

PHI 4938: Senior Research Seminar

Spring 2017

M/W 4:30-5:45 PSY 226

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Office hours: Monday 2-4, Thursday 9:30-11:30 and by appointment.

IMPORTANT NOTICE!

The message below is from The Office of the Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs:

“As of Fall 2014, all faculty are required to document students’ academic activity at the beginning of each course. In order to document that you began this course, please complete the following academic activity by the end of the first week of classes or as soon as possible after adding the course.... Failure to do so may result in a delay in the disbursement of your financial aid.”

Required Academic Activity:

Take “Attendance Verification Quiz”, in Quizzes area of course website. This quiz will not count toward your course grade. It opens Monday, January 9, and closes Tuesday, January 17.

Course Description and Prerequisites

This is a course for **senior Philosophy majors only**. If you do not qualify, please drop the course. This course is a “capstone” experience for Philosophy Seniors. It is an advanced seminar, and will be run accordingly. Emphasis will be placed on quality argumentative discourse (written and spoken), analysis of texts, and synthesis of overall philosophical contributions of philosophical works examined.

Course Themes and Initial Readings

The general theme of the course will be “Philosophy from Non-Philosophers”. I intend both parts of that theme seriously, in that we will most assuredly be doing standard philosophy, but most of the authors from which we will draw are not traditionally regarded as philosophers. More specifically, we will examine three such authors: Martin Luther King, Jr., Oliver Sacks, and J.K. Rowling.

Part I – “The Philosopher King”, Martin Luther King, Jr.

The beginning of this course coincides with Martin Luther King, Jr., Day. While King is rightly remembered as a civil rights leader, he was also a philosopher, and in the first section of the course, “The Philosopher King”, we address the philosophical content and themes in King’s writings and speeches, both alone and in light of earlier, similar themes as found in Plato.

Part II – “The Philosophical Neurologist”, Oliver Sacks

Next, we consider another important intellectual figure, Dr. Oliver Sacks, with a section on “The Philosophical Neurologist”. Like King, Sacks was not primarily known as a philosopher, but his works and his life are widely recognized to have philosophical depth and importance. They are often read in philosophical courses having to do with Philosophy of Mind, Epistemology, Cognitive Science, Philosophy of Psychology, and Philosophy of Neuroscience.

Part III – “The Philosopher of Magic”, J. K. Rowling

In the third section of readings, we will take a trip into pop culture with the philosophy of J.K. Rowling and the magical peoples and worlds she created. If you are not yet familiar with the Harry Potter series, I recommend either reading or watching it before the last third of the course. Acquaintance with the main characters and larger plot lines should be sufficient. Depending on the level of general class familiarity, I can briefly outline the basic elements of the story needed for each assigned reading, but you would do better to have familiarized yourself with the series ahead of time.

Required Texts

You are not required to purchase any texts for this course. I will make them available through online sources, hardcopy handouts, and distribution through email.

Recommended Text

- Strunk, Wm. and White, E.B., 2000. *The Elements of Style*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

Basis for Course Grade

Essay, Précis of Undergraduate Career – 10%

Test 1, February 6th – 15%

Test 2, March 8th – 15%

Test 3, April 24th – 15%

Class participation – 10%

Final Research Paper – 35%

Optional - A research presentation, on the subject of your research paper, to be held during the final exam week meeting (no final exam for this class, but we will meet then), worth up to 10 extra credit points on your paper.

Essay, Précis of Undergraduate Career

Your first assignment to complete is a take-home essay in which you describe the highlights of your undergraduate career as a philosophy major. It is due in class on Monday, January 23rd. More will be said about this in class, and you will be given a separate handout on it along with this syllabus.

Tests

There will be three semester tests, each scheduled at the completion of each of the three parts of the course (see course schedule, below). These tests will be mixed format, including some objective-style questions as well as at least one essay, and possibly some short answer questions. I will distribute a review sheet well in advance of each test, and you will have time in the class before the test to ask review questions. During the test, if you need to leave the room before you complete it, you may go, but you must give up your test as is, and will not be allowed to change it upon your return. Students who arrive late on test day will not be allowed to take the test unless no student has yet left the classroom. If no student has left the room, you will be allowed to take the test without any penalty to your grade, but you will not be given extra time to complete it.

Makeup Policy

If you miss a test, you will not automatically be granted a make-up. Makeups will be given only in exceptional circumstances, with substantial, written documentation, from a competent authority (physician, coach, counselor, etc.) Additionally, you must contact me within 3 calendar days of the missed test in order for me to consider granting a makeup: note that “contact” means actually discussing the matter with me, not merely leaving me a message or an e-mail. **If granted, the make-up will likely be more difficult than the**

original that was missed, and will be given at the end of the semester. Alternatively, if you anticipate having to be absent on a test day, and have a legitimate reason for your absence, see me well ahead of time, and if possible, I will arrange for you to take it early. Unexcused absence from a test will result in a score of zero for the missed test.

Participation, Attendance, and Preparation

Regular attendance, thoughtful preparation and proper class decorum (see below) will be essential to your successful completion of this course. If you should have to miss a non-test day class, it will be helpful for you to obtain copies of the notes for the missed class from a reliable student. You are responsible for any missed material, including announcements made in class. Additionally, you are welcome to consult me during office hours to review material you may have missed, or to ask any questions you may have.

Your class participation grade is based on your performance in 2 components: Preparation (as evidenced by level of contribution to class discussion, judged both qualitatively and quantitatively), and attendance (see below). **Expect to be called on from time to time to answer questions about the assigned material.** For attendance, the table below shows you the relationship between the number of classes missed and the **best attainable** score for overall class participation that you can hope to achieve with a given number of missed classes. Please note that “best attainable” score means just that: if you do not regularly and actively participate while you are present, you can expect a much lower score than what is listed as the “best attainable” score.

It is your responsibility to make sure you have signed the attendance sheet. If you come in late, see me after class, and I will add you to the sheet with a note that you were late. Two late attendances or early departures will count as 1 absence (assuming you were there for at least half the class). Generally, I will not distinguish between excused and unexcused absences since you can miss a few without much harm to your grade, and absence from the class, for whatever reason, detracts from your personal representation in the class.

Contact me ahead of time if you believe you will have justified reason for missing more than 1-3 class(es), such as for participation in a sport or other recognized University activity, and we will discuss your particular situation. (In other words, don't wait until the end of the semester to try to argue that several of your absences were supposed to have been excused – it won't work). Similarly, make sure you have signed the attendance sheet every day that you attend; it won't count if you tell me afterwards that you were there on a given day but simply forgot to sign the attendance sheet.

Number of classes missed	Best attainable class participation score
0-2	100%
3	95%
4	90%
5	85%
6	75%
7	70%
8	60%
9 or more	0%

Email

I will communicate other official course notices to you through your Knight's e-mail. Knight's e-mail is considered an official means of contacting you; if that address changes after the first day of classes, you should notify me of the change in order to avoid missing any important announcements, as you are responsible for anything I send via e-mail. Please make sure it is current, and please check it regularly. After you are officially enrolled in the class, claiming "I never received the email" will not be sufficient excuse for not knowing the content of class emails. **I do not use Canvas mail.**

Class Decorum

Everyone is expected to maintain **positive classroom decorum**. Disagreement and debate in the exchange of philosophical ideas are natural, but you must observe a courteous, respectful attitude toward others in the class. Disruptive or discourteous behavior, including repeated lateness and/or early departures, will not be tolerated, and will result in a lower grade, failure, or outright dismissal from the course. It is rude and disruptive to leave a class in progress in order to get a drink, hit the vending machine, or take care of non-urgent matters that should have been attended to prior to class. Please avoid this behavior except in case of true emergencies; repeated instances of such behavior will lower your grade and/or result in disciplinary action through the Office of Student Conduct. If you know you will have to leave class early, please mention it to me at the start of the class. Consider what your general behavior and attitude convey about you, particularly to those who may know little else about you outside of the classroom.

Research Paper (See also separate handout detailing the paper requirements)

It is a departmental policy that all 4000-level courses require students to write a research paper, and I support this policy. Also, since this course functions as a senior "capstone" course, you are required to write a substantial research paper of at least **5,000** words (approximately 18-20 pages of text), **not** counting footnotes/endnotes, bibliography, cover page, appendices, or anything other than the main text. You will be required to first submit an acceptable thesis statement, followed by a rough draft that included the approved thesis statement, outline, annotated bibliography in progress, and a representative sample of the paper. Failure to submit an acceptable draft will result in the reduction of your final paper grade by an entire letter grade (e.g., an "A" paper will become a "B" paper). Final papers are due at the last regular class meeting, on Monday, April 24th. Paper turned in late will be downgraded 5 points per day, (e.g., an "A" paper of 95 that is 1 day late becomes an "A-" paper of 90, two days late and it becomes a "B" paper of 85, and so on), and I will not accept any papers later than Friday, April 28th. Please note that it is not acceptable to turn in recycled papers that you have written for other courses. You will be given a separate handout that addresses the paper requirement in more detail and you should consult it closely. **Students who do not adequately complete the research paper requirement (that is, students who do not achieve a score of 65%, a "D" or better on their papers) will receive *no higher grade than a D in the class, irrespective of their grades on the other components of the course.***

Minimum Required Grade for this Course to Count Toward Graduation Requirements:

In order for this course to fulfill the requirements for the B.A. degree in Philosophy, you must attain a grade of "C" or better. A "C-" or lower is not sufficient, and you will have to retake the course in order to graduate.

Cheating and Plagiarism

I do not tolerate cheating or plagiarism and will punish cheaters to the fullest extent allowed through the Office of Student Conduct. If you don't have enough integrity to do your own work, drop the class now and re-examine your purpose in life and at UCF. Final research papers will be processed through Turnitin.com. The following guidelines are reproduced for your information from the UCF Golden Rule (<http://www.goldenrule.sdes.ucf.edu/conduct.html>):

“Academic Dishonesty/Cheating

- A. Cheating is a violation of student academic behavior standards. The common forms of cheating include:
1. Unauthorized assistance: communication to another through written, visual, or oral means. The presentation of material which has not been studied or learned, but rather was obtained through someone else’s efforts and used as part of an examination, course assignment or project. The unauthorized possession or use of examination or course related material may also constitute cheating.
 2. Plagiarism: whereby another’s work is deliberately used or appropriated without any indication of the source, thereby attempting to convey the impression that such work is the student’s own. Any student failing to properly credit ideas or materials taken from another is plagiarizing.
- B. Any student who knowingly helps another violate academic behavior standards is also in violation of the standards.”

Course Calendar, Spring 2017, PHI 4938, Senior Research Seminar in Philosophy

(May vary slightly, depending on class progress, and with advance notice given).

Week & Date	Schedule <i>Except for the first class meeting, please have readings completed before class. Readings can be found under the “Pages” section of the course website.</i>
1, January 9, 11	Monday: Syllabus, student surveys Wednesday: Student Introductions, begin Part I of course, “The Philosopher King”. Read “Letter from Birmingham Jail” first, and continue, in the order below. Readings for Part I: (All posted under “Pages” of course website) - King, “Letter from Birmingham Jail” - A Public Statement by Eight Alabama Clergymen, also known as “A Call for Unity” . - King, text of “Mountaintop” speech. Review of selected Platonic works in relation to King: - Class handout, “King and Socrates” - <i>Apology</i> - <i>Crito</i>
2, January 18	Monday: No class, M. L. K. Jr. holiday. Wednesday: Continue above readings.
3, January 23, 25	Monday : Begin comparison of King and Socrates, see class handout titled, “King and Socrates”. Essay due today: Précis of Undergraduate Career Wednesday: <i>Apology</i>
4, January 30, February 1	Monday: <i>Crito</i> Wednesday: Finish all above readings, Review for Test 1 (See “Review for Test 1” posted under “Pages”) section of course website Thesis Statement due today
5, February 6, 8	Monday: Test 1 ----- Wednesday: Begin Part II of course, “The Philosophical Neurologist”, on Oliver Sacks, start reading <i>Gratitude</i> .

	<p>Readings for Part II: (All posted under “Pages” of course website or live linked from online syllabus)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Gratitude</i> - <i>The Man Who Mistook His Wife For A Hat</i> - Excerpt from <i>The Mind’s Eye</i> - Excerpt from <i>Oaxaca Journal</i>
6, February 13, 15	Monday and Wednesday: Finish <i>Gratitude</i> , begin reading <i>The Man Who Mistook His Wife For A Hat</i>
7, February 20, 22	Monday and Wednesday: Continue and finish <i>The Man Who Mistook His Wife For A Hat</i>
8, February 27 March 1	Monday: Excerpt from <i>The Mind’s Eye</i> Wednesday: Excerpt from <i>Oaxaca Journal</i>
9, March 6, 8	Monday: Finish all Sacks readings, Review for Test 2 Wednesday: Test 2, over Part II of course
10, March 13, 15	* * * HAPPY SPRING BREAK * * *
11, March 20, 22	<p>Monday: Begin Part III of course, “The Philosopher of Magic”, J. K. Rowling. Read “The Magic of Philosophy” (a brief introduction) and “Why Harry and Socrates Decide to Die.”</p> <p>Wednesday: “Dumbledore, Plato, and the Lust for Power”</p> <p>ROUGH DRAFTS due today (see handout on Paper Requirements)</p> <p>Part III Readings: (All posted under “Pages” of course website)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - “The Magic of Philosophy” (brief introduction to Rowling and philosophy). - “Why Harry and Socrates Decide to Die” - “Dumbledore, Plato, and the Lust for Power” - “Is Dumbledore Gay? Who’s to Say?” - “The Mirror of Erised: Why We Should Heed Dumbledore’s Warning” - “Voldemort’s Agents, Malfoy’s Cronies, and Hagrid’s Chums: Friendship in <i>Harry Potter</i>” - Last few readings TBA (deliberately left open because of possibility of further guest speakers)
12, March 27, 29	Monday: “Is Dumbledore Gay? Who’s to Say?” Wednesday: “The Mirror of Erised: Why We Should Heed Dumbledore’s Warning”
13, April 3, 5	Monday: “Voldemort’s Agents, Malfoy’s Cronies, and Hagrid’s Chums: Friendship in <i>Harry Potter</i> ” Wednesday: Reading TBA
14, April 10, 12	Monday: Colloquium from guest speaker (scheduled in our class) , Aaron Simmons , readings TBA. Wednesday: Reading TBA
15, April 17, 19	Monday: Reading TBA Wednesday: Review for Test 3
16, April 24	Monday: Test 3 over Part III of course Last day of class FINAL PAPER DUE TODAY
<p>FINAL EXAM WEEK MEETING: Monday, May 01, 2017 4:00 PM – 6:50 PM</p> <p>There is no final exam in this class, but this meeting is required and counts toward your attendance. At this meeting, we will complete the departmental exit exam, and hear from those who opted to do research presentations for extra credit.</p>	

Important Test and Due Dates (also in course calendar above)

Monday, January 23rd, Essay, Précis of Undergraduate Career due
Wednesday, February 1, Thesis Statement due
Monday, February 6th, Test 1
Wednesday, March 8th, Test 2
Wednesday, March 22, Rough Draft due
Monday, April 24th, Test 3, and Final Research Paper Due
Monday, May 1st, Optional Research Presentations and Departmental Exit Exam

Important University Dates

Drop Deadline: Thursday, January 12, 2017, 11:59 p.m.
Add Deadline: Friday, January 13, 2017, 11:59 p.m.
MLK Holiday: Monday, January 16, 2017
Spring Break: Monday, March 13, 2017 - Saturday, March 18, 2017
Last Day of Class: Monday, April 24, 2017
Last Day to Withdraw: Wednesday, March 22, 2017 11:59 PM
Final Exams Wednesday, April 26, 2017 - Tuesday, May 02, 2017