

# REVERSE ENGINEERING THE CANON

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CELINE FASSONE

SUPERVISOR: CARLO IERNA



# AIM OF THE PROJECT

**TO INVESTIGATE HOW THE HISTORY OF PHILOSOPHY IS TAUGHT IN UNIVERSITIES AND THE CRITERIA FOR INCLUDING OR EXCLUDING CERTAIN AUTHORS AND HANDBOOKS IN THE CANON.**

- HISTORY OF PHILOSOPHY IS USUALLY TAUGHT IN CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER WITH A SPECIFIC NARROW CANON OF AUTHORS
- THE CHOICE TO INCLUDE SOME PHILOSOPHERS RATHER THAN OTHERS IS COMPLEX BECAUSE IT INFLUENCES THE ENTIRE KNOWLEDGE AND THINKING SYSTEM OF A GENERATION



# WHY IS THIS RESEARCH RELEVANT?

- THE WORLD WE LIVE IN IS CONSTANTLY EVOLVING AND THE HISTORY OF PHILOSOPHY IS KEEPING TRACK OF THE THOUGHTS AND IDEAS THAT HUMAN BEINGS HAD THROUGHOUT THIS EVOLUTIONARY PROCESS.
- THEREFORE, IT IS FUNDAMENTAL THAT THE HISTORY OF PHILOSOPHY STUDIED IN UNIVERSITIES CONTAINS A REPRESENTATIVE COLLECTION OF PHILOSOPHERS AND IDEAS



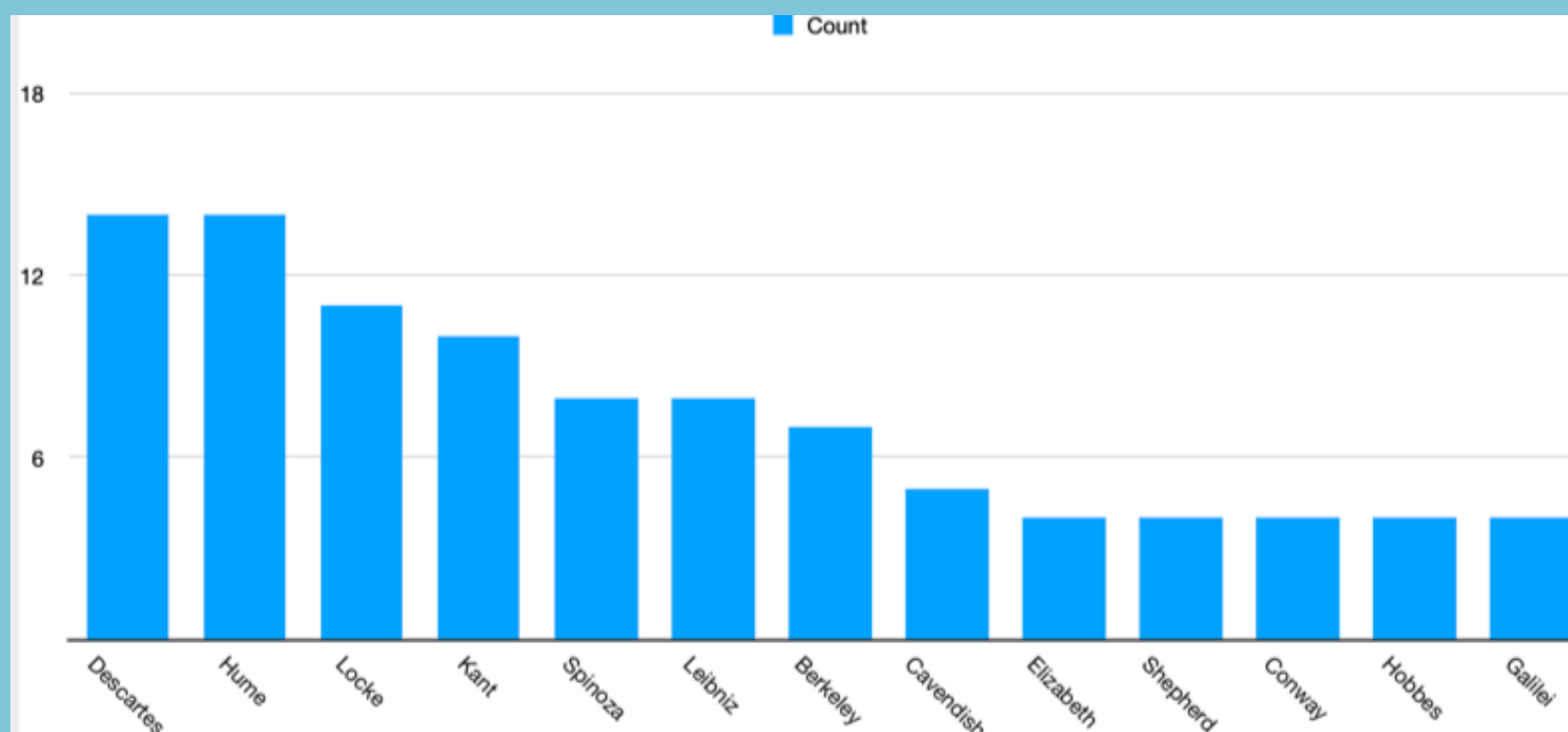
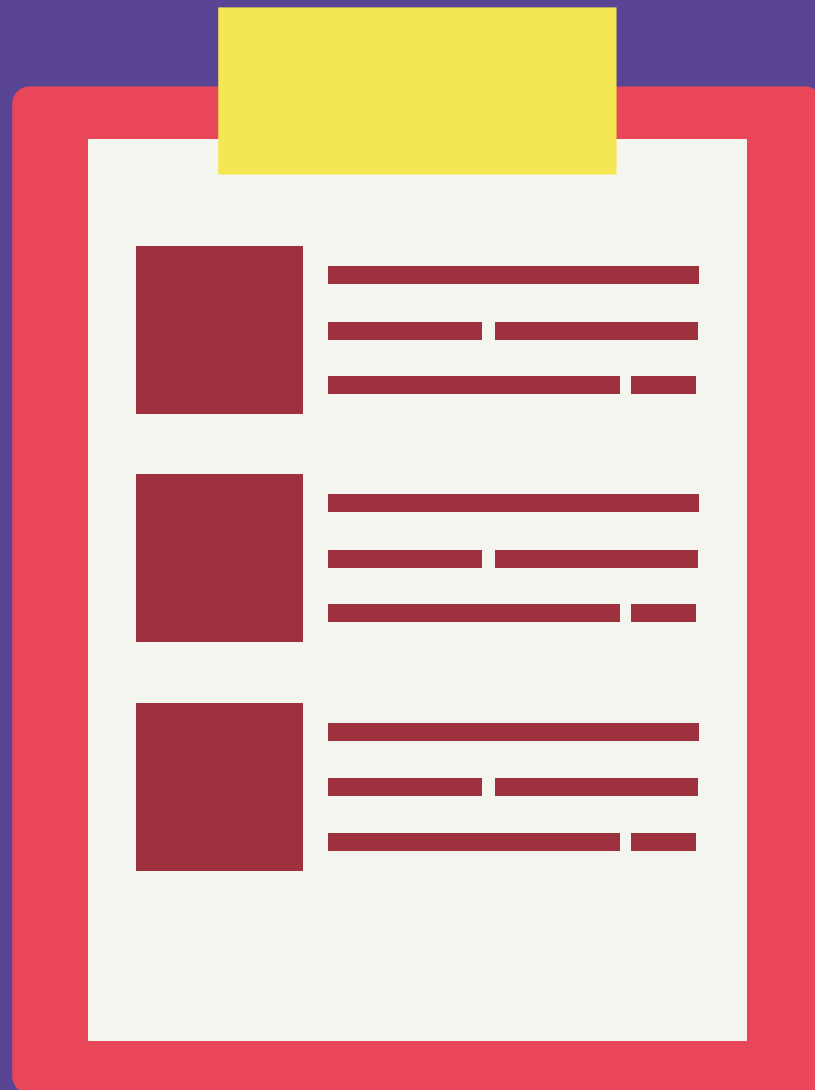


Table 2: graph of philosophers mentioned at least four times

# METHOD

- Literature research: Previous research found that the canon is mainly made up of “The Big Seven” namely Kant, Hume, Descartes, Locke, Leibniz, Spinoza, and Plato
- Dataset: a sample of 18 syllabi of modern philosophy taught in Universities from the years 2002 to 2020 was collected to understand how the canon is nowadays.



## RESULTS

● Even though the big 7 remain the most taught philosophers in Universities' modern philosophy courses, the presence of women philosophers in University syllabi seems to become slowly more relevant.

Therefore, the canon is progressively becoming more inclusive

● However, women philosophers were often included in syllabi in the “optional” or “recommended” readings.

This is problematic because women's readings are still being treated as something additional, something extra to the canon that can of course add something to it, but that is still not part of it

# DISCUSSION



## RESULTS SHOWED THAT

Even though Western men philosophers are still covering the vast majority of Universities' syllabi, the canon is starting to make an effort to be more inclusive.



## THE PROBLEM IS THAT

In the historical period we are currently living in, categorizing women philosophers and non-western philosophers as "optional" is not acceptable.



## TO CONCLUDE

A change in the canon is needed in order to guarantee students a knowledge that is not limited to the ideas of white Western men, but rather inclusive and open to overcome gender stereotypes and racism.