

## NORMS OF DISCUSSION AND COMMUNITY

The Philosophy Department at the University of Chicago believes that philosophy can thrive only in an environment of collegiality, open discussion, and mutual respect. The history of the discipline, as well as the ongoing struggles in larger communities and societies, shows that we cannot take these values for granted. Public affirmations of their importance can help ensure they are nurtured and sustained. This is such an affirmation.

We ask all our members and visitors to honor these norms of conduct:

### Norms of Discussion

1. Be **collaborative**. Don't dominate conversation; give others the space to contribute.
2. Be **charitable**. Acknowledge the reasons for, and insights in, what other people have to say.
3. Be **courteous**. Avoid condescension, dismissiveness and other varieties of rudeness.
4. Be **judicious**. When weighing whether, or how long, to press a given line, keep in mind the stakes of the discussion. Don't nitpick for the sake of nitpicking.
5. **Avoid giving needless offense**, such as in the description of cases or thought experiments.
6. **Keep in mind that tentativeness is not a confession of ignorance**, nor self-assurance a guarantee of truth.

### Norms of Community

1. Be **responsible**: Participate in the life of the department as befits. Work to ensure others are not shouldering a disproportionate share of common tasks.
2. Be **communicative**: Set and agree upon clear expectations, as for assignments or projects.
3. Be **reliable**: Keep appointments; come on time; follow through.
4. Be **inclusive**: Respect the diverse aspects of others' identities.
5. Be **collegial**: Treat everyone in our department—student, staff, faculty, visitor—as a respected member of our community.