

Dear Philosophy Major

In the spring quarter, I will offer Honors Seminar (Phl 485; T,R 12.00-13.50). The course focuses on philosophical research, writing, and other authentic tasks of philosophers. There are no planned lectures on any philosophical topics. Instead, the content of the course and classroom activities are driven by students' research projects. Honors status is **not** a prerequisite for taking the class and the course **satisfies** philosophy majors' requirements at the senior, 400-level.

Here is the organization & schedule of the class:

1st Stage: Choice of Central Source(s) and [rough] Topic.

This stage starts now. Before the course, you are expected to have a topic of interest and source(s) for your topic. You should not sign up for the course if you do not have an area of specific research interest in philosophy together with some rough figure/author/source in mind, one you want to study on the topic. Of course, as is always the case with research, your exact topic (research question or issue) and main sources can evolve but this can happen through a rational progression only if you have a general research interest with some sources in mind right now - or soon hereafter. With respect to topics, all traditional areas of philosophy on which there exists some reasonable level of expertise among the Department's faculty are okay. All sources published through standard peer-review are okay. Contact me, if in doubt.



Also, you must **provide a central source of roughly 20 pages (an article, selections from a couple, or parts of a book) to me quickly, after the beginning of the course.** Since there are no limits on topics apart from traditional areas of philosophy, I may need to familiarize myself with your area of interest & source(s). Also, everyone in the class will read your choice of a central source for purposes of collective discussion later in the class (see 4 below).



2nd Stage, writing.

research.



Week 1: Searches, research, and structured
Exploration and summary of central aspects of philosophical writing and efficient search &

3rd Stage, Weeks 2-5: Independent Research.

No classes scheduled for this period. Students work on their projects on their own and/or through the assistance of the instructor, and/or faculty mentor. Also, provide a copy of your end.



for this period. Students work on their own and/or through the assistance of the and/or faculty mentor. Also, provide a central source to me by the 2nd week

4th Stage, Week 5-6: Exposition and Presentation of the [essential idea(s), arguments, and issues in the] central source.

Each student provides a summary exposition of their main source (not to exceed 3 single spaced pages) and a sketch of the main philosophical positions or larger context relevant for it, the topic (1 page max). This provides material for a 30-50 minute in-class collective discussion of each student's project and its progress. It is carried out in standard "work-in-progress" style with the goal

of facilitating the progress of the project: First, exact question or issue on the reflecting on how the research the literature, its "point" (e.g., ambiguity, synthesize options, etc.). In other words, reflecting on the exact conclusion of the work, the "answer" to the question/issue, Third, deciding on a feasible plan for future-steps in research. Fourth, and finally, settling on an effective structure for the paper.



of facilitating the articulating an topic. Second, might contribute to critique, articulate an offer alternatives,

But note that all this further work-in-progress is **premised** on a *faithful exposition of your source* and its relevance or "location in philosophical space," the broader topic. That is the main accomplishment for the 4th stage.

5th Stage, Weeks 6-10: Independent Research.

No classes but independent exposition on the basis of 4th project and especially those with its "point" or



work on the project: revise stage feedback and advance part(s) most directly concerned conclusion.

6th Stage, Weeks 10-11: Draft and Peer-review.

A draft that can be read & commented by others is due by the end of the 10th week. Peer-review sessions of approximately 50 minutes will take place in author point and, Students are paired for purposes of the peer-review.



class during week 11. During these, first, the gives a quick summary of the paper & main (not to exceed 10 min); second, the primary peer commentator addresses it (not to exceed 20 min) third, the paper is discussed collectively.

7th Stage, Week 11: Final Version.

A final revised version of the paper is due Friday of Finals week. It must also address the central issues that emerged at stage 6.



Incompletes can be granted but only if progress in the class through stages 4-6 has been satisfactory.

For further info, please contact Tom Seppalainen: seppalt@pdx.edu 503-725-3519