

North American Society for Social Philosophy
Committee on Accessibility and Inclusion

Abstract Writing Workshop

2026

01

Responding to Calls for Papers

Read the CFP carefully

- A good abstract directly engages with the CFP.
- What is the scope and the theme/themes of the conference?
- What areas, issues, topics, and keywords does the CFP contain?
- When is the submission due date, and is it feasible for your project?

Pay attention
to what the
CFP is asking
you to produce

- Pay attention to formal guidelines, such as word count, anonymization requirements, requirements to include a bibliography, CV, etc.
- Does the CFP ask for description only of the work itself? Or does it also ask for a description of the presentation (methods, style of presentation)?

Think about how your topic & method fit with the CFP

- Your work doesn't always have to be a perfect fit.
- However, it should be broadly relevant to the CFP.
- The less obvious the fit, the more you will need to show the connection to the CFP in your submission.

Keep your reviewers in mind

- Is this a specialist conference on a niche topic or a specific thinker? Or is this a more generalist conference?
- The answer to the above should inform your language: Consider whether you are using technical language, specialized terms, or anything that would be “insider” concepts and whether this helps or hinders the clarity of your proposal.

Keep your reviewers in mind

- If submitting to a more generalist conference, refrain from using technical language or jargon and don't assume your reviewer knows the literature or concepts you are engaging.
- If you don't know the organizer, ask a professor, mentor, or google more information about them.
- Consider a title that is informative and engaging.

02

Let's Apply!

Read the CFP carefully

- Proposals in all areas of social philosophy (broadly construed) are welcome, whether the content is contemporary or historical, Western or non-Western, analytic or Continental. **Scope**
- This year's conference theme is "Joy, Care, and Resistance." Although proposals in all areas of social philosophy are welcome, submissions on this theme are especially encouraged. **Theme**

Read the CFP carefully

- Some possible topics include: Solidarity, coalition-building, and allyship; Loneliness and connection across difference; Social trust and epistemic environments; Communities of resistance and care... **Topics and keywords**

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- An abstract should:
 - Be 250-500 words and prepared for anonymous review. **Formal criteria**
 - Convey an identifiable and engaging thesis, argument, or overall perspective. **Description**
 - Motivate the author's approach to the issue, by conveying the outlines of the argument or explaining why a particular theoretical frame is helpful for understanding the topic. **Method**

Pay attention
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- An abstract should (continued):
 - Be clear and well-written, avoiding jargon when possible and explaining it when necessary. **Attention to the audience**
 - Demonstrate some engagement with the relevant literature, either through brief citations or an awareness of existing contributions. **Context**

03

Abstract Examples

Seeking to Destabilize Structural Injustice

In response to the CFP for the
NASSP meeting on *Community,
Identity, and Belonging*

“Injustice” denotes a broad category. Individual actions, dispositions, people, or structural arrangements can all be described as unjust. There is increased philosophical work on social structures that has implications for what we might think about structural injustice. Much of the work on social ontology is developed not merely as descriptive metaphysics, but as part of explicitly ameliorative projects (Haslanger 2012). On such an approach, an account of the nature of structural injustice should be shaped, in part, by our goals in seeking to address such injustice.

This paper specifically seeks to develop sufficient conditions for how we might understand at least some forms of structural injustice that do not have unjust actions or intentions as constituents. I argue that collective intentionality isn’t necessary for structural injustice.

Structures can be unjust even if no one in those structures intends them to be so. Drawing on the work of Kate Manne (regarding misogyny) and Jay Dolmage (regarding ableism) as guides, I show how certain social systems can lead to unjust disadvantage and encourage the mistreatment of certain social groups, even apart from individual or collective intentions. Rather, what is needed is a certain pattern of structural disadvantage that persists even apart from explicit intention. Such a pattern is sufficient (even if not also necessary) for structural injustice.

Contempt and Moral Community

In response to the CFP for the
NASSP meeting on *Polarization,
Reconciliation, and Community*

By definition, contempt judges another to be inferior, so it aims to introduce (or, to continue) a certain sort of power dynamic between individuals and/or groups. And, given other sorts of existing social differences, some will be able to wield contemptuous attitudes more powerfully than others. Some defend contempt as at least sometimes an appropriate moral response to persons with particularly rotten characters; but, as Karen Stohr suggests in “Our New Age of Contempt”, “[w]idespread public contempt has the potential to undermine the moral basis of all human relationships and, indeed, human community itself” (2017).

I argue that appropriate moral attitudes must at least allow for the moral relationship to remain minimally intact – that is, that all persons (including the targets of reactive attitudes) be understood as capable of understanding and of engaging in moral discourse with one another. Certain objectionable attitudes of contempt play significant roles in creating, supporting and/or reinforcing social inequities, which in turn can cause significant rifts in the moral community. Following insights from Margaret Urban Walker (2006), I argue that responding to those inequities with counter-contempt prevents moral repair, thus contempt might never be an appropriate moral response.

Bad Example 1

Some US politicians are proud to call themselves socialists. To them, socialism is a good thing. Most Republicans and even many Democrats try to defeat legislative proposals by calling them socialism. To them, socialism is a bad thing. Why this difference of opinion? Because the Stalinist autocratic socialism was and is bad, but democratic socialism was and is good. What justification have I to make these judgments of good and bad? My justification is the standard of what is good and bad in governance provided by the 1948 UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Bad Example 2

This paper analyzes a chapter from Nel Nodding's *Caring* through the lens of non-familial-centric care theory, building on the work of Virginia Held, Joan Tronto, and Cheryl Brandsen. On a revised reading of Noddings, following Held's distinction between normative and prescriptive care, and influenced by the work of Sally Haslanger on conceptual engineering of gender, this paper ultimately suggests that a political approach to care via Tronto and Branden is the rights step forward to address conflicts internal to both care and gender theory.

Questions & Discussion

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