

Colby-Sawyer College
Philosophy 470: Capstone
This syllabus is subject to change.

Professor: Dr. Rachel Fredericks

Class Days, Times, and Locations: W & F, 2:00 – 3:15 p.m. in Colgate Hall, Room 234 (my office), unless agreed upon otherwise ahead of time

Email Address: rachel.fredericks@colby-sawyer.edu

I prefer to be contacted by email rather than telephone. If you send me an email, I will usually be able to respond within 24 hours during the week and 48 hours on the weekend.

Office Hours: T, W, Th, & F, 11:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. and by appointment

Office Location: Colgate 234

Office Phone: 603 526 3422

Course Description:

In this course, which is required of all philosophy majors at Colby-Sawyer, students complete a significant thesis paper in philosophy with the help of a faculty advisor. Prior to the spring semester, students choose a general topic on which to work, begin finding relevant source materials, and consult with their faculty advisor to begin narrowing down the topic. During the spring semester, students develop their understanding of the relevant literature and write a paper that defends a clearly articulated position or main claim of their own, in part by participating in regularly scheduled meetings with their advisor. Near the end of the term, students explain and defend their views in a presentation to the members of the philosophy faculty and interested students during the Susan Colby Colgate Scholars' Symposium.

Student Learning Outcomes

By the end of the course, students should be able to:

1. Locate, read, and evaluate the quality of primary and/or secondary material from reputable sources about a philosophical question or problem of their choosing,
2. Recreate, analyze, and evaluate arguments from the scholarly literature about a philosophical question or problem of their choosing,
3. Apply the knowledge and use the skills developed in previous philosophy classes relative to a subject matter of their choosing,
4. Motivate and direct themselves to achieve goals and implement priorities relating to research, writing, and presentations that they themselves identify, and
5. Justify their own views about a philosophical topic that they consider to be important and interesting, both verbally and in writing.

Requirements:

1. Students must attend all scheduled meetings of the class unless, prior to the meeting, they have communicated to the professor a legitimate reason to miss the meeting AND have scheduled an alternative time to meet. If a student misses a meeting without such prior communication, one of two things will happen:
 - a. If the student provides documentation of some sort showing that they had a legitimate reason for missing class (for example, sickness, a death in the family, or something else beyond the student's control that they did not know about ahead of time), there will be no penalty and the student will be required to reschedule the meeting as soon as possible.
 - b. If the student does not have documentation of that sort, they will have to reschedule the meeting but will not receive credit for that meeting.
2. Students must submit written work to their faculty advisor weekly. The exact nature of what must be submitted will be determined week by week.
 - a. All weekly written work is due by 11:59 p.m. on Mondays.
 - i. Late written work must be turned in ASAP, but will not receive credit.
 - b. All written work must be submitted electronically over email to rachel.fredericks@colby-sawyer.edu.
 - c. All written work must be submitted as a Word document (.doc or .docx).
 - d. All written work must be double-spaced.
 - e. All written work must include correct in text citations for all quotes and paraphrases, as well as full bibliographic citations for all relevant sources.
 - i. Students may choose whichever citation style they prefer (choose the one you are most familiar with), but must use one style consistently.
3. Students must explain and defend their work in a presentation before the philosophy faculty and interested students and faculty during the Susan Colby Colgate Scholars' Symposium (April 22, 2014).
 - a. The presentation must involve a visual aid of some sort (a handout, writing on the board, and/or PowerPoint slides are all options).
 - b. The student should leave approximately half of the allotted presentation time for a question and answer session with the audience (exact details to be determined).
4. Students must complete a final paper that demonstrates an understanding of philosophical literature relevant to their topic AND defends, via argument, a unique thesis of the student's choosing. The exact details of the final product (length, formatting, etc.) will be discussed and agreed upon as the term progresses.
 - a. Students MUST turn in their final papers via email NO LATER THAN 11:59 p.m. on Wednesday, April 30th.
 - i. There will be no extensions to this deadline; I need to receive the paper by then in order to submit grades on time, and incomplete grades are not an option for graduating seniors (the students in this class).
 - b. If a student does not meet this deadline, they will receive a zero for their paper.

Provisional Schedule (items in bold will not be modified):

1/22: Syllabus (requirements / policies / expectations), status report about progress over break, Rachel's comments, set overall goals for the term & specific goals for next time, questions and concerns

1/24: QR test in the ADC with Corrie Howard (no points toward this class)

1/29: Status report, Rachel's comments, set goals, questions and concerns

1/31: Report on internship & workshop

2/5: SNOW DAY

2/7: Status report, Rachel's comments, set goals, questions and concerns, report on internship

2/12: Status report, Rachel's comments, set goals, questions and concerns

2/14: Report on internship & workshop

2/19: Status report, Rachel's comments, set goals, questions and concerns

2/21: Report on internship & workshop

2/26: Status report, Rachel's comments, set goals, questions and concerns

2/28: Report on internship & workshop

3/5: Status report, Rachel's comments, set goals, questions and concerns

3/7: Report on internship & workshop

3/10 – 3/14: SPRING RECESS (no classes)

3/19: Status report, Rachel's comments, set goals, questions and concerns

3/21: Report on internship & workshop

3/26: Status report, Rachel's comments, set goals, questions and concerns

3/28: Report on internship & workshop

4/2: Status report, Rachel's comments, set goals, questions and concerns

4/4: Report on internship & workshop

4/9: Status report, Rachel's comments, set goals, questions and concerns

4/11: Report on internship, discussion of presentation, & workshop

4/16: Status report, Rachel's comments, set goals, questions and concerns

4/18: Report on internship & workshop: presentation practice

4/22: **Susan Colby Colgate Scholars' Symposium PRESENTATION! (no written work due this week)**

4/23: What we learned from the presentation & where to go from here

4/25: Report on internship & workshop

4/30: **Reading Day (no classes) & FINAL PAPER DUE at 11:59 p.m.**

Assessment Criteria:

Students will be graded on:

- Twice weekly meetings with faculty advisor (5 points per meeting, 120 points total)
- Weekly written work (10 points per week, 120 points total)
- Scholars' Symposium presentation (75 points)
- Final thesis paper (150 points)

Total points possible: 465

A= 95% = 442 points

A- = 90% = 419 points

B+ = 87% = 405 points

B = 83% = 386 points

B- = 80% = 372 points

C+ = 77% = 359 points

C = 73% = 340 points

C- = 70% = 326 points

D+ = 67% = 312 points

D = 63% = 293 points

D- = 60% = 279 points

F = <60% = ≤278 points

In general, written assignments will be evaluated according to the following criteria:

1. Structure and Organization
 - a. Is the assignment well organized?
 - b. Does it have a clear introductory paragraph, thesis statement, and concluding paragraph?
 - c. Are there clear transitions between paragraphs and sections of the assignment?
2. Exposition and Interpretation
 - a. Do you give a clear and charitable interpretation of the view(s) under consideration?
 - b. Do you make clear the underlying assumptions of the view(s) and their implications?
 - c. Do you support your interpretations with relevant citations to the text?
3. Argument and Critical Evaluation
 - a. Do you provide rational arguments for the claims you make and clearly signal which reasons support which claims?
 - b. When critiquing a view, do you consider possible responses to that critique?
 - c. Do you show that you have thought independently about the problem in question?
4. Writing Style
 - a. Is your prose style clear and easy to understand?
 - b. Are there any recurring grammatical or spelling errors?
 - c. Do you avoid awkward and confusing sentence structures?

In general, participation in meetings with faculty will be evaluated according to the following criteria:

1. Preparedness
 - a. Is the student on time?
 - b. Is the student able to articulate what he or she has accomplished since the prior meeting?
 - c. Does the student have all the materials needed for a productive meeting (possibly including source material, notes, outlines, drafts, writing implements, a laptop and so on)?
 - d. Has the student prepared relevant questions for the faculty advisor?
 - e. Has the student reflected on what he or she will need or want to work on next?
2. Responsiveness
 - a. Does the student listen attentively to others during meetings?
 - b. Does the student respond respectfully to others during meetings?
 - c. Does the student stay on topic during meetings?
 - d. Has the student articulated any concerns he or she has in a timely manner?
3. Mastery of Content
 - a. Has the student demonstrated that he or she has carefully and critically read the relevant literature, gained understanding of it, is able to reformulate the ideas of others in his or her own words, developed relevant examples, defined relevant technical terms, developed and can defend a position of his or her own, articulated possible objections, and/or responded to possible objections?

In general, the Scholars' Day presentation will be evaluated according to the following criteria:

1. Preparedness
 - a. Is the student on time?
 - b. Does the student have all the materials they need (and any necessary setup completed prior to the start of the presentation)?
 - c. Has the student achieved mastery of enough relevant content to enable them to use the presentation time in a way that benefits him or her and the audience?
2. Verbal Skills (and other skills relating to presentations)
 - a. Does the student speak loudly and clearly enough to be heard by everyone?
 - b. Does the student speak at a pace that can be followed by everyone?
 - c. Does the student make significant eye contact with everyone?
 - d. Does the student use their time appropriately?
3. Listening Skills (and other skills relating to responsiveness)
 - a. Does the student pay attention and respond to the audience during the initial presentation? Is the student aware of whether the audience can hear, see, and otherwise follow the presentation and adjust accordingly?
 - b. Does the student listen carefully and respectfully to the questions posed by the audience?
 - c. Does the student respond to questions in a way that shows respect and understanding of the relevant question & content?

4. Visual aids & other multimedia presentation components
 - a. Are any visual aids or other multimedia components of the presentation accessible to everyone in the audience? Are they big enough? Bright enough? Loud enough? Arranged so that everyone can see them?
 - b. Are multimedia materials appropriately integrated into the presentation?
 - c. Do the multimedia materials add something of value to the presentation (either for the audience or for the presenter)?
 - d. Is the presenter comfortable with the multimedia materials?

Schedule Conflicts

Students are responsible for meeting all of their academic obligations, even if they are engaged in college-sponsored activities, i.e. theatre, athletics, or field trips. There are no excused absences for such activities. In the case of a scheduling conflict between two classes, students should make appropriate arrangements with the course instructors, being mindful that a regularly scheduled class has the higher priority.

Colby-Sawyer acknowledges that religious practices differ from tradition to tradition and that the demands of religious observance in some traditions may cause conflicts with student class schedules. If religious observance will cause a student to be absent from class or otherwise affect his or her ability to complete academic assignments, he or she must notify the instructor in advance and make necessary arrangements to complete the course materials.

Academic Integrity

All Colby-Sawyer College students are expected to understand the meaning of academic honesty and to behave in accordance with the college's policies on academic honesty as published in the Code of Community Responsibility. To read these policies, see the links found at <http://www.colby-sawyer.edu/campus-life/conduct/honesty/index.html>

Plagiarism is the use of creations, ideas, or words of others without formally acknowledging the author or source through appropriate use of quotation marks, citations, and the like. Plagiarizing is presenting someone else's work or thought as one's own original work or thought, whether it is intentional (on purpose) or unintentional (an accident). More detailed resources explaining what counts as plagiarism and how to avoid plagiarizing are posted on the Moodle site for the course. If, after investigating those resources, you still have questions about how to cite appropriately, please contact me *as soon as possible*.

If I discover that a student has plagiarized or cheated in any way, the student will receive a score of zero for the assignment in question (and notice that this may be sufficient to cause the student to receive a failing grade for the course overall). Whenever a student receives a score of zero for this reason, I contact the student to arrange a meeting so I can explain why the assignment constitutes plagiarism (or another form of academic dishonesty) and answer the

student's questions. The primary purpose of these meetings is to ensure that the student understands how to avoid similar problems in the future. After our meeting, I document my findings about the assignment and the content of our discussion in a letter. I then send copies of that letter and the related evidence both to the student and to Dean Burton Kirkwood. The student is then asked to sign a copy of the letter (indicating that it is an accurate representation of what has occurred) and return the signed copy to Dean Kirkwood. Generally, for a first offense, no wider penalties are assigned beyond the grade penalty on the specific assignment as described above, but decisions about such things are in the hands of the dean.

Disability Accommodations

Students who have a documented disability will be provided with reasonable accommodations. They are encouraged to contact Access Resources (accessresources@colby-sawyer.edu) as soon as possible to ensure that such accommodations are implemented in a timely manner. All accommodations must be approved by CSC Access Resources.

Concerns or Problems

If you have a concern or problem relating to any aspect of the course or your performance in it, get in touch with me, the professor, as soon as possible. I want to be able to help you, but if I do not know about your concern, I cannot address it. If discussing your concern with me (and implementing any plan we agree upon) does not resolve the issue, your next step would be to contact the chair of the department, Prof. Tom Kealy.