

Douglas Ehring
6538 Lange Circle
Dallas, Texas 75214

Philosophy Department
Southern Methodist University
Dallas, Texas 75275
(214) 768-2137 Cell 214 336-8901

Educational Background

January 1974 B.A., Johnston College, University of Redlands
May 1981 Ph.D., Columbia University

Teaching and Administrative Experience

1981-1987 Assistant Professor of Philosophy
Southern Methodist University
1987-1996 Associate Professor of Philosophy
Southern Methodist University
1996-Present Professor of Philosophy
Southern Methodist University
1993-2002, 2004-2006 Chair
Philosophy Department
Southern Methodist University
2004-Present William Edward Easterwood Professor of Philosophy

Awards and Scholarships

President's Fellowship, Columbia University, 1976-1977.
Lawrence H. Chamberlain Fellowship, Columbia University, 1980-1981.
Whiting Foundation Fellowship, Columbia University, 1980-1981.
Golden Mustang Award for Teaching and Scholarship, Southern Methodist University,
1987
Gerald Ford Fellowship, 2005-2006
Dedman College Godbey Lecture Series Authors' Award 2012 (Tropes: Properties,
Objects and Mental Causation, Oxford University Press)

Grants

National Endowment for the Humanities Summer Stipend, 1984
American Council of Learned Societies Research Fellowship, 1984
National Endowment for the Humanities Summer Stipend, 1989
National Endowment for the Humanities Summer Seminar 1991, University of Virginia

Publications

Books

1. Causation and Persistence: A Theory of Causation (New York: Oxford University Press), 1997.

Samples from reviews and comments on Causation and Persistence:

“Ehring does an impressive job of articulating and defending his version of an identity theory, good enough to resuscitate it as a live philosophical option.” Peter Lipton, *The Times Literary Supplement*.

“In this illuminating and original book, Ehring attempts to release reductionism from its Humean shackles He argues forcefully that accounts of causation are wholly generalist are doomed to failure.” Helen Beebe, *British Journal for the Philosophy of Science*.

“Causation and Persistence is a detailed and extremely novel attempt to address perhaps the most basic of all philosophical issues.” John Carroll, *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*

“This book ranks with the best of contemporary work on the metaphysics of causation, both because of its thorough and unified treatment of the literature and because its author faces head-on the most difficult foundational questions about causality: How, at the most basic level, do causes bring about their effects? What are the mechanisms operating in the world to bind its parts together? Ehring's answers to these questions are clear, original, and supported by sophisticated arguments. The book is a fine example of what C. B. Martin calls 'ontological seriousness,' a concern for the truthmakers of (in this case) our causal claims, for figuring out how causality works at the most fundamental level.” David Robb, *The Philosophical Review*

"Ehring's new book is the single most significant advance in the philosophical debate about the nature of causality in the last decade or more. It not only faces the most serious problems--like causal preemption and the direction of causation--it moves towards creative and persuasive solutions to them. It will have an appeal well beyond the narrow specialist."--Alexander Rosenberg, *Duke University*

"A high-quality philosophical work on a topic of central importance."--David Papineau, *Kings College, London*

2. Tropes: Properties, Objects and Mental Causation (Oxford: Oxford University Press), 2011.
3. Tropes: Properties, Objects and Mental Causation (Oxford: Oxford University Press), reprinted as paperback edition March 2014.

Sample of review comments on Tropes:

“Ehring’s *Tropes* is an intellectual tour-de-force that old story about a couple of admirers of Michaelangelo’s *David* comes to mind. Q: ‘How do you think he did it? A: ‘He took a chunk of marble and chipped away everything that

didn't look like *David*. Ehring uses the chisel of finely honed logic to hammer away on opposing ontological view. What's left? Natural Class Trope Nominalism." Eric Weislogel, Philosophy in Review

"A fascinating book written by a bold philosopher." Anna-Sofia Maurin, Journal of Philosophy

"Crucial reading for anyone interested in Trope Theory." Tuomas E. Tahko, The Philosophical Quarterly

"Novel solutions to an age-old problem." Brian Jonathan Garrett, Philosophy in Review

"This book provides a rigorous and highly original defence of the claim that properties are tropes (i.e. particulars) as opposed to universals." S.C. Gibb, Analysis

"*Tropes* is a systematic investigation into the metaphysics of properties, aiming to motivate and defend trope theory, and more specifically Natural Class Trope Nominalism (NCTN). Ehring's book treats an impressive span of relevant positions, considerations, debates and objections with charity and clarity; it's also a real page-turner, at least if one has (as I do) a taste for analytic twists and turns." Jessica Wilson, Mind

4. What Matters in Survival: Personal Identity and Other Possibilities (Oxford University Press) June 2021.

Sample of review comments on What Matters in Survival:

"The author provides powerful, thorough, original, and ingenious arguments for a highly radical view, 'Survival Nihilism.'"

"The book is an excellently argued, very clear piece that engages well with the literature. It's really very good, and as I hope I've made clear, will be an important contribution to the literature."

"Ehring has mastered a great body of literature. His discussions of complex cases and issues are impressively clear and logically rigorous." -- B. T. Hutchinson, *CHOICE*

Articles

- (1) "The Brownian Direction of Causation", The Journal of Critical Analysis 7 (1980) pp. 51-56.
- (2) "Bunzl on Causal Overdetermination," Philosophical Studies 39 (1981) pp. 209-210.
- (3) "On Mackie's New Account of Causal Priority," Analysis 41 (1981) pp. 82-83.
- (4) "Manipulability Theory and Event Types," Analysis 42 (1982) pp. 149-151.
- (5) "Causal Asymmetry," The Journal of Philosophy 79 (1982) pp. 761-774.
- (6) "Goal-Directed Processes," Southwest Philosophical Studies 9 (1983), pp. 39-47.

- (7) "Probabilistic Causality and Preemption," British Journal for the Philosophy of Science 35 (1984) pp. 55-57.
- (8) "Mental Identity," The Southern Journal of Philosophy 22 (1984) pp. 189-194.
- (9) "Negative Feedback and Goals," Nature and System 6 (1984), pp. 217-220.
- (10) "The System-Property Theory of Goal-Directed Processes," Philosophy of the Social Sciences 14 (1984) pp. 497-504.
- (11) "Simultaneous Causation and Causal Chains," Analysis 45 (1985) pp. 98- 102.
- (12) "Enc on Functions," Philosophical Inquiry 7 (1985) pp. 74-80.
- (13) "'Normal' Intentional Action," Philosophy and Phenomenological Research 46 (1985) pp. 155-157.
- (14) "Dispositions and Functions," Erkenntnis 23 (1985) pp. 243-249.
- (15) "Personal Identity and the Causal Theory of Memory," The Modern Schoolman 63 (1985) pp 65-67.
- (16) "Closed Causal Loops, Single Causes, and Asymmetry," Analysis 46 (1986) pp. 33-35.
- (17) "The Transference Theory of Causation," Synthese 67 (1986), pp. 249-258.
- (18) "Causation and Causal Factuals," Erkenntnis 25 (1986) pp. 77-84.
- (19) "Teleology and Impossible Goals" Philosophy and Phenomenological Research 47 (1986) pp. 127-131.
- (20) "Accidental Functions," Dialogue 25 (1986) pp. 291-302.
- (21) "Causal Processes and Causal Interactions," PSA, Vol. 1 (1986).
- (22) "Survival and Trivial Facts," Analysis 47 (1987) pp. 50-54.
- (23) "Non-Simultaneous Causation," Analysis 47 (1987) pp. 28-32.
- (24) "Papineau on Causal Asymmetry," British Journal for the Philosophy of Science 38 (1987) pp. 81-87.
- (25) "Cohen, Exploitation, and Theft," Dialogue, 26 (1987) pp. 299-308.
- (26) "Causal Relata," Synthese, 73 (1987) pp. 319-328.
- (27) "Personal Identity and Time Travel," Philosophical Studies, 52 (1987) pp. 427-433.
- (28) "Compound Emphasis and Causal Relata," Analysis, 47 (1987) pp. 209-213.
- (29) "Causal Asymmetry and Causal Relata," Synthese, 76 (1988) pp. 371-375.
- (30) "Preemption and Probabilistic Counterfactual Theory," Philosophical Studies, 56 (1989) pp. 307-313.
- (31) "The 'only t_1 through t_2 ' Principle," Analysis, 49 (1989) pp. 176-177.
- (32) "Are Workers Forced to Work?," The Canadian Journal of Philosophy, 19 (1989) pp. 589-602.
- (33) "Preemption, Direct Causation, and Identity," Synthese 85 (1990) pp. 55-70.
- (34) "Nonbranching and Nontransitivity," Analysis 50 (1990) pp. 268-271.
- (35) "Motion, Causation, and the Causal Theory of Identity," The Australasian Journal of Philosophy 69 (1991) pp. 180-194.
- (36) "Eells' on Token Causation and Preemption," Philosophical Studies 74 (1994) pp. 39-50.
- (37) "Personal Identity and the *R*-Relation," The Australasian Journal of Philosophy 73 (1995) pp. 337-46.
- (38) "Mental Causation, Determinables, and Property Instances," Nous 30 (1996) pp. 461-480.
- (39) "Lewis, Temporary Intrinsic, and Momentary Tropes," Analysis 57 (1997)
- (40) "Fission, Fusion and the Parfit Revolution," Philosophical Studies (1998)
- (41) "Trope Persistence and Temporary External Relations," The Australasian Journal of Philosophy (1998)
- (42) "Tropeless in Seattle: The Cure for Insomnia," Analysis 59 (1999) pp.19-24.

- (43) "Temporal Parts and Bundle Theory," Philosophical Studies 104 (2001) pp. 163-168.
- (44) "Spatial Relations Between Universals," The Australasian Journal of Philosophy 80 (2002) pp. 17-23.
- (45) "The Causal Argument Against Natural Class Trope Nominalism," Philosophical Studies 107 (2002) pp. 179-190.
- (46) "Part-Whole Physicalism and Mental Causation," 136 (2003) Synthese pp.359-388.
- (47) "Counterfactual Theories, Preemption and Persistence," Chance and Cause: Causation in an Indeterministic World, eds, Dowe and Noordhof (London: Routledge, 2004), pp. 58-76.
- (48) "Property Counterparts and Natural Class Trope Nominalism," 82 (2004) The Australasian Journal of Philosophy pp. 436-454.
- (49) "Distinguishing Universals From Particulars," 64 (2004) Analysis pp. 326-332.
- (50) "Abstracting Away from Preemption," (2009) The Monist, pp. 41-71.
- (51) "Causal Relata," (2009) Oxford Handbook on Causation, eds. Beebe, Hitchcock, Menzies, (Oxford: Oxford University Press).
- (52) "Why Parfit Did Not Go Far Enough," 165 (2013) Philosophical Studies, pp. 133-149.
- (53) "Contemporary Theories: Humean Themes," (2014) (in Efficient Causation: A History, ed. Schmalz, Oxford Philosophical Concepts, (Oxford: Oxford University Press).

Sample of review comments on Efficient Causation: A History.

"[E]ach contributor provides an expert treatment of a chapter in the history of efficient causation, and the book as a whole gives a useful framework to reflect historically on a key philosophical concept." --Journal of the History of Philosophy

"This fine history of the evolution of conceptions of causation has no rival... Contributors' reflections on the interactive development of philosophical conceptions of the concept of efficient causation make this a complex but rewarding work for advanced students of philosophy. Comprehensive index and bibliography... Summing Up: Highly recommended. Upper-level undergraduates and above." --Choice

"Does the volume achieve these big-picture goals? Yes, for the most part. The quality of the scholarship is very high without being unapproachable, the volume lays out a detailed and insightful history of its target concept, and the Reflections are engaging and thought provoking...volume succeeds admirably in its stated goals...*Efficient Causation* is a history of causation written for metaphysicians. By those lights, it is excellent."

--Notre Dame Philosophical Reviews Online

"The volume showcases crucial elements that at one point or another entered into philosophical views of efficient causation. It provides a useful framework for taking a fresh look at existing work on causation...This Oxford Philosophical Concepts anthology represents a great first step toward a better, historically situated, understanding of efficient causation. As such it is a welcome addition to the philosophical literature." -- American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly

- (54) "The Trope Coextension Problem," in Nominalism about Properties: New Essays, eds. Rodriguez-Pereyra, G. and Ghislain, G. (Routledge), 2015.

Sample of review comments on Nominalism about Properties: New Essays

"These papers make important contributions to the historical understanding of the development of nominalism and to evaluating the prospects of nominalist theories of properties in contemporary debates." Bryan Pickel, Notre Dame Philosophical Reviews

- (55) "Why Parfit Cannot Generalize from Fission," 59 (3) (2018) Analytic Philosophy, pp. 413-425.
- (56) "Johansson on Fission," Acta Analytica (2019) 34 (2) pp 155–163.
- (57) "Why Parfit Can Rebut Johnston's *Reductio*," Theoria (2020) 86 (5) 583-594.
- (58) "Fission and Anticipating Having an Experience," Synthese (2020) 198 (12):12223-12234.
- (59) "Trope Nominalisms," (2024) (in Routledge Handbook on Properties, eds. Anna-Sofia Maurin and Anthony Fisher, Routledge).
- (60) "Does Parfit Establish Non-Reductionists Should Accept the Extreme Claim?" (2024) Philosophia 52 (1): 57-68.
- (61) "Must Exploiters Objectively Benefit from Exploitation?" (2025) Moral Philosophy and Politics <https://doi.org/10.1515/mopp-2024-0061>.
- (62) "Against Campbellian Tropes," Philosophia (2025). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11406-025-00901-1>

Book Reviews

Causation and Universals. By Evan Fales. New York, N.Y., Routledge, 1990, The Philosophical Review

Physical Causation. By Phil Dowe. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, Mind (2003).

Encyclopedia Article

Campbell, K., Franklin, J., and Ehring, D. "D. C. Williams," (2013) in Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy.

Papers Presented

- "Causal Asymmetry," North Texas Philosophical Association, Fall Meeting, 1981, University of Texas, Dallas.
- Chair, Session on D.S. Clarke's "Ignoring Available Evidence," APA Western Division, April 1983 meeting.
- "Goal-Directed Processes," Southwestern Philosophical Association, 1983 meeting, University of Arkansas.

"The Transference Theory of Causation," APA Eastern Division, December 1983 meeting.

"Enc on Functions," APA Pacific Division, March 1984 meeting.

"Causal Processes and Causal Interactions," Philosophy of Science Biennial meeting, University of Pittsburgh, 1986.

"Causal Relata," (Invited Paper), Philosophy Department, University of Oklahoma, March 1987

"Probabilistic Independence and Causal Asymmetry," APA Pacific Division, March 1987 meeting.

"Cohen, Exploitation, and Theft," APA Eastern Division, December 1987 meeting.

"Comment on Martin and Lewis," APA Central Division 1988 meeting.

"A New Argument for Tropes," (invited paper) Ontology Workshop, University of Texas, Austin Dec. 1991.

"Property Persistence," APA Eastern Division, December 1991 meeting.

"Eells on Token Causation and Preemption," (invited paper) London School of Economics, Philosophy Dept., May 12, 1993.

"Tropes," (invited paper) King's College Philosophy Dept., University of London, May 27, 1993.

"Extrinsicness and Identity," (invited paper) APA Pacific Division, April 1994.

"Kripke and Shoemaker Meet Stout," APA Pacific Division, March, 1995

"Identity, Extrinsicness, Times and Worlds," APA Central Division, April, 1995

"Kripke and Shoemaker Meet Stout," (Invited Paper) Philosophy Department, Texas A&M, April 20, 1995.

"Trope Persistence and Temporary External Relations," Canadian Philosophical Association, Ottawa, 1998.

"Part-Whole Physicalism and Mental Causal Relevance," APA Pacific Division, 1999.

"Part-Whole Physicalism and Mental Causal Relevance," Invited Paper for William H and Lucyle T. Werkmeister Conference on "Causation and Free Will," Florida State University, Jan. 2002.

"Comments on 'Causes as Difference-Makers'." Bellingham Philosophy Conference, Summer, 2003

"Natural Class Trope Nominalism," University of Nebraska Philosophy Department, April, 2005.

Roundtable panel discussion, "Causation and Responsibility," November 3-4, 2006, at the Timberline Lodge Mt. Hood, Oregon, sponsored by the University of Illinois College of Law and the Walgreen Fund.

"Trope Nominalisms," for Routledge Handbook on Properties conference, May 16-18, 2022.

Work in Progress

1. "The Battlefield of Indeterminate Causation" submitted Philosophical Quarterly
2. "Against the Anti-History Principle" submitted to Res Publica
3. "Indeterminate Causation and Moral Responsibility" in process and will submit soon.
4. "How to Formulate a Vulnerability Account of Wrongful Exploitation" in process.

Refereeing

Oxford University Press
Philosophy and Phenomenological Research
Synthese
Philosophical Studies
Canadian Journal of Philosophy
Philosophy Research Archives
British Journal for the Philosophy of Science
NOUS
Mind
The Journal of Ethics
The Australasian Journal of Philosophy
Philosophical Quarterly
Mind
Acta Analytica
Journal of Philosophy
Erkenntnis
Theoria
Acta Analytica
Philosophia

Service, Recent and Past

SMU Research Council
Dean's Advisory Committee on Tenure
Dean's Committee Reviewing Third-Year Contract Renewal 2000-2001
Committee to Review English Department
Cultural Formations Sub-Committee of Council on General Education
Philosophy/Religious Studies Perspectives Courses Sub-Committee
Philosophy Department Search Committee
Full Professor Advisory Committee (to Dean)
Chair of Philosophy Department
Dedman Dean Search Committee (twice)
Meadows Dean Advisory Promotion Committee
Faculty Secretary, Dedman College
Committee on Faculty Concerns (SACS)
Dedman College Strategic Planning Committee
Assessment Coordinator Philosophy Department
Dedman College Mellon Foundation's [New Directions Fellowship](#) Committee
Philosophy Department Mentor to Justin Fisher Pre-Tenure
Philosophy Department Mentor to Justin Fisher Pre-Full-Professor
Philosophy Department Mentor to Matt Lockard Pre-Full-Professor
Philosophy Department Search Committee
Promotion from Senior Lecturer to Senior Lecturer II Committee