

Philosophy and the Climate Crisis Conference

June 10-12, 2021

Guidelines for Chairs



Thank you very much for agreeing to chair a session! We asked you to chair because we want you visibly present and are confident that you will set a good tone.

This conference is large; we expect most sessions will have 50-200 attendees. Because the conference's main goals include building a climate movement through attendee interaction, we are sticking to a Zoom meeting format, in which attendees can see each other, rather than a webinar in which only presenters and chairs are visible. We will also have several lounges open throughout the conference as breakout rooms that attendees can join, switch, or leave at any time. One of these is a Green Room for the next session's presenters. Please join the Green Room breakout room 15 minutes before your session. Someone from the tech or organizing team will be there in addition to your speaker(s), and will assist you with the logistical side of chairing unless you already have a co-chair. There will most likely be some procedural questions, and with a conference this size it will be very helpful to work them out before the session starts!

Please feel free to use your judgment in making the session go well, feel free to be bold in making sure that members of underrepresented groups in philosophy get ample airtime, and lean on tech support as needed. Below are some general suggestions, and some suggestions for each type of session.

General Suggestions:

Pre-session:

- Make sure you are registered for the conference and have the most recent version of Zoom!
- Reach out to the speaker(s) to introduce yourself as chair, check name pronunciations and any changes to institutional affiliation, or ask about any other relevant information your speaker(s) may want to share. *Let speakers know you will be in the Green Room breakout room 15 min. prior to the session to say hello, run a brief tech check (mics and cameras working, etc.) and go over the session format so the session can run smoothly.*
- Unless you already have a co-chair, you will have a designated assistant chair from the conference's tech support team. We will put you in touch ahead of time. Please be sure to communicate any needs or preferences ahead of time, including support during the Q&A. *Be sure to meet your presenters, assistant chair or co-chair in the Green Room breakout room 15 minutes before your session, so that as little procedural discussion happens during the session as possible.*
- Before your session starts, close any unnecessary web tabs or programs so your Zoom connection can run smoothly.

Introductions / Start of Session:

- At the start of the session, you can copy and paste relevant information in the Chat (for example: instructions for how to ask a question in the Chat if people don't want to/can't Raise Hand). The organizers or tech team might also drop reminders into the Chat, sometimes multiple times if there are latecomers or an active Chat thread.
- Start the session with welcoming the audience; introduce yourself.
- We will include a land acknowledgement in the conference opening and closing, but you are welcome to also say where you are and include a land acknowledgment. You can find some helpful guidance about land acknowledgements [here](#).
- We have several session formats and a mixed academic / non-academic audience and participation. Please explicitly introduce the session's topic, speaker(s), and format and procedures, and *do not assume that everyone present is a professional philosopher!*
- Introduce the speaker(s) (feel free to prepare some remarks about their work, accomplishments, or any other information you and the speaker(s) want shared).
- Try to be conscious about handing over the screen by saying something like "now I'm going to hand things over to [NAME]" or "let's start with you, [NAME]". (We want to avoid awkward Zoom silences or instances of people talking at the same time and want to keep the session running as fluidly as possible.)

During Session/Q&A:

- We will mainly use the “Raise Hand” function to manage the queue; attendees can go to Reactions at the bottom of the Zoom screen and click “Raise Hand.” If you click on “Participants” on your Zoom screen you can see the order of hands raised. Gallery View (at the top right of your screen) can also be helpful for seeing raised hands.
- You can call on people with raised hands to unmute themselves and ask their own question. People should mute themselves and lower their hands afterwards.
- For accessibility (for folks with connectivity issues, or who are not able/do not want to unmute camera or mic) we will utilize the Chat as well. It is important to distinguish questions that need to be read out loud from general discussion happening in the Chat. Ask audience members to submit their questions in the following format:
 - Type “QUESTION” in all caps, their name or anonymous (if they don’t want their name read), then text of the question.
 - Example: “QUESTION, Simona, How can we best engage our students on issues of climate justice in our pedagogical methods?”
- Your co-chair or assistant chair can help you track the Chat, track raised hands, and mute people who don’t mute themselves. *Please work out in advance how you plan to manage this* (for example, you can communicate over a shared google doc, private Chat, text messages, etc.).
- Be mindful of keeping time; e.g., offer 5 min. warnings before the session is over so you can wrap up the last part of the queue.
- Try to limit one audience member monopolizing Q&A (perhaps allow 1 follow up question max and move on to others, etc.).
- Sticking exactly to queue order often privileges people who are socialized to speak up quickly and take up space without thinking through a question. Be creative and use your judgment in distributing airtime equitably. Be bold; choose justice over protocol.
- If there are tech issues, focus on setting a good tone and holding the room. Connection over perfection!

Closing Remarks:

- Thank the speaker and audience for joining.
- Invite the audience and speakers to explore the conference schedule, the rest of the Philosophers for Sustainability website, and breakout room “lounges” during the break.
- End with an obvious goodbye so people know when the session is over.

Specific Suggestions for Different Session Types:

Symposium sessions

Symposia are Q&A only. We recommend 15-20 minutes of Q&A for each talk (or 25 if there are only two talks), following the order on the conference schedule, followed by open general discussion for the rest of the time. It is especially helpful to communicate this format clearly to speakers in advance and to attendees at the beginning of the session. Please make clear that there is neither the expectation nor the time for speakers to present their paper, though they can make a brief opening comment if they prefer. Within each Q&A, please invite one of the other speakers to ask the first question if they would like to. You may also want to have a question of your own prepared for each speaker and/or some general comments on the symposium's themes, though there may not be time to comment much if discussion is lively, as we hope it will be.

Panel sessions

Panel chairs are also panel organizers. You have broad discretion in running the session as you have envisioned it. Feel free to be visible yourselves, make substantive comments, and set up whatever session format you think will work well for the session!

Because this session format is the least pre-determined, it will be especially helpful to communicate your planned format and needs to the assistant chair / tech volunteer we will put you in touch with, so that their role is clear and you can focus on moderating the session.

Keynote sessions

These sessions will probably be the largest, and good communication with your co-chair / assistant chair will be important during the session.

Decide in advance with speakers how they would like to be reminded about time, whether they want frequent time updates via direct message / private chat, etc.

One of the organizers (Simona and/or Eugene) will also meet you in the Green Room breakout room 15 min. before the session and be available to work out any issues. S/he may briefly convene the session and make a few announcements before introducing you and handing the session over to you.