

Metaphilosophy

Fall 2017

Course Instructor: Jennifer Nado

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Office: Run Run Shaw Tower 10.05

Office Hours: M 1:30-3:30

Course Number: PHIL 2530

Time: M 3:30-5:20

Location: Centennial Campus CPD-LG.60

Course Description:

This course will consist in a critical examination of various recent topics in metaphilosophy - that is, the philosophy of philosophy. Our focus will be on the nature of philosophical knowledge, and the possible methods for acquiring it. We will begin by looking at theories of a priori knowledge, from modern philosophy to early analytic to contemporary. Then, we will examine more recent debates surrounding the use of intuition in philosophical theorizing, as well as discussions of the methods of conceptual analysis, reflective equilibrium, and thought experimentation. Finally, we will look at the rise of a recent methodological movement known as 'experimental philosophy', and examine several critical responses to it.

Readings:

All readings will be posted electronically on the course's Moodle website. For each topic, there will be one 'required' reading which gives an overview of the topic - these are listed below in the course schedule section. I will also post more in-depth, supplemental readings on the Moodle website - these are optional. It is recommended you read the optional readings for the topics you choose to write papers on – see the section below on papers.

Assessment:

Mid-term paper: 40%

Final paper: 40%

Participation and attendance: 20%

Grading scale:

97% or higher = A+

93-96.9% = A

90-92.9% = A-

87-89.9% = B+

83-86.9% = B
80-82.9% = B-
77-79.9% = C+
73-76.9% = C
70-72.9% = C-
67-69.9% = D+
60-66.9% = D
Below 60% = F

Papers:

You will write two papers during the semester, both approximately 1500-2500 words long. Papers will be turned in via Moodle, and comments will be added to the paper electronically. Due dates are on the schedule below.

Papers are scored on three criteria, for a possible score of 40 points: comprehension of the course material (15 points), quality of argumentation (15 points), and writing skill/clarity (10 points). I will make a more detailed grading rubric available through Moodle several weeks before the midterm paper is due.

The midterm paper should focus on one of the lecture topics from the first half of class; the final paper should focus on one of the lecture topics from the second half of class. I will provide a few sample paper ideas via Moodle, but I encourage you to choose your own. I highly encourage doing additional reading for the topics you choose to write on – either the supplemental readings, or your own research (or both!)

Late papers are penalized by 5 points; I will not accept papers more than 1 week late unless by prior arrangement or in exceptional circumstances.

Plagiarism:

Citing the materials you've used in your papers is extremely important. You must cite your source if you a) use a direct quote from a paper/book/online source (including course readings); or b) discuss an idea from a paper/book/online source outside of assigned course readings.

Make sure you've listed your sources in a bibliography at the end. For guidelines on how to make an academic bibliography, see <https://www.library.cornell.edu/research/citation/apa>. I prefer the APA citation style, but I'm not picky. The only strict style requirement is that direct quotes must be **in quote marks**, with author and page number supplied either directly after or in a footnote/endnote (for Chicago style). Example for APA style: It's been said that "metaphilosophy is awesome" (Nado, 2017, p. 106).

Papers/exams will be run through the Turnitin plagiarism detector. If you are found to have plagiarized any portion, you will automatically receive a score of 0 on that assignment and may be subject to further

disciplinary action. See <http://www.rss.hku.hk/plagiarism/page2s.htm> for more information on what constitutes plagiarism (or ask me!).

Attendance and Participation:

Philosophy is best learned through discussion and active engagement in a classroom setting. For this reason, a substantial portion of your grade will come from attendance and participation. You will be scored out of 20 points for participation/attendance.

Though I understand that many people are too shy to speak in class, in order to receive a score above 16 in the attendance/participation category you **MUST** actively participate in the course in some way or another. Speaking in class is the easiest way to improve your participation grade, but you can also improve your grade by participating in the online discussion forum, or by asking questions/discussing course material with me after class, during office hours, or through email.

I expect you to attend class. Starting in week 2 (after the add/drop period), I will take attendance. You get one free absence for the term – after that, absences must be excused (dr. note, etc) or they will lower your attendance/participation grade. This can be at least partially offset by participation – so if you're a class skipper, you'd better be prepared to participate quite a bit!

Schedule:

Week 1. Sept 4: Historical Roots I – Rationalism and Empiricism

No required readings

Week 2. Sept 11: Historical Roots II – Early Analytic Philosophy

Beaney – What is Analytic Philosophy?

Week 3. Sept 18: Historical Roots III – Quine, Kripke, Putnam

Soames – Ch. 16 of Philosophical Analysis in the Twentieth Century, Vol. 1

Week 4. Sept 25: Contemporary Rationalism and Empiricism

Bonjour – Ch. 4 of In Defense of Pure Reason

Week 5. Oct 2: The 'Standard Method' – Intuitions, Conceptual Analysis, and Thought Experiments

Laurence and Margolis – Concepts and Conceptual Analysis

Week 6. Oct 9: Early Worries About Intuition

Cummins – Reflections on Reflective Equilibrium

Oct 16 – READING WEEK

MIDTERM PAPER DUE: Friday, Oct. 20

Week 7. Oct 23: Experimental Philosophy I – ‘Negative’ Experimentalism

Weinberg, Nichols, and Stich – Normativity and Epistemic Intuitions

Week 8. Oct 30: Experimental Philosophy II – ‘Positive’ Experimentalism

Knobe – Intentional Action in Folk Psychology – An Experimental Investigation

Week 9. Nov 6: Methodological Worries about X-Phi

Kauppinen – The Rise and Fall of Experimental Philosophy

Week 10. Nov 13: X-Phi and Skepticism

Williamson – Philosophical Criticisms of Experimental Philosophy

Week 11. Nov 20: Do Philosophers Use Intuitions?

Deutsch – Intuitions, Counterexamples, and Experimental Philosophy

Week 12. Nov 27: Conceptual Engineering

Carnap – Selection from The Logical Foundations of Probability

FINAL PAPER DUE: Friday, Dec. 8