

Rotman Institute of Philosophy

## **CODE OF CONDUCT FOR EVENTS**

*Revised: April 2022*

### **I. Purpose**

The Rotman Institute of Philosophy is committed to facilitating productive and enjoyable philosophical discussions among our members and attendees of Institute hosted events. We aim to host events where participants from diverse backgrounds may learn from and enjoy the company of colleagues in an inclusive and professional environment. Harassment, therefore, is specifically prohibited.

Harassment is understood as any behavior that is known, or ought reasonably to be known, to threaten or offend another person or group of people. It includes verbal comments, and other forms of conduct, directed against a person or group because of their gender, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, physical disability, age, religion, native language, race, ethnicity, or any other dimension of diversity. For example, this policy prohibits, among other things, deliberate intimidation, sustained disruption of talks and other events, inappropriate physical contact, and unwelcome sexual attention.

Attendance implies consent to abide by this code of conduct in all Institute venues, including online events, and Institute social events.

### **II. Reporting**

Each event shall include 1 or 2 faculty members designated as a Safety Officer, responsible for addressing conduct violations. Names and contact information for Safety Officers will be displayed on the event pages or conference website in advance of the event date(s). Safety Officers will respond to any issues the session chair either does not witness or does not feel comfortable addressing (eg. - if the session chair is a graduate student and the person who violated the code of conduct is a faculty member). If you are being harassed, notice that someone else is being harassed, or have any other concerns, please speak, in confidence, to the designated Safety Officer(s) for the event.

### III. Consequences of Unacceptable Behavior

Unacceptable behavior from any attendee, speaker, session chair, or staff, including those with decision-making authority, will not be tolerated. Participants asked to stop any inappropriate behavior are expected to comply immediately. If necessary, the Safety Officer or on-site security may take further action, including:

- Verbal warning;
- Immediate removal from the event without warning and without a refund, if applicable;
- Submission of a formal misconduct report to the Rotman Institute Executive Committee.

Based on the nature of the violation and the response, the Safety Officer, in concert with the Rotman Institute's Director and Executive Committee, will decide upon appropriate actions. Violation of these guidelines can result in individuals being asked to leave an event or online space, either temporarily or for the duration of the event, or being banned from participation in future events and activities in perpetuity.

### IV. Guidelines for Discussions at Formal Events

In formal settings, such as Institute hosted colloquia, reading groups, workshops, and conferences, attendees are asked to abide by the following set of guidelines to facilitate respectful and constructive discussions. Individuals selected to chair discussions are asked to review these guidelines prior to the start of events. Leading by example, session chairs can help to ensure that everyone behaves in an appropriate and inclusive manner.

1. How to begin the session:
  - a. Consider including a land acknowledgement (see <https://indigenous.uwo.ca/initiatives/land-acknowledgement.html> or <https://express.adobe.com/page/FSblzCQD2HCl5/> for more information)
  - b. Keep the introduction of the speaker brief—attendees can read full speaker bios in advance of the event.
2. Encourage respect:
  - a. Ask attendees to consider their purpose for attending—it should not be to prove something or show that they're the smartest person there. A more productive goal is to be open to ideas that make our own ideas better.
  - b. Any behaviors or comments that are dismissive, derogatory, include hurtful or harmful language, personal attacks, violence or threats of violence will not be tolerated. Sessions chairs or the designated Safety Officer are expected to

respond to any such incidents as they happen or as soon as they are reported.  
(see section III)

- c. Do not allow people to interrupt, speak over others, or out of turn.
  - d. Ensure that questions directed towards the speaker are never answered by another attendee.
3. Facilitate constructive discussions:
- a. Include a 5-minute break immediately following talks to give the speaker a short rest, and to allow attendees to develop their questions. (See more on this strategy here: <https://threadreaderapp.com/thread/114150142261128320.html>)
  - b. If the Q&A session is slow to begin (or there is time remaining at the end), the session chair should always have 1 – 2 prepared questions to ask the speaker.
  - c. Whenever possible, attendees are asked to frame criticisms or objections in a constructive way.
  - d. Ask attendees to keep questions concise and on a single topic. Brief follow-up questions to develop a line of thought are OK, but questions on separate topics should be asked separately. (The attendee can be moved back into line to ask an additional question, or request permission to ask something else.)
  - e. Session chairs should be mindful of the time devoted to individual questions. If an attendee is taking up too much of the speaker's time, politely step in and state that the time has come to allow others to ask questions.
4. Be inclusive:
- a. Sessions chairs needn't call on attendees in the order that hands are raised. Make a conscious effort to include diverse voices and be aware of how much time is taken up by dominant members of the group. It is permissible to skip over someone who has already spoken in the effort to incorporate new voices into a conversation.
  - b. Whenever possible, priority ought to be given to questions coming from graduate students, undergraduate students, and members of the public community (when applicable) rather than faculty members.
  - c. Always prioritize questions from attendees that belong to structurally marginalized or underrepresented groups.