Conference 2022

SATURDAY JUNE 25

9-10:30 am Workshops
1. Mary Gates Hall Room 231:
Making Philosophy Personal: Early Experiences with Inquiry
Debi Talukdar, Alex Chang, and Roberta Israeloff
During this workshop, participants will be invited to explore their earliest experiences with philosophical inquiry, and then recount this in a personal narrative. It is the second in a series of philosophical narrative workshops, the first of which was offered at the 2019 PLATO Conference. These narratives form the core of PLATO's Narrative Project, which explores people's exposure to philosophical thinking and the various factors that inspired them to remain involved in the field. Our findings will be documented, ultimately, in a research paper that will propose new and more relevant ways to introduce philosophy to young students.

2. Mary Gates Hall Room 241:
Author Meets Critics Session: Thinking Through Stories: Children, Philosophy, and Picture Books
Thomas Wartenberg (VIRTUAL), Stephen Kekoa Miller, and Wendy C. Turgeon (VIRTUAL); Erik Kenyon (moderator)
In this session we will discuss Thomas Wartenberg's new book. The topic of picture books has generated a good deal of controversy in the philosophy for children community. Some have followed Lipman's lead and condemned picture books as inappropriate for getting children to think for themselves. Others have advocated for the use of picture books, arguing that Lipman has misunderstood how they generate genuine thinking among young children.

3. Mary Gates Hall Room 251: TEQ Deck: A Tool to Promote Discussions about Technology and Ethics
James Read and Emily Robertson
TEQ Deck: Technology, Ethics, Questions, is a game designed to allow younger audiences an opportunity to practice philosophical discussion, inquiry, and debate by offering 52 different prompt cards, each with a question or statement about the ethics of technology. Because technology has become more omnipresent in our lives since the pandemic, it's more important than ever that young people think critically technology's influence, and about the ethical implications associated with contemporary technological developments. TEQ Deck's design allows for a less formal, Socratic-style discussion or a more structured "gameplay" experience wherein students are presented with a series of goals or objectives over the course of their discussion of each card.

11-12:30 Presentations
1. Mary Gates Hall Room 231
Chair: Aaron Yarmel

Ethics in Action Across the Philosophy Core Sequence at Stanford Online High School

Jonathan Weil and Joseph Rees

In our presentation, we explain the arc of exposure to ethics throughout our philosophy sequence and explore how we think this trajectory equips students. In particular, we will focus on the ethical aspects of the courses at our school – on human nature and society, and political theory – and detail the ethics section of our senior-year course, with an emphasis on the Moral Experiment. Then we will lead a discussion on alternative ways to prepare students for ethical thinking in and out of the classroom.

The Effects of Pre-College Philosophy Instruction on Critical Thinking Skills
Brian Collins (VIRTUAL)

We conducted our research during the SoCal Philosophy Academy's annual Summer Institute at California Lutheran University.   Students took a critical thinking skills test, measuring argument evaluation, assumption recognition, and conclusion drawing both before and after the week-long institute. We found significant increases in the students' scores. In our presentation we will discuss the data and share our approach. We also hope to get feedback to help us devise next steps to improve on future iterations of the project.

Is Virtue Teachable? Cosmopolitanism's terrible bargains
Serge Danielson-Francois

Using the Meno as our point of departure, we will review how the Academy of the Sacred Heart transformed the 10th grade World History curriculum into a political philosophy seminar blending political geography with ethics. Sophomores took a virtual world tour of the world's current hotspots. Students were asked to keep many factors in mind: the global trend towards authoritarianism, the fate of broken nation states teetering between civil war dictatorship, the burden of colonial and postcolonial extraction economies, and the fact that sectarian violence is fueled by prolonged ethnic and regional enmity. They were then asked to consider how one navigates the moral straits between deadly and disorderly democracy and the injustice of tyrannical government.

2. Mary Gates Hall Room 241
Chair: Stephen Miller

Teaching Ethics with Argument Maps
Anne Sanderson (VIRTUAL)

We will introduce argument mapping: a simple, powerful tool for understanding how reasons fit together to support a claim. A growing body of evidence shows that practice with argument mapping significantly improves critical thinking skills compared to other methods. Mapping is particularly effective when people collaborate to construct and discuss ethical issues. Our instructors will first provide an overview of argument mapping using MindMup, a digital tool. Next, we will divide the group into small teams to map an ethics case.

Philosophy Internships
Chong Choe-Smith

Philosophy internships have great potential for achieving important objectives for philosophy programs, particularly those emphasizing ethics emphasis, but what sorts of internship opportunities would be best suited for undergraduates in a philosophy program? Philosophy internships address these two important objectives: (1) assuming that philosophical reflection alone is ineffective in cultivating moral development, philosophy internships offer a mode of experiential learning that may supplement and enhance classroom education; and (2) because philosophy is not associated with any obvious career options, philosophy internships may provide students with additional guidance as they transition from college to career.

Life is Strange: Teaching Ethical Dilemmas through Video Games and Video Game Culture
John Torrey
Teaching ethics to students requires that teachers connect the importance of ethics to daily life. Thanks to social media, smartphones, and video games, students today are more digitally connected than ever. As a result, I argue that we should embrace the existence of technology within our students' lives, which includes both the in-game decisions made by players as well as the interpersonal experiences of online gaming. This allows instructors to use new ways to introduce ethical reasoning to students, as well as impress upon students how frequently they run into ethical dilemmas and the various ethical theories they can deploy when trying to make the right choices.

3. Mary Gates Hall Room 251
Chair: Debi Talukdar

Thinking About Childhood
Jana Mohr Lone and Claire Cassidy
This interactive presentation will examine the nature of childhood and the distinctions made between children and adults. Traditionally childhood is viewed as a time of preparation for adulthood: children are seen as "becomings," as opposed to adults, who are full human beings. Gareth Matthews calls this view the "deficit model" of childhood: children are characterized as possessing underdeveloped cognitive, emotional, and social faculties. As a result, when children express their own ideas, especially on weighty subjects, they are not taken seriously, a form of epistemic injustice. We will invite a conversation about how doing philosophy with children can create possibilities for child-defined philosophical encounters, including the role of listening in philosophy and particularly in K-12 classrooms.

Is that a Philosophical Question? The Tension between Democratizing the Classroom and Building Skills in Philosophy for Children
Karen Emmerman
In the theory underpinning Philosophy for Children (P4C), there is a long-standing commitment to democratizing the classroom in the methodological sense, where democratizing the classroom means, among other things, that the children determine what questions we consider and the direction our discussion takes— they have the epistemic authority to drive the inquiry. Question-asking and question selection are crucial steps in determining the focus of the community's philosophical reflection. There is a widely held belief that, to democratize the classroom, question-asking and question selection should be undertaken by the students themselves rather than by the adult facilitator. In practice, however, this commitment to methodological democratization generates a tension. Learning how to ask and identify philosophical questions is a skill that needs to be acquired through practice.

Why UNESCO supports philosophy with children: political and humanistic issues of this practice in schools and in the city
Edwige Chirouter
Philosophy is one of the essential drivers of democratic life, though too often relegated to secondary or university education, hence to the elite. The challenges of democratizing philosophy teachings are very closely linked to UNESCO's objectives and values, especially the belief that philosophy should be taught at a young age: "The very mission of UNESCO, dedicated to serving the intellectual and moral solidarity of humanity, is to embrace and promote knowledge as a whole. In an open, inclusive and pluralistic, knowledge-oriented society, philosophy has its rightful place…alongside the other social and human sciences…at the heart of our concerns" (Goucha, 2007). In 2016 the first UNESCO Chair for Philosophy with Children was created and this practice is now advocated by the United Nations.

4. Mary Gates Hall Room 271
Chair: Deborah Mower

The Ethical Dimension of History
Paul Reale and Joshua Large
Among the insights of history is that "the past is a foreign country." Past actors saw the world differently from us, raising the question: how can we pass judgment on them? Moreover, doesn't this question illuminate the relativism of today, where cultural differences generate incommensurate ethical foundations? Is history an object lesson in moral relativism? Our presentation will show that, far from leading students into a relativist morass, history helps guide them toward a reasonable middle ground. Perceiving the differences between us and our forebears is no more or less important than perceiving commonality. The fact that ethical judgment must be properly circumscribed in temporal and cultural contexts does not preclude judgment.

Philosophy Through Computer Science
Daniel Lim
This presentation will explore how to teach key philosophical concepts (for example, external world skepticism and the existence of God) through computer science, a novel approach with no precedent. I will introduce and clarify three philosophical ideas by asking participants to engage with computational concepts through activities: (i) digital image manipulation (RGB color system and image file formats) as an entry to external world skepticism, (ii) cellular automata (John Conway's Game of Life) as an entry to the relationship between free will and determinism, and (iii) machine learning (regression and clustering) as an entry to the problem of induction.

New Critical Perspectives: Ethics in Design
Laura Scherling
This presentation examines practical, critical, and historical issues imbued in ethics across design disciplines. Designers have long influenced culture and persuaded educators and practitioners across disciplines to grapple with complex conditions found in contemporary societies, engaging with questions about consumption, technology use, and supply chains. Designers are not only called upon to stay informed of changes in business and education, but also with emerging ethical considerations that accompany these changes. Drawing from our edited collection Ethics in Design and Communication: New Critical Perspectives, we will address the struggle to create a sustainable and equitable world, one in which design and critical thought play essential roles.

12:30-2:30 pm LUNCH INTEREST GROUP SESSIONS

(Saturday lunch is provided for all conference participants)
Interest Group Sessions will involve facilitated open conversations on the following four topics, focusing on issues of interest to the group. Conference participants may choose any one of the four to attend, or you are welcome to take a lunch and spend the lunch period on your own or with colleagues.

Mary Gates Hall Room 231
Issues Facing Experienced P4C Practitioners
Led by Karen Emmerman, Stephen Kekoa Miller, and Debi Talukdar

Mary Gates Hall Room 241
Issues for People New to the P4C Field
Led by Kelly Cowling, Marisa Diaz-Waian, Dustin Webster, and Sarah Vitale

Mary Gates Hall Room 251
Lesson Planning for Classroom Teachers
Led by Alison Cohen and Colin Pierce

Mary Gates Hall Room 271
Philosophy with Young People and Potential Paths After Graduate School
Led by Stone Addington, Cassie Finley, Jordan Sherry-Wagner, and Aaron Yarmel

2:30-4 pm Workshops

1. Mary Gates Hall Room 231: Primary Sources for Youth (PS4Y)
Erik Kenyon, Michael Vazquez, and Stephen Kekoa Miller
The P4C community relies on books and other media created explicitly for children more than on primary sources. In this workshop, session leaders draw from P4C practices to address three major challenges to using primary sources with middle and high school students. Participants will use an excerpt from Cicero, On Fate, to prepare lesson plans for their own context: grade-level, discipline, and language. Finally, participants will sketch a unit based on primary sources to integrate into their own teaching. We will use an Understanding-by-Design approach, starting with the final project/ assessment in mind and then laying out passages to build up to it. Workshop leaders provide online resources for primary sources in age-appropriate translation and accompanying lessons plans.

2. Mary Gates Hall Room 241: Building a Peaceful, Just, Verdant Future
G.G. Kellner
Workshop participants will explore ethical questions that relate to the creation of a peaceful, just, verdant future world. In small groups, participants will review actual historical documents such as the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights (1948). These small groups will consider how these documents might be updated to address current world concerns and views. Participants will have an opportunity to propose changes before a simulated committee or to sit on the committee considering changes. Alternatively, participants may act as reporters or remain in the audience as witnesses.This simulation workshop can be adapted for use in middle school, high school, and college classrooms.

3. Mary Gates Hall Room 251: Assessing P4C Programs
Sarah Vitale
Many educators recognize assessments, rightly, as part of a neoliberal school management system, which functions to reward already high performing schools and punish under-resourced schools. University faculty in the humanities see how assessment functions to reduce the size of our departments, decrease our resources, and, in some cases, eliminate entire programs. Nonetheless, those of us who practice philosophy for children operate in a system that demands such things, especially when it comes to funding or other institutional support. In addition, we want to know our programs are working, beyond anecdotal accounts. In this workshop, participants will (1) consider the potential ethical dilemma of particular types of assessment; (2) discuss the potential benefits and drawbacks of assessment; (3) discuss what may be important to assess in a P4C program; and (4) consider various ways to assess our outcomes.

4. Mary Gates Hall Room 271: The Philosophical Citizen: Exploring Tensions in America's Democratic System
Allison Cohen
Recognizing that years of polarization have left our constitutional democracy in peril, the National Endowment for the Humanities and the US Dept of Education funded the Educating for American

Democracy initiative. This workshop will introduce participants to the EAD framework and a model lesson that uses prompts relevant to current political questions. The model distinguishes itself from more traditional methods of debate and discussion by drawing attention away from the notion that there are two sides to a political question, and by encouraging students to investigate the nuances and complexity of these topics. Providing students an opportunity to discuss controversial political topics is essential to prepare them for self-governance, but teachers are often hesitant to include such discussions in class. This approach seeks to reduce some of this hesitancy. Come prepared to share your thoughts on balancing majority rule and minority interests. We will also brainstorm ideas to measure progress on identified goals.

4 pm Closing Remarks in Mary Gates Hall Commons

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