

What is community philosophy and the democratisation of philosophy?

From the Irish Times (Feb, 2018), link at the end for those who wish to read a bit more:

‘Once seen as the preserve of old men with beards. Yet [today...] debate rages over who is qualified to do philosophy, and where the subject starts and ends.

Prof Aislinn O’Donnell of Maynooth University believes philosophy – the real thing, and not just regurgitating the thoughts of others – can be done far beyond the walls of third-level institutions. An advocate of community philosophy, she practises [...] facilitating critical thinking in schools, prisons and other settings.

Philosophy differs from public debate, one doesn’t argue “for one’s opinion”. Rather one follows the truth wherever it may lead. Thus, the ‘Unthinkable’ idea: “Anyone can be a philosopher.”

Link: <https://www.irishtimes.com/culture/why-we-need-community-philosophy-1.3390995>

From the Community Philosophy website, (link at the end):

Concepts are questioned. Power shifts, minds change and preconceptions are discarded. Relationships strengthen as people come to understand one another. This is because (unlike other meetings and discussions) **Community Philosophy steadfastly focuses on process – not outcomes**. That process is caring, collaborative, critical and creative. Together, people work out what really matters, what’s possible, and what they can do. It’s a rich, deeply rewarding experience.

Link: <https://communityphilosophy.co.uk/what-is-community-philosophy/>

Critics may protest it is dubious philosophy; naive and failing to be cautious with regards biases and fallacies. Also that it’s especially susceptible to motivated reasoning, lacking an inbuilt balance curated sources provide. How does it really compare to it’s academic cousin? ..

	<u>Academic Philosophy</u>	<u>Community Philosophy</u>
Certification	part of a ‘career’ path	informal, amateur
Pace	purposeful	natural
Reasoning	vicariously via ‘greats’	direct engagement
Facts	canon of western thought	everyday observation
Syllabus	agreed by experts	mental ‘journey’ waypoints
Required	qualified teacher	interest / enthusiasm ...

In our experience is the above sketch fair? Is it inevitable?

An acquaintance wanting to live a more reflective life faces a dilemma. A year long series of philosophy night school courses are scheduled for the same evening as a nascent community philosophy group’s meetings. How would you advise them?