



I. Course Description:

The proseminar is for all and only UC San Diego first year philosophy graduate students. Instead of having a single topic, it covers a wide range of central issues in mainstream philosophy. A UC San Diego Philosophy faculty member will visit the class each week to provide an expert's perspective on each topic. The goals of the seminar are to provide familiarity with a range of important papers in central areas, to introduce new students to the faculty (and vice versa), and to help students hone their philosophical reading, writing, presentation, and thinking skills as they begin their graduate work in the subject.

II. Texts:

All texts will be made available electronically.

III. Requirements:

Five short papers (65%): Each class other than the first you may submit by email to me, by midnight the night before class, a short (600-1000 word) paper focussed on clarifying the main thesis and central argument(s) of one of the assigned articles (your choice which). The main goals here are accuracy and clarity: everything in the paper and its organization needs to be as lucid as possible. You need to turn in five of the possible nine, but may write more than five papers and drop your lowest grades if you like.

For some helpful tips on writing philosophy papers, I recommend:

<http://www.jimpryor.net/teaching/guidelines/writing.html> 

[\(http://www.jimpryor.net/teaching/guidelines/writing.html\)](http://www.jimpryor.net/teaching/guidelines/writing.html)

Class Presentation (20%): Each student will be responsible for two 15-minute presentations. A sign-up sheet will be distributed the first day of class. The purpose of the presentation is much the same as the purpose of the short paper: to summarize, clarify, and suggest further thoughts on an assigned reading. In doing so, you should provide a handout. Although time spent presenting will be no longer than 15 minutes, the presentation will last longer since it will be followed by a Q&A period in which you will guide the discussion. Each class will begin with a presentation from one or two students on the assigned readings. After one hour, we will invite the faculty speaker to guide the remainder of the seminar.

Class Participation (15%): One of the most important goals of the proseminar is to become better at

the difficult, and not innately endowed, skill of talking about philosophy together. This is an essential skill without which one cannot become a philosopher. Thus, everyone is strongly encouraged (required as part of the grade!) to get involved in the back and forth of philosophical discussion. The good news is that participation can take many forms, including the valuable asking of clarificatory questions, supplementing or further articulating a piece of reasoning under consideration, posing a challenge to a conclusion or a move in the reasoning, and so on. Quantity is not the goal. At the same time, you should not feel afraid to try something out, even if it doesn't pan out in the end. Our collective goal will be to create a comfortable environment in which everyone productively contributes to the conversation.

IV Schedule (subject to change):

| date | faculty guest | topics | readings | student presenters |
|--------------------------------|----------------------|------------------------------------|---|---------------------------|
| 3 October | none | intro | n/a | n/a |
| 10 October | Chris Shields | anomalous monism | Davidson, "Mental events"; Kim, "Can supervenience and "non-strict laws" save anomalous monism?" | Daria |
| 17 October | Gila Sher | Quine's First Epistemic Revolution | Quine, "Two Dogmas"; Sher, "Is there a place for philosophy in Quine's theory?" | Patricio |
| 24 October | David Brink | moral deference | McGrath, "Skepticism about moral expertise as a puzzle for moral realism"; Sliwa, "In defense of moral testimony"; Westlund, "Selflessness and responsibility for self" | Moraima, Esraa |
| 31 October (costumes optional) | David Danks | causation | Hall, "Two concepts of causation"; Schaffer, "Contrastive causation" | Joe |
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| 7 November | Dana Nelkin | situationism, virtue, and responsibility | Doris, <i>Lack of Character</i> ch2-3; Doris, <i>Talking to Ourselves</i> (3p excerpt); Sartorio, "Situations and Responsiveness to Reasons" | Esraa, Daria |
| 14 November | Jonathan Cohen | pragmatics | Grice, "Logic and conversation"; Cohen and Kehler, "Conversational eliciture" | Joe |
| 21 November | Craig Callender | science and values | Rudner, "The scientist qua scientist makes value judgments"; Callender, "When is it okay to ban research (funding)?" | Amir |
| 28 November | Karen Kovaka | what is the appropriate role of science in policy-making? | Havstad and Brown, "The Disconnect Problem, Scientific Authority, and Climate Policy" | Amir, Moraima |
| 5 December | Kerry McKenzie | epistemology of revisionary metaphysics | Kriegel, "The epistemological challenge of revisionary metaphysics" | Patricio |

Course Summary:

Date

Details

Due