

Guelph Conference in Environmental Philosophy, 2018

Conference Policies

Policy on Respectful Dialogue

At the Guelph Conference in Environmental Philosophy we encourage participants to engage in respectful and constructive dialogue with presenters.

Western Philosophy, perhaps more than any other discipline, recognizes the importance of critical engagement as a means of uncovering the truth. Since the days of Socrates, philosophers have strived to separate their analysis of “the argument” from their criticism of the person(s) who happen to be defending the argument. To respectfully challenge an argument is an expectation of doing philosophy. To criticize or malign the person defending an argument is not only a logical fallacy, it is entirely socially unacceptable.

In recent years, there has been growing recognition that the discipline of Western Philosophy must become more inclusive of people with non-traditional cultural backgrounds in addition to becoming more gender-balanced. At the same time, we are coming to recognize that cultural and individual differences among people can cause them to respond differently when arguments are being challenged, especially when such challenges occur in a public forum.

We therefore encourage conference participants to make extra effort in being respectful and courteous to presenters, for example, when asking questions or raising objections. It is entirely possible to uphold the philosophical tradition of Socratic dialogue while remaining sensitive to people’s differences.

Policy on Social Media Use

We encouraged the use of social media before, during, and after the conference in order to share information and to network with others. However, we asked all conference participants to adhere to the following social media guidelines:

- Blog or tweet about what you are hearing and learning, but refrain from sharing information when the speaker explicitly requests this. Talks are tweetable and shareable by default, but speakers can request that specific details or slides not be shared.
- Whenever possible, use the hashtag #guelphphilosophy to discuss the conference.
- Provide feedback to the conference organizers, for example, by posting and discussing topics of interest as well as ideas for future meetings.
- Communicate with respect and consideration for others, keeping criticism constructive.
- Do not engage in rudeness or personal attacks.

Policy on Gender Equality

The Guelph Conference in Environmental Philosophy strived to achieve gender representation in line with the gender balance in our research community. This initiative is reflected in our choice of keynote speakers. It was not possible to choose submitted papers on a basis of gender equality, because the abstracts were blind reviewed. However, we were pleased that our selection process resulted in an almost equal gender balance.

Policy on Cultural Diversity

The discipline of philosophy, as it has been practiced in European and Colonial contexts, has remained fairly insulated from non-European influences. It remains an important challenge to explore opportunities for dialogue across traditional boundaries. To this end, we have included in our program a keynote presentation that will address a North American First Nation's perspective on environmental policy. We also organized a session on "competing perspectives on environmental policy" that includes talks representing African and First Nations viewpoints.