

CALL FOR PROPOSALS
2024 Annual Meeting – Ohio Valley Philosophy of Education Society
September 19-21, 2024, Nashville, Indiana

The President and Program Committee of the Ohio Valley Philosophy of Education Society (OVPEs) invite proposals that broadly interpret the theme—**authenticity**—for its annual meeting to be held at the Seasons Lodge in Nashville, Indiana, Thursday through Saturday, September 19-21, 2024. Conference leadership welcomes proposals that make connections between philosophy and education, both related and unrelated to the conference theme. OVPEs remains a site for experimental thinking with educational and philosophical ideas in a collegial and friendly environment.

Authenticity has taken on a variety of connotations in philosophy and society broadly: to be authentic can mean to be sincere or honest; it can also mean to be one's true self or to represent oneself faithfully. Authenticity might also refer to originality or true authorship in art or literature. Merriam-Webster named "authenticity" its 2023 word of the year; editor at large Peter Sokolowski saw "a kind of crisis of authenticity" in 2023 and claims that "when we question authenticity, we value it even more."¹ In the era of post-truth, deep fakes, and AI production and reproduction, what does it mean to be authentic? Can authenticity be taught? Should it be? What would it mean for education to be authentic?

Although authenticity may have taken on renewed relevance in this age of AI and digital media, the search for authenticity is an old problem. Philosophers have been on the lookout for inauthenticity since the ancient world. Plato theorized that the difference between a Sophist and a philosopher is that the former presents false or pretend knowledge, and the latter is the authentic seeker of wisdom and truth. Plato was also skeptical of what he referred to as the "imitative arts," likening these to *pseudos* or fakes. More than just producing copies of the forms, these "imitations are *ruinous* to the understanding" of their audience.² Imitation and inauthenticity obscure the truth, which, for Plato, is the ultimate end of all strivings. Philosophers have continued throughout history to describe and explain authenticity. Kierkegaard described authenticity as "to become what one is;"³ Heidegger described it as "ownedness" or being "one's own"⁴ Leo Tolstoy and Walter Benjamin were critical of the inauthenticity in art brought about by mechanization in the period of the industrial revolution.⁵ The cultural revolution of the 1960s brought about an "Age of Authenticity" in which expressive individualism ruled the day.

Philosophers of education have likewise taken up authenticity and how it is related to, lauded in, and assumed by education. In a 2008 volume of *Studies in Philosophy and Education*, Laurance Splitter critiques the notion of "educational authenticity:" that is, that schoolwork can reasonably mimic "real

¹ Leanne Italie, "2023's word of the year is the real deal," *PSB News Hour*, Nov 27, 2023,

[https://www.pbs.org/newshour/arts/2023s-word-of-the-year-is-the-real-deal#:~:text=NEW%20YORK%20\(AP\)%20%E2%80%94%20In,for%202023%20is%20%E2%80%9Cauthentic.%E2%80%9D](https://www.pbs.org/newshour/arts/2023s-word-of-the-year-is-the-real-deal#:~:text=NEW%20YORK%20(AP)%20%E2%80%94%20In,for%202023%20is%20%E2%80%9Cauthentic.%E2%80%9D).

² Plato, *Sophist*, trans. Benjamin Jowett (Hackett, 1998), 15.

³ Soren Kierkegaard, *Concluding Unscientific Postscript to "Philosophical Fragments"*, Vol. 1, (1846; rpt: Princeton University Press, 1992).

⁴ Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. J. Macquarrie & E. Robinson (1927; rpt: New York: Harper & Row, 1962).

⁵ Leo Tolstoy, *What is Art?*, trans. Louise and Aylmer Maude (London, UK: Oxford University Press, 1930); Walter Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," in *Illuminations*, ed. Hannah Arendt, trans. Harry Zahn (1935; rpt: New York: Schocken Books, 1969).

work” done in the “real world.”⁶Merlin Thompson has discussed the relationship between authenticity and narcissism in the role of the teacher.⁷ Last year’s OVPES Phil Smith lecturer, Lauren Bialystok, has examined authenticity in teaching as an ethical and metaphysical tension, positing that “while being true to oneself may render it more likely that a teacher does her job well, there is also reason to believe that excellent teachers can be inauthentic and that inept or even very dangerous teachers can be authentic.”⁸ More broadly, Bialystok writes “the pursuit of authenticity in education rests on various philosophical assumptions about the nature of truth, reality, ethics, and, ultimately, the aims of education.”⁹

While not an exhaustive list, and while proposals certainly need not take up these questions—or address the theme at all—we offer the following questions as ways to begin to think about how the concept of authenticity might intersect philosophies of education:

- As scholars and educators, how can we expand and refine our capacities for authenticity, and aid students in doing the same? Is this a laudable aim?
- Are honesty and authenticity the same or different? Can there be truth or can one be truthful without authenticity?
- As AI becomes more sophisticated every day, is authenticity even possible? How has AI mimesis and reproducibility changed the meaning of authenticity? And, relatedly, how do technologies like ChatGPT and NFTs promote or inhibit authenticity in students’ creative endeavors?
- In a democracy, can we reasonably expect our leaders to be authentic? What would this look like? What are the implications for democratic education?
- What work is being done in other disciplines and scholarly areas to which philosophers of education might look to better understand authenticity? For example, philosophies of art, aesthetics, psychology, communications studies, creative writing, etc.
- What is the relationship between authenticity and identity? How does authenticity shape selfhood and subjectivity?

PHIL SMITH LECTURE

We are pleased to announce that Michael Lynch, [award-winning author](#) and [Distinguished Professor of Philosophy](#) at the University of Connecticut, will deliver the Phil Smith Lecture at our 2024 meeting. Dr. Lynch’s work concerns [truth](#), democracy, and the ethics of technology. We look forward to his generative lecture and the conversations on authenticity it is likely to inspire.

AUTHOR SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

PRESENTATION FORMAT, DEADLINE, AND NOTIFICATION. Proposals for individual papers, alternative sessions, and panels or symposia involving multiple speakers on a single topic are welcomed. All proposals will be peer-reviewed by at least two members of the program committee. The deadline for submissions is **May 15, 2024**, and authors will be notified of the decision by July 15, 2024.

⁶ Laurance Splitter, “Authenticity and Constructivism in Education,” *Studies in Philosophy and Education* 28 (2009): 135-151.

⁷ Merlin Thompson, “Authenticity in Education: From Narcissism and Freedom to the Messy Interplay of Self-Exploration and Acceptable Tension,” *Studies in Philosophy and Education* 34, no. 6 (2015): 603-618.

⁸ Lauren Bialystok, “Should Teachers Be Authentic?” *Ethics and Education* 10, no. 3 (2016): 313-326.

⁹ Lauren Bialystok, “Authenticity in Education,” *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Education* (2017). <https://doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/9780190264093.013.168>.

CONFERENCE PROPOSAL GUIDELINES. Proposals should be submitted to Dr. Annie Schultz, Program Chair, at ohiovalleypes@gmail.com on or before **May 15, 2024**. The subject line of the email should read “OVPES 2024 Proposal,” and proposals should be attached as Word documents (.doc or .docx format; no PDF’s please). Author identifying information should be removed from all proposals prior to submission. In addition:

PART 1: In the body of your email message, please include:

1. Proposal title
2. Presentation format (e.g., paper session, panel, or alternate session)
3. Your name, title, and institutional affiliation (as you prefer to be listed/spelled on the program; this should be the main contact person)
4. Your email
5. The name(s) of co-presenter(s), if applicable (as preferred to be listed/spelled on the program)
6. An abstract of up to 150 words

PART 2: Please attach a Word document that includes the following information:

1. The proposal title and presentation format
2. A summary of up to 500 words, describing how you will address your topic and/or its line of argument, explain its significance, and indicate several major references you will draw upon to make your argument and to place it into scholarly conversation. Please make the connection to philosophy of education clear, and, if applicable, explain how your proposal relates to the conference theme.
3. Remove all author-identifying markers, including references to your prior work.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION. You will receive an email acknowledging receipt of your submission within 48 hours. If you do not, please email the Program Chair at ohiovalleypes@gmail.com. Please note that OVPES will not provide technology or technological assistance at the 2024 conference. Authors who wish to use technology must bring and operate their own. Graduate students whose individual paper session proposals are accepted for presentation and who wish to be considered for the OVPES 2024 Graduate Student Paper Award will be asked to submit their full papers (see full-length conference paper guidelines below).

PSIE JOURNAL CONSIDERATION: Full-length papers presented at the conference should be no longer than 4500 words, including footnotes, following the Chicago Manual of Style. Papers presented at the conference and meeting all the editorial requirements will be considered for publication in *Philosophical Studies in Education*, the refereed journal of OVPES, following a separate, peer review process. A separate call for submissions will follow the conference (see manuscript requirements at ovpes.org/journal).

***This call for proposals was NOT generated by AI.