

UnMute

Q and A with Myisha Cherry



Tell us about your podcast.

UnMute is a monthly philosophy and public affairs podcast. It is hosted and produced by me – I’m a philosopher who specialises in moral psychology and political philosophy. For the last two years, the podcast has been produced out of Boston, where I am currently serving as a fellow at Harvard University.

It’s called UnMute because I want to provide a platform to people and topics that have not been given much attention in mainstream philosophy. UnMute is focused on providing informal and accessible conversations about social, political, and ethical issues from a fresh, fun, and philosophical perspective. I talk with a diverse group of

philosophers (grad students as well as junior and senior scholars) as they give their take on controversial issues, pop culture, and the political and ethical issues of our day.

UnMute can be accessed at unmutepodcast.co, iTunes, and other podcast outlets. A book based on the podcast – *Unmuted: Conversations on Prejudice, Oppression and Social Justice* – is currently under contract with Oxford University Press.

Why did you start doing a podcast?

The podcast was created for several reasons. Firstly, I wanted to give my former students something that would keep them interested in philosophy after our formal philosophy course was over. Secondly, I wanted to bring attention to people and work that philosophers and the general public may not have been aware of.

In philosophy, we have a tendency to stick to our subdisciplines and areas of interest – unaware what others are working on. And the general public is often unaware of the issues, questions, and topics that philosophers are addressing within the ivory tower. The podcast’s job is to break down those walls, to make philosophy not only accessible but relevant to issues and concerns that people are currently wrestling with in public life.

It was also important in creating the podcast to make sure that diverse voices

are heard. So the podcast's goal is to challenge the stereotype that only certain bodies (white cis male) can be philosophers and have something to contribute to knowledge production. To that end, there is a diversity of guests from different social backgrounds and identities.

What are the best three episodes you've aired so far, in your opinion?

I want to stay clear of using the word "best" to describe these episodes. It implies that the other podcasts are lacking in some measurable value. I would just say that these episodes are the most viewed, but they also show a range of issues that are usually discussed each season. Whatever that says about "best", I will let others decide.

Episode 16. I chat with philosopher Nancy Bauer about pornography, the sexiness of taboos, feminism and porn, and hookup culture. (<http://bit.ly/2By1JEF>)

Episode 6. I chat with philosopher Rachel McKinnon about gaslighting, ally culture and its problems, how we can become active bystanders, and why blogs are as informative as books. (<http://bit.ly/2ixnsIa>)

Episode 23. I chat with philosopher Tommie Shelby about dark ghettos, integration, single black mothers, the moral permissibility of crime, and what we can learn about resistance from hip-hop. (<http://bit.ly/2j7kZBu>)

Can you recommend one other philosophical podcast and tell us about one good episode?

There are a lot of good philosophy podcasts out there. I hope I don't get into any trouble

with my colleagues for choosing just one. However, one stands out to me for giving serious attention to one topic: love.

It's called "Labels of Love" and it's hosted by Carrie Jenkins. It's new and short and it's a nicely edited podcast. It's a joy to listen to. I'm sure I'm biased on two fronts for choosing it: I do work on the emotions and find it fascinating and I am also a former guest of the podcast. Unsurprisingly, I recommend that episode. In it (Season 1, episode 7) I talk about love's place in politics, love's relationship to anger, and whether love is truly "all we need". But besides my episode, the podcast is really good! Check it out! <http://bit.ly/2BARJKN>

Beside straight up philosophy podcasts, could you recommend another podcast?

I am an obsessed "Productivity Hack" Person. Any tool or advice that can help me be a better person, academic, and creator has my full attention. For that reason, the Tim Ferriss Show is an important podcast for me. Tim talks to world class performers about their challenges, successes, habits, and lessons. I learn a lot and apply it to my life. My favourite guests of the podcast have been Sarah Elizabeth Lewis, Maurice Ashley, and Jocko Willink. <https://tim.blog/podcast/>

Myisha Cherry is a fellow in the philosophy department at Harvard University. She has written on emotions, politics, race, and forgiveness and is the co-editor with Owen Flanagan of The Moral Psychology of Anger.