Minorities And Philosophy (MAP) Resource Guide
for the University of Toronto

Are you an undergraduate student in philosophy who wants to know what kind of help there is on campus for students of underrepresented groups who need assistance, or those who want to assist others?

Are you a graduate student in philosophy who is interested in professionalization and the promotion of equity in philosophy?

Are you a philosophy teacher who is looking for tools to address the gap between your highly diverse first-year survey courses and your graduate seminars?

There are many potentially helpful resources on the St. George Campus, all of which are free.

Please note: this guide has been assembled by a MAP volunteer.
Additions and corrections are welcome.

Table of Contents

General Resources

There are groups who are minorities both in philosophy and in the university community as a whole. There are also groups who are minorities in the context of academic philosophy, but not in the context of the university community as a whole.[1]

What follows here is a very general list of resources, collected with the view that some of the resources intended for those who stand as minorities within the university community as a whole may be useful in assisting both those persons and those who stand as minorities within the discipline of philosophy.

The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) Office
The main task of this office is to address how the University, as an employer, addresses accommodation for people with disabilities.

This office also:
- Provides guidelines about how to secure an accommodation
- Has a collection of general information for faculty, staff, and students, including links to other resources on campus relevant to the mission of the AODA office
- Has links to/copies of important documents, including the University's:
    - Employment Equity Policy
    - Statement on Equity, Diversity, and Excellence
    - Statement of Commitment Regarding Persons with Disabilities

Links:
http://www.hrandequity.utoronto.ca/about-hr-equity/diversity/aoda.htm
http://www.elaws.gov.on.ca/html/source/regs/english/2011/elaws_src_regs_r11191_e.htm

Accessibility Services
The main task of this office is to provide accommodations and support for students across campus through counseling, study sessions, workshops, and support groups. Those eligible to register with Accessibility Services include students with: Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD); Autism Spectrum Disorder; Brain Injury or Concussion; Chronic Health Issues; Deafness; Learning Disabilities; Mental Health Issues; Mobility Issues; Low Vision/Blindness; and Temporary Accessibility Issues.

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[1] Since the reader is likely to be a philosopher: there are not, to my knowledge, any groups who are minorities in the context of the university as a whole, but not in philosophy!

This office also:
- Provides test and exam services
- Has volunteer opportunities for students to assist others with accessibility issues, e.g. by being a volunteer note-taker
- Can organize accessible intercampus transportation
- Collaborates with Robarts Library to provide access to scholarly materials

Links:
http://accessibility.utoronto.ca/
http://discover.utoronto.ca/students-with-a-disability
http://onesearch.library.utoronto.ca/services-for-people-with-disabilities

The Anti-Racism and Cultural Diversity Office
The main task of this office is to promote an inclusive campus community.

This office is operational at all three campuses of the U of T, and provides all of the following:
- Advice and assistance with programmes relevant to inclusion, cultural diversity and religious accommodation;
- Public education workshops and professional development seminars to build community awareness and inter-cultural competencies;
- Events, programs and forums which highlight issues important to the campus community;
- Responding to concerns, resolving conflict and managing complaints of discrimination and harassment; and,
- Consultation and advice on policy matters.

Links:
http://www.hrandequity.utoronto.ca/about-hr-equity/diversity/anti-racism.htm
http://www.antiracism.utoronto.ca/index2.html

The Sexual and Gender Diversity Office
The main task of this office is to develop partnerships to build supportive learning and working communities at the University of Toronto by working towards equity and challenging discrimination.

This office also:
- Provides innovative education, programming, resources and advocacy on sexual and gender diversity for students, staff and faculty across the University's three campuses

- Organizes Queer Orientation to help new and returning students connect with other students and campus resources
- Runs an employee resource group for LGBTQ staff and faculty
- Gives resources to advertise Positive Spaces

Links:
http://www.hrandequity.utoronto.ca/about-hr-
equity/diversity/diversity.htm
http://sgdo.utoronto.ca
Student Organizations

There are many, many student-run organizations across the campuses of the University. Here is a sampling that may be of particular interest to those wishing to address diversity issues in philosophy, in academia as a whole, or in even larger contexts.

Philosophy-specific groups other than MAP are also included; one of the best ways for minorities in philosophy to promote diversity is simply to be persistently present in philosophy, and to make the most of the resources available to ensure one's own success as a student.

For a full list of groups, including those whose missions involve supporting specific racial minorities in the university environment, see *https://www.ulife.utoronto.ca/organizations.*

Advocates for International Women's Rights
Their statement:
> 'AIWR is a chapter at the University of Toronto dedicated to raising awareness about gender inequality on an international scale. We strive to make a difference for young girls and women around the world by allowing them to gain more freedoms and rights. We engage in discussions on the development of international women's rights and look to empower women across campus to come together to improve international women's rights.'

Link:
http://aiwruoft.wix.com/aiwr

Autism Alliance (UTAA)
Their statement:
> 'Our goal is to support individuals with autism spectrum disorders by providing them with the opportunity to be paired up with supportive student mentors. Students from The University of Toronto will work with the children during activities such as rock-climbing, bowling, or arts and crafts. The program will provide the child with an opportunity to express himself/herself in a safe, non-judgmental environment.'

Link:
https://www.ulife.utoronto.ca/organizations/view/id/2922

<u>Blu Matter Project</u>
Their statement:
> 'Our group is looking to aid students who are struggling with mental wellness during their university life by providing them with coping mechanisms and support. We plan to do this through the practice of monthly yoga sessions. Research has shown that exercise has been one of such coping mechanisms. In particular, yoga has shown to be highly correlated with alleviation of depressive symptoms.'

Link:
https://www.ulife.utoronto.ca/organizations/view/id/64433

<u>Burst Your Bubble (UTM)</u>
Their statement:
> 'We strive to foster a community that supports mental health by challenging students to acknowledge and respond to the stigma surrounding mental illness. We seek to provide general information about mental health and the resources UTM has to offer, which can be used in times of need or to bolster resilience. We organize events and campaigns which serve to reduce the stigma associated with mental illness and improve overall understanding of mental disorders, their role on campus, and how they are perceived in society.'

Link:
https://www.ulife.utoronto.ca/organizations/view/id/56437

<u>Centre for Women and Trans People</u>
Their statement:
> 'The Centre for Women and Trans People is committed to providing a safe, harassment-free drop in space for all women and trans people on campus.'

This group:
- Offers free support, referrals, resources and advocacy on issues of sexism, racism, homophobia, transphobia, ableism, ageism, violence, health and poverty
- Offers anti-oppression and anti-transphobia training to volunteers

Link:
http://womenscentre.sa.utoronto.ca/

<u>Graduate Philosophy Students' Union (GPSU)</u>
Their statement:
> 'The Graduate Philosophy Students' Union (GPSU) is open to all graduate students in philosophy. The GPSU organizes social

gatherings, public discussions of matters relevant to its members, and a variety of philosophical activities.'

Link:
http://graduate.philosophy.utoronto.ca/graduate-programs-welcome/gpsu/

Philosophy Academic Society (PAS) (UTM)
Their statement:

'The Philosophy Academic Society (PAS for short) is a student-run organisation representing students who are either enrolled in Philosophy POSTs (specialist, major, minor or otherwise), or taking at least one half-credit Philosophy course on the Mississauga Campus. PAS aims to facilitate a comfortable, encouraging, and most importantly, an engaging environment for all students involved in Philosophy.'

Link:
http://utmphilosophy.sa.utoronto.ca/Home.html

Philosophy Course Union (PCU) (STG)
Their statement:

'The Philosophy Course Union (PCU) is a student-run organization that serves to ensure the best possible undergraduate philosophy education experience. The PCU co-ordinates essay workshops, social functions, academic seminars, and information sessions regarding grad school and career options.'

Link:
http://pcuuoft.ca/

Philosophy Women's Caucus
The Women's Caucus brings together all female philosophy graduate students twice a term for an informal meeting over drinks or a meal, where they share experiences they've had in the department or in philosophy more generally, support each other, or just remind themselves that there are actually quite a few of them in the department. The Women's Caucus is currently run by johanna.thoma@mail.utoronto.ca.

Students for Barrier-free Access (SBA)
Their statement:

'SBA is a non-profit, student group on campus that represents students with disabilities at U of T. Our approach has been to establish a presence for students with disabilities, raise awareness, provide education, effectively lobby, and directly influence many of the systemic issues in all areas of student life. The accessibility and inclusiveness of university buildings, academic resources, student events, the lack of funding and provision for disability-related accommodations, and the lack of a social space or network of students with disabilities are some of the many barriers to inclusion

experienced by students with disabilities. SBA provides a voice for a constituency that has been under-represented in the past.'

This group:

- Offers American Sign Language (ASL) classes
- Hosts an Accessible Event Planning workshop
- Organizes wheelchair basketball games

Link:
http://sba.sa.utoronto.ca/

UTSC Association of Philosophy Students (APS)
Their statement:

'The Association of Philosophy Students is a student organized association partnered with the Department of Philosophy at the University of Toronto Scarborough. Our primary purpose is to advocate for and on behalf of all students enrolled in degree programs in philosophy on any and all matters pertaining to the quality of the academic experience they receive at the University of Toronto Scarborough. We're also here to ensure that you get the most out of your philosophical experience at UTSC.'

Link:
http://www.utsc.utoronto.ca/~phlub/index.html

Resources for Graduate Student Professionalization

Challenges faced by minorities in philosophy can include not only dealing with expressions of explicit bias and overt discrimination, but also more subtle trials, such as coping with implicit bias and stereotype threat. Professional development may be one way to cope with these less obvious barriers to being successful in philosophy as a member of a minority group.

There are two main sources of certificate-based professionalization for graduate students on the St. George Campus – the Centre for Teaching Support and Innovation, and the School of Graduate Studies.

Through CTSI

Both of the certificates offered through CTSI are teaching-focused, though there are also some workshops focused on job candidacy (e.g. How to Assemble a Teaching Dossier). There are also some workshops focused specifically on equity, diversity, and supported students in distress.

In addition to their certificate programs, CTSI offers course instructor training that one can sign up for without taking a certificate, and a job dossier review service.

The introductory certificate is called the Teaching Fundamentals Certificate. It requires the completion of 6 workshops (some must be 'core', while others can be 'elective), and can easily be completed in a single semester.

The advanced certificate is called the Advanced University Teaching Preparation Certificate. It requires the completion of 10 workshops, as well as other individualized teaching exercises.

Below is a list of workshops that may be of special interest to MAP members. While CTSI does not offer every workshop every year, they do seem to be responsive to feedback about which workshops were found useful and worth repeating.

Dealing with Students in Difficulty
> This workshop will focus on how to identify, engage, refer and manage students who may be challenging. Students who are withdrawn, distressed, demanding or who present unusual requests or situations, including crisis situations, often need special support and/or attention. How and to whom to make appropriate referrals in a variety of situations will be reviewed along with the many resources available for teaching assistants and students

Accessibility and the AODA in the University Environment
> Teaching Assistants are invited to attend a workshop led by Andrea Carter, AODA officer and Employment Equity officer, to learn how to create a more inclusive and accessible learning environment. Purpose: Under new provincial legislation, all staff and faculty must understand how to accommodate people with disabilities in our daily work. Learn the definitions of disability, the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA), the University's obligations and commitments to accommodating people with disabilities, and the policies and procedures to follow.

Identifying, Assisting, and Referring the Student in Distress
> In recent years, increasing concern has been expressed with regard to student mental health at the post-secondary education (PSE) level. Health and mental health professionals in medical and counselling centres have substantiated these concerns. They report significant increases in the numbers of students requesting mental health services, as well as increases in the severity and complexity of the mental health issues. Based on data gathered from the 2009 American College Health Association – National College Health Assessment, this workshop looks at the nature and prevalence of mental health issues with which university students are struggling. Strategies on how to identify, as well as effectively assist and refer students in distress will be discussed.

Confidence in the Classroom
>Do you sometimes feel like an impostor in front of the classroom? You are not alone! Graduate student teachers in all disciplines struggle with feelings of inadequacy and uncertainty, especially in the early stages of developing a teaching style, or when they must provide instruction beyond their own area of expertise. This workshop addresses how and why we experience this "impostor syndrome" as well as what we can do to move past it. Developing the skills to accurately assess our own teaching styles and abilities can help diminish the syndrome's negative impact. Workshop participants will not only gain a better understanding of impostor syndrome, but will also work collaboratively to develop concrete methods for effectively perceiving and evaluating their own teaching performance.

Equity, Power, and Diversity in the Classroom
>This workshop is an introduction to the principles, practices, and resources available for building an equitable classroom in the university environment. This workshop is designed for all TAs from any discipline who are interested in understanding the role that social power and identity plays in their classroom and exploring strategies for creating equitable, inclusive learning environments.

<u>Through SGS</u>

SGS offers a certificate called the Graduate Professional Skills program, completion of which is noted on transcripts. Completion of the program requires courses from a number of different areas: communication and interpersonal skills; personal effectiveness; teaching competence; and research-related skills.

To see what is being offered, you can sign up for the GPS feed in your Blackboard account.

Of particular note is THE 500H - Teaching in Higher Education. This is a semester-length course for senior PhD students and postdoctoral fellows who already have teaching experience. Here is a blurb about the course (it is full for 2013-14):

>In THE500, senior PhD candidates and PDFs will improve their teaching practice by becoming more knowledgeable about the ways in which students learn and about different teaching theories and styles. Course participants will experience and take part in a variety of teaching situations, from small group work to more formal

lecture sessions. Ample opportunity will be given to participants to reflect on the course as it progresses and on their own teaching and learning experiences.

Preference for enrollment is granted to students who have already done courses through CTSI, and completion of THE 500 can be counted toward the GPS certificate.