

Diversity and Inclusion Report

Philosophy and Religion

Our department has reaffirmed our commitment to anti-racist and inclusive pedagogy and research. In the summer of 2020, we constituted an Anti-Racism Task Force, comprised of 7 faculty members and Chaired by Professor Serena Parekh. We also held a listening session for our undergraduate students, where we gained valuable insights into the experiences of our students of color. The Task Force met several times over the summer to think through how we can create a department culture that is welcoming and inclusive, actively promote an anti-racist pedagogy and prepare students to think well outside of the classroom about their lived experience and the pursuit of social justice, in particular racial justice. In order to achieve these goals, we have a number of new and ongoing projects.

Department Life/Co-Curricular

- We created a chapter of Minorities and Philosophy (MAP) in our department, which provides an opportunity for students to meet informally to read philosophy by philosophers of color and on topics such as race and racism. The mission of MAP, an international organization, is “to address structural injustices in academic philosophy and to remove barriers that impede participation in academic philosophy for members of marginalized groups.” Two professors have met with the students who are organizing the club and report great enthusiasm and sense of community. Our department looks forward to supporting the activities of this club.
- We have an on-going PPE/Ethics Institute speaker series that is committed to inviting speakers from diverse backgrounds and perspectives to speak to our students. This semester we had Deva Woodley who spoke about the philosophy behind the Black Lives Matter movement, for example, and was attended by close to 70 students. Next semester, our line-up of speakers includes two Black philosophers, Michelle Moody-Adams and Olúfẹ́mi O. Táíwò (<https://cssh.northeastern.edu/ethics/speaker-series>).

Curriculum

- We are currently in the process of reevaluating our courses and curriculum to find ways to include more pedagogy on race and to ensure that our syllabi and course designs convey the message about our commitment to inclusion and diversity.
- While many of our courses cover topics of race and structural racism, we are currently reviewing our courses to ensure that more of them consistently cover these topics. For example, we are changing the course description of Introduction to Economic Justice to reflect the fact that racial discrimination is a key feature of capitalism and one of the major challenges to achieving economic justice in the US. We also plan to update our course descriptions for Technology and Human Values so that it is clear that the course addresses biases in automated systems, Environmental Ethics so that it is clear that it addresses environmental injustice, which concerns the disproportionate environmental burdens on high minority and low income communities, and Moral and Social Problems in Healthcare so that it is clear that it addresses economic and racial inequities in healthcare and public health.

- We are in the process of developing two new courses that students have already expressed a lot of interest in: Philosophy of Race and Race on Film: Religion, Representation, and Identity. The first course, Philosophy of Race, will be taught either by Patricia Williams or Adam Hosein, both of whom are recognized as leaders in this field of philosophy. The second course, Race on Film, will be taught by Sheila Windborne who designed and teaches our popular Apocalypticism and Film and Problem of Evil and Film courses.
- We are in the process of creating a new concentration for PPE majors in Racial Justice. Students will have the opportunity to take their upper-level Philosophy, Economics and Political Science courses connected to this topic and have the opportunity to study it in-depth from an interdisciplinary perspective.