

PHIL 6000-301 Proseminar for Philosophy Doctoral Students (Draft)

INSTRUCTOR: Jennifer M. Morton (jmmorton@sas.upenn.edu)
DATE/TIME: Mondays 12-2.59pm
LOCATION: McNeil Building 582
OFFICE HOURS: Cohen 462 Mondays 9-11am & By appointment
<https://calendly.com/jmmorton>

COURSE OBJECTIVES (What this course will aim to enable you to do):

- (1) to introduce you to philosophy as a profession
- (2) to expose you to different approaches to philosophy and spark new research interests
- (3) to allow you to practice critical professional skills such as reading philosophy as a professional philosopher, participating in discussion, presenting your work, providing constructive feedback on other people's work, writing an abstract, and writing a graduate-level seminar paper
- (4) to introduce you to some critical texts chosen by faculty and introduce you to other faculty in the department
- (5) to develop habits that will help you as a philosopher, departmental citizen, and professional academic.

All coursework for this class has been designed to help you meet these course objectives.

COURSE TEXTS: All readings will be available on the course canvas site. A significant portion of them have been chosen by faculty in our program as 'essential' readings that they wanted you to have read.

REQUIREMENTS

30% Research Ideas Journal (Weekly)
15% Paper Abstract plus Reading List
10% Presentation (1)
10% Peer Referee Reports (2)
35% Final Paper

ASSESSMENTS

RESEARCH IDEAS JOURNAL: Throughout this course I want you to keep a weekly journal (a google document shared with me jmmorton@gmail.com) in which you write down research/paper ideas generated by the readings. The shape this takes will vary from week to week. Some weeks you might just write two questions; at other times, you might write a paragraph or a paper outline. This is up to you. I will periodically comment on your journal. This document is meant to help you with come up with a research topic for your final paper, but also to serve as a repository for future research ideas. Use it that way. If something we read leads you to think about something in another class, then write about that. The journal is meant to help you develop a research mindset and a writing habit.

ABSTRACT: One important skill you will learn is how to write a conference abstract. This is the germ of a paper idea that ‘sells’ the paper to an unfamiliar audience. You will write a 300–500-word paper abstract & bibliography by **October 28th**. You should think of the abstract on the model of the conference submission. It should lay out your argument and give the reader a clear sense of the literature with which you will be in conversation. The best abstracts are concise, direct, and leave the reader wanting to read more of your paper (and, thus, accept your paper for presentation). The final paper might (probably, will) deviate from the abstract. That is totally fine. The goal of this assignment is to keep you on track and to practice writing a fantastic abstract.

PRESENTATION: Excellent philosophical research is the result of a long process of writing and rewriting on the basis of feedback. One of the most important ways through which you will receive such feedback is the conference presentation. Preparing for a presentation is a great opportunity for you to think carefully about the main ideas of your paper, finesse the best way to communicate them to an audience, and anticipate objections or critical feedback. Do not be surprised if, as you work on your presentation, you realize that you need to change your argument or radically rewrite your paper. This is a critical part of the process. You should have a **presentation & paper draft by December 9th**. During the presentation, you will receive feedback from your peers about the ideas in the paper. You will have to be quick on your feet to respond to the concerns brought up by your peers. Often, the response you offer in the moment will be unsatisfactory. The question will nag at you. That is to be expected. As you rewrite, the paper will get better. You will iterate this process many times. One day, you feel fairly confident that the paper can withstand the critical pressure of its audience and you will send it off (or turn it in).

DRAFT & PEER REVIEW: Another important philosophical skill that you will practice is giving constructive, incisive feedback. You will do so on the basis of a peer’s paper draft. Your report should be written like a professional referee report in which you summarize the main argument, suggest areas of improvement, and place the paper in a broader assessment of the literature (to the best of your abilities). You should ‘turn around’ the referee report within 3-5 days. **It will be due on December 13th**. And it should be concise (300-500 words).

PARTICIPATION: How well (or badly) this course goes will depend on every person in this class taking ownership for the course. This means that I expect all of you to contribute to the discussion in some way. Talking in seminar is only one way to participate in the discussion, others include e-mailing me with questions you’d like to see discussed before class, listening to others respectfully, helping a classmate make a point, continuing the discussion with your fellow students outside of class, and coming to my office when the class discussion sparks an idea that you want to discuss. In class discussion, I expect you to do a lot of *listening* as well as *participating* in a way that is *responsive* to your peers. Be mindful of the class dynamics and aim to include your peers in the discussion, rather than talking just to me.

POLICIES

GRADING: This is a graduate level course, As are served for truly excellent graduate-level work in philosophy both during in class, in your writing, and in your presentation. If you have questions or concerns about grading, please do come by my office for a chat.

HONOR CODE: All students are expected to follow the guidelines of Penn's Code of Academic Integrity. In particular, students are expected to refrain from "lying, cheating, or stealing" in an academic context (but it's also probably good to avoid doing these things in general). If you are unsure about which actions violate that honor code, please consult <https://catalog.upenn.edu/pennbook/code-of-academic-integrity>. Plagiarism of any kind will not be tolerated. Always cite any resource that you use (including friends with whom you have worked if cooperation is permitted on an assignment). Do not reuse papers written for other classes. The internet has made it easier than ever before to catch this sort of thing, so (moral reasons aside) it is not a particularly wise idea.

AI ASSISTED WRITING: This is a graduate philosophy seminar whose purpose is to teach the writing and research skills you will need to be a philosopher, a thinker, and a researcher. Using AI tools like Grammarly, Word Spell/Grammar check, etc. is fine. However, it would disrupt the pedagogical purpose of this class, to use AI tools to *generate* text. Do not do it. Note, furthermore, that it is against the honor code policy to use AI tools to generate text without citing it.

BASIC NEEDS SUPPORT: It is important to me that you have the resources you need to be able to focus on learning in this course – this includes both the necessary academic materials as well as taking care of your day-to-day needs. Students experiencing difficulty affording the course materials should reach out to the Penn First Plus office (pennfirstplus@upenn.edu). Students who are struggling to afford sufficient food to eat every day and/or lack a safe and suitable space to live should contact Student Intervention Services (vpul-sisteam@pobox.upenn.edu). Students may also wish to contact their Financial Aid Counselor or Academic Advisor about these concerns. You are welcome to notify me if any of these challenges are affecting your success in this course, as long as you are comfortable doing so – I can help you access the resources Penn has available for you.

ACADEMIC SUPPORT: The Weingarten Center offers a variety of resources to support all Penn students in reaching their academic goals. All services are free and confidential. To contact the Weingarten Center, call 215-573-9235. The office is located in Stouffer Commons at 3702 Spruce Street, Suite 300.

DISABILITY SERVICES: The University of Pennsylvania provides reasonable accommodations to students with disabilities who have self-identified and received approval from Disability Services. Students can contact Disability Services and make appointments to discuss and/or request accommodations by calling 215-573-9235.

MODIFICATIONS TO SYLLABUS: I reserve the right to make changes to the Syllabus, including project due dates and test dates, when unforeseen circumstances occur. These changes will be announced as early as possible so that you can adjust your schedules.

Date	First Half of Class	Second Half of Class
Sep. 9th	Jennifer Morton, "Flourishing in the Academy: Complicity and Compromise"	Descartes, From the <i>Meditations</i>
Sep. 16 th	G.E. Moore, "Knowledge of the External World"	David Lewis, "Elusive Knowledge" (Singer)
	Faculty Visitor: Dan Singer	
Sep. 23 rd	Nelson Goodman's Chapter 3 of <u>Fact, Fiction, and Forecast</u> (Spencer)	Phillip Kitcher's "Believing Where We Cannot Prove" (Weisberg)
	Faculty Visitor: Quayshawn Spencer	
Sep. 30 th	Miranda Fricker, Selections from <u>Epistemic Injustice</u>	Kristie Dotson's "How is this paper philosophy?" (Santana)
		Faculty Visitor: Carlos Santana
Oct. 7 th	Calvin Normore's "What is to be Done in the History of Philosophy" (Detlefsen)	Stanley Cavell's "Must we mean what we say?" (Yumusak) Fodor & Katz, "The Availability of What We Say" [recommended]
	Faculty Visitor: Karen Detlefsen	
Oct. 14 th	Cora Diamond's "The Difficulty of Reality, The Difficulty of Philosophy" (Vaccarino Bremmer)	Cora Diamond "Moral Differences and Distances." (Vaccarino Bremmer)
	Faculty Visitor: Sabina Vaccarino Bremmer	
Oct. 21 st	Peter Strawson, "Freedom and Resentment" (Morton)	Gary Watson, "Responsibility and the Limits of Evil"
Oct 28 th	Mentoring Workshop with special guest Caitlin Brust (Stanford)	
	Abstract and Reading List Due	
Nov. 4 th	David Velleman, "Love as a Moral Emotion" (Lord)	Errol Lord, "Of Soulmates and Old Spouses: How to Be a Romantic Kantian about the Ethics of Love" (Forthcoming in Ergo)
	Faculty Visitor: Errol Lord	
Nov. 11 th	TBA Work in Progress	Rawls, "Justice as Fairness"
	Faculty Visitor: Ege Yumusak	
Nov. 18 th	Elizabeth Anderson's "What is the Point of Equality?" (Wodak)	Charles Mills, "Ideal Theory as Ideology" (Hirji)
		Faculty Guest: Sukaina Hirji
Nov. 25 th	No Class	
Dec. 2 nd	Fanon, Ch. 5 from <u>White Masks</u> (Lorenzini)	Will Kymlicka, "Toleration and Its Limits" (Tan)
	Faculty Visitor: Daniele Lorenzini	
Dec. 9 th	Presentations & Draft Due	
Dec 13 th	Peer Referee Reports Due	
Dec 19 th	Final Papers Due	