

# Dr. (des) Pascale Willemsen

## Professional Address

Ruhr-University Bochum  
Institute for Philosophy II,  
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## Current Position

Since 04/2018:

Assistant Professor, Chair for Philosophy of Mind and the Center for Mind, Brain, and Cognitive Evolution; Managing Director and Student Consultant for the Master's Program Cognitive Science, Ruhr-University Bochum

## Areas of Specialisation

Philosophy of Moral Psychology, Philosophy of Mind, Metaethics, Experimental Philosophy

## Areas of Competence

Ethics, Philosophy of Action

## Academic Employment

10/2017 – **Visiting Postdoctoral Researcher**

03/2018 University College London  
Department for Experimental Psychology

06/2017 – **Postdoctoral Researcher**

09/2017 Ruhr-University Bochum  
Institute for Philosophy II, Chair for Philosophy of Mind

## Education

- 01/2014 – 06/2017      **PhD in Philosophy**  
Ruhr-University Bochum  
Thesis: “Investigating the Role of Causal Responsibility for the Attribution of Moral Responsibility”  
Committee: Prof. Albert Newen (first supervisor), Prof. Edouard Machery (second supervisor), Prof. Corinna Mieth, Prof. Tobias Schlicht, Prof. James Wilberding  
Grade: summa cum laude (highest possible distinction)
- 09/2015 – 11/2015      **Visiting Fellow**, Yale University  
Host: Prof. Joshua Knobe
- 09/2013      **MSc. in Philosophy of Science**  
London School of Economics and Political Sciences, London
- 09/2012      **M.A. in Philosophy**  
**M.A. in Linguistics and Communication Studies**  
RWTH Aachen University, Aachen
- 08/2010      **B.A. in Philosophy**  
**B.A. in Linguistics and Communication Studies**  
RWTH Aachen University, Aachen

## Publications

### 1. Books

**Willemsen, Pascale.** “Omissions and their moral relevance. Assessing causal and moral responsibility for the things we failed to do”, forthcoming with mentis.

### 2. Peer-Reviewed Research Articles

(\* indicates shared first authorship)

- (1) **Willemsen, Pascale.** “The Relevance of Alternative Possibilities for the Attribution of Moral Responsibility”, *Oxford Series in Experimental Philosophy*, Oxford University Press. Forthcoming.
- (2) **Willemsen, Pascale;** Kirfel, Lara. “Recent empirical work on the relationship between causal judgments and norms”, *Philosophy Compass*. Forthcoming
- (3) Sytsma, Justin; Bluhm, Roland; **Willemsen, Pascale;** Reuter, Kevin (2018). “Causal Attribution and Corpus Analysis”, in *Methodological Advances in Experimental Philosophy*, Bloomsbury Publishing. Forthcoming.  
Preprint: <http://philsci-archive.pitt.edu/14848/>.

- (4) **Willemsen, Pascale**; Kaspar, Kai; Newen, Albert (2018). "A new look at the attribution of moral responsibility: The underestimated relevance of social roles", in *Philosophical Psychology*. doi: 10.1080/09515089.2018.1429592
- (5) Wiegmann, Alex; Rutschmann, Ronja; **Willemsen, Pascale\*** (2017). "Empirically Investigating the Concept of Lying", in *Journal of Indian Council of Philosophical Research*. doi: 10.1007/s40961.017-0112-z.
- (6) Wiegmann, Alex; **Willemsen, Pascale\*** (2017): "How the truth can make a great lie: An empirical investigation of lying by falsely implicating", in *Proceedings of the 35th Annual Conference of the Cognitive Science Society 2017*, pp. 3516-3521.
- (7) Stephan, Simon; **Willemsen, Pascale**; Gerstenberg, Tobias (2017): Marbles in inaction: Counterfactual simulation and causation by omissions", in *Proceedings of the 35th Annual Conference of the Cognitive Science Society 2017*, pp. 1132-1137.
- (8) **Willemsen, Pascale** (2016). "Omissions without Expectations – A New Approach to the Things We Failed to Do", in *Synthese*. doi: 10.1007/s11229-016-1284-9.
- (9) **Willemsen, Pascale**; Reuter, Kevin\* (2016). "Is there really an omission effect?", in *Philosophical Psychology*, 29(8). doi:10.1080/09515089.2016.1225194.

Viebahn, Emanuel; Wiegmann, Alex; Engelmann, Neele; **Willemsen, Pascale**. "Can you lie by asking a question? An empirical investigation", revisions submitted to *Philosophical Studies*.

### Selected Talks

- 2018 *Omission Impossible. Why We Cannot Omit to Perform Impossible Actions*  
Experimental and Naturalistic Perspectives on the Philosophy of Law  
Ruhr-University Bochum (Germany), **invited talk**
- The Relevance of Alternative Possibilities for Moral Responsibility*  
3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Bochum – Rutgers Workshop  
Rutgers University (USA), **keynote talk**
- The Relevance of Alternative Possibilities for Moral Responsibility*  
Chiron Workshop 2018, 9th Edition Experimental Moral Philosophy  
online workshop, **invited talk**
- 2017 *Alternative Possibilities and Moral Responsibility*  
2<sup>nd</sup> Bi-annual Workshop of the Experimental Philosophy Group Germany  
University of Osnabrueck (Germany), **invited talk**  
*Symposium: The Pragmatics of Lying*
- Annual Conference of the European Society of Philosophy and Psychology  
University of Hertfordshire (United Kingdom)

*Are Moral Judgments Grounded in Causal Judgments?*

Annual Conference of the European Society of Philosophy and Psychology  
University of Hertfordshire (United Kingdom)

*Omissions and Causal Explanations*

The Experimental Philosophy of Morality and Causation – Perspectives from  
Philosophy, Psychology, and Law  
Ruhr-University Bochum (Germany), organiser

2016

*I must although I can't!? A pragmatically grounded two-level theory of 'ought implies can'*

Experimental Moral Psychology and Philosophy  
Humboldt Universität zu Berlin (Germany)

*The philosophical trilemma of moral responsibility for omissions – and how to solve it*

Georg-Elias-Müller-Institut für Psychologie  
Georg-August-Universität Göttingen (Germany), **invited talk**

*Omissions and expectations. Two studies on how moral and causal judgments depend on expectations.*

Department for Cognitive and Decision Sciences, Causal Cognition Lab  
University College London (United Kingdom), **invited talk**

*Why you can be blamed for the things you did not do*

Annual Conference of the European Society of Philosophy and Psychology  
August 2016, University of St. Andrews (United Kingdom)

2015

*Omissions without Expectations – A New Approach to the Metaphysics of Things We Failed to Do*

First Conference of the Experimental Philosophy Group Germany  
Ruhr-University Bochum (Germany)

*Is there really an omission bias?*

Buffalo Annual Experimental Philosophy Conference 2015  
Buffalo State University (USA)

*Is there really an omission bias?*

Annual Conference of the European Society of Philosophy and Psychology  
University of Tartu (Estonia)

2014

*Are Omissions on Par with Actions?*

6th Conference of Experimental Philosophy Group UK:  
Joining Forces of Philosophy and the Empirical Sciences to Tackle Social Injustices  
University of Nottingham (United Kingdom)

*Why Social Norms Matter for the Attribution of Moral Responsibility*  
The Moral Domain: Conceptual Issues in Moral Psychology  
October, Vilnius University (Lithuania)

### **Teaching and Supervision Experience**

Winter 2018/19	Introduction to Moral Psychology BA Philosophy, MA Philosophy, MSc. Psychology, and MSc. Cognitive Science, taught in English  Philosophical Thought Experiments and Experimental Philosophy BA Philosophy, MA Philosophy, and MSc. Cognitive Science, taught in English  Handlungen, Ereignisse, und ihre Erklärungen (Actions, Events, and Their Explanations) BA Philosophy, first year, taught in German
Summer 2018	Experiment Philosophy of Responsibility – Perspectives from Ethics, Metaphysics, and the Law BA Philosophy, MA Philosophy and MSc. Cognitive Science, and Law, taught in English  Happiness, Well-Being, and Morality BA Philosophy, MA Philosophy, MSc Psychology and MSc. Cognitive Science, taught in English  Moderne Handlungstheorie (Modern Philosophy of Action) BA Philosophy, taught in German
Summer 2017	Experimental Philosophy of Morality MA Philosophy and MSc. Cognitive Science, taught in English
Summer 2014	Agency and Moral Responsibility MA Philosophy and MSc. Cognitive Science, taught in English

I am currently supervising a master's dissertation on experimental philosophy of happiness. More specifically, this thesis empirically investigates the question of how laypeople use the term "happy" and whether the factors contributing to happiness differ between healthy people and people with physical disabilities.

I supervised a bachelor's dissertation in Experimental Philosophy at University College London, focusing on moral and causal responsibility attribution for omissions in medical care.

As an instructor in experimental philosophy, I have supervised over ten experimental studies ran by students as part of their course work.

### **Committee Work**

- Since April 2018      Managing Director and Student Consultant for the master's program in Cognitive Science
- 2014-2016      Member of the Board of the Institute of Philosophy II
- 2014-2016      Member of the Dissertation Committee of the department

### **Reviewer for**

Cognition  
Erkenntnis  
Ethical Theory and Moral Practice  
Journal of Applied Philosophy  
Quarterly Journal of Experimental Psychology

### **Grants, Awards, and External Funding**

- 2018      Winner of the GdF Dissertation Prize of Ruhr-University Bochum, honoring outstanding interdisciplinary dissertations (Prize money: €4000)
- €2,000 for organising the 9<sup>th</sup> Annual Workshop of the Experimental Philosophy Group UK (together with Lara Kirfel)  
Mind Association
- €4,000 for organising the 9<sup>th</sup> Annual Workshop of the Experimental Philosophy Group UK (together with David Shanks and Lara Kirfel)  
Experimental Psychology Society
- €375 for graduate student travel stipends for the 9<sup>th</sup> Annual Workshop of the Experimental Philosophy Group UK (together with Lara Kirfel)  
Analysis Trust
- 2017      €19,200 postdoctoral research fellowship for a six-month stay at the University College London (Host: David Lagnado, Causal Cognition Lab)  
Research School Plus at Ruhr-University Bochum, German Research Council (DFG)
- €2,810 granted for organizing an interdisciplinary workshop on experimental philosophy of morality and causation  
Research School Plus at Ruhr-University Bochum, German Research Council (DFG)
- 2016      €9,555 granted for interdisciplinary empirical research  
Leibniz Science Campus
- €4,000 granted for a research stay of Karolina Prochownik (PhD student from Krakow University, Poland) at Ruhr-University Bochum

Research School Plus at Ruhr University Bochum, German Research Council (DFG)

€3,260 granted for a research stay Prof. Justin Sytsma (University of Wellington, New Zealand) to Bochum

Research School Plus at Ruhr University Bochum, German Research Council (DFG)

2014 International Realization Budget  
€10,000 granted for organizing the first conference of the Experimental Philosophy Group Germany  
Research School Plus at Ruhr-University Bochum, German Research Council (DFG)

### **Workshop Organisation**

Upcoming (2019) Organisation of a graduate student workshop in philosophy of mind and cognitive science, at Ruhr-University Bochum

2018 Organisation of the 9<sup>th</sup> workshop of the Experimental Philosophy Group UK  
14 – 16 June 2018, at University College London

2017 Organisation of a book symposium on Edouard Machery's book "Philosophy within its proper bounds"  
18 December at Ruhr-University Bochum

Organisation of 1-day workshop on *Experimental Philosophy of Morality and Causation—Perspectives from Philosophy, Psychology, and Law*  
13 June at Ruhr-University Bochum

2016 Organisation of 1.5-day workshop on *Experimental Philosophy: Methods & New Directions* & 1-day conference on *Empirical Moral Psychology*,  
18 – 20 November 2016 at Humboldt-University Berlin

### **Other Activities and Commitment**

Co-founder and member of the scientific board of the Experimental Philosophy Group Germany, together with Albert Newen and Kevin Reuter

<https://sites.google.com/site/xphigroupgermany/home>

Author for Praefaktisch, a German philosophy blog

Several press releases and interviews on public radio about my academic work

Participation in the production of an episode of the popular-scientific tv show "Quarks" at WDR, topic: the psychology and ethics of organ donation in different legal systems (broadcasting date: February 2019)