

2026 Guidelines for Inclusive Presenting and Chairing

North American Society for Social Philosophy

The North American Society for Social Philosophy is committed to cultivating a conference culture that is warm, collaborative, and intellectually generous. Our meetings are designed to support philosophical works in progress and to create space for exploratory ideas, genuinely helpful feedback, and stimulating conversations. In order for this culture to flourish, we do our best to maintain a shared commitment to professional kindness and mutual respect in a professional yet relaxed atmosphere.

The following guidelines are intended to assist chairs and presenters in fostering accessible and inclusive sessions and to help maintain the collegial atmosphere that NASSP values. They offer practical suggestions for creating conversations in which everyone feels welcome to participate and contribute, especially early-career scholars and scholars from marginalized groups.

Presenting

Preparing for the session:

- Many people find it hard to follow auditory talks. To ensure that your presentation is accessible to everyone, please prepare a handout with a detailed outline of your talk if you don't have a script to share. Share your handout with the audience by preparing a slide with a QR code and a URL that links to it. Sharing materials electronically is recommended to permit individuals to use additional accessibility software or technology, but if you choose to print your handout, please make sure to use a highly accessible font such as Verdana, Tahoma, Georgia, or Arial and have some copies with a large print size (17 points or larger).
- When designing your slides, avoid flashing images, arguments that rely solely on color, and small print. Use a plain background without any watermark, photo, or design behind the text. On the [NASSP website](#) are two accessible PowerPoint templates that you can adapt as needed. Please consider using these if you are not already familiar with accessible PowerPoint design.
- If you decide to use presentation slides, please share your slides with the audience to ensure greater accessibility. This can be done by creating a QR code that directs the audience to the online version of the slides. [You can use this free no-sign-up tool to generate a QR code.](#) You can add this QR image to your slide deck or to a handout that participants can scan during the session with their device camera. Online locations you can use include shared folders like Google Drive or Dropbox, a personal webpage, or an institutional webpage.

During the session:

- As you begin, note what materials (an online handout, printed handouts, shared slides, etc.) are available to your audience. If you have printed handouts, have the session chair distribute them rather than having people come forward.
- Use the microphone if in a room in which one is available (including all plenary sessions, like keynotes and book award). This helps all listeners follow your talk and is often connected to an FM monitoring system for those with hearing impairments.
- Speak at a reasonable pace to make sure your talk is easy to follow for everyone in your audience.
- If your slides contain images, describe them. This practice supports the inclusion of participants with low vision and makes your images more purposeful for everyone. Detailed auditory descriptions are best prepared in advance and avoid a bare description merely of what is in the photo – communicate meaning if that is clear and pertinent to those who can see the images.

- If you use videos during your presentation, make sure that they are captioned.
- If you are addressing your audience, avoid using explicitly gendered terms like “ladies and gentlemen” and “guys.” Instead, consider more gender-neutral options, like “everyone,” “folks,” “all,” etc.
- If you are addressing a specific member of the audience during the discussion, refer to them by their name or as they/them until you are made aware of their pronouns.
- Avoid using needlessly ableist terms (e.g, crazy, lame, insane, idiotic, etc.) or terms of derision based on historically ableist categories.
- Reflect carefully on how you engage thought experiments and examples, paying attention to how they may unintentionally perpetuate stereotypes or biases or distract from the substance of the presentation. Avoid needlessly violent examples and be aware of the historical context of thought experiments.

Chairing

Preparing for the session:

- Ask presenters for their pronouns and confirm the name(s) they go by.
- Practice the pronunciation of the presenters’ names before the session, especially if a presenter has a name you have not previously heard or said.

During the session:

- Introduce presenters by their first and last names, and refer to all presenters equally during the session.
- If you are unsure what pronouns someone uses, refer to them by their name or as they/them until you are made aware of their pronouns.
- If someone misuses someone’s pronouns during the session, assist in re-establishing correct pronouns by using the appropriate pronouns in reference to that person. If you realize you have used the wrong pronouns, you should correct yourself and continue talking without drawing more attention to your error.
- Avoid using explicitly gendered terms like “ladies and gentlemen” and “guys.” Instead, consider more gender-neutral options, like “everyone,” “folks,” “all,” etc.

Managing discussion:

- You should manage the queue during the discussion. This is to ensure intentionality in creating an inclusive discussion. Keep in mind that groups that have been historically marginalized in philosophy might not be as comfortable and confident contributing to the discussion. On the other hand, men and senior members of the profession might tend to dominate the discussion.
- To facilitate an inclusive discussion, create an ordered list of those who want to ask a question. In determining an order for the queue, attempt to balance the discussion by making sure a diverse range of voices is heard, for example, from the point of view of gender expression, juniority/seniority in the field, student/faculty, etc., to the extent that these identities are known to you. Questions need not be taken in the order of hands raised. Research shows that allowing a member of an underrepresented group to ask the first question might encourage others to do so later in the discussion.
- Make sure to use the same method when calling on questioners. Usually, firm eye contact and a “yes” or “please” work well. Avoid using familiar names for some and not others, items of clothing for some and not others, and using gendered terms, especially diminutives (“the girl”) or archaic addresses (“the lady”).

- Be aware of the time remaining in the session and pace the discussion accordingly so that as many people as possible can ask their questions, prioritizing those who have not spoken before and those sitting at the back of the venue.
- Instruct participants to raise only one question at a time. It is at the discretion of the chair to determine whether a brief follow-up is permitted, depending on the length of the active queue. This is to ensure that the discussion will not be monopolized by a couple of participants. If a questioner does not follow these instructions, the chair should remind them and/or cut off the line of questioning.
- If a questioner becomes disrespectful, cut off the line of questioning as soon as possible. You need not convey why you are cutting off a particular line of questioning, but should move on to the next question or end the session if there is no time for another.