

Diversity Reading List in Philosophy

Proposal for funding

Applicant Name

Diversity Reading List is available through:

[Mail](#) | [Website](#) | [Twitter](#) | [Facebook](#) | [YouTube](#)

1 ABOUT THE DRL

THE PROJECT

The DRL is a thriving, volunteer-run project focused on promoting diversity in academic philosophy by making it easier for lecturers to include texts written by authors from under-represented groups on their syllabi, and for students to run reading groups on a diverse range of topics. We approach this goal with three core commitments:

- 1) Diverse and inclusive research, teaching, and learning should be accessible and practical. The solutions we offer researchers, teachers, and students reflect that in several ways: the website is user-friendly, the individual text entries are accompanied by teaching comments, difficulty ratings, advice on use, links to existing syllabi where possible, and so on.
- 2) Our approach to diversifying philosophy is research and data-driven. Some of this research and data already exists, in which case we collect and promote it [on our website](#), but we also aim to conduct this research and collect data ourselves where it is needed or possible (see below for examples).
- 3) In our activities, we strive to remain mindful of the often harmful and exploitative mechanics of academia, especially for early-career researchers and members of under-represented groups. Because the DRL is volunteer-run, we pay special attention to the heavy workloads and precarious working conditions of our volunteers, while at the same time trying to offer them opportunities, such as grants, but also various types of experience (teaching, research, service) to help them on their career paths.

THE TEAM

The DRL is a volunteer-run project. The volunteers take on different roles, depending on their availability and the current project needs. Whenever possible, grant money received is offered to volunteers to support their work.

Due to the volunteer-based model, the roles within the DRL tend to fluctuate, with editor roles being distributed according to people's availability, typically for a year-long period. The management of the list is held by Simon Fokt and Clotilde Torregrossa.

Since 2015, 47 people have actively volunteered for the DRL by adding new content, reviewing public contributions, creating specific resources, organising events, engaging in grant project work, conducting research, or helping manage the project. A further 11 people volunteered by actively promoting the DRL at events and online. Currently, 36 people remain on our list of active team members, helping with the ongoing content review process and engaging in specific tasks when needed.

The DRL keeps in touch with all its volunteers through regular check-in emails, bi-annual online calls, and annual AGM meetings. Whenever possible, we try to meet in person at conferences and other events.

Beyond the immediate team of volunteers, the DRL is supported by over a hundred Contributors – members of the public who contribute new content via our website.

CURRENT ACTIVITIES

Continuous list expansion

The main list, directed at lecturers who want to diversify their syllabi, is continuously expanded by volunteers who add entries directly or by reviewing public contributions sent via our contribution form. Due to the ongoing and somewhat less glamorous nature of this work, the list has not been expanding as fast as we would want it to. We hope that future funding will help us establish a paid editor role which will involve more proactive work with the volunteers and the public, as well as organising more Contributions Drives (see below), both leading to more content being added on a regular basis.

Reading Group Blueprints

The Blueprints constitute the student-facing part of the DRL and are designed for students to set up independent reading groups. The topics covered are informed by research we conducted, which identified gaps in the present teaching provision at top UK institutions (available [here](#)). We aim to publish a new set of blueprints at the start of each semester, thus delivering new options and increasing our promotion at the time when students might be thinking about setting up a group.

Most entries used in the blueprints are also added to the main List, which makes them available to lecturers and fuels expansion. As the creation of a Blueprint is a small, self-contained project with a clear deliverable, finding authors and the funding to compensate them has been somewhat easier than in the case of the continuous list expansion.

Events

The DRL has hosted a number of events to date, both online and live. Firstly, we held several edit-a-thons or Contribution Drives - small workshops inspired by Wikipedia edit-a-thons, featuring a talk, and followed by time dedicated to adding new entries to the DRL by the attendees. Currently,

we would like to expand this effort by engaging the local MAP chapter organisers at different universities to help us host such events at their departments. We believe that with some funding we would be better able to encourage people to host and attend such events, thus greatly contributing to the ongoing list expansion and also helping the MAP chapters organise specific activities.

Prior to the pandemic we established the [Northern Diversity Forum](#) - a series of seminars hosted at the Universities of Leeds, York and Sheffield, who offered funding to support it. Sadly, the pandemic prevented us from continuing this effort.

We then moved our events online, and in October 2021, we held our first research seminar on the theme of '[Decolonising Knowledge](#)'. In October 2022, we held a research seminar on '[Creative Resistance and Environmental Justice: Rethinking Ecofeminism](#)', and from October 2022 until April 2023, we sponsored a reading group on [Feminist Philosophy of Mind](#) with the University of Edinburgh and the University of Glasgow.

Finally, we continue to deliver talks about diversity issues and the DRL at conferences around the world, and recently began exploring the possibility of delivering diversity and inclusion training at graduate schools in the UK.

Research

In 2020-21, we have conducted research reviewing UG syllabi from top UK philosophy departments, analysing them with respect to their diversity. This research was funded by the UK Arts and Humanities Research Council, conducted by Anne-Marie McCallion (Manchester) and is available [on our website](#). Some of the departments whose provision we analysed, have since reviewed our data in more detail and used it to inform decisions on how to best diversify their offer in the future. (Note: due to the agreements we made while collecting the data, we cannot disclose the specific departments involved.)

Recently, we have been contacted by the Diversity & Inclusion officers of the British & Irish Postgraduate Philosophy Association, who have independently expanded on our research by analysing the PG syllabi from all Irish philosophy departments. We are currently formatting their findings for publication. Seeing how the topic finds interest, we would like to further expand it by analysing the curricula in other countries in the future.

A separate line of research concerns the classification tools used in philosophy. In the first paper published on this topic ([2020](#)), Simon Fokt analyses the PhilPaper category tree, identifies a number of ways in which it can reinforce existing biases and prejudices, and offers some guidelines for improvement.

Currently, together with Quentin Pharr and Clotilde Torregrossa, he is following up on this, hoping to develop a new, more diversity-conscious way to categorise philosophy as a discipline. The outcome of this research will be two-fold - a theoretical paper publication, and a practical application of the proposal, in the shape of an updated category system for the Diversity Reading List.

Other DRLs

Last year, we were approached by the [Decolonisation Group](#) from the University of Utrecht, with a request to build a sister site for them, a DRL in History. The site has been built and their team is currently filling it with content. We expect that it will be launched in 2023. Since, we have received similar general expressions of interest from other areas, including Anthropology and Psychology, however, no specific moves have been made there yet.

Overall, our approach is to share our infrastructure (licensed under a Creative Commons licence), but not resources. Thus, the different DRLs would have separate funding and teams, but the projects would remain closely tied.

SPONSORS AND GRANTS

[University of Leeds](#) – 2015: Initial development grant, and 2017: Continued development grant
[School of Philosophy, Religion and the History of Science](#) Strategic Funding Scheme

[American Society for Aesthetics](#) – 2015, Curriculum Diversification Grant

[British Philosophical Association](#) – 2015-18, Project Development Funding

[Society for Applied Philosophy](#) – 2015, Grant to expand the applied philosophy section of the list

[University of Edinburgh](#) – 2015-16, [Principal's Teaching Award Scheme](#) to expand the metaphysics, mind and science sections of the list.

[EIDYN, Edinburgh Centre for Epistemology, Mind and Normativity](#) – 2016-19, Continuous Development Funding

[University of Sheffield](#) – 2017, Petrie Watson Grant to expand the List

[British Society of Aesthetics](#) – 2017, BSA Small Grant to improve the DRL website accessibility and usability

[The White Rose College of the Arts & Humanities](#) – 2018, Student Led Forum grant for a joint MAP-DRL workshop and edit-a-thon

[American Philosophical Association](#) – 2019, Fund for Diversity and Inclusiveness to add all public contributions to the List

[Arts and Humanities Research Council](#) – 2020-22, PGR Placement and Knowledge Exchange Grant to conduct research on Diversifying and Widening Participation in Philosophy

[The Future of Work and Income Research Network](#) – 2021, funding to develop the [Future of Work Reading Group Blueprint](#)

[University of St Andrews](#) – 2021, funding to develop the [Sex, what is it good for? Reading Group Blueprint](#), granted by [The School of Philosophical, Anthropological and Film Studies](#)

[University of Manchester](#) – 2022, [School of Social Sciences Small Research Grant](#) to work on developing larger grant projects

[British Society of Aesthetics](#) – 2022, BSA Small Grant to develop three [Reading Group Blueprints](#) in the area of aesthetics



THE WEBSITE

The current DRL website is a WordPress multisite installed on a Cloud Server package with 1&1 IONOS, on a contract owned by TELdesign Limited. At this point, there are two sites under the multisite - the Philosophy DRL and the newly created History DRL.

The site uses multiple custom post types and related custom fields to store all information about each separate list entry, news item, Reading Group Blueprint, event, or piece of teaching advice. The main plugins used to manage the display of that content are: Toolset (main loop display) and Iks Menu (category formatting), while site optimisation is achieved using WP-Optimise.

PROJECT STATISTICS

(data collected on 13/07/2022)

Number of list entries	1,522
Reading Group Blueprints	14
Public contributors	104

Following the European General Data Protection Regulations, the DRL website only gathers most general data about the users, using the WordPress SlimStat plugin. The site functionality does not require users to log in, which means that users only leave a minimal trace as they visit. The relevant information collected is (monthly averages collected over the last 12 months):

Daily pageviews	186.60	up from 102.06 in the previous year
Daily visits	77.30	up from 55.97 in the previous year
Unique IPs	61.09	up from 44.66 in the previous year

Visit Durations

0 - 30 seconds	57.87%
31 - 60 seconds	7.32%
1 - 3 minutes	9.84%
3 - 5 minutes	3.65%
5 - 7 minutes	2.41%
7 - 10 minutes	2.25%
>10 minutes	16.66%

Reading Group Blueprints engagement (launched end of January 2022)

Number of views of the main Blueprints page: 3,480

Although all Blueprints can be viewed on the main Blueprints page, they can also be viewed separately or downloaded as PDF. Below are the relevant stats:

Specific Blueprints released in January	Page views	File downloads
African Languages and African Philosophy	19	29
Feminist Philosophy	31	60
Future of Work	60	51
Native North American Ethics	76	49
Philosopher Queens	23	42
Postcolonial Theory Race and Caste	186	54
Race, Disability, and Gender in Bioethics	48	40
Sex What Is It Good For	32	67
The Wartime Quartet	113	32

Specific Blueprints released in June	Page views	File downloads
Class, Status, and Aesthetics	9	15
Nahua and Mayan Philosophy of Mind	14	11
People and Proofs	41	15
Race and Aesthetics in Latin America	6	6
The Commemoration Debate	10	11

More statistics are available on request.

NEWS AND CONTACTS

Over the years we have developed a solid network of contacts to keep informed of our activities and who often help us to promote them. This list of contacts is continuously expanded and updated. Our contacts fall under the following categories:

Social Media

The DRL is active on both [Twitter](#) (1,806 followers) and [Facebook](#) (1,676 followers).

Newsletter Subscribers

Our newsletter goes out to our **154** subscribers roughly every 3 months. In it, we share how our current activities are developing, what events are coming up, as well as a 'volunteer spotlight', which showcases the work and interests of one of our volunteers. The past newsletters are archived on the ['News'](#) section of the website.

Philosophy Departments

We have created a mailing list specifically for sharing news with Philosophy Departments across the world. We use this mailing list to share big project developments, such as the Blueprints, or upcoming events, such as our online seminar series. So far, we've collected contacts for:

- **60** US departments
- **47** UK departments
- **25** Oceanian departments
- **17** European departments
- **13** African departments
- **9** Asian departments

MAP Chapters

MAP members are often our most active supporters, but we believe that the ties between MAP and the DRL can be further strengthened, especially outside of the UK. Currently we are in contact with:

- **115** US chapters (we are still in the process of updating these contacts individually)
- **17** UK chapters
- **6** European chapters
- **1** Asian chapter
- **1** Oceanian chapter

Related Projects and Groups

These are similar projects and groups to ours working on diversification and decolonisation in academia (for example, [Project Myopia](#) or [Philosophying in...](#)). We are currently in regular contact with **19** of such projects and groups.

Professional Institutions and Funding Bodies

We also keep in contact with **10** professional institutions and funding bodies who have either previously funded DRL projects, or with whom we are currently seeking support.

Individual Allies

Finally, we keep a short list of **19** individuals whose continuous support has been particularly influential, in order to keep them personally informed of our activities.

2 DRL IMPACT AND VALUE

USERS

As can be seen in the above statistics, the DRL is a popular resource with an average of 77 daily visits from users around the world. To find out what impact the DRL had on their practice, in the spring of 2022 we conducted a 14-day survey. The total number of respondents was 31. Here is what they reported:

Did using the DRL help you diversify your curriculum?

36% of respondents answered 'Yes, a lot', with a further 46% answering 'Yes, a little'. Of those, 7 agreed to share their syllabi with us to help us showcase our impact (available on request).



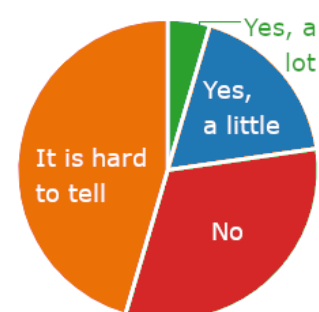
Did you notice if your students have appreciated your teaching more after you diversified your curriculum with the help of the DRL?

24% of respondents answered 'Yes, a lot', with a further 24% answering 'Yes, a little', and 52% admitting it is hard to tell. No respondents answered 'No'.



Did diversifying your curriculum with the help of the DRL help you achieve any professional goals, such as winning a teaching award, receiving higher student evaluations, securing a teaching- or diversity-oriented role within the department, receiving a promotion or securing a new job, etc.?

5% answered 'Yes, a lot', with a further 18% answering 'Yes, a little', and 45% admitting it is hard to tell. Although the numbers here are not as high, some of the stories shared show that at least for some users our impact was significant.



Here are the stories people shared with us:

Two examples. (1) In their annual evaluations, students cited appreciation for the diversity and diversification of resources that the DRL helped me to include on my syllabuses for first-year introductory tutorials (2020/21 and 2021/22). (2) In their feedback, [my university's] Arena Panel recognised my use of the DRL, as cited in case studies, which helped me to be awarded an Associate Fellowship of the Higher Education Academy (AFHEA 2022); I will soon supplement this in my application toward a full Fellowship.

I've used the site for the very first time just in the last week for a syllabus for next session. As such, I've yet to see the impact in regards to questions 5 & 6. However, I found it very useful and thought that there were many great entries that I was already familiar with along with many great entries that I had encountered for the first time. I used it for a general philosophy of mind subject.

Several students have commented in course feedback on multiple courses how much they appreciate diverse reading lists.

Used DRL to help diversity a mock syllabus for a permanent teaching and research position in the UK.

We used the DRL for the Academic Skills Project in Philosophy at [my university] for four workshops on databases, two during the academic year 2020-21 and two during the academic year 2021-22.

VOLUNTEERS

The DRL has a further positive impact on its volunteers, who through their work with us gain valuable professional experience. To find out what impact the DRL had on their professional life, we conducted another 14-day survey. 13 volunteers answered the call. Here is what they reported:

Do you list your involvement with the DRL on your CV?

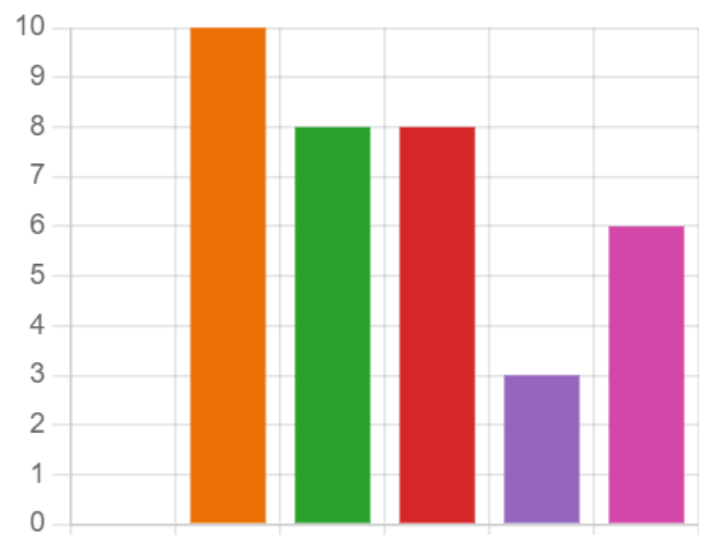
The most encouraging result was that 100% of our volunteers report listing their involvement with the DRL on their CVs, clearly perceiving it as something that might contribute to their career prospects.

Do you think your involvement in the DRL contributed to your professional development?

100% of respondents answered 'Yes', typically identifying several specific ways. See the graph for specific results. The volunteers further offered the following stories, documenting how the DRL helped them:

Deepening my knowledge of diversity issues. Learning about additional resources. Using resources for my teaching. Connecting with colleagues by promoting the DRL. Meeting and connecting with colleagues by working at the DRL. DRL has, as I am sure, had a positive effect in my CV with regards to my current employment.

I constructed a blueprint that's pretty much on my AoS. That being said, as that area is currently developing with many new publications, I had additional motivation to carefully go through the most recent literature. Moreover, by preparing the reading group discussion questions, I had a solid basis to teach, should I wish to teach any of the selected articles in the future.



No

Yes, it has helped me develop my own teaching practice

Yes, it has helped me develop my own research practice

Yes, it has given me other experience needed for my work / to further my career

Yes, it has given me an opportunity to work on a grant project

Yes, it has given me networking opportunities

It made me aware of the issue before it was being addressed by Schools/universities - and able to incorporate more diverse reading into the modules I was leading. It has made me conscious of the need to look at the range of research resources being used - and at the issue of a lack of diversity more broadly (e.g. in representations of relationships in media and films) which has generated a new research project idea. Being involved with the DRL has enabled me to contribute to a working group in my department on decolonising the curriculum - and this work has been valuable for applying for new jobs. I was involved with writing a number of the grants we applied for at the beginning of the project - to help find money to add more content to the DRL and expand the project into the US.

Creating a blueprint in particular has enriched my teaching of that subfield hugely.

The blueprint I prepared has allowed me to widen the scope of topics, readings, and issues that I can incorporate to the courses I currently teach and can teach in the future. For instance, it will allow me to incorporate different approaches to questions typically included in a philosophy of mind syllabus (e.g. personal identity and the self). I've also incorporated it to my teaching dossier for future job applications and have the possibility of building up from it. Preparing the blueprint has also allowed me to explore new avenues of research and to formulate new research questions, as well as to incorporate more diverse material to my research. This work has opened the possibility of applying for funding to support the development of similar blueprints along colleagues with whom I hadn't worked before.

Because of my work with the DRL, I was appointed to the EDI committee of my School and was offered the opportunity to collaborate on an Athena Swan Award application. I was also given leeway in curriculum design and was able to influence the Sub-Honours and Honours course offering.

1. The research that I did for the blue print on Postcolonial theory, Race and Caste, helped me to gain perspectives on the issues (it was co-authored with Andreas Sorger) 2. I am currently organizing an online seminar on EcoFeminism and that has led me to do research in that area which is a gain in itself 3. These two add to my CV, which I expect will add to the list of experience

I have made changes to reading lists for my module based on contributions I have made and using others that I have discovered on the database.

Being a volunteer and contributing to the DRL has helped me find excellent resources for both teaching and research, and has also been highly personally fulfilling!

I have met and engaged with different academics through organising this event and engaging with members of the DRL.

Used it for resources, and in turn turned students onto it as well.

3 CURRENT PROPOSAL
