

Philosophy 700: Proseminar

Fall, 2018

Tuesday 4:00-6:30 in South College E301

Course website: <http://blogs.umass.edu/bricker/teaching/phil-700-proseminar/>

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South College E311

Mon.-Wed. 1:15-2:15, and by appt.

### Course Description:

The proseminar is designed to develop the skills needed for doing graduate-level work in philosophy. These include: presenting, analyzing, and evaluating arguments; interpreting philosophical texts; and communicating philosophical ideas both in written and oral form. It is also designed to familiarize you with key themes and texts in a range of areas of philosophy. This semester we focus on key debates in philosophy of language, philosophy of science, and epistemology. The proseminar is required for, but only open to, first-year graduate students in philosophy.

### Course Requirements:

(1) *Seminar Presentations*. You will give four presentations during the semester, two in the first half and two in the second half. These presentations may focus on answering one of the seminar questions on the readings that will be distributed in advance. Or they may be on a topic or issue from the readings of your own choice, as long as you clear that in advance. (The two presenters in a given week must present on different questions or topics.) Each presentation should last for 20-30 minutes, with discussion to follow. You must prepare either a handout or PowerPoint. (12.5% each; 50% total)

(2) *Midterm paper* (due Nov. 2). 8-12 pages, typically an expansion of a presentation or a weekly response paper from the first half of the course. (25%)

(3) *Final paper* (due Dec. 21). 8-12 pages, typically an expansion of a presentation or a weekly response paper from the second half of the course. (25%)

(4) *Participation and weekly response papers*. You are expected to come to each class session having done all the readings carefully, and prepared to discuss them in detail. To facilitate this, you should give careful consideration to each of the seminar questions that will be distributed in advance. For the weeks you are *not* presenting, you should write a short paper, 500 words maximum, that either responds to one of the seminar questions or discusses some other issue of your choice raised by the readings. You must do at least six of these short papers. (These papers will be read by both instructors, but will not be graded. Strong class participation and weekly response papers, however, may boost your grade in borderline cases.)

## Course Schedule (tentative):

Sept. 4: Course Introduction.

Sept. 11: Frege, "The Thought"; Frege, "On Sense and Reference", Frege, "Function and Concept" (optional).

Sept. 18: Russell, "On Denoting"; Strawson, "On Referring"; Russell, "Descriptions" (optional).

Sept. 25: Kripke, *Naming and Necessity* (Lectures 1 and 2); Putnam, "The Meaning of Meaning" (optional).

Oct. 2: Kaplan, "Demonstratives" (part); Lewis, "Index, Context, and Content"; Stalnaker, "Assertion".

Oct 9: Monday schedule; **no class**.

Oct 16: Donnellan, "Reference and Definite Descriptions"; Kripke, "Speaker Reference and Semantic Reference"; Grice, "Meaning" (optional).

Oct 23: Ayer, *Language, Truth, and Logic* (part); Carnap, "Testability and Meaning" (part); Hempel, "Problems and Changes in the Empiricist Criterion of Meaning".

Oct 30: Bridgman, "The Operational Character of Scientific Concepts"; Block and Dworkin, "IQ, Heritability and Inequality: Part I"; Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, Ch. IX.

Nov. 2: **Midterm Paper Due**.

Nov. 6: Boyd, "On the Current Status of Scientific Realism"; Laudan, "A Confutation of Convergent Realism"; Cartwright, *How the Laws of Physics Lie*, selections.

Nov. 13: Descartes, *Meditations I, II, VI*; Chisholm, *Theory of Knowledge*, selections; Stroud, "Understanding Human Knowledge in General"

Nov. 20: Thanksgiving break; **no class**.

Nov. 27: Quine, "Two Dogmas of Empiricism," section 6; Bonjour, *The Structure of Empirical Knowledge*, selections.

Dec. 4: Goodman, *Fact, Fiction and Forecast*, "The New Riddle of Induction"; Quine, "Natural Kinds"; Quine, "Epistemology Naturalized"

Dec. 11: Goldman, "A Causal Theory of Knowledge"; Goldman, "Discrimination and Perceptual Knowledge"; Goldman, "What is Justified Belief?"

Dec. 21: **Final Paper Due**.