Decolonising Philosophy

A Toolkit

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§ Overview and Purpose of the Project

Much academic philosophy in the UK, US, Australasia, and continental Europe masks its structural antagonism to everything that is not white, bourgeois, male, heteronormative, and able-bodied. Indeed, the institutional gatekeepers of Anglo-European academic philosophy will not take kindly to precisely this critical point, which is bound up with what Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o has termed 'colonial alienation'—the alienation which is "reinforced in the teaching of history, geography, music, where bourgeois Europe was always the centre of the universe".[1] Nor will institutional gatekeepers welcome the redirection of the flow of epistemic power away from the Anglo-European world that is ideologically positioned at the centre to a horizontal, comparative, and dialogical model in which no geolocation occupies a privileged position. At the core of the matter may well be the subconscious struggle to let go or share power with other schools of thought. Sharing the power of thought and giving equal weighting to various different philosophical traditions may lead to loss of influence and control and even sometimes part of one's identity. Asking people who have historically wielded power over others to share power with people over whom they had and continue to have power is not natural for many.[2] However, if this power struggle is to be overcome, then sharing power with others leads to a greater sense of ownership, stronger bonds and cooperation, and improved productivity. The resistance to power-sharing stems from the fear among those who have historically held power that by sharing power with marginalised groups, they themselves will become marginalised, creating a reversal in the power dynamic. However, this will not be the case, since the purpose of this decolonial toolkit is to embrace marginalised thought certainly to challenge the hegemony of western philosophy (which as such does not tend to preface itself), but also to enable rich and transformative conversations between intellectual systems.

Crucially, the decolonial turn is not a binary enterprise. It is consistently co-opted by a binary mindset – especially by those threatened by what they *think* the decolonial turn is saying – e.g. a critical discourse of white normativity/whiteness is heard and disseminated as "all white people are evil racists"; or 'studying African, Asian, Middle Eastern, and Indigenous philosophies' means 'excluding western thought and erasing Plato and Kant from the curriculum'. The agonistic nature of decolonial discursive spaces resists such simplistic closures. But, sadly, decolonial discursive spaces, because of their agonistic nature, are always vulnerable to being captured in dangerously simplistic manners.

The Decolonising Philosophy Toolkit (DPT), as presented here, is a concise guide to decolonising philosophy curricula. It is an output of a 2023/24 SOAS Co-Creator Internship Project, whose team comprises four undergraduate student interns and four academic philosophers. In this document, you will find §1 an argument for why decolonising the philosophy curriculum is required; §2 a guide to implementing critical pedagogy in one's practice; §3 recommendations for decolonising assessment in philosophy programmes; and §4 an example of how an epistemology module can be transformed to reflect decolonising principles. For the handbook version of the toolkit, which comprises detailed academic discourse concerning the four thematic foci, please see the eponymous weblink on the Project's website. The handbook version also contains the complete bibliographic information of all sources cited.

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[1] Ngũgĩ 1987: 17.
[2] Oppong (2023) details this substantially.

§1 Framing the Decolonising Philosophy Curriculum Discourse

§§a On Inclusion

One of the most instinctive ways to foster diversity within academic philosophy involves simply incorporating the voices, thoughts, and perspectives of individuals who have experienced colonisation. However, notwithstanding the evident advantages and importance of creating greater apparent diversity within academic staff and curricula, several complexities may arise from adopting a simplistic 'add and stir' approach to philosophy.[3] Curiously, a significant challenge to decolonising philosophy curricula comes from the liberal discourse and policy of equality, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) (as opposed to the more radical discourse and policy of diversity, equity, and inclusion [DEI]). This is because the longstanding liberal practices of diversification and inclusion in Anglo-European and American-Australasian polities typically fail to recognise the power relations that still 'bolt on', for example, minoritised[4] vocabularies and standpoints to a range of Anglo-European and American-Australasian curricula. Without such recognition, minoritised vocabularies and standpoints are regularly construed as *alternative*, or even *non-canonical* perspectives.

Inviting marginalised individuals into educational discourse constitutes oversight of longstanding systemic exclusion.[5] Persisting unequal power dynamics among various groups render assertions of inclusion insufficient, as those assertions fail to acknowledge deeply entrenched systemic inequities. Instead, engaging in challenging conversations that explicitly address colonisation and its enduring impacts on marginalised communities is better for fostering genuine dialogue on equal footing.[6] If these unequal power relations remain unchallenged, there is a risk of perpetuated dominance by privileged groups, inhibiting authentic exchange and understanding. Dominant traditions may overshadow less privileged ones, suppressing alternative viewpoints and limiting diversity of thought.[7]

§§1b The 'Coloniality of Power'

Significantly, decolonising the curriculum is a constant and even never-ending process, to the point that the idea of thinking of decolonising subjects like philosophy, law, history, literature, mathematics, art, and music reaches a *fait accompli* involves a category error. Decolonising the curriculum is a constant and even never-ending process, mainly because of the ways it responds to the 'coloniality of power'[8] and coloniality's operational life. The coloniality of power—central to and deep-rooted in the ways the Western European-led parts of the Global North[9] and its array of modern institutional structures and

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[3] Sager (2018) coins this expression.

[4] We use the term 'minoritised' rather than 'minority', because we want to reflect the way in which such marking reflects the active way in which individuals and communities are represented as other from a dominant cultural perspective.

[5] Viz. McArthur (2021).

[6] Viz. McArthur (2021).

[7] Viz. McArthur (2021).

[8] Viz. Quijano (1999/2007, 2000a, 2000b).

[9] 'Global North' comprises so-called 'economically developed' countries like the USA, the UK, Canada, many Western and Central European states, Russia, Israel, Hong Kong, Japan, South Korea, Singapore, Australia, and New Zealand. 'Global South' replaces the more supremacist expression 'Third World' used in previous decades, and typically refers to so-called 'economically developing' countries, many of which experienced and still experience the harmful effects of colonisation and exploitation by Global Northern states. The expressions 'Global North' and 'Global South', though, are still not ideal, as they risk recycling over-simplifying categorisations that are precisely emblematic of coloniality and its various practices.

practices construe legitimacy—is always desperate to fiercely combat any and all challenges to its way of making sense of knowledge and of knowledge production.

Coloniality logically precedes the material and symbolic *praxes* of Western European hegemonic powers by serving as the conceptual motor for motivating and structuring the respective modern projects of colonisation by the Western European crowns that materially and symbolically carved the world at its joints. To quote Walter Mignolo here, "[c]oloniality … is much more than colonialism: it is a colonial matrix of power through which world order has been created and managed".[10] Since coloniality is made sense of as a matrix of power relations that shape the predatory practices of Western European colonising projects by "defin[ing] culture, labour, intersubjective relations, and knowledge production …",[11] coloniality can neither be reducible to nor synonymous with colonialism for a second (and arguably more important) reason.

Coloniality neither dies with the expulsion of colonial administrators from sovereign territory, nor does coloniality wither away upon the birth of those independent nation-states rising from the ashes of colonial empire. Coloniality lingers on in having organised a global capitalist geopolitical and economic order that is definitive of much social, economic, and political life in those independent nation-states and the former colonial powers since the end of the twentieth century.[12]

Decoloniality principally takes its lead from coming to terms with Frantz Fanon's postcolonial conception of the double-bind in which colonised people find themselves with respect to seeking recognition from the coloniser. The structure of recognition in such a context is anything but horizontal and *inter*subjective, because the power relation governing the colonial relationship involves the doling out of a specific resource—'recognition'—from a set of colonial recognisers who control its supply to a set of colonial recognisees who are desperate for its acquisition and fairer distribution. To put this another way, if the process of recognition is the bestowal of developmental capital from a centralised domain of power at the behest and pleasure of one group for the purpose of legitimating another, then recognition deals in domination, rather than evincing emancipation. Decoloniality, in this way, aims to accomplish, what Mignolo and Catherine Walsh have called, 'epistemic reconstitution':

> Decoloniality's goal and orientation … are *epistemic reconstitution*. Epistemic reconstitution cannot be achieved by setting up a "new" school of thought within western cosmology. It requires two simultaneous tasks: to open up to the richness of knowledges and praxis of living that the rhetoric of modernity demonised and reduced to tradition, barbarism, folklore, under-development, denied spirituality in the name of reason, and built knowledges to control sexuality and all kind of barbarians. Second, and necessarily, epistemic reconstitution requires delinking from the bubbles of modern thoughts from the left and from the right.[13]

Epistemic reconstitution is constituted by interests in delinking as part of a concerted transformative effort to accomplish what Frantz Fanon envisioned in the Conclusion to *The Wretched of the Earth*, namely a 'critical humanism'. Western European humanism—logically bound up with coloniality and colonialism—is such that "Europe has denied itself not only humility and modesty but also solicitude and tenderness".[14] The Global South, therefore, is going to be the principal site for germinating the vocabulary for a new concept and politics of humanity, "something which Europe has been incapable of achieving".[15]

For a decolonising philosophy curriculum to yield transformative results, each individual must actively embrace challenging coloniality. The responsibility for individual decolonial liberation is ultimately communal; it necessitates collective participation and commitment. Having merely a select few individuals able and willing to transform their individual mindset and educate others is insufficient.

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[10] Mignolo 2011b: 171
[11] Maldonado-Torres 2007: 243.
[12] Viz. Mignolo (2017).
[13] Mignolo & Walsh 2018: 228-29.
[14] Fanon 2005: 235.
[15] Ibid., p. 236.

Genuine desire for change must be internally motivated, institutional and disciplinary in scope, with a willingness to dwell in discomfort.[16]

§2 Critical Pedagogy in Practice

§§a Experiences of the Classroom

Three of the SOAS students we interviewed for the Project reflected powerfully about their experience of marginalisation in pedagogical contexts:

> I feel like they [teachers] didn't consider the students that didn't look like them.

> Having to explain an experience they [white folk] would never understand felt like talking to a brick wall.

> I quickly learnt that in bringing up race or reporting the behaviour of another student I was sentencing myself to a great deal of emotional labour. Instead of having an adult who I could freely talk to and ask for help, I felt like I was holding their hands through this conversation.

No one can deny that the classroom is not experienced in the same way by everyone in the classroom. Much like the world outside its four walls, there are specific power dynamics at play. Much like the world outside, there is the good, the bad, and the ugly. An ugly truth is that racially and ethnically minoritised children within a classroom will be subject to the bias and ignorance of their white peers and teachers. Ignorance born of the latter's inability, or unwillingness, to confront whiteness, what Robin DiAngelo (2011) has famously named 'white fragility':

> White Fragility is a state in which even a minimum amount of racial stress becomes intolerable, triggering a range of defensive moves. These moves include the outward display of emotions such as anger, fear, and guilt, and behaviours such as argumentation, silence, and leaving the stress-inducing situation. These behaviours, in turn, function to reinstate white racial equilibrium.[17]

The problem of white fragility is that it restricts making sense of racism and racist practices to just the form of white hoods and burning crosses. However, the following excerpt from a SOAS student we interviewed for the Project reveals a more complicated, subtle, and insidious side to racism—what Kristie Dotson (2011) has termed 'testimonial smothering'—which white fragility reproduces:

> In history lessons when we were being taught a skewed account of colonialism and slavery, I was always scared to give my true opinions and share my family and life experiences in case I offended anyone or made any of the students or teachers feel uncomfortable for being white. The way in which we learnt about Jallianwala Bagh in school and the colonialism in India was all done within a singular one-hour lesson, where the teacher showed pamphlets from the time, portraying how brown women were not as beautiful, or less than white women. Being the only brown woman, I was so embarrassed and upset, but never felt as if I could portray that at the risk of being called sensitive.

> While I understand what the teacher was attempting to do, trying to show the racist sentiments that people used to hold and for the students to be shocked, I feel that the way it was done was insensitive and made it feel like the cartoons were funny, rather than something to find horrifying. Teachers also taught as if colonialism is this age-old, ancient event that occurred thousands of years ago, when in reality it is a very recent event, with still very raw scars. We have family friends whose great-grandparents were affected by Jallianwala Bagh, which still affects family trees and lines today, not to mention the intergenerational trauma. My own grandma experienced India under British rule and had to endure the burden of fleeing from Pakistan

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[16] Viz. Mignolo and Walsh (2018).
[17] DiAngelo 2011: 57.

to India with her five siblings. My parents grew up in Kashmir, an area that was made dangerous and contested by partition. Losing generations of family wealth and creating long-term mental scars and trauma that are passed down through family. This is what colonialism means to people who have been affected by it. However, colonialism was treated as a trivial topic that can be quickly covered as part of a few lessons when it actually has moulded and created people's entire lives. I do not view myself as a victim to my family history or the way that schools taught colonial history, I just recognise that it was more difficult to navigate certain things in my life that other people would not have to consider.

§§b Pedagogy and Decolonisation

As the SOAS student interviewee voices so far have revealed, classrooms are spaces of power. Classrooms can be alternately empowering or disempowering, liberating or oppressive, both for the teacher and the students. Because classrooms are microenvironments of power relations, it is important to consider how, within a decolonising ethos, power might be (re)distributed effectively and ethically in order to enhance the learning experience, recognise teaching and learning as important contributors to social justice, and to build a rigorous means of questioning 'settled truths'. The demands this poses on both student and teacher are not insignificant, requiring participants to adjust their expectations of the classroom, agree and abide by a set of behavioural principles, and be prepared to experience a degree of discomfort. The traditional role of the teacher is, as such, concretely challenged, moving from the 'sage on the stage' to that of a co-creator of knowledge whose authority is both questioned and yet necessary to maintain a safe space for all, able to facilitate relationships with and between students, and to manage anxieties, and resistance to changed expectations.

More importantly, the teacher should generate excitement, such that the classroom becomes a space of joy, rather than one of boredom, boundaried hierarchies, conventional practice or even fear.[18] Teaching and learning in a decolonial manner are ways of building connections between individuals but also between the inside and the outside of the classroom walls. Taking such an approach is a gift to the discipline of philosophy, which often struggles to show students why philosophical approaches and preoccupations *matter*. This is more than just simply making philosophy 'relevant', an endeavour which runs the risk of playing along with the marketising impulses and metrics of the neoliberal university. Connecting the discipline of philosophy, connecting abstract concepts to the lives we all live, is a means of aiding students to recognise the value that concepts and complex structures offer to the pursuit of justice and freedom. As a SOAS student interviewed for the Project stated,

> I took a philosophy of law class that was really engaging and I think that was because of how based in reality and our lived experiences it was. We studied actual movements in recent history, like the BLM movement, and it didn't seem so distant or far removed from our lives.

A decolonial classroom, therefore, begins with a recognition that the context in which teaching and learning occurs, at least in the Anglo-European world, is a normatively racialised, classed, gendered, and ableist environment. As such, the classroom often distributes power unequally, often to the benefit of those who are most proximate to normative structures of power; and the classroom is often harmful to those who are not so proximate. With respect to developing a decolonial pedagogy, it is particularly important to attend to the nature of whiteness, as already noted, and how it has operated, at the very least historically, in the classroom space.

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[18] See hooks 1994: 7, in particular.

§§c From Theory to Practice: Decolonising the Classroom

Setting some rules: Classroom etiquette

As a first step in establishing the decolonial ethos of a module, it is necessary to communicate a clear set of guidelines for conduct and to draw attention to the racialised context of the classroom. Developing these guidelines has educational value, ensuring that all students are cognisant of and agree to principles of behaviour that reflect an awareness of the potential of a classroom to be oppressive, silencing spaces for minoritised students.

The following example is from one of the philosophy modules that is currently taught at SOAS, and which colleagues may wish to adapt for their own purposes. It is designed to map out clearly the pedagogic ethos of the module, to set expectations around conduct, and to provide routes for redress if things go wrong.

Classroom etiquette: An example

Together we have a responsibility for maintaining a civil and conducive learning environment. Treat each other and your tutors with politeness, respect, and kindness. Professional courtesy and sensitivity are especially important with respect to individuals and topics dealing with differences in race, culture, religion, politics, sexual orientation, gender, gender variance, and ethnicities. Students from different backgrounds and perspectives should be well-served by and comfortable in this course. Your learning needs shall be addressed both in and out of class. The different perspectives, experiences, skills and backgrounds that you bring to this class are a resource, a source of strength and benefit.

Materials and activities will be presented in a way that shall be respectful of your differences and identities, whether these concern gender identity, sexuality, disability, age, socioeconomic status, ethnicity, race, nationality, religion, or culture. The classroom should be a safe space for all of you and that means we need to abide by some basic rules.

Given the sensitive and challenging nature of the material discussed in class, it is vital that there be an atmosphere of trust and safety in the classroom. As the module convenor, I will attempt to foster an environment in which each class member is able to speak and hear each other. This does not mean accepting views that are toxic or blind to privilege. We can call these out but when we do it is important we focus on critiquing what is said, rather than the person expressing these views, and that we do so courteously. That said, it is not your responsibility in this class to carry the burden of educating others. All too often those of us in a position of privilege shirk our responsibilities to educate ourselves. We must be alert to the labour, and exhaustion involved when a member from a less privileged category has to repeatedly call attention to problematic or unthinking statements that reflect privilege or reinforce it.

When you speak,

- be mindful of the space you are taking up
- be aware when you interrupt or speak over someone else

- be gentle with each other and listen carefully before speaking

Some of the material in this course may evoke strong emotions: please be respectful of others' emotions and be mindful of your own. Please let me know if something said or done in the classroom, either by myself or other students, is troubling or causes discomfort or offence.

While the intention may not be to cause discomfort or offence, the impact of what happens throughout the course should not be ignored but rather deserves attention: these moments can be important learning opportunities for everyone who perhaps does not experience the same emotions. If and when this occurs, there are several ways to alleviate some of the discomfort or hurt you may experience:

- Discuss the situation privately with me. I am always open to listening to your experiences. I value your input and want to work with you to find acceptable ways to process and address the issue.
- Discuss the situation with the class. In this case, I would appreciate it if you can let me know beforehand so that I can prepare and support this interaction. It is likely that are other students in the class who have had a similar response to the material. Discussion enhances the ability for us all to have a fuller understanding of the context and impact of course material and class discussions and to seek to change ways of thinking and behaving.
- Notify me of the issue through another source, such as a member of the programme's teaching team, your student representative, or a peer. If for any reason you do not feel comfortable discussing the issue directly with me, I encourage you to seek out another, more comfortable avenue to address the issue.
- You can address the issues anonymously through the course Padlet (the link is available on the virtual learning environment).

Learning Culture
Please remember that you are responsible for your own learning—do not rely on others to do the work for you. This includes attending classes and interactive sessions, turning up to your groups fully prepared and ready to pull your weight.

Names, Alternate Names and Gender Pronouns
Your registration details are provided to me listing your legal name. I will gladly honour any request to address you by an alternate name or gender pronoun. Please advise me of this preference early in the semester so that I may make appropriate changes to my records.

Reimagining the role of the teacher

To re-imagine the role of the teacher, the teacher, as a racialised figure, must first re-examine the space and position they hold within the classroom, and the world as a whole. Understanding the mechanisms of racial inequity, the structures that uphold it, and the role they play in racist systems is essential in decolonising the classroom. Without this intellectual insight, it is impossible to even find the root of the problem, let alone begin to address it.[19]

The teacher in a decolonial classroom must learn to learn from the perspectives and knowledge systems of the students and to unlearn their own colonially-mediated assumptions and background knowledge. Unlearning means stopping oneself from always wanting to correct, teach, and enlighten.

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[19] See Eddo-Lodge (2020) and Leonardo & Gamez-Djokic (2019).

The impetus to always be the speaker and speak in all situations must be seen for what it is: *a desire for mastery and domination*. Rather, the teacher should be prepared to forgo a singularly authoritative role and be a facilitator of, and participant in good learning. The teacher, alongside the other learners in the classroom is then able to explore issues of social inequity that many students experience with the aim of co-constructing a critical consciousness of how knowledge may operate to divide or create connections, challenge the *status quo*, and deepen the class's collective understanding of the contextual and yet "transient nature of knowledge (curriculum, resources, the purpose of education and social change)".[20]

The teacher committed to the decolonial classroom should be prepared to share themselves in an open and generous way with the students, to remove structural barriers, while ensuring that this does not centre the teacher's experiences as solely authoritative. Teachers should nonetheless be open about their own complicities, learning processes, mistakes, anxieties, and hopes. This airing of vulnerability helps to build trust and strong, honest pedagogic relationships. Moreover, actively and sensitively inviting students to share their own experiences in relationship to the topics module convenors cover enshrines students' positive self-recognition as vital sources of knowledge. Recognising students' plethora of lived experiences as *knowledge*, irrespective of their status as minoritised, opens up the classroom to important insights about how we process information, why knowledge matters, and what we may need to unlearn. Taking time in class to get to know the people our students are, by learning about their backgrounds, interests, and concerns, and how to correctly pronounce their names is well worth the time.[21]

Generative learning and co-creation

A decolonial classroom is enabled when teachers create contexts where learners can be authentically self-determining; where pedagogy is interactive, dialogic, and fully relational; where the cultural experiences of all students have validity; where knowledge is actively co-constructed; and where participants are connected through the establishment of a common vision of what constitutes educational excellence. The role as teacher is to enable students to become the agents of their own learning rather than unreflective co-operators with the colonial structures and forms of education that continue to exist.

Co-creation of the curriculum is something that can also take place *in* the classroom. This means, once again, lessening the teachers' control of both *what* is studied and *how* it is studied. Co-creating the curriculum encourages students to take responsibility for their learning and to reflect on how knowledge is constructed, produced, cited, and disseminated.

For example, at the beginning of a course, a module convenor could set up a forum for students to propose topics or approaches within the broader rubric of the module enabling them to identify what they need to learn. It is useful to start each seminar/tutorial with some reflection time, getting students to write down responses to prompts that are designed to elicit reflection on topics, the application of these to their own lived experiences, as well as their affective responses. Cultivate students' intimate knowledge of the nature of the classroom and the content of their education to shape the curriculum to their interests and needs. Linked below is an example of the questions/formatting that could be used within your classrooms to gather this knowledge. It asks for long-form questions that allow students to freely express their experiences of the curriculum and classroom as the module progresses: *Curriculum and Learning Evaluation*.

Below is another example of a questionnaire and survey formatting that would aid in the continual evaluation of changes within the academic space. While the format is mostly scalar questions with the opportunity for longer written answers, the format is based off SOAS Student Evaluation of

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[20] Pirbhai-Illich et al. 2017: 15.
[21] If in doubt, check names at this link and then practise: https://mynameis.raceequalitymatters.com/. Do not put the onus on students to correct mispronunciations.

Module (SEM) surveys, and may be useful in the regular collection of large quantities of quantitative and qualitative data: *Curriculum and Learning Review Form*.

Managing difficult conversations: How to create safe but also challenging spaces

Educational spaces are intended to aid in the growth and learning of the students. Part of that growth is facilitated by the difficult conversations that critically engage with the challenging topics applicable to their lived experiences. Just like in the world outside the academy, this often results in the emotionally tense discussions that can become divisive. It is the role of the teacher to encourage and mediate these debates, whilst refraining from taking sides—outside of clearly harmful rhetoric.[22] However, difficulty begins to arise, when one has to gauge if or when to intervene. Treading the fine line of encouraging participation while minimising harm is no small feat.

In one instance, a SOAS student interviewed for the Project recalled an experience of a conversation that centred around the intersection between race and class in a classroom. A student of colour in the class contributed a view drawn from their own lived experience of racism that ran counter to that of the white teacher. The teacher leading the discussion looked visibly uncomfortable when confronted with the contribution of a racialised perspective, most likely because it exposed the limited scope of their view, tiptoeing around the statement. As the SOAS interviewee went on to say:

> I find it interesting that we'll still have this controversial thought that started this conversation, that no one else has addressed yet, that could topple the viewpoint we've been discussing and it kind of just lingers in the air.

While educators should remain facilitators in these conversations as opposed to active participants, the key to productive and safe discussions lies within well-established safe spaces. The topic of race should not be treated as taboo, but rather a necessary and normalised practice.[23] Making discussions of racism routine alleviates the discomfort that minoritised students may feel, as noted by another SOAS student we interviewed:

> Seeing the school acknowledge things. You know your question to me about when sensitive topics were brought up? Well, my school never even acknowledged [what was wrong with] things like that. So, why would I then feel comfortable talking to them about my experiences?

Enabling students of colour to witness teachers engaging in these conversations, flagging racialised positions, and participating in the pursuit of racial justice creates environments in which minoritised students are able to trust that both their perspective and lived experiences will be positively acknowledged, handled with care, and sincerely valued. We recommend teachers make sure that they are educated in how racialised power dynamics circulate, and how to ameliorate these. Perhaps most importantly, if a teacher is white, then they should additionally focus on how to build their role as an ally to racially minoritised students. *The Guide to Allyship* offers a useful and detailed set of principles and practices in this regard.

Amplifying the voices of students of colour and giving them the space to articulate their experiences of the world is essential in these difficult conversations. Our words and points of views are too often marginalised, and centring them is indispensable for constructing and sustaining decolonial spaces. Crucially, though, as previously discussed, educators should remain vigilant of the emotional

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[22] Viz. Applebaum (2017).
[23] See Benson and Fiarman (2020).

labour students of colour may be undertaking in doing so. There is the common eventuality of these students' worldview being epistemically exploited, epistemically appropriated,[24] and treated as a learning tool for their white peers. Whether there are good intentions behind inviting a singular student— or a small minority of them—to speak, teachers can fall into the trap of relying on the emotional labour of marginalised students to articulate a position or experience they themselves have not done the work to understand. Students of colour, under practices of epistemic exploitation and/or appropriation, become a commodifiable and fungible resource within a classroom, to broaden the curricula without any challenge to the structures of white normativity. One SOAS student interviewee put this especially vividly:

> In school, even when I was too young to fully comprehend issues of race and colonisation, I could feel that I was viewed different[ly] to my peers. Every time the word 'Asia' was mentioned, even if it was relating to East Asia or even American Indians, the whole class would turn around and look at me to provide more information, as if I represented every single person of colour. Even within classrooms, the burden of educating people about race would be put on me, as teachers were either too scared of saying something wrong, which made colour a "sensitive" topic to talk about or they simply did not understand or view race as something that needed to be addressed. When having discussions about race, I believe that we need to create a space where race is not considered a sensitive or a taboo topic, and that open discussions need to be had, even if it can be uncomfortable. The fact that the teachers, the ones who are meant to facilitate such discussions, placed this on me while refusing to have such discussions among themselves creates barriers in decolonising the curriculum.

Creating a safe and challenging space that welcomes and aids in difficult conversations is a balancing act that requires time, empathy, and grace to achieve. It is not something one can expect to immediately achieve: again, it requires learning to learn and unlearn.

Organising the classroom

Authoritative academic studies show that an optimal classroom environment, particularly for minoritised groups,[25] is one that enables active learning which has three dimensions: behavioural (students' engagement in class activities), cognitive (students' critical thinking and decision-making during the activities), and social (students interact with other students in a small group).[26] If possible, teachers should arrange the classroom into areas that enable students to interact easily with their peers in small groups where teachers are also able to move freely, to engage with the students, and encourage their conversations with each other.

Questions to ask now:

- Are students facing you at all times?
- Do the seating arrangements and the types of learning activities you plan and have your students engage in enable dialogue or individualism, cooperation or dominance of a few voices?
- Does the classroom organisation enable students to collaborate and engage in interactive learning structures?
- Are they physically comfortable?
- Are you and they able to move freely around the classroom?

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[24] See Davis (2018).
[25] See Fredericksen (1998).
[26] Viz. Kuwabara 2023: 94. Cf. Watkins et al. (2007).

Lesson Planning

1-hour seminar example

- As students enter the classroom, have a box of numbers on cards (1-4) ready and get the students to select one each. This number will then identify their group and identify the sections of the classroom where each group should sit.

- Start the class with a reflective check-in, perhaps asking every student to use one word to describe how they are feeling about the topic/class (5 mins)
- Ask for volunteers to provide a 3- to 5-minute summary of the topic/assigned reading(s)
- Ask the students to gather in their group and identify 2-3 discussion questions that are in turn analytic, critical, and applied. Students should then post these on the whiteboard. Or even better, on the class Padlet (5 mins)
- If necessary, ask each group to explain their choices and why they think these questions are important and relevant to the topic (10 mins)
- Ask the student groups to discuss their questions and arrive at answers that correspond to what you collectively hope to learn from the exercise. Each group should democratically appoint a spokesperson (20 mins)
- Bring the groups back together to present their findings and give them time to respond to each other (10 mins)
- Just before class ends, do another 5-minute reflective check-in to see how students have changed their attitudes towards the topic.
- Synthesise and summarise the discussion and post on the class Padlet or noticeboard, drawing out in particular the applications of their learning.

50-minute lecture example (social philosophy)

- Start by offering a clear statement about the aims of the lecture and the structure
- Ask students to post their questions and comments on the course Padlet as you speak; but also invite students to interrupt you if anything you say is unclear.
- As you speak, check regularly that students are able to follow
- At the 25-minute mark, break for a quick 10-minute comment section where you can read through the Padlet and respond to the comments and questions posted.
- Resume the lecture, adjusting its direction to address student responses.
- End the lecture with a summary of the direct applications of the topic, their relationship to forms of social justice and liberatory potential.

What we have provided here is by no means an exhaustive guide to decolonised pedagogy. Instead, we have attempted to offer a practical guide to the important first steps necessary to build towards a liberating, justice-oriented mode of learning that is collectively distributed between students and teachers where the decolonising philosophy curriculum is brought to life and made relevant for our students. In this way, decolonial pedagogy produces better, more rigorous teaching and learning experiences for all concerned.

§3 Decolonising Summative Assessment

Philosophy may be regarded as a metacognitive discipline *de rigueur*: philosophers are not just interested in thinking, but in thinking about thinking itself. However, over the course of our research into philosophy assessment culture in the UK HE sector, we found that that many UK undergraduate philosophy assignments are traditional, homogeneous, and lack pedagogic diversity, to the extent that one of the SOAS international students we interviewed for the Project spoke about their experiences in a way that resonates with Gillian Rose's famous reflective remark that mainstream Anglo-American philosophical education '… teaches [students] to be clever, destructive, supercilious and ignorant. It doesn't teach [students] what's important. It doesn't feed the soul':

> If I had seen philosophy assignments from those celebrated UK HEIs before enrolling, I might not have chosen philosophy as my major. The essay questions, by and large, seem devoid of inspiration and intellectual challenges, appearing as mere technical, abstract exercises. Many universities still rely on traditional essays and exams for assessments. This perception still challenges my ability to engage with philosophy. I believe I am not alone in feeling this way. Many people are interested in philosophy but lack the courage to pursue it due to the cold and intimidating nature of such assignments. Writing answers to typical essay questions can also be intimidating for non-native English-speaking students, badly affecting their confidence. A western colonial ideology might be responsible for why I feel so 'put off' here.[27]

There is good reason to contend that western colonial ideology, which is logically bound up with whiteness, also manifests itself in the traditional types of formative activities, and, perhaps more significantly, the traditional types of summative assessment philosophy students tend to encounter at UK universities. After all, as David Boud and Trina Jorre de St Jorre contend, "[a]ssessment is a socially constructed practice, that is interwoven with relations of power … [and] is largely informed by long-standing disciplinary norms, and what educators have themselves experienced. As such, it is designed and constructed in accordance with the social and cultural backgrounds of academics, whose experience of higher education may differ considerably from how it is experienced by contemporary students, or those from other sociocultural backgrounds".[28]

Traditional types of formative activities and traditional types of summative assessment briefs, then, may be said to invariably reflect western (particularly Anglo-European) systems of knowledge production. In doing so, this structurally disadvantages students from diverse cultural and learning backgrounds which enshrines inequities and normalises the debilitating phenomenon of *social closure* –[29] the proclivity of privileged groups to hoard access to epistemic and material resources in ways that sustain social hierarchies.

However diverse and devoid of eurocentrism a module's thematic content and reading lists may well be, these properties *by themselves* neither entail a complete decolonial approach to teaching and learning, nor are they materially effective in eliminating racialised award gaps. For, as David Boud and Maddalena Taras have respectively observed, "assessment is the most significant prompt for learning",[30] and "[assessment] has been shown to be the single most important component that influences student learning and education in general".[31] If, to use Jan McArthur's expression, "assessment is the key driver of how and what students learn",[32] then, under traditional assessment cultures and diets, there is little or no way to pedagogically counter coloniality, since what is the *base* of testing student knowledge is a

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[27] Cf. Ngũgĩ 1987: 12.
[28] Jorre de St Jorre & Boud 2023: 143-44. Cf. Leathwood (2005) and Shay (2008).
[29] Viz. Harvey et al. (2017).
[30] Boud 1995: 36.
[31] Taras 2008: 289. Cf. Boud & Falchikov 2007: 3; Boud, Cohen, and Sampson 1999: 413; Maclellan 2001: 308.
[32] McArthur 2016: 967.

traditional essay or exam. And if the base is constituted by traditional and exclusionary mechanisms for assessment, then decolonising teaching and learning is effectively hamstrung.

Constructively aligning the pedagogical business of decolonising module content, reading lists and classroom practice with the pedagogical business of practising inclusive assessment cultures provide more intellectually stimulating, more fulfilling, and more meaningful learning experiences for *all* students while reflecting the particular epistemic and cultural needs of minoritised groups.[33] Such a way of approaching developing and 'testing' learners, by extension, is important for not only enabling but also sustaining high levels of student engagement and success. One might even contend that inclusive cultures of *authentic* assessment design and *praxis* without inclusive curricula, then, are empty; inclusive curricula without inclusive cultures of *authentic* assessment design and *praxis*, then, are equally so.

§§a Authentic Assessment

The early practice of authentic assessment (AA) in HE—which is currently being revisited as a concerted response to the contemporary neoliberal emphasis on conflating learning outcomes with work-place readiness and the reductive capitalist notions of employability[34]—focuses on students producing summative work that is principally evocative of their personal interests, their lived experiences, and speaks to their lives. In other words, authenticity here properly represents "appropriate, meaningful, significant, and worthwhile forms of human accomplishment".[35] There are at least two principal ways in which AA operates in current HE contexts.

The first involves construing authentic assessments simply in line with 'alternative' assessments—i.e. forms of assessment that are not traditional ones like invigilated in-person exams in grand colonial buildings (or even sport halls) / pen-and-paper tests in sterile seminar rooms / essays. Testing learning outcomes through reflective learning journals,[36] or academic blogs, exhibitions, documentaries, or case-studies, interviews, podcasts, multimedia presentations, infographics, or even creative portfolios with poetry elements are examples of 'alternative' assessments.

AA in this sense is particularly nourished by *crip theory*,[37] which itself is borne out of critical pedagogical discourse at the intersection between critical disability studies and queer theory. The activity of cripping and producing cripistemologies,[38] concerns, to quote Travis Chi Wing Lau, "ways of knowing that are shaped by the ways disabled people inhabit a world not made for them".[39] Cripping and producing cripistemologies, therefore, go beyond the neoliberal idea of 'reasonable adjustments'. Cripping and producing cripistemologies favour a more radical, transformative dismantling and reconstruction of assessment partly through developing a new model of temporality: *crip time*. This new model of time, with its emphasis on the lived and varied affective dimensions of temporality in neurodiverse and disabled communities, prioritises "not just a need for more time, but an exploded concept of time that is flexibly managed, negotiated, and experienced".[40] With this in mind, reflective journal-based assessment has been identified by Neera Jain (2023) as an assessment type that operates more under crip time.[41]

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[33] Viz. Bloxham & Boyd (2007).
[34] See Ashwin (2020).
[35] Newmann & Archbald 1992: 71.
[36] See Woodward (1998).
[37] Viz. McRuer (2006).
[38] Viz. Johnson and McRuer (2014).
[39] Lau 2021: 3.
[40] Jain 2023: 33.
[41] It is important to recognise that for all of the advantages that come with producing a reflective journal, reflective writing in English can be particularly challenging for those students—especially Global South students—whose first language is not English. Because of this, assessment briefs that have significant reflective journal writing elements to them require careful linguistic and technical support, to prevent a pedagogical inequity from arising.

The second way in which AA operates in current HE contexts involves AA modifying what is, other than the exam, the most common form of traditional summative assessment in existing UK academic philosophy programmes: the coursework essay. Often, coursework essays—especially those in undergraduate philosophy programmes—are set solely by the module convenor and straightforwardly 'imposed' on students enrolled on the module, so much so that students are almost 'set up' for mediocrity and discursive banality.[42] A generic essay question is more likely to produce a generic and even superficial answer, one which will be very similar to what a large language model like ChatGPT produces competently.

Thinking in terms of AA in the second operational context means that coursework essays need to be designed in ways that explicitly give students far more sense of *responsibility for their own learning*—in this case particularly, by challenging and encouraging them to have an active stake in the thematic debates. AA, therefore, enables a radical break from the traditional, bureaucratic, and anxiety-inducing modelling of assessment as "a hurdle [students] have to jump over on the way to getting a qualification".[43] Rather than have the module convenor pedagogically act in a 'top-down' manner by setting a *generic* question, the AA version of things here can involve a 'bottom-up' approach in which the module convenor and the enrolled students co-create spaces where students are empowered to create their own essay question. By making it very clear to students that they are 'masters of their own pedagogical destiny', and that the role of the module convenor here is consultative,[44] the assessment brief for a module on, say, metaphysics, can look like this:

> Essay (70%) – 2000 words
>
> *Think very carefully about wording the title of your own essay question—specifically, think about devising a question that*
>
> i.   *is authentic and reflective of your intellectual interests concerning the topics covered in 'Metaphysics'*
> ii.   *best enables you to communicate your own philosophical voice*
> iii.   *addresses the module's learning outcomes*

The AA version here requires students to take significant responsibility for their work. This means their learning becomes properly agentive, since the essay-writing *praxis* now is about "student *becoming*, rather than merely demonstrating familiarity with a lecturer's selected topics".[45] With this in mind, please find below some examples of co-created student authentic essay questions from 2023/24 at SOAS:

> *Focusing on real-life instances with particular emphasis on moral accountability, in what ways—if any—can Judith Shklar's and/or Richard Rorty's discourse about cruelty improve ethical conduct?*
>
> *How do Judith Shklar's and Richard Rorty's respective definitions of cruelty hold up against the philosophical dilemma posed by self-inflicted harm, which can be considered cruel due to its 'unmaking' quality towards the agent?*

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[42] Cf. "… a focus on testing risks encouraging superficial approaches to learning" (Villarroel et al. 2018: 841). Cf. Endedijk & Vermunt (2013), and Beyaztas & Senemoglu (2015).

[43] Bols 2012: 4.

[44] Giving students this critical pedagogic sense also conveniently provides students real motivation to not restrict their intellectual efforts to the reproducible genericity and superficiality of ChatGPT.

[45] Forsyth & Evans 2019: 758. Cf. McArthur 2018: 138.

In the context of human rights abuses, can either Shklar's or Rorty's approach to cruelty offer a robust framework for addressing distinctly modern forms of socio-political cruelty?

Focusing on case-studies centred on the ethical implications of intergenerational justice, what is the most effective way for prioritising the allocation of resources and responsibilities among nations, communities, and individuals in response to the climate emergency?

Which salient themes in 'The Last Forest' shine particularly rich conceptual light on matters pertaining to climate justice?

Focusing on some contemporary case-studies, would operating under an integrationist approach to climate justice provide a particularly effective response to the climate crisis?

To what extent can conceptual decolonisation be applied outside of the African historical colonisation context, particularly in the framework of the colonial-gender system?

Framing conceptual decolonisation in non-obvious colonial contexts: The case of the decline of dialect and accent in the North of England. Internal colonisation in Britain?

Using real-life examples, is translation not merely practised for the sake of achieving the original meaning of a different language but also a tool for conceptual decolonisation and legal reforms?

Focusing on a Chichewa proverb that you find particularly interesting, would making sense of it using conceptual resources from Gricean maxims 'enhance' or 'dissolve' that Chichewa proverb's meaning?

Does translating tenets of Taoism into English risk doing some type of epistemic violence to Taoist thought and culture?

As Juuso Nieminen contends, "authentic assessment criteria do not aim to lower academic standards but indeed to raise the bar higher. When assessment is evaluated in terms of the social good it provides … students are asked to truly connect with the world rather than to produce work only for their teachers".[46] To quote another SOAS international student interviewee here:

> Introducing diverse formats, such as creative portfolios and podcasts, would really make a lot more students comfortable and confident. Personally, I have discovered that I excel in creative portfolios and presentations— and not really in traditional essays. Different assessment formats better reflect actual abilities. Philosophy is about the complex processes of thinking. And, because of this, it's strange to think assessments are often confined to either essay or exam. Just as one would not dismiss Global South philosophers as inferior due to language differences, we should value different assessment forms that allow all students to demonstrate their philosophical abilities. Ignoring diversity and inclusivity in assessment may overlook talented individuals with valuable philosophical skills.

The point about creative portfolios, such as, for example, an assignment comprising a 2000-word academic blog with a 1000-word reflective commentary on the choice of the blog's topic, cannot be overstated. It is nicely complemented by the following five student testimonials: the first is from an undergraduate's Final Year Independent Project at Manchester Metropolitan University (2021/22), the next three are screenshots of preamble sections in student-authored public-facing academic blogs for 'Gender, Race, and Sexuality' at Manchester Metropolitan University (2022/23); the final testimonial is

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[46] Nieminen 2023: 69.

a response from a postgraduate student who participated in a YouTube clip assessment task (cited in Bourke 2023).

Fig 1

> Queer communities tend to 'rebel' against societal norms and form their own subcultures. Thus, to write about queer theory in a traditional dissertation format would be a disservice to what it fundamentally means to be queer. **A blog to a traditional dissertation is what queer culture is to society - an unexpected variation.**
>
> Each essay purposefully swings from theoretical to personal, both in academic style and in content. I refuse to write about an intimate topic with needless academic rigour; work concerning identity needs a heart. For this reason, I am using the blog format rather than presenting a traditional dissertation to you. Whilst *Dyke Writes* is rich with complex queer theory, I believe that wholly intellectualising one's history and community forgoes the emotion, nuance and softness needed to convey lived experiences. *Dyke Writes* is structured as a series of short essays, each providing an accessible subsection of lesbian feminist theory. Each essay can be read and understood as a stand-alone piece. However, they are most effectively understood when read in order and in their entirety to render a more contextualised and nuanced understanding of lesbian feminism.

Fig 2

About

Writing an academic blog is a new experience that was quite enjoyable and an interesting break from the standard academic writing that is required in other modules. Having more freedom surrounding the topics and discussions made within the blog, allowed for a newfound creativity to emerge. The module itself being: Gender, Race and Sexuality was by far one of the most interesting modules that I have been able to study during my time at University.

As I will have mentioned in the blog, being a mixed-race, white and Asian woman, having the opportunity to study more than surface level on feminism and race was truly an eye-opening experience. It has always been of interest to be able to look at more research on feminism and critical race theory as it feels applicable and more personal to me as an individual. To see the struggles that other ethnic women have gone through and to see that inspire them to create movements and develop critical research on topics I would have never otherwise known much about is refreshing.

Fig 3

> However, I wanted to make the blog more interesting and so I decided to link both of these two concepts, homophobia and racism, to something I'm passionate about; Football. Football as a culture and an institution is global but it has a strong grip on the English way of life, and it is evident in today's era that homophobia and racism are rife and rampant in the game. Therefore, I decided it would be a good learning process for me to research the philosophical aspects of these two concepts and relate them to how they're weaponised in the modern footballing world.

Fig 4

> Using the reading list from Moodle helped to find important pieces of literature to learn more about the philosophy of both homophobia and racism respectively, however whilst researching these sources I was able to find more through Google Scholar and also looking in the University library. As a result I was able to acquire a myriad of academic books and journal articles to both educate me on these subjects and also provide quotes for me to reference in my research resources.
>
> As a result, I also provided a set of learning resources for anyone who is still interested in learning more about the philosophy of homophobia, the philosophy of racism, and how both of those fit into footballing culture. I obtained these books, articles, and essays through multiple ways, one such way was to find them as references themselves in other essays I was reading. I believe the reading list I have compiled for any eager learners more than helped me to write these resources and would further educate anyone else on the same matters. It was a challenge to find certain sources, especially those regarding homophobia in football that were from before the 2010s, however I found that the challenge helped me develop vital resourceful skills.

Fig 5

> "Some of my favourite assignments were ones where I was able to be myself, be creative and show my learning in a way that interests me. This is what we expect students to do in primary school so why does it suddenly stop during high school/university and then you're expected to regain creativity in your job/career?"—*Education postgraduate student, 21/22*

However, strangely, despite the extensive and growing literature on AA,[47] it is rare to find talk of AA that focuses on AA's ability to play a substantive role in *decolonising* knowledge and consequently transforming learning environments.

One especially rich perspective on the matter has been articulated by Lambert et al. (2023), who have put forward the Culturally Inclusive Assessment model—a framework which is principally rooted in Paolo Freire's development of critical pedagogy in 1970 and Taskeen Adam's detailed 2020 studies of student reflections on the effect of colonial and apartheid legacies on their pedagogical experiences.

§§b The Culturally Inclusive Assessment Model

Dimension[48]	Common Theme
Justice-as-content: decolonising *what is taught*	Correcting under-representation or misrepresentation in lecture slides/notes and module reading lists
Justice-as-process: decolonising education processes through co-creation or co-design of course curriculum, assessment, and content	'Two-way learning' - Relational processes - Personal positioning and critical consciousness - Student co-creation of decolonised learning materials as an assessment task
Justice-as-pedagogy: - students are encouraged to critically engage, reflect on, and challenge what is being taught - assessments or whole subjects designed to teach the ideas of socio-cultural justice, decolonisation or cultural competence	- Learning how to apply socio-cultural justice, diversification and decolonisation to new experiences and contexts - Leaning how to avoid orientalisation

[47] Following Jan McArthur's very informative literature review (McArthur 2023), AA has been discussed by Maclellan (2001), Rust (2007), and Sambell et al. (2013) in the UK HE context. In the Australian HE context, Ajjawi et al. (2019), Ashford-Rowe et al. (2014), Herrington (2014), and Herrington & Herrington (1998) have discussed authentic assessment. In the Chilean HE context, AA has been discussed by Villarroel et al. (2018). In the Indonesian HE context, Arlianty (2017) and Sutadji et al. (2021) have made important contributions to AA discourse. AA has also received substantive treatment in Sri Lanka by Karunanayaka & Naidu (2021), in Singapore by Chong et al. (2016), in the Netherlands by Gulikers et al. (2004), in South Africa by Maniram & Maistry (2018), and in Botswana by Oladele (2011).

[48] Viz. Adam (2020a, 2020b).

§§c Suggested Strategies, Actions, and Examples

➢ Recognise the great extent to which traditional types of summative assessment briefs invariably reflect western (particularly Anglo-European) systems of knowledge production as well as neurotypical ideologies, and how this structurally disadvantages students from diverse cultural and learning backgrounds.

➢ Encourage crip practices for all students, such as keeping a reflective learning diary (or reflective learning log) for each of their modules.

➢ Encourage students to produce and share a conceptual mind map for each week of study in all of their modules.

➢ Encourage developing cultures of co-creating summative assessment briefs with students such as essay questions, reflective pieces, or academic blogs, or exhibitions, or documentaries, or case-studies, or interviews, or podcasts, or multimedia presentations, or infographics.

The following rubrics are taken from module assessment patterns that we have adopted at SOAS with excellent results. You should feel free to adapt these as necessary:

Example 1

A reflective writing assignment summative assessment brief (1500 words)

What's a Reflective Piece?
70% of the total mark of the module is allocated to the production of a reflective piece. A reflective piece is an instance of 'authentic assessment and learning'. Authentic assessments, which are rooted in critical and relational pedagogy scholarship, are increasingly popular and are designed to enable students to think and feel that what they're producing for their coursework is more meaningful, more enjoyable, and more illustrative of their personal takes on the subject-matter. Only conservative approaches to teaching and learning produce the difficult-to-shift myth, often internalised by students, that assessments cannot be fun.

Reflection (thinking about thinking and feeling) is an important philosophical practice, a practice where we step back and think carefully about what we are learning, where we are positioned, what makes us more or less comfortable, whether we understand an idea or argument, and what conclusions we can draw in ways that we can apply to our own lives. Your reflection piece should include a summary of the reading with which you are engaging, stating what you believe to be the main arguments. Then, you should comment on your own responses to the texts or topics, providing reasons. I am particularly keen that you think through and present your own relationship to the discipline of philosophy in relation to the material we examine. What does this material reinforce or change about what you understand philosophy to be? Can philosophy be different? If so, what would this require?

Producing a reflective piece has a very broad scope, which—understandably—can be a little confusing and even overwhelming. In light of this, you can and should think and feel that you are very warmly encouraged to explore various ways of producing a reflective piece that enables you, as the individual learners each of you are, to not just achieve the module's learning outcomes, but achieve them to a very high academic standard. To help the process of discovering which type of reflective piece works well, here are some ways to nicely model a reflective piece.

Option 1—'Beefing up' your relevant reflective learning diary entry
Let's say that you want to write your reflective piece on feminist speech act theory. You can then look over your 250-word diary entry for that lecture week, and start to determine which bits you want to expand and substantiate. Displaying clear evidence of consulting and engaging with secondary literature, to complement

your engagement with the primary literature, is a very effective way of enhancing your reflections: the more you read, the more you reflect on what you've read, the more you will have things to say about where you stand on a topic, with which 'camp' in the literature you most philosophically identify, and so on.

Option 2—Recorded presentation
Your presentation should not be longer than 15 minutes (which is the equivalent of 1500 words). Start by creating an outline of the presentation, much as you would for an essay. This should include:

1. An introduction where you identify the topic, indicate the problem it is asking you to assess, and then outline how exactly you will approach it
2. An overview of the literature you are examining
3. Main content or points you want to raise; survey of critiques or different positions
4. Conclusion

Option 3—Infographic/Poster
Although content, evidence, and organisation will still be important, you will have to think about these in a new way. Infographics rely less on the written word and more on visual elements to grab attention, convey information, and/or rationally persuade. Therefore, you will need to think about what visual elements and design would best suit your content. Pay attention to what information you include, the language you use, the design elements you use, and the way that you organise the information and visual elements. Strive to make your infographic interesting, readable, and consistent in terms of visuals and text (colours, fonts, sizes, lines, shapes, etc). Be creative and purposeful. You can use a mash-up of graphics from various places that you find and/or created by you. For visual consistency, you will likely want to use the same kind of visuals (as in, photographs, paintings, drawings, or icons, etc.) so that you create a particular theme/style. You could, for instance, represent a core concept with some kind of image or visual map.

Option 4—Blogpost
The purpose of blog writing is to present ideas in an accessible and more informal way than in formal academic essays—they are more like a journalistic 'think piece'. Blogs are a more informal platform than an academic essay to present an argument that builds on your own perspective. Compared to a formal academic analysis, blog posts give you more freedom to discuss personal experiences and perspectives on the course material before delving into analysis. Just as in a formal academic essay, you need to include citations and analysis of evidence in a blog, but you don't need to use a very rigid structure—the tone can be more conversational and reflective. With this looser framework, you can be creative with structure. You can emphasise important points in a range of ways: short paragraphs, bullet points, bold text, italics, underlining, and headings. Because blogs are an electronic platform, images, videos, and links are helpful to demonstrate your thinking.

Example 2

A creative portfolio summative assessment brief (1500 words)

40% of the total mark of the module is allocated to the production of a summative group portfolio intended to enable you to demonstrate skills in applying theory to practical issues and lived experiences and in working as a team. This form of assessment is intended to ensure that you are committed not only to your own learning processes but to those of your fellow classmates, an aspect which we encourage as part of the pedagogical culture of the course. You are expected to create at least two pieces of work that apply the theories you have studied in the module to global issues, challenges and debates. It is important that you employ at least two theories each from two hermeneutical traditions or thinkers you have studied. The format in which you do this work is up to you. It can consist of two of the following: a novella, poem, a piece of art, a video, a poster or infographic, a piece of music, a blog or vlog, a collage, a gallery, etc. The only limits on the format are that (1) it

must be loadable to Moodle directly or via a weblink, from where the creative portfolio can be accessed; (2) you should provide additional documentation describing your creative process, group work, and listing your sources and bibliography.

The mark allocated to each group will generally be the mark that each individual in that group is given, except in cases where there is clear evidence that some members of the group refused to participate in the group work. It is therefore very important that you work closely and cooperatively together as a team in your group.

§4 Traditional vs. Decolonial Design of a Core Philosophy Module

§§a Example of a 'Traditional-cum-Colonial' Epistemology Module (First Year)

Week 1: Introduction to Epistemology
Readings:
- Cooper, J.M. (ed.) 1997. *Plato: Complete Works*. Indianapolis: Hackett. (Book VII of *The Republic*)
- Selections from Audi, R. 1998. *Epistemology: A Contemporary Introduction to the Theory of Knowledge*. New York: Routledge
- Russell, B. 1912. *The Problems of Philosophy*. London: Williams and Norgate.

Week 2: The Analysis of Knowledge
Readings:
- Feldman, R. 2003. *Epistemology*. London: Pearson.
  - Chapters 1, 2, and 3.
- Gettier, E. 1963. 'Is Justified True Belief Knowledge?'. *Analysis* 23: 121-123.
- Selections from Nozick, R. 1981. *Philosophical Explanations*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Week 3: Empiricist Epistemology
Readings:
- Selections from Hume, D. 1975a. *A Treatise of Human Nature*. L.A. Selby-Bigge (ed.)—revised by P.H. Nidditch. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Selections from Hume, D. 1975b. *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*. L.A. Selby-Bigge (ed.)—revised by P.H. Nidditch. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Selections from Locke, J. 1975. *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*. P.H. Nidditch (ed.) Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Week 4: Scepticism
Readings:
- Descartes, R. [1641] 2017. *Meditations on First Philosophy: With Selections from the Objections and Replies* (First Meditation). 2nd edition. J. Cottingham (trans. and ed.) Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Dretske, F. 1970. 'Epistemic Operators'. *The Journal of Philosophy* 67: 1007-1023.
- Moore, G.E. 1939. 'Proof of an External World'. *Proceedings of the British Academy* 25: 273-300.

o Selections from Annas, J. and Barnes, J. (eds. and trans.) 2000. *Sextus Empiricus: Outlines of Scepticism*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
o Selections from Wittgenstein, L. 1969. *On Certainty*. G.E.M. Anscombe and G.H. von Wright (eds.), G.E.M. Anscombe and D. Paul (trans.) Oxford: Blackwell.

Week 5: Epistemic Justification—Foundationalism and Coherentism
Readings:
o BonJour, L. 1976. 'The Coherence Theory of Empirical Knowledge'. *Philosophical Studies* 30: 281-312.
o Selections from BonJour, L. 1985. *The Structure of Empirical Knowledge*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
o Selections from Plantinga, A. 1993. *Warrant: The Current Debate*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Week 6: Epistemic Justification—Evidentialism
Readings:
o Selections from Conee, E. and Feldman, R. 2004. *Evidentialism: Essays in Epistemology*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
o Goldman, A. 1979. 'What Is Justified Belief?', in G.S. Pappas (ed.) *Justification and Knowledge: New Studies in Epistemology*. Dordrecht: Reidel.
o Selections from Haack, S. 1993. *Evidence and Inquiry: Towards Reconstruction in Epistemology*. Cambridge, MA: Blackwell.

Week 7: Internalism and Externalism
Readings:
o BonJour, L. 1980. 'Externalist Theories of Empirical Knowledge'. *Midwest Studies in Philosophy* 5: 53-73.
o BonJour, L. and Sosa, E. 2003. *Epistemic Justification: Internalism Vs. Externalism, Foundations Vs. Virtues*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing.
o Burge, T. 1979. 'Individualism and the Mental'. *Midwest Studies in Philosophy* 4: 73-121.
o Goldman, A. 2009. 'Internalism, Externalism, and the Architecture of Justification'. *The Journal of Philosophy* 106: 309-338.
o Selected chapters from Kornblith, H. (ed.) 2001. *Epistemology: Internalism and Externalism*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Week 8: Epistemology of Modality
Readings:
o Selections from Coates, J. 1983. *The Semantics of the Modal Auxiliaries*. London: Routledge.
o Selections from Ayer, A. J. [1936] 1990. *Language, Truth and Logic*. London: Penguin,
o Selections from Quine, W.V.O. 2010. *Word and Object*. Harvard, MA: MIT Press.

Week 9: Social Epistemology
Readings:
o Selections from Coady, C.A.J. 1992. *Testimony: A Philosophical Study*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
o Fricker, E. 1987. 'The Epistemology of Testimony'. *Aristotelian Society Supplementary Volume* 61: 57-83.
o Selections from Fuller, S. 1998. *Social Epistemology*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
o Selections from Goldman, S. 1999. *Knowledge in a Social World*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Week 10: Feminist Epistemology
Readings:
o Selections from Code, L. 1991. *What Can She Know? Feminist Theory and Construction of Knowledge*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

- Fricker, M. 2007. *Epistemic Injustice: Ethics and the Power of Knowing*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Selections from Harding, S. 1986. *The Science Question in Feminism*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
- Selections from Harding S. 1991. *Whose Science? Whose Knowledge? Thinking from Women's Lives*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
- Longino, H.E. 1999. 'Feminist Epistemology', in J. Greco and E. Sosa (eds.) *Blackwell Guide to Epistemology*. Malden: Blackwell.

The above example of a 'traditional-cum-colonial design' epistemology exemplifies a eurocentric approach to ideas of knowledge and epistemic justification. The readings are predominantly focused on canonical western philosophers such as Plato, Descartes, and Hume which offer in-depth retrospections of their own experiences. A lot of the epistemological discourse also involves 'armchair theorising'. Furthermore, the foundationalist and coherentist theories of justification presented reflect a narrow conception of methodology that disregards alternative approaches prevalent in African, Asian, Middle Eastern, and Indigenous philosophical traditions. Other forms of justification may be more suitable for different cultural and intellectual traditions. Similarly, with regard to thematic debates about truth, the module in its traditional-cum-colonial form overlooks the limitations of the dominant western theories of truth such as the correspondence, coherence, and pragmatic theories. The universalisation of these theories blinds students to theories of truth emerging from global contexts such as truth as an intrinsic feature of cognition in Indian philosophy (*pramanya*) and how this is connected with accuracy (*pramatva*), and truth as the soul of a discourse (*emuata*) as held by the ancient Benin Kingdom of Nigeria.

Furthermore, the absence of African, Asian, Latinx, and a plethora of Indigenous philosophical work on important topics such as feminist and social epistemology highlights the module's cultural hegemony. The module in-principle should offer a comprehensive and critical examination on the theory of knowledge, yet its focus on Anglo-European accounts alone gives a skewed global impression of epistemology. This module would be more accurately labelled 'Anglo-European Epistemology', as it fails to encompass any other cultural perspectives.

By contrast, consider now what a 10-week long epistemology module that has a decolonial design can look like:

§§b Example of a Decolonial Epistemology Module Design (First Year)

Week 1: Introduction to (Decolonial) Epistemology
Readings:
- Alcoff, L.M. 2007. 'Mignolo's Epistemology of Coloniality'. *The New Centennial Review* 7: 79-101.
- Selections from Chimakonam, J.O. & Ogbonnaya, L.U. 2021. *African Metaphysics, Epistemology and a New Logic: A Decolonial Approach to Philosophy*. Cham: Springer.
- Clammer, J. 2008. 'Decolonising the Mind: Schwimmer, Habermas and the Anthropology of Postcolonialism'. *Anthropologica* 50: 157-168.
- Selections from de Sousa Santos, B. (ed.) 2008. *Another Knowledge is Possible: Beyond Northern Epistemologies*. London: Verso.
- Gordon, L.R. 2023. 'What Does It Mean to Colonise and Decolonise Philosophy?' *Royal Institute of Philosophy Supplement* 93: 117-135.

Week 2: The Nature of Knowledge
Readings:
- o Afolabi, O.S. 2020. 'Globalisation, Decoloniality and the Question of Knowledge Production in Africa: A Critical Discourse'. *Journal of Higher Education in Africa* 1 / *Revue de L'enseignement Supérieur en Afrique* 8: 93-110.
- o Cooper, J.M. (ed.) 1997. *Plato: Complete Works*. Indianapolis: Hackett. (*Thaetetus*)
- o Datta, D.M. 1932. *The Six Ways of Knowing: A Critical Study of the Vedānta Theory of Knowledge*. London: George Allen & Unwin.
- o Selections from de Sousa Santos, B. and Meneses, M. (eds.) 2019. *Knowledges Born in the Struggle: Constructing the Epistemologies of the Global South*. New York: Routledge.
- o Selections from Marchetti, G. (ed.) 2022. *The Ethics, Epistemology, and Politics of Richard Rorty*. New York/London: Routledge.

Week 3: Moral Epistemology
Readings:
- o Basu, R. 2018. 'Can Beliefs Wrong?' *Philosophical Topics* 46: 1-18.
- o Confucius. 1998. *The Original Analects: Sayings of Confucius and his Successors*, E.B. Brooks and A. Taeko Brooks (trans. and eds.) New York: Columbia University Press.
- o Horn, P. and Long, E.T. (eds.) 2008. *Ethics of Belief: Essays in Tribute to D.Z. Phillips*. Cham: Springer.
- o Selections from Kar, B. 1978. *The Theories of Error in Indian Philosophy: An Analytical Study*. New Delhi: Ajanta Publications.

Week 4: Religious Epistemology
Readings:
- o Selections from Adeel, M.A. 2019. *Epistemology of the Qur'an: Elements of a Virtue Approach to Knowledge and Understanding*. Cham: Springer.
- o Selections from Fuqua, K., Greco, J, and McNabb, T. (eds.) 2023. *The Cambridge Handbook of Religious Epistemology*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- o Selections from Gaon, S. 2002. *The Book of Doctrines and Beliefs*. A. Altmann (trans.) Indianapolis. Hackett.
- o Selections from McNabb, T.D. 2019. *Religious Epistemology*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Week 5: Feminist Epistemology
Readings:
- o Selections from Alcoff, L.M. & Potter, E. (eds.) 1993. *Feminist Epistemologies*. London/New York: Routledge.
- o Code, L. 2014. 'Ignorance, Injustice and the Politics of Knowledge: Feminist Epistemology Now'. *Australian Feminist Studies* 29: 148-160.
- o Dotson, K. 2014. 'Conceptualising Epistemic Oppression'. *Social Epistemology* 28: 115-138.
- o Frye, M. 1983. *The Politics of Reality: Essays in Feminist Theory*. Trumansburg, NY: The Crossing Press. (Specifically, 'On Being White: Thinking Towards a Feminist Understanding of Race and Race Supremacy')
- o Lugones, M. 2008. 'The Coloniality of Gender'. *Worlds and Knowledges Otherwise* 2, Dossier 2: 1-17.
- o Pérez Sedeño, E., Almendros, L.S., García Dauder, D. & Ortega Arjonilla, E. (eds.) 2019. *Knowledges, Practices and Activism from Feminist Epistemologies*. Wilmington: Vernon Press.

Week 6: Posthumanist and Environmental Perspectives on Knowledge
Readings:

- Selections from Ahrens, J. & Halbmayer, E. (eds.) 2023. *Climate Change Epistemologies in Southern Africa: Social and Cultural Dimensions*. London/New York: Routledge.
- Selections from Cozza, M. and Gherardi, S. (eds.) 2023. *The Posthumanist Epistemology of Practice Theory: Re-imagining Method in Organisation Studies and Beyond*. Cham: Springer.
- Selections from Kimmerer, R.W. 2013. *Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge, and the Teachings of Plants*. Minneapolis: Milkweed Editions.

Week 7: Indigenous Ways of Knowing and Being
Readings:
- Chao, S. 2021. 'Children of the Palms: Growing Plants and Growing People in a Papuan Plantationocene'. *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 27: 245-264.
- Fre, Z. 2018. *Knowledge Sovereignty among African Cattle Herders*. London: UCL Press. (Specifically, Chapter 2: 'The Case for Indigenous Knowledge Systems and Knowledge Sovereignty')
- Gegeo, D.W. & Watson-Gegeo, K.A. 2001. '"How We Know": Kwara'ae Rural Villagers Doing Indigenous Epistemology'. *The Contemporary Pacific* 13: 55-88.
- van Meijl, T. 2019. 'Doing Indigenous Epistemology: Internal Debates about Inside Māori Society'. *Current Anthropology* 60: 155-173.

Week 8: Epistemic Injustice
Readings:
- Fricker, E. 2007. *Epistemic Injustice: Power and the Ethics of Knowing*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Selections from Giladi, P. and McMillan, N. (eds.) 2022. *Epistemic Injustice and the Philosophy of Recognition*. New York: Routledge.
- Maitra I. 2009. 'Silencing Speech'. *Canadian Journal of Philosophy* 39: 309-338.
- Selections from Medina J. 2013. *The Epistemology of Resistance: Gender and Racial Oppression, Epistemic Injustice, and Resistant Imaginations*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Week 9: Epistemic Violence
Readings:
- Dotson, K. 2011. 'Tracking Epistemic Violence, Tracking Practices of Silencing'. *Hypatia* 26: 236-257.
- Selections from Isasi-Díaz, A.M. & Mendieta, E. (eds.) 2012. *Decolonising Epistemologies: Latina/o Theology and Philosophy*. New York: Fordham University Press.
- Kumalo, S.H. 2021. 'Distinguishing between Ontology and 'Decolonisation as Praxis'. *Tydskrif Vir Letterkunde* 58: 162-168.
- Selections from Ndlovu-Gatsheni, S.J. 2018. *Epistemic Freedom in Africa: Deprovincialisation and Decolonisation*. New York: Routledge.
- Selections from Santos, B.D.S. 2014. *Epistemologies of the South: Justice against Epistemicide*. New York: Routledge

Week 10: The Epistemology of Science
Readings:
- Selections from Kimmerer, R.W. 2013. *Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge, and the Teachings of Plants*. Minneapolis: Milkweed Editions.
- Knopf, K. 2015. 'The Turn Toward the Indigenous: Knowledge Systems and Practices in the Academy'. *Amerikastudien / American Studies* 60: 179-200.
- Selections from Nelson, L.H. 1990. *Who Knows: From Quine to a Feminist Empiricism*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.
- van Wyk, J-A. 2002. 'Indigenous Knowledge Systems: Implications for Natural Science and Technology Teaching and Learning'. *South African Journal of Education* 22: 305-312.