

Newsletter 2019/2020

July 2020

This challenging academic year has come to an end. And, as we did last year, we wanted to let you know what we've been up to.

In Fall 2019, we held:

- **Fortnightly well-being lunches** to fight isolation among students.
- The **series of MAP discussion groups** where we discussed extracted speech in the classroom (led by Sophia Rommel) and what a minority is in the context of academia (led by Lara Jost).
- We collaborated with students from the Social Anthropology and Film Studies departments of St Andrews in a series of **Diversity Film Nights** (led, from MAP, by Clotilde Torregrossa).
- Finally, we also ran **the mentoring programme** for undergraduate students who identify as members of an under-represented or disadvantaged group in academic Philosophy. The mentoring programme was organized by Eline Gerritsen and Rasa Davidaviciute, and involved the participation of many PhD students as mentors.

In Spring 2019, we ran:

- The discussion panel **Why I chose to stay in Philosophy?**, in which Kim Kopec (SASP MPhil student), Emilia Wilson (SASP PhD student), Sophia Rommel (St Andrews undergrad student)

and Dr Derek Ball (St Andrews Honours Philosophy Coordinator and Equality Diversity and Inclusivity officer) addressed their own experience of deciding to stay (or not) in philosophy.

- The **feminist reading group** also started running (organized by Emilia Wilson, Lara Jost and Nick Allen). Although this is a departmental reading group, the topics discussed are of great interest to the MAP community.

As everyone else, this semester we had to adjust our plans and look for support in our community. The circumstances led us not only to postpone and cancel projects, but also to completely rethink our priorities.

To provide support to our community during the lockdown and social distancing phase, we:

- Compiled a file with useful **resources** mainly related to maintaining one's well-being and mental health during this time.
- We also held **fortnightly coffee hours**.
- We created a **MAP-SASP Discord server** with different channels in it, with the aim of connecting those who might not be comfortable joining virtual gatherings or might not be able to do so due to time zone and Wi-Fi constraints. We also included a closed mental health support channel.
- Finally, we organized a couple of **discussion groups** centred around well-being during the lockdown (led by Lara Jost). We discussed productivity and the way relationships change during this time.

In support of those protesting the murders of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery, Tony McDade, and many others, we organized a **fundraising action**. Our aim was to bring the community together and gather funds for the fight against anti-Black racism. We raised £2625 and have sent a matching challenge to St Andrews' Principal. The fight against racism and how racism still exists in our institutions are matters that we will continue to address throughout the following academic year.

To address issues related to **equality, diversity and inclusion**, we have continued to work closely with faculty members of both departments and student representatives, at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels. In Spring 2020, we participated in the satisfaction survey sent out by our student representatives to learn more about the climate in our departments. A report of this survey has been passed on to the relevant faculty members.

Members of MAP have continued to be involved in the **Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee** of the **School of Philosophical, Anthropological and Film Studies of the University of**

St Andrews.

To close, we'd also like to make one very exciting announcement. Next year, we will welcome **new leadership** at both the postgraduate level and the St Andrews undergraduate level. The role of postgraduate representative will be filled by **Lara Jost**. The role of undergraduate representative will be filled by **Gwendoline Choi**. Lara and Gwendoline have been incredibly active members of the chapter throughout their time in St Andrews. Their contributions have been crucial for the development of our projects. We are very much looking forward to seeing the fantastic initiatives Lara and Gwendoline will run this upcoming year. Every year, we launch a call for applications to fill the roles of Stirling undergraduate representative, as well as of MLitt representative. We are very excited to see who will be joining the team in September.

Finally, we'd like to thank this year's representatives, **Tommy Zhang, Sophia Rommel** and **Jimena Clavel** for their work leading the chapter.

We're currently working on setting things up for next year. If you're interested in collaborating with us, would like to know more about the chapter or have any suggestions, you can send us an email to mapuk.sasp@st-andrews.ac.uk. You can also follow us on Facebook and Twitter.

Thanks for your support!

MAP – SASP