

Teaching Portfolio

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STATEMENT OF TEACHING PHILOSOPHY

My primary goal while teaching philosophy is to inspire my students to think like a philosopher. The philosophy classroom remains an unusual place where almost everything is up for debate. It allows a student to step back from the hustle and bustle of rote memorization to figure out what they're committed to and why, and why others might be committed to very different views or troubled by very different problems. It is an experience to be relished and remembered. It's also hard work.

Although we all come to philosophy with different backgrounds, I firmly believe that with enough guidance and motivation, any student can succeed in their first (and subsequent) philosophy course(s). I introduce philosophical reasoning as a learnable skill that involves identifying background assumptions, figuring out what it takes to support a position, and considering whether a given argument succeeds. Throughout the semester, we learn how to assess the weight of reasons for and against central premises, along with understanding why substantive disagreements typically remain. All arguments require motivation, including arguments for why anyone should study philosophy. I like to emphasize that philosophical skills are completely transferable: the ability to arrive at a position for principled reasons will serve students well in almost any career, especially those that involve group decision-making. To reason like a philosopher is to reason like a leader.

My secondary goal is to maintain an approachable and inviting attitude that puts students at ease, especially students who have never studied philosophy. I strive to prevent any artificial barriers and feelings of intimidation that could keep students from taking advantage of office hours and classroom learning activities. Students need to feel comfortable in the classroom to discuss openly with their peers, raise questions, and voice their uncertainties. As the semester goes on, I discreetly invite students who are struggling with the material to come to additional office hours.

From day one, I emphasize that we are in the classroom to learn together and to learn from each other. Mistakes are to be welcomed and shared widely, so that we figure out how to avoid them before the first exam. I frequently remind students that if they do not understand something in the moment, it is often as simple as forgetting a key definition or aspect of the argument structure. There is no shame in asking for clarification, and I love explaining the same concept in multiple ways, often with pictures. To alleviate the awkwardness of small group discussions, students make name cards so that they can more easily remember their classmates' names. This also makes it easier to mix up groups of students, so that they encounter a wider variety of viewpoints and conversational styles.

Most philosophy courses involve substantial, sustained, argumentative writing. In my experience, this is the most difficult skill for students to develop. To make meeting these standards more manageable, I build up in a gradual manner. Courses with a writing component always begin with a short (600 word) critical exegesis and analysis of a key argument. The goal is to develop an approach to content and style that students can use to write body paragraphs for the rest of the semester. The stakes are kept reasonably low (less than 8% of the overall course grade), so that a poor result on this assignment does not devastate a student's grade or ambitions. I provide writing samples from both myself and anonymized previous students, along with a detailed rubric and both concise and extensive guides for philosophical writing. Subsequent paper assignments build in length and breadth. For each assignment, I provide a detailed checklist with a series of pointers. Although I grade anonymously, I later identify students who require extra help. I then schedule meetings with them to discuss future paper drafts and to provide further advice. By the end of the course, all students have substantially improved their ability to accurately summarize arguments, analyze argumentative structure, provide objections and rebuttals, and develop their own position on philosophical questions.

In problem set-based philosophy courses (e.g. Logic or Decision Theory), my main aim is to strengthen students' problem-solving ability and confidence. During class, students actively work together on problems with their peers before reconvening for group discussion. We practice problem-solving techniques together, including how to start various problems, recipes for solving them, and what to do when you get stuck. Students are encouraged to solve as many practice problems as they have time for, and I provide a repository of practice problems with worked solutions. I grade each problem set with clear and legible comments, indicating what students lost points for and why. After each assignment, I post detailed solutions so that students can profit from their mistakes. I also frequently post "common pitfalls" documents that highlight typical errors and how to avoid them.

In all my classes, I maintain an open and moldable atmosphere. I poll students at least halfway through the semester to solicit feedback and make any changes that could improve their learning outcomes. Throughout the semester, I maintain an anonymous form where students can report any issues that arise at any time, so that I can address them promptly. This is particularly useful for courses where controversial issues are under discussion. When tense moments do arise in class, I encourage students to take a moment to decompress and reset—refocusing their attention on the ideas under discussion, rather than the people who are trying those ideas out. Similarly, when students make mistakes on problems, I focus their attention not on the mistake itself but what might have led someone to make it, along with what motivates a proper path. Students have consistently reported that they looked forward to class discussion as a space where all voices could be respectfully heard, where they could learn and grow while still making mistakes, and where they felt challenged to engage with the course material and their preconceptions.

TEACHING EXPERIENCE AND TEACHING COMPETENCIES

As sole instructor, I taught Science Fiction & Philosophy in Spring 2020. Due to COVID-19, this class was taught entirely online. I pre-recorded lectures and hosted synchronous online discussions.

As a teaching assistant, I have led discussion sections for Bioethics and Law & Philosophy, both aimed at students with no prior philosophy coursework. I have also been a teaching assistant for Symbolic Logic and an advanced undergraduate course covering game theory and social choice theory. As a TA, I led discussion sections, helped design assignments, held office hours, and graded all assignments.

Outside the Philosophy department, I have given recurring guest lectures in the Physiology department for a graduate course in research methods and grant writing (2018, 2019, 2020).

Sole instructor or recurring guest lecturer:

- Science Fiction & Philosophy (Spring 2020, sole instructor, *taught online due to COVID-19*)
- Method and Logic in Biomedical Sciences (Winter 2018–2020, four guest lectures each year)

Teaching assistant (discussion section leader):

- Critical Reasoning (Fall 2021, Dr. Anna Edmonds)
- Symbolic Logic (Winter 2019, Prof. James Tappenden)
- Issues in Bioethics (Fall 2018, Prof. Sarah Buss)
- Groups & Choices (Winter 2018, Prof. Brian Weatherson)
- Law & Philosophy (Fall 2017, Prof. Ishani Maitra)

Below is a non-exhaustive list of courses that I would happily teach. I have included sample syllabi for the five courses in bold. I am happy to quickly develop additional teaching competencies.

Introductory

- **Introduction to Philosophy**
- Science Fiction & Philosophy
- **Critical Thinking**
- Bioethics
- Law & Philosophy
- Ethics of Technology
- Classical Chinese Philosophy

Formal Tools

- Introductory Logic
- Symbolic Logic
- Mathematical Logic
- Formal Philosophical Methods
- **Groups & Choices**
- Decision Theory and Rational Choice

Philosophy of Science

- **Philosophy of Science**
- Metaphysics of Science
- Scientific Explanation/Understanding
- Science and Values
- Philosophy of Quantum Mechanics
- Space and Time
- Philosophy of Mathematics
- Philosophy of Chemistry

Epistemology, Metaphysics, Etc.

- Epistemology
- **Knowledge & Reality**
- Metaphysics
- Intro to Philosophy of Language
- History of Analytic Philosophy
- Pragmatism
- Wittgenstein

QUANTITATIVE COURSE EVALUATIONS

The University of Michigan collects quantitative and qualitative student feedback toward the end of each semester. For each survey item, students are asked to quantify their agreement by selecting a number from 1 (“strongly disagree”) to 5 (“strongly agree”).

The table below summarizes the numerical feedback from a representative selection of these survey items for all five courses I have taught at the University of Michigan (full quantitative data is available upon request). The table gives (i) the percentage of students who responded with “agree” or “strongly agree” (i.e. a “4” or “5”) (ii) my median scores on a Likert scale,¹ and (iii) the response rate I received for that question. For comparison, my median scores are followed in parentheses by the 50th percentile of median scores for similar philosophy courses—as defined by the Philosophy department—taught over the last 12 years. For example, “4.99 (4.63)” indicates that my median score was 4.99 while the departmental 50th percentile median score for similar courses was 4.63.

For the quantitative items collected below, the average number of my respondents who agreed with each statement was 99%. My average median score was 4.95 out of 5. Finally, my average response rate was 91%. For comparison, the College of Literature, Science, and the Arts at the University of Michigan has had average response rates ranging from 46% to 57% over the past few semesters.

¹ The University calculates interpolated medians from a grouped frequency distribution of students' responses, not simple medians: <http://acc.umich.edu/median.php>

Prompt	Course	Percent agree (4 or 5)	Median Score vs. (Department 50th percentile)	Response rate ²
"Overall, the instructor was an excellent teacher."	Law & Philosophy [F17]	100%	4.99 (4.63)	80%
	Groups & Choices [W18]	100%	4.99 (4.70) ³	91%
	Issues in Bioethics [F18]	100%	4.92 (4.63)	96%
	Symbolic Logic [W19]	98%	4.96 (4.50)	95%
	Critical Reasoning [F21]	98%	4.95 (4.50)	90%
	Sci-Fi & Philosophy [S20]	91%	4.77 (4.63)	95%
"The instructor appeared to have a thorough knowledge of the subject."	Law & Philosophy [F17]	100%	4.99 (4.79)	82%
	Groups & Choices [W18]	100%	4.99 (4.94)	91%
	Issues in Bioethics [F18]	100%	4.95 (4.79)	93%
	Symbolic Logic [W19]	100%	4.97 (4.79)	95%
	Critical Reasoning [F21]	100%	4.97 (4.67)	90%
	Sci-Fi & Philosophy [S20]	100%	4.81 (4.80)	95%
"The instructor seemed well prepared for class meetings."	Law & Philosophy [F17]	98%	4.94 (4.80)	82%
	Groups & Choices [W18]	98%	4.98 (4.82)	94%
	Issues in Bioethics [F18]	100%	4.98 (4.80)	96%
	Symbolic Logic [W19]	100%	4.92 (4.63)	93%
	Critical Reasoning [F21]	98%	4.98 (4.63)	90%
	Sci-Fi & Philosophy [S20]	100%	4.97 (4.75)	93%
"The instructor treated students with respect."	Law & Philosophy [F17]	100%	5.00 (4.86)	82%
	Groups & Choices [W18]	100%	4.99 (4.88)	94%
	Issues in Bioethics [F18]	100%	4.98 (4.86)	96%
	Symbolic Logic [W19]	100%	4.96 (4.89)	93%
	Critical Reasoning [F21]	100%	4.99 (4.86)	90%
	Sci-Fi & Philosophy [S20]	100%	4.92 (4.85)	93%
"The instructor gave clear explanations."	Law & Philosophy [F17]	98%	4.91 (4.56)	82%
	Groups & Choices [W18]	100%	4.95 (4.60)	91%
	Issues in Bioethics [F18]	98%	4.92 (4.56)	96%
	Symbolic Logic [W19]	100%	4.93 (4.50)	95%
	Critical Reasoning [F21]	100%	4.98 (4.42)	90%
	Sci-Fi & Philosophy [S20]	93%	4.79 (4.53)	95%
"The instructor was enthusiastic." ⁴	Law & Philosophy [F17]	100%	4.99 (4.75)	82%
	Groups & Choices [W18]	100%	4.99 (4.82)	94%
	Issues in Bioethics [F18]	100%	4.98 (4.75)	96%
	Symbolic Logic [W19]	100%	4.99	95%
	Critical Reasoning [F21]	98%	4.97 (4.7)	90%
	Sci-Fi & Philosophy [S20]	100%	4.89 (4.75)	95%

² Average response rates in the College of LSA have ranged from 46% to 57% over the past few semesters.

³ The comparison class for Groups & Choices comprises almost entirely data for primary instructors, since so few courses in this comparison class have teaching assistants.

⁴ This question was not surveyed in Symbolic Logic [W19]. I have replaced it with "Josh Hunt was willing to meet and help students outside class."

QUALITATIVE COURSE EVALUATIONS

Below are *complete* and *unedited* qualitative student evaluations for the courses I have taught as sole instructor and the discussion sections I have led as a teaching assistant. For convenience, I have highlighted in **bold** remarks that I believe capture my strengths as an instructor.

-Science Fiction & Philosophy (Spring 2020, sole instructor)

-Symbolic Logic (Winter 2019, TA)

-Groups & Choices (Winter 2018, TA)

-Issues in Bioethics (Fall 2018, TA)

-Law & Philosophy (Fall 2017, TA)

Students were asked (1) to “comment on the quality of instruction in this course” and (2) “how can the instructor improve the teaching of this course?” I have included all student responses to both questions, with some representative comments in bold.

Science Fiction & Philosophy (Spring 2020, sole instructor)

“Comment on the quality of instruction in this course”:

Professor Hunt was amazing! Discussions were always interesting and even if someone wasn't quite getting the topic (philosophy is quite heavy after all), he always worked it out so students didn't get discouraged. Also, the media that we got to watch each week was so fun!

The instruction was great Joh was awesome with making accommodations due to the pandemic.

*Josh Hunt is an amazing instructor! **He really takes the time to explain everything. Lecture videos are very great, very concise, but still detailed, very well structured, and there isn't any redundant information**, unlike many other professors. The crash course videos and movies/TV shows are a great touch, making the philosophical concepts feel more applicable to real life. I found the statistical analysis of the quizzes very helpful, and we got one after each quiz so we constantly knew how we were doing, if needed to study more or if we were on the right track. Josh is also very wise and yet humble about his knowledge, which is super important for professors/soon to be professors as some of the professors at the university can be quite arrogant and unapproachable. **Josh, on the other hand, is extremely approachable and respectful when someone has a misunderstanding about a philosophical concept, whether in public discussion or private communications***

This was a great course. I think that by far the best aspect of this course was how knowledgeable Josh was about all of the material that we discussed. It appeared that he had complete mastery of all the material was discussed in class and was very inspirational for me as a student.

I thought the approach to online learning was done excellently.

Josh has a really good knack for putting forth complicated philosophical topics in laymen's terms.

Exemplary, framed the material in a way so that a novice could understand through the lens of sci-fi.

The lectures were clear and the discussion sections very engaging. Due to the online nature of the course, of course it wasn't ideal, but class material and week-to-week instructions were easy to find and follow.

Josh constructed a series of engaging lectures with even more engaging discussion sections. Despite being in an online format, this classes discussion format has had the most engagement I've witnessed at this university in four years.

fun interesting material that he was able to bring across in cool ways

This course was taught very well. The instructor presented topics in an interesting way that kept students engaged

Overall, I was really happy with how this course was taught and structured! Josh did a really great job of finding interesting material on the units we were learning and I appreciated how understanding he was given the current state of our world when he would make class more manageable without needing prompting from the students.

strong.

very good, often gave me an extra day to complete assignments

Over I felt like Professor Hunt did a great job teaching the course and keeping students engaged with the material.

Josh did really well and was VERY on top of everything

good and improve our critical reasoning

*Everything was clearly explained and I understood it pretty well. **Josh cares a lot about teaching and making sure everyone understands the concepts and learns how to reason well and write good papers.***

Incredible quality.

*I enjoyed taking PHIL 154 with Josh. **Josh was very open to any questions, whether in office hours, in class or through email, and answered them thoroughly and quickly. He also encouraged students to openly voice their opinions in class.** In recorded lectures, Josh was very clear at explaining concepts. The course material, from Youtube videos to readings to film, were engaging and helped advance my understanding of the subject matter. It was also helpful that there were separate group help sessions, and recordings of them, for students working on different essay prompts for the mini-essay assignment. Weekly email write-ups on common mistakes students made on quizzes and essays were also insightful.*

Josh was professional and competent.

It was great, Josh done a good job

Josh Hunt is an amazing teacher and will do amazing things in the field of academia.

Josh is an excellent professor. I find him to be a really nice and engaging individual as well as very knowledgeable and fun to engage with.

The instruction was incredible and very well placed in respects to what we needed to learn.

Hands down excellent!!! Couldn't ask for a better way.

I think the quality of instruction in this course was excellent. Material was always presented in an interesting manner, and student's own opinions on the subject matter were engaged with by Josh regularly, both in class meetings on Zoom and online in discussion forums and assignment feedback. I also thought the selection of course readings was excellent, relevant, and engaging.

I enjoyed the mixed types of learning, such as readings and movies/Tv episodes. It made it easier to do more on our own.

The assigned weekly quiz questions were very unclear and unnecessarily time consuming. Also, when you're paying \$4,000 to take course at a world-class university, you expect the class to be taught by a professor, not a PhD student.

Josh Hunt was a great professor in this course! I truly enjoyed learning the material and it made me think about various topics in an entirely different way!

Josh was an awesome instructor. His ability to engage with the material in an interesting, fun way made it very encouraging for me to want to learn more so I could participate in the discussion properly.

It was very good given that we are online and it can be difficult at times. Everything was always explained and broken down, the reading notes were very helpful as well as the youtube videos that were posted

This course was very interesting and taught well.

*Josh Hunt was certainly in the top-tier of graduate instructors I've had at U of M. **His enthusiasm fostered an environment in which students engaged in spirited debate and discussion.** In my experiences during the pandemic, Zoom classes have generally been boring with lifeless discussion and a sense of detachment from both instructor and other students. However, I truly had a great time during my many lively discussions. This course was the best I could have possibly asked for during the pandemic, and I am very happy to have taken it.*

The quality of instruction was really good, I found myself struggling to understand the readings but after watching lectures feeling like I had a better understanding because the lectures were more palatable

I was very pleased with the instruction in this course.

I really enjoyed the setup of the course for remote learning. It wasn't overwhelming, but still was very engaging and fascinating.

“How can Josh Hunt improve the teaching of this course?”

I found the wording of some of the quiz questions were very difficult to understand. I found myself looking up some words that were used and over all just had to re-read questions because they were so heavy.

Truly, I think it's making small check-ins to understand the material before the next week.

Keep giving everyone a heads up about assignments! That was a great thing Josh did, which more professors did that.

The only thing I really missed about this course was being able to ask questions during lectures, but I'm not sure that would be fixable in the online format.

I wish there was a little bit more time just discussing philosophical issues and a little less time learning definitions of philosophical terms.

Lots of assignments every week. Try to condense them will reduce the workload.

In an online environment, he really can't.

Maybe having more optional movies to watch related to the topics could be engaging. I found that movies and tv series I watched gave me more ideas to discuss in discussion sections than the academic papers.

The written discussion threads felt somewhat tedious and chore-like rather than their intention. I'm not sure how to improve this, but maybe try reworking the requirements.

I think the online quizzes were a little annoying like how you got points taken away for incorrect responses, which I get was done to prevent students from choosing all responses, but still annoying

N/a I think this was a great way to teach this kind of course

I think a more eased in process of learning how to write philosophy papers would be extremely beneficial. Adding smaller writing assignments (that are more extensive than quiz essay questions) with feedback and draft rounds for papers would help students who are writing their first philosophy paper a lot. I understand this is harder for such a short spring term, but if taught during the regular year, it would be great.

very good.

give students less readings, I know its a philosophy class but it's also only 2 credits

Maybe simplifying down the readings or content as it is a 100 level course

Give us some chance to revise our essay based on the comments, not just a one-time deal

Instead of having a bunch of small assignments, have a few big assignments. That would make things easier to keep track of and manage.

There is nothing that jumps out as an area of improvement.

I thought it would have been helpful to have more focus on logic and reasoning during discussion. The materials on logic and reasoning given throughout the course, such as guides on how to write philosophy papers or emails about common logic pitfalls students made on assignments, were very helpful. I think it could be insightful for students to see examples demonstrating concepts such as argument validity or various fallacies in discussion, and discuss these with each other to get a better understanding of logic. At times during discussion small-group breakouts, my group members and I had confusion on logic concepts.

Honestly can't think of anything

Make the writing assignments a little more clear, sometimes I have trouble with them

Nothing. He was absolutely amazing.

Most of it was quite well done, at this moment I find everything to be taught as best as can be done with the online format.

The class seems perfect, but the quizzes seem to be worded a but too tricky in my opinion, but overall the course is great.

The only improvements on interactivity are up to reopening and going back on campus

I found that the quiz questions often lacked clarity. I'm sure this is in part due to my own shortcomings, in that I misunderstood the questions. However, this did not occur in my other philosophy classes and I think ultimately the questions should have been written more clearly. I often found that the questions were ambiguous, or omitted content that was critical to determining the correct answers. I rarely found that I answered questions incorrectly because I genuinely misunderstood the course material.

Discuss potential arguments for potential prompts. The mini essay was useful. I wish we heard more of your take on things.

He should work on developing his thoughts/quiz questions more clearly in ways that make sense. Questions were too much of a roundabout, which is essentially the very thing he told us not to do when writing our papers.

nothing comes to mind

More bad jokes

I think the teaching style right now is great! By far the best class I have had this semester.

Be more accommodating to those who don't have a philosophy background.

Josh couldn't have done much better. I thoroughly enjoyed being in his class. Very great job facilitating discussion.

Josh Hunt did a great job teaching this course.

Symbolic Logic (Winter 2019, teaching assistant)

“Comment on the quality of instruction in this course”:

*I have never had a GSI or professor as dedicated, patient, available or caring as Josh Hunt. He was available at essentially any time of the day or night, responding to emails with detailed paragraphs within twenty minutes of asking a question. **He made himself beyond available with multiple office hours as well as offering to meet outside of those hours. Whenever I was confused he explained things thoroughly and beyond patiently.** U Mich is privileged to have such an amazing person on staff and should give him a raise or tenured professorship or something because I could not have gotten through this class without him.*

Always prepared, and approachable

*I don't think there are enough nice things to even say about Josh, he was wonderful! I had the choice of taking this discussion section with him or Prof. Tappenden and I am so glad I picked Josh because the way he explained things made the subject material so clear that it was next to impossible to not follow along properly. I've taken logic courses before and never have I actually understood the material like I do after his instruction. **He was always responsive to emails, very helpful in office hours, and his notes were so clear (!color-coded!)** that they were an invaluable resource when doing homework. He always has a very cheery attitude and the occasional bad pun, but honestly, I've just really enjoyed having him as a GSI.*

Josh is an excellent instructor who is clear, helpful, and willing to help

*Josh was always well prepared for discussion. **He came with well structured notes that did a good job of recapping the lecture while also giving helpful tips for our problem sets. Josh made himself available for office hours, and he was always energetic for class.** Overall, great GSI.*

*Josh Hunt is the greatest GSI to ever live. He was an absolute savior in this course — i would've failed without his above and beyond commitment to teaching students in section and helping them in extra office hours after extra office hours. **His ability to understand where students are confused, then explain simply and excellently to students how to tackle problems,** is second to none. No other GSI exhibits the same care for students' mastery of material and commitment to their success. Josh reduces stress by keeping everything lighthearted. He is extremely patient. I'll stop here because I'll go on for too long. Josh, THANK YOU!!!!!!!*

Josh was a great teacher

An absolute gem, would be no where without him.

*Josh Hunt was easily one of the best instructors I've ever had, in any course, philosophy department or not, among GSIs and professors. He really went out of his way to explain these concepts, which for me were the first time I'd seen anything of the sort. **He was always fun and excited to talk about the material, but also really taught the material in an easy to grasp way.** He understood that this was an intro level class and never overwhelmed us with information. Past his instructional abilities, he was also a really fun and nice and I was always excited to come to his discussion. Honestly, in the second half of the semester, I just started attending his discussion and office hours and felt like I got MORE out of the class by doing this. He was also available over email for course help, and would really walk you through the questions virtually, which was so helpful.*

Overall this course was good BECAUSE of Josh Hunt, and I honestly think that without him I would have dropped this class because the material felt dry and hard to grasp without his guidance.

*Hands down best GSI ever! **Notes are ridiculously thorough and clear; emails are friendly and informative; always includes intuitive examples when explaining concepts; always willing to help in and outside of class; very patient with struggling students like myself— just utter brilliance :)***

Josh Hunt was the most devoted GSI that I've had at Michigan. He put a lot of work into making sure students understood the material. This class allowed students to drop our lowest two homework assignments. After I missed two, Josh would email the people in the class you had missed two so far to remind them when the next assignment was due and to attach section notes. I have not a single complaint about Josh.

I would not have made it through this class without Josh. He is so dedicated to his role as a GSI and goes above and beyond what is required of him by responding to detailed e-mail responses to questions, meeting with students almost all of the time, and really making sure that we understand the material. His love for the subject and teaching in general shows and it really warms my heart to see how much he cares about his students.

Josh, you've been great and so helpful! Thank you for making the course material manageable and enjoyable!

The instruction was clear and had purpose. Josh started with explaining the basics and built up from there to more complex structures and concepts.

Josh was probably the only reason I was able to do halfway decent in this course. I thought our lecture sections were brutally boring and cumbersome. Josh was able to take, I believe, more information than Prof. Tappenden, condense it, and convey it in a more understandable, interesting, and effective way. I got more out of a 50 minute section with Josh than in 2 weeks of lecture. Josh was able to use examples to explain logic for those of us whom didn't think as easily in the abstract place that logic functions. The notes that Josh painstakingly prepared for every section were immensely useful and detailed and I was very grateful for them, because it was like being able to revisit everything we did in section. It also freed me from having to take notes during section so I could focus completely.

*Josh has been great and truly made a challenging course much more manageable to understand. **He held tons of office hours and was always super helpful. He was always understanding of student concerns and needs** and overall was a great GSI for this course.*

Josh tried but, I mean, he couldn't really change the fact that the subject was pretty boring, and I think a good chunk of us still had issues. But I think that's just the nature of the course, honestly.

Josh is an amazing GSI! He really goes above and beyond for this class. He is incredibly helpful and his notes are really thorough and easy to understand. He understands the material really well so he is able to

answer any and all questions. I liked how he gave a quick summary of the key points we needed to know from lecture then guided us through problems.

Josh is a great GSI. Always willing to help students, held a large amount of office hours, gave great notes, and his attitude made students more comfortable and willing to participate. He is probably the best GSI I've had at umich.

Josh Hunt is an amazing GSI who really helped me understand some of the tougher concepts in this course at much deeper level.

Josh is the best GSI I have had in this college. Few teachers are as passionate for teaching as him. One of his main attributes is to explain things in a simple way, so that non math students understand the topics (which I did not get from lectures). I still have his examples on my mind (like the club for entailment). Definitely, a great teacher.

Josh was the best GSI that I have ever had at Michigan.

Josh Hunt is by far the most thoughtful, helpful and overall amazing GSI I have had at this university. It is so clear how much he cares about his students. Whether it is a thoughtful email, or the time he spends with his students in office hours or preparing notes for discussion. You can tell he wants all of us to succeed. I really appreciated that. Although I had no interest in the subject matter of the course and was quite honestly pretty bad at it, he made the class interesting. He always had a funny joke or something encouraging to say. Thank you Josh!

Amazing

Josh Hunt was an excellent GSI. He knows how to motivate abstract problems/concepts in a meaningful way. He was also especially adept at making sure all students had a complete understanding of the material.

Josh was one of the best GSIs I've ever had. The material in this course is VERY difficult (or at least I think that), so I'm very grateful to have such a thoughtful and hardworking GSI. He always helped each student as much as he was able to. He returned our homework assignments very promptly, responded to emails very promptly, and had office hours as often as he could. He was extremely helpful in making such a difficult course more manageable.

Josh was a great GSI and explained the material very well

It was a fantastic class.

Josh Hunt is the best GSI i have ever had. He make hard material easy to understand and he makes class fun and interesting.

Josh Hunt is an amazing instructor. He explains everything so clearly and succinctly and goes above and beyond to make sure we the students feel comfortable in the class. Honestly the best GSI I've ever had at Michigan.

“How would you change this course?”

Nah, i wouldn't

N/a, I just personally didn't love the subject matter.

These are more administrative changes, but an alternate day/time for discussion would be nice (ie, not just right after lecture).

Tappen can be a little confusing at times and dry as a lecturer, but overall class was good. Have Josh teach the lecture and the discussion.

Make the grading between the two sections more congruent.

I think that section was great and I wouldn't really change much about it. Maybe have more of it is all.

Nothing

I can't really say since I didn't want to take this course to begin with. It was required for my major. Maybe it would be interesting to someone who wanted to take it. Josh was amazing. However, Professor Tappenden was so boring to listen to. He would put me to sleep in lecture. Josh made me at least someone interested and made me understand things much better.

I would only suggest adding another GSI because I feel that Josh takes on a lot of responsibility with the amount of passion he puts into this course—I just want to make sure he is not too overwhelmed (not that it shows, this is just a reflection of how much time he invests in students' success).

I will not pretend to know how to optimize the instruction of an intro logic section.

Honestly, I would make it longer. I cannot emphasize enough how important Josh's contributions to the teaching of this course were to me.

I would change the problem set due dates to later in the week to allow for more office hour time to work on the homework and receive feedback.

I think discussion should be longer if possible. I learned a lot faster by doing problems or by being guided through them in discussion, so it would be helpful if we had additional time to work out more problems each week. Also, I am not quite sure how to resolve this, but it seems to take up a lot of time when people ask questions during discussion because they personally don't understand when we could be going through more material instead.

I would change the course to be 2 hours lecture, 2 hours discussion per week. I personally think that the discussion sections are much more effective than lecture time.

No way.

Make lecture more interactive.

I would make sure every student has the opportunity to get help from Josh. Without him, I would have failed this course.

I wouldn't josh hunt is amazing

Nothing!

The instruction of this course was great. Both Tappenden and Josh were extremely fair about what was expected of us and grading. I personally found the course material very difficult, but Josh did his best to help us understand it as best he could. He was always available and very thorough in his email responses and help during office hours.

I would keep it the same.

Bioethics (Fall 2018, teaching assistant)

“Comment on the quality of instruction in this course”:

High.

Josh Hunt was definitely one of the most competent and compelling GSIs that I have had at this school. Very thoughtful and intriguing discussions were lead by Josh, and he definitely increased my interest in the course.

Swell.

Josh was an amazing GSI. He is so enthusiastic and charismatic, it was easy to come to class and he always kept us engaged. He was always able to understand our questions and offer immediate responses that made a lot more sense. He has a sense of humor while still demonstrating how knowledgeable he is about philosophy. Awesome person, even brought cookies!

It was great!

The discussion sections were very helpful especially the diagrams you drew and the outlines for each author.

*Josh has been my favorite GSI at the university. **He did everything in his control to make sure students succeeded. He explained terms in a way that made sense and gave as many examples as possible.** Overall a very engaging and great person to be around. Made me want to come to discussion every time because it was a safe place to discuss and learn and actually have a good time while doing it.*

Josh is probably one of the best GSI's I have had. He goes out of his way to make sure we are understanding the content and is always willing to help both during and outside of class. He made this class so much better.

Josh was very clear, energetic, accommodating, and intelligent.

*I am a senior taking this course and Josh Hunt is undoubtedly the best instructor I have ever had. **He takes complicated philosophical subjects and makes them manageable** (even adding humor when appropriate) for most who have never taken a philosophy class in their life. He is patient, understanding and always encourages class and group participation. It is evident that he is a master of this material, however **Josh is the most approachable instructor I've ever met.***

I have only the highest regard for Josh. I've never met a professor or GSI as kind as Josh that actually makes a point to ask frequently about our well-being and remind us all to take care of ourselves.

Josh is the best GSI I have ever had in my 4 years at the university.

Josh was literally the best. Not only did he make the class understandable to me, but he was also just so kind and clearly wanted us to succeed. Great teacher. Lucky to have had him.

Josh, I really enjoyed your classes. You are the best GSI that I've met and you made the materials interesting to learn, even the boring bits! And I really appreciate the fact that you made detailed and clearly explained notes for each of the readings, which is helpful for understanding. (and your considerate act of extending deadlines.) My original studies are completely unrelated to bioethics, I just wanted to take this class for fun, and you have made me more interested in this field now! Thanks for the great class!

Josh was the truly the best GSI I have had at this university. His knowledge and passion for the material truly came through during each class period. He was so well prepared and helped students in every day that he could. The outside work he put into the class to help the students was above and beyond. He is so

*intelligent and really understood the material as well as helped the students understand it. **He always made sure students felt like they were heard in discussion. He created a great learning environment.** AMAZING GSI!!*

I think that this has been my favorite discussion for a class thus far in my college career! I think that Josh made us all feel as though we were competent and that we asked great questions. This is a course that I would recommend to anyone, and I believe that Josh is the reason that I was able to enjoy it so much.

Overall, Josh was an excellent GSI, who went well–beyond my normal expectations of a GSI to supplement the course lecture. He did well to explain and highlight the important parts of the readings and lecture and provided a good mix of group discussion with larger group discussion. Josh seemed to really care about his students, their well–being and their success in the course.

Josh was wonderful. He was so knowledgeable and passionate about the topics we went over. He was by far on of my favorite GSIs I have ever had. I would recommend him to all students !! ALso, He was so understanding of a personal situation I was dealing with outside of the classroom and more than willing to work with me and help in any way he could.

Josh was very good at explaining concepts in several ways so that everyone could understand.

I was very apprehensive to take this course as philosophy has not been my strong suit in the class. Josh made this my favorite discussion to go to this semester. He had the most detailed notes and a very enthusiastic approach to the topics. He engaged with the students' ideas on the material, and overall is one of the best GSI's I've had on campus in my four years going here. I hope he more students get an opportunity to take a class with him– all around great instructor.

*Josh always had the best examples to help us understand the topic discussed. He always answered questions to the best of his ability and he was always willing to discuss more on certain topics that were of interest. He was extremely nice and enthusiastic and overall an amazing GSI. **Josh helped bring to light all sides of the argument in an impartial way so as to help us decide on our own what we thought was the most convincing.** Josh was awesome and truly cared about his students. If you're teaching again please let us know!*

Josh rocks !!! Definintely the most helpful GSI I have had at U–M, and made class funny and exciting.

Great instructor! Majority of content was learned through Josh's discussion notes – way more useful than the lecture / readings.

Very welcoming and open to discussion at any point on the related material.

*Josh was an absolute dream GSI. Not only is he one of the kindest human beings I've had the privilege of knowing, but he is also an extremely helpful instructor. **He goes above and beyond to make sure that all students thoroughly understand the material by creating note outlines for each lecture, providing additional resources that may be helpful, and never hesitating to accommodate students that are unable to meet during office hours due to scheduling conflicts.** Additionally, I'm amazed by Josh's deep understanding and knowledge on all subjects and am constantly impressed by his ability to answer questions so quickly and accurately, while simultaneously simplifying challenging material so effortlessly. Perhaps most impressive, however, is that even with this intelligence, **Josh is never condescending and remains friendly and approachable. Also, the enthusiasm that he brings to each session inspires students to engage with material and promotes a comfortable environment for discussion.** It's clear that Josh genuinely wants students to succeed, and for this reason, along with the fact that I have never seen him in a bad mood, Josh is an ideal instructor.*

Josh was extremely well organized and clearly communicated to us about what was to be expected. Josh is the best GSI I have had throughout Michigan, in terms of organization, execution, and overall personability. He seemed extremely comfortable with the material, and was always very present during our

discussions, making clear distinctions in the material which is hard to do when we had a lot of material at one time. Also his light-hearted energy made it enjoyable to come to class, and easy to talk to him during office hours. He showed genuine care for the course material and students during class, as well as outside during office hours specifically accommodating for difficulties I've had throughout the semester. Overall, I had a lot of fun attending his discussions, and am positive Josh will be a remarkable philosophy professor one day!

Great instruction, interesting lectures.

Josh Hunt is by far the best GSI I have had at the University of Michigan. Not only is he enthusiastic about the material, but he imparts enthusiasm to his students as well. He is constantly assuring that students are prepared for upcoming assignments/exams. He fosters healthy and intelligent conversations throughout discussion and is easily one of the smartest GSIs I have met, making him very knowledgeable about material while simultaneously making the content "reachable" for students. Josh Hunt is the number one reason I enjoy this course as much as I do and I can say I have improved significantly as a student and as a person because I took this course with him as the teacher.

Josh was a great instructor. He explained a lot of the difficult topics from lecture pretty clearly, and he was so enthusiastic for everything.

Josh did an incredible job explaining the material in a more specific and clear way. He undoubtedly contributed a great deal to my exam grades.

The instruction was always clear, and when students were confused Josh would put material in new ways to help us think in a new way. Josh would make the most detailed notes that would help us summarize the material that was discussed in lecture. He always went out of his way to make sure that we understood the material and was super supportive of us even when we did not get answers right. He was always willing to meet people outside of class and was extremely helpful during office hours with any questions. Josh did an amazing job this semester and is the best GSI I have had at this university.

Josh Hunt was very knowledgeable and very helpful. When I was confused in lecture, I would come to discussion and Josh would make the material more clear. He is one of the best GSIs I have ever had.

“How can Josh Hunt improve the teaching of this course?”

I have no suggestions to make at this time.

No comment

can't

To be fair, I still need to look over the feedback I received on my first paper, but for the case analysis, I felt that I was marked down points because the grader did not prefer or like my choice of wording or phrasing, even though it was not grammatically incorrect and I do not believe there was anything wrong with it. However, I still need to look at my feedback for paper 1, so I do not want to falsely overgeneralize or exaggerate this! Also it could be improved by going over almost all paper guidelines as far in advance as possible. We did this quite well but the first paper more so than the case analysis but found it a bit stressful to go over necessary and sufficient conditions a couple days before the paper was due.

Maybe a fill in the blank outline?? i'm not sure everything was really good for discussion

He can't! Already awesome

I'm assuming he's going into the philosophy field but if he's teaching this course again, I would suggest offer more tips/examples/rubric etc for expectations for a philosophy paper because I'm still somewhat unsure.

Nothing to be improved. Thank you for everything Josh!

literally nothing

None! You are a great teacher, I hope you become a lecturer one day!

I liked the discussion time during class. Also, many times students wouldn't answer direct questions, but taking a poll on people's thoughts seemed to spark more discussion. Overall amazing job. There is not much to improve upon.

I did not see anything wrong with the way that Josh taught this course. Wouldn't change a thing!

N/A.. He was very good at leading discussion and keeping everyone engaged.

I really can't think of anything; he was that good!

literally josh is great.

maybe add in some powerpoints

Should not ask if students are taking the class P/F when evaluating essays.

Nothing that I can think of

NOTHING—JOSH IS PERFECT

N/A :)

No— Josh Hunt is the best GSI I have ever had at this University! He is incredibly kind, giving of his time, and knowledgeable about the material.

I had a lot of trouble with the essays, especially because I am not a great writer in general, and philosophy just made it harder. I feel as though I may not have gotten the grade I deserved on my essays.

Nothing

Josh did a great job teaching this class and always made sure that everyone was comfortable with the material we were learning. Continuing what he is doing is the best thing he can do.

Groups & Choices (Winter 2018, teaching assistant)

“Comment on the quality of instruction in this discussion section”:

josh is the best!!!!

i preferred Josh's explanations for many of the concepts as they were generally easier to understand

This discussion was more useful to me than the actual lecture. Josh would frequently effectively summarize a 2 hour lecture into a clear concise 30 minute conversation. Would highly recommend this GSI to anyone.

Josh clearly showed that he not only cared about the class material, but also about his students. He was prompt to office hours, always willing to speak at length about any questions you had, was easy to reach via email, and probably added the most to my understanding and experience of this course.

Josh is great. The material he went over supplemented the lectures very nicely.

Josh was an AMAZING instructor I would not have survived this class without his help. He was so complete in everything he did, he helped whenever he could.

Josh was extremely sharp, helpful, and friendly throughout the duration of the course

Amazing.

Josh was a great GSI! He made the class interesting and fun, and was never caught off guard at questions. He definitely took the time to understand the material, and was very willing to help students outside of class. I learned a great deal in discussion section, and it made the class enjoyable to go to.

At points, the discussion section was much clearer than the lecture. Josh deserves tenure.

*The quality of instruction in this discussion section was very high because **Josh ensured that every student was on the same page with understanding the course material before proceeding to discussing the implications and internal debate within a particular concept.** Josh was also extremely helpful with problem sets which helped me personally to get a lot more out of them. Finally, Josh's enthusiasm is infectious and makes each section engaging.*

*Great job. One of my favorite discussions. **You let students drive the conversation but also kept us on track.***

Fantastic! You've really gone above and beyond to help us through this class. You really clarified homework assignments and did everything possible to help us succeed. By far one of the best GSI's I've had in my four years at Michigan. Thanks for a great semester!

*Josh was the best GSI I've ever had at Michigan (and I'm a second semester senior)! **He was always available to answer questions and discuss material from class, whether it be via email, office hours, or appointment.** This class was really difficult for me, and having Josh there to explain the course content and specific theories step-by-step truly saved me in this class and I'll always be grateful for his patience and positivity. His ability to explain concepts clearly and thoroughly is truly extraordinary and I can't wait for him to be a professor- his future students are very lucky.*

It was amazing in every way.

Josh was an invaluable asset to me, and I assume my classmates, during this course. He clarified material and assisted us whenever we needed. He was accessible during office hours, and often outside of office hours as well. His breadth of knowledge on the subject, and outside of the subject, came in handy often during section.

Josh really helped me to understand the concepts that were pretty difficult to comprehend in class, and helped to tie it to the homework assignments/essay.

Josh, you are the best GSI I've ever learned from. No joke I thank god at least once a week that you are who you are. I'd had a nasty taste in my mouth over the past three years with respect to GSI experiences. You washed it away like listerine.

He was a good GSI. He was always available to meet and explain the topics in more detail. However, sometimes he was so technical with definitions and knew so much that I got lost.

*Josh may very well be the best gsi that I have had. **His gift for relaying complicated information in an interesting, yet simple manner, made this class extremely enjoyable***

*Very helpful and clear instruction. The class seemed very well organized and always addressed the main questions students had. **Material was thoroughly explained and examples were frequently used. Differing views were presented clearly and equally.** One of the best GSIs I've had.*

I felt that the discussion section was the most helpful portion of this course. Josh was an excellent instructor, very knowledgeable and made class interesting. He explained things that were unclear in lecture very well.

Superb quality of instruction in discussion section. Engaging, understanding, and motivating.

It did an excellent job of clarifying not just the content of the lectures, but the most important take aways.

It was good

I think Josh did a wonderful job teaching the discussion section. For a class relatively late on a Thursday, Josh did a great job bringing a lot of energy and humor to the room, which I believe encourages participation when participation would normally be in short supply.

Excellent! Josh is a great instructor and he keeps the discussion remarkably fresh (which was impressive given that my discussion section wasn't particularly interested in being active) ! The highest praise I can give Josh is that when he goes on to teach after graduation, I guarantee he'll be regarded on campus as "the philosophy professor who made philosophy cool."

Josh was phenomenal. He made the material much clearer than how it was presented in lecture, and anticipated where we would have problems.

*I can't express how helpful Josh has been as a discussion leader this semester. He really knows his stuff and is **always able to explain class concepts in a succinct, easy-to-comprehend manner.***

I really like Josh's enthusiasm and how he helps clarify lecture concepts by explaining them in a different way. I also like the occasional thought experiments and interesting examples that he shares.

Very thorough in making sure concepts were clear, always answered questions, and was very willing to help students, sensitive to student schedules and always willing to help. Great GSI.

*Great instruction - **Josh was able to explain any complex subjects that came up in lecture, and easily relate it to us. Additionally, he was always available for questions** or any other issues - definitely one of the best instructors I've had, and definitely the best discussion leader, of my four years here.*

“How would you change this discussion section?”

i think it should be biweekly with 1 hour lectures instead of once a week with 1.5 hour lectures

no changes

I would have it twice a week with Josh.

I would let Josh teach the entire class!

I wouldn't, Josh lead one the better sections I've had at this university

Nope.

For a philosophy course, I would like to have had discussion section twice a week. I think it would have been helpful if we had two opportunities to discuss lecture material.

If we had started the “break out into groups” method of discussion earlier in the semester, it would have made it easier than introducing it toward the middle/end when the material was much more complex. I think it resulted in only a few people talking for their group rather than the increased engagement that might come with people being more comfortable with the method first. So its not really a change, because I thought the method was a good one once we implemented it, it just might have come earlier.

Really nothing! More group discussion would have been beneficial, but I think there just wasn't enough time. Overall, I really enjoyed discussion section and was upset if I ever had to miss.

I'd make it 1.5 hour instead of 1 hour just because this class has a ton of content and the professor doesn't explain everything so clearly, so discussion section is crucial if you want to actually understand what's going on in the class

There is nothing I would have changed.

I would ask that he be less technical and explained his definitions more extensively.

I honestly think that Josh did a fantastic job with both the use of time and the expectations placed upon the students

If possible, I would make it longer. Discussion helped my understanding of course material a lot. Otherwise, maybe trying to get students to more strongly take a stand on positions. For example, instead of asking people to just raise their hands if they agree/disagree, try doing an exercise that makes people go to one side of the room if they agree and the other side if they disagree.

I would not!

Honestly holding students to a little higher standard in terms of participation. The grade didn't really depend on this and sometimes I was tired and didn't volunteer to speak and the set up of the class didn't really motivate me to.

The course material is difficult, so maybe having it earlier in the day would help students stay focused and understand the material better.

There isn't any structural changes that could be made. In an ideal world, the section would have more active participants, but having active participants is ultimately one of those luck-of-the-draw things. Josh did a great job of getting higher levels of participation from the section given the shy-ness of the class.

I would not change it.

Not a thing!

Maybe a bit more discussion/open ended questions would make the section more engaging

I wouldn't - it was amazing.

Law & Philosophy (Fall 2017, teaching assistant)

“Comment on the quality of instruction in this discussion section”:

Josh Hunt was an incredible GSI. He is kind, compassionate, knowledgeable, helpful, and organized.

Best GSI I have ever had, thoroughly involved in bettering all the students and I can tell he really wanted each of us to succeed

The instructor was amazing and everyone was very involved as a result.

very helpful, organized and interesting

extremely high quality

Probably the best GSI I've ever had for a course - he's very knowledgeable about course topics, and obviously invested in our class

JOSH IS A FANTASTIC INSTRUCTOR. He was a very challenging grader (but I have never taken a philosophy course and the writing style through me for a loop), but his comments were always really helpful and only meant to better you as a writer. Our class discussions were always really engaging.

*High quality. Best GSI I have ever had in terms of level of engagement, dedication to students, and ability to facilitate productive and insightful discussion. Most in-depth and prompt feedback I've ever received on papers. Willing to meet with students outside of class for office hours or otherwise. **Truly there for students and fostered sense of community within the classroom that allowed for respectful discussion.***

Everything was very clear, however, at times I felt that the instructor could have been a little clearer about how philosophy papers differ from other types of papers because as a non-philosophy major it was confusing at times. I did appreciate the fact that we reviewed papers after we submitted and got them back and the comments left were all detailed and important, I think if the instructor had left us with more thought questions going into the paper would have been good going into the paper about how to best defend arguments we present.

Josh is a great instructor and a super fair grader. He was a little tough on the first paper but all comments/remarks/etc were always fair and he was a lot easier on the second paper overall.

Instruction was very good. Sometimes there were quiet, awkward moments but generally those passed and conversation continued.

*Josh did a great job leading each Discussion. He's very enthusiastic about the contents of the course, and is also very eager to help us out. **He also does many small things to make the Discussion feel a lot smaller and more focussed, including learning all of our names, maintaining a relaxed yet focused atmosphere,** etc.*

***Josh was so enthusiastic and approachable making it comfortable and easy to learn.** He also was really helpful with any questions I may have had.*

Josh is a kind and understanding instructor and also has a clear understanding of the material.

The instruction was invaluable. I felt comfortable going to Josh for anything and felt as if he was genuinely concerned about every student in the section.

Josh is such a great GSI. You can tell he really cares about his students and enjoys the topic he is teaching. He's great at leading discussion and explaining specific theories if you have questions. He is also very nice and understanding and I always looked forward to discussion section.

excellent. josh is always prepared and a great instructor... better than lecture...

NA

Josh has been one of the best GSI's I've had not just in my philosophy classes, but in all discussion sections I have had so far at UofM. He did a great job always being prepared for each section, encouraging students to work on developing their own arguments, and also clarifying confusing concepts throughout the course.

Josh is the best! He wants everyone to be heard. You never felt bad about offering your opinion.

*Josh was a great GSI. **He encouraged dialogue, was sensitive to issues that might trigger students, and tried to engage everyone.***

The GSI was enthusiastic, upbeat and knowledgeable. He was very clear with the material taught and answered questions, displaying a wealth of knowledge.

*Discussions topics were interesting. **The handout assignment gave people a chance to be the expert on a particular reading and lead the discussion with their own views, and in doing so provide everyone else with some great study material.***

*Josh was an extremely knowledgeable, kind and amazing GSI. **He made everyone feel safe and heard. He helped explain every concept and then could connect everything to something else to help further understanding and discussion.** There was never a question he could not answer and could not expand upon. I also was able to come to him with aspects/topics of the course that made me feel personally uncomfortable and he was so understanding and receptive and helped me throughout the course with trigger warnings and such and I could not be more grateful.*

FANTASTIC GSI! Josh was extremely knowledgeable, friendly, and overall a really clear and articulate teacher. Honestly could not have asked for better instruction

*Thank you, Josh, for leading this amazing discussion. I did learn a lot from my peers and you. **Everyone could have a chance to express her idea and even lead a part of the discussion.** I think it was great.*

Josh is awesome, he's such a great GSI. Not only is he wicked smart and kind, but he's also very thorough and well prepared. I loved learning from him.

Josh was an excellent discussion leader. His questions were poignant, feedback was super useful, and he facilitated discussions perfectly. I genuinely think that he was my best GSI this semester.

Josh was very knowledgeable and effective at answering questions and explaining context. He did a great job bringing us back on topic when needed. He did a great job, also, of going in a different direction when it enhanced our learning of that day's topic area.

Josh did a great job! He was engaging and intelligent enough to add value to the course! I think he would be effective at lecturing as well. If he had his own course, I would take it.

Very good, Josh is the man.

“How would you change this discussion section?”

I would encourage the use of a daily class-scribe, who takes notes from discussion on a Google Doc shared with all members from the section.

I would not

I would not change anything because it is awesome the way it is.

spend more time doing class open discussions versus handout discussions

More group discussions about real-life applications of the stuff we've covered in class. Also, I know the full presentation we're all supposed to do was partially to help everyone study, but I think it would have been more practical to just focus on current event connections

Everything was good!

Clearer grading expectations.

Nothing! Structured the class productively in sense that our handouts function as review materials for final. Came up with thought-provoking connections. Brought current events into class often.

More review of court cases would have been great, like key points, because for the second paper I think a more comprehensive understanding of the material/discussion in class would have helped with my reasoning and I felt like sometimes details not talked about in class were holes in my arguments.

*Cut students off sooner. In a PHIL class with no prereqs or major requirements, someone should not be allowed to pontificate for 5 minutes straight (ie the average level of PHIL-knowledge is pretty low). Their thoughts are messy, poorly reasoned, and it's distracting from the rest of class. I can say this because I have taken *very* few PHIL classes and it makes discussion a lot less enjoyable.*

Maybe more review of complicated readings to make them easier to understand.

Less time spent on the individual presentations.

I wouldn't change it.

I think it was great!

would not change it.

The only thing I would improve in this section is to possibly increase the amount of small group discussion compared to the large group discussions that were frequently dominated by a small group of people.

I wouldn't

Maybe add in some videos to break up the talking.

Nothing comes to mind.

Maybe make it a bit longer, I feel like we always ran out of time to talk about really interesting and complex topics and I always left wanting more time to discuss.

Nothing

I wouldn't

I think that there should be a greater variety of immersive activities students could be put to task with to help further an understanding of the material. For instance, formal debates, mock trials, etc. could be allowed for a fun, while still educational environment.

Perhaps have more consistency between section leaders' expectations and assignments. A peer in the same course with a different GSI had very different expectations.

I think if our GSI could be more like our philosophy writing coach it would be better. Need to remove our GSI from being part of the grading process. We need help with our writing and for philosophy sometime the writing center is not enough.

Smaller class sizes might help.

SAMPLE SYLLABI

Below are sample syllabi for five undergraduate courses. The first syllabus includes all supporting sections, while the final four syllabi are slightly abridged. Each course is designed for two 1.5 hour lectures a week for 14-15 weeks, although they could be modified for other schedules. Likewise, I would be happy to modify course content to better match departmental needs or student interests. The syllabi for *Critical Reasoning* and *Introduction to Philosophy* are aimed at beginning students. The syllabi for *Philosophy of Science* and *Knowledge & Reality* are aimed at intermediate students (including intermediate science students with no philosophy background). Finally, the syllabus for *Groups & Choices* is aimed at both intermediate and advanced students. Any of these latter three syllabi could be simplified to suit introductory courses.

Introduction to Philosophy

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This is a survey of some of the most central philosophical questions from ages past and present. We will move briskly over a range of questions, with the aim of making sure you know where to look, and what to look for, if ever you would like to know more. The topics we'll discuss include the following:

- The nature and (non-)existence of God
- Political authority and just punishment;
- Scientific explanation;
- How we know things, and what knowledge is (and isn't);
- What human (and non-human) minds are like;
- What free will is, and whether we have it.

Reading, thinking, talking, and writing about these philosophical issues will hopefully be fun and exciting. And the skills you will develop in this course are valuable in many other contexts as well, helping you think and write more clearly, analyze the evidential basis for your beliefs and others', and give more convincing arguments (along with learning when it might be best to abandon a position).

REQUIRED MATERIALS

Two books:

- Jennifer Nagel, *Knowledge: A Very Short Introduction*
- Samir Okasha, *Philosophy of Science: A Very Short Introduction*

I will post additional readings on the course site.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1. *Do 4 online quizzes* (2.5% each). Multiple-choice quizzes will be posted on the course webpage. The quizzes are timed, but you can take them any time during the week they are due.
2. *Short writing exercise* (7%): in 500–600 of *entirely your own* words, paraphrase and analyze an argument from a reading in Unit One (suggestions will be provided). Provide at least one objection to a premise or other step of the argument, but not the conclusion.
3. *Paper one* (13%): write a 1000–1200 word essay on a topic from Unit 2.
4. *Midterm exam* (20%): it will comprise multiple-choice, short answer questions, and an essay question, taken in-class.
5. *Paper two* (20%): write a 1200–1400 word essay on a topic from Unit 4.

6. *Final exam* (25%): same format as the midterm exam (it will be cumulative but emphasize material from the latter half of the course).
7. *Participate in class* (5%)! (can include completing reading/discussion logs online)

GRADE BREAKDOWN

- Short writing exercise (7%)
- Papers (33%)
- Midterm exam (20%)
- Final exam (25%)
- Online quizzes: 10%
- Participation: 5%

PAPERS

Papers will receive holistically assigned letter grades based on rubrics provided for each paper (see course webpage). I grade anonymously. Make sure your name occurs nowhere in your paper or in the title. Save the document using a title that includes your student ID and the prompt number that you are answering, e.g. “22777788_Prompt3.”

Please submit your paper as a Word document (if you use LaTeX or other typesetting software, please send me your source code). Papers will be submitted online. Please do not include a cover page or use any nonstandard fonts or formatting.

Late papers will be penalized a third of a letter grade for each 24 hour period that they are late.

PLAGIARISM OR CHEATING

You are responsible for making sure that none of your work is plagiarized. Be sure to cite work that you use—both direct quotations and paraphrased ideas. Any citation method that is tolerably clear is permitted. Sample essays will contain examples of convenient citation schemes.

You are encouraged to discuss the course material, including assignments, with your classmates, but all written work that you hand in under your own name must be your own. You should also be familiar with the academic integrity policies of the University. Cheating or plagiarism will result in a grade of zero for that assignment and disciplinary action by the University.

ACCOMMODATIONS

If you think you need some type of instructional or examination accommodations for a disability, please let me know at your earliest convenience (preferably early in the semester). Most aspects of this course can be modified to help facilitate your participation and progress. Any information you provide is private and confidential and will be treated as such. I promise to do my utmost to help.

ADVICE AND EXPECTATIONS

1. Keep up with the readings! They demand close attention and careful thought. If you fall behind, you'll miss much of what's going on for the rest of the semester.
2. We'll be discussing many controversial issues in this course and challenging our beliefs throughout. Please be polite, respectful, and charitable in discussion with your classmates and instructors.
3. Focus on learning each other's names and talking with each other.
4. If you need to use a *Laptop* in lecture, please sit to the *Left* (as you face the front of the room). If laptops distract you, please sit in the center or on the right. (Using laptops in class can distract the user, other students, and instructors. Research has shown that many students learn better if they take notes by hand.⁵ Nonetheless, some students absolutely need to use laptops and benefit from them.)
5. No texting, phone calls, note-passing, etc. in class.
6. Missed exams can be made up only with ample appropriate documentation—for medical reasons, a signed and dated doctor's note; for the death of a loved one, a signed and dated letter from a funeral home, etc.
7. Come to office hours! You don't need to have anything prepared or course-specific questions.

Course Outline & Readings

Readings listed for a class meeting should be completed before that meeting. All the readings other than the material from the textbooks will be linked on the course webpage.

Abbreviations used in the reading list are as follows:

Nagel: Jennifer Nagel, *Knowledge: A Very Short Introduction*, required text.

Okasha: Samir Okasha, *Philosophy of Science: A Very Short Introduction*, required text.

SEP: Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy

VSI: Oxford Very Short Introductions

Routledge: Routledge Handbooks Online

Wiley: Wiley Online Library

JSTOR: JSTOR, a collection of articles published in academic journals.

Socrates: Socrates of Athens: Euthyphro, Socrates' Defense, Crito and the Death Scene from *Phaedo*, Translated by Cathal Woods and Ryan Pack, SSRN.

No Gaps: History of Philosophy Without Any Gaps, podcast series produced by Peter Adamson.

⁵ See, for instance: <https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/a-learning-secret-don-t-take-notes-with-a-laptop/>

Day 0: Introduction and overview
William James, “The Present Dilemma in Philosophy”, from *Pragmatism*

UNIT 1: PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGION

Day 1: **Pascal’s Wager**
Joshua Golding, “The Wager Argument,” Routledge
Alan Hájek, “Pascal’s Wager,” SEP, especially sections 1 and 4

Day 2: **The Design Argument**
Laura Garcia, “Teleological and Design Arguments,” Wiley
[Optional:] Elliot Sober, “The Design Argument,” Wiley

Day 3: **The Problem of Evil**
Michael Peterson, “The Logical Problem of Evil,” Wiley
J. L. Mackie, “Evil and Omnipotence,” JSTOR
[Optional:] Graham Oppy, “The Evidential Problem of Evil,” Wiley

Day 4: **Arguments in Philosophy**
Okasha, Chapter 2 (“Scientific reasoning”)
Jim Pryor, Philosophical Terms and Methods

UNIT 2: GREEK PHILOSOPHY

Day 5: **Sources of Morality**
Plato, Euthyphro, Socrates
[Optional:] Peter Adamson, Plato’s Socrates (podcast)
[Optional:] Geoffrey Sayre-McCord, “Metaethics,” section 1-3

Day 6: **Political Obligation**
Plato, Crito, Socrates (excerpts)
[Optional:] Richard Dagger and David Lefkowitz, “Political Obligation,” sections 3.1, 3.2, 4.1, 4.2, 4.4

UNIT 3: ETHICS

Day 7: **Three Grand Theories**
Brad Hooker, “Consequentialism,” Routledge (just first 7 pages)
Michael Slote, “Virtue Ethics,” Routledge
[Optional:] Simon Blackburn, “Foundations,” in *Ethics*, VSI, especially section 18
[Optional:] In Our Time, “Kant’s Categorical Imperative,” podcast

Day 8: **The Trolley Problem**
Judith Jarvis Thomson, “The Trolley Problem”

Day 9: **The Doctrine of Double Effect**

Alison McIntyre, “Doctrine of Double Effect”
[Optional:] Judith Jarvis Thomson, “Turning the Trolley”

Day 10: **Abortion**
Judith Jarvis Thomson, “A Defense of Abortion”
Don Marquis, “Why Abortion is Immoral”

UNIT 4: PHILOSOPHY OF SCIENCE

Day 11: **The Old Riddle of Induction**
Okasha, Chapter 2, especially *Hume’s Puzzle*
Nagel, Chapters 2 and 3

Day 12: **The New Riddle of Induction**
Goodman, The New Riddle of Induction, online
[Optional:] Frank Jackson, “Grue”

Day 13: **Explanation**
Okasha, Chapter 3 (“Explanation in science”)
[Optional:] James Woodward, “Explanation,” Routledge

Day 14: **Space**
Okasha, Chapter 6 (“Philosophical problems in physics, biology, and psychology”)
[Optional:] Nick Huggett and Carl Hoefer, “Absolute and Relational Theories of Space and Time,” SEP

Day 15: Midterm Exam

UNIT 5: KNOWLEDGE (EPISTEMOLOGY)

Day 16: **Skepticism**
Nagel, Chapter 2
[Optional:] Peter Klein, Skepticism, SEP

Day 17: **Analysis of Knowledge**
Nagel, Chapters 4 and 5
[Optional:] Jonathan Jenkins Ichikawa and Matthias Steup, “The Analysis of Knowledge,” SEP

Day 18: **Testimony**
Nagel, Chapter 6

Day 19: **Self-Knowledge**
Nagel, Chapter 8

UNIT 6: MIND

Day 20: **The Turing Test**

Alan Turing, "Computing Machinery and Intelligence," JSTOR

Graham Oppy and David Dowe, "The Turing Test"

Day 21: **Classic Arguments for Dualism**

Descartes-Elisabeth Correspondence, letters by Princess Elisabeth of May 6, June 10 and July 1, 1643

Lisa Shapiro, "Elisabeth, Princess of Bohemia," section 3.2

[*Optional:*] René Descartes, Meditations on First Philosophy, Sixth Meditation (online)

[*Optional:*] Peter Adamson, "Into Thin Air: Avicenna on the Soul" (podcast)

[*Optional:*] Howard Robinson, "Dualism," SEP

Day 22: **Contemporary Arguments for Dualism**

Frank Jackson, "Epiphenomenal Qualia," JSTOR

Frank Jackson, "What Mary Didn't Know"

[*Optional:*] Martine Nida-Rümelin, "Qualia: The Knowledge Argument"

Day 23: **Modularity and the special sciences**

Okasha, Chapter 6 ("Philosophical problems in physics, biology, and psychology")

Robbins, "Modularity of Mind," sections 1-2 ([*Optional:*] sections 3-4)

UNIT 7: FREE WILL

Day 24: **Free Will**

Thomas Pink, "The Free Will Problem," VSI

Day 25: **Compatibilism**

Harry Frankfurt, "Alternate Possibilities and Moral Responsibility," JSTOR

UNIT 8: PUNISHMENT

Day 26: **Justifications for Punishment**

Mitchell Berman, "The Justification of Punishment," Routledge

Day 27: **Capital Punishment**

Matt Stichter, "The Structure of Death Penalty Arguments"

Michael Cholbi and Alex Madva, "Black Lives Matter and the Call for Death Penalty Abolition"

Day 28: Exam Review

Knowledge & Reality

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course focuses on epistemology (the study of knowledge), metaphysics (the study of reality), and their intersection. We begin with skepticism. We seem to know a lot, but many arguments purport to show that we can't possibly know as much as we do. Some skeptical arguments are interesting because they clarify what it takes to reject skepticism. Other skeptical arguments are interesting because it is sometimes disturbingly difficult to identify where they fail. Setting these worries aside, we proceed to ask what exists? Are holes real? Or numbers? We then return to the nature of knowledge. Within the last 60 years, many philosophers have tried to produce illuminating necessary and sufficient conditions for knowledge. Studying these attempts teaches us a lot about the structure of knowledge.

In the latter half of the course, we consider another kind of skeptical worry: how can we justify our methods for justification? Is deduction any more secure than induction? Can abduction (inference to the best explanation) save us from the abyss of agnosticism? We conclude by returning to metaphysics (sprinkled with some philosophy of science), concerning causation and laws of nature. Does the world ultimately consist in the causal and nomological facts?

REQUIRED MATERIALS

There will be lecture notes and readings posted on the course webpage.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1. Short writing exercise (500–600 words; 7%): Select one required reading from Unit One. Extract a philosophical argument from this piece. Paraphrase this argument in your own words and analyze it. Provide at least one objection to a premise or other step of the argument, but not the conclusion.
2. Paper One (1300–1500 words; 20%): write an essay on metaphysics.
3. Midterm exam (18%): it will comprise eight short answer questions and two essay questions. Eight possible essay questions will be distributed in advance.
4. Paper Two (1500–1700 words; 25%): write an essay on epistemology.
5. Final exam (25%): same format as the midterm exam (although noncumulative)
6. Participate in discussions (5%)! (can include completing reading/discussion logs online)

GRADE BREAKDOWN

- Short writing exercise: 7%
- Papers: 45%
- Midterm exam: 18%
- Final Exam: 25%
- Participation: 5%

Course Outline & Readings

Readings listed for a class meeting should be completed before that meeting. All readings will be linked on the course webpage.

UNIT 1: SKEPTICISM ABOUT THE EXTERNAL WORLD

- Day 1: Nagel 2014, “Skepticism” (Ch. 2)
Unger 1974, “An Argument for Skepticism”
- Day 2: Perry and Bratman, “Reading Philosophy” (in *Introduction to Philosophy: Classical and Contemporary Readings*)
(Reading philosophy)
Pryor 2012, “Guidelines on Reading Philosophy”
- Day 3: Putnam 1981, “Brains in a vat” (Ch 1. in *Reason, Truth, and History*)
Optional: Brueckner 1986, “Brains in a vat”
- Day 4: Nagel 2014, “Internalism and Externalism” (Ch. 5)
Cohen 2002, “Basic Knowledge and the Problem of Easy Knowledge”
- Day 5: Carroll 2017, “Why Boltzmann Brains are Bad”
- Day 6: Chalmers 2005, “The Matrix as Metaphysics”

UNIT 2: ONTOLOGY (WHAT THERE IS AND ISN'T)

- Day 7: Lewis and Lewis 1970, “Holes”
Papineau 2012, “Possible Worlds” (Ch. 5 in *Philosophical Devices*)
Optional: Lamb 2014, “What We Talk about When We Talk about Holes,” *Scientific American*
- Day 8: Quine 1948, “On What There Is”
Optional: Bernays 1935, “On Platonism in Mathematics” (in *Philosophy of Mathematics: Selected Readings*, Benacerraf & Putnam eds.)
- Day 9: Rippon 2008, “A Brief Guide to Writing the Philosophy Paper”
(writing philosophy)
- Day 10: Carroll and Markosian 2010, “Material Objects” (Ch. 8 in *An Introduction to Metaphysics*, pp. 190-202)
Thomson 1998, “The Statue and the Clay” (pp. 149-158)
- Day 11: Bennett 2009, “Composition, Colocation, and Metaontology” (in *Metametaphysics*)

UNIT 3: KNOWLEDGE (WHAT IS IT?)

- Day 12: Nagel 2014, “The Analysis of Knowledge” (Chapter 4)
Gettier 1963, “Is Justified True Belief Knowledge?”

- Day 13: Zagzebski, “The Inescapability of Gettier Problems”
Day 14: Turri, “Manifest Failure: the Gettier Problem Solved”
Day 15: Church, “Manifest Failure Failure: The Gettier Problem Revived”
Day 16: Weatherson 2003, “What Good Are Counterexamples?”

UNIT 4: INFERENCE

- Day 17: Carroll 1895, “What the Tortoise Said to Achilles”
Haack, “The Justification of Deduction”
Day 18: Dretske and Hawthorne 2005, “Is Knowledge Closed under Known Entailment?”
(in *Contemporary Debates in Epistemology*)
Day 19: Howson (2000), “Hume's argument” (Ch. 1 in *Hume's problem*)
Okasha, “What did Hume really show about induction?”
Day 20: Thagard 1978, “The Best Explanation: Criteria for Theory Choice”
Optional: Sober, Ockham's Razors, Chapter 2 (87ff)

UNIT 5: AVOIDING THE REGRESS ARGUMENT

- Day 21: McGrew 1998, “A Defense of Strong Foundationalism”
Day 22: Alston 1976, “Two Types of Foundationalism”
Day 23: Bonjour 1976, “The Coherence Theory of Knowledge”

UNIT 6: CAUSATION AND LAWS OF NATURE

- Day 24: Paul & Hall 2013, “Framework and Preliminaries” (Ch. 2 in *Causation: A User's Guide*, pp. 7–24, *optional: 25-42 on methodology*)
Day 25: Field 2003, “Causation in a Physical World” (Ch. 14 in *The Oxford Handbook of Metaphysics*)
Day 26: Woodward 2007, “Causation with a Human Face” (Ch. 4 in *Causation, Physics, and the Constitution of Reality*)
Day 27: Carroll and Markosian 2010, “Laws of Nature” (Ch. 4 in *An Introduction to Metaphysics*)
Lewis 1973, *Counterfactuals*, pp. 72-77
Day 28: Demarest 2015, “Fundamental Properties and the Laws of Nature”
Bird 2005, “The Dispositionalist Conception of Laws”

Philosophy of Science

COURSE DESCRIPTION

What is science? What isn't science? Does science make true claims about the world simply by observing the world around us? How do we actually construct scientific theories? How do we test them? How do we ultimately reject them in the face of counterexamples and recalcitrant phenomena? Does science tell us how the world really is, or does it merely describe and predict the macroscopic phenomena that we see with our eyes? What are the laws of nature? And how does science purport to give not just descriptions but also *explanations* of physical phenomena? In this course, we will consider these questions and many more. We will see why considering these questions improves our understanding of both science itself and our position in the universe.

REQUIRED MATERIALS

Three books:

- Alan Chalmers (1999), *What Is This Thing Called Science?* Third Edition. St. Lucia: University of Queensland Press.
- Peter Godfrey-Smith (2003), *Theory and Reality: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Science*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Thomas Kuhn (1970), *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*. Second Edition (with Postscript). Chicago: University of Chicago Press

There will also be lecture notes and additional readings posted on the course webpage.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1. *Short writing exercise* (500–600 words; 5%): Select one required reading from Unit One. Extract a philosophical argument from this piece. Paraphrase this argument in your own words and analyze it. Provide at least one objection to a premise or other step of the argument, but not the conclusion.
2. *Case Study exercise* (less than 1000 words; 5%): investigate an episode from either the history of science or contemporary science that illustrates a philosophical issue raised in Units 2, 3, or 5 (due three weeks before the end of the semester).
3. *Paper One* (1300–1500 words; 20%): write an essay on a topic from Units 1 or 2.
4. Midterm exam (20%): it will comprise eight short answer questions and two essay questions. Eight possible essay questions will be distributed in advance.
5. Paper Two (1500–1700 words; 25%): write an essay on a topic from Units 3, 4, or 5
6. Final exam (20%): same format as the midterm exam (although noncumulative)
7. Participate in discussions (5%)! (can include completing reading/discussion logs online)

GRADE BREAKDOWN

- Short exercises: 10%
- Papers: 45%
- Exams: 40% (20% each)
- Participation: 5%

Course Outline & Readings

Readings listed for a class meeting should be completed before that meeting. All the readings other than the material from the textbooks will be linked on the course webpage.

Day 0: Introduction and overview
Godfrey-Smith, chapter 1 (*Theory and Reality*)
Chalmers 1999, chapter 1 (*What Is This Thing Called Science?*)

UNIT 1: EMPIRICISM, EVIDENCE, CONFIRMATION, & FALSIFICATIONISM

Day 1: Godfrey-Smith, Chapter 2 (“Logic Plus Empiricism”)
Ayer 1936, “The Elimination of Metaphysics” (Ch. 1 in *Language, Truth, and Logic*)

Day 2: Chalmers, Chapter 2 (“Observation as practical intervention”)
Chalmers, Chapter 3 (“Experiment”)
Chalmers, Ch. 4, 1st half (“Deriving theories from the facts: induction” pp. 41-48)

Day 3: Godfrey-Smith, Chapter 3 (“Induction and Confirmation”)
Chalmers, Ch. 4, 2nd half (“Deriving theories from the facts: induction” pp. 49-58)
optional: Hesse 1969, “Ramifications of ‘Grue’”

Day 4: Earman & Salmon 1992, “The Confirmation of Scientific Hypotheses” (in *Introduction to the Philosophy of Science*, pp. 42-66)

Day 5: Chalmers, Chapter 5 (“Introducing falsificationism”)
Chalmers, Chapter 6 (“Sophisticated falsificationism, novel predictions and the growth of science”)
Godfrey-Smith, Chapter 4, start, pp. 57-62 (“Popper: conjecture and refutation”)

Day 6: Godfrey-Smith, Chapter 4, end, pp. 63-74 (objections to Popper)
Chalmers, Chapter 7 (“The limitations of falsificationism”)

UNIT 2: KUHN, SCIENTIFIC THEORIES, AND SCIENTIFIC PROGRESS

Day 7: Chalmers, Chapter 8 (“Theories as structures I: Kuhn’s paradigms”)
Kuhn 1962, Chapters 1 and 2 (*The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*)

- Day 8: Godfrey-Smith, Chapter 5 (“Kuhn and normal science”)
Kuhn, Chs. 3 and 4 (nature of normal science; normal science as puzzle solving)
- Day 9: Kuhn, Chapters 5, 6, and 7 (paradigms, anomalies, and crisis)
Rippon 2008, “A Brief Guide to Writing the Philosophy Paper”
- Day 10: Godfrey Smith, Chapter 6 (“Kuhn and revolutions”), pp. 87-95
Kuhn, Chapters 8 and 9 (responding to crisis and scientific revolutions)
- Day 11: Godfrey-Smith, sections 6.4 and 6.5, pp. 96-101
Kuhn, Chapter 10 (“Revolutions as changes of world view”)
Kuhn, Chapters 12 and 13 (resolution of revolutions and progress)
- Day 12: Chalmers, Chapter 9 (“Theories as structures II: Research programs”)
Godfrey-Smith, §§7.1, 7.2, and 7.3 (Lakatos and Laudan)

UNIT 3: BLINDSPOTS: WHAT HAVE WE NEGLECTED?

- Day 13: Chalmers, Chapter 10 (“Feyerabend’s anarchistic theory of science”)
Godfrey-Smith, §§7.4, 7.5, 7.6, and 7.7 (anything goes, pluralism)
- Day 14: Godfrey-Smith, Chapter 8 (“The Challenge from Sociology of Science”)
Shapin & Schaffer, “Understanding Experiment” (Ch. 1 in *Leviathan and the Air-Pump*)
Optional: Pickering 1984, “Introduction” (Ch. 1 in *Constructing Quarks*)
- Day 15: Godfrey-Smith, Chapter 9 (“Feminism and Science Studies”)
Anderson 2015, “Feminist Epistemology and Philosophy of Science,” Sections 1–4
- Day 16: Anderson, “Feminist Epistemology and Philosophy of Science,” Sections 5–8, 10
Longino 1990, “Values and Objectivity” (Ch. 4 in *Science as Social Knowledge*)

UNIT 4: PROBABILITY AND BAYESIANISM (NUMBERS TO THE RESCUE?)

- Day 17: Strevens 2012, Chapters 1, 2, 3, & 4 from *Notes on Bayesian Confirmation Theory*
optional: Papineau 2012, Chapters 7, 8, & 9 from *Philosophical Devices*
- Day 18: Chalmers, Chapter 12 (“The Bayesian approach”)
Earman & Salmon 1992, “The Confirmation of Scientific Hypotheses” (in *Introduction to the Philosophy of Science*, pp.66-84)
- Day 19: Godfrey-Smith, Chapter 14 (“Bayesianism and modern theories of evidence”)
Strevens 2012, Chapter 5 (“The Machinery of Modern Bayesianism”)
optional: Strevens 2012, chapter 11 (“The Problem of Old Evidence”)

UNIT 5: REALISM VS. ANTI-REALISM (VS. ALTERNATIVES)

- Day 20: Chalmers, Chapter 15 (“Realism and anti-realism”)
Godfrey-Smith, Chapter 12 (“Scientific realism”)
- Day 21: van Fraassen 1980, Chapters 2 & 4 in *The Scientific Image*
Laudan 1981, “A Confutation of Convergent Realism”
- Day 22: Psillos 1999, “Resisting the pessimistic induction” (Ch. 5 in *Scientific Realism*)
Worrall 1989, “Structural Realism: The Best of Both Worlds?”
- Day 23: Fine 1984, “The Natural Ontological Attitude” (in *Scientific Realism*, ed. Leplin)
Ruetsche 2015, “The Shaky Game + 25, or: On Locavoracity”

UNIT 6: LAWS OF NATURE & EXPLANATION

- Day 24: Chalmers, Chapter 14 (“Why should the world obey laws?”)
Carroll and Markosian 2010, “Laws of Nature” (Ch. 4 in *An Introduction to Metaphysics*)
- Day 25: Demarest 2015, “Fundamental Properties and the Laws of Nature”
Loewer 1996, “Humean Supervenience”
- Day 26: Godfrey-Smith, Chapter 13 (“Explanation”)
Strevens 2008, “Approaches to Explanation” (Ch. 1 in *Depth*, pp. 3-23)
- Day 27: Kitcher 1981, “Explanatory Unification”
van Fraassen 1977, “The Pragmatics of Explanation”
- Day 28: Lange 2016, “What Makes a Scientific Explanation Distinctively Mathematical?”
(Ch. 1 in *Because without Cause*)

Groups & Choices

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course discusses the theory of choice in groups. We start with game theory, focusing on how thinking about how other people choose—and how they think we will—affects the best choice. Then we move on to social choice theory, looking at the ways to best combine individual choices into a group choice. Finally, we look at whether groups have beliefs and desires, and make choices, and if they do, how this relates to the beliefs, desires and choices of members of the group.

REQUIRED MATERIALS

Two books, which can be downloaded:

- Giacomo Bonanno, *Game Theory*, Available at http://faculty.econ.ucdavis.edu/faculty/bonanno/PDF/GT_book.pdf
- Wolfgang Schwarz, *Belief, Desire, and Rational Choice*, Available at <https://www.umsu.de/bdrc/bdrc.pdf>

You might also look at Kevin Leyton-Brown and Yoav Shoham, *Essentials of Game Theory*. There will also be lecture notes and several readings posted on the course webpage.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING

1. *Do six problem sets* (8% each). During the term seven problem sets will be posted. You must do **six** of them. If you complete all seven, then the lowest score will be dropped.

Problem sets will be assigned mostly in the first half of the course. Since we will discuss the solutions in class (and you can skip any one assignment for any reason whatsoever), there are no extensions for these assignments (except in truly extenuating circumstances).

You may collaborate on the assignments in groups of five or less, provided you (i) note your collaborators on the assignments, and (ii) work with no one on more than three of the assignments. All work you submit must still be your own (i.e. in your own words). You may not submit assignments as a group or blindly copy off group members.

2. Midterm exam on game theory (17%): it will comprise multiple choice questions, quantitative problems, and a short essay question. Questions will be similar but not identical to those found on the problem sets.
3. Short writing exercise (500–600 words; 7%): Select one required reading from Unit Two. Extract a philosophical argument from this piece (you may use one discussed in lecture). Paraphrase this argument in your own words (i.e. **do not use any quoted material**; cite text page numbers at key steps, but not lecture notes). This involves making the premises of the argument explicit, analyzing how these premises entail (or do not entail) purported minor conclusions, and analyzing how these premises and minor conclusions lead to (or fail to lead

to) an intended conclusion. Provide at least one objection to a premise or other step of the argument, but not the conclusion. See course webpage for a detailed rubric and checklist.

4. Write an essay (2000–2200 words; 28%): You are encouraged (but not required) to submit a paper outline (including two draft paragraphs) two weeks before it is due. The essay will be due on the scheduled exam day for the course.
5. Participate in discussions (5%)!

GRADE BREAKDOWN

- Problem sets: 48%
- Midterm exam: 15%
- Short writing exercise: 7%
- Essay: 25%
- Participation: 5%

Course Outline & Readings

Readings listed for a class meeting should be completed before that meeting. All the readings other than the material from the textbooks will be linked on the course webpage.

Day 0: Introduction to basic concepts of game theory
Skyrms 2004, “The Stag Hunt” (Ch. 1 in *The Evolution of Social Structure*)

UNIT 1: GAME THEORY

Day 1: Bonanno, Chapter 1 (“Ordinal Games in Strategic Form”), skip §1.7

Day 2: Yildiz 2012, “Dominance” and “Rationalizability”

Day 3: Bonanno, Chapter 2 (“Dynamic games with perfect information”)

Day 4: Dixit & Nalebuff 2008, “Games Solvable by Backward Reasoning” (Ch. 2 in *The Art of Strategy*)

Day 5: Bonanno, Chapter 3 (Dynamic games with imperfect information)

Day 6: Dixit & Nalebuff 2008, “Strategic Moves” (Ch. 6 in *The Art of Strategy*)

Day 7: Schwarz, Chapters 2 & 3 (“Belief as Probability” & “Probabilism”)

Day 8: Schwarz, Chapters 5 & 6 (“Utility” & “Preference”)

Day 9: Bonanno, Chapter 5 (“Mixed Strategies in Strategic-Form Games”)

- Day 10: Bonanno, Chapter 6 (“Dynamic Games with Cardinal Payoffs”)
 Day 11: Bonanno, Chapter 7 (“Knowledge and common knowledge”)
 Day 12: Bonanno, Chapter 8 (“Adding beliefs to knowledge”)
 Day 13: Midterm exam on game theory

UNIT 2: VOTING THEORY & SOCIAL CHOICE

- Day 14: Eric Pacuit, “Voting Methods”
 FairVote, “Plurality-Majority Systems”
*optional: Dixit & Nalebuff 2008, “Voting” (Ch. 12 in *The Art of Strategy*)*
- Day 15: Christian List, “Social Choice Theory”
 Gaertner 2006, “Introduction” (Ch. 1 in *A Primer in Social Choice Theory*)
- Day 16: Michael Moreau, “Arrow’s Theorem”
*optional: Wallis 2014, “Arrow’s Theorem and the Gibbard-Satterthwaite Theorem” (in *The Mathematics of Elections and Voting*)*
*optional: Gaertner 2006, “Arrow’s impossibility result” (Ch. 2 in *A Primer in Social Choice Theory*)*
- Day 17: Anderson 2006, “The Epistemology of Democracy”
- Day 18: Rippon 2008, “A Brief Guide to Writing the Philosophy Paper”
(writing philosophy)
- Day 19: Sen, “The Impossibility of a Paretian Liberal”
- Day 20: Sen, “The Possibility of Social Choice”
- Day 21: List & Pettit, “Aggregating Sets of Judgments: An Impossibility Result”
- Day 22: Russell, Hawthorne & Buchak, “Groupthink”
 Staffel, “Disagreement and Epistemic Compromise”

UNIT 3: GROUP BELIEF & GROUP MINDS

- Day 23: Goldman & Blanchard, “Social Epistemology”
- Day 24: Tuomela, “Group Beliefs”
- Day 25: Lackey, “Socially Extended Knowledge”
- Day 26: Roth, “Shared Agency”
- Day 27: Gilbert, “Walking Together: A Paradigmatic Social Phenomenon”
- Day 28: Bratman, “Shared Cooperative Activity”

Critical Reasoning

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course deals with methods and strategies of critical thinking, including the construction of arguments, the use and misuse of statistics, the role of presuppositions and frameworks, fact and value, cost-benefit analysis, interpretation, objectivity, ideology, the approaches of various disciplines, the use of alternative hypotheses, and methods of quantitative and qualitative research. It combines material from cognitive psychology, behavioral economics, logic, probability, and decision theory.

REQUIRED MATERIALS

- David Manley 2018, *Reason Better*. TopHat

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING

1. TopHat homework (1% each): complete 10 homework assignments. If you miss an assignment or turn it in late, your grade will be zero. No exceptions except in cases of *documented* unforeseen emergencies.
2. Online quizzes (6% each): complete five online quizzes. Your lowest score will be dropped.
3. Reasoning log (3% each): complete three reasoning logs. This is an exercise in metacognition. Think about your thinking! And think about other people's thinking. Then write about it!
 - a. Keep track of instances of reasoning that you think are worth reflecting on. Did you get in an interesting argument with your parents? Witness a frustrating exchange on Facebook? Read a good op-ed in the New York Times? Trying to decide which internship to take? Or whether to go to that concert you bought tickets for a month ago, but now you're loaded with work? Think you've noticed a weird cognitive glitch?
 - b. Describe the reasoning instance and your reflections on it. If it's related to something we've talked about in the course, great! Articulate how it relates. If you don't think we've mentioned it, that's great too! Maybe you'll discover something important. These aren't meant to be long. Good reflections might be as short as 300 words. Aim to be interesting and thoughtful. To get full credit, you must do two things successfully: i) describe the reasoning; and ii) explain why you think it's relevant to consider in the context of a Critical Reasoning course.
4. Midterm exams (15% each):
5. Final exam (27%):

GRADE BREAKDOWN

- TopHat homework: 10% (1% each)
- Online quizzes: 24% (6% each)
- Reasoning log: 9% (3% each)
- Midterm exams: 30% (15% each)
- Final exam: 27%

Course Outline & Readings

Readings listed for a class meeting should be completed before that meeting. All the readings other than the material from the textbooks will be linked on the course webpage.

Day 0: Introduction and overview

UNIT 1: REASONING & LOGIC

Day 1: Reasoning (§1.1-1.2)

Day 2: Reasoning and Mindset (§1.3 and §2.1)

Day 3: Mindset (§2.2-2.3)

Day 4: Clarity (§3.1-3.2)

Day 5: Clarity and Entailment (§3.3-4.1)

Day 6: Entailment (§4.2-4.3)

Day 7: Finish through Chapter 4 “Entailment,” Review

Day 8: Midterm I

UNIT 2: GATHERING EVIDENCE

Day 9: Evidence (§5.1-5.2)

Day 10: Evidence (§5.3)

Day 11: Generalizations (§6.1-6.2)

Day 12: Generalizations (§6.3-6.4)

Day 13: Levitin on Reporting Numbers, Collecting Numbers (*A field guide to lies*, 2017)
Ellenberg on the Law of Large Numbers (*How not to be wrong*, 2014)

Day 14: Causes (§7.1-7.2)

Day 15: Causes (§7.3)

Day 16: Lau, Reasoning about Causation
Niedermaier & Boyum: *What the numbers say*, 2003

Day 17: Material review (through Chapter 7)

Day 18: Midterm II

UNIT 3: RESPONDING TO EVIDENCE

Day 19: Updating (§8.1-8.2)

Day 20: Updating continued

Day 21: Theories (§9.1-9.2)

Day 22: Theories (§9.3-9.4)

Day 23: Ellenberg on Theories

Day 24: Decisions (§10.1)

Day 25: Decisions (§10.2)

Day 26: Newcomb's Problem

Day 27: Conclusion & Review