

## Phil 3811: Philosophy Writing Workshop Fall 2016

### Instructor

Seth Robertson

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Office Hours: Fridays, 10AM – 12PM, and by appointment

Class Location: DaHT 607 (Philosophy Dept. Seminar Room); Thursdays 10:30-11:50 AM

### Course Description

The purpose of this course is to help ensure that students are prepared to write high-quality philosophy essays at the upper-undergraduate level. This requires developing not only general writing skills but also skills and knowledge particular to contemporary philosophical writing. In particular, students will:

- a) Improve their skill in general writing mechanics at the sentence, paragraph, and essay level
- b) Improve their ability to organize an academic essay
- c) Internalize and learn to utilize philosophical terminology
- d) Develop the ability to summarize, analyze, critique, present, and defend arguments
- e) Learn how to properly use primary and secondary philosophical texts and evidence in general in academic philosophy arguments and essays

### Course Requirements

**I. Take-Home Assignments.** We will occasionally have small take-home assignments that must be turned in or uploaded to the course page before class.

**II. Essays and Draft Improvements.** A requirement of the Philosophy Writing Workshop is that you write two essays for your target class (History of Ethics or Ancient Philosophy): a 5-page paper due roughly October 13 and a 10-page paper due roughly Dec. 7. These papers will be graded in your target course. In the Writing Workshop, you will be graded on the improvements you make to your drafts for these papers. **NOTE:** A completed draft of your final target-class paper (10 pages) is a course requirement. Failure to turn in this draft results in automatic failure of the course.

**III. In-class Activities.** We will frequently engage in in-class activities. These will range from weekly vocabulary quizzes, to group discussions, to team competitions.

### Grade Distribution

Vocab Quizzes: 20%

In-class activities: 20%

Take-home assignments: 10%

Drafts: 20%

Draft-Improvements: 30%

### Required Texts

There are no required texts in this course. The following texts are useful for learning about philosophical writing:

Lewis Vaughn (2006). *Writing Philosophy: A Student's Guide to Writing Philosophy Essays*

Anthony Graybosch, Gregory Scott, & Stephen Garrison. *The Philosophy Student's Writer's Manual*.

In addition to being posted online, vocabulary is available on Memrise (available on Android, iOS, and web - search for "OU Philosophy Writing Workshop.")

**Late/Missed Work Policies**

Exams may be rescheduled if the student provides an acceptable excuse, but must be taken as soon as possible. The deadline for the essay is a hard deadline – there will be a 5% reduction in grade for each day after the deadline that it is turned in. In-class activities cannot be made-up, but every student is allowed to miss 2 without penalty.

**E-mail & Electronic Devices**

Laptops are not permitted for use in class. Exceptions will be made only where there is some documented need for the device.

**Honor Policy**

Students are expected to do their own work. If you violate standards of academic integrity, I will seek to impose the severest penalty the university permits. If you are unclear about what constitutes cheating, plagiarism, or improper collaboration, please consult the OU website at <http://www.ou.edu/provost/integrity/>

**Religious Holidays**

It is the policy of the University to excuse student absences that result from religious observances and to reschedule any exams that were missed owing to such observances. If you do encounter such a problem, please consult with me as soon as possible.

**Reasonable Accommodation Policy**

Any student in this course who has a disability that may prevent them from fully demonstrating their abilities should contact me personally as soon as possible so that we may discuss accommodations necessary to ensure full participation.

**Syllabus Policy**

This syllabus is subject to change. The most updated version of this syllabus will be posted on the course webpage.

## Course Schedule

Below is the course schedule – both the assignments and their currently assigned dates may be changed over the course of the semester. Students are responsible for keeping up with any announced changes in our schedule.

<b>Date</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Major Assignments Due</b>
08/25	Introduction	None
09/01	Arguments	
09/08	Writing Plans	
09/15	Organizing Essays	
09/22	Writing an Introduction	
09/29	Peer Review	<b>Short Paper Draft due (09/28)</b>
10/06	Editing	<b>Peer Review due</b>
10/13*	Research and Evidence	<b>(Short Paper due in target class)</b>
10/20	Citations	
10/27	Reconstructing arguments	
11/03	Analyzing arguments	
11/10	Constructing arguments	
11/17	Effective Critiques	<b>Long Paper Draft Due (11/16)</b>
11/24	<b>NO CLASS</b>	
12/01	Incorporating Feedback	
12/08*	Continuing Improving	<b>Long Paper due in target class</b>
<b>* = Exact date subject to slight change</b>		