

PHI 301/401 Philosophy Seminar I/II

Fall 2008, 1:00-2:50pm, T, CLA 314

Instructor

Dr Jared Bates

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Fall 2008 Office Hours: 1-2 MWF, 11-12 T, and by appointment

<http://vault.hanover.edu/~bates/seminar/>

Philosophy Faculty

John Ahrens, Jared Bates, Don Carrell, Vicki Jenkins, Kate Johnson, Bob Rosenthal, Aimin Shen.

Catalog Description of Philosophy Seminar I

A forum in which philosophy students sharpen skills in research, writing, and dialogues, begin to integrate philosophical studies, and do preliminary work for the senior year.

Catalog Description of Philosophy Seminar II

Preliminary work for the independent study. Examines the nature, structure, and limits of philosophy and its relations with other aspects of culture.

Course Objectives

Through this class students will

1. develop their skills at identifying and reconstructing the central thesis and supporting argument in a piece of philosophical writing;
2. develop dispositions to participate actively in class discussions and debates;
3. be able to distinguish the three main branches (subfields) of philosophy, together with the characteristic questions that fall under each;
4. make substantial preparation toward the Comprehensive Examination;
5. make progress toward the initial stage of the Independent Study (Juniors);
6. complete the initial two stages of the Independent Study (Seniors);
7. help build a vibrant intellectual community among the philosophy majors and faculty, a community that is home to active philosophical inquiry and lively philosophical discussions.

Texts [W] - "online"; [C] - "coursepack"; [L] - "on reserve at library".

O.K. Bouwsma, "Descartes' evil genius" *Philosophical Review* 58/2 (1949). [W]

Roderick Chisholm, "Human freedom and the self" Lindley Lecture (U Kans, 1964). [C]

Philippa Foot, "Virtues and vices" in her *Virtues and vices and other essays in moral philosophy* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1978). [L]

J.L. Mackie, "Evil and omnipotence" *Mind* 64/254 (1955). [W]

G.E. Moore, "Proof of an external world" in his *Philosophical papers* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1959). [L]

Onora O'Neill, "Kantian approaches to some famine problems" in *Matters of life and death*, Tom Regan, ed. (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1980). [C]

Peter Singer, "Famine, affluence, and morality" *Philosophy and Public Affairs* 1/3 (1972). [W]

J.J.C. Smart, "Sensations and brain processes" *Philosophical Review* 68/2 (1959). [W]

Peter Unger, "A defense of skepticism" *Philosophical Review* 80/2 (1971). [W]

Course Requirements & Grading

(i) All students will write eight half-page argument analyses on the reading assignments (these are starred on the reading schedule below), due at the beginning of class on the day the reading is to be covered (worth 25 pts apiece). Late assignments cannot earn a grade. (ii) All students will participate regularly in class discussions of the reading assignments. Participation at these class sessions will be graded (worth a total of 150 pts). Absences from these class sessions obviously lowers your participation grade, but absences from the Winter IS proposals and Fall IS presentations will also lower your participation grade. (iii) Juniors will write an additional half-page argument analysis on the Singer article, due the second week (worth 25 pts). (iv) Seniors will present their IS proposals to the class (worth 25 pts). Detailed assignments will follow.

Grades will be weighted and calculated as follows:

<u>Point Distributions</u>		<u>Letter Grade Distributions</u>	
8 argument analyses, 25ea:	200	A 351-375	B+ 325-337
Class participation:	150		B 313-324
SR IS proposal/ JR extra argument analysis:	25	A- 338-350	B- 300-312
Total:	375	C+ 288-299	D+ 250-262
		C 275-287	D 238-249
		C- 263-274	D- 225-237

F 0-224

Special Information

- Americans with Disabilities Act: If you have any special needs as addressed by the Americans with Disabilities Act and need course materials or tests in alternative formats, notify me immediately. All reasonable efforts will be made to accommodate your special needs.
- Academic Dishonesty: Academic honesty is essential to the intellectual life of the College. Thus, academic dishonesty, such as cheating and plagiarism, is a basis for disciplinary action. No suspected case of academic dishonesty will be taken lightly; all will be handled in accordance with the student conduct code.
- Dropping this course: The deadline for discretionary withdrawal from any class is 5:00pm, Tuesday, 28 Oct.
- Degree Requirements: This course satisfies a major requirement for the Philosophy Major.

Reading schedule

Date	Readings	Topic
Sep 2	--	Course introduction
9	Singer article	Fall IS Proposals / Ethics, Utilitarianism
16	O'Neill article *	Ethics, Deontology
23	Foot article *	Ethics, Virtue
30	Chisholm article *	Metaphysics, Free Will
Oct 7	Mackie article *	Metaphysics, God
14	Smart article *	Metaphysics, Mind and Body
21	--	Fall Break (no class)
28	Moore article *	Epistemology, Empiricism (Skepticism)
Nov 4	Bouwsma article *	Epistemology, Rationalism (Skepticism)
11	Unger article *	Epistemology, Skepticism
18	--	Dinner With Alumni (no class, evening engagement)
25	--	Thanksgiving Break (no class)
Dec 2	--	Winter IS Proposals
Dec 7	Fall IS Presentations will be held during Finals Week; schedule tba.	



"Nihilism"

xkcd.com