

The Pandemic Perspective

The Ryerson Philosophy Graduate Student Union is pleased to announce our annual conference, to be held in March, 2022. Our theme this year is the pandemic.

Conference Description:

It is difficult to overstate the unprecedented nature of our contemporary situation. A few years ago, none of us could imagine that everything we experienced as ordinary -having discussions on campus, visiting friends and family, taking public transit, working out at the gym —would come to an abrupt halt. Today, we speak of a “new normal” and try to understand what that entails for our lives.

The pandemic exposed many facets of being human in modern life. For one, it demonstrated how interconnected we are—how our actions impact others, and how much we need others in our life. But this has come with a dark side. The pandemic revealed the shortcomings of our society with utter clarity. We now see in full view the inequalities of our medical care systems. A looming mental health crisis, already alarming before the pandemic, has exploded onto the scene with unparalleled intensity. As the pandemic reminded us that we live on the same earth, it also showed us the loss of a common world and language to address systemic and urgent issues.

But what does this mean? What does the future hold for us? How can we understand the times we’re living in, and where we are going?

These, broadly speaking, are the questions and concerns that animate the spirit of the conference.

The conference is motivated by the pandemic, but it is not limited to explicitly COVID-19 related themes. Our hope, rather, is to invite submissions from graduate students who have discovered new dimensions to their work due to the pandemic. Examples of the kinds of submissions we are looking for include, but are certainly not limited to:

1. Social Media and Relationships: How has the pandemic affected our relationships? What should we think of the omnipotence of virtual mediation in our relationships?
2. Health Care: What has the pandemic taught us about our health care institutions?
3. Social and Political Questions: How has the pandemic affected political life?
4. Crisis and Collective Reflection: What can the pandemic teach us about our commitment to social justice?

We are delighted to announce that Prof. Diane Enns (Ryerson University) will be keynoting our conference. She will be addressing the theme of loneliness in our contemporary socio-political context.

Submission Details:

Please submit your abstract (500-800 words) and papers, with “Pandemic Conference” written in the subject heading, to rugradconference@gmail.com by January 10, 2022. We are planning the conference for March 2022. Papers should be suitable for an approximately 20 minute presentation, followed by discussion. Please include information about yourself in the body of the email, including: your name, the title of your paper, and affiliation.