

Bram Vaassen

910205-5333 — bram.vaassen@umu.se — Umeå, Sweden

Employment

Jan. 2024 – Present: Associate Professor in Philosophy, Umeå University

Aug. 2021 – Dec. 2023: Postdoctoral Researcher, Umeå University

Feb. 2020 – July 2021: Postdoctoral Researcher, University of Cologne

Visiting Positions

Apr. 2026: Visiting Researcher, Central European University

Jan. 2022 – Dec. 2023: Visiting Researcher, Rutgers University

Jan. 2016 – May 2016: Visiting Researcher, UC Berkeley

Education

2019: PhD in Philosophy, Umeå University

2014: MPhil in Philosophy, KU Leuven

2013: Master of Arts in Philosophy, KU Leuven

2012: Bachelor of Arts in Philosophy and English Literature and Linguistics, KU Leuven

Publications

Peer-Reviewed Articles

1. Dualist Approaches to Mental Causation. *Philosophy Compass* 21(3) (2026)
2. Narrative Therefore. *The Philosophical Quarterly* 76(2): 723-746 (2026)
3. AI Mimicry and Human Dignity. (w/ Jan-Willem van der Rijt & Dimitri Coelho Mollo) *Journal of Applied Philosophy* 43: 95-111 (2026)
4. Against Causal Arguments in Metaphysics, *Asian Journal of Philosophy* 3(2): 1-23 (2024)
5. Mental Causation for Standard Dualists. *Australasian Journal of Philosophy* 102(4) (2024)
6. Absence and Abnormality. *Analysis* 83(1): 98-106 (2023)
7. Halfway Proportionality. *Philosophical Studies* (9): 1-21 (2022)
8. AI, Opacity, and Personal Autonomy. *Philosophy and Technology* 35(4): 1-20 (2022)
9. And Therefore. (w/ Alex Sandgren) *Inquiry* (2022)
10. Causal Exclusion without Causal Sufficiency. *Synthese* 198: 10341-10353 (2021)
11. Dualism and Exclusion. *Erkenntnis* 86(3): 543-552 (2021)
12. Basic Beliefs and the Perceptual Learning Problem. *Episteme* 13(1): 133-149 (2016)

PhD Thesis

13. *Causal After All*. PhD thesis, Umeå University. ISBN: 978-91-7855-098-2 (2019). Shortlisted for the 2020 Mercier Prize in Metaphysics.

Popular Science, Blogs, and others

14. Det är lätt att orsaka saker — även för icke-fysiska sinnen *THULE Kungl. Skytteanska Samfundets Årsbok 2026*
15. Mind-Body interaction is so cheap even dualists can afford it *New Work in Philosophy*
16. AI regulation and the right to meaningful explanation. Pt 2. How (if at all)? *Open for Debate*
17. AI regulation and the right to meaningful explanation. Pt 1. Why (not)? *Open for Debate*
18. Tänk om AI gör människan omänsklig. *Svensk Filosofi*
19. ‘Don’t knock it until you try it’ – Really? (w/ Ian Chawner) *Armchair Opinions*
20. Does lack of ego make us lazy? (w/ J.P. Salsas) *Armchair Opinions*
21. Does lack of ego make us lazy? (w/ James Brown, Alex Impey, and Carl Messenger) *Armchair Opinions Podcast*

Grants and Awards

Unless otherwise noted, collaborators are based at Umeå University.

2026: Two-year post-doctoral stipend: *Why is causation useful?*

- PI; with Christian Loew
- Call for applications planned Aug. 2026
- 760 000 SEK, Kempe foundation

2025: Research project: *Natural properties: a causation-first approach*

- PI; with Jennifer McDonald (Columbia University) & Tom Wysocki (Göttingen University)
- 4 530 000 SEK, Swedish Research Council

2025: Research project: *How words mean: lessons from large language models*

- Co-applicant; with Jessica Pepp (PI; Uppsala University), Dimitri Coelho Mollo & Pär Sundström
- 4 540 000 SEK, Swedish Research Council

2025: Awarded Kungl. Skytteanska Samfundets prize for *outstanding early-career research in the humanities and artistic research*

2024: Umeå University internal research grant (0,4 fte research for two years)

2024: Two-year post-doctoral stipend *What do they say? The new explainable AI problem*

- Co-applicant; with Dimitri Coelho Mollo (PI) and Pär Sundström.
- 1-year position awarded to Jessica Heine (now Auburn University)
- 1-year position awarded James Turner (now University of Essen and University of Birmingham)
- 700,000 SEK, Kempe foundation

2019: *Causation, Correlation, and Insensitivity*

- International postdoc grant, executed at Umeå University and Rutgers University
- 3 150 000 SEK, Swedish Research Council

Teaching

All teaching at Umeå University, unless noted otherwise.

As Main Instructor

The Moral and the Mental: Explanatory Gaps — Master level, campus and online, Fall 2025

The Philosophy of Games — Master level, online, Fall 2024 & Summer 2025

Metaphysics — BA introductory, campus, Spring 2024 & 2025

Data Management and Open Science — PhD level, online, Fall 2024

Philosophy of Perception — Master level, online, Spring 2019

The Problem of Consciousness — Master level, Fall 2018 & 2019

As Teaching Assistant

Journalism, Media and Communication — BA lower-level, online, Spring 2021

Philosophy of Science — Doctoral level, Swedish Agricultural University, Fall 2016–2019, 2021

Theory in Archaeology — Master level, Spring 2019

Philosophy of Social Science — BA intermediate, Spring 2019 & 2021

Metaphysics — BA intermediate, online and on campus, Spring 2018 & 2019

The Problem of Consciousness — Master level, Fall 2017

Philosophy of Perception — Master level, online, Spring 2017

Philosophy of Risk — BA lower-level, Spring 2017 & 2019

Theory of Knowledge, Science, and Formal Methods — BA lower-level, Fall 2016–2019; 2024–2025

Introduction to Philosophy — BA lower-level, online and on campus, Fall 2016, Spring & Fall 2017

Supervision

PhD students: Co-supervisor for Rut Vinterkvist, Umeå University, 2026 – . . .

Master's Thesis: 1 student supervised, 4 examined

Bachelor's Thesis: 4 students supervised, 6 examined

Refereeing

Academic Journals (* marks multiple assignments):

*Philosophical Quarterly**, *British Journal of Aesthetics*, *MIND**, *Analysis**, *Australasian Journal of Philosophy**, *Philosophy and Technology**, *Noûs*, *Canadian Journal of Philosophy*, *Philosopher's Imprint**, *Philosophy of Science*, *Inquiry*, *Ergo**, *Journal of Philosophy**, *Thought*, *Studies in History and Philosophy of Science*, *Minds and Machines**, *Royal Society Interface*, *European Journal for Philosophy of Science*, *Erkenntnis**, *International Journal of Human-Computer Interaction*, *American Philosophical Quarterly**, *Acta Analytica*, *Journal for General Philosophy of Science*, *Ratio*, *Asian Journal of Philosophy*, *Philosophical Studies**, *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research**, *Grazer Philosophische Studien*, *Synthese**, *Theoria*, *Analytic Philosophy*, *Philosophical Psychology*, *Dialectica*, *Logique & Analyse*

Grants and Funding Bodies: ERC Horizon Consolidator Grant

Books: *Routledge*

Outreach and Community Interaction

Speaker at ‘book a researcher’ events in Västerbotten w/ Nils Franzén (2026)

Panelist at Stockholm Explorative Talks on Inclusion (2023)

Chair of Umeå’s Filosofiska Föreningen (2017 – 2020)

Teacher at Urban Words, Leuven (2013 – 2014)

Administration and Leadership

Representation and Coordination

Convenor of the Umeå Close Reading Group in Philosophy (2019–2021; 2024 – ...)

Pedagogical Coordinator for HumLab, Umeå University (2024)

Scientific Representative on the #FrAIday board (2021 – 2022)

Conference and Workshop Organisation

Consciousness and Understanding in Humans and Artificial Systems, w/ Per Algander and Christian Loew Umeå University, (2026)

Umeå Workshop in Epistemology, Umeå University, (2026)

Umeå Workshop in Practical Philosophy, Umeå University, w/ Nils Franzén (2026)

Umeå Metaethics in May, Umeå University, w/ Nils Franzén (2025)

Causal Distinctions, University of Cologne, w/ Maria Fereira Ruiz and Andreas Hütteman (2020)

Powers and Causes, Umeå University, w/ Pär Sundström (2018)

Where is there causation?, Umeå University, w/ Pär Sundström (2016)

Selection of Presentations and Talks

Invited

1. ‘Moral Causation and Causal Exclusion’ (w/ Audrey Powers) *Causation, Grounding, and Explanation*, University and Vienna 2026
2. ‘Does interventionism track manipulability?’ *Does Manipulation Imply Causation?*, Salzburg 2026
3. ‘Against Contextualized Proportionality — but for contextualized regularity’ *Causal Models, Causal Abstraction, and Levels of Causation*, Hamburg 2026
4. ‘Hume’s Revenge’, *Causation, Counterfactuals, and Regularity*, University of Bergen, 2023
5. ‘Explanation and the Autonomy of Affected Parties’, *AI-Colloquium*, Chalmers University, 2023
6. ‘Some questions for empirical research on causal intuitions’, *Experimental Philosophy Seminar*, Lake Forest College, 2022
7. ‘Higher-Level Causes and Freaky Realizations’, *Higher Seminar in Philosophy of Science*, University of Cologne, 2022
8. ‘Higher-Level Causes and Freaky Realizations’, *Higher Seminar in Philosophy of Science*, Stockholm University, 2022
9. ‘Absence and Abnormality’, *Knowledge and Science Colloquium*, Institute of Philosophy, Universität Hamburg, 2021

10. 'Absence and Abnormality', Colloquium of the Institute of Philosophy, Leibniz Universität Hannover, 2021
11. 'Absence and Abnormality', 5th Meeting of the *Nordic Network for Metaphysics*, Lund University, 2021
12. 'No New Problems from Causal Pairing', Colloquium of the Institute of Philosophy, Universität Hamburg, 2021
13. 'Halfway Proportionality', Higher Seminar of Philosophy, Umeå University, 2020
14. 'Insensitive Interventionism and Dualist Mental Causation', *Research Seminar*, University of Gothenburg, 2020
15. 'Therefore Non-Symmetry' (w/ Alex Sandgren), *CLLAM Seminar*, Stockholm University, 2020
16. 'Naturalist Dualism and Mental Causation', CLAW Colloquium, KU Leuven, 2016

Refereed

1. 'No, but really, what *is* so bad about overdetermination?', *Eastern APA* Boston, 2027
2. 'Widespread Benign Overdetermination', *Interventionism and Non-Causal Dependence* Université de Paris Sorbonne, 2026
3. 'Grounding Causal Competition', *Nordic Network for Metaphysics* at Uppsala University, 2024
4. 'Not all Kids get Medals', *45th International Wittgenstein Symposium*, Kirchberg-am-Wechsel, 2024
5. 'Using ChatGPT to facilitate assignment feedback and evaluation' w/ Diego Arana Segura *Eastern APA*, New York, 2024
6. 'Insensitive Sufficiency and the Time-Asymmetry of Causation', *Central APA*, 2023
7. 'Higher-Level Causes and Freaky Realizations', *Swedish Congress of Philosophy*, Lund University, 2022
8. 'AI, Opacity, and Personal Autonomy', *Göteborg-Umeå Practical Philosophy Workshop*, University of Gothenburg, 2021
9. 'AI, Opacity, and Autonomy', *Governing AI @ MANCEPT Workshops*, 2021
10. 'Dualist Mental Causation', *Mind, Language and Metaphysics*, Durham University, 2021
11. 'Procedural Opacity and Applicant Autonomy', *Technology and Work*, KU Leuven, 2021
12. 'Halfway Proportionality', *Causal Distinctions*, University of Cologne, 2020
13. 'Causal Exclusion without Causal Sufficiency', *Swedish Congress of Philosophy*, Umeå 2019
14. 'How to Cause when Powerless', *Powers and Causes*, Umeå University, 2018
15. 'Re-Thinking the Holding Fixed Condition', *CiNaPS*, University of Antwerp, 2018
16. 'Neo-Russellianism and Dualist Mental Causation', CEU Summer School: *Metaphysics and History of Laws of Nature*, 2018
17. 'Dualism and Exclusion, New Formulation of an Old Argument', *Warwick MindGrad*, 2017
18. 'What Can Neo-Russellianism about Causation Do for Dualism about Consciousness?', *Where is there Causation?*, Umeå University, 2017
19. 'Semantics, Pragmatics and Negative Causation', *Semantics and Philosophy in Europe*, University of Padua, 2017
20. 'Interventionism and Time-Asymmetry', *Joint Session*, University of Edinburgh, 2017
21. 'Interventionism and Time-Asymmetry', *Rocky Mountain Philosophy Conference*, CU Boulder, 2017

22. ‘Naturalist Dualism and Mental Causation’, *Non-physical Views of the Mind*, University of Cambridge, 2016
23. ‘Naturalist Dualism, Epiphenomenalism and the Nature of Causation’, *R. Wollheim Society*, UC Berkeley, 2016
24. ‘Intervening on Chalmers’s Epiphenomenalism’, *PLM Masterclass with David Chalmers*, Stockholm University, 2015
25. ‘Perceptual Learning and Basic Beliefs’, *Epistemology of Perception* KU Leuven, 2014

References

Pär Sundström

Umeå University
 par.sundstrom@umu.se
 +46 90 786 51 63

David Papineau

King’s College London
 david.papineau@kcl.ac.uk
 +44 20 7848 2351

Thomas Kroedel

University of Hamburg
 thomas.kroedel@uni-hamburg.de
 +49 40 42838-8370

Carolina Sartorio

Rutgers University
 carolina.sartorio@rutgers.edu

Karen Bennett

Rutgers University
 kbennett@philosophy.rutgers.edu
 +1 848 932-9861

Torfinn Huvenes (teaching)

University of Bergen
 torfinn.huvenes@uib.no
 +47 55 58 89 05