

MAGGIE FIFE, PhD

Assistant Professor of Philosophy | University of North Carolina, Wilmington
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EMPLOYMENT

Assistant Professor of Philosophy 2025-present
University of North Carolina, Wilmington

EDUCATION

City University of New York Graduate Center, New York, NY 2017-2025
PhD in Philosophy
Areas of specialization: Ethics, Social Epistemology
Areas of competence: Feminist Philosophy, Political Philosophy, Metaethics
Dissertation: "Hope, Imagination, and Prison Abolition," under Dr. Miranda Fricker

Northern Illinois University, DeKalb, IL 2015-2017
M.A. with Honors; Philosophy
Comprehensive Examination Subject: Ethics and Political Philosophy

The Ohio State University, Columbus, OH 2008-2011
B.A. with Honors; Philosophy

RESEARCH

Publications:

"The Generative Power of Collective Hope"
Feminist Philosophy Quarterly. Vol 10, Issue 4 (2024).

Works in progress:

"Moral Imagination, Social Possibility, and Prison Abolition" (completed draft)
"Prison Abolition as Utopianism" (completed draft)

CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

"Collective Hope, Activist Movements, and Moral Progress"
Moral Progress Conference, Jean Beer Blumenfeld Center for Ethics,
Georgia State University 2023

"Moral Imagination, Social Possibility, and Prison Abolition"
Metaethics in Society Conference, University of Nottingham 2022

"Hope and Alternative Justice Models"
NASSP 38th International Social Philosophy Conference 2021

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“Imagining Possibilities: Hope’s Role in Implementing Alternative Justice Models” Struggle and Liberation Today Conference, University of Texas at El Paso	2021
“Imagining Possibilities: Hope’s Role in Implementing Alternative Justice Models” Great Lakes Philosophy Conference, Sienna Heights University	2021
“The Nature of Political Responsibility” NASSP 37 th International Social Philosophy Conference [Conference postponed due to the pandemic]	2020
“Culpability and Moral Ignorance: When We Should Have Known Better” NIU Philosophy Department Colloquium	2017

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Sole instructor:

University of North Carolina, Wilmington 2025-present

Assistant Professor

PAR 101: The Big Questions: Introduction to Philosophy (Fall 2025)

Baruch College, New York, NY

Adjunct Instructor

2022-present

Phil 4900: Advanced Capstone: Hope and Imagination in
Moral Revolutions (Spring 2025)

Phil 1500: Honors: Major Issues in Philosophy (Fall 2024)

Phil 1700: Global Ethics (Fall 2024)

Phil 1700: Global Ethics Learning Community (Fall 2023)

Phil 4900: Advanced Capstone: Social Progress and
Moral Revolutions (Fall 2022)

Phil 1700: Global Ethics (Fall 2022)

Brooklyn College, Brooklyn, NY

Graduate Teaching Fellow

2018-2021

Phil 2101: Introduction to Problems in Philosophy (Spring 2021)

Phil 2101: Introduction to Problems in Philosophy (Fall 2020)

Phil 3314: Business Ethics (Spring 2020)

Phil 3314: Business Ethics (Fall 2019)

Phil 3314: Business Ethics (Spring 2019)

Phil 3314: Business Ethics (Fall 2018)

Teaching Assistant:

New York University

Philosophy Teaching Assistant and Recitation Instructor

Fall 2019

Phil-UA 76: Epistemology (Fall 2019)

Northern Illinois University, DeKalb, IL

Philosophy Department

2016-2017

Philosophy Teaching Assistant

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Phil 335: Environmental Ethics
Phil 355: Feminism and Philosophy
Phil 101: Introduction to Philosophy
Philosophy Writing Tutor
Phil 231: Contemporary Moral Issues

University Writing Center
Writing Coach

2016

RECOGNITION, AWARDS, FELLOWSHIPS

Committee on Globalization and Social Change Interdisciplinary Fellowship	2023-2024
CUNY GC Dissertation Year Fellowship	2023-2024
Writing Across the Curriculum At-Large Fellowship, Hostos Community College	2023-2024
Gail Smith Fellow, GSCOPE Pedagogy Workshop	2023
Writing Across the Curriculum At-Large Fellowship, Hosots Community College	2022-2023
Doctoral Student Research Grant	2021-2022
Writing Across the Curriculum Fellowship, Hostos Community College	2021-2022
Graduate Center Fellowship, CUNY	2017-2021
JoAnn Rafelson Memorial Essay Contest, NIU Philosophy Department	2017
Graduate Assistantship, TA position, NIU	2016-2017
Graduate Assistantship, University Writing Center, NIU	2016

PROFESSIONAL TEACHING DEVELOPMENT

Hostos Community College WAC Development Day Presentation titled "Grading Across the Curriculum: A WAC and Women's and Gender Studies Collaboration"	2024
CUNY-Wide WAC Professional Development Workshop Presentation titled "Grading Across the Curriculum: A WAC and Women's and Gender Studies Collaboration"	2023
GSCOPE 2023: Higher Ed, Democracy, and Controversy Pedagogy Workshop	2023
CUNY-Wide WAC Professional Development Workshop Presentation titled "Anti-Racist Pedagogy: An Overview"	2022
CUNY-Wide WAC Professional Development Workshop	2021
Online Teaching Essentials course, CUNY School for Professional Development	2020
Teach@CUNY Summer Institute	2018

SERVICE

Referee, GSCOPE 2023 Conference: Higher Ed, Democracy, and Controversy	2023
CUNY GC Philosophy Department Curriculum Committee	2021-2023

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Co-Organizer, CUNY MAP's "Setting Professional Boundaries" Workshop	
2021	
Organizing member, CUNY MAP	2017-2021
Founding member of the CUNY GC Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Committee	2020
CUNY GC Philosophy Department Placement Committee	2019-2020
Co-Organizer, CUNY MAP's "WTF Do I Do Now?" workshop	2019
Co-Organizer, 22 nd Annual CUNY Graduate Philosophy Conference on "Intersubjectivity and Interpretation"	2019
Participant in upcoming Pedagogy Podcast by Jules Salomone	2019
Referee, NYC Area MAP Spring Workshop Series	2019
Teaching Mentor, Brooklyn College	2019-2021
Co-Organizer, NYC Area MAP "Oppression and Resistance" Conference	2018
Assisted in organizing Charles Mills and Linda Martín Alcoff's Racial Inequality Conference at CUNY	2018
Founding member of the NIU Philosophy Department Climate Committee	2016-2017
NIU College of Liberal Arts and Sciences Graduate Student Advisory Committee	2016-2017

DISSERTATION ABSTRACT

In response to the moral crisis of mass incarceration in the United States, prison abolitionists call for us to expand our imaginations and build a world without prisons. The aim of this project is to explore the role of moral imagination and hope in a utopian political project: the movement for prison abolition. From this contemporary example, I show that what we learn from activist movements can provide a basis for rich work in moral and political theory. While responding to the particular structural injustices related to mass incarceration is certainly not a theoretical task, rethinking many widely held beliefs regarding justice, retribution, moral repair, and social transformation is deeply philosophical. What do abolitionists mean when they ask us to engage our moral imaginations? What are the roles of imagination and hope in political activism, particularly within such a radical utopian movement? Does hope distract and mislead us, or is hope necessary to motivate political action?

Some moral and political philosophers have explored the nature of hope as well as the problems with political hope. A few have addressed moral imagination and mainly consider imagination as it relates to empathy. However, none of these works have addressed the central question of the role of hope and imagination within activist movements or the connection between the two concepts. As a result, the philosophical scholarship appears to consider imagination and hope solitary activities on the periphery of moral and political theory, despite their central role in activist circles. I address this gap by using the theoretical tools of moral and political philosophy to clarify the nature and importance of moral imagination and hope so we may understand how best to work towards shared political goals through activism.

My project makes the following scholarly contributions. First, I provide a working definition of moral imagination, a concept undertheorized in analytic philosophy, characterized by six distinct modes. I illustrate each mode in theory and in the movement for prison abolition, focusing on imagining what is socially possible. I argue that engaging one's imagination can shape the conditions of possibility, thus partially determining what can happen. Second, through exploring the nature of hope (both individual and collective) and responding to serious criticism of political hope and pessimism about moral progress, I argue that some

form of hope is necessary for motivating political activism. However, this motivational hope can arise at the collective level as opposed to the individual level. I introduce and analyze an original concept I call “holding hope,” an interpersonal form of hope of particular interest to the prison abolition movement. Next, I clarify the aims and commitments of prison abolitionists, the distinction between reform and abolition, and defend the abolitionist position against a strong reformist objection. I conclude by identifying the prison abolition movement as a paradigmatic example of utopianism in political thought, a modality needed to address structural injustice built on naturalized concepts.