

Diversity statement

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Growing up in Italy, I thought that moving to the United States for graduate school and blending into the culture of this country would be much easier than it actually was. During my graduate career, both as a researcher and as an instructor, I have faced issues and challenges that increased my understanding of American society and academic environment in ways I didn't expect. I witnessed racial inequality and gender imbalance among the undergraduate student body. I have been on the receiving end of micro-aggressions and 'mansplaining' as a young woman in an older male-dominated discipline like Philosophy. I learned about implicit bias and recognized ways in which it has influenced my judgment: it has been at the same time unsettling and empowering. I have also met incredibly supportive communities and individuals along the way, who made me re-discover my pride as a woman, a member of the LGBTQ+ community, and an immigrant. Living in Squirrel Hill – the largely Jewish Pittsburgh neighborhood where, in October 2018, an openly anti-Semite shooter killed 11 people at a local synagogue – showed me this country's contradictions, virtues, and problems all at once. I am active in the Squirrel Hill community as a volunteer girls' basketball coach at the local community center.

In my teaching, I strive to support intersectionality in any way I can. I regularly read the news and keep myself up-to-date regarding the most pressing social and political debates both in the USA and elsewhere. As a result, the materials I choose for my courses, as well as the way I organize in-class discussions and activities, always try to fit themes and topics that can be of interest to different groups of students at different times. I consider a duty to provide students with the largest possible variety of topics and perspectives, and to expose them to philosophers who are possibly still alive, not all white, not all heterosexual, and not all male. I also try to offer multiple options regarding evaluation and assessment along the way, so that different skills and different learning styles can lead to success in the course. My courses include always at least two choices among written exams, oral exams, essay composition, poster or other graphical renditions of the subject matter, and more. I always encourage my students to suggest what might suit them best and try to implement it if possible.

As a researcher who takes embodiment as fundamental for understanding cognition, I am constantly aware of how our different bodies, and the relationship we have with our bodies, shape the very way in which we learn. Our body is the center of our world; it is the reference point around

which everything else acquires meaning: different body shapes, different skin colors, different sexual and gender identities, different physical abilities, and different socio-economic conditions are only a few examples. When conveying information to my students, I am always mindful that all of these differences will play a role, one way or another, in how they respond to what I am teaching them. It is my job to make sure that everyone feels empowered to shape their education according to their needs, and that their efforts are rewarded with respect, kindness, and professionalism. The training in pedagogy, educational technology, and diversity that I received through the University of Pittsburgh's Achievement in Pedagogy Badge initiative made my teaching accessibility and inclusivity skills more robust.

Moreover, I advocate for a more open and inclusive profession. I belong to several organized groups within the philosophical community focusing on issues like environmental sustainability and how to make philosophy and the academy in general more socially engaged. For instance, I am a founding member of the newly born "Philosophers for Sustainability" group, which has recently advocated for the APA to implement some sustainability guidelines and succeeded. I have also recently joined the research group for Socially Engaged Philosophy of Science, based at the University of Cincinnati, and received a certificate in Public and Engaged Humanities from Georgetown University, in addition to a Humanities Ambassador Fellowship from the same program.