

# Phil 115 Philosophical Methods Seminar: Grounding

Quarter: Fall 2016  
Room: H&SS 1106A  
Times: T-Th 11:00-12:20  
Tel: (858) 822-0082

Professor: Eric Watkins  
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This course is designed for majors to develop their skills in understanding, constructing, evaluating, presenting, and discussing philosophical arguments and writing about them in clear and careful ways. The small seminar format will offer occasions for all of these activities in ample measure. Every student must come to class prepared to discuss the assigned reading in detail. Students will write a paper every week for the first six weeks. Two of these papers will be revised and resubmitted. Students will also write a substantive term paper.

The topic of the seminar is what is meant by phrases such as “in virtue of” “because of”, “results in” or “grounding”. We will pursue the notion both in general and in particular cases.

## Reading Schedule (subject to change):

Th Sept. 22	Introduction	
T Sept. 27	Plato, <i>Euthyphro</i>	
Th Sept. 29	Kant, <i>Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals</i> , Section 1 (selections)	Paper 1
T Oct. 4	Leibniz, “The New System of Nature” (selections)	
Th Oct. 6	Wertheimer, “Conditions”	Paper 2
T Oct. 11	Schaffer, “What Grounds What”	
Th Oct. 13	Audi, “Grounding: Towards a Theory of the In-Virtue-of-Relation”	Paper 3
T Oct. 18	Berker, “The Unity of Grounding” (sections 1-4)	
Th Oct. 20	Ney, “Grounding in the Philosophy of Mind: A Defense”	Paper 4
T Oct. 25	Chisholm, “The Problem of the Criterion”	
Th Oct. 27	Frankfurt, “Alternate Possibilities and Moral Responsibility”	Paper 5
T Nov. 1	Loewer, “Humean Supervenience”	
Th Nov. 3	Armstrong, <i>What is a Law of Nature?</i> (chaps. 2-4)	Paper 6
T Nov. 8	To be determined [possibly, Ross, <i>The Right and the Good</i> , ch. 2]	
Th Nov. 10	To be determined [possibly, Della Rocca, “Violations of the Principle of Sufficient Reason”]	
T Nov. 15	To be determined [possibly, Wilson, “No Work for a Theory of Grounding”]	
Th Nov. 17	To be determined [possibly, Schaffer, “Ground Rules: Reply to Wilson” or second half of Berker]	
T Nov. 22	Class Presentations	
Th Oct. 6	Thanksgiving	
T Nov. 29	Class Presentations	
Th Dec. 1	Class Presentations	
Th Dec. 8		Term paper

## Texts:

All readings on the syllabus will be made available electronically.

## Course Requirements:

- I. Six short (2-3 page) papers (10% each, dropping the lowest one) – Two papers will be revised and resubmitted.
- II. One term paper (8-10 pages) (30%) – Students will have the opportunity to revise (after I provide comments).
- III. Class presentation (10%) – Each student will have one ten-minute presentation, with ten minutes of discussion.
- IV. Class Participation (10%) – Students should contribute to *every* class discussion, and be an “expert” four times.

## Other Information:

1. Honor Code. The Academic Honor Code must be observed in this course.
2. If accommodations are needed for a disability or religious reasons, please notify me during the first class period or as soon as possible.