

Teaching Dossier

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This is the long version of my teaching dossier.
Original documents and a short version are available at <http://tammolossau.com/td>

Teaching Dossier

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Teaching Statement

Teaching, to me, is the most important and the most rewarding part of working in academic philosophy: it allows me to make a real difference to the way students look at the world, whether they question assumptions of their own thinking, how they respond to opposing views, and to what extent they have the capability and courage to make a case for what they think. Even if philosophy had never made any progress as a discipline, it would be worth keeping a philosophy department around just because engaging with philosophy allows students to grow as thinkers and persons. I focus on that kind of growth in my teaching.

To do so, keeping all students actively engaged is key. I usually begin the semester by writing a controversial thesis on the board – such as “Stones and trees have souls just like humans and animals do.” I then ask students to argue for or against that claim with their neighbor, which makes sure that everyone gets used to talking in class. Throughout the semester, I use a “debating club” format in which students are split up in teams to prepare making the case for some philosophical position. I find it especially useful to have students prepare a case for a position that is different from what they really think, because this often leads them to look at the same issue from a different angle. Formats like this also take the pressure of some students, who may be reluctant to contribute to a discussion if they feel uncertain about what position they ultimately agree with.

When I lecture, I like to keep it short and focus on supplying context for the readings, clarifying the main thesis of the reading and sometimes picking up on especially different passages. I then choose discussion questions that allow students to draw from the readings and be able to contribute things that were in the reading, but not in the lecture. Setting up discussions this way rewards students who have done the reading thoroughly and naturally leads to a more philosophical exchange. During the pandemic, half of my classes were synchronous forum discussions, combined with a taped half-hour lecture. This format worked extremely well: even though students were only required to post once, most of them left about 5 posts, and several students told me that those discussions were one of the highlights of their (academic) week. Because these discussions allowed for better structure and led to contributions even from the more introverted or less confident students, I want to maintain this as a tool for in-person teaching.

Perhaps the most important skill to take away from a philosophy course is the ability to make a careful and sophisticated argument for a position. Because of that, papers are the most important kind of formative assessment and (except for logic classes) deserve to be the main assignment. However, to help students succeed at this I find it useful to supplement these with assignments that help students prepare for such a paper. In my course on philosophy of religion, I split students up into “workshop groups” in which they were asked to peer-review proposals for their papers and give presentations on a paper not on the syllabus they read in preparation for their paper. Combined with feedback from me on their proposals and draft, this greatly improved the quality of the papers, and more importantly often gave students confidence to go about a project that does not just amount to defending or criticizing a class reading.

Formats like workshop groups that stretch throughout the semester, not-quite-serious debating clubs, or “live” online discussions have also helped me foster an inclusive environment in my classes. Under such conditions, it is easier for students to feel that their own perspective is as valid as that of their classmates, which in turn will help the class itself. The experience that has brought this point out clearest for me have been my classes on the philosophy of religion. During this Fall semester, I am teaching a historically oriented class on philosophy of religion at Ashoka, and I have taught a similar class at Johns Hopkins. Both of these classes benefit greatly from the diversity in student’s backgrounds. I structured these classes around the question “what is religion?”, which (contrary to a course that focuses on the question “does God exist?”) allowed for the inclusion of non-Western thinkers on the syllabus – I presented a poster as part of the Teaching Hub at the Eastern APA’s conference in January 2022. As students became comfortable with the class, they began to share their own views, grounded in their personal experience, about what was essential to religion, which we were able to apply, for example, to the contrast between Matthew Tindal’s rationalist picture and Friedrich Schleiermacher’s view that religion is a feeling. That sort of safe environment also led to a willingness to engage with views completely contrary to their own: the more religious students could debate the Marxist arguments for religion being an obstacle to progress, and the atheists could debate Swami Vivekananda’s ideas about religious experience.

While at Ashoka, I am teaching two classes per semester, including an introductory lecture. At Johns Hopkins, I have self-taught six courses, and I have worked as a teaching assistant in over a dozen courses, both at Hopkins and in Göttingen. Over the course of that time, I have always strived to improve, which is why I completed the Johns Hopkins Teaching Academy over the 2019/2020 academic year. In 2020 I was also a finalist for the Excellence in Teaching Awards at the Krieger School for Arts and Sciences. Teaching has always felt like the part of my work that makes a real difference and that I can be proud of, and I therefore see it at the heart of my academic activities.

Summary of Student Evaluations

Numerical Results

COURSES TAUGHT AT ASHOKA

Overall, the quality of the course was good.

(1=Strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=neither agree nor disagree, 4=agree, 5=strongly agree)

<i>Course</i>	<i>Semester</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Course Quality</i>
Symbolic Logic	Spring 2023		tbd
Foundations Course Mind & Behavior	Spring 2023		tbd
Philosophy of Religion: Historical Perspectives	Fall 2022	4	5.00
Foundations Course Mind & Behavior	Fall 2022	29	4.07

COURSES TAUGHT AS PRIMARY INSTRUCTOR AT JHU

Overall course quality

(1=Poor, 2=Weak, 3=satisfactory, 4=Good, 5=Excellent)

<i>Course</i>	<i>Semester</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Course Quality</i>
Problems with Knowledge, Evidence, and Action	Spring 2022	15	4.87
Themes from the Philosophy of Religion	Fall 2020	15	4.67
Do we have souls? If so, what are they?	Winter 2020	7	4.57
Wittgenstein and the Limits of Our World	Winter 2019	6	4.83
Belief in God	Winter 2018	21	3.86
Philosophical Intuitions	Summer 2017	3	4.00

COURSES TAUGHT AS TEACHING ASSISTANT AT JHU

Overall effectiveness, compared to other instructors you have had
(1=Poor, 2=Weak, 3=satisfactory, 4=Good, 5=Excellent)

<i>Course</i>	<i>Semester</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Teaching Effectiveness</i>
Introduction to Formal Logic	Spring 2021	6	4.83
Introduction to Metaphysics	Spring 2020	12	4.67
Philosophic Classics	Fall 2019	14	4.93
Introduction to Formal Logic	Spring 2019	9	4.33
Formal Methods of Philosophy	Fall 2018	10	4.70
Introduction to Formal Logic	Spring 2018	10	5.00
Philosophical Problems	Fall 2017	20	4.30

Highlights from Student Comments

The readings were well-selected, the asynchronous and synchronous lectures were well-structured, and feedback on our work was really helpful. This course prepared me so well for upper-level philosophy courses, and I'll take the things I learned with me going forward. The instructor was also one of the best I've ever had at this university. We need more professors like Tammo!

EVERYTHING is awesome about this course! Tammo did an excellent job getting students engaged in online discussions and ZOOM lecture and class discussions. I really enjoyed the group/team work efforts in discussions of papers.

Tammo LOVES philosophy. Having him as a TA encouraged me to love philosophy as well!

Tammo has been a wonderful TA. [...] He elaborates very well on topics I couldn't completely understand and he is readily available to help at any other times. Office hours had been a great help as well. Moreover, the written comments and rubric makes his grading extremely fair and help my development in writing philosophical arguments. He is so kind and helpful.

I honestly cannot say enough good things about Tammo. He has worked so hard to make what was often a difficult, or at least not especially well explained course, not only understandable, but quite good. Tammo answers emails at any hour of the day, sends homework help, advice, & is always open to meet & help. I honestly don't remember having a TA as good as Tammo in my time at Hopkins. I mean that really sincerely.

I really enjoy the style of close reading we are doing. Every day I feel like I learn something new and exciting. There was never a dull moment.

Professor Lossau covered some fascinating topics in class, which were perhaps unusual for an introductory course surrounding philosophy, but he managed to convey these ideas in a very clear and concise manner. Furthermore, he did not oversimplify things, and encouraged us to think through the complex ideas. It felt like he understood and respected the intellectual capabilities of the students, and designed his course around these. It was truly enjoyable to learn from him, and to engage in discussion both with him and the rest of the class.

This course was meant as a close reading of the Tractatus, it indeed was – the best part of this course is breaking down large chunks of content into easily understandable pieces. I no longer feel Wittgenstein is too difficult for me to understand.

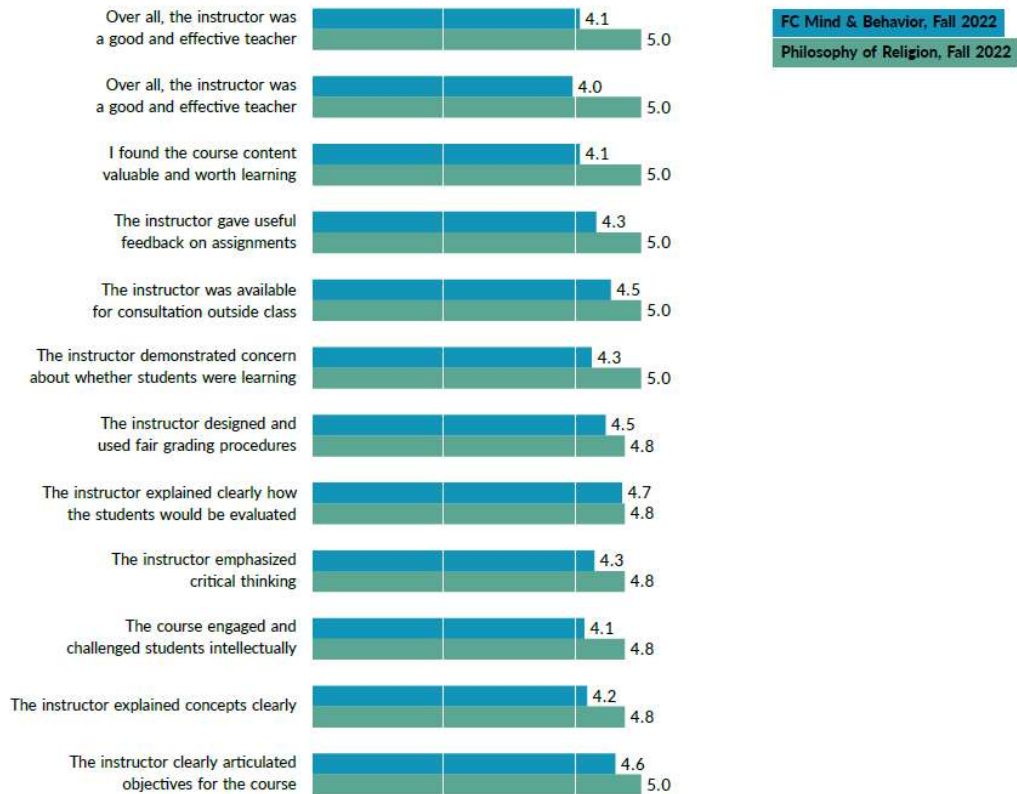
Tammo's discussions and perspectives on our texts were extremely helpful to me in terms of writing essays and thinking about them in general. He pushed us to constantly discuss and engage with the texts in a collaborative manner, which was extremely interesting and thought-provoking. To some extent, the discussions influenced my decision to choose philosophy as my major.

Tammo is the best person + human being I have ever met. He is extremely intelligent, helpful, kind, and considerate. I have actually had some emotional/psychological traumas happen to me during + throughout the course. But Tammo, out of all my TAs, wrote extensive email-notes that made me feel supportive, happy, and more recovered from what happened to me. He also took so much careful time to review my final essay draft before I submitted it to ensure I would do well on the paper. Tammo just sparks so much joy in me; all my friends have even been tired of the amount of times I talk about how good Tammo is. I am so incredibly blessed to have had him in my life. I hope his life is full of immense blessings and joy. Tammo is really the best TA and one of the best human beings I've ever met. I hope he gets his dream job. If you don't hire him, I don't know who you will!

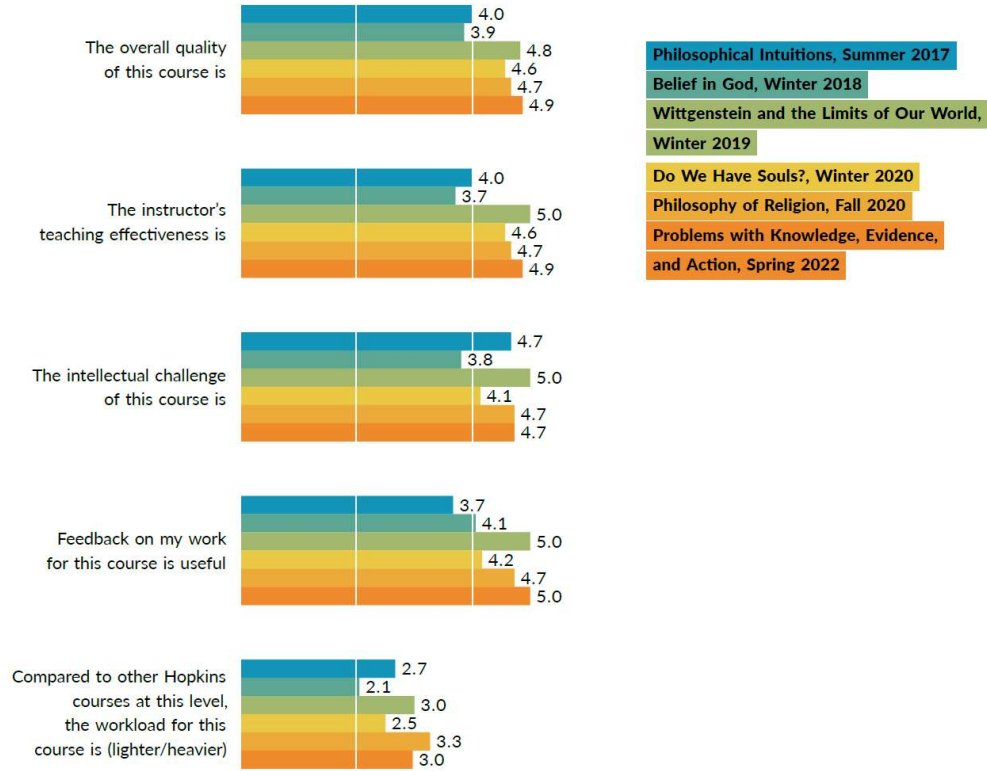
Full Student Evaluations

Courses Taught as Primary Instructor

NUMERICAL RESULTS (ASHOKA)



NUMERICAL RESULTS (JOHNS HOPKINS, PRIMARY)



SURVEY RESPONSES

Philosophy of Religion: Historical Perspectives (Fall 2022)

Please identify what you perceive to be the greatest strengths of this instructor's teaching.

- Lectures were comprehensive and interactive. Fun personality
- the professor took office hours which were very helpful as all doubts were clearly answered
- The greatest strengths of the professor according to me was his explanation of the teaching and grading process as well as igniting an opportunity to make the course work interesting through activities like the Scavenger Hunt.
- Use of examples to explain the concepts
- The enthusiasm.
- Very friendly and approachable
- The quality of readings, the ppts and the documents (that Professor sent to explain grading and paper writing in great detail) were very good. Prof Tammo was always very accomodative of our opinions, very understanding of our situations and willing to give extensions, and always actively tried to make the course and the assignments interesting for us. They even reduced the length of readings to suit our convenience.
- Explains concept nicely, very sympathetic and perceptive to students' feedback.
- The professor liked the material and made very good slides.
- Professor Lossau covered some fascinating topics in class, which were perhaps unusual for an introductory course surrounding philosophy, but he managed to convey these ideas in a very clear and concise manner. Furthermore, he did not oversimplify things, and encouraged us to think through the complex ideas. It felt like he understood and respected the intellectual capabilities of the students, and designed his course around these. It was truly enjoyable to learn from him, and to engage in discussion both with him and the rest of the class.
- Very Good!
- The lecture sessions were very interactive and the Professor integrated new examples and arguments offered by the students very efficiently into the lecture. The Professor created an approachable and warm atmosphere.
- Professor Lossau created a well structured course and taught it well. He also provided an outline of the entire course at the very beginning of the semester and followed it perfectly - this was a big pro. He was also extremely helpful - he was available for office hours and to meet with students all through the semester. He graded fairly and helped spark ideas for paper topics and other assignments.
- His course was well-planned in advance. We were aware of what reading we would be reading each week along with when our assignments would be due. This clarity is much-appreciated.
- Very accommodating on all views in the class. Very engaging with the students
- Their ability to engage with students and their discussions
- the ability to make us question even the most fundamental principles. We learnt how to build strong arguments and learn how to argue in favour of different viewpoints
- Humility
- He was very approachable
- Great
- Course structure
- Structured course and lectures summed up the readings well.
- Well versed and accommodating

Please identify specific changes the instructor could make to improve upon the course or their teaching.

- Discussion sessions were one sided, arguments were sometimes dismissed or not heard. Feedback on grading wasn't satisfactory.
- The readings should be a little easier to consume, as some of them were very hard to get through because of the length and language.
- Use of more notes to explain the readings beforehand
- Definition of the Professor's stand on any given argument.
- I think Professor could be more assertive in class. Also, sometimes the class seemed to be a bit too slow and off-the-track so I think that could also be improved upon.
- nothing as such
- I think there should have been a question a week sort of format with the readings where we pose a question on Google Classroom after each reading, and the professor could formulate some of the class over those particular doubts or thoughts.
- Make the lectures slightly more engaging, perhaps by making in-class discussions more frequent.
- Very Good!
- Perhaps the instructor could return assignments in a more timely fashion. Sometimes the lectures and themes discussed felt repetitive and tedious in nature.
- Drop the Husserl readings and include more papers in the morality and nature section of the course (more recent papers like Richard Joyce's would great too)
- Perhaps it is the nature of the subject(Philosophy) to be tedious and hard to engage with, so classes felt a little dry often. Professor can make classes more interesting.
- Cut down on the readings. As an FC, this course had readings that were not only difficult but also extremely lengthy.
- after assignments get graded, it would be helpful to discuss some common mistakes, and how to not repeat them moving forward
- More interactive and engaging content that caters to a larger audience
- His teaching style could have been more interesting
- Not much, course was good, lectures could've been more engaging.
- more engaging LS
- Could make the lectures more interesting and engaging.
- Since FC is often the first interaction we have with philosophy, maybe use shorter papers and also make it more engaging.

Please comment on which course materials and/or assignments you found most useful and which you found least useful.

- All except scavenger hunt
- All material was interesting, the most interesting part of the course was the part where morality was discussed.
- The course material that I found most useful was the discussion on ethics and the discussion that took place on the trolley problem.
- Most useful- class examples and discourse Least useful-N/A
- Most useful- Final paper Least useful- all the other assignments.
- Readings were overall interesting
- Modern philosophers like Jackson, Sprigge, Churchland were my favorites as I could relate to them well and probably owing to my lack of interest in philosophy, I did not like ancient philosophers much.
- rubrics for each assignment and the guide for the paper very were helpful

- The slides were very useful. The essays had very little continuity with each other and there were too many of them with too little word count to expand on the idea.
- The very first assignment where we learned how to break break down and understand an argument was very useful. All of the assignments and coursework felt like it was useful not only in teaching us philosophy but also in helping us develop useful skills like critical thinking, better argumentation, reading difficult texts etc. that would be applicable everywhere.
- Very Good!
- All assignments except for the scavenger hunt were useful and constructive.
- All resources provided to us for assignments and readings were helpful. Resources for readings and assignments were provided well in advance which allowed us to follow readings and plan out papers well.
- readings were interesting and short paper assignments were intellectually interesting
- Google form assignment, short assignments were useful. The end term was too open ended. There was no question given, and people could either write a paper or do something creative. I fail to see how this would bring about fair grading.
- the four sentence paper and videos attached along with the readings were very helpful in understand the concept
- Quiz, and 4 sentence paper were useful. The mid term paper less useful because we didn't have enough knowledge about philosophy.
- Panpsychism, Turing, Utilitarianism
- All materials were useful but heavy and difficult to follow. Guides/videos explaining the same thing could've been suggested to complement the readings.
- Some of the readings were useful and the assignments were simple and clear.
- Most papers were interesting, especially Turing and Smith, but some were quite absurd, like Albahari.

Philosophy of Religion: Historical Perspectives (Fall 2022)

Please identify what you perceive to be the greatest strengths of this instructor's teaching.

- sweet, open minded
- Professor was extremely good at explaining concepts, he was extremely helpful in papers, and was extremely consistent. The class was structured extremely well and he was very understanding of students' concerns.
- Very in tune with students' learning.

Please identify specific changes the instructor could make to improve upon the course or their teaching.

- some lectures get boring. would love more controversial texts and debates
- None!
- Slightly more discussion-oriented classes would help.

Please comment on which course materials and/or assignments you found most useful and which you found least useful.

- no
- All materials were extremely helpful, like the undergrad paper guide and all the slides
- Most course material was helpful and useful.

Problems with Knowledge, Evidence, and Action (Spring 2022)

What are the best aspects of this course?

- The course did not have a heavy homework load. Instead, the classes were discussion based and structured around a couple of readings we would do over the weekend and the discussion responses we posted. The readings were challenging, but the professor did an amazing job of helping all the students understand the content through engaging lectures and activities. Additionally, the class was on the smaller side, so I felt like I knew everyone in the class on a first name basis even though there were a variety of grade levels and majors. The essays were also open ended enough that we could explore sections of the course that we enjoy and the professor was extremely helpful in terms of feedback.
- Instructor uses a wide variety of teaching techniques&tools, including some online tools I've never seen other instructors use but are very efficient.
- discussions were great; prof was very willing to discuss ideas
- This class is a small class, so there is a lot of engagement with the instructor and with the classmates.
- I really appreciate how Tammo pays attention to every student's comments and discussion. I also like the way he gives feedback on outlines and papers, which are very reasonable, detailed, and helpful.
- the discussion and classes really do provide engaging and interesting viewpoints and concepts on the philosophy of knowledge
- Amazing discussion sections where we could really tackle the material we read for homework. All of the class was engaged, people were always speaking etc.
- The best aspects of this course were the think tanks we did at the end of every unit, as I thought they were very engaging and an effective way to wrap up all the topics discussed in that unit. In general, I thought all the readings and discussions were really interesting and fun to discuss.
- The in-class discussions.
- The discussions on texts read in class, as well as group activities were very helpful in reinforcing knowledge. The workload was bearable, and the instructor did a great job at explaining complex concepts.
- The best aspects of this course include Tammo's teaching. He came to every class energetic and really cared about engaging every student in the class. He wove a tightly-knit community among the students in the class as well. The environment in the classroom was always welcoming.
- Tammo is an excellent instructor. His thorough feedback on writing assignments is extremely helpful. I also really liked the active learning component, with weekly readings and discussion posts pertaining the material. This aspect helped increase comprehension of the topics discussed before lectures, with lectures and class discussions helping to solidify the information. The flexibility in topics for both the discussion posts and the papers was very nice as well.
- The professor is very understanding and willing to help!

What are the worst aspects of this course?

- Literally nothing. This is my favorite class at Hopkins so far to be honest.

- some of the earlier topics regarding internalism v. externalism was difficult, particularly for those with no philosophy background
- N/A
- LOTS of reading
- sometimes Tammo would lecture for too long which could get boring as more discussion is always more entertaining
- The only aspect of this course I didn't like was how early it is, but that has nothing to do with the course itself.
- The readings.
- Some assigned texts were quite difficult compared to others, as well as longer.
- A lot of students dropped the class, so the class size shrunk significantly.
- Sometimes, the lecture would repeat a lot of what we read!

What would most improve this class?

- Maybe more interactive activities and games, but I do think there was a good balance in the class. Some readings were very time consuming and hard to comprehend
- don't rush through internalism v. externalism
- N/A
- 9am class time
- not much. maybe a little more discussions and engaging exercises.
- One thing that could improve this class is having more discussions in smaller groups to switch up the format occasionally.
- Lighter, more applicable/ understandable readings.
- I would add more time for group activities.
- A stricter attendance policy would most improve this class because many students arrived late on many occasions.
- More free-form discussion!

What should prospective students know about this course before enrolling? (You may comment on any aspect of this course such as assumed background, readings, grading systems, and so on.)

- There is no assumed background in philosophy or epistemology. Professor Tammo is very understanding and is such an engaging professor. Be prepared to share your opinions in your class because you will be required to discuss your discussion post with the class (so speak at least once per week). However, there is no judgement from the professor or other students and the environment was very supportive even if your argument isn't fully developed.
- good bit of reading that may be difficult to understand after 10 pages
- There is no background required. There are two readings a week to discuss in class. The grading system is regular with a 93 being an A, and there are 3 papers, a couple of presentations, and there is a participation grade.
- Do as much of the reading as possible and use the discussion board and others responses to fill in any gaps
- There is a lot of writing and discussion involved so definitely be prepared for that.
- A background in philosophy is not necessary at all, as many of the readings are very clear and accessible. There are a few more technical papers, but the instructor explains them well and supplements them during lecture. It is a fairly reading heavy course, but the material is very interesting.

- The readings can be quite difficult but the course content is very interesting and although some of the philosophical papers make the topics seem distant or not as attainable for the average person, there is still a lot of relevance to your own life.
- Prospective students should know that you don't need any background in philosophy to be able to get a good grasp of the concepts. The class is reading-intensive.
- This course is excellent for all students at Hopkins, whether they have prior philosophy experience or not. The instructor is kind and thoughtful, and feedback both in-class and online is responsive and helpful. Tammo is approachable and always there to help all the students.
- This is a typical philosophy class. Stay on top of readings to be engaged.

Themes from the Philosophy of Religion (Fall 2020)

What are the best aspects of this course?

- The material is interesting, and the professor is clearly knowledgeable in the field. The professor was also understanding and willing to work with students to make the course the best possible experience for everyone.
- The readings we do are great because they allow us to read and be familiar firsthand with the big philosophers who wrote on the topic. The discussions are also really fun and engaging, and allow us to fully explore and internalize the conceptual learning. Even though the readings can be hard, the instructor does a great job at explaining them and making sure everyone understands.
- I absolutely loved the structure of course, materials, feed back, professor. I do not think I could have had a better experience.
- Literally everything. The readings were well-selected, the asynchronous and synchronous lectures were well-structured, and feedback on our work was really helpful. This course prepared me so well for upper-level philosophy courses, and I'll take the things I learned with me going forward. The instructor was also one of the best I've ever had at this university. We need more professors like Tammo!
- weekly teams discussions were always amazing and insightful. The weekly readings were also great.
- The live class discussions.
- I loved the material and I think Tammo adjusted to remote really well.
- - The hybrid format worked SUPER well! See more comments below.
- Lively discussion from all members of the class (which may not have been able to happen in the same way if the class was fully in-person)
- Respect for everyone's own beliefs, which is important in a religion class
- Just really excellent content
- -Professor is Friendly and approachable
- Teams worked very well for discussion
- A lot of great student interaction and debate
- Content was very interesting, instructor gave great feedback, pre-discussion videos were very helpful in clearing up any misunderstandings of the texts. Really liked how Tammo helped space out steps in writing our final papers, it allowed for a lot more student-professor contact and guidance early on. Tammo was also very understanding of students' time! I really appreciated how we seldom ran over time,

and that there was no expectation to do additional work outside of class time (other than our essays/assignments).

- Class discussion is insightful. Professor is good at explaining text and provides great feedback. Very personable and genuinely cares. He will go out of his way to help.
- EVERYTHING is awesome about this course! Tammo did an excellent job getting students engaged in online discussions and ZOOM lecture and class discussions. I really enjoyed the group/team work efforts in discussions of papers
- Loved the freedom to digest and present different philosophy perspectives/arguments as if the readings we read were truly ideas that we had to argue for. It helped us more practically learn about those ideas. Loved the mix of online discussion and synchronous Zoom meeting: the multi-modes of communication helped enrich our learning.

What are the worst aspects of this course?

- The course is a mix of philosophy majors and people who are only interested in the subject, and occasionally this separation presents challenges for students who are not experts in methods of philosophical thought or argument.
- Perhaps the fact that readings can be old, so difficult to understand. But this is true for most of philosophy, and not the class' fault. Again, the instructor is great at making sure everyone understands.
- n/a
- Nothing at all. Philosophy of religion isn't something I'm particularly interested in – it kind of just fulfilled a requirement for me, but the excellent teaching of the course made it valuable.
- N/A
- The readings are good but sometimes too long.
- I wish this class would have been writing intensive because I thought it was and I felt like there was enough writing for it to be.
- - Nearly exclusive dependence on Teams – would have been helpful to have class announcements sent through email
- N/A
- Lots of reading and self studying. Term paper is long and is stressful.
- N/A
- There's only 2 big graded papers! Ouchie.

What would most improve this class?

- More instruction on background/central themes to the readings, for students who aren't as familiar with philosophical documents.
- I think the class is already quite nice as is.
- n/a
- Not much, it was already really excellent. I like how halfway through the semester we shortened the discussion section on our Thursday meetings and did more with workshop groups, definitely keep that up.
- N/A
- Not sure. There is a good balance of learning and critical application of ideas.

- I think the class being in person would have been more fun. But it was fun regardless.
- - Another smaller assignment in the middle of the semester, so that so much of the grading does not rest on only the two papers
- Maybe have a list of additional readings and things to look into based on discussions. Would love to explore a few things more outside of the class
- I would recommend setting a syllabus that can be adhered to for the whole semester. Perhaps provide more peer and instructor review sessions.
- N/A
- The first paper should count less, or be given room for revision, so that we can all get back into the swing of things or at least see what the professor is looking for.

What should prospective students know about this course before enrolling? (You may comment on any aspect of this course such as assumed background, readings, grading systems, and so on.)

- A background in philosophy would be useful, and a confidence with reading/writing a philosophical text.
- You can take and enjoy this course with no background in philosophy.
- Great class Great professor, I wish he would teach more courses.
- The instructor for this course is amazing, and no one could provide a better introduction to the philosophy of religion. Having read a few modern philosophers beforehand would be helpful, but you'll be fine if you haven't.
- Fair and thoughtful professor and willing to be flexible in times of need. Also an amazing instructor who handled the material maturely without appearing biased or favored in one direction. An amazing and absolutely fun class, would recommend!
- Don't be afraid to bring your own religious perspectives to your thinking. It broadens other's understanding of the overall discussion.
- It will probe a lot of the most interesting questions about religion and what religion is. It supplies a really good framework for thinking about these things.
- - Some background in either religion and/or philosophy is helpful (I would not take this as your first philosophy class)
- Engage in discussion, do the readings, but don't stress too much if some of them are hard to understand.
- Understanding of philosophy and religion is extremely important although not required. Writing experience is needed to write a solid paper.
- Prepare to dive into unique, diverse literature! Leave your judgement and prejudice outside the door. Be ready to ask questions and tackle the material with analysis and sincere thinking!
- The topics in this class (at least when I took it) were more Christian themed heavy, but we do touch on other religions for a few weeks. But you can write about any religion you want when you write your papers. People of a lot of different religious backgrounds took this class though, and that was cool!

Suppose this class were to run again in a post-pandemic world. What would you think about the following format as a student: the Tuesday classes stay the way they were, i.e. they consist

of a taped lecture and an online discussion on Teams. Only the Thursday classes are taught in-person. Would you prefer this hybrid setup to a fully in-person class?¹

Average response: 3.60 (1=prefer full in-person; 5=prefer hybrid)

- I feel like throwing around raw ideas on Tuesday and then going over the discussion on Thursday and really engaging with each other is really nice, and I think it could work perfectly in hybrid system.
- I really loved having the asynchronous aspect when we were online, but if the course were fully in-person I'm not sure. If we were meeting for classes fully in person, I'd also be okay with having the discussion in person, but I think the Microsoft Teams format was really accommodating.
- I actually really loved the hybrid format, and feel that this class was improved over what its in-person format would have looked like. Multiple Teams discussions allowed for me to read my classmates' responses, consider them, and come back to them later. I was able to link to other sources to further enhance the discussion. Starting Thursday classes with a recap of the Teams convos was useful, too. This was a great idea and one that I hope will carry over into other classes.
- Teams had great discussions that we could pace ourselves and was one of my favorite aspects of the course
- I'm an introvert and online discussions were much easier for me to participate in. It would be important to make sure that those who are not as comfortable talking out loud have space/opportunities to do so!
- I like this! One benefit of the hybrid is that students have time to cook and make a meal while attending the lecture online. Or they have more flexibility that fits their schedule to listen to the lecture and still be heavily involved in the discussions.
- As I commented above: "loved the mix of online discussion and synchronous Zoom meeting: the multi-modes of communication helped enrich our learning." I think people express themselves in different ways and there are pluses and minuses to each mode of communication.

Were the small tasks that were meant to prepare you for the final paper helpful to you, or did you just think of them as additional work?

Average response: 4.40 (1=tasks were not helpful; 5=tasks were very helpful)

- Helped keep me on track, and it was helpful to get feedback on every step so that I knew I was in the right direction.
- So, so helpful. Most instructors don't help us think through our papers like this, but I'm so glad I was able to experience this before going to upper level courses. I think the feedback really improved my writing not only in this course, but in general.
- Ensuring we needed to hand in a draft no doubt made procrastination more difficult and likely led to a better final product.
- I did think of the tasks as additional work as I was doing them. But when finals season rolled around, they were immensely helpful. I started my final paper not from scratch, but with advice from three classmates and the professor. I think that without these small tasks, I would not have constructed as strong of a paper. In the end, I'm very glad we did these tasks, and I would recommend doing them again.

¹ This and the following question were added by me to the survey and do not occur for other classes.

- It got me thinking about the topic earlier than I would have, but probably interfered with the workflow I would've liked for the final paper (would've finished certain things and paced myself in relation to my other classes better than when I had to worry about small tasks)
- VERY helpful to reasonably process through each step getting to the final paper.

Do We Have Souls? If So, What Are they? (Winter 2020)

What are the best aspects of this course?

- The discussion in class were fun and engaging.
- Having the opportunity to learn about interesting philosophical topics in a non-stressful environment. Truly an opportunity to simply ask questions out of curiosity, rather than academic pressure for exceptional academic performance. Professor Lossau is also such a nice human being!
- The best aspect of the course is the end of class discussions that the students engage in with each other. It incentivizes a deeper understanding of the material and allows for further understanding through active argumentation.
- Class discussions Exploring ideas beyond the texts
- Having class discussions was the most fun.

What are the worst aspects of this course?

- The worst aspect of the course is the time limitation, more time is needed to fully understand and support each claim made by the various authors and not enough time is dedicated to each argument.
- A little slow at times
- Group work was rather limiting because we tended to form the same groups.

What would most improve this class?

- More class discussions/debates about opposing views would be good as, at the very least, students learn how to argue for positions that they may not agree with. This is an important skill used to argue against the strongest form of an idea you disagree with and can be carried to other forms of reasoning.
- Less structured discussions given the subject matter
- Having a shorter reading preparation for every reading.

What should prospective students know about this course before enrolling? (You may comment on any aspect of this course such as assumed background, readings, grading systems, and so on.)

- There are a bit of readings that need to be done before class, but they're generally interesting and not super long.
- Prospective students should know that the course is most suited for those who have a real interest in seeking deeper answers about life and reality. While heavier in readings, the work becomes much easier when one has a true interest in the subject.
- Reading every class but only two assignments

Wittgenstein and the Limits of Our World (Winter 2019)

What are the best aspects of this course?

- - Interesting subject matter
- challenging but doable readings
- discussion aspect of class
- effective instructors
- Diving deep into philosophy with open discussions is fun. Also, professors drove the discussion and explained things well.
- This course was meant as a close reading of the Tractatus, it indeed was – the best part of this course is breaking down large chunks of content into easily understandable pieces. I no longer feel Wittgenstein is too difficult for me to understand.
- I love the source material, and I really enjoy the style of close reading we are doing. Everyday I feel like I learn something new and exciting. There was never a dull moment.
- - The instructors' engagement with the texts made the exploration much more exciting.
- Great choice of text for a close reading; I now understand the importance of the Tractatus as a piece of philosophy.
- "Assignments" were directly related to comprehension of the text, and helped in discussion.
- The best aspects of this course were the interesting class discussions of Wittgenstein's work and the professor's use of illustrations and diagrams to explain certain complex concepts.
- Itai and Tammo are great instructors! They very thoughtfully planned out the readings and made sure to answer any and all questions we had in class. I like the small size of the course because we were able to get to know each other and share thoughts as friends.

What are the worst aspects of this course?

- I think 1 hour is sufficient for classtime. 2 hours is too much.
- None.
- Nothing!
- Maybe more discussion would be useful? But I also would much rather hear Itai and Tammo speak than have a superficial discussion.
- Certain points during the class felt like long lecture which was ok, but sometimes in these long explanations it would be difficult to fully understand the ideas that Wittgenstein describes.
- Nothing really comes to mind. The TLP is quite dense. So reading was sometimes difficult, but the class discussions really helped.

What would most improve this class?

- A more consistent workload throughout the class – perhaps requiring shorter preparations for every class from each student but still having students selected to lead discussion or ask questions during two of the classes?
- Cut it down by an hour.
- Sometimes I felt like there was not a set agenda for each class – often we'd have a sort of stop, recollect & see what other ground we should cover. This is good to make sure class discussions were relevant, but maybe sometimes there could be a clear end goal & direction for them.
- Maybe open discussions could be fun? Otherwise everything is great.
- Perhaps a slower pace for readings (which is not always an option to an intersession course).
- Some of the long lectures being broken down into smaller parts followed by class discussion.
- It may be helpful to give a high level overview of the next class's readings before students do it themselves. It would help guide to the reading. Also: I know this can't be helped sometimes, but a room with windows is always nice for longer classes :)

What should prospective students know about this course before enrolling? (You may comment on any aspect of this course such as assumed background, readings, grading systems, and so on.)

- Prior acquaintance with analytic philosophy or philosophy courses could be helpful but is not necessary.
- They go in depth, so read the material and try to grasp it.
- Perhaps taking introductory logic will help understanding the Tractatus, but Tammo & Itai do a fine job explaining what relevant aspects of it you need to know anyway.
- This is a great course. You will learn a lot!
- - very interesting and engaging
- you get a lot out of it
- none of the work/discussion seems tedious
- do the readings so you can participate in great discussion!
- This is a philosophy class that is very logic based. It is different from other philosophy classes in this way as it is not as abstract but highly structured and mathematical.
- You don't need a philosophy background to take this class. The instructors are very helpful and will guide you through understanding the text. Be prepared to do some serious thinking and to partake in in-class discussions.

Belief in God (Winter 2018)

What are the best aspects of this course?

- The content is really interesting and I like the in class discussion.
- Really interesting course material! Instructor has chosen a great variety of selections to read.
- The material is interesting, the readings are generally comprehensible and interesting
- Very interesting discussion topics

- It exposes you to new ideas with regard to God, and it's a simple class. The readings are great, especially, as I never would have read most any of the authors that we've seen had I not taken this course.
- Some of the readings were interesting and not having a large workload.
- Pre-class readings so we can have in-depth discussions in class. Excerpts are also very useful to ensure proper comprehension.
- The readings. The instructor is also very knowledgeable.
- The content being reviewed
- The readings were well chosen and the course is very well structured.
- I liked reading the different reasonings of various philosophers and discussing them in class so I could better understand it.
- The information was interesting
- interesting ideas explored, relevant texts
- Interesting readings, good material
- The last class discussion
- Interesting topics, readings, discussions
- Very interesting readings and broad coverage of many different arguments and philosophical stances; light course work. The "reading extracts" were useful, and while my revision of my own didn't change much, I imagine it would help a lot for people who did not first understand the reading when they created their extract.
- Interesting readings
- Interesting topics studies

What are the worst aspects of this course?

- Although I enjoy the information that is given in the lecture, it is hard to focus sometimes.
- None
- The coursework may be a little bit too light
- Too lecture-based
- I wish the discussions were more free-form in nature (i.e. we have a general reading as a basis, and get to talk about what we thought about the reading overall), though often the class is either more of a lecture format, or we're attempting to interpret a specific passage that was (usually) fairly straightforward.
- The lecturer is too dry and the content is so underwhelming and not stimulating that students fall into a state of not caring and not participating.
- n/a
- Sometimes the readings (& consequently, the class sessions) can get a little dry.
- Nothing
- The lectures can feel long without discussion.
- The discussion would sometimes get tedious when we are discussing the text in the same way for 2 hours.
- The way the info was presented was dull
- sometimes texts were too hard to read, lectures were not engaging at all which limited my understanding of the content
- Sometimes classes feel a little long, more practical discussion would be helpful, at times it is too theoretical
- The lectures that seemed to drone on
- Maybe could be more discussion and less lectures?
- No one in the class seemed eager to discuss much
- Bad class participation activities

- Some arguments are dry and hard to follow

What would most improve this class?

- More engaging lectures
- Would like to read arguments for, if there is a God, it is the Judeo-Christian God, because this is assumed in almost all the readings.
- Having students debate their ideas in class would be helpful and make the class a bit more engaging
- More small group discussions
- More free-form discussions
- If there was more debate in class, the readings were more interesting and not archaic.
- n/a
- Maybe having a broader survey of readings (different time periods, regions, authors, etc.)
- Nothing
- This class would be much more interesting with more class discussion. The discussion would give an expectation for everyone to participate and do the reading, especially if it took place in a seminar room where we could all have contact with each other.
- I think a bigger variety of ways to engage with the text would help to liven up the class.
- better relaying of information
- more variation in teaching - more videos, more group work, less straight lecture
- More discussion based exercises, newer, more practical readings
- Make each class discussion based
- Less time spent lecturing
- Possibly groups like philosophy grad TA Alex's "think tank" structure
- Better discussion questions

What should prospective students know about this course before enrolling? (You may comment on any aspect of this course such as assumed background, readings, grading systems, and so on.)

- This course is a very interesting introduction into theology and the workload is fair.
- No background knowledge needed. Course is interesting and accessible!
- Not too much work, but it is important to have a strong grasp of the reading and its arguments beforehand
- This class isn't for people who are staunch in their beliefs – have an open mind!
- It's not a particularly interesting intersession class, but a decent ease into philosophy.
- Awesome, thought-provoking class
- Readings can be dense, but the class is not that intensive. It's also really interesting!
- Have a basic understanding of philosophy
- Make an effort to participate and do the readings.
- It's interesting if you want to learn more about both sides of the debate of religion, although it has a heavy focus on Christianity. Informative and engaging!
- There's much writing than advertised

- you should have a very good reading comprehension level, and it would help to have a background in philosophy
- heavy on philosophy
- There is a lot of reading involved.
- No background in religious philosophy needed; light workload
- Make sure to do all your readings
- Course is not about religion, it is about god
- Love Tammo

Philosophical Intuitions (Summer 2017)

What are the best aspects of this course?

- Interesting group discussions
- I really enjoyed the case studies

What are the worst aspects of this course?

- Material is sometimes dense and confusing with no philosophy background
- Some of the readings could be really confusing

What would most improve this class?

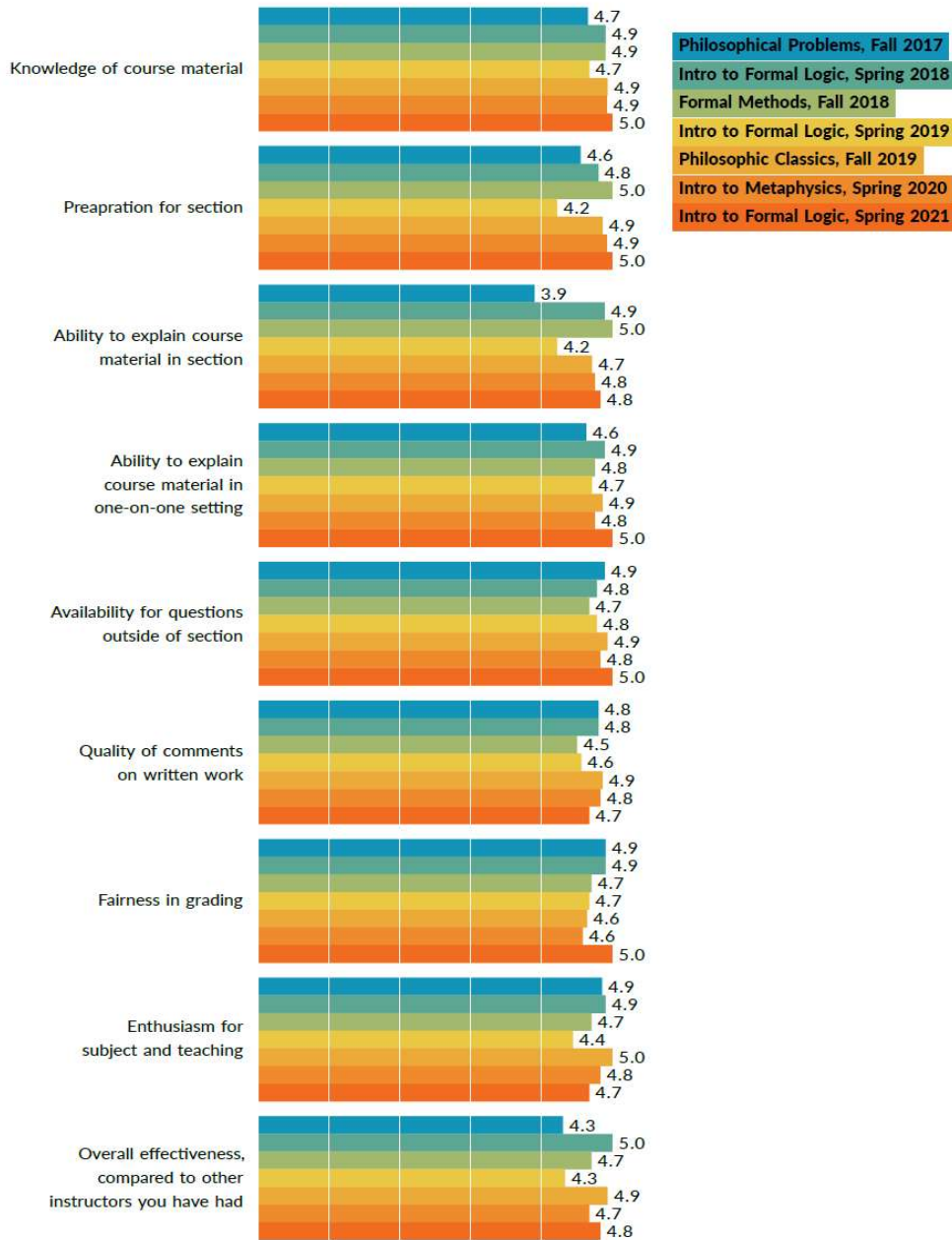
- Clearer expectations of what will be discussed each day
- The class is fine

What should prospective students know about this course before enrolling? (You may comment on any aspect of this course such as assumed background, readings, grading systems, and so on.)

- Lots of daily reading
- They don't need to have any philosophy background

Courses Taught as Teaching Assistant

NUMERICAL RESULTS (AVERAGES)



SURVEY RESPONSES

Introduction to Formal Logic (Spring 2021)²

Primary Instructor: Peter Achinstein

Please use the following space to elaborate on your TA's teaching ability. What did you like most about this TA? Would you recommend this TA to a friend? How did this TA contribute to your development as a student? Would you recommend that this TA change any aspect of his or her teaching? Comment as fully as possible.

- Tammo is very knowledgeable, and tries to put students on the most streamlined path to success. I would recommend him for any future logicians and general philosophy students since he is able to answer exterior questions too. Tammo helped me a lot on homework since the questions were, at times, ambiguous/vague/unclear. He gave us a lot of resources so I didn't need to make much use of office hours outside of section. I would say the only thing that should change is the office hour timing. Most other TA office hours (not just in philosophy) are usually in the afternoon/evening.
- Tammo has always been willing to help me out and is very flexible with meeting times outside of office hours. His comments on work have been instrumental in my understanding of the material.
- I felt that Tammo was very knowledgeable and eager to help students, which makes him very approachable and I appreciated it very much. I would recommend him to a friend. The only thing I would recommend is that he explains the reasoning behind problems more.

Introduction to Metaphysics (Spring 2020)

Primary Instructor: Elanor Taylor

Please use the following space to elaborate on your TA's teaching ability. What did you like most about this TA? Would you recommend this TA to a friend? How did this TA contribute to your development as a student? Would you recommend that this TA change any aspect of his or her teaching? Comment as fully as possible.

- I think that you did a very good job of clarifying concepts. I often felt that you were able to make complicated and abstract topics easier to understand and talk about. I noticed that it was sometimes difficult to spur conversation in recitation. It sometimes is probably just students being bored or tired, but I think that something that could help a lot is what you did with in the second to last section by bringing up interesting points that people made in the Blackboard forums. Also, I think that having student's spontaneously share their ideas is more effective than compelling them to take a position on an issue and making them have a formal debate about it. I thought Tammo did a very good job of setting up and making engaging conversations in section.
- Tammo was great. Super knowledgeable and friendly. Always available to help if needed and made sections run smoothly.

² Due to the COVID-19 crisis, the evaluations for this course and the following (Intro to Metaphysics) were conducted in a Google poll, rather than paper based, like the remaining TA evaluations.

- This TA was great. I liked mostly that he's what I imagine as a real philosopher looking for truth and the most likely truth. I wasn't aware we could acquire TAs so that I would recommend him to a friend, but I would. Tammo clearly knew a lot about the subjects we covered, and every so often threw new ways of seeing the problem at us that were very interesting. He himself was also open to hearing all sorts of opinions. The further we got into the year the more advantages grew and his disadvantages diminished to the point of being negligible. I have no complaints about Tammo, I like his focus on the philosophizing and the real interest in metaphysics he seems to have
- Tammo was an excellent TA, always leading very engaging and enriching sections. He had an excellent knowledge of the course material and he was very accessible. I did feel he was a strict grader for our essays though.
- Tammo was very knowledgeable about all the material, and super helpful and accessible outside of section, both before and after the class went online. Only issue I found with the section is that discussion was sometimes dry because people didn't always want to speak, so making the sections more lively and interactive would be a positive change (maybe more variety in how its run).
- I think Tammo is an excellent TA who is very invested in making sure everyone learns. He put in a lot of effort into making sure he's prepared for section and used to come to every class (before it was virtual) which is thought was very nice. I really liked the interactive format of section with the think tanks and small group discussions. He is very knowledgeable about the material and can answer any questions I have. doesn't force people to talk and is very laid back and great. Would definitely recommend to a friend.
- In previous philosophy courses I've taken, the TA is an important factor to my success in the course, and Tammo was no exception. Recitation was always pretty helpful for solidifying the content in lecture that week, and he was always well-prepared. He was accessible for office hours to read over my essays before submission and gave thoughtful feedback after grading. His responses were really interesting in Blackboard discussion posts, tying in a lot of knowledgeable thoughts from different fields together, which was really cool. A great semester, overall!!
- Tammo is a very kind and knowledgeable TA. In a discussion heavy class, he was always capable of igniting good discourse by asking the right questions or interjecting with philosophical material that was not necessarily discussed in class but still relevant. Overall, it was a pleasure having Tammo as a TA.

Philosophic Classics (Fall 2019)

Primary Instructor: Dean Moyar

Please use the following space to elaborate on your TA's teaching ability. What did you like most about this TA? Would you recommend this TA to a friend? How did this TA contribute to your development as a student? Would you recommend that this TA change any aspect of his or her teaching? Comment as fully as possible.

- Tammo always had worksheets ready for us to work on during section. They were relevant to the course and aided my understanding of the material. I wouldn't recommend that anything be changed. He did a great job.
- Tammo, during section, usually had exercises/discussions prepared that would help make the somewhat cryptic philosophy readings easily digestible. He has a knack for cutting out the peripheral minutia and drawing our attention to the core points of the

philosopher's argument. I would recommend Tammo to a friend. He gives a lot of helpful feedback on essays.

- I liked that the TA was knowledgeable and open to questions & conversations about the texts. I think that the TA should be more forceful in attempting to get all of the students involved during section. I think the conversations & auxiliary texts provided by the TA were very helpful in getting a deeper understanding of the texts.
- Tammo did a great job leading discussions. Sometimes it felt like we were running out of things to talk about in class. The best aspect of the class was the feedback Tammo gave on papers, which has made me a better writer overall. I think the rubric could be limiting at times (especially the counterargument criterion) but overall my grades generally reflected the quality of work, so I cannot complain there.
- I liked the historical & philosophic background he had, which was great for discussions, feedback and clarification. The written feedback was some of the best I've ever gotten, and insightful. I'd recommend more in-section debates, since those were always more lively & fun.
- I liked class discussions, they typically had interesting topics, it's a good format for a smaller section. Possibly, to [illegible], have more material ready in case no one has anything to say about some topic. He really helped with ideas for essays and such, made the prompts more clear.
- I liked how the TA was helpful with comments on papers, drafts and outlines – comments were all very useful and relevant. I would recommend this TA to a friend, especially those who are new to philosophy because the explanations were very helpful. This TA helped me personally by encouraging me to think more critically / in different ways regarding my papers. I would suggest doing more in-depth summaries / outlining the chapters we read on the board during section because many of the readings could be challenging for new philosophers.
- Tammo's discussions and perspectives on our texts was extremely helpful to me in terms of writing essays and thinking about in general. He pushed us to constantly discuss and engage with the texts in a collaborative manner, which was extremely interesting and thought-provoking. To some extent, the discussions influenced my decision to choose philosophy as my major.
- Very helpful during office hours.

Listens and introduces new ideas in a constructive way.

Helps shape arguments in my essay without being dismissive or adamant.

I would recommend this TA to a friend.

Class + TA allowed me to see different perspective and analyze things in a different light.

Not much to recommend any change.

- Very willing to provide additional guidance
friendly w/ students but maintained professional learning setting
would recommend: provided many comments on each essay. Always offered to review outlines / drafts before essay deadlines
facilitated productive class discussions
- Tammo was very good at providing further in-depth discussions and aid with topics discussed in lecture. He helped me a lot with understanding the topics. I would recommend him. There isn't any aspect that he should change about his teaching.
- Tammo is by far the best TA I have had. Not only does he engage the section when teaching material in a way that makes the course easier to understand and more interesting. This section has been a fantastic part of my semester, and I would recommend Tammo to a friend interested in philosophy. During one-on-one meetings,

Tammo helped me better understand philosophy and my own shortcomings in writing essays. There's nothing in particular I would recommend to change about section.

- Tammo is the best person + human being I have ever met. He is extremely intelligent, helpful, kind, and considerate. I have actually had some emotional/psychological traumas happen to me during + throughout the course. But Tammo, out of all my TAs, wrote extensive email-notes that made me feel supportive, happy, and more recovered from what happened to me. He also took so much careful time to review my final essay draft before I submitted it to ensure I would do well on the paper. Tammo just sparks so much joy in me; all my friends have even been tired of the amount of times I talk about how good Tammo is. I am so incredibly blessed to have had him in my life. I hope his life is full of immense blessings and joy. Tammo is really the best TA and one of the best human beings I've ever met. I hope he gets his dream job. If you don't hire him, I don't know who you will!

Introduction to Formal Logic (Spring 2019)

Primary Instructor: Peter Achinstein

Please use the following space to elaborate on your TA's teaching ability. What did you like most about this TA? Would you recommend this TA to a friend? How did this TA contribute to your development as a student? Would you recommend that this TA change any aspect of his or her teaching? Comment as fully as possible.

- Tammo was the most helpful TA I've ever had. He was quick to respond to emails, and his responses were always detailed and helpful. He would meet with me early in the morning before section to make sure I understood the homework for that day. He went out of his way to help us with difficult concepts, and truly seemed to care about us learning and our grades.

My only advice for Tammo would be to be more confident, because you know what you're talking about and are a good teacher. I would very much enjoy a class taught or TA'd by Tammo again.

- Tammo is a great TA. He makes himself available when students want to ask 1-on-1 questions and he's always prepared for section. He seems to really like this subject, which I appreciate because that made this course more enjoyable for me.

My only recommendation would be handouts for section. I think those would help me study for exams more than just by notes.

- He was very good at explaining concepts. Very friendly and approachable. Definitely would recommend Tammo to a friend. Tammo was essential to my development b/c I saw him almost every week to further my understanding of the subject. No real changes needed to be made. Overall he was very good.

- What I liked most is that he tried to keep his section topics adaptable to meet the needs of what we were having trouble with. He did well at helping us understand the core concepts and helping us gain intuition about how to approach difficult problems. Sometimes struggled with student engagement during section – students unresponsive when questions were asked, did not volunteer quickly. So my suggestion is to have a systematic way of working through the class to get full participation so not as much time is wasted sitting and waiting for a response.

- I liked the examples we went through in section, I thought they were helpful. I would recommend the TA. He contributed to my development with examples that

were useful for the homework and the exams. The TA could call up on people more if students don't seem to participate.

- The TA was definitely enthusiastic about the subject. They were also responsive to emails, and tried to answer any individual questions I had. I would recommend the TA to a friend.

- Tammo is awesome and nice.

- Tammo clearly knew the material of the course very well as evident from his mentions of various particularities and special cases of logical translation and function. His email responses to my questions about homework assignment were always thorough and helpful in addition to being prompt. However, our reviews in section were less helpful and often felt like a rehashing of the lecture without a deeper explanation of the topics which may have been confusing. We often spent section doing example problems, which were helpful, but many of them were created on the spot and left open the window for small errors that muddled the explanation. I feel that if the practice material for section was prepared more thoroughly beforehand, the section meetings would be much more helpful and the explanations much clearer. Especially because Tammo knows the specifics of the material, more prepared examples could help him transfer that knowledge more effectively.

Formal Methods of Philosophy (Fall 2018)

Primary Instructor: Robert Rynasiewicz

Please use the following space to elaborate on your TA's teaching ability. What did you like most about this TA? Would you recommend this TA to a friend? How did this TA contribute to your development as a student? Would you recommend that this TA change any aspect of his or her teaching? Comment as fully as possible.

- Tammo has comprehensive ability, experience and enthusiasm for the course he was TA'ing for. He was readily accessible via email and office hours. He was also timely and fair in grading and explanations for the grades he has assigned.

- Tammo has been an excellent TA, and I would certainly recommend him to others. His comments and explanations are consistently clear and helpful – both in office hours and over email – especially for topics that were difficult or confusing in lecture/on the problem sets. His grading is fair, and his marks are clear. Tammo has made himself available to answer questions regularly throughout the semester.

- Cool guy, gave me tea when I had to make up a midterm.

- Grading comments were sometimes hard to read but otherwise good job.

- My TA made every effort to help me learn the material. I asked him questions over email many times and he always got back to me in a timely manner. I would recommend this TA to my friends. My TA helped me learn the material well and cleared up any questions I had.

- He was able to answer questions on all course material, and taught material very well when needed. He was very enthusiastic about material, and was very good about leaving helpful comments on work and sending out additional resources.

- I like the well written and explained solutions for each homework. I would definite[ly] recommend this TA to a friend. He also showed a lot of care for the academic success of students in the class.

- Pretty good at explaining material during office hours, but hours should be offered before an assignment is due and not only after. It can sometimes be difficult to

understand the meaning of written comments on returned work, but it's usually decipherable by referring to the very helpful attached answer guide.

- Tammo was always responsive and helpful when I had questions about the homework. Whenever I emailed him, he responded promptly and thoroughly, always making sure I understood the concept and didn't have any further questions.

Introduction to Formal Logic (Spring 2018)

Primary Instructor: Peter Achinstein

Please use the following space to elaborate on your TA's teaching ability. What did you like most about this TA? Would you recommend this TA to a friend? How did this TA contribute to your development as a student? Would you recommend that this TA change any aspect of his or her teaching? Comment as fully as possible.

- Tammo comes off as someone who genuinely wanted us to learn as much as possible, and did whatever was in his power to make us succeed. He helped me understand certain nuances on the material that was not covered in lecture, and overall was very receptive to questions.

- My TA was able to effectively teach and explain concepts. This TA was very transparent with the course in his communication. I felt more prepared to do HW and the midterms after going to section.

- I honestly cannot say enough good things about Tammo. He has worked so hard to make what was often a difficult, or at least not especially well explained course, not only understandable, but quite good. Tammo answers emails at any hour of the day, sends homework help, advice, & is always open to meet & help. I honestly don't remember having a TA as good as Tammo in my time at Hopkins. I mean that really sincerely.

- Tammo is an excellent instructor. I would definitely recommend him to a friend. I honestly learned more from him in section than I did from the professor in lecture.

- Material was taught in a lot of detail.

- Tammo was extremely helpful. He would give me guidance through email when I had questions and always respond efficiently and it made this class a lot smoother for me in times of frustration. Great TA, really cares about us students and wants to see us do well. encouraging and engaging section leadership!

- - Answered emails very quickly and helpfully

- Would recommend

- No changes necessary

- Tammo was awesome & had a great understanding of how to explain material. Very good at explaining subtle differences between problems. Very understanding & easy to go to for help. Responded to emails quickly w/ helpful answers.

- Tammo was a great TA. I really liked how he emailed PDFs of the HW each week and was easily accessible through email. Really informative / knowledgeable in section as well. No complaints from me.

- His knowledge of the material was excellent and explained the more difficult concepts in a simplified way. I would recommend him to any friend taking this course. I never had any one-on-one time, so there wasn't much to gain in terms of my development as a student.

Overall the structure of section was good and the material was presented clearly.

Philosophical Problems (Fall 2017)

Primary Instructor: Steven Gross

Please use the following space to elaborate on your TA's teaching ability. What did you like most about this TA? Would you recommend this TA to a friend? How did this TA contribute to your development as a student? Would you recommend that this TA change any aspect of his or her teaching? Comment as fully as possible.

- I think Tammo was great at giving good feedback on written materials and always addressing discussion questions. He took time to write everything out on the board and slowly explain concepts. Sometimes, though, he'd look for participation and not receive it, so he'd just switch topics instead of explaining himself.
- Tammo is very enthusiastic about philosophy and it shows in the way he addresses topics in section. I also really like the comments our papers because they were very thoughtful. TA hours were also helpful before writing papers, maybe in order to improve, elaborate more on first paper because I was confused going into it.
- He has a good sense of humor and youthful disposition. He exudes a genuine enthusiasm for philosophical discourse. Tammo's comments on my writing were constructive and critical.
- He loves philosophy and is thorough in reviewing what we learned in lecture.
- Tammo was very pleasant. He also did a very good job of addressing each of our discussion/blog questions.
- Lossau is quite clearly very passionate and well read in philosophy. In section, he gave us very helpful examples in concepts and in office hours, he was helpful in explaining concepts and throwing out ideas for essays. One thing to improve is that I needed much more help and preparation for the 1st essay b/c it was my first philosophy paper.
- Tammo LOVES philosophy. Having him as a TA encouraged me to love philosophy as well! He knows the topics thoroughly and facilitated exploration naturally.
- He is very enthusiastic about this class. I was not available for Tammo's office hours, but he was very willing to schedule appointments out of his office hours. His feedback on our essays was very effective as well. I would definitely recommend this section to my friends.
- I thought Tammo was a good T.A. Sometimes what we learned in class was hard to understand and a bit too extensive but section helped make it a lot clearer. This especially helped on the essays. (For example, I could not understand the retentionalist view in class but I got it in section.) I think making the class more interactive, however, would be a positive thing. Overall, compared to TAs in other classes I have, Tammo was better.
- Tammo was always well organized in section and took our comments + questions seriously. He based the section around our questions and made sure we reviewed all materials covered in class. When meeting with him one-on-one he was always encouraging and had great feedback on how to improve a paper or better understand a difficult topic we discussed in class.
- Tammo has been a wonderful TA. At first, during the first couple of sections, it was a bit difficult understanding him through the accent, but afterwards I've gotten used to it. He elaborates very well on topics I couldn't completely understand and he is readily available to help at any other times. Office hours had been a great help as well. Moreover, the written comments and rubric makes his grading extremely fair and help my development in writing philosophical arguments. He is so kind and helpful.

- I liked how Tammo was available often for help on our work, but section is a wasted time. There is no general direction, so there is a lot of “dead air”. We definitely need a better system for section. Section, which is supposed to clarify lecture, failed to do so.
 - Great feedback on papers, and knows the material well enough to expand discussions of course materials in [illegible]. Good with scheduling problems, helped me catch up on missed week when I was unable to attend lecture.
 - Tammo comes prepared for class, always having a sense of structure to his sections. I enjoyed how he incorporated questions students posted into his teaching. I would recommend this TA to a friend.
 - This TA was well prepared for the material. He knew how to clarify things that otherwise may have seemed confusing through lecture alone. I am appreciative for discussion sections with this TA. On several occasions, he has helped me with my work and with questions. I would recommend him to friends. I don't think he needs to change anything.
 - Tammo was obviously very interested and enthusiastic about the subject he was teaching. He always came well prepared, with discussion board questions printed out and a plan how to organize the discussion. Unfortunately, Tammo received a not too talkative section, so he had to work extra hard to keep discussions going and making everyone contribute. He answered questions very well. The only improvement would be to make himself more audible, as sometimes he would mumble & in combination with an accent it could be a bit difficult to understand him.
 - Great response & knowledge via email. Somewhat awkward and unhelpful in section.
 - Tammo is definitely a good TA with excellent knowledge of the material covered over the course of the semester. I often found that he was better at explaining things in a one-on-one setting than in sections, however. This was perhaps just due to the lack of discussion between students. I would not recommend him to a friend but he was by no means a bad TA and helped contribute to my understanding of the course greatly.
 - He understood the course material well but sometimes his explanations were difficult to follow. Section felt fairly stagnant at times due to lack of discussion amongst the group so trying to encourage/facilitate more discussion would be good.
 - I like that he was very enthusiastic about the material and that he was able to blend in our weekly discussion board posts into the section. However, sometimes when we brought up a question that one of us had, he would start to explain it but we would get sidetracked in the discussion and not come to the answer to the original question. Overall, though, he did a good job of trying to keep discussions going in our group.
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Syllabi of Courses Taught as Primary Instructor

Foundations Course Mind & Behavior (Fall 2022)

Course Description

Is there something special about human minds or can our conscious experience be explained by physics just like the rest of the universe? And if so, what is the nature of our beliefs, emotions, and other mental states? What about morality – is it a feature of the world as well, or maybe just a useful fiction we have created? We will explore these questions through (mostly) contemporary philosophical writings. We will also develop essential skills such as reading complex academic texts and reconstructing their core arguments, constructively discussing these issues and giving feedback on another student's ideas, and expressing philosophical ideas in structured, concise, and linear pieces of writing.

Learning Goals

This course is structured as an introduction to some philosophical themes that connect with the question whether our world is entirely physical, and what the implications would be if this was the case. These questions should be of interest to those considering a major or minor in philosophy, but may also provide a useful background for those interested in natural or cognitive science, among others. At least equally important, however, is the development of some general skills that are important beyond philosophy:

Analytical Reading: We will be reading some difficult and complex texts, some of which are historical and come in unfamiliar forms. We will develop strategies for digesting those texts, reconstructing their core arguments and finding the crucial statements. This will allow us to ask pointed questions to the text and discuss hypothetical ways for the author to expand or tweak their ideas. I have tried to include some shorter and more accessible readings to give us a break in between the hard ones – but please use that time to read all the texts closely and (where necessary) multiple times to make the most of them.

Critical Thinking: At the heart of philosophy is the critical discussion of controversial ideas. This involves coming up with an interesting idea, but also to develop this idea in detail, understand its implications and explore arguments for and against it. This can sometimes seem like a game of chess: if I say x, my opponent can object y, but I have rejoinder z.... However, the goal is not to win by exploiting an opponent's mistake, but to understand the merits and problems of a philosophical position as much as possible. We will (hopefully) find that this process is easiest in constructive dialogue with others.

Writing Argumentative Texts: Many of your assignments will involve writing argumentative texts of various lengths (which are self-standing to varying degrees). These texts are supposed to make the case for a philosophical thesis, and are streamlined towards supporting that specific claim (and nothing else). We will aim to develop your ability to express your own thoughts in a way that is structured and written so that others will find them easy to understand and convincing.

Student Assessment

Your course grade will be calculated from the following components:

- Two papers: 20% and 30% (in that order)

- Four small assignments: 40%, each 10%.
- Course participation (including sections): 10%

The due dates for the papers and small assignments are noted on the schedule below. All assignments and papers are due on a Tuesday at the end of the day. I have scheduled them such that there is always a week with no assignments or papers in between. All papers and assignments must be submitted via Google Classroom.

The two *papers* are short pieces of philosophical writing. I will make a selection of questions available about two weeks ahead of the due date, which will also specify the exact length requirements. I will also make a guide on writing these papers (which includes a rubric) available.

The small assignments are shorter and more specific tasks meant to train certain abilities. Assignments will be published at least a week ahead of the due date. There will not be a formal rubric for these assignments, but I will specify criteria for what counts as a good submission.

Your participation grade will reflect the quality (not the quantity) of your verbal participation, especially (but not exclusively) in section. Note that too many absences or frequent late arrivals to class or section will also affect your participation grade.

Course Policies

- Please aim to practice respectful and constructive discourse with your fellow students. Listen to what others have to say even if it does not relate to what you want to say. Do not interrupt others, and do not dismiss other perspectives. When you criticize others, make an effort to improve upon their ideas instead of flat-out rejecting them. Practicing this kind of discourse will make the class a much better experience for everyone, and may improve our capacity to engage with differing world views.
- Please arrive to class on time, as late arrivals tend to be disruptive and make it particularly difficult to plan group activities. Regularly arriving late will impact your participation grade. Arriving more than 15 minutes late counts as an absence.
- Attendance is mandatory for both the lecture and the discussion sections. You can miss up to four classes without an excuse, any further absence requires a valid excuse (e.g. illness). More than four unexcused absences will result in a penalty on your participation grade.
- Infection with Covid counts as an excuse for missing classes. However, if you have Covid (or another infectious disease), but are generally feeling well and would like to attend class, just send me a short email the evening before class, and I will try to make online participation possible.
- Paper submission policy: all papers are due at 9pm on the posted due date. There is a grace period until 1am, during which papers are considered to be submitted on time. After that, every day the paper is late will reduce its grade by 5% (so a 90% on your paper will become 85% for one day, 80% for two days, etc.).
- All work you submit for this class must be your own, and you cannot re-submit your own work from other classes either. Any content you take from other sources must be clearly marked as such. This includes direct quotations, but also paraphrases of other people's ideas. Failure to do so is plagiarism, which is a serious violation of academic integrity and will result (depending on the level of it) in penalties on the paper or a failing grade on the class.
- If you have a disability or other condition that is making it more difficult for you to participate in this class, please contact me. I am happy to discuss accommodations that will make it easier to successfully complete this class.

- This course will use the following grading scale: <https://www.rapidtables.com/calc/grade/gpa-to-letter-grade-calculator.html>
- Because of the delayed start of the FC courses, the university has scheduled two make up classes on October 1 and November 26 (both Saturdays) at 10:10-11:40 in AC02 LT 211-12. Because I realize that it may be more difficult for you to attend these or prepare for these, I have not assigned readings for them and attendance for these two sessions is not mandatory - i.e., if you miss one or both of these two classes, it will not count as an absence. We will use these sessions to review content and workshop ideas for papers.

Some General Advice

- This course will require you to read difficult texts, some of which are even trickier to read because they are historical and written in an unfamiliar style or format. Don't expect to be able to read through them quickly: many of these texts will require you to read things twice or to go back when you notice you missed something earlier. Please don't feel disheartened by this: these readings are meant to be a challenge. Also, do raise questions about the reading in class or in discussion sections: you'll often be surprised by how many of your classmates will have the same question.
- The secret to a good piece of classwork is this: you start working on it early. Even if the piece you are writing might be short, it is always extremely helpful to be able to sleep over it. When you look at your writing again the next day, you will often have a much clearer sense of what you need to do and how you might change your paper to achieve that.
- If you have questions or are experiencing any type of difficulties, do send us an email. If you are struggling with writing an email to your professor/TF, this guide might be helpful to you: <https://www.wikihow.com/Email-a-Proffessor>
- DON'T PANIC

COURSE SCHEDULE

<i>Day</i>	<i>Topic</i>	<i>Reading</i>	<i>Notes</i>
September 13	Introduction; Philosophical Arguments		
September 15	Philosophical Arguments	Rosenberg	
<i>I. Historical Accounts of Mind and Matter</i> <i>Are there souls in addition to physical matter? Are they really separate?</i> <i>Or does one exist without the other?</i>			
September 20	Descartes and the Skeptical Method	Descartes	
September 22	Critiques of Descartes	Husserl	
September 27	Immaterial Realism	Berkeley	Assignment 1 due
September 29	Anatman	Buddha, Nagarjuna	
October 1	Review Session		Make Up Session (10:10, AC02 LT 211-12)
<i>II. The Contemporary Debate about Consciousness</i> <i>Can conscious experience be explained within a physical framework or is it irreducible to physics? Does perhaps everything have a nonphysical component?</i>			

October 4	Qualia	Jackson	
October 6	The "Problem of Consciousness"	Chalmers	
October 11	Physicalism	Churchland	Assignment 2 due
October 13	The Intentional Stance	Dennett	
October 18	Panpsychism	Sprigge	
October 20	Integrated Information Theory	Tononi	
<i>midterm break/Diwali</i>			
November 1	Perennial Idealism	Albahari	
November 3	Review Session		
November 4			Paper 1 due
<i>III. Mental States, Physicalism, and the World Around Us</i> <i>What is the nature of mental states like belief? Can these be captured as brain states?</i>			
November 8	Behaviorism	Braithwaite	
November 10	Artificial Intelligence	Turing	
November 15	Affordances	Siegel	Assignment 3 due
November 17	Review Session		
<i>IV. Morality and Nature</i> <i>Where do our moral attitudes come from? Do we need to suppose that morality is concerned with mind-independent facts? Or is morality a useful fiction?</i>			
November 22	Origins of Moral Thinking	Mencius	
November 24	Empathy and Morality	Smith	
November 26	Workshop Session		Make Up Session (10:10, online)
November 29	Utilitarianism	Smart	Assignment 4 due
December 1	Capabilities	Nussbaum	
December 6	Is Morality Real?	Joyce	
December 8	Review Session		
December 20			Paper 2 due

READINGS

All readings will be made available as pdfs in the Drive folder for this class linked in Google Classrooms. They are listed here in the order in which they appear on the syllabus.

Rosenberg, Jay (1996). *The Practice of Philosophy: A Handbook for Beginners* (3rd ed.). Prentice Hall. Chs. 2-3 (pp. 10-34).

Descartes, René (1641). *Meditations on First Philosophy*. Transl. by John Cottingham. In: id., *The Philosophical Writings of Descartes*, Vol. II. Cambridge University Press 1984. – First and Second Meditation (AT VII 17-34).

Husserl, Edmund (1954). *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology*. Transl. by David Carr. Northwestern University Press 1970. – Part II, sections 16-20 (pp. 73-83).

- Berkeley, George (1710). *The Principles of Human Knowledge*. Ed. by Jonathan Bennett. Available online at <https://www.earlymoderntexts.com/assets/pdfs/berkeley1710.pdf>. - Introduction and Part I, par. 1-40 (pp. 1-21).
- The Buddha (undated). *The Book of the Aggregates (Khandhavagga)*. Transl. by Bikkhu Bodhi. In: *The Connected Discourses of the Buddha*. Wisdom Publications 2000. Excerpt: III.63-72 (pp. 906-910).
- Nagarjuna (undated). *The Fundamental Wisdom of the Middle Way*. Translation and Commentary by Jay Garfield. Oxford University Press 1995. Ch. 18, pp. 245-253.
- Jackson, Frank (1982). Epiphenomenal Qualia. *The Philosophical Quarterly* 32: 127-136.
- Chalmers, David (1995). Facing up to the problem of consciousness. *Journal of Consciousness Studies* 2 (3): 200-219.
- Churchland, Patricia (2011). The Brain and Its Self. *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 155, 41-50.
- Dennett, D. (1971). Intentional Systems. *The Journal of Philosophy* 68: 87-106.
- Sprigge, T. (1998). Pansychism. In: *Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. Routledge.
- Tononi, Giulio (2004). An information integration theory of consciousness. *BMC Neuroscience* 2004, 5:42.
- Albahari, Miri (2019). Perennial Idealism: A Mystical Solution to the Mind Body Problem. *Philosopher's Imprint* 19(44): 1-37.
- Braithwaite, Richard (1933). The Nature of Believing. *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* 33: 129-146.
- Turing, Alan (1950). Computing Machinery and Intelligence. *Mind* 59, 433-460.
- Siegel, Susanna (2014). Affordances and the Contents of Perception. In B. Brogaard (ed.), *Does Perception Have Content?* Oxford University Press.
- Mencius (undated). *Gaozi*. Translated by James Legge. In: *The Works of Mencius*. Clarendon Press 1985. Available online at: <https://ctext.org/mengzi>
- Smith, Adam (1759). *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*. Cambridge University Press 2002. Part I, Section I (pp. 11-31).
- Smart, Jack (1973). An outline of a system of utilitarian ethics. In id. and Bernard Williams, *Utilitarianism For and Against* (pp. 1-75). Sections 1, 2, 6 and 10.
- Nussbaum, Martha (2021). The Capabilities Approach and the History of Philosophy. In E. Chiappero-Martinetta et al. (eds), *The Cambridge Handbook to the Capabilities Approach* (pp. 13-39). Cambridge University Press.
- Joyce, Richard (2005). Moral Fictionalism. In Mark Kalderon (ed.), *Fictionalism in Metaphysics* (pp. 281-313). Oxford University Press.

Philosophy of Religion: Historical Perspectives (Fall 2022)

Course Description

What is religion? Historically, many Western philosophers have attempted to prove or disprove the existence of God, assuming a picture of religion that puts reason at its center. In this course, we will compare these philosophers with those who think that we can accept religious beliefs even if they cannot be proven (like James and Kierkegaard), those who view religion as essentially linked to morality (like Kant and Mencius), those who look at religion as a non-belief (like Nagarjuna and Chuang Tzu), and those who think that certain feelings or experiences are at the heart of religion (like Schleiermacher, Dogen and Vivekananda).

Learning Objectives

The primary goal of this course is to gain an understanding of some of the most influential views and arguments from the philosophy of religion and the historical trajectory that shaped them. You should be able to explain and contextualize the views expressed in the readings in depth and to critically discuss them and clearly advocate your own opinion. More broadly, this will also help building several reasoning and expression skills in general: engaging with complex readings and closely analyzing them will improve your ability to read carefully and attend to detail as well as to weigh the different readings. Critical assessment of the arguments expressed in those readings will allow you to learn thinking and expressing yourself clearly and precisely both in conversation and in writing.

Student Assessment

Your overall grade will be composed of the following:

- Paper 1 (3-4 pg.): 15%
- Paper 2 (4-5 pg.): 20%
- Paper 3 (7-8 pg.): 30%
- Workshop Group Preparations: 15%
- Weekly Online Discussion Posts: 10%
- In-Class Participation: 10%

The main component of the grade are the papers. For these, I will post a menu of questions two weeks before their due date. I will also make a guide available that helps clarify expectations and gives tips on writing these papers. Feel free to contact me for help during the writing process. However, note that I do not give comments on draft papers. Papers 1 and 2 can be written based on the course readings. However, for paper 3 it is required to use at least one academic paper not listed on the syllabus.

To help you write the papers, you will be assigned to a workshop group consisting of 3-4 students. These groups will meet during class time and discuss their ideas for the paper. A week before the due date, there will be a slot for presentations. For papers 1 and 2, you will present a thesis and a structure of the paper. For paper 3, you will give a presentation on an outside reading you intend to use in the paper. In each case, please prepare a short (1 page) handout to use in your presentation. Submit the handout to me via email ahead of the relevant meeting. The handouts will be graded, and each will make up 5% of your overall grade.

In addition, you will be required to submit weekly discussion posts. I will post a few discussion questions on Canvas before the weekend, but feel free to submit a comment on any other topic relevant to that week's readings. The posts are due on

Monday, 7pm (beginning in week 2). A good discussion post shows engagement with the relevant reading, and expresses a productive thought or question with respect to it in a clear manner. If you post later, it is understood that your post may be less original, but you can make up for that by engaging with the posts of your classmates.

Policies

- Please aim to practice respectful and constructive discourse with your fellow students. Listen to what others have to say even if it does not relate to what you want to say. Do not interrupt others, and do not dismiss other perspectives (e.g. other religious views). When you criticize others, make an effort to improve upon their ideas instead of flat-out rejecting them. Practicing this kind of discourse will make the class a much better experience for everyone, and may improve our capacity to engage with differing world views.
- Please arrive to class on time, as late arrivals tend to be disruptive and make it particularly difficult to plan group activities. Regularly arriving late will impact your participation grade. Arriving more than 15 minutes late counts as an absence.
- Attendance is mandatory. You can miss up to four classes without an excuse, any further absence requires a valid excuse (e.g. illness, death of a close relative, incarceration). More than four unexcused absences will result in a penalty on your participation grade.
- Infection with Covid counts as an excuse for missing classes. However, if you have Covid (or another infectious disease), but are generally feeling well and would like to attend class, just send me a short email the evening before class, and I will try to make online participation possible.
- Paper submission policy: all papers are due at midnight at the end of the day on the posted due date. There is a grace period until 3am, during which papers are considered to be submitted on time. After that, every day the paper is late will reduce its grade by 5% (so a 90% on your paper will become an 85% for one day, an 80% for two days, etc.).
- All work you submit for this class must be your own, and you cannot re-submit your own work from other classes either. Any content you take from other sources must be clearly marked as such. This includes direct quotations, but also paraphrases of other people's ideas. Failure to do so is plagiarism, which is a serious violation of academic integrity and will result (depending on the level of it) in penalties on the paper or a failing grade on the class.
- If you have a disability or other condition that is making it more difficult for you to participate in this class, please contact me. I am happy to discuss accommodations that will make it easier to successfully complete this class.
- Electronic devices: Please do not use any laptops or phones during class time. E-Readers are permitted. Research shows that the use of electronic devices seriously impacts learning outcomes. Please also make sure to put your phones on silent/vibrate before class.
- This course will use the following grading scale: <https://www.rapidtables.com/calc/grade/gpa-to-letter-grade-calculator.html>
- Extra credit assignments, if there are any, will be assigned late in the course.

COURSE SCHEDULE

<i>Day</i>	<i>Topic</i>	<i>Reading</i>	<i>Notes</i>
September 6	Introduction		
September 8	The Question: What is Religion?	Appiah	
<i>I. The Rational Conception of Religion</i>			
September 13	The Ontological Argument	Anselm, Gaunilo	
September 15	The Cosmological Argument	Thomas	
September 20	Natural Religion	Tindal	
September 22	Enlightenment and Skepticism	Hume	
September 27	Theodicy	Leibniz	
September 29	Review Session		Paper 1 assigned
<i>II. Belief Without Proof?</i>			
October 4	Pascal's Wager, The Will to Believe	Pascal, James	
October 6	Cont'd / workshop groups		Workshop presentations
October 11	Fideism	Kierkegaard	
October 13	Wittgensteinian Fideism	Wittgenstein	Paper 1 due
<i>III. Religion and Moral Belief</i>			
October 18	The Confucian Tradition	Mencius	
October 20	Mohism	Mozi	Paper 2 assigned
<i>midterm break/Diwali</i>			
November 1	Kant on religion as moral belief	Kant	
November 3	Review Session / workshop groups		Workshop presentations
<i>IV. Non-Belief</i>			
November 8	Emptiness and the Four Noble Truths	Nagarjuna, ch. 24	
November 10	Emptiness and Nirvana	Nagarjuna, ch. 25	Paper 2 due
November 15	Taoism	Chuang Tzu	
November 17	Review Session		
<i>V. Religious Experience as the Core of Religion</i>			
November 22	Religions without a book	Vivekananda	Paper 3 assigned
November 24	Zen	Dogen	
November 29	Religion as a feeling	Schleiermacher	
December 1	Review Session		
<i>Final Review</i>			
December 6	Paper workshop		Workshop presentations
December 8	Wrap-Up Session		
December 16			Paper 3 due

READINGS

All readings will be made available as pdfs on Canvas. They are listed here in the order in which they appear on the syllabus.

Appiah, K. Anthony (2009). Explaining Religion: Notes Towards a Research Agenda. In: Simon Levi (ed.), *Games, Groups, and the Global Good* (pp. 195-203). Springer.

Anselm of Canterbury (1077/1078). *Proslogion*. In id., *Major Works*. Translated by M.J. Charlesworth. Oxford University Press. – Chapters 2-5.

Gaunilo of Marmoutiers (no date). *Pro Insipientie* (On Behalf of the Fool). Ibid.

Thomas Aquinas (1274). *Summa Theologiae I* 1-13. Translated by Brian Shanley. Hackett 2006. – Pars I, Quaestio 2.

Tindal, Matthew (1730). *Christianity as Old as the Creation*. Garland Publishing 1978. – Chapters 1+2.

Hume, David (1770). *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion*. Ed. by Dorothy Coleman. Cambridge University Press 2007. – Pt. 3, par. 1-10 (pp. 29-32) and pt. 7-8 (pp. 52-62).

Leibniz, Gottfried Wilhelm (1710). *Theodicy: Essays on the Goodness of God, the freedom of Man, and the Origin of Evil*. Transl. by E.M. Huggard. Routledge 1951. – Appendix 1 (“Summary of the Controversy, Reduced to Formal Arguments”).

Pascal, Blaise (1670). *Pensées*. Transl. by John Warrington. Dent 1932. – Sec. 3, par 233 (“Infinity – Nothingness”).

James, William (1898). The Will to Believe. In id., *The Will to Believe and other essays in the popular philosophy* (pp. 1-31). Dover 1956.

Kierkegaard, Søren (1846). *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*. Transl. by Alastair Hannay. Cambridge University Press. Part 2, section 2, chapter 4, section 1 (he sure is complicated), pp. 303-323.

Wittgenstein, Ludwig (1967). Lectures on Religious Belief. In: id., *Lectures and Conversations on Aesthetics, Psychology and Religious Belief*. Compiled from Notes taken by Yorick Smythies, Rush Rhees and James Taylor. University of California Press.

Mencius (ca. 300 BC). *Gaozi*. Translated by James Legge. In: *The Works of Mencius*. Clarendon Press 1985. Available online at: <https://ctext.org/mengzi>

Mozi (ca. 400 BC). *Mozi*. Transl. by W.P. Mei. In: The ethical and political works of Motse. Probsthain 1929. Book III: Identification with the Superior. Available online at <https://ctext.org/mozi>

Kant, Immanuel (1788). *Critique of Practical Reason*. Translated by Mary Gregor. Cambridge University Press 2015.– Book II, Ch. 2, sec. 5 (“The Existence of God as a Postulate of Pure Practical Reason”).

Nagarjuna (ca. 200). *Nagarjuna's Mūlamadhyamakakārikā*. Transl. and commentary by Jay Garfield. Oxford University Press 1995. – Ch. 24 (“An Analysis of the Noble Truths”) and ch. 25 (“Examination of Nirvana”) + commentary on those chapters.

Chuang Tzu (ca. 300 BC). The Inner Chapters. Transl. by James Legge. In: *The Writings of Chuang Tzu*. Oxford University Press 1891. Chs. 1-3. Available online at <https://ctext.org/zhuangzi>

Vivekananda, Swami (1896). *Raja Yoga*. Celephais Press 2003. – Book 1, chapters I and VIII.

Dogen (ca. 1250). *Shōbōgenzō*. Transl. through the Soto Text Project. Ch. 1 ("Bendowa"). Available online here: https://www.thezensite.com/ZenTeachings/Dogen_Teachings/Shobogenzo_Complete.html

Schleiermacher, Friedrich Daniel Ernst (1799). *On Religion: Speeches to Its Cultured Despisers*. Transl. by Richard Crouter. Cambridge University Press 1988. – Second speech, section B ("The Locus of Religion").

Problems with Knowledge, Evidence, and Action (Spring 2022)

Course Description

This course covers a selection of recent work in epistemology and serves as an introduction to these topics. Issues to be discussed include new approaches to the nature of knowledge and skepticism, normative aspects of the way we handle information in our decision-making, epistemic injustices, and epistemic requirements for democratic discourse.

Course Objectives

The primary goal of this course is to provide students the background they need to access the contemporary literature on epistemology, and to develop an understanding of the different approaches to the topics being discussed. More broadly, this will also help building several reasoning and expression skills in general: engaging with complex readings and closely analyzing them will improve your ability to read carefully and attend to detail as well as to weigh the different readings. Critical assessment of the arguments expressed in those readings will allow you to learn thinking and expressing yourself clearly and precisely both in conversation and in writing.

Student Assessment

Grading for this course consists of three components:

- Three essays (60% total)
- Four preliminary writing assignments (20% total)
- Class participation (20%)

The essays are the most significant part of your grade, because the skills that can be acquired while writing them are the most valuable thing you can take away from this course (or most other philosophy courses). A list of two or three topics for the essays will be given out at least three weeks prior to their due date (four weeks for essay 1, but a draft will be due two weeks before the final due date). You must choose exactly one of these topics – if you have an idea for a different topic, please clear this with me before you start writing. The topics will become more liberal as the semester progresses.

The essays have different lengths and will contribute to your overall grade to different extents:

- Essay 1: about 4 pages, will count 15% of your final grade.
- Essay 2 OR course project: about 5 pages, will count 20% of your final grade.
- Essay 3: about 7 pages, will count 25% of your final grade.

I will circulate a longer document with more specific guidelines and tips for writing those essays. I also encourage you to talk to me while you are in the early stages of writing your paper. The secret to writing a good paper, however, is this: start writing early, so you have time to sleep over your ideas.

Given the writing-intensive listing of this course, you will be allowed to submit at least one draft of a paper. To facilitate this, one of the preliminary writing assignments will be a draft of the first paper, to be submitted 1.5 weeks before the due date of that paper (see schedule). I will grade these papers informally as drafts, meaning that they will not be held to the same standard as the paper itself. (Note that

this means that an A for the draft does not mean that your paper will receive an A as well.) You have the option of submitting drafts or paper outlines for the remaining papers as well, but these are not mandatory and are not graded. If you plan on doing so, please submit those drafts at least one week ahead of the deadline, giving me time to read them, to give you feedback, and for you to make revisions.

You have the option of substituting essay 2 with a course project. You can come up with your own idea for a project like this, but you will need to agree with me on the setup. I will also provide some examples of project setups. One such example: limit your news intake to one outlet (e.g. one daily cable news show) for a week and write down what you took to be the main news items over that week. Then compare your list with a partner who was limited to a different news outlet. You will need to write a 5-page report on your project, which should include the immediate results, but should also include at least 2 pages of philosophical analysis, and the analysis should make reference to at least one course reading. The deadline for the report is the same as for the regular paper, so make sure you plan the timeline for your project well in advance.

For papers 2 and 3, you will be assigned to a “workshop group” and will share ideas for those papers within that group, present on a reading for paper 3, and give each other feedback. I will reserve a part of class time for the meetings of these groups.

The preliminary writing assignments are as follows (each is worth 5% of your overall course grade):

- A draft of the first paper (as outlined above)
- A short presentation of the structure of your second paper or the plan for your course project to your workshop group (submit 1-page handout to me)
- A peer review report on the presentations given in your workshop group (submit to me and to presenters)
- A short presentation on a reading you did in preparation for the third paper to your workshop group (submit 1-page handout to me)

Finally, your class participation will be part of your grade. There are two aspects to this grade:

- Once a week, submit an online comment in response to the discussion questions I will post on MS Teams (worth 10% of your overall grade). These comments need to be submitted by 7pm on Monday (even if they are concerned with a reading assigned for a Thursday). You don't need to submit these comments for the first week of class. You can miss one of these comments without an excuse, every further missed comment will result in a penalty on this part of your grade.
- Your in-class participation will be worth 10% of your overall grade. This is mainly about being active (including in group work) and engaging with others, less about quality or quantity of your contributions to in-class discussions. If you do the readings, show up, and are willing to talk, your grade should be good.

All grades will be calculated as percentages. At the end of the semester, I will convert your overall percentage into a letter grade, using the following scale: A+ beginning at 97, A beginning at 93, A- beginning at 90, B+ beginning at 87, B beginning at 83, etc. If you are very close to a better grade, I will consider rounding your score up.

Course Policies

Attendance is required. You can miss up to 3 classes without any penalty (and you don't have to send me an apology). Beyond that, you can only miss classes with a valid excuse. If you miss more than 3 classes without a valid excuse, there will be a penalty on your participation grade. Arriving more than 15 minutes late to class counts as an absence. (If you have a letter from the disability office that exempts you from attendance requirements, you can ignore this paragraph.)

Late assignments: assignments are always due at midnight at the end of the day specified on the course schedule. I will allow a "grace period" until 4am, but after that the assignment counts as late. For every day an assignment is late, there will be a deduction of 5% from the grade of that essay. However, if the assignment is late more than 5 days, it will simply be graded 0%. If you have received a homework assignment, the daily deduction is 10%, the 5-day rule applies in the same way.

Research demonstrates that classes in which students are not allowed to use laptops and smartphones have far better learning outcomes. For that reason, using laptops, smartphones, etc. is not allowed in class. The only exceptions to this policy are e-readers which do not have a browser function and students with disability accommodations that allow them to use electronics.

We will comply with Covid-19 related university policies. Currently, this means that you need to wear a properly fitted mask (covering your mouth and nose) during class, except when drinking. It also means that you will need to stay home for a period if you are symptomatic or tested positive. I will make accommodations and will make remote attendance available. If a large number of people cannot attend in person (but feel well enough to attend remotely), or if I cannot attend, we will move the class online until the in-person format makes sense again.

Disability Accommodations

If you are a student with a disability or believe that you might have a disability that requires special accommodations, please contact Student Disability Services to obtain a letter from a specialist: Garland 385; (410) 516 4720; studentdisabilityservices@jhu.edu. The terms of these letters will be honored. (Please make sure I actually received the letter. If I did not write you a quick email acknowledging that I got it, I probably did not get it.)

Academic Integrity

The strength of the university depends on academic and personal integrity. In this course, you must be honest and truthful. Ethical violations include cheating on exams, plagiarism, reuse of assignments, improper use of the internet and electronic devices, unauthorized collaboration, alteration of graded assignments, forgery and falsification, lying, facilitating academic dishonesty, and unfair competition. Report any violations you witness to the instructor. You may consult the associate dean of students and/or the chairman of the Ethics Board beforehand. See the guide on "Academic Ethics for Undergraduates" at <https://studentaffairs.jhu.edu/policies-guidelines/undergrad-ethics/> for more information.

Course Schedule

Detailed references are at the end of this syllabus.

Day	Topic	Readings	Notes
Jan 25	Introduction		
I. Skepticism <i>What kind of access do we have to facts about the world we live in? How can the problem of skepticism be addressed?</i>			
Jan 27	Skeptical Problems	Williams	
Feb 1	Externalism about Evidence	Bonjour	
Feb 3	Internalism about Evidence	Madison	
II. Epistemic Normativity <i>What are the normative implications of how well-informed we are? When do we have the right to assert something, believe something, or act on an assumption?</i>			
Feb 8	Norms of Assertion	Williamson (read only to end of sec. 2, p. 508)	paper 1 assigned
Feb 10	Norms of Assertion	Kelp & Simion	
Feb 15	Epistemic Norms of Action	Hawthorne & Stanley	
Feb 17	Epistemic Norms of Action	Neta	Paper 1 draft due
Feb 22	Epistemic Norms of Belief	Rinard	
Feb 24	Review Session		
III. Social Epistemology <i>Can two reasonable people with the same access to evidence disagree? What forms of epistemic injustice are there, and how can they be rectified?</i>			
Mar 1	Peer Disagreement	Christensen	paper 1 due
Mar 3	Peer Disagreement	Hawthorne & Srinivasan	
Mar 8	Testimonial Injustice	Fricker, Introduction and ch. 1 (pp. 1-29)	
Mar 10	Testimonial Injustice		paper 2/ project assigned
Mar 15	Hermeneutical Injustice	Fricker, ch. 7	
Mar 17	Review Session		Presentation session 1
Mar 21-25	<i>Spring Break - no class</i>		
IV. Epistemology and Democracy <i>How should democratic discourse be organized to allow for beneficial decisions? What role does empathy play? In what ways is diversity important?</i>			
Mar 29	Political Epistemology	Hannon & Edenberg	Presentation session 2
Mar 31	The Epistemology of Democracy	Anderson	Peer reviews due
Apr 5	Empathy	Steinberg	
Apr 7	Epistemic Effects of Diversity	O'Connor & Bruner	paper 2/ project report due
Apr 12	Rational Public Discourse	Habermas	
Apr 15	Review Session		
V. Misinformation and Conspiracy Theories <i>How Do Conspiracy Theories arise and what exactly is problematic about them? Are they similar to propaganda?</i>			

Apr 19	Vice Epistemology	Cassam	
Apr 21	Conspiracy Theories	Hawley	final paper topics due
Apr 26	Propaganda	Stanley	
Apr 28	Review Session		
May 10			final paper due

Readings

Here are the full citations of the readings, listed in the order of the course schedule. All readings are available on MS Teams.

- Williams, Michael (2000). Problems of Knowledge. Oxford University Press. – Chapters 5 and 6 (pp. 58-80).
- BonJour, Laurence (1980). Externalist Theories of Empirical Knowledge. *Midwest Studies in Philosophy* 5, 53–73.
- Madison, B.J.C. (2010). Epistemic Internalism. *Philosophy Compass* 5, 840-853.
- Williamson, Timothy (1996). Knowing and Asserting. *The Philosophical Review* 105: 489-523.
- Kelp, Christoph and Mona Simion (forthcoming). A Social Epistemology of Assertion. In Jennifer Lackey and Aidan McGlynn (eds.), *Oxford Handbook of Social Epistemology*. Oxford University Press.
- Hawthorne, John and Jason Stanley (2008). Knowledge and Action. *Journal of Philosophy* 105: 571-590.
- Neta, Ram (2009). Treating Something as a Reason for Action. *Noûs* 41:594–626.
- Rinard, Susanna (2017). No Exception for Belief. *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 94: 121-143.
- Christensen, David (2007). Epistemology of disagreement: The good news. *Philosophical Review* 116: 187-217.
- Hawthorne, John and Amia Srinivasan (2013). Disagreement Without Transparency: Some Bleak Thoughts. In David Christensen and Jennifer Lackey (eds.), *The Epistemology of Disagreement: New Essays* (pp. 9-30). Oxford University Press.
- Fricker, Miranda (2007). *Epistemic Injustice*. Oxford University Press.
- Hannon, Michael, and Elizabeth Edenberg (forthcoming). A Guide to Political Epistemology. In Jennifer Lackey & Aidan McGlynn (eds.), *Oxford Handbook of Social Epistemology*. Oxford University Press.
- Anderson, Elizabeth (2006). The Epistemology of Democracy. *Episteme* 3, 8–22.
- Steinberg, Justin (2014). An Epistemic Case for Empathy. *Pacific Philosophical Quarterly* 95, 47-71.
- O'Connor, Cailin & Justin Bruner (2019). Dynamics and Diversity in Epistemic Communities. *Erkenntnis* 84, 101–119.
- Habermas, Jürgen (1984). *The Theory of communicative action. Vol. I: Reason and the Rationalization of Society*, T. McCarthy (trans.). Boston: Beacon. [Ch. 1, section C]
- Cassam, Quassim (2016). Vice Epistemology. *The Monist* 99, 159-180.
- Hawley, Katherine (2019). Conspiracy theories, impostor syndrome, and distrust. *Philosophical Studies* 176, 969–980.
- Stanley, Jason (2015). *How Propaganda Works*. Princeton University Press. [Ch. 3]

Themes from the Philosophy of Religion (Fall 2020)

Course Description

Religion has always been a contested and extensively debated topic throughout the history of philosophy, and the topics from the philosophy of religion are still relevant today. In this course, we will look at several of those topics: what is religion? Do we have reason to believe or not believe in God? How does God relate to the world (or are there many Gods)? How can we understand religious practice? And what role (if any) should religion play in our society?

Course Objective

The primary goal of this course is to gain an understanding of some of the most influential views and arguments from the philosophy of religion and the historical trajectory that shaped them. You should be able to explain and contextualize the views expressed in the readings in depth and to critically discuss them and clearly advocate your own opinion. More broadly, this will also help building several reasoning and expression skills in general: engaging with complex readings and closely analyzing them will improve your ability to read carefully and attend to detail as well as to weigh the different readings. Critical assessment of the arguments expressed in those readings will allow you to learn thinking and expressing yourself clearly and precisely both in conversation and in writing.

Class Format

Due to the ongoing pandemic, this class will run entirely online, although it will follow the original schedule. The modalities of the course will look like this:

- Readings for each week will usually be assigned to be read by Tuesday.
- I will pre-record a lecture of about 30 minutes and post it by Tuesday morning. The idea is for you to watch that lecture at 10:30 on Tuesdays. (I will link to these videos on the MS Teams site.)
- Following that until 11:45, we will have an online discussion on the Microsoft Teams site. I will provide discussion questions in the lecture and will be participating in the discussion on Teams. You are welcome to continue the discussion after class ends, or post earlier if you have a scheduling conflict.
- On Thursdays, we will be meeting on Zoom and discussing that weeks content further. Typically, this will involve group work using breakout rooms.

Student Assessment

Grading for this course consists of four components:

- A preliminary paper (20%)
- Preparatory stages of the final paper (20%)
- The final paper (40%)
- Weekly posts and participation (20%)

The preliminary paper is a 4-5 page paper to be written early in the class. I will assign a choice of topics (which will relate to the different conceptions of religion) and provide a guide on how to write such a paper within the first few weeks. The idea is for you to write that paper over a period of two weeks, mainly as a way of allowing you to get a sense of what you will need to do in the final paper.

The main project in this class is your final paper, which should be 12-15 pages long and cover a topic that you choose yourself. This paper should come close to an academic research paper and should go beyond what we are covering in class. In particular, it should cover content and literature that is not covered in our regular meetings, and it should contain some line of argumentation that goes deeper than or is different from what we talked about in class. I'm happy to help you in finding a topic and identifying relevant literature.

To help you write that paper, you will need to submit preparatory stages of your paper throughout the semester. After the preliminary paper, you will need to declare which section of the class you would like to write your final paper about. I will assign you to a workshop group based on that interest, and I will set up a MS Teams chat for each group. You are encouraged to group chat about your papers in that group. As preparatory work, you will need to do the following things:

- Write a proposal for your paper that describes its thesis, structure, and the literature you want to read (5%)
- Provide feedback on the proposals of your workshop group (5%)
- Give a short literature report to your workshop group about a text or paper you read for your final paper (5%)
- Submit a draft of your final paper at least two weeks before the due date (5%)
- Finally, this class has a participation component which covers two aspects:
- Your discussion posts on Teams (10%): you are expected to post at least one short comment or question every week. The comment has to be relevant and thought-out, but it is sufficient for it to be 2-3 sentences long. I will only count comments being posted on the relevant Tuesday (so you can't post a bunch of comments towards the end of the semester).
- Your participation in Zoom meetings and group workshops (10%): you are expected to actively participate in the class meetings, both in group work and in class discussions. (I recognize that the former is difficult for me to assess, but I will give you the benefit of the doubt.) Failing to regularly attend these meeting (including being late / leaving early) or ignoring group workshop discussions counts against this part of your grade.

See the section below for my policies on missed meetings or posts.

Because of the special circumstances, the university has decided to make S/U grading the default option for this class. Here are the specific Krieger School policies concerning that:

- You can switch to a regular letter grade for any number of courses you like. Please check with the registrar's office for the relevant deadlines.
- If you take this class as S/U, it will still count towards all degree requirements that require a graded class, including those that require at least a C.
- The course requirements described above (and the policies described below) *do not change* if you take this class as S/U. The university has set up the system in such a way that I do not know which of you are choosing to receive a letter grade, and I have been told to not ask you about your grading preferences. I will therefore act on the assumption that any of you may be needing a letter grade.

Course Policies

- Attendance is required. You can miss up to a total of four Zoom classes or discussion posts without any penalty (e.g. you could miss two Teams discussion posts and two Zoom classes). Beyond that, you can only miss classes/posts with a valid excuse. If you miss more than four classes without a valid excuse, there will be a penalty on your overall grade. (If you have a letter from the disability office that exempts you from attendance requirements, you can ignore this paragraph.)
- Late assignments: assignments are always due at midnight at the end of the day specified on the course schedule. I will allow a “grace period” until 4am, but after that the assignment counts as late. For every day an assignment is late, there will be a deduction of 5% from the grade of that assignment. However, if the assignment is late more than 5 days, it will simply be graded 0%.
- Zoom etiquette: when attending Zoom classes, please open Zoom 2 minutes before the start time, so we are able to begin on time. While we are in the main meeting, please keep your video on, but your audio muted unless you would like to talk. In breakout rooms, please unmute yourself. Please use the “raise hand” button and other buttons in the “Participants” menu of Zoom, and feel free to post questions in the chat (but please don’t have a side discussion in the chat).
- Covid-related accommodations: I realize that this is a difficult time for many of you, and that some of you may have additional obligations or restrictions in the way they can do academic work. Please alert me of any ways in which these circumstances inhibit your participation in this class – I will try to provide accommodations for that. (Some examples of such restrictions: being in a different time zone, having to take care of your siblings, having an unsteady internet connection, ...)
- Finally, some of you may feel strongly about the topic of this course – either because you are religious yourself, or perhaps because you have a relation to some form of harm that has been done in the name of religion. This makes it important for us to work together to create a friendly environment in which our different perspectives can coexist. It also presents an opportunity for us to learn to voice opinions and productive criticism to someone who disagrees with us, and to be receptive to such statements and respond to them well.

Disability Accommodations

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Academic Integrity

The strength of the university depends on academic and personal integrity. In this course, you must be honest and truthful. Ethical violations include cheating on exams, plagiarism, reuse of assignments, improper use of the internet and electronic devices, unauthorized collaboration, alteration of graded assignments, forgery and falsification, lying, facilitating academic dishonesty, and unfair competition. Report any violations you witness to the instructor. You may consult the associate dean of students and/or the chairman of the Ethics Board beforehand. See the guide on

“Academic Ethics for Undergraduates” at <https://studentaffairs.jhu.edu/policies-guidelines/undergrad-ethics/> for more information.

Course Schedule

Detailed references are at the end of the syllabus.

Day	Topic	Readings	Notes
Sep 1 (Zoom)	Introduction		
I. Conceptions of Religion			
<i>What is religion? Is it a system of beliefs (and what kinds of beliefs)? Or is it a feeling?</i>			
Sep 3 (Panopto / Teams)	Natural religion	Tindal	
Sep 8 (Panopto / Teams)	Religion as moral belief / Religion as a feeling of absolute dependence	Kant, Schleiermacher	
Sep 10 (Zoom)			
II. Does God exist?			
<i>Can we prove or disprove the existence of God? And if not, do we still have reason to believe one way or the other?</i>			
Sep 15 (Panopto / Teams)	The Ontological Argument / The Cosmological Argument	Anselm, Gaunilo, Thomas	Preliminary Paper assigned
Sep 17 (Zoom)			
Sep 22 (Panopto / Teams)	The Argument from Design / Belief based on miracles?	Hume (Dialogues + Enquiry)	
Sep 24 (Zoom)			
Sep 29 (Panopto / Teams)	The Problem of Evil	Leibniz, Plantinga, Mackie	
Oct 1 (Zoom)			
Oct 6 (Panopto / Teams)	Pascal's Wager / The Will to Believe	Pascal, James	
Oct 8 (Zoom)			Preliminary Paper due
Oct 13 (Panopto / Teams)	Religion without belief? / Review session	Mackie	
Oct 15 (Zoom)	Review / workshop meeting		
III. God's relation to the world			
<i>Are things good because God approves of them, or is it the other way around? Are we free in our actions if God can foresee our choices? Is God in space and time or outside of it?</i>			
Oct 20 (Panopto / Teams)	Foreknowledge and freedom / God and space/time	Zagzebski, Boethius, Descartes	

Oct 22	– Fall Break –		
Oct 27 (Panopto / Teams)	God and morality / Pantheism	Plato, Spinoza	
Oct 29 (Zoom)			
IV. Religious Practice and Experience <i>What is prayer, and is it justified? What other kinds of religious experience and practice are there in Buddhism and Hinduism?</i>			
Nov 3 (Panopto / Teams)	Buddhism and emptiness / Yoga	Nagarjuna, Vivekananda	Election Day – you have the option of posting on Nov 4.
Nov 5 (Zoom)			Presentation session 1
Nov 10 (Panopto / Teams)	Prayer / Review session	Thomas, Of Prayer	Presentation session 2
Nov 12 (Zoom)	Review / workshop meeting		Presentation on Taoism + presentation session 3 PROPOSAL DUE
V. Religion and Society <i>Does religion have a place in our society? Can someone be religious and also be a good scientist? How is religion different from, say, political ideologies?</i>			
Nov 17 (Panopto / Teams)	Marxism and Religion / Secularism	MacIntyre, Habermas	
Nov 19 (Zoom)			Presentation session 4 REVIEWS DUE (11/22)
– Thanksgiving Break –			
Dec 1 (Panopto / Teams)	Religion and Science / Is religion Special?	Gould, Brownlee	
Dec 3 (Zoom)			DRAFT DUE
Dec 8 (Zoom)	Review / workshop meeting		
Dec 15	DUE DATE FINAL PAPER		

Readings

Here are the full citations of the readings, listed in the order of the course schedule. Readings will be made available via Blackboard.

Tindal, Matthew (1730). *Christianity as Old as the Creation*. Garland Publishing 1978. – Chapters 1+2.

Kant, Immanuel (1788). *Critique of Practical Reason*. Translated by Mary Gregor. Cambridge University Press 2015.- Book II, Ch. 2, sec. 5 ("The Existence of God as a Postulate of Pure Practical Reason").

Schleiermacher, Friedrich Daniel Ernst (1799). *On Religion: Speeches to Its Cultured Despisers*. Transl. by Richard Crouter. Cambridge University Press 1988. - Second speech, section B ("The Locus of Religion").

Anselm of Canterbury (1077/1078). *Proslogion*. In id., *Major Works*. Translated by M.J. Charlesworth. Oxford University Press. - Chapters 2-5.

Gaunilo of Marmoutiers (no date). *Pro Insipientie* (On Behalf of the Fool). Ibid.

Plantinga, Alvin (1969). *God Freedom and Evil*. Eerdmans. - Part II (c) ("The Ontological Argument").

Thomas Aquinas (1274). *Summa Theologiae I 1-13*. Translated by Brian Shanley. Hackett 2006. - Pars I, Quaestio 2.

Hume, David (1770). *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion*. Ed. by Dorothy Coleman. Cambridge University Press 2007. - Pt. 3, par. 1-10 (pp. 29-32) and pt. 7-8 (pp. 52-62).

Hume, David (1748). *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*. Hackett 1977. - Section 10.

Leibniz, Gottfried Wilhelm (1710). *Theodicy: Essays on the Goodness of God, the freedom of Man, and the Origin of Evil*. Transl. by E.M. Huggard. Routledge 1951. - Appendix 1 ("Summary of the Controversy, Reduced to Formal Arguments").

Plantinga, op. cit. - Part I (a), sections 4-8 (pp. 29-55).

Mackie, John (1983). *The Miracle of Theism*. Oxford University Press. - Ch. 9, sections (d)-(f).

Pascal, Blaise (1670). *Pensées*. Transl. by John Warrington. Dent 1932. - Sec. 3, par 233 ("Infinity - Nothingness").

James, William (1898). *The Will to Believe*. In id., *The Will to Believe and other essays in the popular philosophy* (pp. 1-31). Dover 1956.

Mackie, John (op. cit.). - Ch. 12 ("Religion without belief?")

Plato (no date). *Eutyphro*. Transl. by G.M.A. Grube. In: John Cooper (ed.), *Plato: Complete Works* (pp. 1-16). Hackett 1997.

Zagzebski, Linda (1997). *Foreknowledge and human freedom*. In: Philip Quinn and Charles Taliaferro (eds.), *A Companion to Philosophy of Religion* (pp. 291-298). Blackwell.

Boethius (around 524). *The Consolation of Philosophy*. Transl. by David Slavitt. Harvard University Press 2008. - Book V, section VI.

Descartes, René (1644). *The Principles of Philosophy*. Transl. by John Cottingham. In id., *The Philosophical Writings of Descartes*. Cambridge University Press 1985. - Part One, par. 24-27.

Spinoza, Baruch de (1677). *Ethics, Demonstrated in Geometrical Order*. Transl. by T.S. Eliot. Princeton University Press 2020. - Book I, up until (including) proposition 16.

Thomas Aquinas (1274). *Summa Theologiae II-II*. Translated by the Fathers of the English Dominican Province. Christian Classics Ethereal Library. Available online at <https://www.ccel.org/ccel/aquinas/summa.html>. - Quaestio 83 ("Of Prayer").

Nagarjuna (ca. 150). *Nagarjuna's Mūlamadhyamakakārikā*. Transl. and commentary by Jay Garfield. Oxford University Press 1995. - Ch. 24 ("An Analysis of the Noble Truths") + commentary on that chapter.

Vivekananda, Swami (1896). *Raja Yoga*. Celephais Press 2003. - Book 1, chapters I and VIII.

MacIntyre, A. (1968). *Marxism and Religion*. In id., *Marxism and Christianity*. University of Notre Dame Press.

Habermas, Jürgen (2006). Religion in the Public Sphere. *European Journal of Philosophy* 14: 1-25.
Gould, Stephen Jay (1997). Nonoverlapping Magisteria. *Natural History* 106: 16-22.
Brownlee, Kimberley (2017). Is religious conviction special? In: Cecile Laborde and Aurelia Bardon (eds.): *Religion in Liberal Political Philosophy* (pp. 309-320). Oxford University Press.

Do we have souls? If so, what are they? (Intersession/Winter 2020)

Course Description

According to a view called "physicalism", our world is entirely physical, and therefore leaves no room for things like souls to exist. According to a different view called "dualism", there is a second type of substance aside from physical objects, which would leave room for souls. In this course, we will discuss arguments for and against those two views, but we will also look at further conceptions of what a "soul" might be which promise to offer a third way.

Course Objective

After completing this course, you should have an understanding of the most important positions in play within the philosophical debate around souls: naturalism, dualism, hylomorphism, panpsychism, and immaterial realism. You should also understand some of the most influential arguments in favor of and against these positions, and you should be able to verbalize them yourself and critically discuss them. Like most philosophy courses, this course should also help to build your analytic thinking and verbal reasoning skills.

Student Assessment

Like all Intersession courses, this course is graded satisfactory/unsatisfactory. To receive a satisfactory grade, you must:

- Meet the attendance requirement (see below).
- Show active participation in the class.
- Complete two reading preparations and receive a satisfactory grade on both.

The reading preparations are critical summaries of the class readings for one of our meetings (except the first one). Those summaries should highlight the most important claims and lines of argument in that day's mandatory readings and offer your thoughts (such as applications, criticisms, further illustrations) about those readings. They should be around 3 pages long (i.e. 800- 1000 words) and must be submitted to me by email before 8pm the day before that meeting. Class preparations will be assigned at our first meeting.

Course Policies

Attendance is required. You can miss one class without any penalty (and you don't have to send me an apology). Beyond that, you can only miss classes with a valid excuse. Missing more than one class without valid excuse will result in an unsatisfactory grade. (If you have a letter from the disability office that exempts you from attendance requirements, you can ignore this paragraph.)

Research demonstrates that classes in which students are not allowed to use laptops and smartphones have far better learning outcomes. For that reason, laptops, smartphones, etc. are not allowed in class. The only exceptions to this policy are e-readers which do not have a browser function and students with disability accommodations that allow them to use electronics.

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Course Schedule

Detailed references are at the end of this syllabus.

Day	Topic	Readings
Jan 6	Introduction; Physicalism	Churchland
I. A very brief historical tour		
Jan 8	Cartesian Dualism	Descartes (Husserl optional)
Jan 10	Hylomorphism	Aristotle, Madden (Berkeley optional)
II. The debate about consciousness		
Jan 13	Qualia (I): What is it Like to be a Bat? / The Knowledge Argument	Nagel, Jackson
Jan 15	Qualia (II): The “Hard Problem”	Chalmers, Smart
Jan 17	The Evolutionary Argument Against Naturalism	Plantinga
Jan 20	<i>MLK Day - no class</i>	
Jan 22	The Intentional Stance	Dennett
Jan 24	Panpsychism	Sprigge, Carruthers & Schechter

Readings

Here are the full citations of the readings, listed in the order of the course schedule. All readings will be made available on Blackboard.

Churchland, P. (2011). The Brain and Its Self. *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 155: 41-50.
 Descartes, R. *Meditations on First Philosophy*. Transl. by John Cottingham. In: id., *The Philosophical Writings of Descartes*, Vol. II. Cambridge University Press 1984. – First and Second Meditation, excerpt from Sixth Meditation (AT VII 17-34; 71-78).

- Husserl, E. (1954). *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology*. Transl. by David Carr. Northwestern University Press 1970. – Part II, sections 16-20 (pp. 73-83).
- Aristotle. *De Anima*. Transl. by Christopher Shields. Oxford University Press 2016. – Book II, Chs. 1-2 (pp. 22-26).
- Madden, J. (2013). Thomistic Hylomorphism and Philosophy of Mind and Philosophy of Religion. *Philosophy Compass* 8: 664-676.
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- Nagel, T. (1974). What is it like to be a bat? *The Philosophical Review* 83: 435-450.
- Jackson, F. (1982). Epiphenomenal Qualia. *The Philosophical Quarterly* 32: 127-136.
- Chalmers, D. (1995). Facing up to the problem of consciousness. *Journal of Consciousness Studies* 2 (3): 200-219.
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- Carruthers, P. and E. Schechter (2006) Can Panpsychism Bridge the Explanatory Gap? *Journal of Consciousness Studies* 13 (10-11): 32-39.

Wittgenstein and the Limits of Our World (Intersession/Winter 2019)

[co-taught with Itai Marom]

Course Description

In his *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, Ludwig Wittgenstein argues that in philosophy, we are often trying to say things that cannot be said. He set himself the task of showing the limits of what can be expressed in language and thought. He arrives at the conclusion that much of what passes under the name of “philosophy”, from questions of truth to value and the good, is nonsensical. In this course, we will read this important text closely.

Goals

We want to try a “close reading” of the *Tractatus*. This will provide an understanding of Wittgenstein’s early philosophy and improve on students’ ability to critically engage with complex texts. The *Tractatus* can also allow students to better understand other issues in philosophy of mind and language as well as introduce the to the origins of analytic philosophy.

Requirements

Like all Intersession classes, this class is graded S/U for all students. A satisfactory grade requires regular attendance (no more than one unexcused absence) and active participation. In addition you need to submit two class preparations in advance of

meetings. These preparations contain summaries of the main ideas and arguments in that day's assigned readings (roughly 10 % of the original text's length) as well as open questions, thoughts and tentative criticisms you may have developed in reading the materials. For a "satisfactory" grade, both submissions need to be graded "satisfactory".

[sections on academic integrity and disability accommodations as above.]

Class Schedule

Readings in [brackets] are not required but will be in the background of discussions and are listed for easier reference. We will be using D.F. Pears and B.F. McGuinness's 1961 translation of the Tractatus published by Routledge with an introduction by Bertrand Russell. You can buy any edition of the TLP that contains this translation and introduction as we will be navigating using Wittgenstein's enumeration of the propositions. All readings other than the TLP are on Blackboard.

Jan 7	<p><u>Housekeeping; Frege, On Sense and Reference</u> Gottlob Frege, On Sinn and Bedeutung. Transl. by Max Black. In: Michael Beaney (ed.), The Frege Reader, Wiley Blackwell 1997, 151-71. (Very short) excerpt from: Gottlob Frege, 'The Foundations of Arithmetics'. Transl. by Max Black. In: Michael Beaney (ed.), The Frege Reader, Wiley Blackwell 1997, 84-129, here p. 90. [Gottlob Frege, On Concept and Object. In: Michael Beaney (ed.), The Frege Reader, Wiley Blackwell 1997, 181-193.] [Gottlob Frege, Selections from the 'Begriffsschrift'. Transl. by Max Black. In: Michael Beaney (ed.), The Frege Reader, Wiley Blackwell 1997, 47-79.] [Bertrand Russell, On Denoting. Mind 14, 56 (1905), 479-493.] [Roger White, Wittgenstein's Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus: A Reader's Guide, Continuum 2006, ch. 1.]</p>
Jan 9	<p><u>Wittgenstein's background; worlds and logical space</u> Bertrand Russell, Introduction to the TLP. TLP, Preface and 1 - 2.063. [Eli Friedlander, Signs of Sense, Harvard University Press 2001, ch. 1-2.]</p>
Jan 11	<p><u>The picture theory</u> TLP, 2.1 - 3.5. Ludwig Wittgenstein, Some Remarks on Logical Form. Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society, Supplementary Volumes 9: 162-171. [Kelly Dean Jolley, Logic's Caretaker - Wittgenstein, Logic and the Vanishment of Russell's Paradox. The Philosophical Forum 35 (2004), 281-309.] [Georg Henrik von Wright, A Biographical Sketch. In: Norman Malcolm: Ludwig Wittgenstein. A Biographical Sketch. Second Edition. Oxford University Press 2001. Pp. 7-8.]</p>
Jan 14	Snow day - class cancelled
Jan 16	<u>Language and propositions</u>

	<p>TLP, 4 - 4.53. [Ludwig Wittgenstein, Notebooks 1914-1916. Translated by G.E.M. Anscombe. Chicago University Press 1961.] [White, Wittgenstein's, ch. 2.] [Cora Diamond, What Does a Concept Script Do? The Philosophical Quarterly 34: 343-368.]</p>
Jan 18	<p><u>Logic</u> TLP, 5 - 5.5571. [Peter Geach, Wittgenstein's Operator N, Analysis 41 (1981), 168-171.] [Juliet Floyd, Appendix of "Number and Ascriptions of Number in Wittgenstein's Tractatus", in id. and Sanford Shieh (eds.), Future Pasts: The Analytic Tradition in Twentieth Century Philosophy (145-84). Oxford University Press 2001.]</p>
Jan 21	<p>MLK day</p>
Jan 23	<p><u>Nonsense</u> TLP, 5.6 - 7. [Cora Diamond, What Nonsense Might Be, Philosophy 56 (1981), 5-22.] [Meredith Williams, Nonsense and Cosmic Exile. The austere reading of the Tractatus, in: Max Kölbel and Bernhard Weiss (eds.), Wittgenstein's Lasting Significance, Routledge 2004, 6-31.]</p>
Jan 24 (make up class)	<p><u>Wittgenstein's ethics</u> Ludwig Wittgenstein, Lecture on Ethics. The Philosophical Review 74 (1965), 3-12. [Kevin Cahill, Tractarian Ethics, in: Hans Sluga and David Stern (eds.), The Cambridge Companion to Wittgenstein (pp. 96-125). Cambridge University Press.] [Cora Diamond, The Tractatus and The Limits of Sense, in: Oskari Kuusela and Marie McGinn (eds.), The Oxford Handbook of Wittgenstein (pp. 240-75). Oxford University Press 2011.]</p>
Jan 25	<p><u>Early Wittgenstein and Late Wittgenstein</u> Ludwig Wittgenstein, Philosophical Investigations. Transl. by Elisabeth Anscombe. Blackwell, 2nd ed., 1958. Preface, 1-23, 91-124. [White, Wittgenstein's, ch. 4.]</p>

Belief in God (Intersession/Winter 2018)

Course Description

Historically, many philosophers have tried to provide arguments to establish the existence of God. While these arguments are often extremely interesting, they fail when understood as proofs and face problems even as supportive arguments. Even worse, defenders of religious belief face the *Problem of Evil*: why would a benevolent God create a world that allows for such things as the Holocaust and the bubonic plague? This is a serious objection, but some have at least provided some considerations how it might still be possible that God would create the world like this. If these ideas are convincing, this opens the door for considerations whether and how it might at least be rationally *permissible* to believe in God. In this course, we will read and discuss some of the most famous texts from both sides of these debates. A background in philosophy is not required, but participants are presumed to be willing to work through complex and “hard” readings.

Goals

The primary goal of this course is to introduce participants to some classical arguments and ideas from the philosophy of religion. By way of doing this you will hopefully also gain some understanding of philosophical activity and of what constitutes a good argument in general. A specific aspect of this topic is that religion may personally mean a lot to some participants – either because they are themselves religious, or because they have strong feelings about things like violence or discrimination in the name of religion. I would like for everyone to focus on the question how the different sides can have a fair discussion about belief in God without either side being personally attacked or offended. The ability to have such discussions is useful outside the classroom, too.

Requirements

This class is graded satisfactory/unsatisfactory for all students. A satisfactory grade requires regular attendance (miss no more than two classes) and participation as well as completion of both steps of the reading excerpts. These are papers that summarize the main line of reasoning of one of our papers and should indicate both which questions you have and (very briefly) which potential problems you might see with it. As a rough approximation, an excerpt should be 10-15% of the original text's length. As the first step, you pick one course reading (to be decided on in the first meeting) and submit your excerpt to me by email before 7pm on the day before we discuss this text in class. For Jan 12, pick one of the readings (Aquinas or Hume). As a second step, you rewrite that paper after that class, taking into consideration the key takeaways of our class discussion of that reading. You do not need to (and should not) include discussions of other authors or biographical details I might bring in, but you should try to use the class to get clearer on the reading itself. The rewritten excerpts are due at 7pm the day before the next meeting. (For example, if you write on Anselm, the first version is due Jan 9, 7pm, and the final version is due Jan 11, 7pm.) I will post one of these excerpts on Blackboard after each class to make revisiting classes easier – if you would not like me to post your excerpt, please flag this in your message.

[sections on academic integrity and disability accommodations as above.]

Class Schedule

Readings in [brackets] are not required but will be in the background of discussions and are listed for easier reference. For most classes, there is a chapter in Mackie which is usually a very good guide to the text. All required readings are available on Blackboard.

Jan 8	<u>Housekeeping; what is God?</u>
Jan 10	<u>The Ontological Argument</u> Anselm of Canterbury. Prologion. In id., <i>The Major Works</i> . Edited by Brian Davies and G.R. Evans. Translated by M.J. Charlesworth. Oxford University Press 1998. Ch. 1-4, pp. 82-89. [Gaunilo of Marmoutiers. <i>Pro Insipientie (On Behalf of the Fool)</i> . Ibid., pp. 105-110.] [Anselm of Canterbury. <i>Reply to Gaunilo</i> . Ibid., pp. 111-122.] [Alvin Plantinga. <i>God Freedom and Evil</i> . Eerdmans 1969. Pp. 83-112.] [John Mackie. <i>The Miracle of Theism</i> . Oxford University Press 1982. Ch. 3, pp. 41-63.]
Jan 12	<u>The Argument from Design</u> Thomas Aquinas. <i>Summa Theologiae I</i> 1-13. Translated by Brian Shanley. Hackett 2006 (originally published 1274). Pars I, Quaestio 2 [especially article 3, the "fifth way"], pp. 17-24. David Hume. <i>Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion</i> . Ed. by Dorothy Coleman. Cambridge University Press 2007 (originally published 1779). Pt. 3, par. 1-10 (pp. 29-32) and pt. 7-8 (pp. 52-62). [Mackie, ch. 8, pp.133-49.]
Jan 15	MLK day
Jan 17	<u>The Problem of Evil</u> Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz. <i>Real-Life Dialogue on Human Freedom and the Origin of Evil</i> . Translated by Jonathan Bennett (2006, originally published 1695). Available online at http://www.earlymoderntexts.com/assets/pdfs/leibniz1695a.pdf . [Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz. <i>Theodicy</i> . Translated By E.M. Huggard. BiblioBazaar 2007 (originally published 1710). Part One, par. 1-26, pp. 126-142.] [Pierre Bayle, <i>Historical and Critical Dictionary</i> . Selections, transl. by Richard Popkins, The Bobbs-Merrill Company 1965 (originally published 1697). Pp. 166-193 (article on Paulicians).] [Plantinga, pp. 7-65.] [Mackie, ch. 9, pp. 150-76.]
Jan 19	<u>Kant on the failure of Theodicy</u> Immanuel Kant. <i>On the Miscarriage of all Philosophical Trials in Theodicy</i> . In id., <i>Religion and Rational Theology</i> (Cambridge edition to the works of Kant), transl. and ed. by Allen Wood and George di Giovanni (pp. 21-37). Cambridge University Press 1996 (originally published 1791).

Jan 22	<u>Hume's argument against belief based on miracles</u> David Hume. <i>An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding</i> . Ed. by Peter Millican. Oxford University Press 2007 (originally published 1748). Ch. 10 ("Of Miracles"), pp. 79-95. [Mackie, ch. 2, pp. 13-29.]
Jan 24	<u>Pascal's Wager and The Will to Believe</u> William James. <i>The Will to Believe</i> . In id., <i>The Will to Believe and other essays in the popular philosophy</i> (pp. 1-31). Dover 1956 (originally published 1898). [William James. <i>Pragmatism</i> . In: id., <i>Pragmatism and The Meaning of Truth</i> . Harvard University Press 1975 (originally published 1907). P. 124.] [Blaise Pascal. <i>Pensées</i> . Translated by T.S. Eliot. Dutton 1958 (originally published 1669). Nr. 233, pp. 65-69.] [Mackie, ch. 11, pp. 199-229.]
Jan 26	<u>Wrap up; ramifications for non-monotheistic religions</u>

Philosophical Intuitions (Summer 2017)

Course Description

If a train is running at five people tied to the track and the only chance to save them is to push a fat person down a bridge to stop the train, should I really do this? Does the length of a flagpole's shadow explain the height of the pole just as well as the height of the pole explains the length of the shadow? Somehow, most people are moved to reply "No" to both of these questions without having to undergo a great deal of deliberation. Such immediate responses are typically referred to as intuitions. At least according to a prevalent conception, analytic philosophy frequently appeals to intuitions; but only recently, philosophers have discussed the role of intuitions more explicitly. In this course, we will discuss three questions that naturally arise:

(1) What exactly are (philosophical) intuitions? We will look at some philosophical attempts, but also explore the perspective of cognitive science.

(2) Do philosophers really appeal to intuitions as frequently as they seem to think? Herman Cappelen (2012) has recently suggested otherwise and thereby caused a heated metaphilosophical debate.

(3) Which role *should* intuitions play in philosophy? We can, quite independently of the actual role of intuitions in philosophy, ask whether or in which type of cases intuitions are in fact good evidence for philosophical claims. Champions of the so-called *negative program* of experimental philosophy try to uncover the degree to which intuitions are influenced by apparently philosophically irrelevant factors and use their results to argue that we should abstain from appealing to intuitions. Others have taken more nuanced approaches that allow intuitions as evidence for philosophical claims if the nature of the claim and our best understanding of the kind of intuitions involved do indeed allow for the intuitions to be truth-indicative.

Goals

There are four main goals of this course: (1) understanding the main lines of reasoning within the metaphilosophical debate about intuitions; (2) being able to discuss (alleged) appeals to intuitions in philosophical literature at an advanced level; (3) the ability to closely analyze arguments and point out their assumptions precisely and (4) getting a sense of how philosophy can benefit from cognitive science. According to a popular proverb among philosophers, what you can learn when studying philosophy is reading and writing. In that sense, this course is supposed to increase reading abilities.

Requirements

This class may be taken fully graded or graded satisfactory/unsatisfactory. In any case, a satisfactory grade requires regular attendance, a class presentation and a short essay. Class presentations will be "case studies" of about 10 minutes on one prominent philosophical passage which, at least allegedly, appeals to intuitions. Your role is that of an expert on this passage, so you need to supply the relevant bit of context and the content of the passage, ideally even tell us about the impact of that passage. A list of presentation topics is included as an appendix; if you have another interesting passage you would like to present on, please talk to me. Essays should be 6-8 page discussions (preferably) of the topic of your presentation, relating it at least to one general topic we discussed in class. Papers are due on the evening of July 7. If you need a grade, participation, presentation and paper will be graded and count one third towards your final grade.

Academic Integrity

The strength of the university depends on academic and personal integrity. In this course, you must be honest and truthful. Ethical violations include cheating on exams, plagiarism, reuse of assignments, improper use of the internet and electronic devices, unauthorized collaboration, alteration of graded assignments, forgery and falsification, lying, facilitating academic dishonesty, and unfair competition. Report any violations you witness to the instructor. You may consult the associate dean of students and/or the chairman of the Ethics Board beforehand. See the guide on “Academic Ethics for Undergraduates” at <https://studentaffairs.jhu.edu/policies-guidelines/undergrad-ethics/> for more information.

Disability Accommodations

If you are a student with a disability or believe that you might have a disability that requires special accommodations, please contact Student Disability Services to obtain a letter from a specialist: Garland 385; (410) 516 4720; studentdisabilityservices@jhu.edu

Class Schedule

All readings are available on Blackboard.

May 31	<u>Introduction and housekeeping; the case of the Gettier debate</u> Seminar texts: Gettier 1963; Russell 1912, 129-130. Further readings: Weatherson et al. 2001; Machery et al. 2015.
Part I: What are Intuitions?	
June 2	<u>Philosophical theories of intuition I: defining intuitions</u> Seminar texts: Alexander 2012, 11-27; Pust 2000, 43-46. Further readings: Bealer 1998; Sosa 1998; Sosa 2007.
June 5	<u>Philosophical theories of intuition II: Williamson and his critics</u> Seminar texts: Williamson 2007, 215-220; Chudnoff 2011. Further reading: Alexander 2012, 102-107.
June 7	<u>Intuitions in cognitive science</u> Seminar text: Kahneman 2011, 19-30; 50-7-; 89-105. Further reading: Nado 2014
Part II: Are intuitions central to philosophy?	
June 9	<u>Cappelen’s linguistic arguments</u> Seminar text: Cappelen 2012, 29-60. Further readings: Weinberg 2014, Nado 2016.
June 12	<u>Cappelen’s empirical argument</u> Seminar text: Cappelen 2012, 130-163. Further readings: Deutsch 2010; Chalmers 2014.
Part III: Intuitions as evidence?	
June 14	<u>Weighing intuitions</u> Seminar text: Weatherson 2003. Further reading: Lycan 2006.

June 16	<u>The case against intuitions I: distorting factors</u> Seminar text: Swain et al. 2008 Further readings: Kahneman 2011, 50-58; 119-128; Alexander et al. 2010; Alexander 2012, 70-88.
June 19	<u>The case against intuitions II: Weinberg's challenge</u> Seminar text: Weinberg 2007. Further readings: Grundmann 2010, Ichikawa 2012.
June 21	<u>The "positive program" of experimental philosophy</u> Seminar text: Stich & Tobia 2016. Further readings: Nichols & Knobe 2007
June 23	<u>Understanding and assessing intuitions</u> Seminar text: De Cruz 2015 Further reading: McCauley 2011.
June 26	<u>Boyd and Nagel on epistemic intuitions</u> Seminar text: Boyd & Nagel 2014 Further reading: Nagel 2012
June 28	<u>Debunking moral intuitions</u> Seminar text: Singer 2005. Further readings: Greene et al. 2001, Street 2006.
June 30	<u>Wrap-up discussion</u>

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- Machery, E., Stich, S., Rose, D., Chatterjee, A., Karasawa, K., Struchiner, N., Sirker, S., Usui, N. and Hashimoto, T. (2015). *Gettier Across Cultures*. *Noûs*, doi:10.1111/nous.12110.
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- Nichols, S. & Knobe, J. (2007). Moral Responsibility and Determinism: The Cognitive Science of Folk Intuitions. *Noûs* 41, 663-685.
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- Weatherson, B. (2003). What Good Are Counterexamples? *Philosophical Studies* 115, 1-31.
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Courses I Am Prepared to Teach

Below is a list of courses I am prepared to teach in the future – courses similar to what I have already taught are not included here. I am happy to offer full syllabi upon request.

Introduction to Philosophy

A first course in philosophy, that introduces students to four examples of philosophical debates and offers propaedeutical support. Topics could include (depending on departmental preferences): free will, personal identity, skepticism, the concepts of race and gender, the problem of evil, etc. Students would write short papers and time would be allotted to have workshop settings to develop the relevant skills.

Introduction to Formal Logic

A conventional introduction to Propositional Logic and First-Order Logic, with an emphasis on helping students understand the semantics of these languages and the underlying implications for argumentation theory.

Critical Thinking

A course that first introduces students to Propositional Logic as a formal tool and then applies that understanding in argumentation theory, giving students a chance to work with real-world examples in a course project.

Introduction to Epistemology

A course that surveys some of the standard problems and debates in epistemology: skepticism, the analysis of knowledge, the structure of justification, different kinds of evidence, and epistemic norms. At this lower level, the course would use a mix of textbook and original articles and emphasize the acquisition of skill such as argumentative writing.

Introduction to the Philosophy of Language

Another introduction course that introduces traditional problems of meaning and reference, discusses the nature of words, and methodologically reflects on conceptual analysis (introducing Ordinary Language Philosophy and Carnapian explications). This course would also partly utilize a textbook and emphasize philosophical skills.

Introduction to the Philosophy of Religion

An introductory-level version of the course “Themes from the Philosophy of Religion” (see syllabus above). The course focuses on carefully studying short extracts from historical texts, including both Western classics as well as authors from Indian and Chinese traditions.

Introduction to Metaphysics

A selective overview of debates in contemporary metaphysics, including personal identity, the metaphysics of time, the social ontology of categories like gender and race, and the problem of free will. The course is based on a textbook and excerpts from contemporary papers.

Introduction to Classical Eastern Philosophy

An introduction to some of the most influential thinkers in Buddhist and Chinese philosophy, including Nāgārjuna, Ramanuja, Confucius, Chuang Tzu, and Mencius, which will use original materials with commentary. The course will include an outlook to recent work and ask students to apply the insights from these authors to contemporary debates.

Skepticism and Its History

This course explores the history of philosophy along the lines of skepticism. It begins with Plato's aporetic dialogues and the skeptical life recommended by Sextus Empiricus and Nāgārjuna and a potential response to this through Wang Yangming's doctrine of the unity of knowledge and action. It then turns to Early Modern skeptical arguments by Descartes and Hume, ending with Wittgenstein's *Tractatus*. This course can be taught as an introduction to the history of philosophy or at an intermediate level.

History of Analytic Philosophy

A mid-level course that focuses on original readings, beginning with Frege, Russell, and Wittgenstein and ending with "modern classics" such as Quine, Anscombe, and Putnam. As an intermediate course, it would allow students to work on a longer paper throughout the semester, with a requirement to submit stages or drafts of their work.

Philosophical Methods

An intermediate course that critically examines the methodological assumptions of both historical and contemporary philosophy. Topics include the use of myths and tales in Plato and in Eastern philosophy, Humean skepticism and Kant's transcendental method, the role of logic and conceptual analysis, and recent debates about intuitions and experimental philosophy.

Political and Social Epistemology

A course for more advanced students that covers recently the emerged fields of social and political epistemology. In particular, participants will read work on epistemic norms, epistemic injustice, epistemic criteria for a successful democracy, work on disagreement and on conspiracy theories.

Appendix 1: Teaching Certificate



For details on the contents of the program, see the letter on the following page.

June 5, 2020

To whom it may concern,

This letter serves as acknowledgment that Tammo Lossau has met the completion requirements of the Johns Hopkins University [Teaching Academy](#).

The Teaching Academy provides Hopkins doctoral students and post-doctoral fellows the opportunity to acquire an overview of pedagogy, explore different educational models, acquire concrete teaching and assessment skills, and work with faculty teaching mentors in a classroom, online course, or laboratory environment.

The Teaching Academy is designed as a professional development program that offers three phases of increasingly complex teaching-related experience:

Phase I builds a foundation in teaching and requires participants to be exposed to a range of 6-10 hours of introductory teaching subject matter. Participation in a course or workshop series establishes pedagogical vocabulary and lays the foundation for the hands on resource development and teaching required later in the program. Activities and courses in this phase present an introduction to pedagogy, research-informed teaching, backward design, developing a lecture, leading discussions and labs, engaging students and designing active learning.

Phase II immerses participants in hands on teaching and learning activities and requires a minimum of 12 hours or 1-credit of teaching-related conceptual development and content production. Participants select from a variety of options to develop teaching resources, assessment tools, and rubrics; and they explore a variety of assessment techniques. Activities and courses in this phase involve students accessing discipline-specific literature, developing instructional goals and active learning exercises, building a syllabus, participating in micro-teaching and learning to use instructional technology for concrete pedagogical objectives.

Phase III is the capstone experience that requires either an apprenticeship through which a minimum of 6 hours are devoted to teaching under the guidance of an instructor of record *or* participation as the instructor of record for an entire course. In either case, participants work with faculty teaching mentors who help them better understand what is required to be a successful instructor, oversee their classroom teaching, facilitate an online instructional module, or help to supervise a lab or clinical course. Activities in this phase involve developing course and/or unit learning objectives, selecting and implementing formative and summative assessment plans, and implementing instruction. For some participants, evidence gathered and analyzed about their students' learning outcomes is of sufficient quality that it can be presented as a Teaching-as-Research project at a final recognition event and/or professional meeting.

Through the Teaching Academy, Johns Hopkins University aims to better prepare our doctoral students and post-doctoral fellows to be successful instructors as they begin their initial professional positions.

Sincerely,



Dr. Michael J. Reese, Jr.
Associate Dean of University Libraries
Director, Center for Educational Resources, Sheridan Libraries

Appendix 2: Philosophy Paper Guide

So You're Going to Write a Philosophy Paper...

Tammo Lossau

(version 1.3, August 2020)

Introduction.

This document is meant as a guide to writing a philosophy paper in an undergraduate course at Johns Hopkins if instructed/graded by me. It is supposed to give advice on how to proceed in doing so, clarify expectations both formal and content-wise, and give an idea of how the paper will be graded. Much of what I say is standard in philosophy, and you will find similar documents in many other places. However, as a cautionary note, there are small differences between what I expect in a paper and what other people may expect. For example, I do not expect you to use references according to some specific style guide (but there are some requirements, see below) – other people may require that. Conversely, I do want the introduction of a paper to meet certain standards that others may not expect. In this sense, do not assume this guide applies to all other philosophy papers you may have to write; and neither assume that you can use some other guidelines instead of this one when I have to grade your paper.

What does this guide cover?

I mean to address here a very typical writing assignment in philosophy classes: an *argumentative essay*. These essays are texts that may be as short as three pages or as long as 30 pages (in which case this would likely be your only writing assignment). They are supposed to establish a certain claim in response to a question by a convincing line of reasoning that provides the structure to the paper – I will go into more detail about this later. An important feature of these essays is that in evaluating these we do not presume that there is a *correct* answer that you need to give. Rather, we focus on whether you can establish the answer you put forward in a *convincing* way while displaying *competence*

with the material in the background of your argument. That being said, there are other important aspects that I will talk about below.

The argumentative essay is different from some other papers that you may be asked to write. For example, you may be assigned to write a *summary* of a reading, in which case you would need to give the central claims and lines of reasoning in a given paper. There are also *quizzes* that require a short answer of a specific question (in this case there would be a definite correct answer). In some case, you may be asked to write an *outline* of a paper to write later in the course. What I say here does not apply to these types of assignment, although some aspects such as correct referencing are relevant to summaries and outlines, too.

1. The topic and how to find it.

What am I supposed to do?

You will be given an assignment to complete in a certain period, usually two or three weeks. These assignments vary in how much they specify the topic. Often the first assignment you get will give you a specific *question* to answer, or a list of questions to choose from. Later assignments will often ask you to find your own question within certain boundaries. You should think of your essay as a carefully developed and focused answer to whatever the question is that concludes with your own *thesis*. The assignment should also specify a rough length for the paper.

What types of questions are there?

As a rough approximation, there are the following types of questions:

- You might decide or be asked to *argue for or against a certain philosophical claim X*. This is the most common type of essay. These essays introduce X and usually some reasons for and against holding X (which will often be familiar from class). You then either try to make a convincing case for X and/or defend X against one or multiple objections, or you make the case against X arguing that X cannot evade at least one of the objections. For example, you might argue that

free will and determinism are compatible by making the case that there are convincing cases of people acting freely despite the fact that they could not have acted otherwise.

- A related type of essay is the *problem discussion*. Here, you introduce the reader to a philosophical problem that arises, maybe given some kind of background view. You then discuss options how one might tackle this problem, which, again, will usually be familiar from the readings. After that, you evaluate whether these responses can really solve the problem (or perhaps give rise to new problems), either arguing that one of them is superior and will ultimately work, or that none of them is actually convincing. For example, you may start with Frege's Puzzle, the problem that identity statements seem to be trivial and yet can sometimes be informative, and compare Frege's own response with Russell's, taking sides with one of them or opting for a third view.
- Another possibility is to write a *comparison*. You are asked to present two different views on a topic and point out their differences. Comparisons should be in an effort to understand better what lies at the heart of these views. This can be useful especially in historically oriented classes. For example, you may compare Aristotle's views on power with Max Weber's and point out that Aristotle's view is less concerned with how power comes about.
- Almost exclusively in historical classes you may write an *interpretative essay*. This means you pick a passage from a historical text and try to give a clear statement of what the author is trying to say. The more advanced your class is, the more you may move towards working out details that are unclear in the original and open to interpretative discussion. In an introductory course, you may be asked to discuss the relation between practical wisdom and virtue in Aristotle. In a more advanced class, you may want to discuss Wittgenstein's conception of *sense* and whether it does or does not trace back to Frege. Rima Hussein has a very helpful guide for this type of essay here: <https://www.rimahussein.com/write-a-paper-in-history>

Fine, but how do I come up with a good question?

If you are not given a question in the assignment, that means you need to think about what you want to write about. Sometimes the assignment will give you a limited range of choices (for example, the assignment might ask you to discuss one of three views on Y that were put forward in the readings). In this case, I generally recommend going into the direction you have most thoughts on (and that you are most confident to have gotten the gist of). If the assignment leaves your topic more open, it is harder to give general advice. You are invited to come to office hours or make an appointment with me to bounce around ideas. It is worth mentioning that good student papers may very well be spun off from a point you may have made in class. Also, if you had a moment of inner resistance to some aspect of one of the readings, it may be worth pursuing where this resistance came from.

2. The writing process

What kind of writing are you looking for?

Writing a good argumentative essay may be different from what you have written before, or from what you may be having in mind when thinking about philosophy. Two things are very important: first, I have already mentioned that your essay needs to be an answer to a question. This means that every aspect of your paper needs to be geared towards a line of reasoning that supports your thesis. This is important when structuring your paper: your paper as a succession of steps that describe a straight path to your thesis.

Second, we are looking for an academic paper. This has some formal implications regarding referencing I will get into below. But it also means that your paper needs to be a self-standing piece of writing. As a result, you cannot refer to portions of the lecture – do not write “in class we discussed...” You will also need to explain every position (“consequentialism”, “realism”) you mention or technical term (“sense datum”, “implicature”) you make use of. The easiest way to make sure you comply with this is to imagine a reader who is generally interested but unfamiliar with the philosophical background of your paper and who is not sitting in on the lectures. If you can, you may

actually have a student with this background read your paper and tell you where they did not understand what was going on.

This is how Jim Pryor puts this point (<http://www.jimpryor.net/teaching/guidelines/writing.html>):

„In fact, you can profitably take this one step further and pretend that your reader is **lazy**, **stupid**, and **mean**. He’s **lazy** in that he doesn’t want to figure out what your convoluted sentences are supposed to mean, and he doesn’t want to figure out what your argument is, if it’s not already obvious. He’s **stupid**, so you have to explain everything you say to him in simple, bite-sized pieces. And he’s **mean**, so he’s not going to read your paper charitably. (For example, if something you say admits of more than one interpretation, he’s going to assume you meant the less plausible thing.) If you understand the material you’re writing about, and if you aim your paper at such a reader, you’ll probably get an A.“

How should I go about in writing the paper?

To a certain extent, people are different and a process that works for one person may not necessarily work for another. However, because we want you to write a focused and streamlined paper, it is important that you develop the structure of your paper early on and keep improving it as it becomes necessary. Once you have an idea for a question and a thesis, try to think about how the essay as a whole might look like and which things you will need to cover in order to make your thesis both comprehensible (in the sense of understanding what it entails for the broader debate) and convincing to a reader not familiar with the material. If you notice that you would have to cover way more material than what can be discussed within the given page number or that you have time to research, pick a narrower question.

Here’s a process that works for many people:

- Revisit the readings and develop a tentative question and thesis.
- Write an introduction that gives your thesis and an overview over what you want to write about (this will be the tentative structure).

- Write the main part that gives the actual argument you want to make, and write a conclusion. This can be in a “sloppy” language and without paying attention to formal features.
- Rewrite the introduction and adjust it to what you have actually done.
- Rewrite the main part. Revisit your statements as necessary, polish the language, add “signposts”, correct referencing, add tweaks.
- Proofread.

So how should I structure my paper?

Your paper should consist of three parts: the *introduction*, in which you tell the reader what you are going to argue; the *main part*, in which you actually argue these things; and the *conclusion*, in which you sum up your results.

The introduction, in a short (3-5 page) paper, will just be the first paragraph, and should not be much longer in any other case. It should include a *motivation* of the topic, i.e. some reason why your question is interesting, maybe within a certain context or debate (e.g. “Contextualists claim that X, but this is in tension with our intuitions on Y”, but there are many other possibilities). It should also include a *thesis statement*, i.e. a statement of the claim you will be arguing for (e.g. “In this paper, I will argue that...”). Finally, it should include an *agenda*, i.e. an overview over the structure of the paper that allows the reader to separate the paper into distinguishable units (e.g. “First I will explain X, then I will show how it leads to problem Y, then I will discuss proposed solution Z etc.”).

The main part should follow this agenda (if not, adjust your introduction). It will often begin with *explanations* of certain positions, arguments, or problems relevant to the paper. Remember that you cannot simply assume these things just because the reader (me) is probably familiar with them. Your explanations should be clear and to the point – this is where you can demonstrate that you paid attention in class and did the readings thoroughly. Depending on the type of question you are writing about, this may then be followed by a critical discussion of some view or argument, by the motivation of a new proposal, by a discussion of problems or objections to a view you are defending, by an

evidence-based interpretative argument, or by a comparison between two views that points to the most crucial differences and shared features.

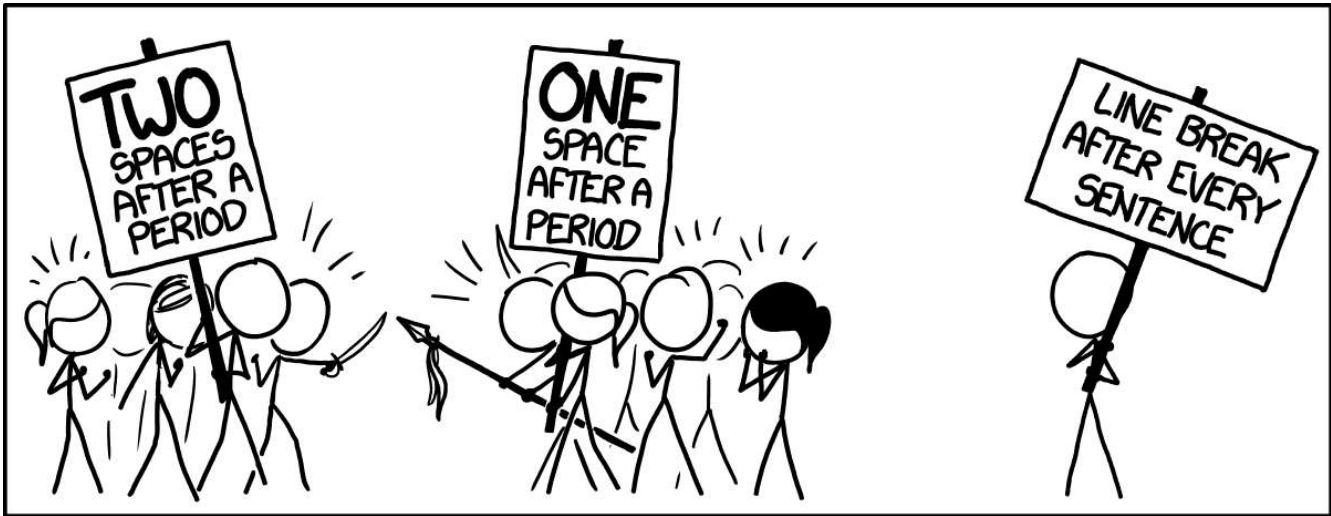
The conclusion should include a very brief *summary* of the argument you have provided for your thesis. It may include such things as an outlook that points out questions that have remained open (you can't do everything!) or what you take your arguments impact to the debate to be from a "big picture" view. The latter things are not required, however, and may be more natural in some case than in others. Importantly, the conclusion should *not* include any *new claims or arguments*. In a short paper, your conclusion will simply be your last paragraph.

How do I make my structure visible to the reader?

Good question! Trying to figure out what a student is getting at can be one of the hardest parts of grading a paper – why are they bringing X up? Is this a new argument or are they trying to discuss an objection? You should not bring me into such a situation (a) because a clear and obvious structure counts for something with respect to your grade and (b) I might actually end up not understanding you. To avoid this, do the following things:

- Give me an *agenda* for your paper in the introduction so I know what the steps of your argument are going to be. I know I've already said that, but from my experience you can't say it often enough.
- Use "*signposts*" throughout your paper. These are single sentences at the beginning or (sometimes) end of a paragraph that sum up what you have done so far and what you are going to do now. For example: "So far I have discussed X and concluded that Y. Now I will turn to Z and argue that...". These signposts are extremely helpful to the reader and they show that you've thought about your argument and divided it into separate steps.
- Use *paragraphs* well. Nobody likes to read a paragraph that stretches over three pages, but just separating all statements by a line break will not help the reader either. Instead, think of paragraphs as the smallest structuring unit of your paper. For example, one paragraph may contain an explanation of a philosophical view

(or two views in immediate contrast), or discuss an example you want to draw from, or present one objection to a claim you are discussing.



(<https://xkcd.com/1285/>)

Can you help me write my paper?

I can try to help you, but I will not *help* you. You can always come to my office hours and talk to me about your ideas for a paper and how you would structure it, and I will try my best to provide feedback that helps you understand what you need to do and how you can go about to get there. You can also ask me questions about the readings. However, I will not tell you what exactly to write. Writing good argumentative papers yourself is maybe the most important thing you can learn from your first few philosophy courses, and I will not do it for you.

3. Style, layout and referencing

How should I write my paper, stylistically?

I subscribe to what is fairly common in philosophy, at least in the analytic tradition: prioritize *clarity* over everything else. This is not to say that your paper cannot be elegant, but do not exclusively rely on metaphors or vague expressions that are open to interpretation. Think of your paper as a bit of research rather than a work of art. If you

can avoid technical vocabulary (you often can), keep your language simple. If you need to use technical terms, explain them at their first use (even if they were explained in class). Use examples to illustrate what a position claims or what you have in mind. Consider using *italics* on words that you would stress when reading the text out loud (I do this excessively, as this document demonstrates).

Do you give/deduct points for grammar etc.?

A little bit, it is the first point on the grading rubric. Make sure you proofread the paper before you submit it, these are easy points and many students get full points on that portion. However, if your writing is so bad that it affects the clarity of the paper, this will be a problem. If you are an English language learner or if you are having problems expressing yourself verbally, the Writing Center is a great resource Hopkins offers.

May I use the word “I”?

Sure, there is no good I-free alternative to “First I will discuss...”. However, avoid autobiographical remarks such as “At first I thought that X, but then I noticed...” or “In my leisure readings I have come across...”. Such remarks do not contribute to your argument, if anything they will distract from it.

Should I use gendered language?

It’s up to you. Your options are (a) to use the generic masculine (“he”), (b) to use the generic feminine (“she”), or (c) to use the plural (“they”) when referring to unidentified persons (“the skeptic”, “the scientific realist”, ...). Which option you choose is up to you, but stick to your choice consistently. On a related note, use the correct pronoun for every author you discuss (a quick Google search will usually tell you how to reference an author).

What layout should my paper have?

It’s mostly up to you, but please use double spacing and page numbers. I strongly prefer justified text alignment and small indents at the beginning of the paragraphs, but

this is not a grading criterion. Aside from that, a page is presumed to have around 300 words, so a 5-page paper will have around 1500 words. If you stretch out your text, I will notice this simply from looking at the word count.

My paper is too long/short. Do you care?

If your paper deviates from the norm by less than 20%: no. If your paper is shorter than that, it will probably be too short to go into as much depth as we expect from that paper, and will not receive a good grade on those grounds. If your paper is longer than that, please check back with me.

When and how should I cite readings I have used when writing the paper?

This is important: your text needs to meet academic standards of referencing (the same that apply to academic research articles). This means that you need to use references in such a way that it is obvious to the reader of your paper what exactly you are drawing from which source. This means that you do not only need to cite direct quotes, but also paraphrases of any passages from any source as well as ideas you are taking from these sources. This applies to anything that is not so common that it would be found in a general encyclopedia (not Wikipedia).³ If you do not cite anything and something is not common knowledge in this sense, it will be considered your own contribution. If it is in fact not, you are committing plagiarism (for more info on plagiarism, see <https://www.plagiarism.org>)

As for how to use citations, the exact format is up to you, but you need to comply with the following:

- Citations need to be in the text or footnotes and make clear what exactly you are drawing from this source. You can add these references in parentheses or in a footnote.

³ Note that specifically philosophical encyclopedias like the *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* or the *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy* are not general encyclopedias, so if you use them, you need to cite them.

- If you quote directly, you need to use quotation marks or indented paragraphs. Whether you quote verbatim or paraphrase, you need to include the page number(s). E.g., you can add “(Bach 1994, 134)”.
- You usually do not need to cite the lectures in your paper. The material in the lectures to a large extent (a) is common enough not to need a citation or (b) is material from the course readings or (c) other papers cited in the lecture, in which case you should cite those papers.
- In addition to the in-text citations, you need to add a list of references at the end that includes identifying information, including author name, year, title of the paper and information about where it was published. The precise format is up to you, but it needs to be uniform. For example, you can use the following format (the first is a journal article, the second a book and the third a book chapter):

Bach, K. (1994). Conversational Implicatures. *Mind & Language* 9, 124–162.

Blome-Tillmann, M. (2014). *Knowledge and Presuppositions*. Oxford University Press.

DeRose, K. (1998). Contextualism: An Explanation and Defense. In J. Greco and E. Sosa (eds.), *The Blackwell Guide to Epistemology* (187-205). Blackwell.

4. Submission, grading and feedback

What do I need to submit and how?

Depending on the course setup, you will need to submit your paper either via Turnitin, which you can access via the Blackboard page’s “Contents” section, or by email. You can submit an office file (docx, odt) or a pdf file – the commenting function in office programs is a little better, so please don’t convert your office file to a pdf before you submit. If you are using LaTeX, submitting a pdf is fine, of course.

Can I get an extension?

Only if you have an acceptable reason for this. Such reasons include family emergencies, certain disabilities (contact the disabilities office to get a letter), and

religious holidays. Any extension needs to be agreed on *before* the regular deadline. In case you have a sudden illness before the deadline that prevents you from contacting me, please send me a doctor's note. (Note that the Student Health Center does not issue these notes.)

When will I get my paper back? What will I get back?

I will send you back your paper within two weeks. On most papers, you will get your paper with some comments and a completed grading rubric that includes your grade (as a percentage). Sometimes, we might decide to use a different grading system for the first paper.

A note on the comments: these are usually a few sentences on aspects of the paper that could be improved. I only occasionally comment on the stronger passages, and it is often just the word "good". I may not always have the time to couch negative aspects carefully. It may also be a side-effect of coming from the German academic culture, in which this is the norm. Don't take this too much at heart: it would be extremely unusual to write a paper that could not be improved.

How will I be graded?

I will use a grading rubric, which you can find attached to this document (when using it, I will often include comments that explain briefly why you lost points). Using the rubric helps me compare papers that do well and poorly on different counts (e.g., a poorly structured paper with great ideas vs. a well-structured paper that shows imperfect grasp of the topic). I will admit that this is not exactly rocket science, as there are always "close calls." But I will try to pay attention to cases where there are multiple of those close calls and try to balance them out.

Two notes: first, you may lose or gain points for aspects that are not listed on the rubric. This will be the exception, but I reserve the right to do this if there is an unusual feature in your paper. (If you are Friedrich Nietzsche, you will lose points for lack of clarity, but you will get them back for brilliance in style.) Second, the rubric places the

greatest emphasis on argumentation, but you may still lose very significant numbers of points in any of the other sections.

How do the percentage points in the rubric translate into grades?

I use the standard system: an A+ begins at 97%, an A at 93%, an A- at 90% and so forth.

I got my paper back. Can I meet with you to discuss how to improve my next paper?

Yes, this is a good idea, come to my office hours or make an appointment.

I'm unhappy with my grade.

I don't usually change grades, unless you have a real case for it. One example of this would be a calculation error on the grading rubric.

5. Credits

A chunk of these remarks is based on Jim Pryor's guidelines for writing a philosophy paper, which can be found here: <http://www.jimpryor.net/teaching/index.html>. I am also drawing from a presentation I was given as an undergrad in Göttingen by Tina Ellermann and Tim Kraft. This guide has greatly benefited from feedback from Rima Hussein.

Appendix 1: grading rubric

Language, style and formal correctness (20 points)

	yes	mostly yes	in parts	mostly no	no
The paper is written in orthographically and grammatically correct English.	X				
The author presents their case in a plain and clear language and avoids relying on vague or otherwise obscure expressions.	X				
The paper is stylistically well-written in the sense that the author chooses adequate formulations that make it easy to focus on the content.	X				
Technical terms are explained at their first use (even if they are familiar from the course readings) and terms introduced by the author are explicitly defined.	X				
References in the text make clear which aspects are taken from which pages of the literature and references are listed following a consistent and unequivocal system.	X				
<u>comments and further aspects:</u>					
<u>total points</u>	20				

Structure (20 points)

	yes	mostly yes	in parts	mostly no	no
The paper has an introduction that sets up the question or thesis guiding the paper and explains the structure of the paper helpfully and accurately.	X				
The paper concludes with an answer to the initial question or a thesis that is clearly stated as a result at the end.	X				
The entire paper is well organized around the guiding topic and every part of it makes a clearly recognizable contribution to establishing the author's thesis (<u>counts twice</u>).	X				
The author's line of reasoning leaves no "gaps" and the author does not elaborate on topics irrelevant to their topic or thesis in the main text.	X				
<u>comments and further aspects:</u>					
<u>total points</u>	20				

Discussion of literature (20 points)

	yes	mostly yes	in parts	mostly no	no
The author cites all the literature immediately relevant to her topic that was discussed in class (<u>bonus points for <i>relevant</i> additional literature possible</u>).	X				
The relevant ideas of the literature are portrayed in accordance with the actual text and their discussion shows understanding of the texts (<u>counts twice</u>).	X				
The literature is discussed in a fair way, e.g. the author does not omit important qualifications, interpret a text in an unfavorable way, or attack the author personally.	X				
If papers from the literature contain unclear or incomplete ideas, the author makes an effort to explore clarifications or amendments rather than simply criticizing this.	X				
<u>comments and further aspects:</u>					

total points: 20

Content and argumentation (40 points)

	yes	mostly yes	in parts	mostly no	no
The author chooses a manageable claim to argue for as the scope of the paper.	X				
Assumptions made to narrow down the topic are stated explicitly in the introduction or early in the paper.	X				
Positions or arguments in the background of the paper are explained adequately and the paper's thesis is located in the debate surrounding it (<u>counts twice</u>).	X				
The author supports their claim with one or multiple arguments (that do not just support a broader or loosely related claim) as a conclusion (<u>counts twice</u>).	X				
The steps of the argument(s) are convincing and leave no room for obvious moves of sidestepping them (<u>counts twice</u>).	X				
The author anticipates potential problems or reactions of philosophers who take contrary positions.	X				
The author brings in a creative idea (e.g. an objection or a suggested amendment) or a useful clarification that goes beyond the literature (<u>bonus points possible</u>).	X				
<u>comments and further aspects:</u>					

total points: 40

