University of Kansas, Spring 2010
Philosophy 800: Tutorial
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Tutorial: Syllabus

Description: The purpose of this course is to provide, as stated in KU's graduate catalog, "[i]ntensive supervised training in the techniques of research." It does so by focusing on reading comprehension and textual analysis, oral comment and discussion, expository and interpretive writing, and critical writing. We'll work on developing these skills by studying texts concerning five important issues in contemporary philosophy and discussing papers written by members of the class.

Class schedule: Fridays, 2:30–4:20, in 3097 Wescoe Hall (enrollment code 60611)

Meeting with me and contacting me:

The location of my office is 3071 Wescoe Hall. I will have office hours on Tuesdays at 2:00–2:50 and Fridays at 1:00–1:50, but you should feel free to come by my office at any time. I anticipate being in and around my office most Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Fridays; and although in rare cases I may have to ask you to come back at another time, in general I will be happy to speak to you at your convenience. You are also quite welcome to make an appointment with me, by e-mailing me at the address given above. Please note that I tend to use e-mail only for scheduling appointments and handling logistical matters, not for substantive discussions of course material.

Requirements/grading:

At the end of the course, I'll give you a grade between A and F. The grades A, B, C, and D are given specific interpretations in KU's University Senate Rules and Regulations, which I adhere to. Article 2 of those rules and regulations—"Academic Work and Its Evaluation"—contains a section called "The Grading System" (at https://documents.ku.edu/policies/governance/USRR.htm#art2sect2), which says that an A should be given for achievement of outstanding quality, a B for achievement of high quality, a C for achievement of acceptable quality, and a D for achievement that is minimally passing, but of less than acceptable quality.

What letter grade I give you will depend on the final average of the scores you get on the various assignments in the course (which I'll outline below). I'll use the following scale to convert your final average to a letter grade. (For an explanation of how I arrived at these numbers, see the "Plus/Minus Grading" document on my web site.)

final average	letter grade
93.50 and above	A
90.00 through 93.49	A–
86.50 through 89.99	B+
83.50 through 86.49	B
80.00 through 83.49	B–
76.50 through 79.99	C+
73.50 through 76.49	C
70.00 through 73.49	C–
66.50 through 69.99	D+
63.50 through 66.49	D
60.00 through 63.49	D–
59.99 and below	F

Many (if not all) assignments will be graded numerically, rather than with letter grades, and you can also use this scale to interpret the numerical scores you get in this course during the semester.

Here are the factors that will determine your overall grade, and their weights (in percentages):

	assignment	weight (percent)
1	summary 1	4
2	summary 2	4
3	summary 3	4
4	summary 4	4
5	summary 5	4
6	argumentative paper 1, version 1	7
7	argumentative paper 1, version 2	7
8	argumentative paper 2, version 1	7
9	argumentative paper 2, version 2	7
10	argumentative paper 3, version 1	7
11	argumentative paper 3, version 2	7
12	critique of an argumentative paper	4
13	independent paper, version 1	10
14	independent paper, version 2	10
15	critique of an independent paper	6
16	attendance and participation	8
total		100

Further information about these assignments will be provided as the course progresses, but here are the basic requirements:

Summary assignments: Each of your summaries should be not more than 1,000 words long. It should simply describe, as thoroughly as this very strict length limitation allows, the view in question. (For each unit, "[t]he view in question" is specified below, in the schedule.) Note that when you summarize a work, you should not be overly influenced by its internal organization. For example, if a work (such as a journal article) has *s* sections, your summary should not necessarily—indeed, probably should not—be just a concatenation of *s* summaries of the respective sections. In fact, a good summary of such a work might ignore one of the *s* sections because it just isn't important enough to be mentioned in the limited number of words within which the summary has to be written.

Argumentative papers: Each of your argumentative papers should be not more than 1,500 words long. In order to establish anything convincingly in such little space, it should be tightly focused—probably on a single narrow claim—rather than ranging widely over the material under discussion.

Independent paper: Your independent paper should be not more than 3,000 words long, and should be the kind of thing a responsible philosopher might submit for presentation at a professional conference or for publication in a reputable journal: it should offer an original contribution to the discussion of some important philosophical issue or text. The topic of your paper can be related to one of the five units of part I of the course, or can be unrelated, and of your own choosing, within certain bounds. You are welcome to talk to me at any point in the semester about your plans for this paper. I encourage you to make your paper the culmination of a semester of gradual progress, rather than a large burden to be discharged under duress at the end.

A note on word counts: How word counts are computed depends on the circumstances. For a journal concerned about the cost of materials (e.g., paper and ink), word counts might include every single word. In contrast, our purposes have to do with establishing a level playing field for everyone in the class to express his or her ideas within the same constraints as everyone else. So, word counts do not have to include identifying text you should put at the beginning of everything you write for this course (see "Formatting your document," below), or any bibliography which you might have occasion to put at the end of a paper. But they must include every word directly contributing to the content of the paper—including, for example, a paper's title, section titles (if applicable), regular text (of course), and footnote text. You do not have to have a bibliography—you can put citations in footnotes if you want—but if you are pressed for space then you can move the details of citations to a bibliography and not be "charged" for the words that appear there.

A note on word limits: For any given assignment, if *w* is the word limit and *n* is the number of words in your paper, and *n* > *w*, then your paper's score will be reduced by $100 \times \frac{n-w}{w}$ points, or (simplified) $\frac{100n}{w} - 100$ points.

Formatting your document: At the beginning of every paper, include at least the following identifying information: your name, the date when you are turning in the document, and its word count.

Stylistic expectations: Every piece of written work you turn in should be a finished, polished piece of philosophical writing. Additionally, it should be written as if intended for the general philosophical reader, not just for me or the members of this class.

Turning in work: Every piece of written work you turn in should be submitted by e-mail. If it is to be discussed in class, it should be e-mailed to the e-mail distribution list mentioned below. Otherwise, it should just be e-mailed to me.

Formatting your files: The files you send should be in .doc format—that is, the format associated with Microsoft Word, versions 97 through 2003. If you use Word 2007, please take care to use the .doc format rather than the .docx format (the format associated with Word 2007) for work that you turn in. Note that merely changing a filename extension (from, e.g., .docx or .wpd) will not change the format of the file itself. Versions of Word capable of saving files in the .doc format are available on most, if not all, of the computers in KU's computer labs, and many other word processors than Word are also capable of saving files in the .doc format.

Deadlines: Each of your summaries, version 1 of each of your argumentative papers, and version 1 of your independent paper will be associated with specific class sessions, as indicated below. In every case, you must e-mail your paper (to the class list or to me, as appropriate) by 6 a.m. on the immediately preceding Thursday. This is not meant to encourage a lot of middle-of-the-night paper writing, but is simply intended to give paper writers as much time to do their work as possible, consistent with their classmates' and my having virtually all of Thursday to read it. This deadline will be strictly enforced: late papers' scores will be reduced by 25 percentage points for each full or partial day of lateness (with each "day" starting at 6 a.m.).

Meetings about version 1 of papers: Whenever you e-mail me version 1 of an argumentative paper or version 1 of your independent paper (i.e., version 1 of any paper of which there will be a version 2), please suggest some times on the following Monday, Tuesday, and/or Wednesday (the earlier in the week, the better), between 11 a.m. and 2 p.m., when you would be available to meet with me for twenty or thirty minutes to discuss your paper and the revisions you'll make for version 2. Then I'll write back confirming a specific time for our meeting.

Deadlines to be determined: Version 2 of each of your argumentative papers and version 2 of your independent paper will have due dates that will be determined along the way.

Critiques: Your critiques—of an argumentative paper and of an independent paper—will be oral, and will not have a written component (though you can, of course, bring written notes or even, if you are so inclined, a paper that you read aloud).

Attendance and participation: Your attendance and participation score will be based, mainly, on the following considerations. First, you can miss up to one class period at your discretion, without providing an excuse for your absence; if you have more than one absence, you should be prepared to provide excuses for all of them. Second, good class participation consists of offering intelligent, relevant, and helpful comments and questions. You should be an active discussant and should feel free to introduce your own perspective and concerns into the discussion; at the same time, however, you should not think that more participation is always better. Ideal class participation involves not only being willing and able to contribute; it also involves being respectful of others' time and interests, being aware of what concerns are already under discussion and unresolved at any particular point, and being aware of those occasions when a particular topic or thread that interests you would be more appropriately pursued later or outside of class.

Course materials:

Some course documents, including this syllabus, will be available on the web site for the course, the URL of which is

http://web.ku.edu/~utile/courses/tutorial2

(If you don't want to type in this whole thing, you can stop after 'utile'—at which point you'll be at my personal web site—and then follow the links to the web site for this particular course.)

Most of the readings mentioned below—every one for which URLs are not provided (and some for which they are)—will be provided on the course Blackboard site.

It will be important to read most items with care and alertness and several times. I suggest at least the following for most items: skimming it to get a sense of its overall structure and the author's main priorities, then reading it straight through with normal intensity, then reading it extremely closely, and then reading it again with normal intensity.

There is no book you have to buy for this course, and I have not asked the bookstore to order any.

E-mail distribution list:

I've had the KU computer folks set up an e-mail distribution list for the course:

phil800_60611sp10_dl@mail.ku.edu

Because everyone in the class will use this list to circulate written work to be discussed in class, you must make sure that you read mail that is sent to this list. You can do this by making sure that you (1) have an e-mail address, (2) are registered for the course (because this list is updated every night to reflect current enrollment, taking account of drops and adds), and (3) read your e-mail. There is one complication that you should be aware of: if you have both an Exchange e-mail address (e.g., so-and-so@ku.edu) and a non-Exchange e-mail address (e.g., so-and-so@yahoo.com), and you prefer to receive e-mail at the latter address, then mail sent to the e-mail distribution list for the course will not necessarily go to it, even if you have registered it with KU as your primary e-mail address. (This is a known problem with the KU distribution-list system.) To deal with this problem, either check your Exchange account as often as your check your non-Exchange account, or arrange for mail sent to your Exchange account to be forwarded to your non-Exchange account. For more information on this problem and how to solve it, see the Exchange Distribution List Primer (http://www.email.ku.edu/dlists/primer.shtml) and look at the answer to the second question: "Some of the people on my list say they're not getting my list mail. Why?"

Also in regard to this list, note that you cannot send e-mail to this list just by sending a message to its address. You also have to send your message *from an authorized e-mail account.* Normally, that is whatever account you use to receive e-mail sent to this list. So, even if you receive mail sent to this list by having your KU e-mail forwarded to (e.g.) your Gmail account, you should not count on being able to use the e-mail list (as a sender) from your Gmail account. You may have to send your message from your Exchange account.

Academic misconduct:

I take academic misconduct, especially cheating on tests and plagiarizing papers, extremely seriously, and am generally disposed to impose the harshest available penalties when it occurs. KU's policy on academic integrity is in article 2, section 6 of the University Senate Rules and Regulations (https://documents.ku.edu/policies/governance/USRR.htm#art2sect6).

Disability accommodation:

If you have a disability for which you may be requesting special services or accommodations for this course, be sure to contact Disability Resources (http://www.disability.ku.edu), at 22 Strong Hall or at 864-2620 (V/TTY), if you have not already done so, and give me a letter from that office documenting the accommodations to which you are entitled. Please also see me privately, at your earliest convenience, so that I can be aware of your situation and can begin to prepare the appropriate accommodations in advance of receiving the letter from Disability Resources.

Possible H1N1 flu (swine flu) pandemic:

The interim provost has asked faculty to include links on syllabi and course web sites to the following resources:

KU Pandemic Response Plan: http://www.pandemic.ku.edu

"Personal Planning Guide for Pandemic Influenza": http://www.pandemic.ku.edu/pdf/tipSheet.pdf

He has also asked faculty to avoid policies that encourage you to come to class if you are infected. So, let me say explicitly: *If you might have the flu, don't come to class.* Absences in such circumstances will be excused.

Schedule:

January 15:

I. course introduction
II. filling in of schedule of assignments for part I

Part I: Five Philosophical Issues

Unit 1

The Future-Like-Ours Argument against Abortion: Marquis vs. Boonin

January 22:

I. The first couple of items of reading include some introductory material and an influential paper by Don Marquis.
   A. I would recommend that you start by reading Louis P. Pojman and Francis J. Beckwith, "Introduction to the Book" (in Pojman and Beckwith [eds.], *The Abortion Controversy: A Reader* [Jones and Bartlett Publishers, 1994], pp. x–xviii).
   B. The most important reading for this unit, and thus the first required item, is Don Marquis, "Why Abortion Is Immoral" (originally published in 1989; we'll read it as reprinted in Pojman and Beckwith, pp. 320–338).
II. The next items of reading are from David Boonin's book *A Defense of Abortion* (Cambridge University Press, 2003):
   F. I would recommend that you start by reading section 1.0, "Overview" (pp. 1–3).
   G. The first item of required reading from this book is section 1.2, "The Method" (pp. 9–14).
   H. I would recommend that you then read section 2.0, "Overview" (pp. 19–20).
   I. The second item of required reading from this book is section 2.8, "The Future-Like-Ours Argument" (pp. 56–85).
III. The last two items of reading are from Marquis's recent paper "Abortion Revisited" (in Bonnie Steinbock [ed.], *The Oxford Handbook of Bioethics* [Oxford University Press, 2007], pp. 395–415):
   J. It is optional to read this paper up to the section break on p. 409.
   K. The required reading from this paper is from the section break on on p. 409 to the end.
IV. For the summary assignment, summarize either "Why Abortion Is Immoral" or section 2.8 of *A Defense of Abortion*. Heed carefully the instructions, above, about not just writing summaries of the respective sections of the work you're summarizing and concatenating them.
V. In class, we'll discuss the reading for this unit, and two summaries:
   A. Ian McDaniel
   B. Rich Muirhead

January 29:

I. Critiques and discussions of two argumentative papers:
   A. Benjamin Keil (critique by Brian Clarke)
   B. Andrew Marsh (critique by Teresa Bruno)

Unit 2

Epistemic Closure: Dretske vs. Hawthorne

February 5:

I. For this topic we'll use four items from Mattias Steup and Ernest Sosa's *Contemporary Debates in Epistemology* (Blackwell Publishing, 2005). The first item is optional, and the other three are required:
   A. Mattias Steup, introduction to part I (knowledge and skepticism) (pp. 1–4)
   B. Fred Dretske, "Is Knowledge Closed under Known Entailment?" (pp. 13–26)
   C. John Hawthorne, "The Case for Closure" (pp. 26–43)
      1. As you read this paper, you might find this document useful: supplement_unit_2_Hawthorne.pdf (available on the course web site).
   D. Dretske, "Reply to Hawthorne" (pp. 43–46)

II. If you would like more information on this issue, an additional (and optional) resource is the *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* entry on this topic: Steven Luper, "The Epistemic Closure Principle," viewable at http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/closure-epistemic.

III. For the summary assignment, summarize the debate between Dretske and Hawthorne. To do this summary well, do not just write summaries of the three required items and concatenate them. The very most sequential summarizing that you should do here is to summarize the view of one author, then the other. Furthermore, you may see a way to summarize the debate more synoptically, so that your summary is one integrated whole (albeit with appropriate internal organization) rather than having two concatenated but essentially separable parts. (But if this last strategy does not seem promising, that is o.k.)

IV. In class, we'll spend the first hour or so in Watson library. Julie Buchsbaum, the librarian for the library's philosophy resources, will provide instruction concerning library resources. We'll meet at the Clark Instruction Center (a classroom in Watson library just inside, somewhat southeast of, the library's main entrance).

V. After that, we'll go to our usual room to discuss the reading for this unit, and two summaries:
   A. Ian McDaniel
   B. Brian Clarke

February 12:

I. Critique and discussion of one argumentative paper:
   A. Brian Clarke (critique by Andrew Marsh)

Unit 3

The Integrity Objection to Utilitarianism: Williams vs. Harris and Carr

February 19:

I. For this topic we'll use some material from a book partly authored by Bernard Williams and two journal articles responding to Williams's material.
   A. Bernard Williams, selections from "A Critique of Utilitarianism," in J. J. C. Smart and Bernard Williams, *Utilitarianism: For and Against*.
      1. In *Utilitarianism: For and Against*, J. J. C. Smart offers an introduction and affirmative argument for utilitarianism, and Williams offers some objections. We'll focus on one, the integrity objection, which has been influential in discussions of utilitarianism.

2. The required reading from the Williams material is from the paragraph break on p. 96 to the section break on p. 118. For more perspective on where Williams is coming from, you may also want to read the earlier pages (pp. 75ff) of Williams's critique.

B. John Harris, "Williams on Negative Responsibility and Integrity" (*The Philosophical Quarterly* vol. 24, no. 96 [July 1974], pp. 265–273; J-Stor stable URL: http://www.jstor.org/stable/2217939).

C. Spencer Carr, "The Integrity of a Utilitarian" (*Ethics* vol. 86, no. 3 [April 1976], pp. 241–246; J-Stor stable URL: http://www.jstor.org/stable/2380192).

II. Utilitarianism's bearing on integrity is discussed more ambitiously in Elizabeth Ashford, "Utilitarianism, Integrity, and Partiality" (*The Journal of Philosophy* vol. 97, no. 8 [August 2000], pp. 421–439; J-Stor stable URL: http://www.jstor.org/stable/2678423). (Because this article discusses later works in ethical theory by Williams and other authors, we will not attempt to include it in our coverage of the integrity objection.)

III. For the summary assignment, summarize any one of the three items of required reading.

IV. In class, we'll discuss the reading for this unit, and two summaries:

A. Brian Clarke

B. Benjamin Keil

February 26:

I. Critique and discussion of one argumentative paper:

A. Rich Muirhead (critique by Benjamin Keil)

Unit 4

Personal Identity: Thomson vs. Parfit

March 5:

I. For this topic we'll use material from Theodore Sider, John Hawthorne, and Dean W. Zimmerman's *Contemporary Debates in Metaphysics* (Blackwell Publishing, 2008).

A. You should start by reading the introductory paragraph on p. 153.

B. Then the required reading comprises the following two papers:

1. Judith Jarvis Thomson, "People and their Bodies" (in Sider, Hawthorne, and Zimmerman, pp. 155–176)

2. Derek Parfit, "Persons, Bodies, and Human Beings" (in Sider, Hawthorne, and Zimmerman, pp. 177–208)

a. As you read these papers, you might find this document useful: supplement_unit_4_Thomson_and_Parfit.pdf (available on the course web site).

II. If you would like more information on this issue, an additional (and optional) resource is the *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* entry on this topic: Eric T. Olson, "Personal Identity," viewable at http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/identity-personal.

III. For the summary assignment, summarize either of the two items of required reading.

IV. In class, we'll discuss the reading for this unit, and two summaries:

A. Benjamin Keil

B. Teresa Bruno

March 12:

I. Critique and discussion of one argumentative paper:

A. Ian McDaniel (critique by Rich Muirhead)

March 19: no class (Spring Break)

Unit 5

Newcomb's Problem: Nozick

March 26:

I. The only required reading for this unit is Robert Nozick, "Newcomb's Problem and Two Principles of Choice" (originally published in 1969, but we'll use the edition published in Nozick's collection *Socratic Puzzles* [Harvard University Press, 1997], pp. 45–73).
   A. As you read this paper, you might find this document useful: supplement_unit_5_Nozick.pdf (available on the course web site).

II. For some historical perspective on the significance of Nozick's discussion of Newcomb's problem for decision theory, see David Schmidtz and Sarah Wright, "What Nozick Did for Decision Theory" (*Midwest Studies in Philosophy* vol. 28 [2004], pp. 282–294).

III. For the summary assignment, summarize Nozick's paper.

IV. In class, we'll discuss the reading for this unit, and two summaries:
   A. Rich Muirhead
   B. Andrew Marsh

April 2:

I. Critique and discussion of one argumentative paper:
   A. Teresa Bruno (critique by Ian McDaniel)

Part II: Independent Papers

Critiques and discussions of independent papers:

date	paper		critique
April 9	1	Rich Muirhead	Benjamin Keil
	2	Andrew Marsh	Ian McDaniel
April 16	3	Ian McDaniel	Brian Clarke
	4	Teresa Bruno	Rich Muirhead
April 23	5	Brian Clarke	Teresa Bruno
	6	Benjamin Keil	Andrew Marsh
April 30	(reserve)		