

# 5 Ways to Be More Inclusive

## 1. Diversify your syllabi

The profession will be more inclusive and welcoming to students of diverse backgrounds if they see philosophers with similar backgrounds represented. Exposing students to authors from diverse backgrounds can benefit them by challenging their own cultural beliefs and norms.

The resources below provide syllabi that prominently feature philosophers from underrepresented backgrounds. The syllabi cover a wide range of areas, from epistemology to philosophy of religion.

- [APA Diversity and Inclusion Syllabus Collection](#)
- [Philosophical texts written by diverse philosophers](#)
- [Diversity Reading List](#)
- [Resources for diverse syllabi](#)

## 2. Be proactive against bias

Individuals from underrepresented groups might suffer from stereotype threat, which is a harmful fear of confirming a negative stereotype about one of their identities. If a student anticipates falling into a stereotype that is accepted and not confronted, they may fulfill the characteristics of that stereotype.

Educators can research implicit bias, which is an unconscious attitude toward socially identified groups such as races, social classes, etc. where the individual is often unaware, or only partially aware, of these attitudes. Educators may take the free online Implicit Association Test (IAT) and then begin to think seriously about whether they might have underlying cognitive or affective attitudes at odds with their avowed beliefs, principles, or values, and that might have an influence in their thoughts and action that they would hope to avoid. They must not stop after taking the test, as there is only evidence of effective administration of the IAT as an initial step, accompanied by a discussion of what such results do or do not mean.

- [APA Good Practices Guide](#), Section 2: Contemporary forms of bias and discrimination
- Stanford Encyclopedia entry on [implicit bias](#)
- *Scientific American* article, ["How to Think About 'Implicit Bias'"](#)

## 3. Grade anonymously

Anonymizing papers and exams help limit the effects of bias. Graders can be biased against certain groups even if they claim to not be biased. Consider letting students use ID numbers instead of names or make them put any identifying information on a separate cover sheet.

- Extensive description of [anonymization](#)
- Philosophy discussion of the why and how of [anonymous grading](#)

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## 4. Proactively pass on diversity resources to students

Given the size and demographics of most departments, students may not know whom to reach out to or they may feel uncomfortable doing so. Proactively offer resources by making them visible in the department or on your syllabus. Have a section on your department's website, send out a yearly email to majors, or make announcements in introductory classes. Seek out and recognize promising students from underrepresented groups and pass on tailored resources directly to them.

- [Minorities and Philosophy](#), a network of departmental working groups working to address issues of diversity and inclusiveness
- A [directory of philosophers from underrepresented backgrounds](#)
- [Resources on diversity and inclusiveness](#) in general
- Resources related to [undergraduate diversity institutes](#)

## 5. Create inclusive classrooms

Studies suggest students from underrepresented groups can feel alienated from classroom discussions, which may reinforce a sense of not belonging in philosophy and may discourage future participation. To more inclusive in the classroom, be aware of whom you call on, and how often. Avoid over-using terms like “obviously”—they can prioritize some intuitions over others. Use gender-neutral language (e.g., they, them, their). Ask students about their preferred gender pronouns. Avoid using ableist terms and phrases (e.g., do not use mental illnesses as labels, say “anonymous review” rather than “blind review”).

- [Quick tips and further resources](#)
- [MIT bystander intervention information page](#)
- [Guidelines](#) for respectful, constructive, and inclusive philosophical discussion
- Ensuring equality in classroom [discussions](#)
- [Inclusive Teaching Strategies](#)