

Phil 115 Philosophical Methods Seminar

Syllabus

Winter 2019

MWF 1:00-1:50 pm

Humanities and Social Science Building

Room 8025

Andy Lamey

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Office: HSS 7017

Office hours: M 5:00-6:00 pm / W 2:00-3:00 pm

1. Overview

This course is designed for majors to hone their skills in constructing, evaluating and presenting philosophical arguments. Students will refine their ability to speak and write about such arguments in a clear and careful way. The small seminar setting will provide an ideal opportunity to practice all of the above. The format of each class will be discussion of the views and arguments expressed in the readings assigned for that day, with everyone contributing to constructive class discussions.

Our means of honing our skills will be through a close examination of debates set off by Derek Parfit in his philosophical masterpiece, *Reasons and Persons*. Are some ethical theories self-defeating? What is the relevance of the Prisoner's dilemma for morality? What is the relationship between rationality and time? What makes someone the same person through time? What is the non-identity problem and is it solvable? These are some of the questions we will ask in this seminar, all of which are addressed in Parfit's highly influential book, which has set the agenda for philosophical inquiry in ethics, personal identity and beyond.

2. Assessment

1. Four to six weekly short two-three page papers responding to the readings, from week two to week eight. Your grade will be based on the top four grades, so you can turn in all six and use the top four, or just turn in four (20%).

2. One term paper (about 10-15 pages), preceded by a prospectus that includes the main ideas and a bibliography (1-2 pages). I will provide feedback on the prospectus before you get started on the paper (10% + 35% = 45%).

Prospectus due: Monday March 4 start of class (week nine).

Term-paper due: Friday, March 22, 5:00 pm (exam week).

(3) Attendance and participation (15%). If you have a valid excuse and cannot make it to class, you need to let me know as soon as you can.

(4) Two oral presentations (5% + 15% = 20%).

3. Readings and Schedule

There is one required textbook, which will be available at the bookstore and also on reserve at the library:

Parfit, Derek. *Reasons and Persons* Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984.

We will also read a handful of articles, all of which will be available on TritonEd.

Week I Indirectly Self-defeating Theories

Mon Jan. 7: Introduction to Phil 115: No Reading

Wed: *Reasons and Persons*, Appendix I: 493-502; 3-24.

Fri: *Reasons and Persons*, 24-51.

Week II Self-defeating Theories Cont. and Rationality and Time

Mon Jan. 14: *Reasons and Persons*, 53-78.

Wed: *Reasons and Persons*, 78-110.

Fri: *Reasons and Persons*, 111-36.

Week III Rationality and Time

Mon Jan. 21: No class

Wed: David Gauthier. Rationality and the Rational Aim. *Reading Parfit*, 24-41.

Fri: *Reasons and Persons*, 137-65.

Week IV Rationality and Time and Personal Identity

Mon Jan. 28: *Reasons and Persons*, 165-91.

Wed: *Reasons and Persons*, 191-99; And Appendixes B and C, 461-68.

Fri: *Reasons and Persons*, 199-227.

Week V Personal Identity

Mon Feb. 4: *Reasons and Persons*, 227-253.

Wed: *Reasons and Persons*, 253-82.

Fri: *Reasons and Persons*, 282-302 AND Appendixes D and E, 468-79.

Week VI Personal Identity and Future Generations

Mon Feb. 11: *Reasons and Persons*, 302-330.

Wed: *Reasons and Persons*, 330-357.

Fri: TBD (catch-up day).

Week VII Personal Identity and Future Generations

Mon Feb. 18: No class.

Wed: Judith Jarvis Thomson. People and Their Bodies. *Reading Parfit*, 202-229.

Fri: *Reasons and Persons*, 357-77 AND Appendix F and G, 480-90.

Week VIII Future Generations

Mon Feb. 25: *Reasons and Persons*, 377-406.

Wed: *Reasons and Persons*, 406-32 AND Appendix H, 490-93.

Fri: Seana Valentine Shiffrin. Wrongful Life, Procreative Responsibility and The Significance of Harm. *Legal Theory* 5/2 (1999): 117-148.

Weeks IX and X Presentations

No readings (class presentations)

Prospectus due: Monday March 4, start of class (week nine).

Term-paper due: Friday. March 22, 5:00 pm (exam week).

4. General Information

4a Office Hours

I keep both normal and electronic office hours. Drop by in person or contact me via Skype (ID: andy_lamey). I am also available immediately after class or by appointment. I am always happy to discuss any aspect of this course with you.

4b Email Policy

I am happy to reply to emails sent from UCSD email addresses. I do not reply to emails from non-UCSD addresses. Please note that there are three subjects I do not discuss by email, even if they are sent from a UCSD account. These are:

- a) Requests for information about an exam that arrive in the 24-hour period immediately preceding the exam.
- b) Requests to adjust your final class grade. If you have an issue with your grade please make an appointment to discuss it during my office hour next quarter.
- c) Information that can be found in the syllabus.

4c Late Work

For all assignments over 1,000 words handed in after the due date and without an extension, a five percent penalty applies for the first day of the missed deadline. After that, a subsequent penalty of two percent per day will be applied for the next thirteen calendar days after the due date (including Saturdays and Sundays). No assignment can be accepted after more than fourteen calendar days except in exceptional circumstances and in consultation with your professor. Assignments that are handed in late without an extension will be graded and returned after those that were completed on time and will not receive comments.

A different policy will apply to short assignments, to be outlined in class.

4d Accommodation for Disability

Students requesting accommodations for this course due to a disability must provide a current Authorization for Accommodation (AFA) letter issued by the Office for Students with Disabilities (OSD) which is located in University Center 202 behind Center Hall. Students are required to present their AFA letters to Faculty (please make arrangements to contact me privately) and to the OSD Liaison in the department in advance so that accommodations may be arranged. Contact the OSD for further information: 858.534.4382 (phone), osd@ucsd.edu (email), disabilities.ucsd.edu (web)

4e Academic Integrity

Integrity of scholarship is essential for an academic community. The University expects that both faculty and students will honor this principle and in so doing protect the validity of University intellectual work. For students, this means that all academic work will be done by the individual to whom it is assigned, without unauthorized aid of any kind. More information about UCSD's policy on academic integrity is available at <http://senate.ucsd.edu/Operating-Procedures/Senate-Manual/appendices/2>

4j Technology in the Classroom

Please note that until further notice, laptops and tablets are not permitted in class.