



Trinity College Dublin
Coláiste na Tríonóide, Baile Átha Cliath
The University of Dublin

The Irish Philosophical
Society
Cumann Fealsúnachta na hÉireann

“Philosophy in the Public Space” Conference

Trinity College Dublin, 21-22nd October 2022

Call for Abstracts

**Extended Abstract Deadline until Monday 9th May
(midnight Irish time)**

Conference Theme

We live in a time of multiple crises when philosophy’s public role is once again a matter of significant concern. Much public discourse, whether in parliaments and public squares, on traditional or social media, seems far removed from ideals of reasoned discussion which philosophers have championed and continue to uphold. What role philosophy has or can have in public life remains, however, unclear. Since Socrates practised philosophy in the *agora*, philosophers have repeatedly affirmed philosophical discourse as a public pursuit. Under such a view, engagement in public life is not simply peripheral to philosophy, but part of its core mission, characterising the philosopher as a committed member of their community, aiming to inform the public discourse on issues of common importance.

Philosophical engagement has helped shape political, social, cultural, and economic life over many centuries. However, the relation of philosophy to society remains contested both within and outside philosophy, by a monological view of philosophical reasoning as above or outside public discourse, and by a rejection of the critical questioning stance, something particularly poignant in the life (and death) of Socrates, respectively. When engaged in the public domain, the Platonic tendency to position the philosopher in a privileged position appears reformulated today as expertise applicable to policy matters. Philosophy can furthermore be perceived as contributing to democratic culture by demonstrating and fostering reasoned debate.

Conversely, we might think of philosophers eschewing any special claim to knowledge, engaging with their communities as a voice within a plurality of voices, to bring philosophical insights and

styles of thinking to the general conversation of the community. This conference seeks contributions from a wide variety of approaches to public philosophy with a view to debating the value and efficacy of philosophy in the public domain.

We are delighted to have three great **keynote speakers** for this conference:

Prof. Angie Hobbs is Professor of the Public Understanding of Philosophy at the University of Sheffield, the first of its kind. Her chief interests are in ancient philosophy and literature, and in ethics and political theory from classical thought to the present, and she has published widely in these areas. She contributes regularly to radio and TV programmes and other media. She has spoken at the World Economic Forum at Davos, the Houses of Parliament, the Scottish Parliament, Westminster Abbey and the United States Air Force Training Academy.

Prof. Katherine O'Donnell researches and lectures in the History of Ideas and feminist & gender theory at the School of Philosophy, UCD. She was a co-founding member of the Irish Lesbian and Gay Archive and is a member of the Justice for Magdalenes Research group, which was instrumental in having the State issue apologies to the women of the Magdalene Institutions and in successful lobbying for the Magdalene Redress Scheme. She researches and publishes also in the history of thought and the cultural politics of emotion, and has a particular interest in the life and work of Edmund Burke.

Prof. Liam Kofi Bright is assistant professor at the London School of Economics and Political Science and has particular research interests in Social Epistemology, scientific methodology and African Philosophy. He has research interests also in the early Christian Church fathers, especially St. Augustine, ancient Chinese philosophers, especially Zhuangzi, as well as some of the Roman Stoics, especially Epictetus. He is a regular contributor to public debate on the BBC, through Podcasts and blogposts.

Abstracts

If you wish to present a paper, please send an anonymized abstract of no more than 300 words free of any identifying information, and in Word format, to irishphilosophicalsociety@gmail.com by 2 May 2022 (midnight Irish time).

We welcome abstracts from multiple perspectives, from practitioners and philosophers (including both the European / Continental and Anglo-American / Analytic traditions), and from postgraduate researchers. We also welcome abstracts from Undergraduate Students for an Undergraduate Student session. Areas include, but are not limited to:

- New approaches to public philosophy
- The history of public philosophy
- Philosophical thinking as a means of protecting democracy
- Philosophy for and with children and young people
- The role of philosophers in civic discourse

- The relationship between public philosophy and popular philosophy
- Philosophical work on public policy issues
- Case studies of philosophical work that engages the public directly in action (such as field philosophy initiatives.)
- Ways in which engagement with non-philosophers can inform philosophical concepts
- Conceptual and systemic challenges in communicating the value of philosophy
- Philosophy and the environmental crisis
- Philosophy of peace in times of war
- Gender-based violence and toxic masculinity

Conference format:

The conference will be held in person unless there is a dramatic change with respect to public health guidance. Papers will be 20 minutes in length with 15 minute questions and answers.

Conference costs:

- > Free to members of IPS.
- > Non-members of the IPS can become members by [joining the IPS](#) during registration if their abstracts are accepted.

Timeline:

- > 25th March 2022: CfP opens
- > 9th May 2022 (midnight Ireland): CfP closes
- > Mid-June 2022: Abstract submission outcomes communicated
- > Early August 2022: Speaker and delegate registration opens

Selection process:

- > The deadline for the submission of abstracts is Monday 9th May 2022 (midnight Irish time).
- > Abstracts will undergo blind peer-review by members of the conference committee who represent Trinity College Dublin and The Irish Philosophical Society.
- > We intend to inform everyone on the outcome of their submission by **15 June 2022**.