# Fostering Philosophical Discourse Among Students

## Teaching Project „The Quartet“

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covid-19 pandemic

### Lack of Communication

For numerous reasons our current university culture tends to lack encouragement of philosophical discussions between students outside of regular class. This situation worsened during the Covid pandemic, which exacerbated a solitary university lifestyle. That student‘s voice (on the right) is echoed in the findings of Kiel Universities' own commission for examinig the consequences of the pandemic on university life (BAMU), which show that online teaching in particular produced social isolation and lack of motivation in students. Furthermore it hindered students who started their studies during the pandemic to develop a connection to their subject and university life as a whole in the first place. Hence the pandemic and subsequent online teaching created a gap between students and university life, which limits the space for real philosophical discussion on campus.[3]

*„Not having anyone to talk to about the stuff, or indeed about anything else that matters, is sometimes a sheer agony.I lose all sense of my reality as a thinker.“*
*– I. Murdoch*[1]

*„To be honest, the depth of the discussions has decreased, and I have also become more indifferent about whether I participate or not.“*
*– a student‘s voice during pandemic-related online teaching*[2]

autumn 2022

### Idea and Planning

To contend with this issue the teaching project "The Quartet" aims to revive philosophical discourse on campus. Inspired by "Metaphysical Animals" four lecturers of Kiel University joined to create said teaching project. After they obtained financial support from the universities fund for teaching innovation to finance the project they set out to plan their respective seminars and recruit a group of students who would oversee the organization of the conference at the end of the semester. The fund also supports eight students in attending the Durham Conference as guests. Finally funding from the philosophical seminar and again the fund for teaching innovation makes it possible for the student quartet to attend the Durham conference as speakers presenting this very poster. All these efforts culminate in the student conference in september where students will share and discuss their respective studies and make an example of how philosophical discourse can be reinvigourated on university campuses.

*We knew that if we were to keep going we would need to find a way to do philosophy in a more engaged, creative and open way. [...] We were looking for a story that could help us.*[4]

*But he [the human] is alienated from his own nature, from the natural world that is his home and from other humans. For us, now, loneliness and alienation have a distinctive twist.*[5]

*We make and share pictures, stories, theories, words, signs and artworks that help us to navigate our lives together. These creations are immensely powerful, because they at once show us what is and was the case, and at the same time suggest new ways of going on.*[6]

### Lecturers Team

april 2023

#### 4 Classes

starting with shared syllabus

**G.E.M. Anscombe**
Dr. Julia Müller
Focus on:
Anscombe‘s Moral Philosophy

**Philippa Foot**
PD Dr. David Lauer
Focus on:
Foot‘s Naturalism and the Aristotelian Tradition

**Mary Midgley**
Moritz Riemann
Focus on:
Animals, Feminism, Artifical Intelligence

**Iris Murdoch**
Heike Behnke
Focus on:
Philosophy and Literature

### Student Organization Team

#### Teamwork on the Tasks

but different leaders for each area of responsibility

**Kübra Avanas**
inviting keynote speakers and chairs
conference schedule
speaker/guest communication
coordination of student assistants

**Soian Grap**
room planning
presentation and event equipment
poster design f. Durham conference
evaluation

**Nina Riethmüller**
hotel reservation f. keynote speakers
conference dinner
catering at conference
hire photographer

**Markus Rohloff**
inviting keynote speakers and chairs
conference schedule
documentation/record
advertisement and promotion

### Wartime Quartet: conference at Durham

The conference provides diverse educational opportunities that serve as the foundation for exchanging new research findings and critical perspectives. As participants, Durham offers an ideal platform for building valuable networks and stimulating the indispensable discourse that fosters philosophical thinking. The conference becomes a source of motivation and inspiration for aspiring scholars who aim to shape their future careers.

june 2023

### The Quartet: Student Conference

12th-14th september 2023

The main programme of this student conference at Kiel, Germany, is made of papers and speeches by students, who participates in at least one „Quartet“-class during summer lectures and therewith earn their credits. The participants contribute their own scientific expertise in their respective fields and engage in stimulating debates. To round off the panels different philosophers of Kiel University doing the chairs and discussions. The conference is framed by four (international) keynote speakers sharing their expertise on each of the philosophers Anscombe, Foot, Midgley, and Murdoch.

G.E.M. Anscombe
Rachael Wisemann
Janine Borcherding
M. Midgley

P. Foot
Richard Runge
Eva-Maria Düringer
I. Murdoch

### Added Value for the Students

- drawing on the knowledge acquired during studies and putting it into practice
- gaining insights into practical research expanding and refining techniques of scientific work
- encouraging skills in well-founded research and structured development of a scientific lecture

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Christian-Albrechts-Universität zu Kiel
Philosophisches Seminar

**Fonds für Lehrinnovation**
**Christian-Albrechts-Universität zu Kiel**

1 Mac Cumhaill, Clare, and Wiseman, Rachael. *Metaphysical Animals. How Four Women Brought Philosophy Back To Life*. New York: Doubleday, 2022, p. 229.
2 BAMU - Kommission zur Beurteilung der Auswirkungen pandemiebedingter Maßnahmen auf die Universitätskultur. *Zwischenbericht der AG – Selbstverständnis der Studierenden*. Kiel University – Philosophische Fakultät, 2022, p. 2. https://www.phil.uni-kiel.de/de/fakultaet/bamu/zwischenberichte-der-arbeitsgruppen-im-april-2022/ag-selbstverstaendnis-der-studierenden -zwischenbericht-der-bamu-kommission/at_download/file .
3 BAMU - Kommission zur Beurteilung der Auswirkungen pandemiebedingter Maßnahmen auf die Universitätskultur. Abschlussbericht Arbeitsgruppe Studierende. Kiel University – Philosophische Fakultät, 2022. https://www.phil.uni-kiel.de/de/fakultaet/bamu/abschlussbericht-der-bamu-kommission/ag-selbstverstaendnis-der-studierenden -universitaet-als-ort/abschlussbericht-ag -studierende-und-universitaet-als-ort/at_download/file .
4 Mac Cumhaill and Wiseman, *Metaphysical Animals*, p. 10.
5 Mac Cumhaill and Wiseman, *Metaphysical Animals*, p. 11.
6 Mac Cumhaill and Wiseman, *Metaphysical Animals*, p. 12.

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Anscombe: https://mappingthequartet.org/assets/elizabeth-anscombe-7247193ba20cbfc981cb75919e0f679a3ec905e3c332e68e1229620dba2512bf.png | Foot: https://mappingthequartet.org/assets/philippa-foot-c32907189bbb45534b21a1b4707d59a220de80381280460b47f156f023015 23f.png | Midgley: https://mappingthequartet.org/assets/-mary-midgley-ceaeda90b3a5f4d39451e3d330a23d4569a491a77ea0e6d9ee393dbfcd 16102a.png | Murdoch: https://mappingthequartet.org/assets/iris-murdoch-1325908185544cb03665b2eada5af0dd3fd1196dabaee05fa55b11cb02fd4e59.png | Müller: https://www.ub.uni-kiel.de/de/kontakt/Mueller_Julia.jpg/@@images/f273eba8-bb9f-4e69-a248-097d137c70e7.jpeg | Drawing: Freepik.com | Avanas, Behnke, Borcherding, Grap, Lauer, Riemann, Riethmüller, Rohloff, Runge: private.