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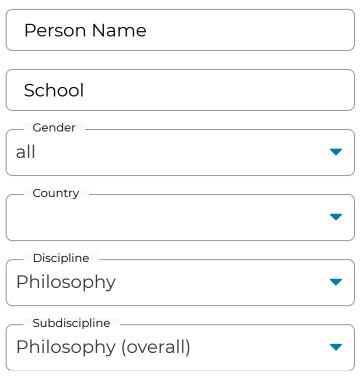
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Methodology: How and Why We Rank by Influence ...

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List of the most influential people in Philosophy, for the years 1990 – 2020



Peter Singer

1946 - Present (75 years)

#154 Person's Overall Influence

Peter Singer is a well-known Australian moral philosopher, Laureate Professor at the Centre for Applied Philosophy and Public Ethics at the University of Melbourne, and Ira W. DeCamp Professor of Bioethics at Princeton University. He studied at the University of Melbourne and the University of Oxford.





Jacques Derrida

1930 - 2004 (74 years)

#51 Person's Overall Influence

Jacques Derrida, born in Algeria, was a French philosopher best known for developing a form of semiotic analysis known as deconstruction, which he analyzed in numerous texts, and developed in the context of

phenomenology. He is one of the major figures associated with poststructuralism and postmodern philosophy.

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Jürgen Habermas

1929 - Present (92 years)

#70 Person's Overall Influence

Jürgen Habermas is a German philosopher mostly associated with the influential Frankurt School in Germany, part of the Institute for Social Research, at Goethe University Frankfurt, and historically an important center for research on social theory and critical philosophy. Habermas, now 90, earned his Ph.D. in Philosophy from the University of Bonn in 1954. Habermas is a famed philosopher who has taught a number of influential philosophers, including Hans Joas at the University of Chicago.





Alasdair Macintyre

1929 - Present (92 years)

#247 Person's Overall Influence

Alasdair MacIntyre is Senior Research Fellow at the Centre for Contemporary Aristotelian Studies in Ethics and Politics (CASEP) at London Metropolitan University. He is also Emeritus Professor of Philosophy at the University of Notre Dame, and Permanent Senior Distinguished Research Fellow at the Notre Dame Center for Ethics and Culture. MacIntyre received his early philosophical training at the University of Manchester and the University of Oxford.



Richard Rorty

1931 - 2007 (76 years)

#212 Person's Overall Influence

Richard McKay Rorty was an American philosopher. Educated at the University of Chicago and Yale University, he had strong interests and training in both the history of philosophy and contemporary analytic philosophy, the latter of which came to constitute the main focus of his work at Princeton University in the 1960s. He subsequently came to reject the tradition of philosophy according to which knowledge involves correct representation of a world whose existence remains wholly independent of that representation.

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Daniel Dennett

1942 - Present (79 years)

#138 Person's Overall Influence

Currently appointed as the Austin B. Fletcher Professor of Philosophy at Tufts University (and co-director of the Center for Cognitive Studies) Daniel Dennett is a philosopher concerned with questions of the mind and cognitive science, and is colloquially known as one of the " Four Horsemen of New Atheism. " As an undergraduate, Dennett studied at Wesleyan University and Harvard University before earning his PhD in philosophy at Oxford University in 1965.





Alvin Plantinga

1932 - Present (89 years)

#362 Person's Overall Influence

Alvin Plantinga currently holds the title of the William Harry Jellema Chair in Philosophy at Calvin University. Previously, Plantinga has taught at Wayne State University and the University of Notre Dame. Additionally, Plantinga was the president of the American Philosophical Association, Western Division from 1981 to 1982. As an undergraduate, Plantinga studied at Jamestown College, Calvin College, and Harvard University. Plantinga went on to pursue graduate studies at the University of Michigan, before transferring to Yale University in 1955 and earning his PhD there in 1958.

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Saul Kripke

1940 - Present (81 years)

#286 Person's Overall Influence

Saul Kripke currently boasts the title of Distinguished Professor of Philosophy at the Graduate Center of the City University of New York. Unlike other philosophers on this list (and other notable academics in general) Kripke holds only a bachelor's degree in mathematics, earned in 1962 at Harvard University. It is worth noting, however, that during his undergraduate studies Kripke taught a graduate-level logic course at MIT. He also holds numerous honorary degrees. Kripke has also taught at Harvard University, Rockefeller University, and Princeton University.





Hilary Putnam

1926 - 2016 (90 years)

#160 Person's Overall Influence

Hilary Whitehall Putnam was an American philosopher, mathematician, and computer scientist, and a major figure in analytic philosophy in the second half of the 20th century. He made significant contributions to philosophy of mind, philosophy of language, philosophy of mathematics, and philosophy of science. Outside philosophy, Putnam contributed to mathematics and computer science. Together with Martin Davis he developed the Davis-Putnam algorithm for the Boolean satisfiability problem and he helped demonstrate the unsolvability of Hilbert's tenth problem.

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William Lane Craig

1949 - Present (72 years)

#476 Person's Overall Influence

William Lane Craig was born in Peoria, Illinois, in 1949. He earned a B.A. from Wheaton College, and pursued graduate work at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School in the philosophy of religion. His earned his doctorate in 1977 at the University of Birmingham, England, with work on the cosmological argument for God's existence under the supervision of John Hick. He pursued postdoctoral work under the direction of Wolfhart Pannenberg at the Ludwig-Maximillians-Universität München in Germany, where he earned a doctorate in theology in 1984.



Alain Badiou

1937 - Present (84 years)

#641 Person's Overall Influence

Alain Badiou is formerly chair of Philosophy at the École normale supérieure (ENS), and is a founder of the faculty of Philosophy of the Université de Paris VIII along with French philosophy luminaries Michel Foucault and Jean-François Lyotard. Badiou though associated with postmodern thinkers like Foucault maintains that his thought and work cannot be described adequately by postmodernism, though it is not also purely modern. He is a prominent advocate of a return to communism as a form of government.

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Slavoj Žižek

1949 - Present (72 years)

#369 Person's Overall Influence

Slavoj Žižek is a Slovenian philosopher, a researcher at the Department of Philosophy of the University of Ljubljana Faculty of Arts and international director of the Birkbeck Institute for the Humanities of the University of London. He is also Global Eminent Scholar at Kyung Hee University in Seoul and Global Distinguished Professor of German at New York University. He works in subjects including continental philosophy, psychoanalysis, political theory, cultural studies, art criticism, film criticism, Marxism, Hegelianism and theology.

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John Rawls

1921 - 2002 (81 years)



#95 Person's Overall Influence

John Bordley Rawls was an American moral and political philosopher in the liberal tradition. Rawls received both the Schock Prize for Logic and Philosophy and the National Humanities Medal in 1999, the latter presented by President Bill Clinton, in recognition of how Rawls's work "helped a whole generation of learned Americans revive their faith in democracy itself."

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Willard Van Orman Quine

1908 - 2000 (92 years)

#170 Person's Overall Influence

Willard Van Orman Quine was an American philosopher and logician in the analytic tradition, recognized as "one of the most influential philosophers of the twentieth century." From 1930 until his death 70 years later, Quine was continually affiliated with Harvard University in one way or another, first as a student, then as a professor. He filled the Edgar Pierce Chair of Philosophy at Harvard from 1956 to 1978.





Judith Butler

1956 - Present (65 years)

#301 Person's Overall Influence

Judith Butler is the Maxine Ellio Professor in the Department of Comparative Literature and the Program of Critical Theory at the University of California, Berkeley. Butler earned a bachelor of arts in philosophy at Yale University in 1978, and her PhD at Yale in 1984. In addition to UC Berkeley, Butler has taught at Wesleyan University,

George Washington University, Johns Hopkins University, Columbia University, and the University of Amsterdam.

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Graham Harman

1968 - Present (53 years)

#3123 Person's Overall Influence

Graham Harman is currently the Distinguished Professor of Philosophy at the Southern California Institute of Architecture. Prior to his current position, Harman taught at the American University in Cairo from 2000-2016, and also held positions at the University of Amsterdam, University of Turin, Yale University, and the European Graduate School. Harman studies philosophy as an undergraduate at St. John's College, earning his BA in 1990, before earning his MA at Pennsylvania State University, and his PhD at DePaul University, finishing his studies in 1999.





Timothy Williamson

1955 - Present (66 years)

#1601 Person's Overall Influence

Swedish-born British philosopher Timothy Williamson currently holds the title of the Wykeham Professor of Logic at the University of Oxford, and is a fellow of the New College at Oxford. Williamson has also taught at places including Trinity College Dublin, the University of Edinburgh, the Australian National University, the University of Canterbury, and the University of Michigan. Williamson completed his BA in mathematics and philosophy at Oxford in 1976, and his PhD in 1981.



John McDowell

1942 - Present (79 years)

#1051 Person's Overall Influence

John Henry McDowell is a South African philosopher, formerly a Fellow of University College, Oxford and now University Professor at the University of Pittsburgh. Although he has written on metaphysics, epistemology, ancient philosophy, and meta-ethics, McDowell's most influential work has been in the philosophy of mind and philosophy of language. McDowell was one of three recipients of the 2010 Andrew W. Mellon Foundation's Distinguished Achievement Award, and is a Fellow of both the and the British Academy.

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Richard Dawkins

1941 - Present (80 years)

#147 Person's Overall Influence

Richard Dawkins is an emeritus fellow of New College, Oxford and former University of Oxford's Professor for Public Understanding of Science, but he is best known for his work in evolutionary biology. He studied zoology at Balliol College, Oxford, earning a bachelor's degree, M.A., and Ph.D.





Michael Dummett

1925 - 2011 (86 years)

#793 Person's Overall Influence

Sir Michael Anthony Eardley Dummett was an English academic described as "among the most significant British philosophers of the last century and a leading campaigner for racial tolerance and equality." He was, until 1992, Wykeham Professor of Logic at the University of Oxford. He wrote on the history of analytic philosophy, notably as an interpreter of Frege, and made original contributions particularly in the philosophies of mathematics, logic, language and metaphysics. He was known for his work on truth and meaning and their implications to debates between realism and anti-realism, a term

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Martha Nussbaum

1947 - Present (74 years)

#424 Person's Overall Influence

Currently, Martha Nussbaum holds the position of Ernst Freund Distinguished Service Professor of Law and Ethics at the University of Chicago. Too influential to be confined to one department, Nussbaum is appointed to the faculty of both the philosophy department and the law school. As an undergraduate, Nussbaum spent two years at Wellesley College, before deciding to pursue theatre studies at New York University. After, Nussbaum completed her graduate studies and PhD at Harvard University.

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Noam Chomsky

1928 - Present (93 years)



#63 Person's Overall Influence

Noam Chomsky currently holds joint appointments at MIT as Institute Professor Emeritus, and the University of Arizona as Laureate Professor. Chomsky completed his university studies between the University of Pennsylvania and Harvard.

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Thomas Nagel

1937 - Present (84 years)

#580 Person's Overall Influence

Currently holding the title of University Professor of Philosophy and Law, Emeritus at New York University, Thomas Nagel previously held positions at the University of California, Berkeley and Princeton University, among others. Nagel earned a BA in philosophy from Cornell University in 1958, a BPhil in 1960 at the University of Oxford (as a Fulbright scholar, and studying under JL Austin, no less), and his PhD from Harvard University in 1963.

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Fredric Jameson

1934 - Present (87 years)

#470 Person's Overall Influence

Fredric Jameson is an American literary critic, philosopher and Marxist political theorist. He is best known for his analysis of contemporary cultural trends, particularly his analysis of postmodernity and capitalism. Jameson's best-known books include Postmodernism, or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism and The Political Unconscious.

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Susan Haack

1945 - Present (76 years)

#1839 Person's Overall Influence

Susan Haack is a British philosopher. She is Distinguished Professor in the Humanities, Cooper Senior Scholar in Arts and Sciences, Professor of Philosophy, and Professor of Law at the University of Miami. She has written on logic, the philosophy of language, epistemology, and metaphysics. Her pragmatism follows that of Charles Sanders Peirce.

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Nicholas Rescher

1928 - Present (93 years)

#1207 Person's Overall Influence

German-born Nicholas Rescher is a professor of philosophy at the University of Pittsburgh, as well as the Chairman for the Center of Philosophy of Science. Rescher came to the United States as a child, where he would go on to earn a degree from Queens College (in mathematics) before earning a PhD in philosophy in 1951 at Princeton University, at only 22 years of age. Rescher taught at Princeton until 1961, when he changed to the University of Pittsburgh.



Bruno Latour

1947 - Present (74 years)

#613 Person's Overall Influence

Bruno Latour is an anthropologist, philosopher, and sociologist. He earned his Ph.D from the University of Tours. Soon after graduating, he became interested in anthropology, and set out on a study of race and decolonization in Ivory Coast.

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Nick Bostrom

1973 - Present (48 years)

#649 Person's Overall Influence

Nick Bostrom is the founding director of the Future of Humanity Institute at Oxford University, the Oxford Martin Programme on the Impacts of Future Technology, and a philosopher at Oxford. He has earned a B.A. from the University of Gothenburg, an M.A. from Stockholm University, an M.Sc. from King's College of London, and a Ph.D. from the London School of Economics.

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Robert Nozick

1938 - 2002 (64 years)

#331 Person's Overall Influence

Robert Nozick was an American philosopher. He held the Joseph Pellegrino University Professorship at Harvard University, and was president of the American Philosophical Association. He is best known for his books Philosophical Explanations, which included his

counterfactual theory of knowledge, and Anarchy, State, and Utopia, a libertarian answer to John Rawls' A Theory of Justice, in which Nozick also presented his own theory of utopia as one in which people can freely choose the rules of the society they enter into. His other work involved ethics, decision theory, philosophy of mind, met

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Derek Parfit

1942 - 2017 (75 years)

#994 Person's Overall Influence

Derek Antony Parfit was a British philosopher who specialised in personal identity, rationality, and ethics. He is widely considered one of the most important and influential moral philosophers of the late 20th and early 21st centuries.





Ray Brassier

1965 - Present (56 years)

#4407 Person's Overall Influence

Brassier is Professor of Philosophy at the American University of Beirut, Lebanon. He received his bachelor's degree from the University of North London in 1995. He received his master's degree in 1997 and in 2001 his Ph.D., both from the University of Warwick.



Simon Critchley

1960 - Present (61 years)

#2529 Person's Overall Influence

Simon Critchley is the Hans Jonas Professor of Philosophy at the New School for Social Research, a board member for the Onassis Foundation, and a professor of philosophy at the European Graduate School. He earned his M.Phil at the University of Nice, and his Ph.D. at the University of Essex.

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Philippa Foot

1920 - 2010 (90 years)

#1483 Person's Overall Influence

Philippa Ruth Foot was an English philosopher and one of the founders of contemporary virtue ethics, who was inspired by the ethics of Aristotle. She is credited with inventing the so-called trolley problem. She was elected a member of the American Philosophical Society. She was a granddaughter of the U.S. President Grover Cleveland.

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David Chalmers

1966 - Present (55 years)

#1547 Person's Overall Influence

David Chalmers serves currently as Professor of Philosophy and Director of the Centre for Consciousness at the Australian National University, as well as University Professor, Professor of Philosophy and Neural Science, and co-Director of the Center for Mind, Brain and Consciousness (with

philosopher Ned Block) at New York University. One of the world's most influential philosophers on the problem of consciousness, Chalmers has a degree in pure mathematics from the University of Adelaide in Australia, and received his Ph.D. in philosophy and cognitive science from Indiana University Bloomingt...

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Rosalind Hursthouse

1943 - Present (78 years)

#4374 Person's Overall Influence

Mary Rosalind Hursthouse is a British-born New Zealand moral philosopher noted for her work on virtue ethics. Hursthouse is Professor Emerita of Philosophy at the University of Auckland. Biography Born in Bristol, England, in 1943, Hursthouse spent her childhood in New Zealand. Her aunt Mary studied philosophy and when her father asked her what that was all about, he could not understand her answer. Rosalind, 17 at the time, knew immediately that she wanted to study philosophy, too, and enrolled the next year.





Hans-Hermann Hoppe

1949 - Present (72 years)

#751 Person's Overall Influence

Hans-Hermann Hoppe is a German-American paleolibertarian and anarcho-capitalist political theorist. He is Professor Emeritus of Economics at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, Senior Fellow of the Ludwig von Mises Institute, and the founder and president of the Property and Freedom Society.



Charles Taylor

1931 - Present (90 years)

#1082 Person's Overall Influence

Charles Taylor is Emeritus Professor of Philosophy at McGill University, Canada. He is known best for his contributions to political philosophy, the philosophy of social science, and the philosophy of history and intellectual history. Taylor received a bachelor's degree in History from McGill in 1953. As a Rhodes Scholar at the University of Oxford, Taylor took a first-class bachelor's degree in Philosophy, Politics, and Economics and a Doctor of Philosophy (DPhil) from Oxford in 1961. Notably, his supervisor was Isaiah Berlin, the renowned British social and political theorist.

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Quentin Meillassoux

1967 - Present (54 years)

#5415 Person's Overall Influence

Meillassoux is a French philosopher who studied under Alain Badiou. He is Professor of Philosophy at the Université Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne (or "the Sorbonne"). Meillassoux is perhaps best known for his 2006 book on philosophy, After Finitude. In it, he develops a position which has made him a notable and iconoclastic philosopher, as it departs radically from the mainstream in philosophy, often traced back to Immanuel Kant. Kant argued that our ideas about the world are "correlated" with ourselves, in the sense that we cannot understand the world apart from ourselves. By contrast, Meill...



Ken Wilber

1949 - Present (72 years)

#529 Person's Overall Influence

Kenneth Earl Wilber II is an American philosopher and writer on transpersonal psychology and his own integral theory, a philosophy which suggests the synthesis of all human knowledge and experience. Biography Wilber was born in 1949 in Oklahoma City. In 1967 he enrolled as a pre-med student at Duke University. He became inspired, like many of his generation, by Eastern literature, particularly the Tao Te Ching. He left Duke and enrolled at the University of Nebraska at Lincoln, but after a few years dropped out of university to devote all his time to studying his own curriculum and writing boo...

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Bernard Williams

1929 - 2003 (74 years)

#811 Person's Overall Influence

Sir Bernard Arthur Owen Williams, FBA was an English moral philosopher. His publications include Problems of the Self, Ethics and the Limits of Philosophy, Shame and Necessity, and Truth and Truthfulness. He was knighted in 1999.



Robert C. Solomon

1942 - 2007 (65 years)

#2785 Person's Overall Influence

Robert C. Solomon was an American professor of philosophy at the University of Texas at Austin, where he taught for more than 30 years. Professor Solomon won many teaching honors, including the Standard Oil Outstanding Teaching Award in 1973; the University of Texas President's Associates Teaching Award; a Fulbright Lecture Award; University Research and National Endowment for the Humanities Grants; and the Chad Oliver Plan II Teaching Award in 1998.

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Mario Bunge

1919 - 2020 (101 years)

#871 Person's Overall Influence

Mario Augusto Bunge was an Argentine-Canadian philosopher and physicist. His philosophical writings combined scientific realism, systemism, materialism, emergentism, and other principles. He was an advocate of "exact philosophy" and a critic of existentialist, hermeneutical, and phenomenological philosophy, postmodernism, and feminist philosophy. He was popularly known for his opinions against pseudoscience.

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Nicholas Wolterstorff

1932 - Present (89 years)

#2572 Person's Overall Influence

Nicholas Paul Wolterstorff is an American philosopher and theologian. He is currently Noah Porter Professor Emeritus Philosophical Theology at Yale University. A prolific writer with wide-ranging philosophical and theological interests, he has written books on aesthetics, epistemology, political philosophy, philosophy of religion, metaphysics, and philosophy of education. In Faith and Rationality, Wolterstorff, Alvin Plantinga, and William Alston developed and expanded upon a view of religious epistemology that has come to be known as Reformed epistemology. He also helped to establish the jou...

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Roderick Long

1964 - Present (57 years)

#1902 Person's Overall Influence

Currently holding the title of Professor of Philosophy at Auburn University, Roderick Long is known for his work in left-libertarianism. Long earned a BA in philosophy at Harvard University in 1985 and a PhD in 1992. Long has also taught at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, the University of Michigan, and the Institute for Humane Studies. Outside of teaching, Long is an editor with the Journal of Libertarian Studies and president of the Molinari Institute and Molinari Society.

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Jerry Fodor

1935 - 2017 (82 years)

#502 Person's Overall Influence

Jerry Alan Fodor was an American philosopher and the author of many crucial works in the fields of philosophy of mind and cognitive science. His writings in these fields laid the groundwork for the modularity of mind and the language of thought hypotheses, and he is recognized as having had "an enormous influence on virtually every portion of the philosophy of mind literature since 1960." Until his death in 2017 he held the position of State of New Jersey Professor of Philosophy, Emeritus, at Rutgers University.

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William Alston

1921 - 2009 (88 years)

#2101 Person's Overall Influence

William Payne Alston was an American philosopher. He made influential contributions to the philosophy of language, epistemology, and Christian philosophy. He earned his PhD from the University of Chicago and taught at the University of Michigan, Rutgers University, University of Illinois, and Syracuse University.

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Richard Swinburne

1934 - Present (87 years)

#1490 Person's Overall Influence

Richard Swinburne was born in 1934 in Smethwick, Staffordshire, England. He graduated in 1957 with a bachelor's degree in philosophy, politics, and economics from Exeter College, the fourth oldest college at the University of Oxford. He pursued a graduate degree in philosophy (1957-59) from the university and then entered St. Stephen's House,

where he earned the Oxford Diploma in Theology (1959-60). From 1985 until his retirement in 2002, Swinburne held the position of Nolloth Professor of the Philosophy of the Christian Religion at Oxford.

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Jaegwon Kim

1934 - 2019 (85 years)

#1821 Person's Overall Influence

Jaegwon Kim was a Korean-American philosopher. At the time of his death, Kim was an emeritus professor of philosophy at Brown University. He also taught at several other leading American universities during his lifetime, including the University of Michigan, Cornell University, the University of Notre Dame, Johns Hopkins University, and Swarthmore College. He is best known for his work on mental causation, the mindbody problem and the metaphysics of supervenience and events. Key themes in his work include: a rejection of Cartesian metaphysics, the limitations of strict psychophysical identi

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Tom Regan

1938 - 2017 (79 years)

#1775 Person's Overall Influence

Tom Regan was an American philosopher who specialized in animal rights theory. He was professor emeritus of philosophy at North Carolina State University, where he had taught from 1967 until his retirement in 2001.





Michael Huemer

1969 - Present (52 years)

#4985 Person's Overall Influence

Michael Huemer is a professor of philosophy at the University of Colorado, Boulder. He has defended ethical intuitionism, direct realism, libertarianism, veganism, and philosophical anarchism. Education and career Huemer graduated from the University of California, Berkeley and earned his Ph.D. at Rutgers University in 1998 under the supervision of Peter D. Klein.

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