

Call for Papers
Dialogue as Community Building and as Philosophical Method

ECREA Philosophy of Communication Section, 2025 Workshop

Institute for Media and Communication Studies

Freie Universität Berlin

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Please send your abstract by Friday, 27 June to the Management Team of the ECREA Philosophy of Communication section via EasyChair at <https://easychair.org/cfp/ECREAPhilComm2025>

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In an age acutely defined by digital fragmentation, the relentless logic of the attention economy, and increasingly polarized public spheres, dialogue emerges not merely as endangered but as an existential, epistemic, and civic necessity. This workshop seeks to radically revisit and reclaim the notion of dialogue, not only as a communicative ideal but also as a foundational philosophical practice, an ethics of relationality, a crucial means of co-constructing shared worlds, and an essential practice for cultivating positive freedom. We approach this exploration keenly aware that dialogue never occurs in a vacuum, but always within, and often constrained by, pre-existing discourses that articulate and enact power, shaping what is considered sayable, knowable, and legitimate.

The contemporary dominance of monological forms of expression, often performative, algorithmically amplified, and emotionally charged, threatens to erode the very conditions for authentic dialogical encounter. This erosion is compounded by inherent human tendencies: our reasoning is frequently driven by partisan loyalties and identity-protective cognitions, creating anthropological and psychological impediments that render the cultivation of genuine dialogue—and by extension, the exercise of positive freedom—both more challenging and more urgent. This necessitates a critical engagement not only with our own biases but also with the power structures embedded in our communicative ecosystems.

We propose to explore dialogue as a liminal space where understanding is not a pre-existing entity to be unilaterally imposed, but rather emerges processually and intersubjectively. This emergence is contingent upon profound openness, radical listening, and mutual recognition of the Other in their irreducible particularity – a feat requiring conscious effort against our more primal, self-justifying inclinations, critical vigilance towards how discourse itself can marginalize or silence, and an active exercise of our capacity to co-determine our shared realities.

Can dialogue, in its Socratic spirit of maieutic inquiry, still function as a robust method of philosophical investigation and critical thinking in a world increasingly structured by immediacy, curated visibility, and self-affirming echo chambers, especially when confronted with our innate

biases and the subtle yet pervasive workings of discursive power? What does it truly mean to think with others, engaging in a shared pursuit of understanding that consciously strives to transcend motivated reasoning and actively challenges hegemonic narratives? How can dialogue serve not only as a method of inquiry but as a practice that cultivates positive freedom: the capacity to act, to participate meaningfully, and to co-shape our institutions and collective life, even against the grain of dominant discourses? How might embodied dialogical practices resist the pervasive atomization, the instrumentalization of communication, and the deficit of presence that characterize contemporary societies, while simultaneously fostering the self-awareness needed to navigate our own cognitive limitations and our complicity in, or resistance to, prevailing power dynamics? How can dialogue cultivate the *phronesis* (practical wisdom) needed to navigate complex ethical and political landscapes with humility, intellectual honesty, active agency, and a critically discerning eye for power? How can, in turn, cultural practices, such as art, open dialogues in an increasingly disaffected world?

This event is an invitation to collectively reflect, converse, and experiment with the multifaceted possibilities of dialogue: as a rigorous philosophical method, as an ethical praxis rooted in care and responsibility, and as a vital force for community-building, democratic renewal, and the empowerment of individuals to exercise their positive freedom by critically engaging with and seeking to reshape the discourses that define our world, fully acknowledging the profound challenges this entails.

We welcome contributions that engage with (but are not limited to):

- Ontological and Epistemological Foundations of Dialogue.
- The Epistemic Functions of Dialogue
- Psychological and Cognitive Barriers to Dialogue
- Dialogue and Positive Freedom.
- Dialogue and Recognition.
- Dialogue, Debate, Discussion, Conversation
- The Phenomenology of Listening and Encounter.
- Dialogue and Education.
- Dialogue in Digital Spheres.
- Dialogical Resistance and Praxis.
- Dialogue, Power, and the Public Sphere.
- Dialogue and Democracy
- Dialogue as Method
- Dialogue and the Arts
- Dialogue and Monologue
- Ethics of Dialogue
- Approaches to Dialogue in the History of Philosophy and Communication Theory