

### **3-year postdoctoral position in Philosophy of Mind / Epistemology at the University of Geneva**

Applications are invited for a 3-year postdoctoral position (employment rate 75/80%) at the Philosophy Department of the University of Geneva, in the framework of the SNSF Starting Grant Project 'Metaphysics We Can Believe In' (description of the project below).

The Geneva Philosophy Department is one of Europe's leading centres for analytic philosophy. It is the home of Eidos – the Centre for Metaphysics, Thumos – the Research group on Emotions, Values and Norms, and of numerous third-party funded research projects in core areas of theoretical philosophy. The selected candidate will have the opportunity to join an international community of scholars, and carry out their research in a vibrant and friendly intellectual environment.

#### Responsibilities:

- Carrying out research in the philosophy of mind / epistemology, broadly related to the project's goals (particularly, Work Package 1 – see the project description below);
- Participating in, and assisting in the organization of, the project's research activities (reading groups, conferences, workshops);
- Attending some of the main research events organized by the department (particularly, the Eidos and Thumos seminars).

#### Requirements

- PhD in philosophy;
- Fluency in English;
- Capacity to publish original research in international, peer-reviewed journals;
- Some familiarity with and/or interest in philosophical issues having to do with perspectival and first-person thought, self-locating / indexical belief, *de se/de nunc* content, self-/time-biases, and/or related topics in epistemology and the philosophy of mind.
- A broad interest in metaphysics will be considered an advantage.

Applications from members of underrepresented groups are especially welcome.

Gross salary: Approximately between 67'500 and 73'000 CHF per year. The exact employment rate will be determined on the basis of the candidate's experience, and will not exceed 80%. The position comes with a travel allowance for attending conferences and workshops.

Starting date: **1 February 2025**, or shortly thereafter.

To apply: Candidates should submit their dossier as a single PDF file by sending an email to [giovanni.merlo@unige.ch](mailto:giovanni.merlo@unige.ch) with 'Postdoc application' in the subject line. The dossier should include:

- (i) a cover letter describing the candidate's background and profile, and the fit between their interests and skills and the Starting Grant project;
- (ii) a CV;
- (iii) one writing sample (max. 15'000 words);
- (iv) a research proposal (max. 2-3 pages);
- (v) the contact details of two possible academic references.

The deadline for applications is **1 June 2024**.

Interviews will take place in the week starting on **15 July 2024**.

For further inquiries, please contact Giovanni Merlo at [giovanni.merlo@unige.ch](mailto:giovanni.merlo@unige.ch)

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**Metaphysics We Can Believe In**  
**SNSF Starting Grant (University of Geneva, 2024-2029)**

Much contemporary metaphysics aspires to provide us with an ‘absolute’ conception of reality – the kind of conception that, much like a god’s eye perspective, does not reflect any particular standpoint or location within the reality it describes. But is this a conception that any of us can rationally believe in? The main hypothesis guiding this project is that it is not, and that – for this reason – metaphysicians should replace the absolute conception with a very different, ‘perspectival’, image of reality.

In the first part of the project (Work Package 1: Incredible Metaphysics), we will look at the ways in which philosophers have tried to square the absolute conception with the phenomenon of agential and psychological perspectivity – roughly, the phenomenon whereby our everyday beliefs, emotions, and actions are often directed at, or motivated by, contents whose correctness depends, or appear to depend, on who we are and where, in space and time, we happen to be located. Three main absolutist approaches will be examined: introducing ‘indexical’ ways of thinking about absolute matters (Indexicalism), positing ‘perspectival propositions’ that are not made true or false simpliciter by any facts (Relativism), or – the most radical one – enriching reality with a plethora of mutually incompatible ‘perspectival facts’ (Pluralism). For each approach, we will seek to show that, if a rational agent with reasonably good self-knowledge and reasonably good intellectual capacities were to embrace the approach in question and try to integrate its consequences into his or her belief network, he or she would eventually arrive at a rationally untenable combination of commitments – as could be expressed by claims like ‘There are no facts of such-and-such kind, but I am committed to believing that there are’, or ‘There is no reason to act thus-and-so, but I should act thus-and-so’.

In the second part of this project (Work Package 2: Credible Metaphysics), we will aim to construct a credible metaphysical alternative to the absolute conception. Two ideas will inform this construction. First, that a credible metaphysics – a metaphysics we can rationally believe in – should admit at least certain varieties of perspectival facts (namely, ‘tensed’ and ‘subjective’ ones), and do so – not in the ecumenical fashion that characterizes the Pluralist Approach – but in a way that privileges exclusively one’s own identity and temporal standpoint. Second, that – by exploiting a certain non-standard notion of metaphysical reality – a perspectival metaphysics can go a long way towards vindicating the most important intuitions supporting the absolute conception.

The third and last part of the project (Work Package 3: Credibility in Metaphysics) will be devoted to clarifying the role of rational credibility as a criterion for theory choice in metaphysics. We will show that the fact that a rational agent sharing our everyday beliefs, emotions, and patterns of action could not coherently endorse a certain metaphysical view should, with some qualifications, count as a decisive reason against that view. This will rule out various metametaphysical positions according to which considerations of rational credibility should not guide metaphysical inquiry, or should at most be treated as one factor among others in a cost/benefit analysis of a theory’s virtues and vices.