

PHIL 6120: Philosophical Methods and Analysis

Dr. Trevor Pearce (tpearce6@uncc.edu)

Fall 2019 — Wednesdays 1:25–4:10pm — Winningham 107

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 UNC Charlotte 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 several historically situated ‘methods’ used by those working in and across these traditions: phenomenology, existentialism, genealogy, and pragmatism. Finally, we will investigate a series of approaches that are prominent in our own department: applied ethics, feminism, global justice, Latinx philosophy, and Africana philosophy. 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 at the course website on [Canvas](#).

Evaluation

- 10% — Attendance and Participation
- 30% — Short Papers (500–700 words), due **weekly beginning Aug 28**
- 20% — Presentation (10–15 minutes), due on **Nov 20 or Dec 4**
- 40% — Review Essay (2000 ± 500 words), due on **Dec 11**

Your attendance grade is calculated by dividing attended classes by total classes. **I automatically excuse one absence.** Requests for additional excused absences due to illness, medical emergencies, personal or family emergencies, military orders, or court orders should be made to [Student Assistance and Support Services](#) and not to me directly.

‘Participation’ means making comments and asking questions that reflect your having read and thought about the text under discussion. **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/or 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 **review essay**, you will select a book exemplifying one of the philosophical approaches to philosophy discussed in the class and write an “essay review” of it. This review should include a summary of the book, but more importantly it must discuss the approach used by the author, taking on stand on whether this approach was successful and explaining why or why not. I am happy to provide feedback on introductory paragraphs or outlines, if you allow me enough time. **The essay must be submitted by December 11** at 11:59pm through 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 or several weeks before your review essay is due (depending on your presentation date), you will present an overview of it to the class. The length of this **presentation** will be determined later in the semester, once the number of students is finalized.

All grading will be done anonymously when possible.

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 e-mail notice.

All students are required to read and abide by the [Code of Student Academic Integrity](#). Violations of the Code, including plagiarism, will result in disciplinary action as provided in the Code. Definitions and examples of plagiarism are set forth in the Code.

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.

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.

UNC Charlotte is committed to providing an environment free of all forms of discrimination and sexual harassment, including sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, and stalking. Please be aware that all faculty members are required to relay any information or reports of sexual misconduct they receive. This means that if you tell me about a situation involving sexual harassment, sexual assault, dating violence, domestic violence, or stalking, I must report the information to the university Title IX Coordinator. If you wish to speak to someone confidentially, there are several on-campus resources that are not subject to this mandatory reporting requirement, e.g., the [Center for Counseling and Psychological Services](#).

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.

Students who miss classes, examinations or other assignments because of a religious prac-

tice 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](#) to the instructor prior to August 30, 2019.

Students in this course seeking accommodations to disabilities must first consult with the [Office of Disability Services](#) and follow the instructions of that office for obtaining accommodations.

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.

Reading Schedule

Aug 21 – Introduction

- Kristie Dotson, “How Is This Paper Philosophy?” (2012)
- Little Red Schoolhouse, “Introductions I” and “Introductions II”

Aug 28 – History of Philosophy

- Richard Rorty, “The Historiography of Philosophy: Four Genres” (1984)
- Chike Jeffers, “Anna Julia Cooper and the Black Gift Thesis” (2016)

Sep 4 – Analytic Philosophy

- Michael Beaney, *Analytic Philosophy: A Very Short Introduction* (2017), Chapter 6
- Regina Rini, “Fake News and Partisan Epistemology” (2017)

Sep 11 – Continental Philosophy

- Simon Critchley, “What Is Continental Philosophy?” (1997)
- Eduardo Mendieta, “[...] The Political Ontology of ‘Assassination Nation’” (2017)

Sep 18 – Phenomenology

(Guest: Dr. Elisabeth Paquette)

- Edmund Husserl, *Ideas* (1913), §§27–37
- Sara Ahmed, *Queer Phenomenology* (2006), Chapter 1

Sep 25 – Existentialism

(Guest: Dr. Phillip McReynolds)

- Simone de Beauvoir, *The Ethics of Ambiguity* (1947), Part 1
- William Wilkerson, “Beauvoir and Merleau Ponty on Freedom [...]” (2017)

Oct 2 – Genealogy

(Guest: Dr. Gordon Hull)

- Michel Foucault, “Nietzsche, Genealogy, History” (1971)
- Sam Binkley, “Anti-Racism Beyond Empathy” (2016)

Oct 9 – Pragmatism

- John Dewey, “What Does Pragmatism Mean by Practical?” (1908)
- José-Antonio Orosco, *Toppling the Melting Pot* (2016), Chapter 2

Oct 16 – Applied Ethics

(Guest: Dr. Lisa Rasmussen)

- Tom Beauchamp, “[...] Applied Ethics and Ethical Theory” (1984)
- Lisa Rasmussen, “Clinical Ethics Consultants are Not ‘Ethics’ Experts [...]” (2016)

Oct 23 – Feminism

(Guest: Dr. Shannon Sullivan)

- María Lugones & Elizabeth Spelman, “Have We Got a Theory for You!” (1983)
- Camisha Russell, “On Black Women [...] and Imperial Harm” (2019)

Oct 30 – Global Justice

(Guest: Dr. Ruth Groenhout)

- Huw Williams & Carl Death, *Global Justice: The Basics* (2016), Chapter 2
- Carmen Gonzalez, “Environmental Justice [...] and the Global South” (2015)

Nov 6 – Latinx Philosophy

(Guest: Dr. Andrea Pitts)

- Gloria Anzaldúa, *Borderlands / La Frontera* (1987), Chapter 7
Gloria Anzaldúa, “Let Us Be the Healing of the Wound” (2002)
- Mariana Ortega, *In-Between* (2016), Chapter 1

Nov 13 – Africana Philosophy **1:00pm start time**

(Guest: Dr. Eddy Souffrant)

- Amir Jaima, “Africana Philosophy as Prolegomenon [...]” (2018)
- Elisabeth Paquette, GROUP talk [1:00–2:15pm]
- Charles Mills, “Black Radical Kantianism” (2018) [2:30–4:10pm]

Nov 20 – Student Presentations

Nov 27 – Thanksgiving Break **no class**

Dec 4 – Student Presentations