

# Alfredo Watkins

Duke University  
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Duke Department of Philosophy  
311 Gray  
409 Chapel Drive  
Durham, NC 27705

## Education

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### University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill

PhD, Philosophy (2021)

**Dissertation:** “Immanent Structuralism: A Neo-Aristotelian Account of Mathematics”

Advisors: Marc Lange, Thomas Hofweber, John Roberts

MA, Philosophy (2017)

**Thesis:** “Essence and Counterfactuals: Coordination and Extension”

Advisors: Marc Lange, Gillian Russell, Thomas Hofweber

### University of California, Los Angeles

BA, Philosophy (2014)

*Department Honors*

**Thesis:** “Essentially Ordered Causal Series”

Advisor: Calvin Normore

## Research Areas

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### Areas of Specialization:

Ancient Philosophy

Political Philosophy

Philosophy of Mathematics

### Areas of Competence:

Philosophy, Politics, and Economics (PPE)

Medieval Philosophy

## Employment History

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- Duke Department of Philosophy | Assistant Research Professor  
Fall 2023 – Present
- Duke Transformative Ideas Program | Executive Director  
Fall 2023 – Present
- Kenan Institute for Ethics, Duke University | Postdoctoral Fellow  
Fall 2021 – Summer 2023

- Duke University | Summer Teaching Fellow  
Summer 2017 – Summer 2020
- UNC Department of Philosophy | Teaching Fellow  
Fall 2016 – Spring 2021
- UCLA Department of Philosophy | Teaching Assistant  
Fall 2014 – Spring 2015
- CSU San Bernardino Department of Philosophy | Logic Lab Tutor  
Fall 2011 – Spring 2012

## Research and Publishing

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### Articles:

- “Kallipolis in Motion: Grand Strategy in Plato’s *Republic*” (2025, *Polis: The Journal for Ancient Greek and Roman Political Thought*)
- “Multivalence and Candor in Plato’s *Menexenus*” (draft)
- “Empire as a Regulative Ideal” (draft)
- “Explaining *De Re* Mathematical Necessities” (draft)

### Book Reviews:

- “Book Review: M. Zwolinski & J. Tomasi, *The Individualists Radicals, Reactionaries, and the Struggle for the Soul of Libertarianism*” (2024, *The Independent Review: A Journal of Political Economy*)

### Book Manuscript (under development):

**Title:** *The City in Motion: Plato on International Politics*

Engaging scholarship at the intersection of ancient philosophy, political science, and classical studies, my manuscript argues that throughout his corpus Plato exhibits a discernible interest in the international realm, offering a sophisticated strategic vision that is especially attuned to the military and political realities of Plato’s own time, while also yielding lessons of enduring relevance. I show how Plato’s understudied views on war, diplomacy and constitutions constitute a systematic framework for thinking about international politics, while also responding to Plato’s contemporaries, such as Thucydides and Xenophon.

## Conference and Workshop Presentations

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- “When Norms Buckle: The Authority of Custom in Rome’s Late Republic,” November 2025  
Ninth Annual PPE Society Meeting – New Orleans, LA
- “Plato and Trump: Regimes, Decay and Transition,” November 2025  
Ninth Annual PPE Society Meeting – New Orleans, LA
- “Populism and Political Decline in the Late Roman Republic,” October 2025  
Elon University – Elon, NC
- “‘Stronger, More Powerful, More Free:’ Platonic Justice vs Power Politics,” September 2025  
2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Foothills Workshop in Social and Political Thought  
UNC Chapel Hill – Chapel Hill, NC
- “Plato’s Guardians: Narratives of Legitimacy in Early Christian Platonism,” July 2025  
Conference for the International Society for Macintyrean Enquiry  
University of Pennsylvania – Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
- “Aristotle the Pythagorean: The Power of Number in Aristotelian Thought,” June 2025  
19<sup>th</sup> Annual Marquette Summer Seminar on Aristotle and the Aristotelian Tradition  
Marquette University – Milwaukee, Wisconsin
- “Multivalence and Candor in Plato’s *Menexenus*,” April 2025  
Genre in Ancient Greek Writing Conference, Interdisciplinary Center for Hellenic Studies  
University of South Florida – Tampa, Florida
- “Public Choice and Elite Theory: Friends or Foes?” April 2025  
University of Colorado Boulder – Boulder, Colorado
- “Education as Quest: Liberal Arts in the Heroic Life,” April 2025  
Annual Meeting of the Association for Core Texts and Courses – Madison, Wisconsin
- “Explaining *De Re* Mathematical Necessities,” March 2025  
North Carolina Philosophical Society – Wake Forest, North Carolina
- “Public Choice and Elite Theory: Friends or Foes?” February 2024  
33<sup>rd</sup> Annual Association for Practical and Professional Ethics Conference – Cincinnati, Ohio
- “Explaining *De Re* Mathematical Necessities,” November 2023  
Duke Department of Philosophy Faculty WIP
- “Cryptocurrencies, Monetary Policy and Justice,” October 2023  
Mercatus Markets & Society Conference – George Mason University
- “Imperialism and Regulative Ideals,” October 2022  
Duke Political Theory Workshop (Zoom)

- “Some Questions for Epistocracy,” April 2022  
Barry Fellows Spring 2022 Paper Workshop (Zoom)
- “Aquinas and Locke on Property,” August 2019  
Classical Liberalism in the Carolinas Conference – Wake Forest University
- “Some Questions for Epistocracy,” July 2019  
Duke PPE Symposium: Buchanan Camp – Park City, Utah
- “Mathematical Reduction, Treating-as, and Abstraction,” February 2017  
2017 Meeting of the North Carolina Philosophical Society – UNC Wilmington
- “Mathematical Reduction, Treating-as, and Abstraction,” June 2016  
14<sup>th</sup> Annual Philosophy of Logic, Mathematics and Physics Conference – University of Western Ontario
- “Heavyweight Realism in Metaphysical Disputes: A Defense,” February 2014  
2014 Meeting of the North Carolina Philosophical Society – UNC Chapel Hill

## Teaching Experience

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- HISTORY 190FS – Free to Think: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives  
Fall 2025 – Duke University
- PHIL 213/NEUROSCI 233 – Exploring Science and Religion  
Fall 2025, Fall 2024, Fall 2023 – Duke University
- POLSCI/CLST 337 – How to Rule the World: Global Governance from Greece to America  
Fall 2024, Spring 2023, Fall 2023 – Duke University
- PHIL 214/RELIG 210 – The Good Life: Religion, Philosophy, and Life's Ultimate Concerns  
Fall 2025, Fall 2024 – Duke University
  - (Regular guest lecturer in team-taught course + organized course dialogue groups)
- ECON 225S/POLSCI 247S – Liberalism and Its Critics (co-taught w/ Bruce Caldwell)  
Fall 2022 – Duke University
- POLSCI 256/CLST 276S – Contemporary Nationalism and Classical Political Theory  
Spring 2022 – Duke University
- POLSCI 175 – Introduction to Political Philosophy  
Summer 2018, Summer 2019, Summer 2020 – Duke University
- ECON 361 – Prisoner's Dilemma and Distributive Justice (Intro to PPE)  
Summer 2017 – Duke University
- PHIL 160 – Introduction to Ethics

Spring 2021 – UNC Chapel Hill

- PHIL 215 – Medieval Philosophy  
Spring 2019 – UNC Chapel Hill
- PHIL 110 – Introduction to Philosophy via Great Works  
Spring 2018 – UNC Chapel Hill

Undergraduate Honors / Independent Studies Supervising:

- Luca Adamo, “Jacques Maritain on Early Modern Epistemology”  
Duke, Philosophy – Fall 2025 (Honors Thesis)
  - An examination and re-construction of Jacques Maritain’s critique of early modern epistemology found in his central works on metaphysics, especially *The Degrees of Knowledge* and *Existence and the Existent*.
- Jason Murray, “Laws of Nature and Medieval Voluntarism”  
Duke, Philosophy – Spring 2025 (I/S)
  - An examination of shifting understandings of laws of nature in light of the development of medieval voluntarism, from the condemnations of Paris through Ockham to Suarez.
- Peter Lehrman, “Imperial Overreach: Ancient and Modern”  
Duke, Classical Studies – Fall 2024 (Honors Thesis)
  - A close, two-semester read of Thucydides and relevant secondary scholarship, with a focus on debates about power and the ethics of geopolitics.
- Rina Sclove, “Halakhah and the Secular State”  
Duke, Poli Sci – Spring 2024 (I/S)
  - Analysis of competing conceptions of secularism in modern Jewish political theory and their influence in contemporary Israeli jurisprudence.
- Gavin Murdock, “Fusionism and its Critics”  
Duke, Poli Sci – Spring 2024 (Honors Thesis)
  - A study of the rise and fall of fusionist political theory in the United States from the 1960s through the early 2000s.
- Jacob Rosenszweig, “The Greco-Roman Road to Natural Rights”  
Duke, Classical Studies – Spring 2024 (Honors Thesis, co-reader)
  - An account of the development of the concept of natural rights, with emphasis on secondary scholarship about Aristotle, Cicero, Stoicism, and the medieval jurists.

## TA and Tutoring Experience

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UNC Chapel Hill

- PHIL 160 – Introduction to Ethics (Spring 2017)
- PHIL 101 – Introduction to Philosophy (Fall 2017, Fall 2018)
- PPE 384 – Introduction to Philosophy, Politics, and Economics (PPE) (Fall 2016)

## UCLA

- Philos 100B – History of Medieval Philosophy (Winter 2015)
- Philos 7 – Introduction to Philosophy of Mind ( Fall 2014, Spring 2015)

## Formal Logic Tutoring:

- UCLA: Philos 31 – First Course in Logic; Philos 132 – Second Course in Logic; Philos 135 – Metalogic; CSU San Bernardino: Phil 300 – Predicate Logic

## Grant, Development, and Director Experience

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- **Executive Directorship:** As Executive Director of the Transformative Ideas program at Duke, oversaw growth of program from a pilot of 60 sophomores in Spring 2022 to 350 sophomores in Fall 2024 – nearly one-third of the sophomore class. Responsibilities included liaison with faculty for creation of courses across departments, grant development and fundraising, institutional strategy, media and communication strategy, and development of programming and colloquia.
- **Civil Discourse in Teaching Grant:** Wrote successful \$600,000 private grant to fund series of summer seminars at Duke University through the Kenan Institute for Ethics. Seminars involved nearly 100 faculty from over 70 universities.
- **Postdoctoral Fellowships:** Wrote several successful grants to fund Transformative Ideas and Kenan Institute for Ethics postdocs, amounting to > \$1,000,000 over four years.
- **Science and Religion Project:** Successfully wrote and acquired \$300,000 private gift to fund courses and visiting scholars working at the intersection of science and religion.
- **Intellectual Friendship Grant:** Helped develop and submit one successful grant, and another pending grant, worth over \$6,000,000, to create fellowships, and to offer faculty seminars and working groups with the goal of reinvigorating interdisciplinary scholarship. Worked closely with Duke development, Duke Foundation Relations, and Duke Office of Research Support (ORS) to create detailed budget and proposal for successful submission.
- **TI Living Learn Dorm:** Created and launched the Transformative Ideas living learning community (LLC), an intellectual dorm community of students dedicated to considering big questions of society, meaning, politics, and culture from a range of viewpoints.
- **Curriculum Development:** In role as Executive Director assisted with developing more than a dozen new courses with faculty teaching in the Transformative Ideas program from various departments, including English, History, Romance Studies, Political Science, Neuroscience, Mathematics, Classics, Computer Science, Biology, Economics and Ethics.

## Service and Advising

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- Referee: *Philosophia Mathematica*; *Synthese*; *Polis: The Journal For Greek and Roman Political Thought*
- Grant Author/Co-Author: 12 grants
- Organizer: Arete Summer Seminar on Philosophy, Ethics and Religion (2022)
- Co-Organizer: Duke Civil Discourse Undergraduate Fellowship
- Co-Organizer: Duke Discourse in the Sciences Faculty Roundtables (x2)
- Faculty Advisor: Duke Socratic Conversations Graduate Club
- Faculty Advisor: Duke Graduate Student Stoicism Retreat
- Faculty Advisor: Transformative Ideas Living-Learning Dorm
- Faculty Advisor: Duke Iterate CS Club

## Academic Affiliations

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UNC-Duke Ancient Philosophy Workshop: Faculty Participant  
Sydney School in the Philosophy of Mathematics: Member ([link](#))  
Duke Center for the History of Political Economy (CHOPE): Faculty Affiliate  
Duke Program in American Grand Strategy (AGS): Faculty Affiliate

## Academic and Spoken Languages

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- Ancient Greek (Reading)
- Latin (Reading)
- Biblical Hebrew (Intermediate Reading)
- Spanish (Reading and Spoken)

## Graduate Coursework

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Aristotle's Politics (C.D.C. Reeve)  
Aristotle's Metaphysics (C.D.C. Reeve)  
Philosophy of Mathematics (Marc Lange)  
Philosophy of Classical Mechanics (Marc Lange)  
Late Medieval and Early Modern Political Theory (Gerald Postema)  
Empiricism: Hobbes, Locke, Hume (Alan Nelson)  
Descartes' Metaphysics and Epistemology (Alan Nelson)  
History of Analytic Philosophy (Alan Nelson and Matt Kotzen)  
Kant's Metaphysics (Markus Kohl)  
Kant's Practical Philosophy (Markus Kohl)  
Advanced Symbolic Logic (Gillian Russell)  
Advanced Topics in Metaphysics: Idealism (Thomas Hofweber)  
Advanced Topics in Value Theory: Practical Rationality (Alex Worsnip)  
Advanced Topics in Epistemology: Irrationality (Alex Worsnip)  
Philosophy of Perception (William Lycan and Carla Merino-Rajme)