

THE FIRST COMPASS WORKSHOP
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Princeton's MAP chapter ran a number of events this year, one of which was a workshop called *Compass*. The workshop was two-day event designed to promote gender diversity in the discipline. We invited fifteen undergraduates -- women and other underrepresented genders in philosophy -- from a variety of campuses around Princeton to join undergraduate and graduate students from Princeton for a weekend of fun and philosophy.

We structured the workshop as a kind of extended reading group. In advance of the workshop, the participants all read six philosophy papers from a variety of sub-disciplines. Over the course of the weekend, we discussed each of these papers in six different discussion sessions. The discussions were largely undergraduate-led, with facilitation by graduate students. We also ran two advice sessions with female faculty members we invited from nearby departments: Ruth Chang, Elizabeth Harman, Melissa Lane, Sarah McGrath, and L.A. Paul.

There is a lot about the workshop that, I think, worked very well. The "reading group" model gave the undergraduates, some of whom had very little background in philosophy, a chance to have really high-level philosophy discussions in a relaxed and informal setting. It was nice for the graduate students and undergraduates to interact both philosophically and personally. The workshop also gave participants a chance to talk, especially in the faculty advice sessions, about some of the less wonderful things about being from an underrepresented gender in philosophy; we wanted participants to leave with a realistic assessment of both the good and the bad. We asked participants if they would encourage other undergraduates to attend a similar workshop in the future, and I've included their responses to this question at the end of this post.

A nice thing about the *Compass* workshop is that it is easily replicable. And, as long as you're inviting undergraduates from nearby campuses, it is also fairly inexpensive to run. With this in mind, we have encouraged a variety of departments across the country to consider running a similar workshop next year, each targeting undergraduates at nearby campuses. So far, graduate students at Stanford, USC, UCI, WUSTL and UNC are all planning on running a version of the *Compass* workshop next year. If your department would like more information about the workshop, you can check out the website (www.princeton.edu/~compass) or contact me at hirjisukaina@gmail.com.

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Would you encourage other undergraduates to attend a similar workshop in the future? Why/why not?

ABSOLUTELY. Truly a phenomenal experience. I felt very understood, empowered, and inspired.

Absolutely! Because it helped me understand what pursuing philosophy after college would look like!

I would definitely encourage others to attend the workshop, it was an extremely positive experience for me to be surrounded by women and gender minorities in a philosophical setting.

Definitely. It was a reinvigorating way to dip my toe back into something I love dearly, in a supportive and structured setting with people who all share that love. There's nothing better!

Absolutely! This workshop opened my mind to a whole new way of thinking about philosophy. I am strongly considering grad school in philosophy now, and I wasn't even considering it an option before. It was very helpful to meet so many grad students and faculty that all chose unique paths to a graduate degree in philosophy.

Absolutely! It was a chance to do really interesting philosophy in a welcoming environment that lent itself to constructive discussions. I think people who are put off by the sometimes combative nature of philosophy discussions could find the workshop an eye-opening experience.

Absolutely, it's so important to get to be in an all-female/gender minority space because once you're in it, "minority voices" are no longer a minority and it becomes a non-issue. In that way, you show up because you care about minority voices in academia but you're able to forget that factor once you're in this "safe space" and just talk about ideas with people who respect one another and that is so unique and important. It also puts into perspective for those who enjoy philosophy that it's not just an academic obligation but also something you chose to study because you enjoy it.

YES. 100% because it's necessary and inspiring and more people should have access to philosophy!

Yes. It's important to find support in this process of upward mobility. especially for women. I'd encourage all minorities to apply.

Yes. I thought it was a great chance to meet people, and I really appreciated the academic tips.

Absolutely; the discussions were fun (and sharp--I came home after the weekend feeling far more clear-headed!) and there was a lot of information about applying to graduate school that I would not necessarily have known.