

## TEACHING PORTFOLIO

Patrick Shirreff

---

TEACHING STATEMENT	1
TEACHING INTERESTS	3
EVALUATIONS AS PRIMARY INSTRUCTOR	4
EVALUATIONS AS DISCUSSION SECTION LEADER	8
SAMPLE SYLLABUS: PHILOSOPHY OF ART	14
SAMPLE SYLLABUS: COGNITIVE SCIENCE FOR PHILOSOPHERS	19
SAMPLE SYLLABUS: PHILOSOPHY OF SOCIAL AND POLITICAL LANGUAGE	23
SAMPLE SYLLABUS: PHILOSOPHY OF SCIENCE	27
SAMPLE SYLLABUS: ANALYTIC PHILOSOPHY	31

---

### TEACHING STATEMENT

---

A typical college student steps into a philosophy class with neither understanding of the discipline nor knowledge of the specific subject matter. In addition, the vast majority of philosophy students do not believe that there are unique sets of analytical skills and techniques that are required to be successful within the discipline. My goal as an instructor is to have designed a learning environment that allows students to acquire, develop, and master these analytic skills and techniques by engaging with the subject matter of the course. All students should leave the course with valuable skills that will help them in all aspects of life: they should be better writers, better readers, and above all else, better thinkers.

Designing a class that is conducive to these goals will in part be governed by its unique content. This being said, there are also certain design elements that have to be present no matter the specifics of the class. I will outline four such elements.

1. *Learning goals for any class and the motivation behind them must be carefully explained.*

Completing a college course will be challenging but should be rewarding for the students. For this to be the case, it is necessary for students to know what they will be getting out of the course and why this is worth their time and effort. In my classes students will develop and master skills and techniques are tremendously helpful in non-philosophical endeavours along with be necessary for rich philosophical investigation. Carefully explaining this to the students up front helps them see that the challenge in front of them is one worth pursuing.

2. *All assignments need to be tailored to advance learning goals and should build off of each other.*

In my experience, students have found writing an essay as a first assignment to be a frustrating task that presented many obstacles they weren't yet equipped to handle. At the beginning of a course students are just beginning to develop the skills and techniques that are required to write a successful essay. Due to this, I have found that having each assignment designed to target and develop a specific skill or technique has been greatly helpful. Some examples include: writing an introduction to an article that lacked one; providing an objection to an argument and then replying on the author's behalf; highlighting key commonalities and differences between two similar theories; highlighting arguments that do not advance the thesis of an article and explaining why they do not do so; writing a 300 word mini-essay that focused on a concise argument. These assignments build on one another allowing the students to be in the best possible position to succeed. By the time students had to write a full essay they had worked on all of the requisite techniques and skills.

3. *Provide students with ample opportunities for practice.*

Students should be provided with as many opportunities as possible for practice. Mandatory graded assignments should only be one of these ways. Others should include optional assignments, practice assignments, collaborative assignments, etc. Different students thrive differently. Making sure that there are a variety of formats in which to hone skills – that not every bit of writing and practice comes with the pressure of a grade, for example – helps every student in the end. Another aspect that goes hand in hand with ample practice is ample feedback. Students need to know what isn't going well but also, and more importantly, what is going well and what they should continue to do. As a practice I initially grade blindly to combat implicit biases. But after the initial grading assignments receive comments tailored to the students which allows them to know how they have improved from their previous work.

4. *Foster a classroom where students engage with the material collaboratively.*

The best courses are ones where students are highly engaged and act as the primary vehicle driving discussion forward. This rarely happens organically and requires the instructor to put students in a position to succeed. I make sure that every student shares her thoughts on the material within the first two sessions. This builds the habit of critically thinking through the material and discussing it publicly. Varying the class format helps to keep students engaged and enthusiastic as well. As mentioned above, students learn and thrive in differently. Where one student best learns from lecturing, another is best suited to learn from interactive discussions with a small group of peers. Examples I have used include the following: one, a close reading of sections of Hume's *On*

*Tragedy* followed by comprehension questions. This put the students in a position where they had to take the lead interpreting a difficult argument. Two, groups formalizing and critiquing arguments against an anti-intentionalist view of art interpretation. Breaking into groups meant that more students could contribute at once in a lower pressure environment. And three, student peer review of paper drafts. This forced the students to critically evaluate original work in a collaborative setting.

## TEACHING INTERESTS

---

The following is a (non-exhaustive) list of undergraduate courses I would be happy to teach. I have included sample syllabi for the courses in bold.

### INTRODUCTORY:

- Introduction to Philosophy
- Critical Thinking
- Philosophical Paradoxes
- **Philosophy of Art/ Aesthetics**
- Science Fiction and Philosophy
- Philosophy of Religion

### FORMAL PHILOSOPHY CLASSES:

- Introductory Symbolic Logic
- Intermediate and Modal Logic
- Formal Epistemology
- Formal Philosophical Methods
- Semantics for Philosophers

### INTERMEDIATE/ ADVANCED:

- Philosophy of Language
- **Political Philosophy of Language**
- Philosophy of Mind
- **Cognitive Science for Philosophers**
- Empirical and Experimental Philosophy
- **Philosophy of Science**
- Epistemology
- Metaphysics
- Language and Mind
- Knowledge and Reality
- **Analytic Philosophy**

## STUDENT EVALUATIONS

---

Throughout the next two sections I will provide course evaluation data from every course I have taught either as a primary instructor or as a discussion section leader since 2013. This includes three courses taught as a primary instructor, two during academic terms and one during the summer term, and two courses taught outside of the philosophy department as a discussion section leader.

At University of Michigan course evaluations are not required of students, which means that response rates can vary significantly from course to course and even discussion section to discussion section within one course. I have been fortunate that all but one set of evaluations has received at least a 55% response rate from enrolled students. I will flag the response rates for all of the courses and sections in what follows.

## EVALUATIONS AS PRIMARY INSTRUCTOR

---

### PHILOSOPHY OF ART:

During my time at University of Michigan I was able to deepen my interest in Aesthetics when I served as the primary instructor for Philosophy of Art on two separate occasions. I have included teaching evaluation data from both iterations of the course – the first occurring during the Winter semester of 2014 and the second the Winter semester of 2015. The following are the evaluation response rates for the two courses: 64% for the 2014 course – 18 out of 28 students; 82% for 2015 – 37 out of 45 students.

The below table summarizes the numerical feedback from all students who responded to the course evaluation in either iteration. For each claim the students were asked to quantify their agreement by selecting a number from 1 “strongly disagree” to 5 “strongly agree.” The table below gives (i) my median<sup>1</sup> scores, and (ii) the 25th percentile of median scores for similar courses taught in the philosophy department over the last 8 years.

Following the table I will provide *complete* and *unedited* qualitative student evaluations from the prompt “Comment of the quality of instruction in this course.”

PROMPT	MY MEDIAN SCORE: W14	MY MEDIAN SCORE: W15	DEPARTMENTAL COMPARISON (25TH PERCENTILE)
<i>“Overall, the instructor was an excellent teacher.”</i>	4.75	4.76	4.75
<i>“The instructor gave clear explanations.”</i>	4.75	4.76	4.73
<i>“The instructor stressed important points in lectures/ discussion.”</i>	4.75	4.88	4.70
<i>“The instructor was willing to meet and help students outside class.”</i>	4.90	4.94	4.88
<i>“The instructor seemed well prepared for class meetings.”</i>	4.90	4.94	4.88

### WINTER 2014:<sup>2</sup>

- “I really enjoyed this class. I took it kind of on a whim, but ended up learning a lot. I want to take more philosophy courses. The readings were appropriate, and well spaced. I liked how flexible and accommodating Patrick was, while still holding us to high standards. He was exceptionally willing to meet with students outside of class and go over assignments and material. He is an exceptionally dynamic lecturer and was totally able to hold my attention at 8:30 AM. That being said, I felt that the class could have been a little more debate and discussion oriented, because I really liked those activities when we did them.

---

<sup>1</sup> University of Michigan reports responses by median not mean. The median is calculated by finding the median from a frequency distribution of student responses.

<sup>2</sup> 8 out of 18 students that filled out the quantitative evaluation also wrote qualitative comments.

One other thing that I really liked about this course was that it taught me to think in new ways. Writing argumentative response papers were a great way to grow as a writer and thinker and the comments and office hours help with these further helped this process. This is a versatile skill that I am exceedingly glad I learned in this class.”

- “There was very little discussion, making it rather difficult to get to know the other students.”
- “Very strong instructor/teaching style.”
- “This course was not something that piqued my interest a lot, but Patrick knows a great deal about philosophy which made it interesting.”
- “[T]he materials were presented and taught well.”
- “I didn’t like the structure of this course; we read papers and then Patrick spent the whole explaining what we read instead of deepening our understanding with other material.”
- “Good course.”
- “Overall, Patrick was a good instructor. Patrick’s lectures were informative and he grades fairly.”

#### WINTER 2015:<sup>3</sup>

- “[P]atrick is great. very enthusiastic and articulate.”
- “Patrick made his lectures clear and easy to understand.”
- “I did not see the coherence or relation of everything at times. Sometimes I feel more of a base understanding of philosophy would help. Besides that great course.”
- “ I would like to see more basic phil[o]sophical concepts explained”
- “The instructor was able to clarify texts that were otherwise often difficult to comprehend, either due to dated language or because of abstract concepts. Hence, the instruction was very helpful alongside the readings that were assigned.”
- “The instruction of this course was great! The subject matter wasn’t my favorite but that was a mistake on my part and nothing to do with the teaching of the class itself. Patrick has been fantastic and even though the subject isn’t something I’m passionate about, he made the class very interesting and I am happy that I took this class.”
- “ Very informative... would have been better if it was more of a discussion (however I know the class size made this difficult)”
- “[I] really enjoyed the course!”
- “The instruction was great and the teacher was very open to interpretation and any extra questions during class.”
- “[A]lways clear, slowly explained.”

---

<sup>3</sup>21 out of 37 students that filled out the quantitative evaluation also wrote qualitative comments.

- “I found this class to be very interesting; it definitely changed the way I think about art in general. The readings are long and dense, and I found getting through them to be tedious, but I know understanding their information is crucial to doing well in the class. Patrick’s lectures were always thoughtful, and he explained the concepts in detail. His PowerPoints allowed me to understand the material much better.”
- “The instructor was very enthusiastic each class, which allowed me to stay engaged in class through out the semester.”
- “Professor Shirreff was consistently thorough and informative in his teaching of Philosophy 153. He successfully fielded students’ questions and was clearly knowledgeable about the subject matter of the course.”
- “Overall, it is my belief that an LSA education should focus on teaching students how to think, rather than what to think. To me, it seemed as if there was too much bias in the subject matter, specifically when examining different arguments made in the readings over the course of the semester.”
- “Confusing material but interesting.”
- “Patrick was a great teacher who was able to make the complex philosophy readings we had more simple. I also appreciated how flexible he was in office hours and the relevant examples he was able to apply to course readings.”
- “Helped develop a basic interest in philosophy”
- “The lectures were informative, cleared up questions from the readings that were particularly difficult, and Professor Shirreff answered any questions to the best of his ability even when the reading didn’t go into enough depth.”
- “I really liked Patrick, and he brought about all this material in manageable ways through his slides. My notes were thorough because his slides were thorough, but he found it hard not to always inject his own opinion all the time. Other than that, I really enjoyed talking about these theories he presented.”
- “Patrick was a wonderful professor. He explained the readings and slides very well and kept the class engaged.”
- “This is an excellent course overall.”

#### PHILOSOPHICAL ISSUES – PHILOSOPHICAL PARADOXES:

As previously mentioned, participation in course evaluations can vary widely from class to class. While all of the other classes and sections received over a 55% response rate, this class stands as an outlier. Only 10 out of 33 enrolled students filled out an evaluation. This course also stands as a significant outlier when it comes to my evaluation data. In all other courses, which includes one taught prior to this class and three taught after, my quantitative evaluation scores consistently fall within the top quartile of median scores for similar courses taught in the philosophy department over the last eight years.

I was able to learn a great deal from this class that has helped me become a better teacher. In particular, after teaching this class I fully realized the importance of varying the way that I teach from day to day and within a single day even in a larger “lecture based” class. Approaching each class with a variety of potential formats to use has become a major pillar in my teaching philosophy and I have had the opportunity to update my classroom pedagogy in light of this. The time when I was able to implement this was when I taught Philosophy of Art in winter 2015 with a class size of 45. Despite the size of the class, I made sure to use a variety of different techniques – some of these are outlined in my teaching statement – during “lecture” time which made for a vastly improved in class experience compared to my summer paradoxes class. The resultant evaluation data and qualitative comments for Philosophy of Art W15 has already been summarized above.

Due to the lower evaluation data in Philosophical Paradoxes, I will show the department comparison for the 50th percentile of median scores rather than the 25th percentile showed above. Following the table I will provide *complete* and *unedited* qualitative student evaluations from the prompt “Comment of the quality of instruction in this course.”

PROMPT	MY MEDIAN SCORE	DEPARTMENTAL COMPARISON (50TH PERCENTILE)
<i>“Overall, the instructor was an excellent teacher.”</i>	4.10	4.50
<i>“The instructor gave clear explanations.”</i>	4.25	4.43
<i>“The instructor stressed important points in lectures/ discussion.”</i>	4.50	4.50
<i>“The instructor was willing to meet and help students outside class.”</i>	4.67	4.69
<i>“The instructor seemed well prepared for class meetings.”</i>	4.50	4.67

#### SUMMER 2014:<sup>4</sup>

- “Too much lecturing and not enough discussion in my opinion. The slides did a great job breaking down and explaining the paradoxes, but they could have filled in for the reading so that more discussion should have ensued. It’s an introductory philosophy class about paradoxes—I expected it to be a bit more engaging.”
- “The instruction was good and clear.”
- “Could have made expectations a bit more clear.”

---

<sup>4</sup>4 out of 10 students that filled out the quantitative evaluation also wrote qualitative comments.

- “Professor was knowledgeable and passionate about the subject. Explained the course material well and clearly stated the objectives of the class and the requirements to succeed.”

## EVALUATIONS AS DISCUSSION SECTION LEADER

The evaluations in this section come from courses where I served as a discussion section leader rather than being the primary instructor. The responsibilities of a discussion section leader at University of Michigan include: (i) running two to three discussion sections, each with up to 25 students, once or twice a week, (ii) all of the grading for the students in your discussion sections, and (iii) weekly office hours open to all students in your sections.

The following quantitative and qualitative evaluations come from the following: Introduction to Cognitive Science taught during Winter semester 2016 and Fall 2016 along with Introduction to Political Economy taught Winter 2017. I should note that classes in Cognitive Science are taught through the Weinberg Institute for Cognitive Science whereas Introduction to Political Economy is taught through the Program in Philosophy, Politics, and Economics. These courses are not through the philosophy department.

The data from Cognitive Science is a weighted median of all of the responses from the three mandatory discussion sections that were taught during that semester. The response rates are the following: 85% in Winter 2016 – 45 out of 53 students; 56% in Fall 2016 – 42 out of 75 students.

The data from Political Economy is a weighted median of all of the responses from the two optional discussion sections that were taught during that semester. Due to the optional nature of the discussion sections, the response rates are lower than normal. They are the following: 28% – 11 out of the 39 students.

As in the previous section, the table below summarizes the numerical feedback from all students who responded to the course evaluation in the relevant course. I once again provide *complete* and *unedited* qualitative student evaluations from the prompt “Comment of the quality of instruction in this course.”

### COG 200: INTRODUCTION TO COGNITIVE SCIENCE

PROMPT <sup>5</sup>	MEDIAN SCORE: W16	MEDIAN SCORE: F16	DEPARTMENTAL COMPARISON (25TH PERCENTILE) <sup>6</sup>
<i>“Overall, the instructor was an excellent teacher.”</i>	4.77	4.84	4.75
<i>“The instructor presented material clearly in lectures/ discussion.”</i>	4.82	4.88	4.75
<i>“I learned a great deal from this course”</i>	4.47	4.71	4.38
<i>“The instructor seemed well prepared for class meetings.”</i>	4.92	4.88	n/a <sup>7</sup>



WINTER2016:<sup>8</sup>

- “Patrick always made sure to clearly state requirements and expectations (which is really refreshing), and often would teach a few different ways we were able to do some of the different things in class. I felt like I gained something by going to discussion each week.”
- “Patrick seemed really enthusiastic about cognitive science and seemed to enjoy having discussions with the class about topics such as morality, etc. He also was really helpful, especially in office hours.”
- “I enjoyed it.”
- “I thought Patrick really did a great job of supplementing course information with innovative ways of teaching and added lessons.”
- “I thought the discussion sections were extremely helpful. They were especially helpful in clarifying how to apply the ideas and rules that we learned, because that is what our assignments were on.”
- “I learned a lot in Patrick’s class that I did not feel I learned in lecture—it was almost as if he understood the topics better than the professor did! I appreciated the way he explained things and understood many topics only after attending lecture.”
- “Great instruction, Patrick knew a lot about cognitive science and it showed.”
- “Good.”
- “It was excellent.”
- “I really liked the discussion classes because they kept my interest the entire class time and I enjoyed the class conversations that we had. I also thought the teacher (GSI) did an excellent job of presenting multiple ways to think about topics to introduce alternative ways to understand concepts and ideas. Also the examples presented were explained very well and I thoroughly enjoyed the class.”
- “Patrick was super helpful and really was willing to meet with you outside of class. He also was always able to answer every one of my questions with ease. Very knowledgeable on the topics covered in class.”
- “Patrick did a good job reviewing the content from lecture. Often times, he made it seem much simpler than the professor’s explanations. I will say, however, that he seemed to let his personal beliefs about content affect what we went over in discussion. I would suggest that he try not to do so.”

---

<sup>5</sup>Introduction to Cognitive Science is taught through the Cognitive Science Institute which means it has different prompts than courses taught within the Philosophy Department. This is why the prompts for the previous evaluations and this set of evaluations differ.

<sup>6</sup>There currently isn’t historical comparison for courses taught through Cognitive Science, so I have used the most relevantly similar comparison class found within the Philosophy department: discussion sections for Introduction to Logic. They are both large introductory lecture courses that are primarily problem set and exam based.

<sup>7</sup>This prompt is only asked in the philosophy department when a student is the primary instructor. This is why there isn’t any data for comparison.

<sup>8</sup>26 out of 53 students that filled out the quantitative evaluation also wrote qualitative comments.

- "Patrick did a great job of going over the finer details of the various topics throughout the year. I felt very comfortable talking to and e-mailing with him during the semester. He helped me many times through office hours and was always very encouraging and helpful during our conversations."
- "[G]reat discussion."
- "Wouldn't know."
- "[V]ery good help in office hours."
- "Really helped reinforce what was presented in class."
- "Vital information was very clearly presented, and Patrick himself grasped the material well enough to teach it effectively."
- "Jennifer [Professor] did a great job covering the many otherwise complicated topics in a simple manner. The GSI's did very well backing up that information in discussions."
- "Patrick was a great instructor in discussion sections. He was enthusiastic and wanted to hear student input. He made discussions pretty fun and did a lot of group activities."
- "Patrick seemed to have an enthusiasm for the material he was teaching and a very good understanding of it."
- "Good instruction. Questions were sometimes tough, and required critical thinking for a toss-up between choices. Course didn't make it clear how to tackle such situations. Sometimes, questions weren't phrased clearly."
- "Patrick did an excellent job. His discussions were well planned and he did a great job at answering questions. In some ways it felt as though he would be a better instructor for this class than Jennifer [Professor]."
- "Good explanations of material and good presentation of examples to help explain concepts to students. Occasionally could use more techniques to keep students engaged and eager to participate."
- "Patrick is a good teacher. He knows a lot about the subject. His discussions were always very interesting. He gave us extra material of contemporary theories and achievements in the field."
- "I am very thankful that I was in a discussion section with Patrick! He helped explain concepts, especially the algorithms, far better than they were explained in lecture; this is the only reason I did well on the homework assignments. He clearly put a lot of time into preparing slides and examples for us to better understand the material and seemed genuinely interested in the material and teaching it. Thanks Patrick!"

FALL2016:<sup>9</sup>

- "Good."

---

<sup>9</sup>24 out of 42 students that filled out the quantitative evaluation also wrote qualitative comments.

- “The instruction for this course was fantastic! Students had abundant opportunities to ask questions. The GSI [Patrick] and the Professor were both very knowledgeable and offered a sense of humor with their thorough explanations. I would recommend this class to anyone.”
- “Patrick was very thorough in covering the topics from class such that I felt confident in continuing with the homework assignment or following up with the continuation of the next lecture. He was also very patient if there was general confusion about a certain topic covered in class, and that was greatly appreciated!”
- “Patrick really help me understand the more complicated topics from lecture.”
- “Rick is absolutely delightful. He almost takes on the role of everyone’s dad with his jokes, affirmations, and attempts to connect the concepts to pop culture. He has done a fantastic job with this course, and we have all learned so much.”
- “Awesome.”
- “It was very easy to understand the content due to the many times we reviewed material from previous lectures. There were lots of good specific examples demonstrating concepts and the discussion sections were very helpful in problem-solving.”
- “Discussion sections were nice and good at explaining much of what was learned. Mostly helpful with understanding topics that would be on the homework assignments. Not all topics that were learned are discussed, and I wish we could touch on more topics to widen student’s understandings of the topics. However, I really did like the vibe in discussion sections and the teacher was very friendly and helpful. Discussion sections are interesting, as multiple forms of media were utilized to give us examples and widen our understanding on certain topics.”
- “I was very content to have Patrick Shirreff as my GSI. Questions were always welcomed and there was never a moment where I thought that asking a question would be intrusive to the class atmosphere. I looked forward to attending discussion sections.”
- “Patrick is a fantastic GSI who was extremely helpful in explaining what was expected of us on assignments, as well as explaining the actual conceptual part of the material. 10/10, would rec’d.”
- “This class was super interesting. Professor Lewis kept class interesting every lecture, and made everything connect together. I was never bored, and I really enjoyed coming to lecture. This may be my favorite class so far at U of M.”
- “Patrick, I thought the way you taught your section was very effective. I found it helpful that you spent time teaching the step by step processes involved for our homework assignments. Overall, coming to your section gave me a deeper understanding of the material covered in lecture.

One concern I had was that I felt you didn’t spend enough time explaining the Bayes Theorem process. However, I am not the strongest math student, so that may have just been me. I would have appreciated a little more clarity about the step by step process of solving the Bayes’ Theorem math problems.

The way you taught choice/reinforcement learning using your cat as an example was very effective. I had no problem with that concept, nor did I have a problem with the phrase structure trees.”

- “Great GSI [Patrick]. He was always willing to meet outside of class at whatever time worked for the student.”
- “Patrick did a great job with each discussion session and was prepared to discuss topics that correlate to what was being discussed in lecture. He was always prepared and answered questions clearly and helped in understanding certain concepts better.”
- “The teaching staff was well-prepared and engaged with the course material. They seemed excited to teach, which increased my interest in the subject matter.”
- “Key ideas are very clearly described and explained.”
- “Homework’s were very well described in discussion which was extremely helpful. The 50 minutes flew by.”
- “I think Patrick was really good at time management. 1 hour discussion is not a long time. But he could always manage to complete his goals for the classes and left us time to discuss or ask questions.”
- “Our GSI [Patrick] was great. Definitely went out of his way to help students, and to make himself available.”
- “Loved professor! So passionate.”
- “Patrick is a great GSI! He always goes over concepts central to completing the homework, and is quick to answer any questions over email. He is fair in his grading and thoughtful in his answers to questions during discussion section.”
- “Based on my GSI’s presentation of the course material, I can guess this is not his first time teaching a course because he was extremely good at reinforcing important concepts in class and clarifying the more confusing subjects in the course. He seemed to want everyone to leave discussion with no doubts on the course material.”
- “He was a very clear instructor.”
- “Patrick was awesome. Understood the subject matter enough to be able to answer probing question that required personal knowledge outside of the course. He was always available and willing to assist in any manner. Truly concerned about the students understanding the material.”

PPE300: INTRODUCTION TO POLITICAL ECONOMY

PROMPT	MY MEDIAN SCORE	DEPARTMENTAL COMPARISON (25TH PERCENTILE)
<i>“Overall, the instructor was an excellent teacher.”</i>	5.00	4.86
<i>“The instructor gave clear explanations.”</i>	4.95	4.82
<i>“The instructor stressed important points in lectures/ discussion.”</i>	4.95	4.85
<i>“The instructor appeared to have a thorough knowledge of the subject.”</i>	4.95	4.92
<i>“The instructor seemed well prepared for class meetings.”</i>	4.89	4.89

WINTER2017:<sup>10</sup>

- “Hands down one of the best GSI’s I’ve had. Well-informed, facilitating interesting dialogue and debate in class and made himself available to students outside of class & regular office hours.”
- “The instructor did a good job of fostering student discussion and encouraging academic debate.”
- “Patrick is probably the best GSI I have had at U of M. He has a clear, genuine interest in the subject, and seems very invested in the performance and understanding of his students. The way he structures the class around peer discussion allows students to learn new perspectives and new ideas on previously discussed material. The discussion did a good job of clarifying material, and helped with essays assigned in the class.”
- “Discussion was helpful and when possible the students gave opinions and arguments on the readings and topics.”
- “Patrick was a great GSI. He was very flexible and understanding and was always willing to meet and help students where needed.”

---

<sup>10</sup>5 out of 11 students that filled out the quantitative evaluation also wrote qualitative comments.

## SAMPLE SYLLABI

### PHILOSOPHY OF ART

#### Topics in Aesthetics and Philosophy of Art

---

##### **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This course serves as an introduction to philosophy of art or aesthetics. The course will begin trying to answer the seemingly simple but deceptively difficult question of “what is art?” To attempt to answer this question we look into real world examples of art forgery and what this can tell us about art’s nature. The course will then look at relationships between works of art and those who view them. Specifically, we will discuss the way we value and judge art, the nature of art appreciation, and how we interpret, or ought to interpret, art. The course will then move on to examining the moral status of art; we will try to understand what makes an artwork immoral and look at the relationship between art and society. Lastly, we will look at specific aesthetic issues that arise due to the nature of music. Students should note that this is not a class that will look into issues about the history of art but rather one that is trying to answer fundamental philosophical questions about art itself.

##### **COURSE OBJECTIVES AND CLASS FORMAT**

This class will focus on helping you acquire and develop critical reasoning skills, specifically analytic reading and writing skills, through the engagement with the philosophical work about the arts. Developing these skills will also help with the other objective of gaining specific knowledge of the philosophy of art and aesthetics studied throughout the course. The evaluations throughout the course will reflect the nature of these objectives.

Each class will explore assigned reading(s) through a mixture of lecture and discussion. Each student is required to have done the assigned reading(s) in order to actively participate in course discussion.

##### **INTENDED AUDIENCE**

This class is designed to accommodate a wide variety of students at various levels of background in aesthetics and philosophy. This means that no prior background in philosophy or the history of art is required for this class. Any student that has an interest in non-historical questions regarding art should take this course.

##### **EVALUATIONS**

###### **READING QUESTIONS:**

At the start of one class per week you have to hand in a short reading response

to the assigned reading for that class. These should be roughly a paragraph in length and raise question(s), concerns, or comments about specific parts of the reading. These will be graded on a satisfactory/ unsatisfactory scale.

#### IN-CLASS TESTS:

Throughout the semester, short tests will be administered. This is both to encourage engagement with course material and to gauge comprehension.

#### SHORT RESPONSE PAPERS:

Throughout the semester you will be responsible for *five* short response papers (maximum 300 words). In these papers, you will be working on different aspects that are necessary for writing philosophical essays. For example, you will have to summarize arguments, come up with objections and replies to arguments, or create your own concise argument related to a point made in a reading. Which readings you will be responding to will be up to you and the due dates will be split up over the course of the semester.

#### ESSAY:

Each student is required to produce one “research” essay for this class, on a set of topics that I will distribute in good time before the essay is due. Papers should be 1,500–2,000 words long. I’ll say more about papers later in the semester.

#### EXAM:

The exam will cover all the course topics and will be a mixture of short answer and essay questions.

### GRADING

Your final class grade will be determined by your performance in the above evaluations and participation throughout the semester. Percentages of the final class grade are determined as follows:

<b>In-Class Tests and Reading Questions:</b>	10%
<b>Response Papers:</b>	30%
<b>Essay:</b>	30%
<b>Final Exam:</b>	25%
<b>Participation:</b>	5%

## READING SCHEDULE

Lecture 1: Jan 8

No reading – What is Philosophy? What is Art?

*Assignment Discussion*

### 1. ART – DEFINING ART AND IDENTITY

Lecture 2: Jan 13

George Dickie, *Defining Art*

Clive Bell, *Art*

Susanne Langer, *Feeling and Form*

Lecture 3: Jan 15

Leo Tolstoy, *What is Art?* (excerpts)

RG Collingwood, *The Principles of Art*

Jenefer Robinson, *The Emotions in Art*

Lecture 4: Jan 20

George Dickie, *What is Art?*

(Suggested: Arthur Danto, *The Artworld*)

(Suggested: Jennifer Jenkins, *Where Beauty Lies*)

Lecture 5: Jan 22

Jorge Luis Borges, *Pierre Menard, Author of the Quixote*

Arthur Danto, *Transfiguration of the Commonplace* (excerpts)

(Suggested: Amie Thomasson, *Ontology of Art*)

(Suggested: Kendall Walton, *Categories of Art*)

Lecture 6: Jan 27

Alfred Lessing, *What is Wrong with a Forgery?*

Denis Dutton, *Artistic Crimes*

### 2. APPRECIATION

Lecture 7: Jan 29

Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Judgement* (excerpts)

Kant's Aesthetics, SEP, §§1–2

(Suggested: Marcia Muelder Eaton, *Art and the Aesthetic*)

Lecture 8: Feb 3

Edward Bullough, *Psychical Distance*

(Suggested: George Dickie, *The Myth of the Aesthetic Attitude*)

Lecture 9: Feb 5

David Hume, *Of Tragedy*

(Suggested: Alex Neill, *Philosophy Bites: Paradox of Tragedy*)

Lecture 10: Feb 10

Susan Feagin, *The Pleasures of Tragedy*

(Suggested: Flint Schier, *Tragedy & the Community of Sentiment*)

Lecture 11: Feb 12

Kendall Walton, *Mimesis as Make-Believe*

(excerpts: emotion)



### 3. JUDGEMENT & VALUE

Lecture 12: Feb 17

Mary Mothersill, *Beauty and the Critics Judgment*

Lecture 13: Feb 19

David Hume, *The Standard of Taste*  
(Suggested: Nick Zangwill, *Aesthetic Realism*)

### 4. INTERPRETATION – INTENTIONS AND FICTION

Lecture 14: Feb 24

Beardsley & Wimsatt, *The Intentionalist Fallacy*  
(Suggested: Gregory Currie: *Interpretation in Art*)  
(Suggested: Robert Stecker, *Interpretation*)

Lecture 15: Feb 26

Noël Carroll, *Art, Intention, and Conversation* (excerpts)  
(Suggested: Jerrold Levinson, *Intention and Interpretation*)  
(Suggested: Jenefer Robinson: *Style and Personality in the Literary Work*)

Lecture 16: March 10

Margaret Macdonald, *The Language of Fiction*  
(Amie Thomasson, *Fiction and Metaphysics* (excerpts))

Lecture 17: March 12

David Lewis, *Truth in Fiction*

Lecture 18: March 17

Kendall Walton, *Mimesis as Make-Believe*  
(excerpts: fictionality)

### 5. ART AND MORALITY

Lecture 19: March 19

Mary Devereaux, *Beauty and Evil: The Case of Leni Riefenstahl's "Triumph of the Will"*  
Noël Carroll, *Moderate Moralism*  
(Suggested: Berys Gaut, *The Ethical Criticism of Art*)

Lecture 20: March 24

Anderson & Dean, *Moderate Autonomism*  
(Suggested: Noël Carroll, *Moderate Moralism vs. Moderate Autonomism*)

Lecture 21: March 26

W.E.B. Du Bois, *Criteria of Negro Art*  
Paul Taylor, *Black Aesthetics*

Lecture 22: March 31

Mary Devereaux, *Feminist Aesthetics*  
Cynthia Freeland, *But Is It Art?* (excerpts)

**April 2:** Exam Review

**April 7:** Exam on units 1–5

## **6. PHILOSOPHY OF MUSIC**

**Lecture 23: April 9**

Roger Scruton, *Representation in Music*  
Jenefer Robsinon, *Representation in Music and Painting*

**Lecture 24: April 14**

Peter Kivy, *Is Music an Art?*

**Lecture 25: April 16**

Kendall Walton, *Listening with Imagination*

**Lecture 26: April 21**

Diana Raffman, *Is Twelve-Tone Music Artistically  
Defective?*

## COGNITIVE SCIENCE FOR PHILOSOPHERS

---

### **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

Cognitive Science is an exciting, fast-growing, and revolutionary area of study which seeks to develop integrated explanations of mind, brain, and behaviour. It does so by drawing on concepts and methods from a range of related fields including at least: linguistics, psychology, philosophy, neuroscience, and computer science. Not only does Cognitive Science draw on the methods and concepts from philosophy but its findings and empirical results have direct bearing on various aspects and theories within a variety of philosophical areas. This course will explore just this area of overlap. Throughout this course we will examine contemporary research from Cognitive Science and the relevance this research has on philosophical topics. Topics will include: free will, determinism, consciousness, perceptual justification, foundationalism in epistemology, decision making, responsibility, and morality.

### **COURSE OBJECTIVES AND CLASS FORMAT**

This class will focus on helping you acquire and develop a deeper understanding of Cognitive Science and areas of philosophy by engaging with primary texts in both fields. Doing so will also require students to understand and use a wide range of formal techniques that are common within Cognitive Science. The evaluations throughout the course – which include a mix of problem sets, quizzes, exams, and an essay – reflects the nature of these objectives.

Each class will explore assigned reading(s) through a mixture of lecture and discussion. These readings will be drawn from both the philosophical literature as well as contemporary empirical research within Cognitive Science. Each student is required to have done the assigned reading(s) in order to actively participate in the course.

### **INTENDED AUDIENCE**

This class is designed to accommodate a wide variety of students at various levels of background in philosophy and the various other fields that make up Cognitive Science. This means that no prior background in philosophy or Cognitive Science is required for this class.

### **READING SCHEDULE**

#### **Lecture 1: What is Cognitive Science?**

No reading

## **1. IS THE MIND A COMPUTATIONAL MACHINE?**

### **Lecture 2:** Thought as computation

Readings: Pinker (1999), selection on “Reverse engineering the psyche.” from Chapter 1 of *How the Mind Works*. Pinker (1999), selection “Thinking machines” from Chapter 2 of *How the Mind Works*.

### **Lecture 3:** Thought as computation cont.

Reading: Turing (1936), “On Computable Numbers, with an Application to the Entscheidungsproblem”

### **Lecture 4:** Background: Free will and determinism

Reading: Sider (2005), “Free Will and Determinism”

### **Lecture 5:** Free will and determinism

Reading: Greene and Cohen (2004), “For the law, neuroscience changes nothing and everything.”

### **Lecture 6:** Free will and determinism cont.

Reading: Nahmias (2011), “Is Neuroscience the Death of Free Will?”

### **Lecture 7:** Consciousness

Reading: Chalmers (1995) “The Puzzle of Conscious Experience.”

### **Lecture 8:** Consciousness cont.

Reading: Cooney & Gazzaniga (2003) “Neural disorders and the structure of human consciousness.”

## **2. MORALITY AND RESPONSIBILITY**

### **Lecture 9:** The cognitive science of moral decision making

Readings: Green (2001), “An fMRI investigation of emotional engagement in moral judgement”. John Mikhail (2008), “Universal moral grammar”. Haidt (2007), “The New Synthesis in Moral Psychology”

### **Lecture 10:** Confounds in Moral Judgements

Reading: Strohminger N., Lewis R., Meyer D. (2011). “Divergent effects of different positive emotions on moral judgment”.

### **Lecture 11:** Confounds in Moral Judgements cont.

Readings: Duke & Bègue (2014), "The drunk utilitarian: Blood alcohol concentration predicts utilitarian responses in moral dilemmas". Hall, L., Johansson, P., & Strandberg, T. (2012). "Lifting the veil of morality: Choice blindness and attitude reversals on a self-transforming survey".

**Lecture 12:** What can we learn from the empirical data?

Readings: Berker (2009), "The Normative Insignificance of Neuroscience".

**Lecture 13:** What can we learn from the empirical data? cont.

Readings: Kumar, V. & Campbell, R. (2012), "On the Normative Significance of Experimental Moral Psychology". Kumar, V. (forthcoming), "The Ethical Significance of Cognitive Science".

**Lecture 14:** What is Implicit Bias?

Readings: Devine, P., (1989), "Stereotypes and prejudice: Their automatic and controlled components". Greenwald, A. & M. Banaji, (1995), "Implicit social cognition: attitudes, self-esteem, and stereotypes"

**Lecture 15:** Implicit Bias cont.

Reading: Amodio, D. & P. Devine, (2006), "Stereotyping and evaluation in implicit race bias: evidence for independent constructs and unique effects on behavior". Schmid, & Amodio, D. (2016). "Power effects on implicit prejudice and stereotyping: The role of intergroup face processing"

**Lecture 16:** The Structure of Implicit Bias

Reading: Mandelbaum, E. (2016), "Attitude, Inference, Association: On the Propositional Structure of Implicit Bias"

**Lecture 17:** Implicit Bias?

Readings: Oswald, F. L., et al. (2013), "Predicting ethnic and racial discrimination: A meta-analysis of IAT criterion studies". Carlsson, R., & Agerström, J. (2016) "A closer look at the discrimination outcomes in the IAT literature".

**Lecture 18:** Implicit Bias and Responsibility cont.

Reading: Saul, J. (2012), "Scepticism and Implicit Bias". Zheng, R. (2016), "Attributability, Accountability, and Implicit Bias"

### **3. PERSONAL IDENTITY**

**Lecture 19:** Philosophical perspectives on personal identity

Readings: Parfit, D. (1995), "The Unimportance of Identity". Thomson, J. (1997), "People and Their Bodies".

**Lecture 20:** Cognitive scientific perspective on personal identity

Readings: Strohminger, N. and Nichols, S. (2014), "The Essential Moral Self". Strohminger N. and Nichols, N. (2015), "Neurodegeneration and Identity".

## **4. EPISTEMOLOGY AND DECISION MAKING**

**Lecture 21:** Philosophical perspective on perception

Reading: Siegel, S. & Silins, N., (2015), "The Epistemology of Perception". Siegel, S. (2012), "Cognitive Penetrability and Perceptual Justification".

**Lecture 22:** Perception as Bayesian inference

Readings: : Ramachandran, V. and Antis, S. (1986) "The perception of apparent motion". Scholl, B. (2005) Innateness and (Bayesian) Visual Perception.

**Lecture 23:** Bayesianism in philosophy

Readings: Easwaran, K. (2011), "Bayesianism I: Introduction and Arguments in Favor". Easwaran, K. (2011), "Bayesianism II: Applications and Criticisms"

**Lecture 24:** Bayesian brains

Readings: Gopnik, A. (2010), "How Babies Think". Saffran, J., Aslin, R., Newport, E. (1996), "Statistical Learning by 8-Month-Old Infants".

**Lecture 25:** Rational decision making?

Readings: Samuels, R. & Stich, S. (2004), "Rationality & Psychology". Kahneman, D. (2011), *Thinking, Fast and Slow* (excerpts).

**Lecture 26:** Rational decision making

Reading: Railton, P. (2014), "The Affective Dog and Its Rational Tale: Intuition and Attunement". Kable, J. & Glimcher, P. "The Neurobiology of Decision: Consensus and Controversy".

**Lecture 27:** Rational decision making cont.

Readings: Enomoto, K. et al. (2011), "Dopamine neurons learn to encode the long-term value of multiple future rewards". Schultz, W. (2000), "Multiple reward signals in the brain". Singh, S., Lewis, R., Barto, A. (2010), "Intrinsically Motivated Reinforcement Learning: An Evolutionary Perspective"

**Lecture 28:** Wrap up and review

# PHILOSOPHY OF LANGUAGE

## Social and Political Language

---

### COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course aims to provide students with in depths knowledge about contemporary issues within philosophy of language and will do so by exploring distinctively political and social aspects of language and discourse. The course will begin by providing a broad background in the major concepts in philosophy of language that will be needed to examine the political and social language that will follow in the course. The range of linguistic expressions that will be looked at in the class include: slurs, apologies, 'dog-whistle' speech, propaganda, and implicatures. We will read foundational work in philosophy of language and political philosophy, very broadly construed, in addition to reading accessible recent work in social and political philosophy of language.

### COURSE OBJECTIVES AND CLASS FORMAT

This class will focus on helping you acquire and develop a deeper understanding of philosophy of language in general along with contemporary work in the field that focuses on political and social language. The evaluations throughout the course – which include a mix of reading responses, quizzes, exams, and essays – reflects the nature of these objectives.

Each class will explore assigned reading(s) through a mixture of lecture and discussion. Each student is required to have done the assigned reading(s) in order to actively participate in the course.

### INTENDED AUDIENCE

This class is designed to accommodate a wide variety of students at various levels of background in philosophy of language and political philosophy. This means that no prior background in either of these sub-fields of philosophy is required.

### READING SCHEDULE

**Lecture 1:** What is philosophy of language?

No reading

## 1. PHILOSOPHY OF LANGUAGE BACKGROUND

**Lecture 2:** Meaning part 1

Readings: Elbourne, P. (2011), *Meaning: A slim guide to semantics*, chpt. 1 "Definitions", chpt. 2 "What are word meanings?".

**Lecture 3: Meaning part 2**

Readings: Grice, H.P. (1957), "Meaning". Davidson, D. (1967), "Truth and Meaning".

**Lecture 4: Meaning part 3**

Readings: Elbourne, P. (2011), *Meaning: A slim guide to semantics*, chpt. 5 "Semantic properties of sentences", chpt. 6 "Meaning and grammar".

**Lecture 5: Meaning part 4**

Reading: Elbourne, P. (2011), *Meaning: A slim guide to semantics*, chpt. 7 "Meaning and Context". Stanley, J. (2005), "Semantics in Context".

**Lecture 6: Pragmatics part 1**

Reading: Austin, J.L. excerpts from *How to Do Things with Words*

**Lecture 7: Pragmatics part 2**

Reading: Grice, H.P. (1975), "Logic and Conversation"

**Lecture 8: Pragmatics part 3**

Readings: Stalnaker, R. (1973), "Presuppositions". Stalnaker, R. (1974), "Pragmatic Presuppositions".

**Lecture 9: Pragmatics part 4**

Readings: Lewis, D. (1979), "Scorekeeping in a Language Game". Heim, I. (1983), "On the projection problem for presuppositions".

## **2. SUBORDINATING SPEECH**

**Lecture 10: Pornography part 1**

Reading: Nancy Bauer, chapters 6 and 7 of *How to Do Things with Pornography*: "What Is to Be Done with Austin?" and "On Philosophical Authority"

**Lecture 11: Pornography part 2**

Readings: MacKinnon, C. (1993). *Only Words* (excerpts). Rae Langton & Caroline West (1999), "Scorekeeping in a pornographic language game".

**Lecture 12: Pornography part 3**

Readings: Maitra, I. (2004), "Silence and Responsibility". Maitra, I. (2009), "Silencing Speech".

**Lecture 13: Pornography part 4**



Reading: Maitra, I. and M.K. McGowan. (2007), "The Limits of Free Speech: Pornography and the Question of Coverage."

### **3. RACIALLY CHARGED LANGUAGE**

#### **Lecture 14: Hate Speech part 1**

Reading: Mary Kate McGowan & Ishani Maitra (2009), "On Racist Hate Speech and the Scope of a Free Speech Principle".

#### **Lecture 15: Hate Speech part 2**

Reading: Mary Kate McGowan, (2012) "On 'Whites Only' Signs and Racist Hate Speech: Verbal Acts of Racial Discrimination".

#### **Lecture 16: Stereotyping and Generics part 1**

Reading: Sally Haslanger (2011), "Ideology, Generics, and Common Ground".

#### **Lecture 17: Stereotyping and Generics part 2**

Reading: Sarah-Jane Leslie (forthcoming) "The Original Sin of Cognition: Fear, Prejudice, and Generalization"

#### **Lecture 18: Slurs part 1**

Readings: Luvell Anderson & Ernie Lepore (2011), "Slurring Words". Elisabeth Camp (2013), "Slurring Perspectives".

#### **Lecture 19: Slurs part 2**

Reading: Robin Jeshion (2013), "Slurs and Stereotypes"

#### **Lecture 20: Slurs part 3**

Reading: Renée Jorgensen Bolinger (2015), "The Pragmatics of Slurs".

### **4. PROPAGANDA**

#### **Lecture 21: Propaganda part 1**

Reading: Jason Stanley (2015), Introduction and chapter 1 of *How Propaganda Works*

#### **Lecture 22: Propaganda part 2**

Reading: Jason Stanley (2105), chapter 2 of *How Propaganda Works*

#### **Lecture 23: Propaganda part 3**

Reading: Jason Stanley (2105), chapter 3 of *How Propaganda Works*

**Lecture 24:** Propaganda part 4

Reading: Jason Stanley (2105), chapter 4 of *How Propaganda Works*

## **5. DOGWHISTLES AND APOLOGIES**

**Lecture 25:** Dogwhistles part 1

Reading: Tali Mendelberg, chapter 4 of *The Race Card: “The Political Psychology of Implicit Dogwhistles Communication”*

**Lecture 26:** Dogwhistles part 2

Readings: Jennifer Saul (ms), “Dogwhistles, Political Manipulation, and Philosophy of Language”.

**Lecture 27:** Apologies part 1

Reading: Danielle Celermajer (2009), chapter 2 of *The Sins of the Nation and the Ritual of Apologies: “Apologies as Speech Acts”*.

**Lecture 28:** Apologies part 2

Reading: Alice MacLachlan (2015), “ ‘Trust Me, I’m Sorry’: The Paradox of Public Apology”

# PHILOSOPHY OF SCIENCE

## Classic and Contemporary Debates

---

### COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course will offer an introduction to some central questions in the Philosophy of Science. We will begin by asking some general questions about scientific methodology:

- What is science?
- What distinguishes it from pseudo-scientific methodologies?
- Should we believe that scientific methodology will lead us toward truth?
- How does evidence support or confirm a scientific theory?
- What can science teach us about the nature of reality?

We will then shift gears slightly and look at some questions about the metaphysical status of some concepts which appear regularly in scientific practice: *objectivity, explanation, laws, dispositions, causation, and chance*. During this section of the course, we will be considering questions such as:

- What is it for something to be a law of nature?
- What is a chance?
- What is it for two events to be causally related?
- What makes claims about what would have happened true or false?

### COURSE OBJECTIVES AND CLASS FORMAT

The focus and objective of this class is twofold. The first is to provide a broad overview of substantive issues in the philosophy of science. This will be done by engaging with historical and contemporary works in various areas of philosophy of science. The second is to develop our critical thinking skills along with various tools that are used in scientific practice. As a result, you should be prepared to learn the fundamentals of formal logic and probability theory, for example. No background knowledge in these tools and techniques will be required nor will they be assumed. However, a willingness to work through mathematical content is required. The evaluations throughout the course – which include a mix of problem sets, quizzes, exams, and an essay – reflects the nature of these objectives.

Each class will explore assigned reading(s) through a mixture of lecture and discussion. Each student is required to have done the assigned reading(s) in order to actively participate in the course.

### INTENDED AUDIENCE

This class is for anyone who has an interest in learning about the nature of science and scientific investigation, regardless of whether you are coming from a philosophy background or a scientific background. As such, this class is designed to accommodate a

wide variety of students at various levels of background in philosophy and the sciences. This means that no prior background in philosophy of science or in any particular science is required. However, having taken at least an introductory course in philosophy is recommended.

## **READING SCHEDULE**

### **1. WHAT IS SCIENCE?**

**Lecture 1:** Science and Pseudo-Science part 1

Reading: Popper, K. (1957), "Science: Conjectures and Refutations".

**Lecture 2:** Science and Pseudo-Science part 2

Reading: Kuhn, T. (1970), "Logic of Discovery or Psychology of Research?".

**Lecture 3:** Science and Pseudo-Science part 3

Readings: Lakatos, I. (1977), "Science and Pseudo-Science". Ruse, M. (1982), "Creation Science is not Science".

### **2. SCIENTIFIC THINKING**

**Lecture 4:** Confirmation and Induction part 1

Reading: Hempel, C. (1945), "Studies in the Logic of Confirmation".

**Lecture 5:** Confirmation and Induction part 2

Readings: Popper, K. (1959), "The Problem of Induction". Skyrms, B. (1966), *Choice and Chance* chpt. 3 "The Traditional Problem of Induction".

**Lecture 6:** Confirmation and Induction part 3

Reading: Goodman, N. (1955), *Faction, Fiction and Forecast* chpt 3 "The New Riddle of Induction".

**Lecture 7:** Bayesianism part 1

Reading: Strevens, M. (2012) *Notes on Bayesian Confirmation Theory* §1–4. Weisberg, J. "A Probability Primer for Philosophers".

**Lecture 8:** Bayesianism part 2

Reading: Strevens, M. (2012) *Notes on Bayesian Confirmation Theory* §6–8.

### **3. CHARACTER OF SCIENTIFIC THEORIES**

**Lecture 9: Realism? part 1**

Reading: Hempel, C. (1958), "The Theoretician's Dilemma" (excerpts). Sellars, W. (1963), "Phenomenalism". Sellars, W. (1961), "The Language of Theories" (excerpts).

**Lecture 10: Realism? part 2**

Maxwell, G. (1962), "The Ontological Status of Theoretical Entities"

**Lecture 11: Realism? part 3**

Reading: van Fraassen, B. (1982), "Arguments Concerning Scientific Realism" (excerpts). van Fraassen, B. (1976), "To Save the Phenomena" (excerpts).

**Lecture 12: Realism? part 4**

Reading: Laudan, L. and Leplin, J. (1991), "Empirical Equivalence and Underdetermination". Laudan, L. (1981), "A Confutation of Convergent Realism".

**Lecture 13: Realism? part 6**

Hesse, M. (1965), "The Explanatory Function of Metaphor".

## **4. LAWS OF NATURE**

**Lecture 14: Laws of Nature part 1**

Reading: Hempel, C. (1966), *Philosophy of Natural Science*, chpt 5 "Laws and Their Role in Scientific Explanation".

**Lecture 15: Laws of Nature part 2**

Reading: Tooley, M. (1977), "The Nature of Laws". Dretske, F. (1977), "Laws of Nature".

**Lecture 16: Laws of Nature part 3**

Reading: Lewis, D. (1973), "The Laws of Nature". Lewis, D. (1986), "Humean Supervenience".

**Lecture 17: Laws part 4**

Beatty, J. (1995), "The Evolutionary Contingency Thesis."

**Lecture 18: Laws part 5**

Reading: Lange, M. (2002), "Who's Afraid of *Ceteris-Paribus* Laws? (or: How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love Them)".

## **5. CAUSATION, CHANCE, AND COUNTERFACTUALS**

**Lecture 19: Chance**

Reading: Hájek, A. (2011), *Interpretations of Probability* §3.

**Lecture 20:** Chance continued

Reading: Hájek, A. (2011), *Interpretations of Probability* §3.

**Lecture 21:** Causation

Reading: Mackie, J.L. (1965), “Causes and Conditions”.

**Lecture 22:** Causation continued

Reading: Hesslow, H. (1976), “Two Notes on the Probabilistic Approach to Causality”.  
Cartwright, N. (1983), “Causal Laws and Effective Strategies”.

**Lecture 23:** Counterfactuals

Reading: Goodman, N. (1955), *Fact, Fiction, and Forecast* chpt. 1 “The Problem of Counterfactual Conditionals”. Martin, C.B. (1994), “Dispositions and Conditionals”.

**Lecture 24:** Counterfactuals continued

Readings: Lewis, D. (1973), *Counterfactuals*, selections. Lewis, D. (1973), “Causation”.

## **6. FEMINIST PHILOSOPHY OF SCIENCE**

**Lecture 25:** Feminist Critique part 1

Reading: Longino, H. and Doell, R. (1983), “Body, Bias, and Behavior: A Comparative Analysis of Reasoning in Two Areas of Biological Science”.

**Lecture 26:** Feminist Critique part 2

Reading: Lloyd, E. (1995), “Feminism as Method: What Scientists Get That Philosophers Don’t”.

**Lecture 27:** Feminist Critique part 3

Reading: Longino, H. (1995), “Gender, Politics, and the Theoretical Virtues”.

**Lecture 28:** Feminist Critique part 4

Reading: Harding, S. (1995) “Strong Objectivity: A Response to the New Objectivity Question”

## **ANALYTIC PHILOSOPHY**

### **An Evolution of Analytic Thought**

---

#### **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

In this course, we'll read classic works of analytic philosophy that have helped shape the discipline as we currently know it. In each case, the classic texts will be followed by contemporary work that serves to highlight the evolution of the philosophical debate.

For instance, we'll read Frege's "On Sense and Reference" and then talk about famous puzzles and theories of hyperintensionality developed over half a century later. We'll read Carnap's "Empiricism, Semantics, and Ontology" and talk about how contemporary metaphysicians have appropriated or rejected Carnap's distinction between internal and external questions. The course will be split into various units that each focus on an area of analytic philosophy. These areas will include: philosophy of language, metaphysics, epistemology, philosophy of mind, and philosophical methodology.

Over the course of the term, you'll gain a solid grounding in the twentieth-century history of analytic philosophy, as we progress through representative texts from that period. But you will also come to appreciate these texts as catalysts and constituents of ongoing investigations and debates.

#### **COURSE OBJECTIVES AND CLASS FORMAT**

This class will allow you acquire and develop a deep understanding of analytic philosophy through a historical perspective. This will be done by reading some of the earliest foundations of the discipline and moving to works that are as contemporary as can be. The evaluations throughout the course – which include a mix of reading responses, quizzes, exams, and essays – reflects the nature of these objectives.

Each class will explore assigned reading(s) through a mixture of lecture and discussion. Each student is required to have done the assigned reading(s) in order to actively participate in the course.

#### **INTENDED AUDIENCE**

This class is designed to accommodate a wide variety of students at various levels of background in analytic philosophy. This means that no prior background in any particular sub-field of analytic philosophy is required. However, having some background in a sub-field of analytic philosophy and in logic is recommended.

## **READING SCHEDULE**

### **Lecture 1: Context and Scope of Analytic Philosophy**

No reading

## 1. PHILOSOPHY OF LANGUAGE

**Lecture 2:** Sense and Reference part 1

Reading: Frege, G. (1892), "On Sense and Reference".

**Lecture 3:** Sense and Reference part 2

Reading: Kripke, S. (1979), "A Puzzle About Belief".

**Lecture 4:** Sense and Reference part 3

Reading: Salmon, N. (1986), *Frege's Puzzle*, chpt. 8.

**Lecture 5:** Denoting part 1

Reading: Russell, B. (1905), "On Denoting".

**Lecture 6:** Denoting part 2

Readings: Strawson, P.F. (1950), "On Referring". Russell, B. (1957), "Mr. Strawson on Referring".

**Lecture 7:** Denoting part 3

Reading: Donnellan, K. (1966), "Reference and Definite Descriptions".

**Lecture 8:** Denoting part 4

Reading: Rothchild, D. (2007), "The Elusive Scope of Descriptions".

## 2. METAPHYSICS

**Lecture 9:** State of Metaphysics part 1

Reading: Quine, V.W. (1948), "On What There is".

**Lecture 10:** State of Metaphysics part 2

Reading: Carnap, R. (1950) "Empiricism, Semantics, and Ontology".

**Lecture 11:** State of Metaphysics part 3

Reading: Quine, V.W. (1951). "Two Dogmas of Empiricism".

**Lecture 12:** State of Metaphysics part 4

Readings: Price, H. (2009), "Metaphysics after Carnap: the Ghost who Walks?". Soames, S. (2009), "Ontology, Analyticity, and Meaning: the Quine-Carnap Dispute".



**Lecture 13:** State of Metaphysics part 5

Readings: Melia, J. (1995), "On What There's Not". Manley, D. (2009), "When Best Theories Go Bad".

### **3. EPISTEMOLOGY**

**Lecture 14:** Pre-Gettier part 1

Readings: Russell, B. (1910), "Knowledge by Acquaintance and Knowledge by Description". Russell, B. (1912), *Problems of Philosophy* chpt. 5. Russell, B. (1914), *Our Knowledge of the External World* chpt. 3.

**Lecture 15:** Pre-Gettier part 2

Reading: Moore, G.E. (1939) "Proof of an External World".

**Lecture 16:** Pre-Gettier part 3

Reading: Wittgenstein, L. (1969), *On Certainty* selections.

**Lecture 17:** Gettier and Post-Gettier part 1

Readings: Gettier, E. (1966), "Is Justified True Belief Knowledge?". Zagzebski, L. (1994), "The Inescapability of Gettier Problems"

**Lecture 18:** Gettier and Post-Gettier part 2

Readings: Williamson, T. (2000), *Knowledge and its Limits* chpt. 1.

**Lecture 19:** Gettier and Post-Gettier part 3

Readings: Weinberg, J., Nichols, S., and Stich, S. (2001), "Normativity and Epistemic Intuitions". Nagel, J. (2012), "Intuitions and Experiments: A Defense of the Case Method in Epistemology". Boyd, K. and Nagel, J. (2014), "The Reliability of Epistemic Intuitions".

### **4. PHILOSOPHY OF MIND**

**Lecture 20:** The Mental and Physical part 1

Readings: Russell, B. (1914), "On the Nature of Acquaintance". Russell, B. (1921), *The Analysis of Mind*, selections. Russell, B. (1927), *The Analysis of Matter*, selections.

**Lecture 21:** The Mental and Physical part 2

Readings: Ryle, G. (1949), "Descartes' Myth". Carnap, R. (1933), "Psychology in Physical Language". Putnam, H. (1968), "Brains and Behaviour".

**Lecture 22:** The Mental and Physical part 3

Readings: Putnam, H. (1973), "The Nature of Mental States". Block, N. (1978), "Troubles with Functionalism" (excerpt).

**Lecture 23:** Consciousness and Qualia part 1

Readings: Wittgenstein, L. (1953), *Philosophical Investigations*, selections. Nagel, T. (1974) "What is it Like to Be a Bat?".

**Lecture 24:** Consciousness and Qualia part 1

Reading: Chalmers, D. (1995) "Facing Up to the Problem of Consciousness". Cooney & Gazzaniga (2003) "Neural disorders and the structure of human consciousness".

## **5. PHILOSOPHICAL METHODOLOGY**

**Lecture 25:** Ordinary Language Philosophy part 1

Readings: Wittgenstein, L. (1953), *Philosophical Investigations*, selections. Wittgenstein, L. (1958), *The Blue and Brown Books*, selections.

**Lecture 26:** Ordinary Language Philosophy part 2

Readings: Austin, J.L. (1956). "A Plea for Excuses". Austin, J.L. (1962), *How to Do Things With Words*, selections. Grice, H.P. (1989), *Studies in the Way of Words*, selections.

**Lecture 27:** Experimental Philosophy part 1

Readings: Næss, A. (1933), " "You Assert This?": An Empirical Study of Weight Expressions". Næss, A. (1953), "An Empirical Study of the Expressions "True," "Perfectly Certain" and "Extremely Probable." "

**Lecture 28:** Experimental Philosophy part 2

Readings: Murphy, T. (2014), "Experimental Philosophy: 1935–1965". Knobe, J. (2016), "Experimental Philosophy is Cognitive Science".