

Teaching Portfolio – Kenneth Boyd

Contact Information

Department for the Study of Culture
University of Southern Denmark
Campusvej 55
Odense, Denmark
5230

Email: kenneth.boyd@gmail.com
Website: kennethboyd.wordpress.com

Teaching Abilities

Graduate

- Epistemology, Early Analytic, Pragmatism

Undergraduate

- 17th/18th Century, Critical Thinking, Logic, Metaphysics, Philosophy of Mind, Ethics, Philosophy of Language

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1. Statement of Teaching Interests and Philosophy

In teaching, my goal is to provide students with skills they can apply in their university education more broadly, as well as to problems in their daily lives. I thus design my courses in such a way that will allow students to develop different skills at different stages of their philosophical education. It is my goal that in equipping students with these skills that they become not only better thinkers, but more critically engaged members of society.

In my *Introduction to Philosophy* class students develop the basic skills required for effectively writing philosophy by completing targeted assignments focused on individual components of a philosophy essay: summary and analysis of a primary text, raising objections against an argument, and developing an original argument. For example, students are first presented with a short passage from Descartes' *Meditations* and asked to reconstruct the argument contained within concisely, and in their own words. In doing so students practice their abilities to reconstruct arguments, and learn to avoid the temptation to simply regurgitate work in their essays without showing that they comprehend it. In their next assignment, students present an objection to Moore's infamous proof of the external world. In focusing on the presentation of objections students are able to more easily bridge the gap from interpreting philosophy to creating their own arguments. By addressing these components separately, first-time philosophy students better able to see how the components of a philosophy essay fit together, and produce higher-quality work as a result.

To recognize how the skills they develop in philosophy are applicable outside of the classroom, students engage with diverse course materials. In my *Ethics of Belief* class, students read academic work on culpable ignorance, and then apply theoretical work to address contemporary social problems. For instance, students read an opinion from *Vox* concerning whether someone should be blamed for spreading "fake news" on social media, and listened to an episode of the *This American Life* podcast that explored the beliefs that underlie the misogynistic behavior of catcalling. Since social issues are messier than most philosophical thought experiments, by addressing these kinds of issues students are able to increase their understanding by thinking about course material in different ways.

Finally, as the developer of *The Socrates Project* – a senior undergraduate seminar focused both on teaching students to become teaching assistants for introductory courses and guiding them through the process of developing a major research paper – I have also taught students skills in becoming teachers themselves. To help students plan their tutorials I have them complete templates that divide their class time into key components: a pre-assessment designed to figure out how much the students know about the relevant material, a "hook" focusing on the core ideas they want to discuss to motivate their students, an activity that allows students to engage with class material in a more active way, and a concluding discussion to help them synthesize everything they covered during the class. In presenting my students with these guidelines they are better able to break down the intimidating task of running a tutorial into manageable chunks. After visiting my students' tutorials and having them submit regular reflections on their experience I have been able to confirm that the success of this approach.

While my courses span a range of levels and subjects, they are all ultimately guided at making sure students leave having developed a set of skills, be those involving in generating philosophical arguments, applying their theoretical knowledge to applied knowledge, or becoming teachers themselves.

2. Statement of Commitment to Diversity

Over the course of my teaching career I have taught students from a wide range of different backgrounds and experiences. In teaching diverse groups of students I aim to make the classroom as inclusive as possible in a number of different ways: first, in terms of providing students with opportunities to engage with the course material in terms of assessments and in-class activities; second, in terms of providing an open and welcoming classroom environment; and third, in terms of including a diverse range of readings that recognizes and takes seriously different points of views from different groups of people. One of my primary aims in implementing these strategies is to address challenges that face first-generation students, specifically: it has been my experience that such students face a number of unique challenges and obstacles in their educations, viz. that they are more likely to have additional obligations outside of just being a student, that they are more likely to require guidance in navigating the university environment, and that they tend on average to be less likely to actively seek out help when it would be beneficial to them to do so. In response to these challenges I have implemented a number of strategies in an attempt to maximize the chance of student success.

In my classes I employ specific strategies via assignments and in-class activities, as well as a general strategy in fostering an environment in which students feel that they can seek assistance if they need it. For example, to encourage students who may otherwise be reluctant to seek out help when completing coursework, I have included in my courses a requirement to meet with me in person to discuss students' work. In my experience many students are reluctant to take advantage of the assistance that professors are able to provide. By incentivizing students to meet with me I aim to both provide that assistance, as well as to normalize what can often be seen as the intimidating activity of meeting with a professor one-on-one.

I make it a point in all of my classes to foster an environment in which students feel comfortable in asking questions, seeking clarification, and making mistakes. In general, I present philosophical material as something that the class and I are meant to figure out together in a cooperative, as opposed to competitive, way. Part of creating such an environment is presenting clear expectations for behavior in the classroom. A standard part of all of my syllabi is a "Don't Be A Jerk" policy: this policy is meant to both provide students with guidelines as to what is considered unacceptable class behavior, and to give students the assurance that any kind of negative behavior towards them – say in the form of being talked over, not being given ample time to participate as a result of discussion being dominated by specific students, etc. – will not be tolerated.

I also aim to create syllabi which reflect a diversity of viewpoints, whenever possible. For example, in my Social Epistemology class, students read work from a variety of sources from feminist philosophy, psychology, and critical race theory. In my Belief, Truth, and Knowledge class I have included a new unit on philosophical methodology, in which we discuss questions concerning whether intuitive judgments that epistemologists try to elicit via thought experiments are affected by demographic factors like race, sex, or gender, and the consequences of these worries for the way that we do epistemology and philosophy generally.

While I am committed to providing all of my students with the best chances of success, I recognize that members of different groups of students will sometimes have differing needs. It is my aim as a teacher of primarily first-generation students, as well as a diverse group of students in general, to both provide my students with the opportunities for success, as well as to foster an environment in which students can feel empowered to seek out those opportunities.

3. Teaching Experience

Primary Instructor

University of Toronto, Scarborough Campus – Undergraduate

PHLD88: Advanced Seminar in Philosophy: Socrates Project – Fall 2018/Winter 2019

- A seminar designed to teach advanced undergraduates the skills necessary for running tutorials for introductory philosophy classes, while at the same time giving them the opportunity to engage in advanced texts relating to those classes. The course culminates in a major research paper written under the supervision of a faculty member.

PHLC20: Theory of Knowledge: Ethics of Belief – Winter 2018

- An advanced upper-level undergraduate course on the topic of the ethics of belief. Some of the major questions we will address in the course include: can it be morally wrong to hold certain beliefs? Do we have voluntary control over our beliefs, and if not, how does that affect whether we can be held responsible for them? What are our goals as believers?

PHLB81: Theories of Mind – Fall 2016 and Winter 2018

- An introduction to some of the major questions and views in the philosophy of mind, including: what is the relationship between the mind and the body? What is consciousness? Is the mind just a really complex computer? Are non-human animal minds more like ours, or more like automata? In addition to readings in philosophy students will read some work from psychology and neuroscience, as well.

PHLB60: Introduction to Metaphysics – Winter 2017 and Winter 2019

- An introduction to some major questions in the history of metaphysics, including questions of free will, personal identity, and the nature of objects, both everyday and abstract.

PHLB20: Belief, Knowledge, and Truth – Winter 2017, Fall 2017, and Fall 2018

- An introduction to some of the major questions and views in epistemology. Classic topics will include skepticism, theories of knowledge, theories of justification, and epistemic luck. The class also addresses more contemporary views in epistemology, including contextualism and pragmatic encroachment.

PHLC95: Topics in the Philosophy of Mind: Knowing Minds – Fall 2017

- An advanced topics course in the philosophy of mind, focusing on the ways in which we know the contents of our own minds as well as the minds of others. Major questions addressed include: is the way that we know about our own minds different from the ways we know about other things? Do we have special access to the content of our own minds? How do I know what's going on in your mind? How do I know you have a mind at all?

PHLC22: Topics in Theory of Knowledge: Social Epistemology – Fall 2016

- An advanced upper-level undergraduate course focusing on the topic of social epistemology. Some of the major questions and topics addressed in the class include: how can I know things just on the basis of you telling me something? What should I believe when you and I disagree? Who should I trust to as a source of knowledge? What happens to us epistemically when we're not taken seriously because of biases that other people have?

Dalhousie University – Undergraduate

PHIL1010X/Y: Introduction to Philosophy – Fall 2014/Winter 2015; Fall 2015/Winter 2016

- An introduction to some of the major areas of western philosophy, taught over two terms. Topics from the first term included: the existence of god, bases of beliefs, ethics, and social and political philosophy. Topics from the second term included: theories of knowledge, skepticism, metaphysics, and philosophy of mind. This is a “writing course” which also emphasizes the development of skills in writing philosophy, centred on the completion of a number of “skills assignments” (“Summarizing a Text”, “Creating an Objection”, and “Generating an Argument”), and short essays.

PHIL2090: How to Win an Argument – Winter 2015 and Winter 2016

- An introduction to critical thinking, with an emphasis on argument structure, decision theory, and fallacies of reasoning. Students are also exposed to issues in practical decision making, including cognitive heuristics, “gut feelings”, and bias.

PHIL2620: History of Philosophy: The Empiricists – Winter 2015

- A survey of some of the major empiricists and their work, including Locke’s *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, Berkeley’s *Principles of Human Knowledge and Three Dialogues*, and Hume’s *Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*.

PHIL3051/5051: Epistemology – Fall 2015

- A cross-listed undergraduate and graduate seminar that surveys of some of the major topics in contemporary epistemology, including the analysis of knowledge and justification, epistemic luck and reactions to “Gettierology”, as well as contemporary theories like contextualism and pragmatic encroachment. Students are introduced to some topics in “metaepistemology”, including issues in experimental philosophy and the role of intuitions in epistemic dialectics.

Dalhousie University – Graduate

PHIL4055/5055: The Value of Knowledge – Fall 2014 and Winter 2015

- A graduate seminar on the nature and value of knowledge. Questions covered include contemporary responses to the “Meno problem,” whether knowledge has a unique value, the “swamping problem,” and the value of other epistemic relationships like understanding and wisdom.

University of Toronto, St. George Campus – Undergraduate

PHL232: Knowledge and Reality – Spring 2013

- A survey course covering major topics in metaphysics and epistemology, including idealism, realism, possibility, skepticism about knowledge, Gettier cases and responses, foundationalism, coherentism, and contextualism.

PHL245: Modern Symbolic Logic – Spring/Summer 2011 and Spring/Summer 2012

- An introduction to sentential and predicate logic. Topics included conditions for argument validity and soundness, translations from English into logical syntax, semantics for sentential and predicate logic, deductive proofs, proof theory, quantification theory, and finite models.

4. Professional Development and Awards

Teaching Hub at the American Philosophical Association January 2019
Presenting “Gettier and Metaphilosophy: Intuitions and Empirical Approaches in Epistemology” as part of the Teaching Hub’s groups session on novel approaches to teaching the Gettier problem.

Young Philosophers Lecture Series September 2017
Chosen to present research and introductory lectures as part of a competition for early career philosophers at DePauw University.

More Feet on the Ground August 2016
Online course (<https://utoronto.morefeetontheground.ca/>) providing training on how to recognize, respond to and refer students experiencing mental health issues on campus.

New Instructor Training Fall 2014
A two-day seminar at Dalhousie University for new faculty members. Seminars included: Who are Dalhousie Students?; Teaching and Learning Innovations; Managing for Effective Student-Professor Relationships; Copyright Demystified; and Getting Started With Blackboard

Teaching Fundamentals Certificate Winter 2013
Awarded by the University of Toronto Centre for Teaching Support and Innovation. I attended a series of seminars on a wide variety of topics pertaining to course management and instruction, including: Equity, Power and Diversity in the Classroom; Fostering Academic Integrity; Pedagogy 101; Identifying, Assisting and Referring the Student in Distress; and Elements of Effective Lesson Planning.

Martha Lile Love Teaching Award Honorable Mention Summer 2012
Honorable mention for the department of philosophy’s annual teaching award, for PHL245: Modern Symbolic Logic. I was recognized for my strong evaluations from students and particularly high retention rate.

Teacher Training Session Fall 2011
A full-day seminar offered by the University of Toronto philosophy department, including topics on course preparation, lecture design, tools for facilitating discussion, and the use of technology in the classroom.

Tutorial Assistant Training Session Fall 2009
A training session offered by the University of Toronto, designed to train new tutorial leaders. Topics included marking guidelines, techniques for generating discussion in tutorials, and the design of tutorial activities.

Athabasca University Teaching Conference Winter 2008
A weekend-long conference hosted by Athabasca University that emphasized strategies for dealing with the unique challenges of teaching part-time, distance-education, and continuing-educations students.

5. Course Reviews and Student Feedback

Summary of Teaching Evaluations: Overall Ratings of Teaching Effectiveness

University of Toronto at Scarborough		
PHLD88: <i>The Socrates Project</i>	Fall 2018/Winter 2019	4.8/5
PHLC20: <i>Theory of Knowledge</i>	Winter 2018	4.6/5
PHLC95: <i>Topics in Philosophy of Mind</i>	Fall 2017	4.5/5
PHLB20: <i>Belief, Knowledge, and Truth</i>	Fall 2017	4.2/5
	Winter 2017	4.1/5
PHB81: <i>Theories of Mind</i>	Winter 2018	4.1/5
	Fall 2016	3.9/5
Dalhousie University		
PHIL1010X/Y: <i>Introduction to Philosophy</i>	Fall 2015/Winter 2016	4.37/5
	Fall 2014/Winter 2015	4.29/5
PHIL2620: <i>History of Philosophy: The Empiricists</i>	Winter 2015	4.00/5
PHIL2090: <i>How to Win an Argument</i>	Winter 2016	4.31/5
	Winter 2015	3.89/5
PHIL3051: <i>Epistemology</i>	Fall 2015	4.43/5
University of Toronto St. George Campus		
PHL232: <i>Knowledge and Reality</i>	Spring 2013	4.00/5
PHL245: <i>Modern Symbolic Logic</i>	Spring/Summer 2012	5.90/7
	Spring/Summer 2011	6.40/7

NB: No reports were provided from other classes taught due to small class size, insufficient response rate, or because courses are in progress

In the following pages I have included detailed student reports and complete student comments for the courses I taught in the 2017/2018 and 2018/2019 academic years. Complete reports for any additional course are available upon request.

University of Toronto at Scarborough – PHLD88: The Socrates Project
Fall 2018/Winter 2019

Overall Ratings

Common Questions	
1 = Strongly Disagree; 2 = Moderately Disagree; 3 = Neither Disagree Nor Agree; 4 = Agree; 5= Strongly Agree	Mean/5
I found the course intellectually stimulating.	4.8
The course provided me with a deeper understanding of the subject matter.	5.0
The instructor (Kenneth Boyd) created an atmosphere that was conducive to my learning.	5.0
Course projects, assignments, tests, and/or exams improved my understanding of the course material.	5.0
Course projects, assignments, tests and/or exams provided opportunity for me to demonstrate an understanding of the course material.	5.0
Overall, the quality of my learning experience in this course was....	4.8

Complete Student Comments

The quality of instruction was incredibly high. Despite the novelty of the seminar, Professor Boyd executed his role as supervisor perfectly. The material always challenged us to think deeper and reflect and relate it to our lives. The conversations had in class were stimulating—for the most part; after all, it is a 3 hour long session XD— and intellectually complex. Professor Boyd kept us on track, be it with handing in assignments, staying on track during discussions, or guiding us through various processes. He was amazing.

Really well structured. I felt supported and inspired.

The small class size allowed for all of the students to talk about ideas and to discuss opinions. The instructor was very good at facilitating discussion by formulating questions, responses, and objections that kept the conversations flowing. This course has been a central part of my undergraduate experience, and I'm very grateful for its coming to UTSC. This is something that should have arrived sooner and that should stay a part of the department. It may look like I'm biased by selecting the best option for each question asked in this evaluation, but I assure you that my answers here are a clear reflection of the course.

Professor Boyd was available any time through email and regularly made office hours in the portable. He made himself available to us any time we needed him.

This course is an amazing opportunity to develop philosophical and communicative skills. For once, students were able to contribute to the course reading list, and we were given several chances to become the expert on a topic and lead the discussion with our peers. Additionally, working closely with a supervisor and getting input from peers for a research paper allowed many opportunities for constructive feedback. It also granted an opportunity to be independent by allowing me to pursue a topic of my choice.

Overall Ratings

Common Questions		Mean/5
1 = Strongly Disagree; 2 = Moderately Disagree; 3 = Neither Disagree Nor Agree; 4 = Agree; 5= Strongly Agree		
I found the course intellectually stimulating.		4.5
The course provided me with a deeper understanding of the subject matter.		4.5
The instructor (Kenneth Boyd) created an atmosphere that was conducive to my learning.		5.0
Course projects, assignments, tests, and/or exams improved my understanding of the course material.		4.5
Course projects, assignments, tests and/or exams provided opportunity for me to demonstrate an understanding of the course material.		4.5
Overall, the quality of my learning experience in this course was....		4.6

Complete Student Comments

Professor Boyd ensures that the concepts taught in class are well understood. I personally enjoyed this course a lot and it has enabled further conversation outside of the classroom. Professor Boyd made this course all the more enjoyable
Prof was very open when it came to letting people provide answers to what they believe about certain rules and ideologies setup by the ethics of belief.
Professor Boyd is excellent at explaining complicated concepts. He is able to break down and explain complex arguments making them understandable.
I enjoyed the course.
Sometimes I did not really understand the reading and I appreciate that Prof. Boyd would go over it.
Classes are always interesting and I actually enjoy participating in class because the professor allows us to use easy examples to understand concepts which is very helpful
Prof was helpful, punctual, accommodating and easy to approach. Although the prof is a hard marker, his class is good, is lectures are well presented and he is very kind.
Prof. Boyd is a great lecturer and he is very good at creating an open and comfortable environment for class discussion. He also pushed students to think critically and not be afraid to develop opinions and new ideas which was great. He also clearly understands the material very well and often brought in real world examples which really brought the relevance of the material into context.
Intellectually stimulating; very well done

University of Toronto at Scarborough – PHLB81: Theories of Mind
Winter 2018

Overall Ratings

Common Questions	
1 = Strongly Disagree; 2 = Moderately Disagree; 3 = Neither Disagree Nor Agree; 4 = Agree; 5= Strongly Agree	Mean/5
I found the course intellectually stimulating.	4.2
The course provided me with a deeper understanding of the subject matter.	4.1
The instructor (Kenneth Boyd) created an atmosphere that was conducive to my learning.	4.3
Course projects, assignments, tests, and/or exams improved my understanding of the course material.	4.0
Course projects, assignments, tests and/or exams provided opportunity for me to demonstrate an understanding of the course material.	4.0
Overall, the quality of my learning experience in this course was....	4.1

Complete Student Comments

I think Professor Boyd was very knowledgeable in his field. He was funny and added a quirky personality to the learning environment. The only thing that made me anxious was when having to stay late in another class, or when being devastating hungry and needing to grab something, and then walking into class late and feeling uncomfortable by the side eye for interrupting a little.

Prof Boyd did an excellent job this term. His slides were concise and conducive to learning actively. I thoroughly enjoyed coming to each and every class as the material was exciting, as was the professor while teaching.

Professor was very open towards letting students ask for help. Explained through concepts thoroughly and carefully, though I would prefer if he did not talk about a single example for a long time.

The energy and atmosphere was very conducive of my learning early in the semester but post-midterms, the energy and motivation from the class as a whole as well as from Prof. Boyd lowered. The content felt as though it became less in-depth.

Prof taught material well, summaries were succinct and clarified the heavy readings.

However, the prof had a tendency to repeat sentences where clarification was not needed.
(Same example stated 3 times)

Some of the readings were very dry, dense and long. The Lewis reading in particular was dreadful. Block reading was very long.

The best readings were the shorter ones: (This is not because I refuse to put in effort, there are genuine time constraints here. To understand the material fully takes time, this is not an English course) they allowed for full understanding.

Please, shorten the unnecessarily long readings.

The instructor made class very interesting and stimulating because of his laidback nature. It made him easy to listen to.

Very clear, professor was engaging with students

The structure of the class was not as conducive to learning as I would have liked. Splitting 1 hour, and 2 hour chunks made things difficult. Additionally, the class size made it difficult to engage with the material as deeply as I would have liked, given there were so many people asking questions. Professor Boyd did a good job of keeping up with the schedule and trying to offer up moments for conversation, but the structure did not adequately facilitate the learning I was expecting.

Professor taught topics clearly. Could be better when answering questions, some answers would reiterate the question.

Instructor has a unique, stimulating, and crystal clear lecture style that combines visual aids, simplified points, and thorough consolidation of previous material on each PowerPoint.

Professor Boyd did a WONDERFUL job at directing this course. He was always available to talk, provided great assistance when I didn't understand concepts or the readings (i'm not that great at philosophy and this was the first time i've taken a philosophy course). I honestly could not imagine being taught this course by anyone else since the way he organized the course really does help your ability to learn the material. He constantly goes back and points out the theories which we have covered previously, once we start to learn a new one. So it really does help when you're learning a new theory to be able to get a reminder of the older ones and how they may differ. Great professor!

the readings were not that difficult to understand and the teaching was intriguing

- I wish that prof.boyd uploaded the actual sides to blackboard.
- Clear, loud, even some humour
- Sometimes he talks very slow, and repeats things too many times and this confuses people
- The slides are a bit unclear, even when looking at them in class as he is speaking, I would suggest making the arguments flow much more with what you say (repeating titles, premise, thesis – all of these things very clearly stated)
- I found that with the essays and argument summaries, it was all very subjective to what the t.a was feeling. I would really appreciate some sort of marking scheme.

The instruction was very clear, Professor Boyd always answered any questions on ideas and concepts that might have been unclear the first time around.

Decent. Lectures were a bit dry, but did help breakdown the readings.

Professor Boyd is an absolute legend. One of the best professors I've ever had. Looking forward to taking more courses with him. He's a natural orator. Knows exactly how to engage an audience.

Thought-provoking, engaging, put in concept easier to understand at core.
Great balance between material and discussion.

The instruction in this course was excellent, as Professor Boyd was able to explain ludicrously complex papers simply and effectively, as well as piquing my interest in the topic matter as it related to other fields such as ethics with his series of lectures on non-human minds.

Prof Boyd was very good at explaining the content of course in great detail so that it was easier to understand.

Professor was great at conveying difficult concepts by simplifying them into relatable thought experiments. Lectures were interesting, and thought provoking.

Overall Ratings

Common Questions	
1 = Strongly Disagree; 2 = Moderately Disagree; 3 = Neither Disagree Nor Agree; 4 = Agree; 5= Strongly Agree	Mean/5
I found the course intellectually stimulating.	4.6
The course provided me with a deeper understanding of the subject matter.	4.6
The instructor (Kenneth Boyd) created an atmosphere that was conducive to my learning.	5.0
Course projects, assignments, tests, and/or exams improved my understanding of the course material.	4.2
Course projects, assignments, tests and/or exams provided opportunity for me to demonstrate an understanding of the course material.	4.2
Overall, the quality of my learning experience in this course was....	4.4

Complete Student Comments

great, professor Boyd is an engaging professor and is great at helping me understand the basic concepts and lessons without extra jargon to filter through

Professor Boyd created an atmosphere that was conducive to thoughtful analysis of content. He lectured in a very engaging manner, and he provided students with several opportunities to ask questions or make comments to further the discussion. He was a phenomenal instructor.

Professor Boyd provided an excellent atmosphere for learning. Concepts and theories that were presented in readings were made concise and understanding in lecture. I highly encourage future students to attend lectures because they are incredibly useful in understanding the material (far better than doing the readings on your own)

Great course.

Overall Ratings

Common Questions		
1 = Strongly Disagree; 2 = Moderately Disagree; 3 = Neither Disagree Nor Agree; 4 = Agree; 5= Strongly Agree		Mean/5
I found the course intellectually stimulating.		4.3
The course provided me with a deeper understanding of the subject matter.		4.5
The instructor (Kenneth Boyd) created an atmosphere that was conducive to my learning.		4.5
Course projects, assignments, tests, and/or exams improved my understanding of the course material.		4.0
Course projects, assignments, tests and/or exams provided opportunity for me to demonstrate an understanding of the course material.		4.1
Overall, the quality of my learning experience in this course was....		4.2

Complete Student Comments

The professor was very lively and interesting to listen to which improve the content of the course.
The instructor "Kenneth Boyd" was a reliable and friendly person when it came to teaching epistemology. He was able to provide excellent explanations for each topic that was brought up; filling in the details that were assumed in the text but not in lecture. Overall, the instruction provided in this course is Good.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> –great –prof was engaging and broke down complex concepts into very understandable chunks with engaging and relevant examples to aid in understanding –course was very interactive with class discussion which helped alot with my understanding
The instructor for this course was probably one of the best professors I've ever had. He explained complex concepts in a really engaging and easy to understand way which is difficult for philosophy courses. The structure of the course evaluations was also great in helping me to understand the materials. It was really nice to have smaller writing assignments that slowly increase in length and weight. I found it very helpful because I was able to get really good feedback on the first reading responses and adjust my writing style and fix my errors for the longer essays.
Very engaging, enthusiastic, and clear instruction. Able to explain material comprehensively while also allowing plenty of opportunities for students to ask questions and voice answers of their own. The frequent use of thought experiments/Gettier cases for the students to actively think about and provide their own answers to was great. The instructor knows how to keep students engaged with the material over the period of a 3 hour lecture. Very positive feeling about the class.
I loved the lectures and the essays were very stimulating
Student participation was handled extremely well. The pace of the class was a little slow but got the job done and explained concepts clearly. Unlike other philosophy classes, this class allowed students to give their own interpretations and objections towards concepts.
Very clear and engaging lectures.

The lectures were engaging, and elaborated on the ideas presented in the readings.

Well structured, organized, and instructed.

very clear professor even though the material is hard to understand. atmosphere of the class is interesting and engaging

Great course and great professor, only issue is the time

Dr. Boyd is an excellent instructor. He makes philosophy a piece of cake.

6. Sample Syllabi and Course Materials

PHLC22: Topics in Theory of Knowledge – Social Epistemology

Taught at the University of Toronto at Scarborough

Where: BV363

When: MO 10-1

Office Hours: PO102, Office P116, Mondays 2-4 p.m.

Professor: Kenneth Boyd

Email: kenneth.boyd@mail.utoronto.ca

Course Description

While the history of philosophy might make you think that the way we get knowledge is primarily by reflecting in our armchairs, in real life we rely heavily on others to learn about and successfully navigate the world. In this course we will be looking at a number of issues in *social epistemology*, an approach to thinking about knowledge that emphasizes the fact that we are social creatures who get a lot of knowledge from each other. Some of the questions we will be looking at include: how can I know something just by you telling me things? What should I believe when we disagree about something? Who should I trust to give me knowledge? What happens when we're not taken seriously because of biases that people have?

In this course we will be discussing these issues together, so you are expected to do the readings beforehand, have them with you during class, and be prepared to ask and answer questions.

Course Materials

All readings for the course can be found on the course website. You may print these out or read them on your electronic device of choice. In order to get the most out of class you should read the material covered in each class *before* the class takes place. Some of the reading can be quite dense; don't try to cram it all in a few minutes before class begins.

Course Evaluation

<i>Assignment</i>	<i>Value</i>	<i>Due</i>
Participation	10%	Weekly
Argumentative Response 1: Testimony	10%	Oct. 2, 11:59 p.m.
Argumentative Response 2: Trust	10%	Oct. 16, 11: 59 p.m.
Essay 1	30%	Nov. 13, 11: 59 p.m.
Essay 2	40%	Dec. 11, 11: 59 p.m.

All assignments will be submitted online through the course website. Your grade for the course will be determined by a combination of weekly participation, two short argumentative responses in the first half of the term, and two essays in the second half of the term. Good participation requires more than just showing up: while you do not have to say something brilliant in every class, you are expected to ask questions and answer questions and participate in discussion.

Late Policy

Late penalty is a partial letter grade per day late. So if you would have originally, say, gotten a B+, and you were two days late, then you would get a B-. This is a dumb way to lose marks. Don't submit your stuff late. If you have a reasonable reason for submitting something late then talk to Prof. Boyd about it. If you are sick then you need to provide a doctor's note.

Email and Office Hours

You can email Prof. Boyd at any time about anything pertaining to course administration. You *must* start the subject line of your email with the course code. So for example you would send an email of the form “PHLC22: Well-thought out question” (but without the quotes). Prof. Boyd will try his very best to get back to you within 48 hours during the week. Email is *not* the medium for deep philosophical discussion: that is what office hours are for. You do not need to make an appointment to come by during office hours, you can just stop by. If you would like to talk philosophy but you can't make it to office hours, please send an email and a time to meet can be scheduled.

Accessibility

Students with diverse learning styles and needs are welcome in this course. In particular, if you have a disability/health consideration that may require accommodations, please feel free to approach Prof. Boyd and/or the *AccessAbility* Services as soon as possible. *AccessAbility* Services staff (located in Rm SW302, Science Wing) are available by appointment to assess specific needs, provide referrals and arrange appropriate accommodations 416-287-7560 or email ability@utsc.utoronto.ca. The sooner you let us know your needs the quicker we can assist you in achieving your learning goals in this course.

Academic Integrity

Academic integrity is one of the cornerstones of the University of Toronto. It is critically important both to maintain our community which honours the values of honesty, trust, respect, fairness and responsibility and to protect you, the students within this community, and the value of the degree towards which you are all working so diligently. According to Section B of the University of Toronto's Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters which all students are expected to know and respect, it is an offence for students:

- To use someone else's ideas or words in their own work without acknowledging that those ideas/words are not their own with a citation and quotation marks, i.e. to commit plagiarism.
- To include false, misleading or concocted citations in their work.
- To obtain unauthorized assistance on any assignment.
- To provide unauthorized assistance to another student. This includes showing another student completed work.
- To submit their own work for credit in more than one course without the permission of the instructor
- To falsify or alter any documentation required by the University. This includes, but is not limited to, doctor's notes.
- To use or possess an unauthorized aid in any test or exam. There are other offences covered under the Code, but these are by far the most common. Please respect these rules and the values which they protect.

“Don't Be A Jerk” Policy

Since we will be talking to each other a lot you must strive to be a virtuous participant in philosophical discussion. This means: no speaking out of turn, no cutting people off, no dominating discussion, no talking down to anyone, no being a jerk in general. Other ways to be a jerk include: having your cellphone go off in class, showing up late to class, browsing Reddit on your laptop or sending Snapchats or whatever it is you do with your phone instead of paying attention, and other things of that nature. Jerky behavior will result in you being called a jerk and feeling bad about it. If you're a jerk consistently you'll be asked to leave.

Schedule of Readings

Sept. 1 - Introduction	In-Class Readings
Sept. 12 - Testimony 1	Hardwig - Epistemic Dependence Robert Audi - The Place of Testimony in the Fabric of Knowledge and Justification
Sept. 19 - Testimony 2	Lackey - Testimony: Acquiring Knowledge from Others Goldberg - If that were true I would have heard about it by now
Sept. 26 - Trust 1	Goldman - Experts: Which ones should you trust? Frost-Arnold - Trustworthiness and truth: the epistemic pitfalls of internet accountability
Oct. 2, 11: 59 p.m. - Reading Response 1 Due	
Oct. 3 - Trust 2	Sperber - Epistemic Vigilance Origg - Is Trust an Epistemological Notion?
Reading Week - Oct. 16, 11:59 p.m. - Reading Response 2 Due	
Oct. 17 - Peer Disagreement 1	Richard Feldman - Reasonable Religious Disagreements Adam Elga - Reflection and Disagreement
Oct. 24 - Peer Disagreement 2	Thomas Kelly - Peer Disagreement and Higher Order Evidence
Oct. 31 - Groups 1	Goldman - Group Knowledge versus Group Rationality Pettit - Groups with minds of their own - From Goldman book
Nov. 7 - Groups 2	Tollefson - Group Testimony Tollefson - WIKIPEDIA and the epistemology of testimony
Nov. 13, 11: 59 p.m. - Essay 1 Due	
Nov. 14 - Injustice 1	Fricker - Testimonial Injustice Fricker - Hermenutical Injustice
Nov. 21 - Injustice 2	Fricker - Hermenutical Injustice - Cont'd Dotson - Tracking Epistemic Violence
Nov. 28 - Obligations	Goldberg - Should have known
Dec. 11, 11:59 p.m. - Essay 2 Due	

PHLB60: Introduction to Metaphysics

Taught at the University of Toronto at Scarborough

Where: Monday: MW160, Wednesday: BV264

Prof: Kenneth Boyd

When: Monday and Wednesday, 2-3:30

Email: kenneth.boyd@mail.utoronto.ca

Office Hours: Wednesdays, PO102, Room 105, 3:30-5

TA: Caitlin Hamblin

TA Email: caitlin.hamblin@mail.utoronto.ca

Course Description

Metaphysical questions are some of the most basic questions about the nature and structure of reality. Some of the questions that we will be addressing in this course include: do we really have free will, or is freedom just an illusion? What makes us the same thing that we were 10 years ago, and the same thing 10 years from now? Why is there something rather than nothing? Do moral facts exist in the way that other things exist? We will be reading material both classic and contemporary, from a wide variety of sources.

Course Materials

Readings will come from both a required text and the course Quercus website. The required text is *Riddles of Existence: A Guided Tour of Metaphysics, 2nd Edition* by Earl Conee and Theodore Sider, and can be found in the UTSC bookstore.

Course Evaluation

<i>Assignment</i>	<i>Value</i>	<i>Due Date</i>
Weekly Quizzes	10%	Every Friday
Short Paper 1	15%	Feb. 9, 11:59 p.m.
Short Paper 2	15%	Mar. 2, 11: 59 p.m.
Longer Paper	25%	Mar. 23, 11: 59 p.m.
Final Exam	35%	TBA

Grades will be assigned on the basis of three papers (two short, one longer), weekly quizzes (starting in week 2 and ending in week 11) and a final exam. Format of papers, midterm, and final will be discussed in class. All work except for the final exam will be submitted through the Quercus website.

Late Policy

Late penalty is a partial letter grade per day late. So if you would have originally, say, gotten a B+, and you were two days late, then you would get a B-. This is a dumb way to lose marks. Don't submit your stuff late. If you have a reasonable reason for submitting something late then talk to Prof. Boyd about it.

Quizzes cannot be submitted late.

Schedule of Readings

Readings marked "ROE" are from the textbook *Riddles of Existence*. All other readings can be found on the Quercus website.

Week 1 Introduction	<i>Jan. 7</i> Introduction (no readings)	<i>Jan. 9</i> Class Cancelled
Week 2 Personal Identity	<i>Jan. 14</i> ROE Chapter 1 – pp. 7-11 Perry – Night 1	<i>Jan. 16</i> ROE Chapter 1 – pp. 12-15 Locke – Of Identity and Diversity
Week 3 Personal Identity	<i>Jan. 21</i> ROE Chapter 1 – pp. 15-19 Williams – The Self and the Future (pp. 75-84)	<i>Jan. 23</i> ROE Chapter 1 – pp. 19-21 Parfit – What We Believe Ourselves To Be
Week 4 Freedom and Determinism	<i>Jan. 28</i> ROE Chapter 2 – Fatalism	<i>Jan. 30</i> ROE Chapter 6 – Freedom and Determinism
Week 5 Freedom and Determinism	<i>Feb. 4</i> Ayer – Freedom and Necessity	<i>Feb. 6</i> Chisholm – Human Freedom and the Self
Week 6 Why Not Nothing?	<i>Feb. 11</i> ROE Chapter 5 – pp. 88-102 Gaunilo – In Behalf of the Fool	<i>Feb. 13</i> ROE Chapter 5 – 102-113 Parfit – Why Does the Universe Exist?
Week 7 Universals	<i>Feb. 25</i> ROE Chapter 8 – pp. 156-170	<i>Feb. 27</i> Russell – The World of Universals
Week 8 Universals	<i>Mar. 4</i> Quine – On What There Is	<i>Mar. 6</i> ROE Chapter 8 – pp. 171-182 Quine – On What There Is – Cont'd
Week 9 Possibility and Necessity	<i>Mar. 11</i> Hume – Of the idea of necessary connexion	<i>Mar. 13</i> ROE Chapter 9
Week 10 Time	<i>Mar. 18</i> ROE Chapter 3 – pp. 44-51 Smart – The Space-Time World	<i>Mar. 20</i> ROE Chapter 3 – 52-61 Prior – Some Free Thinking About Time
Week 11 Metaphysics of Ethics	<i>Mar. 25</i> ROE Chapter 10	<i>Mar. 27</i> ROE Chapter 10
Week 12 Metametaphysics and Review	<i>Apr. 1</i> ROE Chapter 12	<i>Apr. 3</i> Exam Review
Final Exam: TBD		

PHIL1010X: Introduction to Philosophy

Taught at Dalhousie University

Time: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 10:05-11:25

Professor: Kenneth Boyd

Place: Henry Hicks Academic 212

Email: Kenneth.Boyd@dal.ca

Office Hours: Wednesdays, 3-5 p.m. (or by appointment), 3130 Marion McCain

Course Description

This is an introduction to some of the major areas in the history of philosophy, including the existence/non-existence of God, ethics, and issues in social and political philosophy. Here is a smattering of some of the questions we will be looking at: can we prove that God exists? Is it okay to believe that God exists? What kinds of actions are right, and which ones are wrong? Is it okay to eat puppies? What is justice, and why should we care about being just? It is fair that you have significantly more than other people, and that other people have significantly more than you? What should we do about that? As you will be writing about a lot of these questions, this course fulfils the writing requirement.

Required Texts

- Gendler, Siegel and Cahn. *The Elements of Philosophy*. Oxford University Press.
- Vaughn and McIntosh. *Writing Philosophy: A Guide for Canadian Students*. Oxford University Press.

Course Objectives

We will be aiming to accomplish three major things in this course. The first is to give you a broad overview of some major issues in philosophy. The second is to develop your skills as critical reasoners and arguers. The third is to develop your skills as good writers of philosophy. We will accomplish these goals together by carefully reading the assigned texts, participating in discussion in class, and by writing on a number of issues throughout the term.

Course Requirements

Your grade is determined by a number of short assignments and essays, as well as a final exam. The breakdown of the grades are as follows:

Assignment	Value	Due
Skills Assignment: Summary and Paraphrase	5%	Sept. 27
Skills Assignment: Debate and Respond	5%	Oct. 12
Skills Assignment: Developing an Argument	5%	Oct. 30
Essay 1	20%	Nov. 15
Essay 2	20%	Dec. 6
Final Exam	40%	TBD
Tickets-Out-The-Door	5%	Every class

Submission of Assignments

All assignments (except for the Tickets-Out-The-Door) must be submitted electronically through BlackBoard. Every assignment (except for the Short Essay) will be due at the end of the weekend between Thursday and Tuesday classes. An assignment that is received one minute late will be late. *Do not wait until the last minute to submit your assignments.*

Late Policy

Every day that the assignment is late will cost you a partial letter grade. That means that if you submit the assignment one day late, and you would have received the equivalent of a B+, you will instead receive the equivalent of a B; if you would have received a B- you will instead receive a C+, etc.

Reasonable Excuses

You can be excused from late penalties if you have a *good and reasonable excuse*. Here are some examples of *good and reasonable excuses*:

- "I was very sick, and here is the doctor's note to prove it." Significant illness is a good and reasonable excuse, *but only if you have a doctor's note*. No doctor's note, no excuse. No exceptions.
- "There was a significant life event that demanded my full attention, and I talked to you about it well in advance of the assignment deadline." It's understandable that life happens, and sometimes you're absolutely, unavoidably needed elsewhere. In these kinds of cases (and only these kinds of cases) you must *talk to Prof. Boyd well beforehand*. You absolutely cannot email Prof. Boyd the night before with this kind of excuse.

Here are some examples of *bad and unreasonable excuses*. These kinds of excuses *will be ignored*:

- "My computer crashed!" / "I thought I emailed it to myself but I guess I didn't!" / "My roommate totally stole my USB key, and he won't reply to my texts!"
- "I have a million assignments due in my other classes!"
- "I forgot."

One Free Extension

Once a term you may use one free extension on any assignment without needing to provide a reasonable excuse. This extension will be for 5 days. So if your assignment is due at the end of Sunday, and you take your free extension, it will be due at the end of the following Friday. To use your extension you *must* email Prof. Boyd indicating that you want to use your extension. *It will not be assumed that you want to use your free extension if you submit something late.*

What Is Expected From You

As a student in this class, the following is expected from you:

- 1) **Come to Class.** We will be reading some difficult material and addressing some complex philosophical questions, so it is important that you come to class, not only to listen, but to ask questions and participate in discussion.
- 2) **Do the Readings.** Read the material before class. Read every word of every page. Everything you've been asked to read is really, really rewarding stuff if you put the time in. Promise.
- 3) **Participate.** There will be lots of time for discussion in class, and it's important that you take advantage of these opportunities. This does not mean that you have to ask a million questions, or that you absolutely must ask a question every class. But if you have questions or want to respond to your fellow classmates you should do so.
- 4) **Don't be a Jerk.** There are lots of ways that you can be a jerk in class. You can be a jerk by shouting out questions or comments without raising your hand, disrespecting your classmates by talking over them or otherwise being patronizing or condescending, dismissing someone out of hand, etc. Being a jerk will not be tolerated.
- 5) **Pay Attention.** A lot of you will want to take notes on your laptop. This is fine. What's not fine is coming to class and clicking around Reddit or Facebook or whatever for 90 minutes. It's a waste of your time to do so, and those kitten gifs are distracting to the people sitting behind you.

- 6) **Turn off Everything that Makes Noise.** Cell phones going off in class are extremely distracting, so turn them off or make them be *completely* silent. Do not text in class. I can see you when you're texting, you're not being discreet.
- 7) **Bring Your Books to Class.** They're heavy, but you have to have them with you. It is useful to have the text with you to follow along, and you will sometimes need to refer to specific passages. Spare copies are not available.

What You Can Expect

As a student in this class, you can expect the following things:

- 1) **Timely Responses to Emails.** If you email Prof. Boyd he will get back to you within 48 hours, often sooner. Emails should not be for lengthy philosophical discussion, but rather questions about course administration. If he doesn't get back to you within 48 hours, do not feel bad about sending him a follow-up email.
- 2) **Being Available for Discussion.** Come to office hours for philosophical discussion. You can come with any questions about the materials you have. If you have questions and want to discuss them but have another significant conflict, you can email Prof. Boyd to schedule another time to meet.
- 3) **Fair and Timely Grading.** Graded assignments will be returned in as reasonable amount of time as possible. All grading will be blind: papers will be identified by student number, not name, so it will not be known whose paper is being graded until after all assignments are graded.

Email Policy

All emails *must* have a subject line that starts with "PHIL1010X:" If you do not send an email in this form, chances are it won't be answered. *Use your Dalhousie email.*

Writing Centre

If you want some help with your writing, the writing centre is for you (<http://dal.ca.libguides.com/writingcentre>). Open six days a week, they have tutors available to help you.

24-Hour Reflection Period

After you have had a graded assignment returned to you, if you wish to contact Prof. Boyd about it you must wait at least 24 hours. If you are unhappy with your grade and wish to contest it, you must meet with Prof. Boyd, in person, to discuss it. You must also show that you have given considerable attention to the comments, and that you understand what the assigned grade means according to Dalhousie's grading guidelines (http://www.dal.ca/campus_life/student_services/academic-support/grades-and-student-records/grade-scale-and-definitions.html).

Schedule of Readings

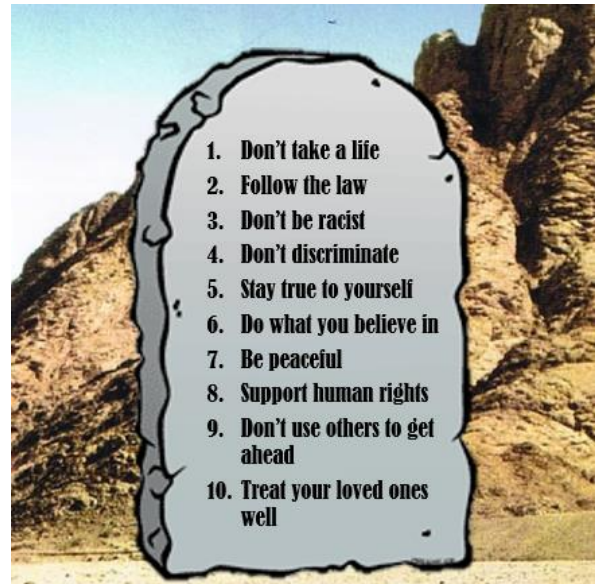
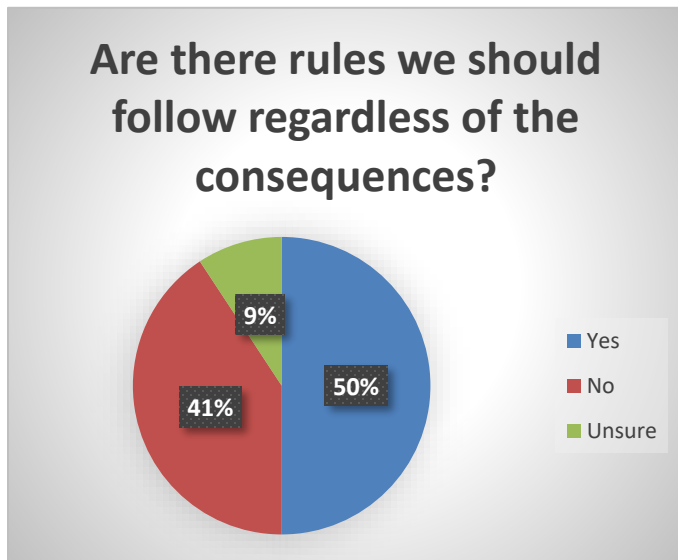
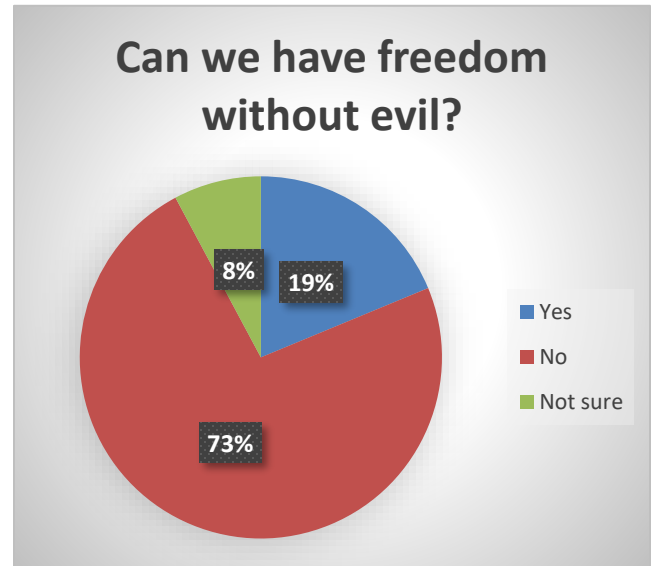
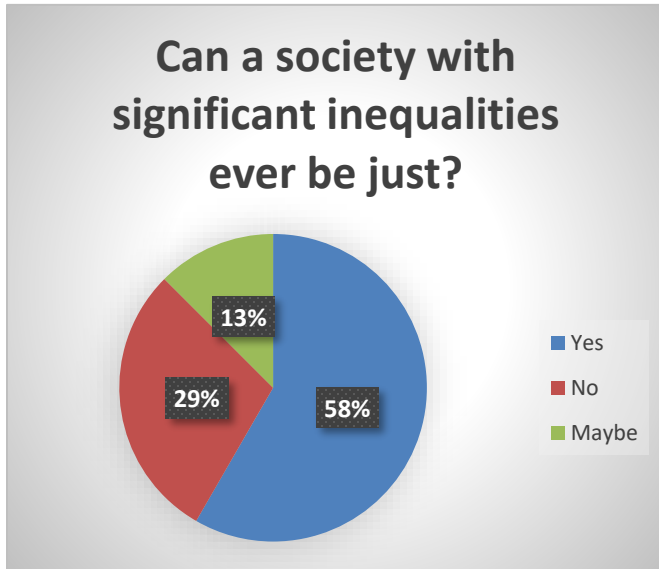
- Readings marked with * are only available online
- All other readings found in *The Elements of Philosophy*

Tuesday	Thursday
	Sept. 10 - Introduction
Sept. 15 - Reading Philosophy Writing Philosophy: Chapter 1	Sept. 17 - Reading Philosophy Writing Philosophy: Chapter 2
Sept. 22 - Existence(?) of God Anselm: The Ontological Argument Gaunilo: In Behalf of the Fool	Sept. 24 - Existence(?) of God Taylor: The Cosmological Argument
Sept. 29 - Existence(?) of God Paley: The Argument from Design	Oct. 1 - Existence(?) of God Hick: The Problem of Evil Cahn: The Problem of Goodness
Oct. 6 - Writing Philosophy Writing Philosophy: Chapters 3 and 4	Oct. 8 - Grounds for Belief Pascal: The Wager
Oct. 13 - Grounds for Belief Clifford: The Ethics of Belief WP: 96-101	Oct. 15 - Grounds for Belief James: The Will to Believe WP: 101-107
Oct. 20 - Introduction to Ethics Plato: Glaucon's Challenge	Oct. 22 - Relativism Rachels: The Challenge of Cultural Relativism
Oct. 27 - Utilitarianism Mill: Selections from Utilitarianism	Oct. 29 - Utilitarianism Williams: Utilitarianism, Integrity and Responsibility
Nov. 3 - Kant Kant: Selections from Groundwork	Nov. 5 - Virtue Ethics Aristotle: Selections from Nicomachean Ethics
Nov. 10 - Practical Ethics Norcross: Puppies, Pigs, and People	Nov. 12 - Study Day - NO CLASS

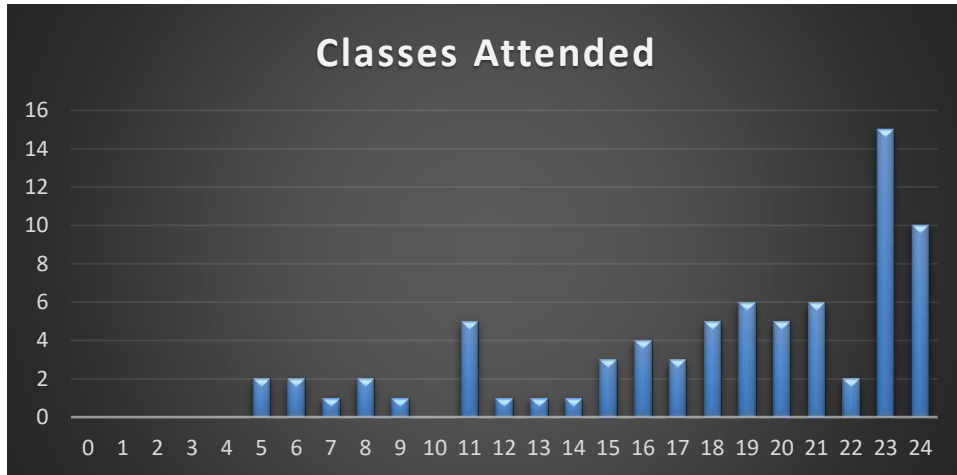
<p>Nov. 17 – Practical Ethics Cohen: A Critique of the Alleged Moral Bias of Vegetarianism</p>	<p>Nov. 19 – Problems in Ethics Thomson: The Trolley Problem</p>
<p>Nov. 24 – Problems in Ethics Nagel: Moral Luck</p>	<p>Nov. 26 – Political Philosophy Hobbes: Contract and Commonwealth</p>
<p>Dec. 1 – Political Philosophy Rawls: Justice as Fairness</p>	<p>Dec. 3 – Political Philosophy Nozick: Distributive Justice</p>
<p>Dec. 8 – Review No new readings</p>	

PHIL1010 Sample “Ticket Out The Door” Questions and Responses

At the end of each class, students were presented with a “ticket out the door” question that pertained to the material covered during that class. Answers were then tallied and presented at the beginning of the subsequent lecture:

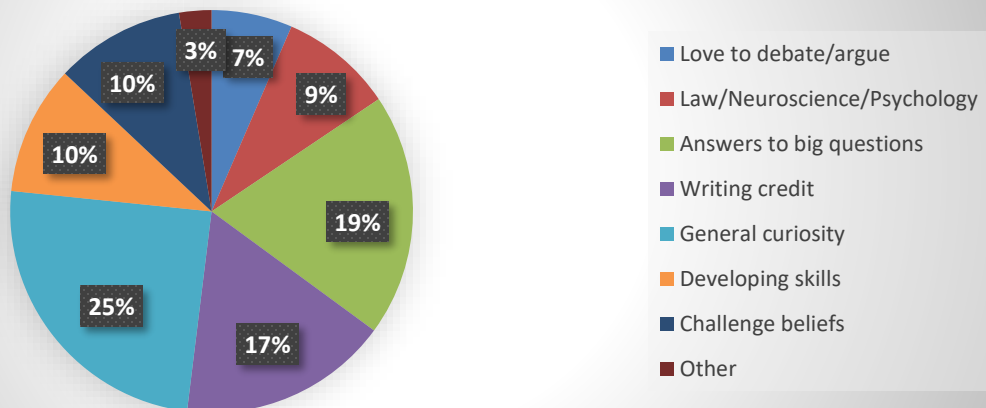


Ticket Out The Door questions were also used to track attendance and assign an attendance grade:



And to check in with students periodically about general course matters:

Why Did You Choose to Study Philosophy?



Favorite/Least Favorite Readings

