

# Maja Sidzińska

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## AREAS OF RESEARCH

*Specialization:* Metaphysics, Philosophy of Science, Feminist Philosophy

*Competence:* History of Philosophy, Early Modern Philosophy, Philosophy of Biology, Biomedical Ethics, Political Philosophy

## EDUCATION

- 2025 (expected). PhD, Philosophy, University of Pennsylvania  
Dissertation: "Individuality in Pregnancy: A Pragmatist Ontology for Biomedical Science"  
Co-supervisors: Drs. Michael Weisberg and Karen Detlefsen
2018. MA, Philosophy (distinction), San Francisco State University  
MA Thesis: "Are Pregnant Mammals Emergent Substances?"  
Supervisor: Dr. Ásta (Ásta Kristjana Sveinsdóttir)
2012. BA, Political, Legal, Economic Analysis (summa cum laude), Mills College  
Minor: Philosophy

## PUBLICATIONS

### *Book*

Under contract. *Pregnancy in the History of Philosophy*, co-edited with Myrna Gabbe and Evangelian Collings, Palgrave Macmillan.

### *Peer-reviewed*

- Forthcoming. "Life Spirals: A Critique of Life Cycle Diagrams." *Philosophy, Theory, and Practice in Biology*, with Jacqueline Mae Wallis and Kate Nicole Hoffman.
2024. "[Émilie du Châtelet's Mathematical Fictionalism.](#)" *New Voices on Women in the History of Philosophy*, ed. Clara Carus (*Women in the History of Philosophy and Sciences* book series, ed. Ruth Hagenruber. Dordrecht: Springer).
2024. "[A Pragmatist Interpretation and Defense of Entity Realism.](#)" *European Journal of Pragmatism and American Philosophy*, Issue XVI-1 on Pragmatism and/on Science and Scientism.
2023. "[Cogito, Ergo Sumus? The Pregnancy Problem in Descartes's Philosophy.](#)" *HOPOS: The Journal of the International Society for the History of Philosophy of Science* 13 (2).
2017. "[Not One, Not Two: Toward an Ontology of Pregnancy.](#)" *Feminist Philosophy Quarterly* 3 (4).

### *Book review*

2023. Review of *The Maternal Imprint: The Contested Science of Maternal-Fetal Effects*, by Sarah S. Richardson (2021), Chicago: The University of Chicago Press. [Philosophy of Science Association Newsletter, July 12.](#)

### *Under review*

(Revise & resubmit decision) "Biological Individuality in Pregnancy: An Argument from Biomedical Practice," *Philosophy of Science*.

"What Is Pregnancy and What is Disease? A Critique of Smajdor and Räsänen's "Is Pregnancy a Disease? A Normative Approach"," *Monash Bioethics Review*.

### *Public philosophy*

2023. "Hello, We're Philosophy in the Wild." Introduction to the Philosophy in the Wild Collection of the [Public Philosophy Journal](#), with Zachary Agoff and Mike Gadowski.

2012-2016. *TelosScope: The Telos Press Blog*.

- ["Small Is Ethical" \(Or: "The Morality of the Micropolis"\)](#)
- ["That's So Liberal It's Conservative"](#)
- ["Liberalism: Hero by Day, Despot by Night"](#)
- ["The Motley Sponsorship of Liberté, Egalité, Fraternité"](#)
- ["What Utility of Civility?"](#)
- ["An Unhappy Marriage"](#)

### *In progress*

"How to Get Pregnant (Or: Pregnancy, Methodology, and Metaphilosophy)." (I propose a non-circular version of reflective equilibrium for understanding pregnancy.)

"Pregnancy's Double Form," for the *History of the Philosophy of Pregnancy* edited volume. (I argue that Marx provides a framework that accommodates understanding the natural and social features of pregnancy.)

## **TEACHING**

### *As Instructor of Record*

University of Pennsylvania

Bioethics (2023; 2025)

Philosophy of Science (2023)

Mills College

Ethics (2019)

San Francisco State University

Feminist Moral Issues (2019)

Ethics (2018)

Introduction to Critical Thinking (2015; 2017)

### *As Teaching Assistant*

University of Pennsylvania

Philosophy of Mind (2025)

Philosophy of Science (2024)

Social Contract (2020; 2022)  
History of Modern Philosophy (2021)  
Bioethics (2021)  
San Francisco State University  
Metaphysics (2017)

## PRESENTATIONS

2024. "What is Pregnancy and What is Disease? A Response to Smajdor and Räsänen." Fourteenth Annual Midwestern Medical Humanities Conference, Western Michigan University.
2024. "How to Get Pregnant (Or: Pregnancy, Methodology, and Metaphilosophy)." Tenth Biennial Society for Philosophy of Science in Practice Conference (SPSP), University of South Carolina.
- 2023 (invited). "*Cogito, Ergo Sumus?* The Pregnancy Problem in Descartes's Philosophy." Philosophy Departmental Colloquium, University of Kentucky.
2022. "Biological Individuality in Pregnancy: An Argument for the Evo-Devo Approach." The Paradox of the Organism (Revisited), Georgetown University.
2022. "Émilie du Châtelet's Mathematical Fictionalism." New Voices Conference, Paderborn University.
2021. "A Pragmatist Defense of Entity Realism." The Philosophy Exchange Philosophy of Science Graduate Conference, London School of Economics.
2021. "De-Alienation: A Marxist Perspective on Migration Justice." Equality & Immigration Workshop, New York University.
2021. "De-Alienation: A Marxist Perspective on Migration Justice." What is Left? Conference, University of Chicago.
2021. "Émilie du Châtelet's Mathematical Fictionalism." Extending New Narratives in the History of Philosophy Early Career Researcher Workshop, King's College London & University of Jyväskylä.
2020. "Does the Difference between Fundamentality and Derivativeness Make a Difference (for Perspectival Realism)?" Philosophy in the Wild Graduate Workshop.
2018. "Intrinsic and Extrinsic Properties, Identity, and Pregnancy." The Bay Area Feminism and Philosophy Workshop, University of San Francisco.
2017. "Reading Emergence Experimentally: Pregnancy as a Case Study." The Midwest Society for Women in Philosophy (Midwest SWIP) Conference, Cleveland State University.
2017. "Phenomenon Creation via Interactive Intersubjectivity." The Mountain-Plains Philosophy Conference (71st Meeting), Weber State University.
2016. "Not One, Not Two: Toward an Ontology of Pregnancy." The Northwest Philosophy Conference. Gonzaga University.

2016. "Small Is Ethical: The Morality of the Micropolis." The 2016 Telos-Paul Piccone Institute Conference, New York University.

### **AWARDS, GRANTS, and HONORS**

Penn School of Arts and Sciences Graduate Government Travel Grant (2022-2025)

Greater Philadelphia Philosophy Consortium Event Grant (for Philosophy in the Wild, 2021, 2022)

Benjamin Franklin Fellowship (University of Pennsylvania 2019-present)

Graduate Student Award for Distinguished Achievement: faculty selected (San Francisco State University 2018)

State University Grant (San Francisco State University; 2016-2018)

Kaufmann College of Liberal and Creative Arts Scholarship (San Francisco State University; 2015-2018)

Kosciuszko Foundation Graduate Scholarship (private; 2014; declined)

### **PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

2024. Corpus Analysis Masterclass, Macquarie University (Discovery Project, "Trust and Distrust in Social Epistemic Networks").

2022. Early Career Researchers Archival Methods Workshop, April 21, University of Pennsylvania (Extending New Narratives in the History of Philosophy).

2021. Metaphysics of Pregnancy Summer School, July 12-14th, King's College London, Philosophy & Medicine Project and the BUMP (Better Understanding the Metaphysics of Pregnancy) Project.

2021. Laws and Explanations in Metaphysics and Science Spring School, March 24-25th, University of Dusseldorf, Inductive Metaphysics Research Group (DFG).

### **SELECT EDITORIAL WORK**

2022, Copyeditor (Research Assistant), [\*Routledge Handbook of Women and Early Modern European Philosophy\*](#), edited by Karen Detlefsen & Lisa Shapiro, Routledge (2023)

2021, Copyeditor (Research Assistant), [\*Mental Action and the Conscious Mind\*](#), edited by Michael Brent & Lisa Miracchi Titus, Routledge (2023)

2020, Freelance Idiomatic Editor, Copyeditor, and Indexer, [\*Analytic Philosophy and Avicenna: Knowing the Unknown\*](#), by Mohammad Azadpur, Routledge (2020)

2019-2020, Copyeditor, "[\*In Pursuit of Justice for Disability: Model Neutrality Revisited\*](#)," by Anita Silvers, in *The Oxford Handbook of Philosophy and Disability*, edited by Adam Cureton and David T. Wasserman, Oxford University Press (2020)

2017-2019, Managing Editor, Hypatia Reviews Online, *Hypatia: A Journal of Feminist Philosophy*

2016-2017, Editorial Assistant, Hypatia Reviews Online, *Hypatia: A Journal of Feminist Philosophy*

## **SERVICE and ACADEMIC ACTIVITIES**

2025 (invited), Commentator for “Pregnancy, Caregiving, and a Supposed Obligation to Gestate,” *American Philosophical Association’s Eastern Division Meeting*, New York, NY

2024, Panel Organizer, “Pregnancy, Health, and Disease,” prepared for the Fourteenth Annual Midwestern Medical Humanities Conference, Western Michigan University, MI

2024-present, Co-organizer, Minorities in Philosophy (MAP) Annual Conference, Penn Chapter

2023-present, Referee, [Feminism & Psychology](#)

2022-2023, Co-organizer, [History of the Philosophy of Pregnancy Conference](#), University of Dayton (Richard Baker Colloquia Series), Oct 6-7, 2023

2022-2023, Organizer, Penn Graduate Publishing Group

2022-present, Editor, [Pregnancy, Birth](#), PhilPapers (<https://philpapers.org>)

2020-present, Founder and Co-organizer, [Philosophy in the Wild](#) (annual outdoor conferences on environmental philosophy)

- Philosophy in the Wild 2020: Graduate Workshop (Media, PA)
- Philosophy in the Wild 2021a: Graduate Workshop (Media, PA)
- Philosophy in the Wild 2021b: Inaugural Conference (Woodward, PA)
- Philosophy in the Wild 2022: Environment & Race (Media, PA)
- Philosophy in the Wild 2023: Localism & Globalism (Woodward, PA)
- Philosophy in the Wild 2024: The Philosophical Environment (Wellsboro, PA)
- Philosophy in the Wild 2025 (upcoming): Environmental Philosophy (Hancock, MD)

2020-present, Member, History and Philosophy of Science Reading Group, Consortium for the History of Science, Technology and Medicine

2020-2023, Committee Member, Penn Prospective Graduate Student Visit Organizing Committee

2019-present, Board Member, The Family Resource Center at Penn’s Student Parent Advisory Board, University of Pennsylvania

2018-2019, Researcher, PHIL 110: Introduction to Critical Thinking Student Non-Success Study, San Francisco State University

## **INTERVIEW**

2023. [“Not One, Nor Two: The Philosophy of Pregnancy,”](#) *Penn Today*, by Erica Moser.

## **REFERENCES**

Note: Direct email addresses are available upon request.

Karen Detlefsen  
Professor of Philosophy and Education  
University of Pennsylvania  
[send.Detlefsen.733BC76FE5@interfoliodossier.com](mailto:send.Detlefsen.733BC76FE5@interfoliodossier.com)

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Kok-Chor Tan (teaching)  
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## **BRIEF DISSERTATION ABSTRACT**

Is there one individual in a pregnancy or are there multiple? While on the one hand embryos or fetuses are often taken to be individuals, understood roughly as substances, on the other, physiological boundaries are often taken to demarcate individuals. This presents a conundrum, given the shared physiological connection—in the form of the placenta—between the maternal and fetal entities. Early modern conceptions of individuality, many of which are still in use today, don't settle the matter. Physical, dispositional, substantial, and functional accounts of individuality, such as occur in Descartes's work, do not resolve the question of individuality in pregnancy. But we may employ a non-circular method of reflective equilibrium to establish a pragmatic understanding of individuality that works for pregnancy and beyond. Such a method depends upon specifying a target system as a hypothetical individual, and testing whether the selection of this target yields meaningful experimental results. An application of this method suggests that individuality in pregnancy may be understood as a "causal thicket," one which occurs between the levels of the organism and the population. Such a result is vindicated by successful biomedical interventions into health issues related to pregnancy, such as treatments for gestational diabetes. It is important for both methodological reasons and for feminist reasons of ontic representation to include pregnant individuals in our scientific ontologies.