

Philosophy 505: Seminar in Teaching Philosophy (Fall 2010)

Prof. Ann Baker (annbaker@uw.edu)

Rachel Fredericks (rachef@uw.edu)

Tuesdays, 3:30-5:00 in Savery 359

Course Objectives:

The main purpose of this seminar is to provide graduate students a forum in which to develop their teaching skills. The fall quarter sessions will focus on topics that are primarily of interest to new teaching assistants, but will also provide any returning TAs with opportunities to hone skills, ask questions, and rethink prior commitments relating to teaching. Given that the vast majority of professional philosophers do some amount of teaching throughout their careers, reflection on this professional role early in one's career is time well spent. The focus of the winter quarter meetings will be on strategies for effectively planning and teaching a class as the primary instructor, opportunities for which become available after passing MA papers.

Course Structure and Policies:

- The seminar is informal and is offered credit/no credit. We will meet for 1.5 hours, five times throughout the quarter. Despite the informal nature of the seminar, attendance at each meeting is mandatory. If you are unable to attend a scheduled meeting, please make this known to us as far in advance as possible, and we will reschedule the meeting.
- Although each session will be structured around a broad topic, it is both appropriate and desirable that questions, concerns, etc., be brought up as they occur. (It should go without saying that you need not wait until our next scheduled session if you feel you urgently need to discuss an issue with the seminar instructors.) Do not hesitate to bring up such issues to the class as they occur; you needn't wait to discuss them until they fall under a general discussion topic scheduled to be covered later in the quarter.
- There are three additional requirements for the seminar:
 1. Each student is required to have his/her teaching observed by one graduate student (who may or may not be in this seminar). It behooves you to act quickly on this: scheduling observations can be tricky, time becomes a more scarce commodity for everyone as the quarter progresses, and getting feedback on your teaching earlier rather than later can help you guide your reflections in this seminar and in general. (You will need to turn in at least one such peer observation to the department annually anyway.) You are responsible for getting the graduate student observer to write you comments and to turn in both those comments and your written reflections on those comments to me (Rachel) by December 10.
 2. Each student is required to observe at least one graduate student who is teaching a 100 level class or 240, either as a TA or as a solo instructor. You must write up comments suitable for the student being observed to submit to the department for their annual peer evaluation; I can provide you with a template of questions to answer during and after your observation if you like. You are responsible for turning in a copy of these comments to me (Rachel) by December 10. It is up to the student being observed to determine whether or not to submit the comments to the department.
 3. For each session (except the first), each student is required to compose two discussion questions related to the general topic we will be covering. Submit these questions to me by email (rachef@uw.edu) no later than 24 hours prior to our meeting.

Fall Quarter Topics:

Meeting #1: General Introduction

Tuesday, September 28

- What are our responsibilities as TAs?
- How do we set the tone we want to set on the first day?
- What are some strategies for being a good colleague to faculty instructors and fellow TAs?

Meeting #2: Leading and Generating Discussion

Tuesday, October 19

- What can you do if your students won't talk?
- How can you prevent the same few students from dominating class discussions?
- How do you balance discussion and lecture in sections?
- What kind of discussion is possible in a logic class, if any? How else are logic sections different?

Meeting #3: Challenges in the Classroom

Tuesday, October 26

- What classroom challenges are of particular concern to us?
- What can we do to prevent classroom challenges before they arise?
- How can we ensure that we are offering the right amount of assistance to our students?
- How can we best handle complications that arise between faculty instructors and students?

Meeting #4: Grading

Tuesday, November 2

- How do you grade long essay questions? What should we look for when we grade?
- How does grading papers differ from grading exams?
- What can we do to maintain consistency in grading?
- What are effective ways of handling student complaints about grades?
- How do we detect cheating and what do we do if it has occurred?
- How do we handle the time management problems associated with grading?

Meeting #5: Teaching Portfolios and Other Thoughts for the Future

Tuesday, November 30

- Setting goals as a teacher

- Teaching statements
- Teaching evaluations

Philosophy 505: Seminar in Teaching Philosophy (Winter 2011)

Prof. Ann Baker (annbaker@uw.edu)

Rachel Fredericks (rachef@uw.edu)

Friday 12:30-2:00 p.m. in Savery 359

Course Objectives:

The main purpose of this seminar is to provide graduate students a forum in which to develop their teaching skills. Given that the vast majority of professional philosophers do some amount of teaching throughout their careers, reflection on this professional role early in one's career is time well spent. The focus of the winter quarter meetings will be on strategies for effectively planning and teaching a class as the primary instructor, opportunities for which become available after passing MA papers. Each session will be divided in two: the first part will focus on a certain set of responsibilities that one has as an instructor. The second part of the session will focus on a particular class that is commonly taught as a solo course by graduate students, and will involve guest attendees (grad students and faculty) who have experience teaching the course in question.

Course Structure and Policies:

- The seminar is informal and is offered credit/no credit. We will meet for 1.5 hours, five times throughout the quarter. Despite the informal nature of the seminar, attendance at each meeting is mandatory. If you are unable to attend a scheduled meeting, please make this known to us as far in advance as possible, and we will reschedule the meeting.
- Although each session will be structured around a broad topic, it is both appropriate and desirable that questions, concerns, etc., be brought up as they occur. (It should go without saying that you need not wait until our next scheduled session if you feel you urgently need to discuss an issue with the seminar instructors.) Do not hesitate to bring up such issues to the class as they occur; you needn't wait to discuss them until they fall under a general discussion topic scheduled to be covered later in the quarter.
- There are three additional requirements for the seminar:
 1. Each student is required to submit a draft syllabus for a solo course to Rachel by email (rachef@uw.edu) no later than 3 p.m. on Friday, March 18. Students should choose a course that (a) could potentially be assigned as one's first solo course and (b) one would like to teach. So students should choose from PHIL 100, 102, 110, 114, 115, 120, or 160. The syllabus should include a course description, required texts, schedule, and information about assignments and grading. This is a way to keep track of your teaching inclinations based on our discussions throughout the quarter and will come in handy when your first opportunity to solo teach rolls around.
 2. Each student is required to submit a one-page draft teaching statement to Rachel by email (rachef@uw.edu) no later than 3 p.m. on Friday, March 18. Every student has to submit one to the department in the fall and this draft will give you a head start.

3. For each session, each student is required to compose two discussion questions related to the general topics we will be covering. Submit these questions to me by email (racheff@uw.edu) no later than 24 hours prior to our meeting.

Winter Quarter Topics:

Meeting #1: Transition from TA to Instructor / Phil 100

Friday, January 7: guests are Michael Rosenthal and Joe Ricci

- How does solo teaching differ from being a TA?
- How can one prepare ahead of time for solo teaching?

Meeting #2: Course Design / Phil 102

Friday, January 14: guest is Michael Blake

- How does one choose texts for a course?
- How does one construct a narrative to hold the elements of a course together?
- How much/what information should one include on a syllabus?

Meeting #3: Writing Exams / Phil 115 & 120

Friday, January 21: guests are Mitch Kaufman and Jeramy Gee

- What goals might one have in writing an exam?
- What are the pros & cons of different exam types?
- What different schemes might one use for grading exams?

Meeting #4: Writing Paper Topics and Other Writing Assignments / Phil 240

Friday, January 28: guest is Jean Roberts (and yours truly)

- What goals might one have in writing paper topics?
- What are the pros & cons of different types of writing assignments?
- What different schemes might one use for grading papers and other writing assignments?

Meeting #5: Responding to Evaluations / Topics Classes

Friday, February 4: guests are Elizabeth Scarbrough and Jeremy Fischer

- What are some different methods of getting feedback from students?
- What are the advantages of these methods of evaluation?
- How can one set goals for one's teaching based on feedback from students/peers/faculty?