Philosophical Analysis—GWAR
(PHIL ANALYSIS-GWAR)
Phil 320
Syllabus

Meeting: Tu/Th 2:10 – 3:25 PM
Humanities 382

Instructor:
Email:
Office:
Office Hours:

Course Description:

Philosophical Analysis-GWAR teaches the analytic, interpretive and expressive written communication skills essential for philosophical study. Required for all majors. Prerequisites: ENG 214 and PHIL 110 (or equivalent to PHIL 110).

Goals and Prerequisites:

This course has two basic goals. First and foremost, we will learn how to write papers in this discipline. Although academic philosophers (and their students) are not generally aware of it, most of their written work falls in line with a number of broad conventions. Familiarizing ourselves with these conventions will go a long way toward preparing us to produced advance work in the field (and help us write more sophisticatedly on topics outside of philosophy as well). Second, we will learn the art of philosophical analysis, as modeled by current philosophers. Although their work may sometimes seem obscure, most in fact take great pains to make themselves understood, and they really can be understood—so long as one is familiar with the concepts they use and the (largely unstated) formulas and rules on which they rely.

This course has two prerequisites: a course in critical thinking and ENG 214. To qualify you must have received a grade of C- or better in both of these courses.

Teaching Methods:

This course is writing-intensive. We will have lectures on writing philosophical essays, workshop groups devoted to reviewing and revising drafts, and mandatory paper revisions in light of feedback from the instructor and your peers. Individual workshops are structured around different facets of paper writing and designed to help with composing and revising your papers.
You will submit rough drafts in advance of the workshop, which the instructor and a group of your peers will then discuss. In response to your rough and final drafts, your instructor will give a manageable number of point-by-point recommendations for improving your writing, which she or he will then consult when evaluating later written work.

This course combines lectures, discussions, and group work. Most class sessions begin with a lecture on an assigned article or take-home exercise. Lectures on articles begin with an examination of the common writing conventions adopted by the author and then proceed to discuss argumentative structure and content.

**Connection to Program Learning Outcomes:**

PHIL 320 is a “gateway” course for two degree programs: the Philosophy B.A. and the Philosophy and Religion B.A. As such, it is designed to provide you with the basic tools and techniques required for work in standard courses offered by the department of philosophy. By the time you finish this course you will have developed several reading strategies that can be applied even to advanced works on unfamiliar topics. You will also have a foundation in writing that will be of use not just in your philosophy and/or religion classes, but also in persuasive and analytic writing more generally.

**Assignments and Grading:**

As a paper-writing course, the largest share of the final grade (80%) will come from the papers we write throughout the semester. However, more than most philosophy courses, this course also consists of homework assignments (five total), which will constitute the other 20% of the final grade.

In addition, regular attendance and thoughtful participation in class discussion can enhance your final grade by up to two gradations. For example, a “B-” might become a “B” or “B+” if you have contributed productively to the class. Good participation includes such things as contributing regularly and constructively to class discussion, actively participating in group work and paper workshops, and contributing to discussions on iLearn.

There will be three papers total—two shorter essays and a term paper. The two shorter papers are due on September 15 and October 20. The term paper will be completed in stages, with printed copies being due in class on December 4 and 9, and a final draft due on iLearn on December 11. Anyone who is late in completing a paper at any stage will be penalized by one gradation per day from the final paper grade. For example, a “B” paper would be reduced to a “B-” if one day late and to a “C+” if two days late. Exceptions will be made for verified emergencies.
There will also be five take-home assignments. The short assignments will be worth three points apiece, and the longer ones worth six to nine points apiece. Late homework assignments will not be counted (except in cases of verified emergency).

The final grade for the course will be calculated by combining the letter grades you receive on the papers and homework assignments. These will be weighted as follows:

- Homework assignments: 20%
- First paper (3 pages): 20%
- Second paper (5 pages): 20%
- Term paper (10-12 pages): 40%

A final word about attendance. This course is structured in such a way that the later portions of the course depend heavily on the earlier portions. For example, it will be hard to complete the assignments on “setting up a problem” (weeks three and four) without having mastered the material on thesis statements (weeks one and two). Not unlike a course in language or mathematics, missing the earlier class sessions come at great cost to your work in the rest of the semester.

If you know that you will have to miss more than two class sessions, it is recommended that you not take the course this semester.

**Policy on Plagiarism:**

“Plagiarism occurs when a student misrepresents the work of another as his or her own. Plagiarism may consist of using the ideas, sentences, paragraphs, or the whole text of another without appropriate acknowledgement, but it also includes employing or allowing another person to write or substantially alter work that a student then submits as his or her own. Any assignment found to be plagiarized will be given an ‘F’ grade. All instances of plagiarism in the College of Humanities will be reported to the Dean of the College, and may be reported to the University Judicial Affairs Officer for further action.” (Quotation taken from “College of Humanities Plagiarism Resources,” [www.sfsu.edu/~collhum/plagiarism](http://www.sfsu.edu/~collhum/plagiarism))

All final drafts of papers will be checked for plagiarism using TurnItIn. Instructions for using TurnItIn are available on the course website on iLearn.

As a general rule of thumb, if you feel that your formulations of your ideas or the ideas themselves are adopted in any way from another work, you should mention that work in the body of your essay or in a footnote. Do not worry that crediting someone else will lead me to underestimate your own creativity or originality. I find that all of the most insightful ideas owe some debt to the work of others, and I will be able to see what is distinctive about your proposals and arguments even when you credit significant portions of them to someone else.
**Accommodations:**

Students with disabilities who need reasonable accommodations are encouraged to contact me. The Disability Programs and Resource Center (DPRC) is available to facilitate the reasonable accommodations process. The DPRC is located in the Student Service Building and can be reached by telephone (voice/TTY 415-338-2472) or by e-mail (dprc@sfsu.edu).

**Classroom Behavior:**

Please turn off your cell phones and refrain from electronic correspondence of any kind during lectures and discussions.

As in all SFSU courses, instructors and students are expected to conduct themselves in an honest and respectful way. When debating contentious ideas in class or on iLearn, please try to focus on the merits of the ideas being expressed and refrain from personal attacks. A philosophy course by its very nature requires us to entertain controversial ideas and arguments. Our ability to do this well depends crucially upon giving others the benefit of the doubt when thinking about their motives and intentions, even if we believe their opinions are fundamentally wrong or offensive. Therefore, criticisms like “I disagree with your view for reasons X, Y, and Z” are preferred to criticisms like “you’re daft” or “your view is imbecilic.”

**Communicating with the Professor:**

The best way to communicate with me is to talk to me after class or during office hours. There is a sign-up sheet for office hours outside my office door (Humanities 389), enabling you to reserve an appointment well ahead of time and avoid long waits. These are the preferred methods for discussing paper ideas, test-taking strategies, and for any other substantive reviews of written work or course materials. For more routine matters you may write me email (jtiwald@sfsu.edu). I will usually be able to respond within two days.

I use the course website on iLearn as my primary mode of communication about course matters, where I will post general announcements, important documents and reminders, and invite you to continue some of the discussions we were not able to finish during class. If you have not already acquired the habit of using iLearn, please explore the course website by logging in at

https://ilearn.sfsu.edu/login/index.php

Although the dates for the major written assignments in this syllabus are fixed, some of the reading assignments may be changed as the course proceeds. When changes are made I will provide paper copies of the changes and post them on iLearn as well.

**Required Texts:**

**Class Schedule:**

Basic structure of philosophy papers

26 Aug.  *Thesis*
   Workshop on thesis statements

28 Aug.  Singer, “Famine, Affluence, and Morality” (505-12)
   Thesis assignment due

Reconstructing arguments

2 Sept.  *Objections*
   Paper workshop on objections and responses

4 Sept.  Harris, “The Survival Lottery” (513-17)
   First argument analysis due

Setting up a problem

9 Sept.  *Stasis, destabilization*
   Thompson, “Killing and Letting Die” (590-99)
   Paper workshop on setting up a problem

11 Sept.  *Review for first paper* (do not miss this day of class)
   Review Singer’s “Famine, Affluence, and Morality” (505-12)
   Problem assignment due

15 Sept.  (Monday) First paper due by noon (on *iLearn*)

Warrants and valid arguments

16 Sept.  *Introduction to Metaethics*
   Mackie, “The Subjectivity of Values” (25-35)
18 Sept. Craig and Sinnott-Armstrong, “God and Objective Morality: A Debate” (248-52) 
Adams, “A New Divine Command Theory” (242-47)

23 Sept. Harman, “Ethics and Observation” (36-40) 
Smith, “Realism” (72-76) 
**Second argument analysis due**

25 Sept. Lenman, “Moral Naturalism” (linked on *iLearn*)

**Third argument analysis due**

**Writing essays on the history of philosophy**

2 Oct. Selections from Aristotle’s *Nicomachean Ethics* (on *iLearn*)

7 Oct. Ackrill, “Aristotle on Eudaimonia” (on *iLearn*)

9 Oct. Nagel, “Aristotle on Eudaimonia” (on *iLearn*)

14 Oct. *Prepare for history of philosophy papers* 
Kraut, “Aristotle’s Ethics” (linked on *iLearn*)

16 Oct. **Workshop on complete rough draft** 
**History of philosophy paper: rough draft due (two printed copies)**

**Preparing for term papers: consequentialism**

20 Oct. (Monday) **History of philosophy paper due by noon (on *iLearn*)**


**Paper workshop on objections and responses**

28 Oct. Hooker, “Rule-Consequentialism” (482-95)

30 Oct. Smart, “Extreme and Restricted Utilitarianism” (475-81)

**Preparing for term papers: deontology**

4 Nov. Kant, “Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals” (525-30 and 537)
6 Nov.  O’Neill, “Kantian Approaches to Some Famine Problems” (553-64)

11 Nov.  Veteran’s Day—no class


Preparing for term papers: particularism

18 Nov.  Dancy, “An Unprincipled Morality” (771-74)
          Little, “On Knowing the ‘Why’” (775-84)


25 Nov.  Fall Recess—no class

27 Nov.  Fall Recess—no class


4 Dec.    Workshop on complete rough draft
          Term paper: rough draft due (two printed copies)

Workshopping term papers

9 Dec.    Workshop on revised draft
          Term paper: complete draft due (one printed copy)

11 Dec.   Term paper: final draft due by noon (on iLearn)