

## Pre-Syllabus Preparation

- Who are your students? CUNY students are 42% first-generation (the first in their family to go to college), 38.5% come from families who make less than 20,000 a year, and 78.2% are students of color.
- What are the departmental/institutional expectations for your course? Writing courses generally require a certain number of pages of writing over the semester. Introductory courses are seen as gateway courses that should make students excited about taking more philosophy, while preparing them for an upper-level philosophy course. Some colleges *require* final exams during exam week, some don't. Find out and plan accordingly.
- How many students will you have? A 20-30 person can center around discussion in a way that is more difficult with a 30-40+ person class. The size of your class will also dictate how much grading you can reasonably expect of yourself. Keep this in mind as you prepare the syllabus.
- What else do YOU have going? Make sure to put all of *your* important dates in the calendar and keep them in mind as you design the syllabus. Do not plan on having to grade 40 papers right before your Qualls or when you have an important deadline in a class. Plan the syllabus schedule around yours. If you are teaching multiple classes, stagger assignments so that they are not all turned in at the same time.

## Establish your learning goals.

- What are some key skills that students will develop over the course of your class? (3-4 per semester)
  - Reading philosophy carefully, outlining argument, developing objections, writing a solid 3-page critical paper, putting forward an argument
- What are some key ideas/concepts that your students will learn over the course of the semester? (1-2 per week of the term)
  - Typical examples for an intro class: Validity, soundness, logical implication, Empiricism, foundationalism, rationalism, Consequentialism, Deontology, Virtue Theory, Arguments for/against God
  - Here are less typical ones: Epistemic injustice, racial eliminativism, racial constructivism, free speech on campus, sexual consent
  - Think about content that will **connect** with the students. If you don't know what that is, ask more experienced teachers who teach students like yours.
- What are some key readings that you definitely want to include in the syllabus?
  - This should be a list of **3-5 readings** that you think are *essential*, not everything that you think is important in philosophy or the topic area.
  - For example: In an intro course, I generally always have Descartes' Meditations, Mill's Utilitarianism or On Liberty, Some Plato or Aristotle, and another historical figure from the 'cannon' such as Locke, Hume, or Kant.
  - A nice thing about having a core set of readings is that if you keep teaching those readings every time you teach that class, after a few times you can teach them in your sleep. If you spread those out throughout the term, they give you some breathing room even as you have new 'fresh' material.
  - Once you have picked out your central readings, give yourself freedom to have fun with the other readings. What are you interested in? Did you read a recent philosophy paper that you thought was a good example of great philosophical writing? This is your chance to individualize the syllabus to your students' interests, your interests, etc.

## Developing the Syllabus

- Establish the ‘logic’ of the syllabus: I favor a syllabus in which you start by establishing a progression of skills/ concepts and then select readings based on how well they *align* with those goals. Others favor a historical approach. And yet another approach is a ‘problems’ approach. These are all good approaches but make sure that you have decided on an approach before you start selecting readings. It will make the process of winnowing the readings and deciding on assignments much easier.
- Select just *enough* reading. Research in STEM suggests that students learn better from delving deeply into a few readings than when the instructor is aiming for breadth.
- Ensure that your assignments are aligned with your pedagogical goals. Do the assignments help students learn to read philosophy, identify arguments, etc? You need to give students a chance to practice the skills they are learning in class and their written assignments are a good place for them to do this. Make it clear to your students in the description of the assignment and/or the grading rubric you provide how the assignment aligns to the learning goals you have in mind. Are they supposed to be showing you that they understand a particular concept or paper? Are they supposed to raise an objection?
- Scaffold your assignments. What you ask students to do should ideally build on skills they’ve learned in class. Each assignment should be a step in that progression. For example, if you ask students to raise an objection to Jackson’s What Mary Didn’t Know. Consider: Do they know at this point in the course what counts as a good objection? Have you given them good examples of what you have in mind? Have you gone over why X’s paper counts as a good objection to Y’s paper? Do your students know what a bad objection is?
- Space out assignments over the semester and make sure to assign something early on so that students start to learn what your expectations are.

## The Fine Print

- Explain to the students the key terms in your syllabus: office hours, attendance and participation, how you will calculate the grading, etc. Remember that many students are not familiar with the norms governing a college campus. Make your expectations more explicit than you think is necessary.
- Decide on how strict/lenient you will be about your policies and stick to it. It’s okay to start out strict and get more lenient if that’s what you’ve decided to do, but do not be inconsistent about how you apply your policies across students unless you have a **very strong** reason to do so.
- Find a way to make sure students digest the syllabus: Quiz them on the first day of class, have a ‘hidden’ line in which they get extra points for sending you a cat picture, have them come up with questions about the syllabus in groups, etc.

## Recommended Resources

- What the Best College Teachers Do by Ken Bain
- Small Teaching: Everyday Lessons from the Science of Learning by James M. Lang
- “Reading Philosophy with Background Knowledge and Metacognition” by David Conception in *Teaching Philosophy*
- Faculty Focus <https://www.facultyfocus.com/>
- The Teaching Workshop at the APA Blog <https://blog.apaonline.org/tag/teaching-workshop/>
- Guide to teaching Intro to Philosophy at CCNY written with Carolyn Plunkett <http://ccnyphilosophy.jennifermorton.com/>

SAMPLE PHIL 102: INTRODUCTION TO PHILOSOPHY  
 Spring 2018  
 MW 12:30pm-1:45pm/ Location NAC 1/203  
 Professor Jennifer M. Morton

Phone: x7637      Office: NAC 5/136C      E-mail: [jmorton@ccny.cuny.edu](mailto:jmorton@ccny.cuny.edu)  
 Office Hours: MW 9:30am-10:30am, Via Skype (professormorton) by appointment

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:** The general aim of this course is to serve as an introduction to central philosophical problems and methods of philosophical argumentation and analysis. We will consider some of the following questions: How can we know there is an external world? What makes an action right and/or good? Does lying undermine consent? Do we need friends? What is racism? Is pornography speech?

**READING:** All primary readings will be available through the course Blackboard Page. No textbook is required for this course, but please do print out the readings and bring them to class with you.

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS:**

5 Reading Responses [RR] (1-2 pages)	10 pts each = 50 pts
Paper (3-4 pages)	15 pts
Exam	15 pts
5 Quizzes	3 pts each = 15 pts
Attendance	5 pts

**GRADES:**

A+	98-100 points	C+	77-79 points
A	94-97 points	C	74-76 points
A-	90-93 points	C-	70-73 points
B+	87-89 points	D	60-69 points
B	84-86 points	F	0-59 points
B-	80-83 points		

**READING RESPONSES:** Questions for reading responses will be posted by Friday of the week before they are due. 11 questions will be posted in total, you only need to **complete 5** during the term. Reading responses that are turned in **on time**, show that you have read the material, and demonstrate an honest attempt at answering the question posed will be given full credit (10 points). Reading responses that are late, that demonstrated have not read the material carefully, or that do not answer the question will receive **no** credit (0 points). You will need to turn in reading responses via Blackboard **and** via paper copy by the **beginning of class**.

**QUIZZES:** Several surprise quizzes will be given throughout the term. If you are not in class when a quiz is given or you are late, you will not receive credit for the quiz. However, only your **top 5 quiz grades** will count towards your final grade.

**LATE ASSIGNMENT POLICY:** **NO LATE Reading responses** will be accepted (no exceptions!). Late papers will only be accepted in cases of emergency AND arrangements must be made with me at least **48 hours in advance**. No exams will be issued after the exam date, except for in extreme medical circumstances with a doctor's note.

**ATTENDANCE:** Students who are persistently absent are more likely to do poorly in class and drop-out. **I strongly recommend that you make attending class a priority**. Of course, I understand that emergencies happen, so you will be granted up to **3 absences** throughout the term. Any absences above that number will result in **you losing all 5** attendance points. If you arrive **late to class**, you must contribute to the class discussion in order to count as having attended the class. If you arrive more than 15 minutes late, you will be marked as absent.

**PROFESSOR AVAILABILITY:** I will be available at my office during office hours (MW 9:30am-10.30am) and via e-mail during regular business hours (M-F 9am-5pm). If you e-mail me outside of those hours, you will not receive a response until the following business day. If you cannot attend my office hours, please make an arrangement with me via e-mail to chat on the phone or via skype.

**COMMUNICATION:** It is extremely important to your success in this course that you communicate with me whenever you are confused, need help, or have questions. Please be **professional** and courteous in your communications with me. I will do the same in my communications with you. E-mails should start out with "Dear Professor Morton..." and be sent during regular office hours.

ELECTRONICS: Research shows that the use of electronics decreases your capacity to understand, remember, and learn. Consequently, the use of **electronics is not allowed** during class. I will give you the option of taking out your laptop during the last 10 minutes of class if you need to use it to write notes reviewing the main points from class. **Cellphone use during class is not allowed at any time.** If you need to use your cellphone because you have an emergency, please step outside to do so. If I see you using your cellphone during class, I will ask you to leave the class until you are done. Cellphone use during class doesn't only disrupt your learning but it distracts other students.

PLAGIARISM: Plagiarism and other forms of cheating will be subject to penalties in conformity with the College's policy on Academic Integrity. I am obligated under the college's policy to report any and all cases of plagiarism **no exceptions**.  
([http://www1.ccnycuny.edu/facultystaff/provost/policies\\_integrity.cfm](http://www1.ccnycuny.edu/facultystaff/provost/policies_integrity.cfm))

LEARNING COURSE OBJECTIVES: By the end of this course you should: (1) Be able to read philosophy; that is, to identify the thesis of a piece of philosophical writing and the arguments or evidence adduced in support of that thesis. (2) Be able to write philosophy; that is, to present a claim in clear terms and to defend it in a logically coherent manner. (3) Be able to reconstruct and debate some foundational issues in the Western philosophical tradition.

As part of the College's General Education Curriculum, this course is designed to satisfy the requirements for a *Logical-Philosophical Perspective* course. Students successfully completing this course will develop the following proficiencies: will have had multiple experiences in communicating ideas in writing and speaking by completing assignments totaling at least 3500 words of writing, will have had experiences that emphasize analytic and/or philosophical reasoning to critically examine fundamental questions of ethics, justice and epistemology, and will have had multiple experiences in finding information and evaluating the reliability of this information.

Skills	Date	Topics	Reading	Assignment	
Reading Philosophy Critically	M	1/29	What is philosophy? What's the point?	Jennifer Morton, "An Antidote to Injustice"	
	W	1/31	What is required for knowledge?	Rene Descartes, Selections from <u>Meditations on First Philosophy</u>	
	M	2/5	Descartes Continued	Rene Descartes, Selections from <u>Meditations on First Philosophy</u>	
	W	2/7	Is skepticism self-defeating?	G.E. Moore, Excerpt from "Proof of the External World" (Read only pp. 145-150)	RR #1
	M	2/12	NO CLASS—Lincoln's Birthday		
	W	2/14	Who gets to be a knower?	Miranda Fricker, Philosophy Bites Podcast on <u>Epistemic Injustice</u>	RR #2
	M	2/19	NO CLASS—President's Day		
	T	2/20	What is bullshit?	Harry Frankfurt, "On Bullshit"	
	W	2/21	Is morality relative?	James Rachels, "The Challenge of Cultural Relativism"	RR #3
	M	2/26	What is wrong with lying?	Immanuel Kant, Selections from the <u>Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals</u>	
	W	2/28	Kant Continued	Immanuel Kant, Selections from the <u>Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals</u>	RR #4
	M	3/5	Does lying undermine consent?	Tom Dougherty, "Sex, Lies, and Consent"	
	W	3/7	What does the good consist in?	John Stuart Mill, Chapters 1 and 2, <u>Utilitarianism</u>	RR #5
	M	3/12	Utilitarianism continued	John Stuart Mill, Chapters 4, <u>Utilitarianism</u>	
Defending an Argument	W	3/14	How much ought we give?	Peter Singer, "Famine, Affluence, and Morality"	RR #6
	M	3/19	Is it morally acceptable to be partial to those you love?	Peter Railton, "Alienation, Consequentialism, and the Demands of Morality"	
	W	3/21	Do we need friends?	Aristotle, Book VIII of the <u>Nicomachean Ethics</u>	RR #7
	M	3/26	What should we believe about our friends?	Sarah Stroud, "Epistemic Partiality and Friendship"	
	W	3/28	What makes you the same person over time?	John Locke, Selections from <u>An Essay Concerning Human Understanding</u>	RR #8
		4/2-4/5	NO CLASS-Spring Break		
	M	4/9	NO CLASS—Online Paper Writing Workshop—Watch Video On Blackboard—Work through Rubrics		
	W	4/11	NO CLASS-Friday Schedule		
Developing and Responding to Objections	M	4/16	What is essential to personhood?	Harry Frankfurt, "Freedom of the Will and the Concept of a Person"	<b>Paper Due</b>
	W	4/18	What is Race? What is Gender?	Sally Haslanger, "Gender and Race: (What) are they? (What) do we want them to be?"	RR #9
	M	4/23	What is Racism?	Jorge Garcia, "The heart of racism"	
	W	4/25	Is Racism in the heart?	Charles Mills, "'Heart' Attack: A Critique of Jorge Garcia's Volitional Conception of Racism."	RR #10
	M	4/30	Freedom of Speech and Action	John Stuart Mill, <u>On Liberty</u>	
	W	5/2	Mill Continued	John Stuart Mill, <u>On Liberty</u>	RR #11
	M	5/7	Pornography	Rae Langton and Caroline West, "Scorekeeping in a Pornographic Language Game"	
	W	5/9	Exam Review		
	M	5/14	<b>Exam</b>		
	W	5/16	Wrap-Up Discussion with Snacks		

PHIL 30900: SOCIAL AND POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY  
Spring 2015  
MW 9.30-10:45am    NAC 7/225

Professor Jennifer M. Morton  
E-mail: [jmorton@ccny.cuny.edu](mailto:jmorton@ccny.cuny.edu)

Office: NAC 5/136C    Phone: x7637  
Office Hours: W 11:00am-2.00pm & by appointment

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:** We are social beings that thrive in communities, yet we have different values, moral commitments, and opinions on a diversity of matters. Questions in political philosophy center on how political institutions and practices should be organized to allow us to live together despite these disagreements. This course will serve as an introduction to social and political philosophy, including historical figures such as Mill, Hobbes, Locke, Hume, Marx, and Rousseau, as well as contemporary figures, such as Rawls, Nozick, and Okin.

**PREREQUISITES:** An introductory level philosophy course (Phil 10200, Phil 30000, Phil 20100, or Phil 20200).

**READING:** There are two books required for this course Jonathan Wolff's [An Introduction to Political Philosophy](#) (Oxford University Press, 2006) and [The Broadview Anthology of Social and Political Thought: Essential Readings: Ancient, Modern, and Contemporary Texts](#) (eds. A. Bailey, S. Brennan, W. Kymlicka, et al Broadview Press, 2012)

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS:** Every week, you will be required to turn in a 1-2 page polished reading response based on the assigned reading and a prompt I will post on Blackboard. Be ready to share your reading response with the rest of class. You are responsible for one in-class exam and one paper (6-8 pages) during the course of the term. You are also required to complete a group presentation related to your paper topic, a draft of your paper, and a peer review. Most importantly, you are expected to attend every meeting and actively participate in class discussion.

8 Reading Responses (1-2 pp)	30%
Exam	30%
Paper Stages (Summary, Draft, etc)	5%
Paper (6-8 pages)	25%
Group Presentation	5%
Participation & Attendance	5%

A	95-99%	C	65-69%
A-	90-94%	C-	60-64%
B+	85-89%	D	51-59%
B	80-84%	F	0-50
B-	75-79%		
C+	70-74%		

**LATE ASSIGNMENT POLICY:** **NO LATE Reading responses** will be accepted (no exceptions!). You will, however, be allowed to make-up 1 reading response during the last week of class. Late papers will only be accepted in cases of emergency AND arrangements must be made with me at least **48 hours in advance**. No exams will be issued after the exam date, except for in extreme medical circumstances with a doctor's note.

**SUBMISSION OF ASSIGNMENTS:** A printed copy **AND** an electronic copy (via Safe Assign) should be submitted.

**ATTENDANCE:** **Regular attendance is required.** You will be granted up to **3 excused absences** (medical, family emergencies, etc) throughout the term, any absences above that number will affect your grade significantly. If you arrive **late to class**, I will call on you and you **must** contribute to the class discussion in the form of a **thoughtful** question or comment in order to count as having attended the class.

**PLAGIARISM:** You will receive **no credit** for a plagiarized assignment and your participation grade will be significantly lowered. Any act of plagiarism will be reported to the Office of Academic Integrity. Plagiarism and other forms of cheating will be subject to penalties in conformity with the College's policy on Academic Integrity. ([http://www1.cuny.cuny.edu/facultystaff/provost/policies\\_integrity.cfm](http://www1.cuny.cuny.edu/facultystaff/provost/policies_integrity.cfm))

**ELECTRONICS:** No phones, laptops, or other electronic devices allowed in class.

**E-MAIL:** I will only respond to e-mail received during regular business hours (M-F/9am-5pm).

**LEARNING COURSE OBJECTIVES:** By the end of this course you should: (1) Improve your ability to read philosophy, that is, to identify the thesis of a piece of philosophical writing and the arguments or evidence adduced in support of that thesis. (2) Be able to identify and debate central issues in social and political philosophy. (3) Be able to develop and argue for a critical position in a philosophy paper that engages with a central issue in social and political philosophy.

	Due Date	Reading Assignment	Written Assignment	
	W 1/28	Introduction of <b>IPP*</b> (pp. 1-6)		
THE STATE OF NATURE				
Reading	M 2/2	Ch. 1 of <b>IPP</b> (pp. 6-17), Hobbes, <u>Leviathan</u> Ch. 13-15.7, 17 ( <b>BA*</b> pp. 258-268, 276-278)		
	W 2/4	Hobbes, <u>Leviathan</u> Ch. 17-19 ( <b>BA</b> pp. 276-289)	R. Response #1	
	M 2/9	Ch. 1 of <b>IPP</b> (pp. 17-23), Locke, <u>Second Treatise</u> Ch. 2-3 ( <b>BA</b> pp. 333-338)		
	W 2/11	Ch. 1 of <b>IPP</b> (pp. 24-33), Rousseau, <u>Discourse</u> ( <b>BA</b> pp.422-426, 435-44, 441-451)	R. Response #2	
JUSTIFYING THE STATE				
Critical Analysis	M 2/16	NO CLASS		
	W 2/18	Ch. 2 of <b>IPP</b> (pp. 34-48), Locke, <u>Second Treatise</u> Ch. 8-14, ( <b>BA</b> pp. 356-375)	R. Response #3	
	M 2/23	Ch. 2 of <b>IPP</b> (pp. 48-61), Mill, <u>Utilitarianism</u> Ch. 2-5 ( <b>BA</b> pp. 658-668)		
	GROUP PRESENTATIONS			
	W 2/25	Group Presentation #1: Tommie Shelby, "Justice, Deviance, and the Dark Ghetto" <b>BB*</b>	Paper Summary Due	
	M 3/2	Group Presentation #2: Virginia Held, "Non-Contractual Society: A Feminist View" <b>BB</b>		
	JUSTIFYING THE STATE CONTINUED			
	W 3/4	Class Canceled—Online Worksheet Ch. 2 of <b>IPP</b> (pp. 55-61), Hume, <u>Of the Original Contract</u> ( <b>BA</b> pp.403-412)	Online Worksheet/Reading Response #4	
WHO SHOULD RULE?				
	M 3/9	Ch. 3 of <b>IPP</b> (pp. 62-74), Plato, <u>The Republic</u> ( <b>BA</b> pp. 59-64)		
	W 3/11	Ch. 3 of <b>IPP</b> (pp. 74-87), Rousseau, <u>The Social Contract</u> ( <b>BA</b> pp. 470-490, 504-507)	R. Response #5	
	M 3/16	Ch. 3 of <b>IPP</b> (pp. 87-103), Madison, Federalist Paper #10 ( <b>BA</b> pp.552-555)		
	THE PLACE OF LIBERTY			
	W 3/18	Ch. 4 of <b>IPP</b> (pp.104-132), Mill, <u>On Liberty</u> ( <b>BA</b> pp. 627-650)	R. Response #6	
	M 3/23	Marx, <u>The Communist Manifesto</u> ( <b>BA</b> pp. 717-727)		
	GROUP PRESENTATIONS			
	W 3/25	Group Presentation #3: Alexander Guerrero, "Against Elections: The Lottocratic Alternative" <b>BB</b>	Paper Critique Due	
M 3/30	Group Presentation #4: Jeremy Waldron, "Homelessness and the Issue of Freedom" <b>BB</b>			
THE DISTRIBUTION OF PROPERTY				
Considering Objections	W 4/1	Ch. 5 of <b>IPP</b> (pp. 133-143) Locke, <u>Second Treatise</u> Ch. 5 ( <b>BA</b> , pp. 338-345)	R. Response #7	
	M 4/6	No Classes-Spring Break		
	W 4/8			
	M 4/13	Ch. 5 of <b>IPP</b> (pp. 143-152), Marx <u>Estranged Labor</u> ( <b>BA</b> pp. 692-698)		
	W 4/15	Ch. 5 of <b>IPP</b> (pp. 152-168) Rawls, <u>A Theory of Justice</u> ( <b>BA</b> pp. 862-872)	R. Response #8	
	M 4/20	Rawls, <u>A Theory of Justice</u> ( <b>BA</b> pp. 872-890)		
	W 4/22	Ch. 5 of <b>IPP</b> (pp. 168-176) Nozick, <u>Anarchy, State, and Utopia</u> ( <b>BA</b> pp. 907-924)	R. Response #9	
	GROUP PRESENTATIONS			
	M 4/27	Group Presentation #5: Lea Ypi "What's Wrong With Colonialism?" <b>BB</b>		
W 4/29	Writing Workshop	Paper Draft Due		
CONTEMPORARY ISSUES				
M 5/4	Ch. 6 of <b>IPP</b>	Response Make-Up		
W 5/6	Exam Review	Final Paper Due		
M 5/11	In-Class Exam			
W 5/13	Wrap-Up			
Sa 5/16	Optional Paper Rewrite			

\***IPP** designates Introduction to Political Philosophy by Wolff; **BA** designates The Broadview Anthology of Social and Political Thought: Essential Readings; **BB** designates Blackboard