

**SEXUAL HARASSMENT**  
*in academia and the workplace*

- FREE ALL-DAY CONFERENCE - 9am to 5pm -

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*CUPE 3906 Political Action Committee*

Sexual  
Harassment in  
Academia and  
the Workplace



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## Acknowledgements

The CUPE 3906 Political Action Committee would like to thank the following groups for their generous support:

- CUPE 3906
- Women and Gender Equity Network
- Gender Studies and Feminist Research
- McMaster Philosophy Department
- President's Advisory Committee on Building and Inclusive Community, Women and Gender Based Violence Working Group

## Schedule

9:00 – 9:30: Registration and Introductions  
*Refreshments will be provided\**

9:30 – 10:00: “Sexual Harassment in the Law: A Critique of Court Decisions”  
Regina Taptich, McMaster University

10:00 – 10:30: “Embodied Practices of Consent”  
Niomi Cherney, University of Toronto

10:30 – 11:00: “The Violent Injustice of Sexual Harassment in the Workplace”  
Parisa Samet, Ryerson University

11:00 – 11:30: “Academic Sexual Harassment: A Symptom of Patriarchal Norms”  
Beverly Anger and Natalie Zip, McMaster University

11:30 - 12:00: Panel: Sexual Harassment and the Experiences of Lesbian, Bi and Gender Nonconforming Women  
Julia Emepy, McMaster University, Lynn , University of Toronto and Jyssika Russell, McMaster University

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## Schedule

12:00 – 1:00: Lunch

*Provided free of charge by the conference organizers\**

1:00 – 2:00: “The Intimacy of Ideas: Why is Sexual Harassment and Assault so Common in Philosophy?”

Sarah Kizuk, York University

2:00 – 2:30: “At the End of this Seminar, Your Entrails Will Be On the Floor: On Taking and Giving (Sexual) Abuse in Philosophy”

Dr. Maria Kulp, Notre Dame of Maryland

2:30 – 3:30: “Preventing Sexual Harassment in the Workplace and Academia”

Rita Samson, Public Education and Outreach Officer,  
Ontario Human Rights Commission

3:30 – 4:00: Break

*Refreshments will be provided*

4:00 – 5:00: Keynote: “Allies Behaving Badly”

Dr. Rachel McKinnon, Charleston College

## Abstracts

### **Keynote: Allies Behaving Badly**

Dr. Rachel McKinnon, Charleston College

In a recent blog post, Mia McKenzie convincingly argues for the end of the term and concept of "allies." Like her, I'm done with allies. In this talk, I raise some ways in which ally culture has resulted in a number of very serious problems for those that "allies" seek to support. Drawing on real-life examples, I connect ally culture to a lack of accountability and a worrying prevalence of gaslighting, which is a kind of epistemic injustice. In its place, I suggest that we focus on people being good active bystanders, "currently operating in solidarity with" those they seek to support, as McKenzie puts it.

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### Abstracts

#### Preventing Sexual Harassment in the Workplace and Academia

Rita Samson, Public Education and Outreach Officer, Ontario Human Rights Commission

The presentation will provide an overview of the Ontario Human Rights Commission's *Policy on preventing sexual and gender-based harassment* focusing specifically on harassment in the workplace and post-secondary academic settings. It will cover: forms of sexual harassment, examples of sexual harassment in employment and academic settings, steps that individuals can take when they experience sexual harassment, steps that employers and educators can take to prevent and respond to sexual harassment

### Abstracts

#### Sexual Harassment in the Law: A Critique of Court Decisions

Regina Taptich, McMaster University

The legal system's approach towards gender inequality plays an integral role in rectifying the wrongs being committed. One approach the judiciary has taken, as exemplified in *Ellison v. Brady*, is to invoke a "reasonable women's standard": a common-law principle holding that, when deciding on sexual harassment cases, the court needs to appeal to how a *reasonable woman* would approach the very same situation. In my presentation, I criticize this approach as it obscures the real problems with sexual harassment and simultaneously blames victims while absolving perpetrators of their guilt.

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## Abstracts

### **Embodied Practices of Consent**

Niomi Cherney, University of Toronto

Consent is always a negotiated territory. 'Consent' as a topic, in the last five years, has made its way onto high school sexual health curricula, and into the public sphere, including the recently created (and excellent resource)

<http://www.consented.ca/>. Consent often operates at the level of pre-verbal, pre-linguistic, embodied life. In this presentation, I will lead a number of exercises drawn from my training in contemporary dance and contact improvisation that are designed to attune participants to ways of articulating consent through the body. I suggest that finding ways of listening to non-verbal forms of consent is a crucial part of the necessary and ongoing dialogue around consent.

Participants are asked to wear comfortable clothing if possible, and will be asked to take part in some low-key, non-strenuous movement exercises.

## Abstracts

### **At the End of this Seminar, Your Entrails Will Be On the Floor: On Taking and Giving (Sexual) Abuse in Philosophy**

Dr. Maria Kulp, Notre Dame of Maryland

Maria J. Kulp, Ph.D., Assistant Professor of Philosophy, Notre Dame of Maryland University. My primary area of research is in the philosophies of suicide and suicide survivors. Additionally, I have a keen interest in exploring the roles of philosophical pedagogy in transformative learning, specifically as relates to the philosophical training of women and minorities.

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### **Abstracts**

#### **The Intimacy of Ideas: Why is Sexual Harassment and Assault so Common in Philosophy?**

Sarah Kizuk, York University

In this workshop-style presentation I intend to unpack three things that I take to be constitutive of the culture of sexual harassment and assault in philosophy. The first is the intimacy of ideas, or the intimacy of doing philosophy. The second unchallenged nature of assault in philosophy. Finally, I want to connect both with the notion of gate-keeping in philosophy. There is, I suspect, a great challenge posed to changing cultures of abuse and harassment when folks feel that the borders of their discipline are being threatened. I argue that it may be easy to romanticize the disciplines intimacy of ideas and avoid confronting assault, abusers, and chronic harassers because of the fear of change in the discipline.

### **Abstracts**

#### **The Violent Injustice of Sexual Harassment in the Workplace**

Parisa Samet, Ryerson University

The normalization of sexual harassment between employers and employees results from oppressive gendered norms, which include characteristics and roles imposed upon men and women. Sexual harassment in the workplace is in fact an injustice, which ought to be viewed as a serious form of violence against women. I criticize the idea that sexual harassment is a normative form of engagement between employers and employees in the workplace; instead I propose sexual harassment ought to be treated as a form of violence against women. I examine the theoretical nature of sexual harassment, along with psychological and legal implications, to suggest potential changes to eradicate this injustice.

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## Abstracts

### **Academic Sexual Harassment: A Symptom of Patriarchal Norms**

Beverly Anger and Natalie Zip, McMaster  
University

This paper seeks to investigate the potential negative effects of a liberal feminist approach to the problem of sexual harassment in the context of academic institutions, and advocates for an approach to sexual harassment policy that uses critical dialogue as a means of addressing patriarchal ideology. We investigate problems that arise from a liberal feminist approach characterized by the modification of bylaws, policies, and procedures in an institution. We argue that an appropriate approach to the problem of sexual harassment in academia must distance itself from the rigid formality of the public sphere to a method more in line with the practices of feminist ethics.

## Abstracts

### **Panel: Sexual Harassment and the Experiences of Lesbian, Bi and Gender Nonconforming Women**

Julia Empey, McMaster University, Lynn, University of  
Toronto, Jyssica Russell, McMaster University

This panel questions how we talk critically about sexual violence from the perspective of lesbian and bisexual women. What interventions can take place by bringing lesbian and bi women into the current conversation? We desire to think beyond simply how one's sexuality and sexual identity affects how sexual harassment and violence is experienced. We hope to interrogate how homophobic misogyny and heterosexism can make lesbian and bisexual women "rapable" (Marcus, 386), while problematizing the role women can take up within this violence as perpetrators.