

Philosophy 6120: Philosophical Methods and Analysis

UNC Charlotte, Fall 2018

Section 091, Wednesdays 1:25–4:10pm, Cedar 2E

Instructor: Trevor Pearce Office Hours: by appointment (e-mail me)
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Description

This course is an introduction to the various methods of doing philosophy—not only to the analytical reading and writing skills you will need as a graduate student, but also to various philosophical traditions, each characterized by a certain approach to philosophical problems. Philosophy at UNCC is intertraditional, meaning that our students and faculty draw from many traditions of philosophy rather than focusing on a single approach. We will begin the class by examining three broad traditions: history of philosophy, analytic philosophy, and continental philosophy. We will then turn to a few of the ‘methods’ used by those working in these traditions: phenomenology, genealogy, and pragmatism. Finally, we will investigate a series of narrower approaches and sub-traditions that are prominent in our own department: applied ethics, feminism, Latin American philosophy, philosophy of disability, African philosophy, and critical philosophy of race. Throughout the class, you will get to know your fellow first-year graduate students as well as many faculty members here, since most classes will include a visit from a specialist in the relevant approach to philosophy.

Required Texts

All texts will be available on the course website at <https://canvas.uncc.edu/>.

Evaluation

10%	Attendance & Participation	
30%	Short Papers (300–500 words)	Weekly (beginning August 29)
20%	Presentation	December 5
40%	Book Review (1500 ± 200 words)	December 12

Your attendance grade is calculated by dividing attended classes by total classes. I automatically excuse one absence. Requests for additional excused absences due to medical emergencies, personal/family emergencies, military orders, or court orders should be made to the Dean of Students Office (<http://goo.gl/1NYBCY>) and not to me directly.

'Participation' means making comments and asking questions that reflect your having read and thought about the text under discussion. I will call on individual students following the small-group discussion or the summary write-up. **You must bring a copy of the relevant text to each class**, or you will not be able to effectively participate.

For each class session, we will read two types of texts: (1) either an overview of a particular approach to philosophy or a classic presentation of that approach, and (2) a recent exemplification of the approach. In your **weekly short papers**, submitted online through Canvas, you will explain whether and how the second of these exemplifies or parallels the approach of the first (giving textual evidence), which will of course include a brief summary of the approach itself.

For the **final book review**, you will select a book exemplifying one of the philosophical traditions/approaches discussed in the class, and write a standard academic review of it (i.e., one that could be published in an academic journal). We will discuss the form such reviews usually take in class, and I am happy to provide feedback on introductory paragraph or broader outlines if you allow me enough time. **The review must be submitted by 7pm on December 12 at the Canvas site.** Reviews that are too long or too short will be penalized a minimum of half a grade point. Late reviews will be penalized half a grade point per day.

A week before your book review is due, you will present an overview of it to the class—the length of this overview will be determined later in the semester, once the number of students is finalized.

Class Policies

The standards and requirements set forth in this syllabus may be modified at any time by the course instructor. Notice of such changes will be by announcement in class or by written or e-mail notice.

I will conduct this class in an atmosphere of mutual respect. I encourage your active participation in class discussions. Each of us may have strongly differing opinions on the various topics of class discussions. The conflict of ideas is encouraged and welcome. The orderly questioning of the ideas of others, including mine, is similarly welcome. However, I will exercise my responsibility to manage the discussions so that ideas and argument can proceed in an orderly fashion. You should expect that if your conduct during class discussions seriously disrupts the atmosphere of mutual respect I expect in this class, you will not be permitted to participate further.

All students and the instructor are expected to engage with each other respectfully. Unwelcome conduct directed toward another person based upon that person's actual or perceived race, actual or perceived gender, color, religion, age, national origin, ethnicity, disability, or veteran status, or for any other reason, may constitute a violation of University Policy 406, The Code of Student Responsibility. Any student suspected of engaging in such conduct will be referred to the Office of Student Conduct.

This course affirms people of all gender expressions and gender identities. If you prefer to be called a different name than what is indicated on the class roster, please let me know. Feel free to correct me on your preferred gender pronoun. If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me.

The use of cell phones, smart phones, or other mobile communication devices is disruptive, and is therefore prohibited during class except in emergencies. Students are permitted to use tablets and laptops during class for note-taking and other class-related work only.

University Policies

All students are required to read and abide by the Code of Student Academic Integrity. Violations of the Code of Student Academic Integrity, including plagiarism, will result in disciplinary action as provided in the Code. Definitions and examples of plagiarism are set forth in the Code. The Code is available from the Dean of Students Office or at <http://legal.uncc.edu/policies/up-407>.

As a condition of taking this course, all required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to VeriCite for the detection of plagiarism. All submitted papers will be included as source documents in the VeriCite reference database solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of such papers. No student papers will be submitted to VeriCite without a student's written consent and permission. If a student does not provide such written consent and permission, the instructor may: (i) require a short reflection paper on research methodology; (ii) require a draft bibliography prior to submission of the final paper; or (iii) require the cover page and first cited page of each reference source to be photocopied and submitted with the final paper.

Students who miss classes, examinations or other assignments because of a religious practice or belief must provide reasonable notice of the dates of religious observances on which they will be absent by submitting a Request for Religious Accommodation Form (<http://goo.gl/I1Ncv0>) to the instructor prior to August 31, 2018.

Students in this course seeking accommodations to disabilities must first consult with the Office of Disability Services (<http://ds.uncc.edu/>) and follow the instructions of that office for obtaining accommodations.

Reading Schedule

Aug 22 – Introduction

Dotson, "How Is This Paper Philosophy?" (2012)

Little Red Schoolhouse, "Introductions I & II" [how to frame an academic article]

Aug 29 – History of Philosophy

Rorty, "The Historiography of Philosophy: Four Genres" (1984)

Jeffers, "Anna Julia Cooper and the Black Gift Thesis" (2016)

Sep 5 – Analytic Philosophy

Beaney, "So What Is Analytic Philosophy?" (2017)

Bright, Malinsky, and Thompson, "Causally Interpreting Intersectionality Theory" (2016)

Sep 12 – Continental Philosophy

Critchley, "What Is Continental Philosophy?" (1997)

Mendieta, "The U.S. Border and the Political Ontology of 'Assassination Nation'" (2017)

Sep 19 – Phenomenology

Husserl, *Cartesian Meditations* (1931), Introduction & First Meditation
Ahmed, *Queer Phenomenology* (2006), Chapter 1 [Guest: Dr. Paquette]

Sep 26 – Genealogy

Foucault, “Nietzsche, Genealogy, History” (1971)
Camargo & Ried, “Towards a Genealogy of Pharmacological Practice” (2016) [Guest: Dr. Hull]

Oct 3 – Pragmatism

Jackman, “The Pragmatic Method” (2016)
Pappas, “John Dewey’s Radical Logic: The Function of the Qualitative” [Guest: Dr. McReynolds]

Oct 10 – Applied Ethics

Beauchamp, “On Eliminating the Distinction between Applied Ethics and Ethical Theory” (1984)
Kestigian & London, “Adversaries at the Bedside” (2016) [Guest: Dr. Rasmussen]

Oct 17 – NO CLASS**Oct 24 – Feminism**

hooks, “Eating the Other: Desire and Resistance” (1992)
McKittrick & Weheliye, “808s and Heartbreak” (2017) [Guest: Dr. James]

Oct 31 – Latin American Philosophy

Quijano, “Coloniality of Power, Eurocentrism, and Latin America” (2000)
Mendez, “Notes Toward a Decolonial Feminist Methodology” (2015) [Guest: Dr. Pitts]

Nov 7 – Philosophy of Disability

Barnes, “Disability, Minority, and Difference” (2009) [shortened class due to GROUP event]

Nov 14 – Africana Philosophy

Jaima, “Africana Philosophy as Prolegomenon to Any Future American Philosophy” (2018)
Mills, “Black Radical Kantianism” (2018) [Guest: Dr. Souffrant]

Nov 21 – NO CLASS [Thanksgiving Break]**Nov 28 – Critical Philosophy of Race**

Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk* (1903), Forethought & Chapter 1
Jones, “To Be Black, Excess, and Nonrecyclable” (2018) [Guest: Dr. Sullivan]
Bohrer, “Color-Blind Racism in Early Modernity” (2018) [optional]

Dec 5 – Student Presentations