

MICHAEL UHALL

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RESEARCH INTERESTS

Political philosophy (ancient and modern); contemporary political theory; environmental political thought; philosophical anthropology; political geography; astropolitics; strategic studies; film and literary studies

EDUCATION

University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign

- Ph.D., Political Science (May 2020)
 - *Dissertation*: "On the political uses of creative darkness: freedom, subjectivity, and normativity" (Winner of the Kathleen Burkholder Prize for Best Dissertation)
 - *Chair*: Professor Samantha Frost
- M.A., Philosophy (May 2013)

University of Georgia

- B.A., Philosophy (*cum laude*) (December 2009)

ACADEMIC APPOINTMENTS

Indiana University East (2021-present)

- Adjunct Professor, Political Science

PUBLICATIONS

Books

- *Theory of the Alien: Astropolitics, Space Power, and the Outside*. New York: Routledge, 2027. Under contract.
- [Noir Materialism: Freedom and Obligation in Political Ecology](#). New York: Bloomsbury, 2024.

Peer-reviewed journal articles

- "Dark laboratories of the soil: Bruno Latour and Aldo Leopold on cosmopolitics and crisis." *Nature and Culture* 18:2 (2023): <https://doi.org/10.3167/nc.2023.180201>
- "Companion ecologies: a new theory of the subject." *Contemporary Political Theory* 21 (2021): <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41296-021-00494-w>
- "Bleeding together: Caitlin Hackett and companion ecologies." *Rhizomes: Cultural Studies in Emerging Knowledge* 37 (2021): <http://rhizomes.net/issue37/uhall/index.html>
- "The end of the affair with life: political theory and the corpse." *Critical Horizons* 20:4 (2019): <https://doi.org/10.1080/14409917.2019.1672274>
- "Creaturely conditions: acknowledgement and animality in Kafka, Cavell, and Uexküll." *Configurations* 24:1 (2016): <http://doi.org/10.1353/con.2016.0005>

Peer-reviewed book chapters

- "Politics of the outside: preface to a political theory of the alien" in *The Politics of UAP: Security, Science, and Society*, eds. Jacob Haqq-Misra, Alexander Wendt, and James Wirtz. New York: Oxford University Press. Forthcoming.
- "What do we lose when we become posthuman?" in *The Future Is Unwritten: Representations of Political Resistance and Emancipation in Science Fiction*, eds. Judith Grant and Sean Parson. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2022.

Selected reviews and popular writings

- "What is living and what is dead in vitalism?" *Theory & Event* (forthcoming).
- "'Providence is my world': H. P. Lovecraft and the politics of selves." *Extrapolation* (forthcoming).
- "Lovecraft in Mexico: Guillermo Samperio's 'Borges, Escher, Lovecraft.'" *Lovecraft Annual: New Scholarship on H. P. Lovecraft* 19 (August 2025).
- "Agora and archipelago: fragmentation and political theory." *DIFFRACTIONS* (October 2024).
- "Past as prevarication: ancient Greece in modern science fiction." *Extrapolation* (July 2024).
- "Spirals of reason: inhuman vitalism in Junji Ito's *Uzumaki*." *Gothic Nature* (June 2024).
- "Rules of war and human rights in first contact scenarios." *Limina: The Journal of UAP Studies* 1:1 (January 2024).
- "Geopolitics and marriage: on Andrzej Żuławski's *Possession*." *Vault of Culture* (Sept. 2023).
- "John Boyd's entropy machine." *SYNTHETIC ZERØ* (March 2021).
- "Augustine and institutional resilience." *SYNTHETIC ZERØ* (October 2020).
- "Plato and political decay." *SYNTHETIC ZERØ* (October 2020).
- "Astronoetic cinema" series of occasional essays. *Vault of Culture* (April-May 2019).
- "From biocult to bioculture: the case of Ludwig Klages." *Configurations* 27:1 (2019): 117-20.
- "Transformations in the terrain of science fiction." *Extrapolation* 59:3 (2018): 319-21.
- "Material speculation as political praxis." *Configurations* 25:4 (2017): 563-566.

Papers in progress

- "Molotov's cowboy hat: Alexandre Kojève, Carl Schmitt, and the politics of friendship."
- "Globus or nomos: arcane geopolitics and world order in Franz Rosenzweig and Carl Schmitt."
- "The savage anomaly of Aldo Leopold: political theory and post-apocalyptic forms of life."
- "Storms and omens of life itself: political decay in Ludwig Klages and Gilles Deleuze."
- "Paranoid intelligence: James Jesus Angleton and the epistemology of betrayal."
- "Shapes of the living mind: Hans Blumenberg and Leo Strauss on agency and natural right."
- "Wisdom or oblivion: psychoanalysis and the political anthropology of Wilfred Bion."
- "Plato's *Phaedo* and the vitalism of reason."

AWARDS AND FELLOWSHIPS

- Kathleen Burkholder Prize for Best Dissertation (2020)
- IPRH-Andrew W. Mellon Doctoral Fellowship in Bio-Humanities (2017-2018)
- Nicholson Graduate Student Fellowship for the School of Criticism and Theory at Cornell University (2012)

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Teaching honors

- Named repeatedly on the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign List of Teachers Ranked as Excellent by Their Students (2014, 2018, 2019, 2020).

Courses as Instructor

- *Indiana University East* (2021-present)
 - PS105: Introduction to Political Theory
 - PS381: Ancient Political Thought ("Plato, Aristotle, Augustine, Cicero, Machiavelli")
 - PS382: Modern Political Thought ("Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau, Tocqueville, Marx, Nietzsche")
 - PS384: American Political Thought ("From Revolution to Civil War")
 - PS392: Special Topics in Political Philosophy ("Nationalism and Its Afterlives," "Neoconservatism and Its Enemies")
- *University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign* (2015-2020)
 - PS101: Introduction to American Politics
 - PS199: Environmental Political Theory

- PS224: Politics of Natural Resources
- PS241: Politics in Developing Nations
- PS270: Introduction to Political Theory

Courses as Graduate Teaching Assistant

- *University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign* (2011-2020)
 - AAS100: Introduction to Asian American Studies
 - PHIL101: Introduction to Philosophy
 - PHIL105: Introduction to Ethics
 - PHIL412: Modern Philosophy ("Spinoza and Kant")
 - PHIL441: Contemporary European Philosophy ("Nietzsche, Heidegger, Arendt")
 - PS100: Introduction to Political Science
 - PS270: Introduction to Political Theory
 - PS302: The United States Constitution
 - PS356: International Political Economy

Pedagogy development

- Project manager for major ABET review at the Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign (2024-present).
- Reviewer for General Education Assessment criteria compliance and requirements for Indiana University East (2022-present).
- Ongoing participant in numerous Center for Innovation in Teaching and Learning workshops at both Indiana University East and the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign (2011-present).
- Faculty mentorship and teaching evaluation and training sessions with Dr. Kristoffer Rees and Dr. Scott Lee at Indiana University East (2021-2022, 2023-2024).
- Recipient of the Graduate Teacher Certificate from the Center for Innovation in Teaching and Learning at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (2015).

PRESENTATIONS

Selected conference papers

- "Alien matters: thinking normatively about UAP." Co-authored with Michael Cifone (University of San Francisco/St. John's University). International Studies Association 2025 (March 2, 2025).
- "Existentially weighted time decay: on speculative fragmentation and political immunology." Diffractions Collective: Wyrld Patchwork 5 (November 28, 2020).
- "Morbid opportunism: on ecopessimism, ends, and exits." Western Political Science Association (April 18, 2019).
- "Strange new forests: nine strategic recommendations for the age of extinction." Western Political Science Association (March 30, 2018).
- "Gray sky thinking: decathexis as a mode of futural projection." 31st Annual Society for Literature, Science, and the Arts Conference (November 11, 2017).
- "Savage anomalies: Aldo Leopold, companion ecologies, Herakut." Western Political Science Association (April 14, 2017).
- "The politics of creative darkness: Schelling and the ecological crisis." North American Schelling Society 5: Crisis and Critique (February 21-25, 2017).
- "The roots of creative darkness: Blackwood, Milner, Schelling." 30th Annual Society for Literature, Science, and the Arts Conference (November 3, 2016).
- "Anthropocene futures, object use, and post-apocalyptic forms of life." Western Political Science Association (March 25, 2016).
- "Conserving Area X: cosmopolitics and landscape in the Southern Reach." 29th Annual Society for Literature, Science, and the Arts Conference (November 13, 2015).
- "The end of the affair with life: corpses as figures of political loss and vitality." Western Political Science Association (April 3, 2015).
- "Singular creatures: animality, the Anthropocene, and the unbearable." Midwest Interdisciplinary Graduate Conference (February 20, 2015).

- “Rethinking politics in the face of the corpse.” Northwestern Graduate Student Conference in Political Theory (November 7, 2014).
- “Each valley exalted: ambivalent messianism in Walter Benjamin’s philosophy of history.” Loyola University Chicago: “Freedom, Action, Politics.” September 10, 2011.

SELECTED PROFESSIONAL SERVICE

- Humanities Research Institute (formerly Illinois Program for Research in the Humanities) chair for sponsored research groups on various topics, including Machiavelli’s political psychology, the ontological turn in anthropology, the political realism of Henry Kissinger, special topics in the philosophy of science, and various texts by Plato, Nietzsche, and Agamben (2011-present).
- Referee and reviewer for numerous academic journals and presses (2013-present).
- UIUC Political Science GSA Mentor for Incoming Ph.D. Students (2018-2020).
- Research assistant for Dr. Samantha Frost (2013-2015, 2017-2018).
- Chair for “Crafting Functional Ecopessimisms” at Western Political Science Association (2018).
- Chair for “Collective Manifestations: Thinking Environmental Futures beyond the Dark Mountain” panel at the 31st Annual Society for Literature, Science, and the Arts Conference (2017).
- Invited chair for “New Materialisms” panel at Western Political Science Association (2017).
- Chair for “Weird Evolutions: Nature, Creativity, Vitality” panel at 30th Annual Society for Literature, Science, and the Arts Conference (2016).
- Chair of the New Materialisms Research Unit (2014-2016).

MEMBERSHIPS

- American Political Science Association
- Association for Political Theory
- Unit for Criticism and Interpretive Theory (Affiliate)
- Western Political Science Association

FACULTY REFERENCES

- Dr. Samantha Frost, Professor
Department of Political Science
University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign
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- Dr. Robert Pahre, Professor
Department of Political Science
University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign
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- Dr. Scott Lee, Associate Professor and Chair
Department of Political Science
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- Dr. Kristoffer Rees, Associate Professor
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