



APPA Annual Meeting
Saturday June 27, 2026
all times EST

9:00-9:15 a.m. **Lou Marinoff** (USA): *Welcome*

9:15-10:00 a.m. **Ang Li** (China) [Chaired by **Lou Marinoff**]

The Seven Virtues of the North Star: A Virtue-Based Ethical Framework for Philosophical Practice Grounded in the Liangzhi Tradition

10:00-10:45 a.m. **Goutham AV** (India) [Chaired by **Lou Marinoff**]

What Exactly Are We Training Students to Become? Rebuilding an Undergraduate Course in Philosophical Practice

10:45-11:00 a.m. *Coffee break*

11:00-11:45 a.m. **Tatiana Zdyb** (Canada) [Chaired by **Vaughana Feary**]

Self-Esteem and the Philosophical Life: From Nietzsche's Genealogy of Shame to Kantian Duty, Stoic Governance, and Existential Authorship

11:45 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. **Carolina Beaini** (Canada) [Chaired by **Vaughana Feary**]

Cultivating Philosophical Intelligence: The PHICLARITY Method for Applied Philosophical Practice

12:30-1:30 p.m. *Lunch Break*

1:30-2:15 p.m. **Ross Reed** (USA) (Chaired by **Rick Repetti**)

Existential Philosophical Counseling, Part II: Therapeutic Hermeneutics and the Medical Pathologization of Existential Suffering

2:15-3:00 p.m. **Susan Castro** (USA) (Chaired by Rick Repetti)

Philosophical Counseling and Value Sensitive Design: first person plural, impure a priori conceptual investigations

3:00-3:15 p.m. *Coffee Break*

3:15-4:00 p.m. **Shanti Jones & Andrew Fitz-Gibbon** (USA) [Chaired by **Lou Marinoff**]

The Moral Third: Love, Virtue, and the Ethics of the Between

4:00-4:45 p.m. **Wang Zhiyuan** (China) [Chaired by **Lou Marinoff**]

Nine Essential Practices for a Life Free from Disturbance: A Philosophical Perspective

4:45-5:00 p.m. *Close of program*





Ang Li: *The Seven Virtues of the North Star: A Virtue-Based Ethical Framework for Philosophical Practice Grounded in the Liangzhi Tradition*

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Abstract: Philosophical practice has developed a rich repertoire of methods over the past four decades, yet it remains undertheorized in its ethical foundations. This paper proposes a virtue-based ethical framework for philosophical practitioners, drawing primarily on Wang Yangming's concept of liangzhi (良知, innate moral knowing) as an integrative moral faculty, while engaging critically with Alasdair MacIntyre's account of practice-based virtues and responding to the situationist challenge from experimental moral psychology. I identify seven practitioner virtues — Wisdom (明智), Conscience (良心), Courage (勇毅), Temperance (節制), Justice (正義), Integrity (至誠), and Expansiveness (弘仁) — organized in a three-layer structural model and mapped onto four functional roles the practitioner inhabits. Three case studies serve as heuristic demonstrations, and I introduce the exploratory concept of Virtue Resilience (美德韌性), defined as the capacity to maintain moral coherence amid conceptual chaos and value conflict. The framework is offered as a set of navigational coordinates — an internal compass for practitioners who must think clearly, act justly, and remain morally present in conditions of genuine uncertainty.

Bio: Ang Li holds a Bachelor of Management in E-commerce from Guangdong University of Technology, China. He is an Auxiliary Member of the American Philosophical Practitioners Association (APPA) and a Research Assistant at the Institut de Philosophie Pratique, France. He is the founder of Guangzhou Phaenarete AI Technology Co., Ltd. (广州菲娜睿特人工智能科技有限责任公司), where he works at the intersection of philosophical practice, interdisciplinary inquiry, and applied ethics. His research focuses on virtue-based ethical frameworks for philosophical practitioners, drawing on Wang Yangming's concept of liangzhi (良知, innate moral knowing). His APPA 2026 paper, "The Seven Virtues of the North Star," proposes an ethical compass centered on seven virtues—Wisdom, Conscience, Courage, Temperance, Justice, Integrity, and Expansiveness—offering practitioners navigational coordinates for uncertainty and value conflict. Beyond philosophical practice, he maintains a sustained interest in the distribution of prime numbers and the Riemann Hypothesis, reflecting his broader engagement with questions of order, uncertainty, and meaning across mathematics and the humanities.



Goutham AV: *What Exactly Are We Training Students to Become? Rebuilding an Undergraduate Course in Philosophical Practice*

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Abstract: Translating philosophical theory into applied practice is a major challenge in undergraduate education. This paper reflects on a two-year pedagogical initiative at Fergusson College, Pune, aligned with India's NEP-2020. Unlike traditional textbook-led courses, this program operated as a rigorously tested, two-cycle research initiative utilizing worldview analysis and case-based inquiry to foster active "Dialogic Learning." Classroom execution, however, revealed two primary challenges: AI Plagiarism, where Generative AI compromised the authenticity of student case studies, requiring customized evaluation strategies; and Therapeutic Drift, where students struggled with boundary discipline, consistently drifting from philosophical inquiry into advice-giving and amateur therapy. This study engages the debate on whether philosophical practice can be formally taught, demonstrating that teaching procedural frameworks inadvertently encourages students to act as therapists. Consequently, the redesigned curriculum shifts away from instrumental techniques toward shaping subjectivity through four core cognitive capacities: identifying assumptions, clarifying conceptual tensions, tracing competing values, and sustaining non-directive dialogue. Assessment was similarly reformed using "Holistic Dominant Pattern Judgement" to evaluate overall reflective disposition rather than isolated behavioral outputs. Ultimately, the paper argues that training mature interlocutors requires prioritizing an enduring philosophical attitude over mechanical dialogue.

Bio: A V Goutham is an APPA and PPAI-certified philosophical practitioner with over 20 years of cross-disciplinary experience across science, philosophy, and media. He holds an M.A. in Philosophy and a B.Sc. in Physics, Still Photography, and Audio-Visual Production. At Fergusson College, he is a Visiting Scholar teaching Philosophical Counselling and serves as an Industry Expert on the Board of Studies. He also guest lectures for the Philosophical Practitioners Association of India (PPAI). He is the Co-founder and Director of WiseOne HelpSelf Wellness LLP, an ecosystem offering psychological and philosophical counseling to a global clientele. He has documented over 250 hours of counselling sessions. His research is published in peer-reviewed journals including *Philosophical Practice* and *Religions*. An author and filmmaker, his background also includes co-writing a feature film screenplay preserved for research by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences.



Tatiana Zdyb: *Self-Esteem and the Philosophical Life: From Nietzsche's Genealogy of Shame to Kantian Duty, Stoic Governance, and Existential Authorship*

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Abstract: Self-esteem is a highly significant yet philosophically underexamined concept in applied clinical practice. While popular culture frames self-esteem as an internal feeling cultivated through positive affirmations, this paper argues such views are shallow and counterproductive. Instead, it offers a richer, clinically applicable account of self-worth by synthesizing five major philosophical traditions: (1) Nietzsche: Diagnoses low self-worth and the "bad conscience" as historical, cultural achievements of internalized instincts rather than personal failures, allowing clients to externalize and refuse the inner critic. (2) Kant: Decouples self-respect (*Selbstachtung*) from emotional states, framing it as an unconditional moral duty grounded in rational agency—offering a resilient baseline untouched by failure or external devaluation. (3) The Stoics: Relocate dignity from external recognition to internal governance, presenting practical exercises to cultivate "self-esteem without applause" in a performance-driven attention economy. (4) Epicurus: Examines shame's social architecture, demonstrating how withdrawing from status-driven environments and limiting vain desires can structurally decouple self-worth from social performance. (5) The Existentialists (Sartre, de Beauvoir, Camus): Reject intrinsic worth in favor of an "authorship model," where self-esteem is earned through aligning choices with values, and bad faith is identified as the root of self-erosion. The paper concludes by synthesizing these insights into a framework for philosophical practitioners, proposing that durable self-esteem is not felt, but built through rigorous self-examination, value-aligned action, and communities that do not require performance.

Bio: Tatiana Zdyb, PhD, is a clinical philosopher whose work sits at the intersection of psychology, embodiment, and meaning-making. Holding a Bachelor's degree in Philosophy and Psychology from Western University, a Master's in Counselling Psychology from Adler University and a PhD in Health and Rehabilitation Sciences from Western University, she has spent over 25 years walking alongside individuals navigating the complexities of being human. Her practice rests on the belief that our inner worlds are not problems to be fixed, but landscapes to be understood and explored through dialogue, reflection, and compassionate inquiry.

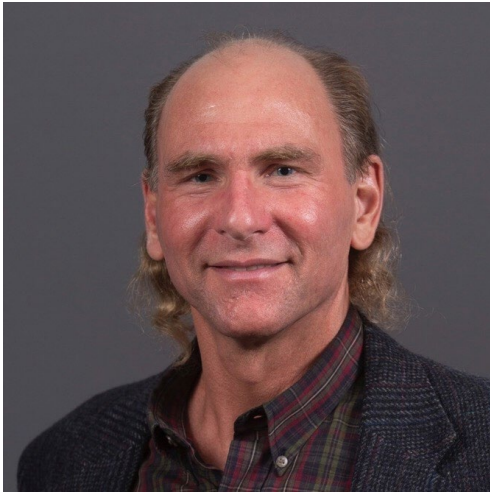


Carolina Beaini: *Cultivating Philosophical Intelligence: The PHICLARITY Method for Applied Philosophical Practice*

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Abstract: This presentation proposes a conceptual and practical framework aimed at cultivating what is defined here as Philosophical Intelligence (PHI-I), a reflective capacity understood as a sigma (Σ) of multiple forms of intelligence, harmonizing cognitive, emotional, social, and ethical dimensions through philosophical reflection. To develop this capacity within applied contexts, the presentation introduces the PHICLARITY Method, a structured approach to philosophical inquiry designed to accompany reflective practice through different stages of analysis, clarification, and discernment. The presentation also introduces EPhiR (Evolution of Philosophical Intelligence Record), a reflective documentation framework designed to trace and document the progressive development of philosophical intelligence across situations and over time, capturing moments of inquiry, philosophical exploration, insights and decision-making. Together, these elements form the PHICLARITY Model of Applied Philosophical Practice, offering a conceptual, methodological, and reflective framework for cultivating philosophical clarity, ethical awareness, and thoughtful action in professional and personal contexts.

Bio: Carolina Beaini is a Certified APPA philosophical consultant and founder of PHICLARITY, an applied philosophical initiative advancing clarity, ethical leadership, and strategic thinking. Holding a doctorate in philosophy, she is recognized for her pioneering contribution to the evolution of philosophical practice, bringing rigorous thought into actionable frameworks impacting individuals, institutions, and societies. Specialized in hermeneutics and clinical philosophy, she develops original methods that cultivate reflective, logical and philosophical intelligence, enabling individuals and organizations to navigate complexity with precision and purpose. She is also certified in mediation, negotiation, organizational consulting, and leadership excellence, embodying a holistic and distinguished approach to philosophical practice and counseling.



Ross Channing Reed: *Existential Philosophical Counseling, Part II: Therapeutic Hermeneutics and the Medical Pathologization of Existential Suffering*

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Abstract: This paper advances an existential approach to philosophical counseling by examining how hermeneutics, unquestioned assumptions, and self-deception shape what counselees take as “evidence” about themselves. Beginning with a case vignette about intimacy and memory, the paper argues that practitioners must remain flexible about explanatory framing, since new recollections can destabilize earlier meanings. The discussion then connects this hermeneutical problem to a wider cultural epidemic of denied suffering and proposes that the minimization of one’s own pain impairs recognition of the suffering other and risks ethical harm. The paper then critiques contemporary mental health discourse, emphasizing the continuum between wellness and illness, and questions the scientific grounding and social function of diagnostic categories, ultimately challenging the medical model’s tendency to pathologize ordinary suffering while sustaining “noble lies” (such as chemical-imbalance narratives). Drawing on Nietzsche, Plato, Epicurus, and critiques of biological reductionism, the author concludes that philosophical counselors should prioritize truthfulness, autonomy, and values that support dignity and self-respect, while collaborating respectfully with mental health professionals.

Bio: Ross Channing Reed has been a philosophical counselor in private practice since 1998, and a member of the American Philosophical Practitioners Association since its inception. He is the author of *Love and Death: An Existential Theory of Addiction*, *The Liberating Art of Philosophy*, *Mindscapes*, *Precarity*, *Trauma*, *Addiction*, *Love* (forthcoming), other works of philosophy and fiction, as well as number of book chapters and scholarly articles. He is a member of the National Philosophical Counseling Association and is certified in client counseling by the American Philosophical Practitioners Association. He teaches philosophy at Missouri University of Science and Technology.



Susan Castro: *Philosophical Counseling and Value Sensitive Design: first person plural, impure a priori conceptual investigations*

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Abstract: This paper sketches the following argument. 1. Philosophical counseling (PC) is, among other things, a first person plural form of philosophical research: investigation by *us* that enlightens *us*. Conceptual analysis, synthesis and development, i.e. conceptual investigation, is central to the processes of PC whether the particular practice employs formal methods like Logic-Based Therapy or informal maieutic methods. 2. In many cases, people seek PC because they want to wisely *apply* the *a priori* to their lives. From a Kantian perspective, this would make the typical conceptual investigations of PC *impure a priori*. 3. Value Sensitive Design is a framework for helping technology developers *design for good*. In VSD, conceptual investigation is iteratively intertwined with empirical and technological investigation to foreground the values of stakeholders and thoughtfully integrate those values into the scripts and affordances of the design. Whereas the empirical and technological investigations of VSD rely on the empirical methods of social science research and engineering respectively, the conceptual investigation with which they are intertwined is, I argue, a first person plural *impure a priori* conceptual investigation. 4. Understanding both PC and VSD in this way yields at least two significant results, a) PC is ideally suited to the work of conceptual investigation in VSD, and b) this way of understanding humanities research offers insight into a much needed alternative to the traditional extractive methods of human subjects research that historically led to the necessity of IRB protection.

Bio: Dr. Castro is the founding Director of [The Academic Center for Biomedical and Health Humanities](#) (HealthHum), which aims to center humanity and health and medicine. She is also an Instigator for [Responsible AI@ICT \(rAI\)](#), a working group at Wichita State University that brings together researchers from all disciplines to collaborate in intelligently shaping our future in this AI era, through translational research that takes special care in how AI is developed and integrated into our world. Her current research foci are Philosophy of Biomedical Engineering and AI Ethics, with a hefty dose of humanizing from World Philosophy and Philosophical Counseling.



**Shanti Jones &
Andrew Fitz-Gibbon:**
*The Moral Third: Love, Virtue,
and the Ethics of the Between*

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Abstract: This paper advances Jessica Benjamin’s psychoanalytic concept of the "Moral Third" as a practical ethical framework for philosophical counseling. Drawing on Andrew Fitz-Gibbon’s account of love as a disciplined practice, we propose that the Moral Third is concretized through shared virtues—such as respect, humility, patience, and honesty—which act as lived constraints against self-assertion and moral absolutism. By submitting to these virtues, both counselor and client participate in a shared ethical reality that neither controls. Philosophical counseling is thus redefined as an ethical practice oriented toward a "third term"—a moral horizon that structures inquiry, challenges solipsism, and sustains meaning. Ultimately, we suggest that the central task of philosophical counseling is not merely clarifying thought, but cultivating the conditions under which truth, recognition, and ethical life can be shared.

Bio: Shanti Jones, Ph.D., is a philosophical counselor, educator, and performer whose work bridges philosophy, psychology, and spiritual practice. Based in Taos, New Mexico, she has spent over forty years helping individuals become “the subject of their own lives” through reflective dialogue, dream work, and the cultivation of virtue. Her publications and international presentations explore philosophy as a lived practice. An ordained priest in the Lindisfarne Community, Dr. Jones is especially interested in the intersection of ethics, spirituality, and personal transformation, and in how meaningful change becomes experientially recognizable.

Bio: Andrew Fitz-Gibbon is a SUNY Distinguished Service Professor and Professor of Philosophy at the State University of New York at Cortland. His academic interests are in the areas of ethics, nonviolence, love, philosophical practice, and somaesthetics. He is the author, co-author, or editor of twenty books, numerous book chapters and articles in peer reviewed journals such as *Social Philosophy Today*, *The Journal for Peace and Justice Studies*, *The Acorn*, *Peace Review*, and *Philosophical Practice*. He is an Associate Editor with Brill Academic Publishers where he edits the VIBS Social Philosophy Series. He is a Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts, a Fellow of the American Philosophical Practitioners Association, certified in client counseling, a certified senior taijiquan instructor, and abbot of an ecumenical religious order.



Wang Zhiyuan: *Nine Essential Practices for a Life Free from Disturbance: A Philosophical Perspective*

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Abstract: This paper systematically explores the behavioral principles and mental attitudes of individuals in interpersonal interactions and self-cultivation, focusing on nine core themes: “maintaining composure,” “seeing through appearances,” “concealing inadequacy,” “hiding one’s edge,” “disenchantment,” “embracing softness,” “focusing the mind,” “controlling speech,” and “self-discipline in solitude.” Drawing on the philosophical wisdom of both East and West—from Confucius, Laozi, and Zhuangzi to Plato, Aristotle, and the Stoics, and from Bacon, Descartes, and Kant to Nietzsche, Schopenhauer, and Russell—this paper extensively references the views of thinkers across ages and cultures. It analyzes common pitfalls such as “smiling at everyone,” “taking appearances as truth,” “speaking without understanding,” “revealing personal matters,” “blind worship,” “meeting force with force,” “distracted eyes,” “speaking without thought,” and “losing integrity when alone.” For each of the nine themes, three actionable practices are proposed, emphasizing contextual judgment, boundary awareness, verbal restraint, inner discipline, and cognitive clarity. The paper advocates a balanced wisdom that respects others while protecting oneself: smiling with reason, seeing with clarity, speaking with measure, acting with gentleness, and maintaining integrity in solitude—all ultimately aimed at the wholeness of character and the clarity of living.

Bio: Wang Zhiyuan (Ph.D., Nanjing University) is Professor of Philosophy, Philosophical Counselor, and a core member of the Nanjing School of Philosophical Consulting. As a visiting scholar at CCNY (2016-17), he has done some foundational researches on philosophical practice. His expertise includes Existential Therapy, Logotherapy, and Cognitive Therapy. He has helped more than 2,000 people with their life problems. He has written several books in Chinese on philosophical practice: *Diagnosis and Treatment of Life Problems*, *To Search for the Meaning of Life*, *Looking up at the Stars at Café*, *Philosophical Meditations*, *Philosophical Letters*, and *The Consolation of Life*.