

A Philosophical Diagnosis and Proposed Methods for Overcoming Challenges to Interfaith Dialogue

Zach Bishop '24 & Kaija Mortensen, Philosophy

Mutual understanding is paramount to navigating the polarization and injustice we face on a daily basis.



Mutual understanding has been especially tested in the case of religious faiths/beliefs. Philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein claims that people of differing faiths are playing different “language games”, and William James argues for a pluralistic society characterized by mutual respect and freedom to believe. However, neither philosopher offers concrete methods for fostering productive dialogue between these different language games towards a genuinely pluralistic society. In this research project, we will examine how contemporary philosophers have responded to and made use of the ideas of Wittgenstein and James in discussions of interfaith dialogue. Drawing on both his own philosophical analysis as well as the work of contemporary practitioners

of interfaith dialogue, Zach will create a toolbox of strategies that might aid people of various religious beliefs and nonbeliefs in creating a common language we can all speak and understand.