

Phil 115 Philosophical Methods Seminar

Syllabus
Winter 2016
Tu-Th 12:30-1:50 pm
Humanities and Social Science Building
Room 7077

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Office Hours: Th. 2:00-4:00 pm

1. Overview

This course is designed for majors to hone their skills in understanding, constructing, evaluating, presenting, and discussing philosophical arguments and writing about them in a clear and careful way. The small seminar setting will provide an ideal opportunity to practice in 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 philosophical skills will be through a close examination of G.A. Cohen's 2008 book, *Rescuing Justice in Equality*, in which Cohen takes up central issues in political philosophy, particularly as they concern distributive justice. Much of Cohen's discussion takes the form of a critique of John Rawls, arguably the most influential political philosophy of the 20th century. To prepare ourselves for understanding Cohen we will therefore begin by reading one of Rawls's later works, *Justice as Fairness: A Restatement* (2001).

2. Assessment

1. Weekly short two-three page papers responding to the readings, from week two to week eight. Your grade will be based on the top five grades, so you can turn in all seven and use the top five, or just turn in five (25%).

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: Tues. March 1, start of class.

Term-paper due: Thurs. March 17, 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% + 10% = 15%).

3. Readings and Schedule

This class will consist of a close reading of the following two texts:

John Rawls, *Justice as Fairness: A Restatement* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2001)

G. A. Cohen, *Rescuing Justice and Equality* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2008)

Both books are available at the UCSD bookstore.

Week One: Course Intro and Rawls

Tues. Jan 5. Introduction to Phil 115. No reading.

Thurs. Jan 7. *Justice as Fairness*, pp. xi-xiii + 1-38.

Week Two: Rawls

Tues. Jan 12. *Justice as Fairness*, pp. 39-79.

Thurs. Jan 14. *Justice as Fairness*, pp. 80-119.

Week Three: Rawls

Tues. Jan 19. *Justice as Fairness*, pp. 120-161.

Thurs. Jan 21. *Justice as Fairness*, pp. 162-202.

Week Four: Cohen

Tues. Jan 26. *Rescuing Justice and Equality*, pp. 1-47.

Thurs. Jan 28. *Rescuing Justice and Equality*, pp. 48-86.

Week Five: Cohen

Tues. Feb. 2. *Rescuing Justice and Equality*, pp. 87-115.

Thurs. Feb. 4. *Rescuing Justice and Equality*, pp. 116-150.

Week Six: Cohen

Tues. Feb. 9. *Rescuing Justice and Equality*, pp. 151-180.

Thurs. Feb. 11. *Rescuing Justice and Equality*, pp. 181-225.

Week Seven: Cohen

Tues. Feb. 16. *Rescuing Justice and Equality*, pp. 229-273.

Thurs. Feb. 18. *Rescuing Justice and Equality*, pp. 274-314.

Week Eight: Cohen

Tues. Feb. 23. *Rescuing Justice and Equality*, pp. 315-358.

Thurs. Feb. 25. *Rescuing Justice and Equality*, pp. 359-397.

Week Nine: Cohen

Tues. March 1. *Rescuing Justice and Equality*, pp. 398-412.

Thurs. March 3. Presentations. No Reading.

Prospectus due: Tues. March 1, start of class.

Week Ten: Cohen

Tues. March 8. Presentations. No Reading.

Thurs. March 10. Presentations. No Reading.

Term-paper due: Thurs. March 17, 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 two subjects I do not discuss by email, even if they are sent from a UCSD account. These are:

- a) Requests for information about the 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.

4c Late Work

For all assignments 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.

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.