



Curriculum Vitae Professor Dr Michela Massimi



Image: private

Name: Michela Massimi

Research Priorities: The nature of scientific knowledge, pluralism and perspectivism in scientific practice, science policy, the right to science, cultural rights, local knowledge, ocean governance

Michela Massimi is an Italo-British philosopher of science, whose work centres on the philosophy and history of the natural sciences. She is interested in fundamental questions such as: what is the nature of scientific knowledge? What role for pluralism and perspectivism in scientific practices? What is the value of local knowledge? And how to ensure equitable policy and governance systems in science? In line with these foundational questions, she does research in many different fields, ranging from philosophy of particle physics and cosmology to philosophical issues arising in the right to science and ocean governance, more recently.

Academic and Professional Career

- since 2015 Professor of Philosophy of Science, School of Philosophy, Psychology and Language Sciences, University of Edinburgh, Edinburgh, UK
- 2012 - 2015 Senior Lecturer in Philosophy of Science, School of Philosophy, Psychology and Language Sciences, University of Edinburgh, Edinburgh, UK
- 2009 - 2012 Senior Lecturer in History and Philosophy of Science, Department of Science and Technology Studies, University College London (UCL), London, UK
- 2009 Visiting Professor, Department of History and Philosophy of Science, University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, USA
- 2005 - 2008 Lecturer in History and Philosophy of Science, Department of Science and Technology Studies, UCL, London, UK
- 2002 - 2005 Junior Research Fellow, Girton College, University of Cambridge, Cambridge, UK

- 1998 - 2002 Doctorate Degree (PhD), London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE), London, UK
- 1993 - 1997 Bachelor Degree (Laurea) in Philosophy, Sapienza University, Rome, Italy

Functions in Scientific Societies and Committees

- 2023 - 2024 President, Philosophy of Science Association (PSA)
- since 2022 Member, Committee, The Analysis Trust, UK
- 2020 - 2021 Member, Editorial Advisory Board, Philosophy of Science
- 2019 - 2022 Subject Editor for Philosophy of Science, Routledge Encyclopaedia of Philosophy
- 2015 - 2019 Vice-President, European Philosophy of Science Association (EPSA)
- since 2015 Member, Editorial Advisory Board, The Philosophical Quarterly
- 2012 - 2015 Elected Member, Governing Board, PSA
- 2011 - 2016 Editor-in-Chief, The British Journal for the Philosophy of Science

Project Coordination, Membership in Collaborative Research Projects

- 2023 - 2025 Principal Investigator, Network Award “Ocean and Us”, Royal Society of Edinburgh (RSE), UK
- 2021 - 2022 Principal Investigator, RSE Saltire Workshop Award “Scientific Knowledge Across Jurisdictions”, RSE, UK
- 2016 - 2021 Principal Investigator, Consolidator Grant “Perspectival Realism”, European Research Council (ERC)
- 2012 - 2015 Principal Investigator, International Research Network “Kant and the laws of nature”, Leverhulme Trust, London, UK

Honours and Awarded Memberships

- since 2023 Member, German National Academy of Sciences Leopoldina, Germany
- 2023 Lakatos Award for the monograph “Perspectival Realism”, LSE, London, UK, and Latsis International Foundation, Geneva, Switzerland
- since 2019 Elected Member, Academia Europaea
- since 2019 Elected Fellow, Royal Astronomical Society, UK
- since 2018 Elected Fellow, RSE, UK

Research Priorities

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In her philosophical work and decade-long collaborations with scientists (from particle physics to cosmology, from nuclear physics to marine science more recently), Michela Massimi has endeavoured to bring in dialogue philosophy and the natural sciences. Professor Massimi's intellectual journey started with scholarly work on Immanuel Kant's philosophy of nature, and the influence of the Kantian tradition in modern physics, especially philosophical discussions that physicists such as Albert Einstein, Max Born and Niels Bohr conducted in the early 20th century about the meaning of physical reality in the context of quantum physics.

Michela Massimi has been a tireless ambassador for the importance of these interdisciplinary debates, which often today have fallen out of fashion. Nowadays, researchers often tend to focus on ever more narrowly defined specialist areas. At the same time, their work is expected to have a clearly defined use for a certain group of people. By contrast, Michela Massimi's work has systematically engaged with a wide range of foundational questions about the nature of science and scientific knowledge as part of our cultural history and a key defining feature of humanity. The question of the interplay between reality and the natural sciences, which greatly interested the scientists who discovered quantum physics, continues to interest Massimi today: How to think of scientific knowledge? What is the nature of physical reality? Or, in the Kantian tradition, how to think of physical phenomena that are the objects of scientific knowledge?

In this context, Massimi has articulated a new philosophical position – “perspectival realism” – whereby questions about the reliability of scientific knowledge and the nature of physical reality are re-framed by placing center stage the human vantage point. Scientific knowledge, Massimi has argued, is perspectival through and through: it is the product of myriad epistemic communities that are historically and culturally situated. Massimi sees this pluralism and perspectivism as the driving engine behind the reliability of science.

In addition to such foundational-philosophical questions, Professor Massimi works also on science policy and global governance issues. In cooperation with experts from the fields of ocean science, international law, and policy-making, Massimi has been investigating epistemic injustices at play in marine science and possible ways forward for a more inclusive and more equitable global ocean governance when it comes to the fair use of the oceans' resources, capacity building, technology

transfer, access and benefit sharing. Ultimately, Michela Massimi sees working on such projects as an integral part of better implementing the human right to science (Art 27 of the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights). The so-called right to science, its relation to cultural rights, and to broader questions about epistemic injustices, pluralism and perspectivism in science remains one of Massimi's current areas of active research.