-65.
- Phenomenal knowledge without experience. In E. Wright (ed.) *The Case for Qualia*, Cambridge: MIT Press, 2008: 247-67.
- On the conditional analysis of phenomenal concepts. *Philosophical Studies* 134, 2007: 235-53.
- Imagining subjective absence: Marcus on zombies. *Disputatio* 2, 2007: 91-101.
- Does representationalism undermine the knowledge argument? In T. Alter and S. Walter (eds.) *Phenomenal Concepts and Phenomenal Knowledge: New Essays on Consciousness and Physicalism*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2007: 65-76.
- Does synesthesia undermine representationalism? *Psyche* 12 (5), December 2006: 1-11, <http://psyche.cs.monash.edu.au/>.
- Nothing matters in survival (co-written with Stuart Rachels). *The Journal of Ethics* 9, 2005: 311-30.
- Epistemicism and the combined spectrum (co-written with Stuart Rachels). *Ratio* 17 (3), September 2004: 241-55.
- On two alleged conflicts between divine attributes. *Faith and Philosophy* 19 (1), January 2002: 47-57.
- Nagel on imagination and physicalism. *Journal of Philosophical Research* 27, 2002: 143-58.
- Know-how, ability, and the ability hypothesis. *Theoria* 67 (3), 2001: 229-39
- Strong *de re* belief, *Philosophia* 28. June 2001: 223-32.
- Free acts and robot cats (co-written with Russell Daw). *Philosophical Studies* 102, February 2001: 345-57.
- Vague names and vague objects. *Dialogue: Canadian Philosophical Review* 90, 2001: 435-41.
- Symbolic meaning and the confederate battle flag. *Philosophy in the Contemporary World* 7, (2-3), Summer-Fall 2000: 1-4.
- A limited defense of the knowledge argument. *Philosophical Studies* 90, February 1998: 35-56.
- Mary's new perspective. *Australasian Journal of Philosophy* 73 (4), December 1995: 582-84.

Books

- *Fifty Thought Experiments and Puzzling Cases in Philosophy of Mind* (co-written with Robert J. Howell and Amy Kind). Submitted, under contract. Routledge.
- *The Matter of Consciousness: From the Knowledge Argument to Russellian Monism*. Oxford University Press, 2023.

- *Consciousness in the Physical World: Perspectives on Russellian Monism* (co-edited with Yujin Nagasawa), New York, Oxford University Press: 2015.
- *Consciousness and the Mind-Body Problem: A Reader* (co-edited with Robert J. Howell). Oxford University Press, 2012.
- *The God Dialogues* (co-written with Robert J. Howell). New York: Oxford University Press, 2011.
- *A Dialogue on Consciousness* (co-written with Robert J. Howell). New York: Oxford University Press, 2009.
- *Phenomenal Concepts and Phenomenal Knowledge: New Essays on Consciousness and Physicalism* (co-edited with Sven Walter), New York: Oxford University Press, 2007.

Encyclopedia entries and such

- Russellian monism (co-written with Derk Pereboom). *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, 2019 (updated 2023). <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/russellian-monism/>
- The knowledge argument:
 - Physicalism and the knowledge argument. In M. Velmans and S. Schneider (eds.) *The Blackwell Companion to Consciousness*, second edition, Oxford: Blackwell, 2017: 404-14.
 - Knowledge argument. Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy Online, edited by Tom Polger, 2017.
 - The Knowledge Argument Against Physicalism. In *The Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, 2012 (updated 2023): <http://www.iep.utm.edu/>
 - Mary the Color Scientist. In the SAGE Encyclopedia of Perception, edited by B. Goldstein.
 - Learning from Mary. Spanish translation forthcoming in *Frank Jackson. El Argumento del Conocimiento*, edited by C. M. Muñoz S. and Rodolfo López G., Mentis Research Group, Universidad del Valle, Columbia.
 - The Knowledge Argument. In *A Field Guide to the Philosophy of Mind*, edited by M. Nani and M. Marraffa: <http://www.uniroma3it./kant/field/index.html>, June 1999.
 - The Knowledge Argument: Annotated Bibliography. In *A Field Guide to the Philosophy of Mind*, edited by M. Nani and M. Marraffa: <http://www.uniroma3it./kant/field/index.html>, June 1999.
- Phenomenal concepts. In T. Bayne, A. Cleeremans and P. Wilken (eds.) *The Oxford Companion to Consciousness*, 2009: 516-18.
- The Hard Problem of Consciousness:
 - The Hard Problem of Consciousness. In T. Bayne, A. Cleeremans and P. Wilken (eds.) *The Oxford Companion to Consciousness*, 2009: 340-43.
 - The Hard Problem of Consciousness (co-written with Robert Howell), *Scholarpedia* 4(6):4948. http://www.scholarpedia.org/article/Hard_problem_of_consciousness
- Qualia. In L. Nadel (ed.) *Encyclopedia of Cognitive Science*. London: Macmillan Publishers Ltd., 2003: 807-13.

Book reviews and such

- Review of *Current Controversies in Philosophy of Mind*, edited by U. Kriegel, *Notre Dame Philosophical Reviews*, January 2015 <http://ndpr.nd.edu/news/55375-current-controversies-in-philosophy-of-mind/>

- Review of Derk Pereboom's, *Consciousness and the Prospects of Physicalism*, Oxford University Press 2011. *Mind* 121 (2012): 1115-1122.
- Tye's New Take on the Puzzles of Consciousness, *Analysis Reviews* 71, June 2011, 765-775.
- Review of Mark Rowlands' *The Nature of Consciousness* (CUP 2001). *International Philosophical Quarterly* 47, September 2007.
- Pereboom on Consciousness and Introspective Inaccuracy. *Brainpains*, January 2007: <http://brainpains.com/wordpress/>.
- Book symposium on Gregg Rosenberg's *A Place for Consciousness* (OUP 2004). Guest edited. *Psyche* 12 (5), December 2006: <http://psyche.cs.monash.edu.au/>.
- Review of Ludlow, et al., *There's Something About Mary* (MIT 2004). *Psyche* 11 (2), March 2005: <http://psyche.cs.monash.edu.au/>.
- E. O. Wilson on the Foundations of Ethics. *Philosophy Now* 27, June/July 2000: 30-31.
- On Racist Symbols and Reparations. Review essay, *Social Theory and Practice* 26 (1), Spring 2000: 153-71.

Presentations

- Physicalism and fundamental mentality. Mind and Language Work in Progress Zoom Group, June 2023.
- Physicalism, supervenience, and monism. Mind and Language Work in Progress Zoom Group, August 2022, Southern Society for Philosophy and Psychology, March 2023.
- A defense of the supervenience requirement on physicalism. American Philosophical Association, Central Division, February 2022.
- Physicalism and infinite decomposition. The University of Alabama, January 2022, Davidson College, February 2022, Southern Society for Philosophy and Psychology, March 2022, Mississippi State University, April 2022.
- Physicalism without fundamentality. American Philosophical Association, Central Division, February 2021.
- Russellian monism and structuralism about physics. Society for Philosophy and Psychology, annual meeting, December 2020, American Philosophical Association, Central Division, February 2020, Alabama Philosophical Society, September 2019
- Enthusiasm for Russellian monism. Institute for Advanced Studies, Princeton, NJ, May 2018, Presidential Lecture at the Society for Philosophy and Psychology, annual meeting, March 2019.
- History and Russellian monism. Mississippi Philosophical Association Annual Meeting, February 2019.
- Russellian monism and mental causation. University of Alabama, May 2017; *Russellian Monism: Time for the Details*, at the Central European University, August 2017; University of Arizona (Tucson), September 2018; colloquium, American Philosophical Association, Central Division, February 2019.
- Comments on Haoying Liu's "Consciousness in Space?" Southern Society for Philosophy and Psychology, annual meeting, March 2018.
- Does Russellian Monism Improve on Traditional Dualist and Traditional Physicalist Views? Southern Society for Philosophy and Psychology, Savannah, GA, March 2017; The University of Alabama, April 2017; *Russellian Monism: Time for the Details*, Budapest, Hungary, August 2017.
- The Concept-Mastery Explanation of Mary's New Knowledge. TSC 2016 Tucson, The Science of Consciousness, April 2016; 2nd International Conference on Philosophy of Mind: Thought and Perception, Braga, Portugal, September 2016; Colloquium, American Philosophical Association

- Central Division Meeting, Kansas City, Mo., March 2017; Workshop on Consciousness and Semantic Externalism, NYU, May 2017.
- Are There Brute Facts about Consciousness? The University of Alabama, April 2016; Second Annual Conference of the Society for the Metaphysics of Science, Geneva, September 2016; Southern Methodist University, December 2016; The University of California, Los Angeles, May 2017.
 - The Structure and Dynamics Argument. The University of Alabama, February 2014; CUNY Graduate Center, March 2014; *Conscious Thought and Thought about Consciousness*, University of Mississippi, April 2014; The University of Texas at Austin, September 2014; American Philosophical Association Pacific Division Meeting, Vancouver, April, 2015; First Annual Conference of the Society for the Metaphysics of Science, Rutgers University, September 2015.
 - The Short Slide from A Posteriori Physicalism to Russellian Monism. Southern Methodist University (department workshop), April 2013.
 - Concept Mastery, Concept Possession, and the Knowledge Argument. Conference on Phenomenal Concepts, Rio de Janeiro, January 2013.
 - Open Possibility and the Knowledge Argument. Conference on The Metaphysics and Ontology of Phenomenal Qualities, The University of Hertfordshire, September 2011; Symposium, American Philosophical Association Pacific Division Meeting, Seattle, April 2012.
 - Social Externalism and the Knowledge Argument. The University of Alabama, October 2009; New York University (philosophy of mind group), November 2009; Symposium, American Philosophical Association Pacific Division Meeting, San Francisco, April 2010; University of Birmingham, U.K., June 2010.
 - Comments on Benedicte Veillet on the Property Dualism Argument. American Philosophical Association Pacific Division Meeting, Vancouver, April 2009.
 - Deference and Phenomenal Knowledge. The University of California, Riverside, October 2008; Southern Methodist University, January 2009.
 - Does the Ignorance Hypothesis Undermine the Conceivability and Knowledge Arguments? Colloquium, American Philosophical Association Pacific Division Meeting, Pasadena, March 2008; Presidential Address, Alabama Philosophical Society Annual Meeting, Orange Beach, September 2007.
 - Does Synesthesia Undermine Representationalism?: Alabama Philosophical Society Annual Meeting, Tuscaloosa, October 2006; Toward a Science of Consciousness, Tucson, April 2006.
 - Imagining Zombies. Physicalism and Beyond: GAP.6, Berlin, Germany, September 2006.
 - Howell's Reductio: A Modal-Rationalist Reply. NEH 2006 Summer Seminar on Mind and Metaphysics, Washington University, St. Louis, July 2006.
 - What do Split-Brain Cases Show about the Unity of Consciousness? Colloquium, American Philosophical Association Central Division Meeting, Chicago, April 2006; Alabama Philosophical Society Annual Meeting, Mobile, October 2004.
 - On the Conditional Analysis of Phenomenal Concepts. Alabama Philosophical Society Annual Meeting, Gulf Shores, October 2003; Toward a Science of Consciousness, Tucson, April 2004; Southwestern Philosophical Society Annual Meeting, New Orleans, November 2004; Colloquium, American Philosophical Association Central Division Meeting, Chicago, April 2005.
 - Comments on John Kulvicki's 'What is What it's Like?'. American Philosophical Association Eastern Division Meeting, Washington D.C., December 2003.
 - Comments on Garrett on Causal Essentialism and Zombies. American Philosophical Association, Pacific Division Meeting, Pasadena, April 2003.

- Jackson's Retraction. NEH 2002 Summer Institute on Consciousness and Intentionality, Santa Cruz, July 2002; Colloquium, American Philosophical Association Pacific Division Meeting, San Francisco, March 2003.
- Consciousness in a Physical World. University Lecture, The University of Alabama at Birmingham, Birmingham, April 2002.
- Implicit Phenomenal Knowledge. The University of Alabama at Birmingham, Birmingham, April 2002.
- Epistemicism and the Combined Spectrum Argument. Alabama Philosophical Society Annual Meeting, Gulf Shores, October 2001; Mid-South Philosophy Conference, Memphis, February 2002.
- Schedler on Racist Symbols. Author Meets Critics Session at American Philosophical Association Central Division Meeting, Chicago, April 2001.
- A Chomskian Challenge to the Lewis-Nemirow Ability Hypothesis. Colloquium, American Philosophical Association Central Division Meeting, Chicago, April 2000; Alabama Philosophical Society Annual Meeting, Gulf Shores, October 2000; Toward a Science of Consciousness, Tucson, April 2002.
- Schedler on Racism and the Confederate Battle Flag. Colloquium, American Philosophical Association Pacific Division Meeting, Albuquerque, April 2000.
- Sensations, Brain Processes, and Essence. Toward a Science of Consciousness, Tucson, April 2000.
- Free Acts and Robot Cats. Florida State University, Tallahassee, December 1999; American Philosophical Association Eastern Division Meeting, New York, December 2000.
- Linguistic and Ontological Vagueness. Colloquium, American Philosophical Association Pacific Division Meeting, Oakland, April 1999.
- Emotions, Belief, and the Knowledge Argument. Emotions, Consciousness, and Qualia, Ischia, Italy, October 1998.
- Comments on Mark Brown's 'Immunity to Error in First Person Memory Reports'. American Philosophical Association Pacific Division Meeting, Los Angeles, April 1998.
- Genuine *De Re* Belief. Texas A&M University, College Station, April 1998.

Awards and Grants

- Leadership Board, College of Arts and Sciences, The University of Alabama, 2015-18.
- Research Grant Committee Award, 2019-21, 2015-17, The University of Alabama.
- Interactive and Collaborative Learning Grant, The University of Alabama, fall 2010.
- Grant from Capstone International Center and the Office for Academic Affairs Williams Fund, for travel to the Pacific APA, 2009, in Vancouver; for travel to UK conference, June 2010; for travel to Rio conference, 2013; for travel to Pacific APA, 2015, in Vancouver.
- Arts and Sciences Teaching Grants, The University of Alabama, 1996, 1998, and (with Chase Wrenn and Kevin Kukla) 2009
- Sports Club Adviser Award, The University of Alabama, Fall 2007.
- Summer Stipend, NEH Institute on Mind and Metaphysics, Summer 2006.
- Summer Stipend, NEH Institute on Consciousness and Intentionality, Summer 2002.
- Sabbatical Fellowship, *The American Philosophical Society*, 2002-03.
- Research Advisory Committee Grants, The University of Alabama, 1997, 1999, 2001.
- Carnap Prize, for Best Essay by a Graduate Student, Department of Philosophy, UCLA, 1994.
- Graduate Student Fellowships, Department of Philosophy, UCLA, 1986-87.

Teaching

At The University of Alabama

- PHL 100: Introduction to Philosophy
- PHL 191: Honors Introduction to Philosophy
- PHL 195: Introduction to Deductive Logic
- PHL 106: Honors Introduction to Deductive Logic
- FLC 101: Mind and Brain
- PHL 300: Symbolic Logic
- PHL 360: Philosophy of Mind
- PHL 362: Philosophy of Language: Mind, Language, and Reality
- PHL 380: Philosophy of Mathematics
- PHL 380: Special Studies in Philosophy: Self-Knowledge
- PHL 309: Teaching Practicum
- PHL 409: Research in Philosophy
- BUI 301/PHL 380: The Enduring Self: Fact or Fiction?
- BUI 301: Philosophy and the Silver Screen

At The College of New Jersey

- PHIL 200: Basic Philosophical Issues
- PHIL 120: Introduction to Logic
- PHIL 340: Language and Reality
- IDSC 151: Athens to New York
- PHIL 205: Modern Philosophy

Service

For the profession

- Referee for the following book presses: Oxford University Press (since 2002); Cambridge University Press (since 2018); W. W. Norton (since 2023)
- Referee for the following journals: *Philosophy Compass* (since 2009), *Philosophia* (since 2009), *Ergo* (since 2017), *Erkenntnis* (since 2008) *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (since 2008), *Mind* (since 2008), *Philosophical Papers* (since 2007), *Journal of Consciousness Studies* (since 2004), *Philosophical Studies* (since 2003), *Synthese* (since 2003), *Journal of Philosophical Research* (since 2002), *Australasian Journal of Philosophy* (since 1999), *Phenomenology and the Cognitive Sciences* (since 2012), *Canadian Journal of Philosophy* (since 2013), *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* (since 2015), *Philosophical Quarterly* (since 2016), *Pacific Philosophical Quarterly* (since 2015), *Topoi* (since 2016), *Klesis* (since 2017), *Analysis* (since 2019), *Nous* (since 2020), *Thought* (since 2020), *The Journal of Philosophy* (since 2022), *The Philosophical Form* (since 2022), *Teorema* (since 2023)
- External reviewer for 7 tenure and/or promotion cases (confidential)
- Southern Society for Philosophy and Psychology: in-coming president (2017-18), president (2018-19), outgoing president (2019-20); consultant on program (2018-19); Griffith Award Committee chair (2020, 2022); council member (2018-2022)

- Alabama Philosophical Society: president (2006-07), vice-president (2005-06), secretary-treasurer (2004-05)
- Reviewer of textbook proposals: Oxford University Press (Spring 2007), Wadsworth/Thomson Higher Education
- Referee for The American Philosophical Society grant applications (since 2006)
- Referee for conference submissions: Southwestern Philosophical Society (2006); The Southern Society for Philosophy and Psychology (since 2006), American Philosophical Association, Pacific Division 2012 Meeting; The Society for Philosophy and Psychology (2017)
- External Examiner, Ph. D. Theses: Australian National University Philosophy Department, Summer 2004; University of Sydney, Philosophy, summer 2011; Monash University, Philosophy, Spring 2014; The Graduate Center at CUNY, Spring 2019.

For the University, College, and Department, The University of Alabama

- Member, Diversity Committee, since Spring 2021.
- Philosophy Today Coordinator, Philosophy Dept., since Fall 2015.
- Advisor and Director of Advising, Philosophy Dept., since Fall 2013.
- Member, University Research Grants Committee, 2011-2013.
- Faculty Advisor, Nepalese Students Association, since Summer 2019.
- Faculty Advisor, Alabama Atheist Association, 2012-Summer 2014.
- Member, three English Department Thesis Committees, Spring 2009, Spring 2013.
- Member, Academy for Improving Student Success, College of Arts & Sciences, Fall 2008 through Spring 2011.
- Chair, Departmental Committee on Student Prizes, Spring 2011, Spring 2008, Spring 2010.
- Awards Coordinator for the Philosophy Department, Spring 2006 through Spring 2008.
- Department Representative, University Day, Fall 2006.
- Member, Department Committee on Tenure Guidelines, Spring 2006, Fall 2012.
- Member, Departmental Committee on Student Prizes, Spring 2006, Spring 2009, Spring 2011.
- Faculty Advisor, Alabama Table Tennis Association, since Spring 2005.
- Chair, Departmental Chair Search Committee, 2004-05.
- Member, Barnwell-Sellers Award Committee, Summer 2004.
- Member, University Awards Committee, 2003-05.
- Member, Faculty Senate, 2003-05.
- Member, Program Review Committee, Review of Department of Religious Studies, 2003-04.
- Alternate, Faculty Senate, 2001-02
- Chair, Chair Review Committee, Department of Philosophy, 2001-02.
- Member, Tenure and Promotions Committee, College of Arts & Sciences, 2001-02.
- Member or Chair, Departmental Committees on Retention, Tenure, and Promotion, since 2001-02
- Member, Undergraduate Services and Programs Committee, Fall 1999-Spring 2002.
- Faculty Associate, Blount Undergraduate Initiative, 1999-2000.
- Coordinator, Colloquium Committee, Department of Philosophy, since 1996
- Member, Search Committee, Department of Philosophy, since 1996
- Faculty Advisor, UA Philosophy Club, 1995-97, 1998-2002, Spring 2010.

For the College and Department, The College of New Jersey

- Faculty Representative, Philosophy Club, 1997-98.
- Member, Faculty Search Committee, Department of Philosophy and Religion, 1997-98.

References

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