

Critical  
&  
Creative  
Thinking



VICTORIAN  
ASSOCIATION  
FOR PHILOSOPHY  
IN SCHOOLS

# VAPS Conference 2023

Ethical

The Victorian Association for Philosophy in Schools will host its biennial conference for 2023 over Fri 1 - Sat 2 December, 2023

## Professor Megan Laverty

Megan Laverty is Associate Professor of Philosophy and Education at Teachers College, Columbia University. Her primary research interests are philosophy of education, moral philosophy, and philosophy with children and adolescents.

## The Legacy of Janette Poulton

Janette Poulton was a founding member of VAPS 30+ years ago. She had led Philosophy in Schools initiatives in Victoria, Australia, Asia-Pacific, and around the world. Her contributions are immeasurable, but we will try to put some perspective to her impact here.

tickets:



<https://events.humanitix.com/vaps-2023-conference>

The theme for this year's conference is

Educating for Capabilities: Critical & Creative Thinking, Ethical, Intercultural, Personal, & Social

Intercultural

[www.vaps.vic.edu.au](http://www.vaps.vic.edu.au)

[vapscommittee@vaps.vic.edu.au](mailto:vapscommittee@vaps.vic.edu.au)

## Whole-School Stream

Presentations & Workshops on:

- Capabilities in the Victorian & Australian Curriculum
- Philosophical Thinking
- Community of Inquiry Pedagogy
- Integrating deep thought and discussion through learning areas

## VCE Philosophy Stream

Presentations & Workshops on:

- VCE Philosophy Units 1-4
- Set texts in VCE Units 3-4
- Pedagogical approaches to the teaching of VCE Philosophy
- Incorporating the new 2025 VCE Study Design

Personal  
&  
Social

	Friday	Friday	Friday	Saturday	Saturday	Saturday
	Col Stream	Col Stream	VCE Stream	Col Stream	Col Stream	VCE Stream
08:30	Entry	Entry	Entry	Entry	Entry	Entry
09:00	KEYNOTE Megan Laverty			KEYNOTE The Legacy of Janette Poulton		
	Philosophy for Children as Liberal Education for Today's Youth					
10:30	Break	Break	Break	Break	Break	Break
11:00	Tristan Hill Middle Years Philosophy and Creating Whole-School Engagement in Critical Thinking	Josey DeRossi & Clare-Rose Trevelyan An Ever-Growing Imaginary Theme Park	Peter Soutar Mind Matters: a Delve into Philosophy of Mind	Laurance Splitter Diversity: The Key to Powerful Thinking, Moral Education, and Developing Personhood	Bonnie Zuidland Interrogating the Inquiry Pathway	Matt Nieuwenhuizen Nietzsche - The Suspended Animal: Reading The VCE Extracts
12:00	Break	Break	Break	Break	Break	Break
12:15	Ben Kilby Research on Dialogue		Peter Soutar Putting Plato in Context	Monica Bini, Janice Dunbar, Vanessa Hodgkiss, Katherine Houston, Mardon Elian Ethical Capability and Critical and Creative Thinking: An Overview of Revisions	Jill Howells Learning through Philosophy and the Capabilities	Tristan Hill Resources for VCE Philosophy
13:15	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch
14:15	Philip Cam Cultivating Intellectual Virtues	Ross Barham Fictional Philosophy	Will Tuckwell Teaching Social Epistemology	Monica Bini & Bonnie Zuidland Capabilities, COI and Whole School Planning	Deborah Cordingley & Miguel Regalo What would Plato say about Virtual Reality (VR) in a Critical & Creative Thinking Classroom?	James Watt New Study Design, New You
15:15	Break	Break	Break	Break	Break	Break
15:45	Britta Jensen & Janine Timillero Building Professional Capacity across a Whole School		Monica Bini The Revised VCE Philosophy Study Design: An Overview	Jake Muir Preston High School: A Whole School Approach to Philosophical Thinking	Dr Stephanie Massey Attributing Meaning and Developing Confidence through Philosophical Pedagogies	Amber Partington Readying Year 11s for Year 12 Philosophy
16:45	Britta Jensen & Sam Giles The Critical Thinking Passport: Sharing a New Initiative	Sturt Boltin The School of Continentalism	Kalinda Ashton Teaching Contemporary Debates	Harry Galatis Matters of Perspective: Some Reflections	VAPS Team (facilitated by Tristan Hill) Demonstration Community of Inquiry: The Good Life	Bonnie Zuidland VCE 2025 Study Design Preparation: Unit 4 - AoS2: The Case Studies. Exploring External Resources
17:15	Close of Day	Close of Day	Close of Day	Close of Day	Close of Day	Close of Day
				7pm Conference Dinner		

# Keynote: Megan Laverty

Megan Laverty is Professor of Philosophy and Education and Director of the Philosophy and Education Program at Teachers College, Columbia University in New York.



# Keynote: The Legacy of Janette Poulton

Janette Poulton has been the key pillar of VAPS for more than 30 years. She sadly passed away at the beginning of this year. Her legacy at VAPS includes establishing philosophy in the VCE, creating Community of Inquiry teacher training, and further developing Philosophy in Public Spaces (PIPS) events for schools. Beyond VAPS, she worked in teacher education and schools, and has contributed to research on schools, philosophy, dialogue, critical thinking, and teacher education. She has also worked on a worldwide scale, leading PCYNAP in its focus on philosophy in the Asia-pacific region, as well as serving ICPIIC as the international body of Philosophy for/with Children.

## Philosophy for Children as Liberal Education for Today's Youth

In this presentation, Megan will provide an overview of the archival research conducted by Maughn Rollins Gregory and herself on the life and work of Matthew Lipman, with a particular focus on his time at Columbia University. Subsequently, proposing that philosophy for children was originally modelled on the Contemporary Civilization and Literature Humanities courses of the Core Curriculum at Harvard, Columbia, and Chicago, which Lipman had taught at Columbia University's College of Pharmaceutical Sciences and Columbia College. To substantiate this proposal, Megan will underscore four critical characteristics shared by philosophy for children and Columbia's Core Curriculum. Both educational approaches are a) informed by the rich history of intellectual and social thought; b) intended to nurture informed social criticism and active social engagement; c) implemented through a dialogical pedagogy aimed at enhancing students' general understanding and their capacity to engage with diverse perspectives; and d) committed to addressing the intellectual and existential depth of students. Having explored these interconnections, Megan concludes that conceiving philosophy for children as a form of liberal education tailored for young learners offers an invaluable perspective on its practice.

# Ben Kilby

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Day 1, 12:15pm

Ben Kilby is currently the Chair of VAPS, primarily focusing on PIPS events and organisational oversight. He is in the final stages of his PhD in Education at Monash University, with his research focus on how Community of Inquiry dialogue can work to create more equitable classrooms, particularly with regards to gender and marginalised students. He is also a Leading Teacher at a Victorian Government school.

## Research on Dialogue

This session will focus on presenting the research related to classroom discussion. It will distinguish between different types of talk in classroom settings and demonstrate the kinds of dialogue-based pedagogy that is most effective for learning and most inclusive from a student equity perspective. Community of Inquiry pedagogy is one example of the kind of dialogue-based pedagogy that aligns with what the research shows is best practice is classroom discussion. This session will explore these connections, as well as present tentative findings from novel research that has recently been collected in one Victorian Government school in 2023.



# Philip Cam

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Day 1, 2:15pm

Philip Cam began his working life as a secondary teacher, but his love of philosophy led to an academic career, and eventually to his combining both his lifelong interest in education with work on philosophy for children. He is the author of many books for children and teachers, as well as numerous academic articles on related subjects.

## Cultivating Intellectual Virtues

In order to cultivate intellectual virtues in education we need to understand what they are in educational terms. It is only then that we can see how to make adequate provision for them in the curriculum. This need is better met by a psychological analysis than a logical one. Accordingly, I take intellectual virtues to be behavioural dispositions that are closely bound up with skills and abilities, and analyse open-mindedness in these terms by way of illustration. In order to show the merits of this way of proceeding, the analysis is mapped onto a sample of curriculum documents, highlighting the opportunities to develop open-mindedness that are contained within them.

# Laurance Splitter

[laurance@splitter.com.au](mailto:laurance@splitter.com.au)

Day 2, 11:00am

Laurance pioneered the introduction of philosophy for children in Australian schools in the early 1980s, and played a key role in establishing both VAPS (then VPCA) and FAPSA (then FAPCA). He has published widely in areas relating to p4c and community of inquiry, and have facilitated many workshops for teachers and teacher educators in Australia and around the world. My most recent book is "Identity, Reasonableness and Being 'One Among Others': Dialogue, Community, Education" (Springer, 2023).

## Diversity: The Key to Powerful Thinking, Moral Education, and Developing Personhood.

The idea that communal inquiry in general, and philosophical inquiry in particular, depend on dialogical interaction among diverse participants, is familiar. But what does “diversity” mean here and does it apply at the level of individuals, or the various groups and associations to which they belong? I defend the former, by appealing to how we should properly construe personal identity, the relationship between thought and language, and what we mean by “morality”. Individual diversity accommodates the relational idea that each person sees themselves as “one among others”, where “others” here is to be understood in the broadest possible terms: any others. I caution against the “group think” that ties both our identities and our moral frameworks to such collectives and institutions as nations, religions, ethnicities, genders, tribes, cultures and, even, communities. I examine the implications of these ideas for an idealized sense of the community of inquiry, one which should guide our actual practice. I also examine some implications of individual diversity for conceptions of citizenship in a multicultural democracy, and for formal education, including a defence of public schooling.





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# Harry Galatis

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Day 2, 4:45pm

Dr Aristidis (Harry) Galatis is a senior lecturer and the Director of Professional Experience at the University of Melbourne's Faculty of Education. He has previously coordinated the Master of Education (International Baccalaureate) Primary Years Program as well as the Master of Teaching (Primary), Master of Teaching (Early Childhood and Primary) and Master of Teaching (Secondary) initial teacher training programs. His research interests include dialogic instruction and the use of questioning, perspective-taking, community of inquiry practices and critical thinking capability in teaching and learning. He has previously served on the Executive Committee of the Victorian Association of Philosophy in Schools.

## Matters of Perspective – Some Reflections

Perspective-taking competency, the ability, coupled with the inclination, to mentally simulate an 'other's' situation, has emerged as an important outcome criterion in education. However, perspective-taking has typically been conceived as a unitary concept. In this paper I argue against a unidimensional model of perspective-taking in favour of a multidimensional one. Six perspective-taking types are proposed, defined by their frames of reference, or deictic fields, what I call Somatic, Agentive, Sociative, Temporal, Spatial, and Alethic. I argue that different perspective-taking types implicate different categories of decentric thinking requiring the application of different kinds of imaginative proficiencies and cognitive dexterities. I argue, further, that different perspective-taking types (and combination of types) bring with them different sorts of conceptual affordances for the thinking subject, as well as precipitating some familiar, and some not so familiar, challenges and deterrents.



# Bonnie Zuidland

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Day 2, 11:00am

Bonnie Zuidland has been teaching philosophy in schools for 16 years and is currently teaching at Ballarat High School. She is a long-standing member of VAPS, having served in a variety of roles, but has focused her energies on VAPS' teacher training course in Community of Inquiry. She was also a part of the VAPS team that developed the Ethical Capabilities Resources.

## Interrogating the Inquiry Pathway

Interrogating the Inquiry Pathway: In this workshop we will explore the CoI Inquiry Pathway, what it is, what are its variations. Then as a group explore the strengths, weaknesses and challenges that the Inquiry Pathway has in our practice(s). Explore ways to support each other to deepen Inquiry through the pathway and other dialogical strategies. In the words influenced by Susan Gardner – So we can we beyond mere conversation.



# Monica Bini & Bonnie Zuidland

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Day, 2:15pm

Bonnie Zuidland has been teaching philosophy in schools for 16 years and is currently teaching at Ballarat High School. She is a long-standing member of VAPS, having served in a variety of roles, but has focused her energies on VAPS' teacher training course in Community of Inquiry. She was also a part of the VAPS team that developed the Ethical Capabilities Resources. Monica Bini is Capabilities Curriculum Manager at the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority. In this role, she has worked with school leaders and teachers on whole school planning for delivery of the Capabilities.

## Capabilities, COI and Whole School Planning

This session will begin with an introduction to whole school planning for delivery of the Capabilities. Participants will be given a chance to assess and discuss implementation of capabilities at their school using a roadmap tool. The second half of the session will take an interactive approach to focusing on Community of Inquiry and how it can support whole school delivery of the Capabilities.



# Britta Jensen & Sam Giles

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Day 1, 4:45pm

Dr Britta Jensen is Co-director of the Centre for Critical Thinking and Ethics at Newington College, a K-12 philosophy teacher, and President of the Philosophy in Schools Association of NSW. Britta's DPhil is from the University of Oxford (2003). Following a visiting fellowship at the University of Cambridge (2003-2006), she has worked in Australia in research (Linguistics and Cognitive Science) and in education: teaching (languages + humanities), building staff capacity with P4C pedagogy, and developing curricula. Sam Giles is a Philosophy teacher at Newington College. He studied philosophy at UNSW before becoming a teacher.

## The Critical Thinking Passport – Sharing a New Initiative

Phil Cam's 2006 seminal work *Twenty Thinking Tools*, identifies and clarifies several discrete elements of critical thinking that are central for successful classroom dialogue. Following Cam's (2006) suggestion that "Thinking should be explicitly taught and practised" it is imperative to make these tools 'visible' to learners. Various mechanisms have since been developed, e.g., laminated cards, classroom posters, and the physical "toolbox" that P4C practitioners and leaders such as Daniel Muir-Smith and Phil Cam bring into classrooms. In this presentation we will introduce a new initiative, the 'Critical Thinking Passport'. We issued the first Passports to Year 7 students in July 2023 at Newington College. The Passport provides definitions and examples of a set of thinking moves and includes space for students to record examples from Philosophy class and create examples from other subject areas and their own lives. In this talk we will explain how the passport fits into our school's strategic plan for Critical Thinking as well as its utility. At present, in the piloting phase, we also have some preliminary results to showcase the Passport's impact on students' growing mastery of thinking moves. Once refined, we will be pleased to share this resource to others to use as well.



# Dr Josey De Rossi & Clare Rose Trevelyan

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Day 1, 11:00am

Josey De Rossi is a teacher and curriculum developer who specialises in projects that combine educational theories of Embodied Cognition with structured literacy and philosophy in school approaches. Clare-Rose Trevelyan is the author of nine books for young readers. These are imagined as two series: five are fictional journals, the Past Life Library series tells the stories of one girl through five lifetimes, and the second series is the Young Philosophers Series, four books that attempt to revitalise questioning in middle school students.

## An Ever-Growing Imaginary Theme Park.

What if a school was more like a theme park than a 19th-century factory? What would happen to the quality of thinking and questioning? Wait a moment...Aren't we beset with enough problems before we imagine a radical disruption to the existing curriculum order as we know it? Alternatively, we might dig deeper into teaching and learning the capacity to be philosophers to our students, particularly in that 'wasteland' that is the middle school years. That's what Clare and Josey (and the team at independent publishers Red Wool Edition) have imagined through their Young Philosophers Series. The presentation sets out the scope of the series and the launch of the first book, *The Book With No Story*, and its activity books within a festive teaching and learning context, imagined by Clare as THE THEME PARK OF THE MIND.



# Dr Ross Barham

Day 1, 2:15pm

Ross is Head of Philosophy, Melbourne High School.

## Fictional Philosophy.

Putting aside the fact there is much fiction that is philosophical, I'm interested instead in thinking about the possibility of Philosophy itself being considered a genre of literature. Of course, I'm not suggesting all philosophy need give up its normative commitment to truth and reality (however conceived), only that it might be liberating and interesting to explore theories that are clearly 'fictional', not in the sense of not being set in this world on Earth, but rather in the sense that they aren't necessarily to be believed. To illustrate what I have in mind, take Spinoza's 'Ethics' -- even though he likely believed what he said was a true description of the reality of the world, I think it's perfectly wonderful that some of us still might read him as though we were reading fictional philosophy. Come along to see what I think it might take for us to intentionally write philosophy as fiction, and what its benefits might be (especially for high school students).



# Britta Jensen & Janine Timillero

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Day 1, 3:45pm

Dr Britta Jensen is Co-director of the Centre for Critical Thinking and Ethics at Newington College, a K-12 philosophy teacher, and President of the Philosophy in Schools Association of NSW. She has worked in research (Linguistics and Cognitive Science) and in education: teaching (languages + humanities), building staff capacity with P4C pedagogy, and developing curricula. Janine Timillero is Head of Professional Growth at Newington College, President of GATSTA, and an experienced teacher with expertise in HSIE, Philosophy, and Gifted Education. She has a Masters of Education and has a graduate diploma in Philosophy. In her role, Janine works with teachers to build capacity by incorporating philosophical thinking in classrooms.

## Building Professional Capacity across a Whole School

In 2022, following a comprehensive community consultation, Newington College established the Centre for Critical Thinking and Ethics as part of the strategic aim to focus on improving students' critical thinking. Our work is premised on the view expressed in Cam (2006) that "Thinking skills should be explicitly taught and practiced." Our first step, therefore, was to equip our staff with a shared vocabulary of thinking and inquiry, informed by the Philosophy in Schools (P4C) tradition. This presentation shares the impact of this initiative to date in terms of building teacher capacity, presenting both the successes and challenges of the first phase of the project. Our results, obtained from semi-structured interviews conducted with staff, will be of interest to others intending to roll out an intervention in relation to improving teacher capacity with thinking skills and metacognition.

# Jake Muir

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Day 2, 3:45pm

Jake Muir is a philosophy and music teacher. Jake is also a graduate research student at the University of Melbourne. His research interests are student agency, p4c, oracy, and teacher identity.

## Preston High School: A Whole School Approach to Philosophical Thinking

This presentation delves into the complexities of implementing a whole school approach to philosophical thinking in a recently established government school in Melbourne. With a clear mandate and committed leadership, the potential for developing a culture around critical thinking and ethical reasoning in students is evident. However, challenges hinder the integration of philosophical thinking into the school's day to day. These hurdles encompass teacher buy-in, teacher skill development, and the resourcing of time. Drawing from my recent my work in this role during the 2022 and 2023 school years, this presentation reflects on my experiences tackling these issues. Attendees will gain practical insights to embark on similar transformative educational journeys.



# Jill Howells

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Day 2, 12:15pm

Jill is an educator with a long history in Philosophy for Children. She is Assistant Principal at Brunswick East Primary School (BEPS). And a member of the Victorian Association for Philosophy in Schools and The Federation of Asia-Pacific Philosophy in School Associations. Philosophy for Children is threaded through the learning at BEPS and underpins the school's values of empathy, creativity, resilience, friendship and wonder. All students participate in regular Philosophy for Children sessions. Jill has mentored, coached and led Professional Learning sessions for teachers in Philosophy for Children, presented at conferences and continues to work in this role for VAPS with its educational courses and Philosophy on Public Spaces events. She has worked with the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority, reviewing and developing the Ethical Capability and the Creative and Critical Thinking Capability.

## Learning through Philosophy and the Capabilities

This presentation will explore the approach of Brunswick East Primary using inquiry-based learning that integrates Philosophy for Children and the Victorian Curriculum for a whole school approach to pedagogy.

# Deborah Cordingley & Miguel Regalo

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Day 2, 2:15pm

Deborah and Miguel are philosophy teachers at Mac Robertson Girls' High School. Philosophy is highly valued at MacRob and this year we have introduced VR as an educational tool to meet the VC capabilities.

## What would Plato say about Virtual Reality (VR) in a critical & creative thinking classroom?

If you are ready to use technology as an educational tool to develop a critical and creative thinking classroom, then this is the workshop for you to ensure students meet a range of expected capabilities. This workshop will be a 'choose your own adventure' so be courageous and join us to explore different realities in VR. We know students love to 'rave in cave' as Plato's Allegory of the Cave & the Simile of the Divided Line continuously fascinate students. Developing and de-constructing Plato's theories gives rise to so many interpretations and allows students to think about the authority given for reality and knowledge. Offering our students the opportunity to experience the potential of VR allows them to enter different realities and test their ideas, assumptions and perceptions. Join our workshop to experience the potential of VR technology as a stimulus and learning tool to ensure students meet the expected capabilities across primary, secondary and VCE spaces.



# Tristan Hill

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Day 2, 4:45pm

Teacher of Philosophy for over a decade and former Chair and VCE Network Officer for the VAPS.

## Demonstration Community of Inquiry: The Good Life

Tristan will model facilitating a community of inquiry on the topic of the good life. This session will involve several participants engaged in a community of inquiry facilitated by Tristan. The purpose of this session is to model the practice of facilitating philosophical dialogue in a community of inquiry.

# Monica Bini, Janice Dunbar, Vanessa Hodgkiss, Katherine Houston, Mardon Elian



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Day 2, 12:15pm

Monica Bini is the Capabilities Curriculum Manager at the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority. She led the revisions to Ethical Capability, Critical and Creative Thinking, Intercultural Capability and Personal and Social Capability.

Janice Dunbar (Education Officer, Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Schools), Vanessa Hodgkiss (Casey Grammar), Katherine Houston (Preston High School) are practising teachers with an interest in Ethical Capability, and Mardon Elian (University High School) is a practising teacher with an interest in Critical & Creative Thinking

## Ethical Capability and Critical and Creative Thinking: A General Overview of Revisions

In this session participants will be given a general overview of revisions to the Victorian Curriculum F-10: Ethical Capability and Critical and Creative Thinking. Participants will engage in activities guided by practising teachers designed to assist implementation in the classroom.



# Tristan Hill

[tristanalexanderhill@gmail.com](mailto:tristanalexanderhill@gmail.com)

Day 1, 11:00am

Teacher of Philosophy for over a decade and former Chair and VCE Network Officer for the VAPS.

## Middle Years Philosophy and Creating Whole-School Engagement in Critical Thinking

Tristan will provide an overview for establishing and teaching a Year 9 and 10 Philosophy course and will provide some ideas for improving the critical thinking culture within the school community. The session will be relatively informal, with opportunity for questions as well as encouragement to share ideas from your experience in Middle Years Philosophy.



# Dr Stephanie Massey

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Day 2, 3:45pm

Originally from the UK, Stephanie has taught Religious and Philosophical Studies to all ages of children since 2006. She completed her doctorate at The University of Notre Dame in Perth in 2020. Her research looked at how philosophical pedagogies can encourage the exhibition of critical and creative thinking, attribute meaning and develop confidence in learning. She is currently the Head of Religious Studies and RaVE at Overnewton in the Northern suburbs of Melbourne.

## Attributing Meaning and Developing Confidence through Philosophical Pedagogies.

Students who engage in philosophical pedagogies are not bound by the development of critical and creative thinking skills and the insurmountable benefits of such competencies from ACARA or the multitude of other contributors to the field confess. The powers of philosophical inquiry through pedagogies such as the Question Quadrant and Community of Inquiry are far reaching. While philosophical pedagogies are consistency proven to develop attributes of critical and creative thinking, they also enable students to attribute meaning to their studies and become more confident in their learning. Throughout my presentation, I aim to interpret the array of literature that comments on meaning confidence, showing how the themes drawn provided a foundation for the research I conducted at three Western Australian Secondary Schools. The research not only complemented the literature, but also gave insight into the transformational abilities of philosophical pedagogy.

# VCE Stream



# Matt Nieuwenhuizen

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Day 2, 11:00am

Matt has been teaching VCE Philosophy for 20 years, in both public and independent schools. He has a specific interest in questions of time and agency, animality and the human, and the metaphysics of selfhood more broadly. For relief, he rides bikes and cooks food.

## Nietzsche – The Suspended Animal – Reading The VCE Extracts

This presentation explores Nietzsche's unique perspective on morality, human identity, and metaphysics in the context of the VCE extracts. The paper delves into Nietzsche's genealogical method, emphasizing its focus on the origins and functions of moral categories, highlighting the contingent foundations of moral phenomena. Nietzsche's critique targets the "herd mentality" and the urge to generalize, which he sees as oppressive and driven by fear. He calls for the rekindling of the struggle between moralities, especially contrasting slave and master morality, to allow for the openness and plurality of human identity. Nietzsche's metaphysics, centred on the concept of the will to power, challenges traditional metaphysical notions, emphasizing the pluralistic and interpretative nature of reality. His perspectivism highlights the importance of subjective context in understanding truth. Nietzsche's call to "new philosophers" urges a reevaluation of values and the affirmation of life's transformative power. Ultimately, the paper explores the profound relationship between values, affirmation, and the human journey towards self-realisation and creative transformation.



# William Tuckwell

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Day 1, 2:15pm

Will is a postdoctoral researcher in philosophy at Charles Sturt University. He completed his PhD at the University of Melbourne in 2021. His main interests are in epistemology and social and political philosophy.

## Teaching Social Epistemology

In this presentation, Will explains what social epistemology is and how it differs from traditional epistemology, introducing some of the main topics in social epistemology, and providing some resources that will be useful when introducing these topics to high school students. Social Epistemology is a new topic for the 2025 VCE Philosophy Study Design.



# Sturt Boltin

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Day 1, 4:45pm

Sturt is a Year 11 student at Preston High School who has been pursuing the unanswerable questions of knowledge since his days of youth. Despite interest in all philosophical fields, his most explored are metaphysics, epistemology, contemporary aesthetics, and political philosophy and ideology. Sturt often attempts to tackle philosophical quandaries through an absurdist or existential lens.

## The School of Continentalism

This presentation will analyse the implications and applications of continental and analytic philosophy in education and p4c. This dichotomy of objectivity and subjectivity has caused epistemological debate since the days of Nietzsche, and it is worth exploring in terms of high school education. Continentalism should be employed to a greater extent in education and p4c, as rigid analysis has overtaken the schooling curriculum in recent years. It is wrong to conceive philosophy as a scientific endeavour and to neglect continental methodologies, as different modes of thought provide new opportunities for engagement with ethical, social and critical cognition.



# Monica Bini

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Day 1, 3:45pm

Monica Bini is Curriculum Manager for VCE Philosophy at the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority. She led the review of the VCE Philosophy study design.

## The Revised VCE Philosophy Study Design: An Overview

In this session participants will be given an overview of changes to the VCE Philosophy study design, due to begin in 2025. A major focus will be Units 3 and 4. The session includes a guided discussion on selecting a case study for Unit 4.

# James Watt

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Day 2, 2:15pm

James teaches at the Virtual School Victoria. He has taught a bit of philosophy. Buy him a coffee and let him pet your dog. Like and subscribe for weekly content.

## New Study Design, New You

A session for anyone who wants to take a short moment to reflect on what sort of philosophy teacher they want to be, within the framework of a new curriculum. Inspired by the very worst of the self-help movement.



# Bonnie Zuidland

[bonnie.zuidland@education.vic.gov.au](mailto:bonnie.zuidland@education.vic.gov.au)

Day 2, 4:45pm

Bonnie Zuidland has been teaching philosophy in schools for 16 years and is currently teaching at Ballarat High School. She is a long-standing member of VAPS, having served in a variety of roles, but has focused her energies on VAPS' teacher training course in Community of Inquiry. She was also a part of the VAPS team that developed the Ethical Capabilities Resources.

## VCE 2025 Study Design Preparation: Unit 4 – AoS2: The Case Studies. Exploring external resources.

In this session we will have a quick close look at the newest addition to the VCE Study Design being implemented in 2025. I hope to have access to the newest iteration of the Area of Study. I will then present some ideas for possible case studies (a reframing of the past contemporary debates). At the end I would like to brainstorm other possible cases that explore ideas of social epistemology and create live a document together of ideas and if possible links to sites that highlight those cases.

# Amber Partington

Day 2, 3:45pm



Amber Partington is a teacher of Philosophy/Humanities, English, Literature and English Language, with degrees in Philosophy, Literature, and Cultural & Creative Practice. In 2019 she was tasked with building her school's entire VCE Philosophy curriculum from the ground up, and every year since then, be it after meeting a Year 12 class for the first time or taking her cohort through their whole VCE journey, she has learned a little bit more about how and where the Year 11 course can help prepare students for the challenges of Year 12 Philosophy.

## Readying Year 11s for Year 12 Philosophy.

The Study Design for Year 11 Philosophy presents teachers with an exciting opportunity to explore an array of captivating topics. From delving into foundational metaphysics, knowledge and morality, to contemplating aesthetics, time travel and the existence of God, the scope of possibility in Year 11 is both inspiring and dizzying.

While the Year 11 curriculum offers a range of choices, we need to keep the challenges and requirements of Year 12 in mind when making curriculum decisions. The prescriptions of Units 3/4 can come as a shock to students when contrasted with the exploratory nature of Year 11 - curriculum design needs to strike a balance between student engagement, the joy of discovering philosophy and the foundational knowledge and skills necessary for success.

This workshop aims to provide practical advice and strategies to assist and advise new teachers in crafting a Year 11 curriculum that not only offers choice but also cultivates a deeper understanding of philosophical concepts that will serve as building blocks for Year 12. The emphasis will be on the alignment of Units 1/2 content, skills development and assessment tasks with the expectations of Units 3/4.



# Kalinda Ashton

[kalinda.ashton@footscray.vic.edu.au](mailto:kalinda.ashton@footscray.vic.edu.au)

Day 1, 4:45pm

Dr Kalinda Ashton presently teaches Philosophy at Footscray High School. She has published a novel and more than thirty works of short fiction and holds a PhD in literary theory. Prior to working in secondary schools seven years ago she spent more than a decade lecturing and tutoring in creative writing, literature and critical theory at universities. She has a particular interest in ethics and aesthetics and the relationship between the two.

## Teaching Contemporary Debates

VCE Philosophy requires the consideration of various contemporary debates, both in the current study design and arguably even more so in the proposed new study design which will be implemented in future. This session presents a range strategies concerning how to successfully teach, integrate and assess relevant current issues, problems, dilemmas and debates into the teaching of VCE philosophy and addresses common challenges and pitfalls in this area and how they may be overcome



# Peter Soutar

[peter.soutar@carey.com.au](mailto:peter.soutar@carey.com.au)

Day 1, 12:15pm

Peter has taught VCE Philosophy for over fifteen years and his particular interests lie within classical Greek philosophy and philosophy of mind.

## Putting Plato in Context

Plato's "Gorgias" is a complex and fascinating dialogue. This presentation will explore the socio-historical context surrounding the reading. We'll delve into how Athenian democracy and the emergence of sophists amongst other factors shaped the dialogue's themes of justice, rhetoric, and morality. This will hopefully give us a better understanding of the ideas behind the text.

# Tristan Hill

[tristanalexanderhill@gmail.com](mailto:tristanalexanderhill@gmail.com)

Day 2, 12:15pm

Teacher of Philosophy for over a decade and former Chair and VCE Network Officer for the VAPS.

## Resources for VCE

### Philosophy.

Bring some resources to share; take some resources for your use! Bring questions and your ideas for improving the teaching and learning of Philosophy in secondary levels.



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# Peter Soutar

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Day 1, 11:00am

Peter has taught VCE Philosophy for over fifteen years and his particular interests lie within classical Greek philosophy and philosophy of mind.

## Mind Matters: a Delve into Philosophy of Mind

In this presentation, we explore the philosophy of mind, delving into questions about the nature of consciousness and its relationship with the physical world. This presentation will also focus on artificial intelligence as a key theme. Relevant for those teaching Unit 11 and 12 in 2024, or those with an interest in the field. There will also be time for a Q&A.

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Fri 1 - Sat 2  
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