The Diversity Reading List in Philosophy (DRL) is seeking a small grant from the APA to implement a new indexing system for its website. Its current one is based on PhilPapers’s system. But, given lingering equality, diversity, and inclusivity issues within that system, we have developed a new system which improves in all of those regards and is also better catered to researchers and educators alike who are seeking to diversify their work and teaching. As proof of concept, we outlined this system in our paper, ‘Indexing Philosophy in a Fair and Inclusive Key,’ which was published by the Journal of the American Philosophical Association in April 2023. But, with the help of the APA, we would now like to take the next step: implementing it.

Dr Simon Fokt

Dr. Quentin Pharr (Recent Graduate at the University of St Andrews and Editor (Epistemology) for the Diversity Reading List in Philosophy)

Dr Clotilde Torregrossa (Associate Lecturer at the University of St Andrews and co-manager of the Diversity Reading List in Philosophy)

Funding Amount Requested
$4,999.00

Expected Project Completion Date
December 2024

Project Description
The DRL is a volunteer-run project focused on promoting equality, diversity, and inclusivity in academic philosophy by making it easier for lecturers to include texts written by philosophical authors from under-represented groups on their syllabi, and for students to run reading groups from the same. 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.

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 underrepresented 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.

In light of these core commitments, we are now seeking one-off funding from the APA to implement a new indexing system for the DRL which will better align with our commitments, establish a positive example for other philosophical indexing systems, and most importantly bring more users to the DRL and, consequently, help the philosophical community to become more aware and capable of making their research and teaching more equal, diverse, and inclusive.

The DRL needs a new indexing system because having borrowed the template for its existing indexing system from PhilPapers, there are still a number of issues in terms of equality, diversity, and inclusivity that need to be corrected. We have published two papers on what these issues are and how we aim to fix them for the DRL – ‘Categorical Imperfections: Marginalisation and Scholarship Indexing Systems’ (2020) and ‘Indexing Philosophy in a Fair and Inclusive Key’ (2023).

In 'Indexing Philosophy in a Fair and Inclusive Key' (2023), we note several problematic areas:

“PhilPapers’ ‘Browse by Category’ groups all world philosophical traditions — except the Western analytic tradition — in the crypto-miscellaneous category Philosophy of Traditions, which appears toward the end of the nonalphabetical list of top-level categories (PhilPapers n.d.). It is not divided in a careful or meaningful way, and its specific topics are found lower down its category tree and are given tradition-specific qualifiers that distinguish them from unqualified (and thus presumably universal) categories where Western analytic scholarship is found. Similarly, feminist perspectives tend to appear in miscellaneous categories, with qualifiers distinguishing them from unqualified scholarship (for example, Feminist Philosophy of Science as a subcategory of Philosophy of Science, Misc.) Moreover, when it comes to topics, the ordering of top-level categories on PhilPapers strongly suggests a gradation of importance of philosophical topics, with those more abstract and, as it happens, more dominated by white male authors appearing closer to the top. Categories devoted to times, figures, and topics more relevant to the Western analytic tradition tend to appear higher up the tree, have more subcategories, and lack tradition-specific qualifiers. Scholarship discussing other times, figures, and topics is listed under (crypto-)miscellaneous or tradition-specific categories and is often not found in the general, unqualified categories” (Fokt, Pharr, and Torregrossa 2023, 2).

In response, we then suggested key changes that our new indexing system will adopt - most notably, “recast[ing] historical and figure- or tradition-focused categories as filters, remove[ing] Miscellaneous categories, and implement[ing] alphabetical sorting” (Fokt, Pharr, and Torregrossa 2023, 20).

But now, the only immediate barrier to practically implementing our new system is funding for the tools and labor involved. We already have both a website hosted on a private server owned by Simon Fokt's
company, TELdesign Limited, and an existing indexing system that is reconfigurable. Moreover, relevant computer applications and individuals have already been identified that can implement the new system.

**Project Impact**
This project will benefit the field of philosophy in two main ways. Firstly, as outlined in ‘Indexing Philosophy in a Fair and Inclusive Key’, it will offer an unbiased platform for finding philosophical texts. As we have shown in our publications, the practice of using databases for philosophical research marginalises certain authors, topics, and traditions. As such, our proposed project would offer a very practical remedy to this marginalisation.

Secondly, the project will serve as a proof of concept which could inspire similar improvements in other databases and indexing systems in philosophy. The reconfiguration process will be documented throughout, with notes of specific changes and methods used, and a log of what works and does not work in implementing specific index-related changes. This will enable anyone wishing to make similar changes in the future to refer to an existing process instead of needing to develop a new one.

A sister project, the Diversity Reading List in History, will also be able to make use of these notes. And, more generic notes will also be kept so that similar projects, such as PhilPapers, can also more easily implement their own systems.

**Project Goals**
- Create the new DRL index based on ‘Indexing Philosophy in a Fair and Inclusive Key’ publication.
- Create website infrastructure to support the new index.
- Re-launch and advertise the DRL with its new index.

**Project Timeline**
We anticipate work to begin in June 2024 and to be completed for the end of 2024 (7 months). Total: 198 hrs. We anticipate three-stages.

1st June 2024 – 15th August 2024: Creation of Indexing Components, including: Time Slider, Traditions and Figures Filters, New Website Design Interface and Structure

16th August 2024 – 1st December 2024: Transferring Data from Old System to New System


**Project Outreach**
The DRL has developed a solid network of resources and contacts to inform others of our activities. In kind, they have often helped us to promote our work. For this project, we will make use of all of our current resources and contacts to advertise, including:

Social Media

The DRL is active on both Twitter (1,990 followers) and Facebook (1,806 followers).

Newsletter
Our newsletter goes out to our 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 also have 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 grants (like this one) and publications, or upcoming events, such as our online seminar series. Currently, we are in contact with:

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

MAP Chapters

MAP members are also among our most active supporters. 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

There are similar projects and groups to ours working on diversification and decolonisation in academia (Project Myopia, Philosophying in...). We are currently in regular contact with 19 projects and groups.

Professional Institutions and Funding Bodies

We also maintain contact with 10 professional institutions and funding bodies who have either previously funded DRL projects, or with whom we are currently seeking support. We are proud to include the APA among these institutions and bodies, and to already have our website link advertised on its website.

Philosophy News Sites
We will reach out to Daily Nous, Philosophy Now, Philosophynews.com, and several blog sites for advertisements.

**Accessibility Plan**

As an online project, the accessibility plan for the DRL involves making the website accessible to people with visual impairments. The website has already been developed in this direction as part of a 2017 grant funded by the British Society for Aesthetics, including contrast optimisation, text-to-speech facilitation, etc. We will ensure that any new front-end content is created to the same high standard as the rest of the site.

**Evaluation Plan**

We have a current set of data regarding how many users access the DRL’s website and for how long. To gauge the success of our new system, we will compare that dataset to a post-implementation dataset in order to determine whether there were increases or decreases in our user numbers and how long users accessed the website. We will also issue a user-experience survey to assess whether the new indexing system and its interface are easy to use and helpful for the relevant users’ practices, be they research, teaching, or studying.

**Online Presence**

As mentioned previously, the DRL has an extensive online presence through its primary website, as well as through its social media platforms. In the last 12 months, the DRL website received 23,387 unique IP visits and 86,072 pageviews.

https://diversityreadinglist.org/

**Budget Narrative**

All labor expenses are calculated using a research assistant rate of $23 per hour.

The DRL website will need to be backed up and restructured on the back-end of its website to allow for the creation of the new taxonomy filters (Traditions, Times, and Figures). The backing up and structure update should be finished within two working days, while the work on setting up filters will be slightly more time-consuming, requiring working out the best way to apply the filters to the existing content. It will further require purchasing a license for Toolset, a WordPress plugin capable of managing multiple entry taxonomies.

The main bulk of the work will involve transferring the existing content into the new system by semi-automated reclassification using the Sheet Editor plugin. For example, all entries currently classified under Kant: Epistemology will need to be reclassified under Topic: Epistemology, Time: 18th Century, Tradition: European, and Figure: Kant. We estimate that the semi-automated process we envision for this task will allow us to reclassify the c.1600 entries in the DRL database within 100 hours, allowing an average of just over 3 minutes per entry. This process will include creating ongoing documentation of the changes made.

Next, a new interface will need to be created to enable website users to filter content using the new taxonomies. Most of this will be created in-house. We estimate that it will take about 25 hours to do so, including the creation of filters in both the main search engine and the category browsing system. The only exception will be the Time Slider feature which requires more advanced programming beyond the skills of
the steering committee or the DRL volunteers. A developer has been contacted for a preliminary estimate and offered to complete the task for the price stated in the budget.

Finally, the new system will be thoroughly tested and checked for any errors. We estimate that this can be done within 25 hours, allowing for two 10-hour rounds of testing and a final 5-hour check.

**Other Funding Sources**

N/A
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<td>Labor for Pre-Setting Website Structure</td>
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Dr Simon Fokt – Resume

CONTACT INFORMATION

TELdesign Limited
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TEL +44 (0) 7851668244
Email simonfokt@teldesign.net
Website www.simonfokt.org

Work

TELdesign Limited

Director and Learning Designer (September 2018 – present)
• Technology enhanced learning design and development;
• Project management and consulting
• Instructional design
• Web design

Clients include: University of Edinburgh, King’s College London, University of Law;
Audi, LIDL, Deutsche Bahn, Vitesco Technologies, Simpleshow

Hochschule f"ur Technik und Wirtschaft Berlin

Visiting lecturer (September 2022 – present)
Learning Designer (January 2021 – December 2022)
• Development of a Masters programme in Project Management and Data Science

University of Edinburgh

Project Lead (September 2019 – July 2020)
• Managing the MOOC academic and production teams
• Instructional design

Learning Technologist (August 2015 – June 2019)
• Design, development and support for MOOCs and online Masters programmes
• VLE support and innovative design with UX testing
• Project co-ordination, monitoring staff and strategic input into course design

Diversity Reading List

Manager (January 2015 – present)
• Managing the project team
• Grant applications and managing grant projects
• Promotion online, at conferences and other events

University of Leeds, Inter-Disciplinary Ethics Applied Centre

Online Learning Specialist and Teaching Fellow (September 2014 – August 2015)
• Preparation and delivery of teaching in ethics and applied ethics
• Supervision of Masters dissertations and support through personal tutorials
• Development of teaching materials for online Masters and VLE management

University of St Andrews, Departments of Philosophy

Teaching Assistant (September 2009 – June 2014)
Education

University of St Andrews, Scotland

Ph.D., Philosophy, accepted without corrections, on 17th December 2012

- Thesis Title: *Defining art culturally*
- Funding: AHRC studentship

M.Litt, Philosophy, August 2009

Adam Mickiewicz University, Poznań, Poland

Magister, Cultural Studies, June 2010

University of Glasgow, Scotland

M.A., Philosophy, June 2008

- 1st level degree (Hons) in Philosophy
- Awards: MacLagan Prize in Moral Philosophy (2009)

Projects and Grants

Diversity Reading List – online resource for teachers (2015–present)

- Role: Manager
- Project involving ten paid and 37 volunteer collaborators
- Sponsors include: UK Arts and Humanities Research Council, American Philosophical Association, British Philosophical Association, British Society of Aesthetics (see project website for a full list)

Erasmus+ visits to Universitat Politecnica de Catalunya and Universitat Autonoma de Barcelona (2017), Universidade de Sao Paulo (2018), and Universitat Politecnica de Valencia (2019)


- Role: Organiser
- Funding: Seminar series grant, British Society of Aesthetics

Resource Use for philosophers - online course in Blackboard Learn (2016)

- Role: Project coordinator, managing the work of two PhD students
- Funding: Read.Write.Cite Grant, University of Edinburgh

What is art? A reading list – online resource for teachers (2015)

- Funding: Diversity Curriculum Grant, American Society for Aesthetics.

Effective Resource Use for UG Philosophy Students - online course in Moodle (2014)

- Funding: Teaching Development Award Scheme grant, University of St Andrews

Professional Qualifications

PG Cert in Digital Education, University of Edinburgh (2019)

University of Leeds Teaching and Research Award (2015)


Introduction to University Teaching by Higher Education Academy (2011)