

# Teaching Portfolio

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## 1 Teaching Philosophy

In the fields I teach, students usually enter courses with a set of moral and political topics that interest them. My main aim in my courses is to provide students with the philosophical ability to tackle these intellectual problems by themselves.

**Course Design.** I set a strong emphasis in course design on depth, rather than breadth. My courses look at particular problems inside a subfield, rather than trying to cover everything. A course on democracy, for example, I structured around five clusters of issues in democratic theory, each based on recent philosophical literature. This allowed students to get a sense for different debates, but also to approach cutting-edge research in philosophy.

**Seminars.** My main focus in smaller courses is on open discussion and directly engaging students. For example, this September I gave a one-week “crash course” introduction to philosophy, aimed at new Master’s students in a philosophy & economics programme. I asked students to read Gettier’s famous paper (“Is justified true belief knowledge?”) for the first session. We kicked off by collecting impressions of Gettier’s method. I then lectured on basic argument structures in philosophy. In turn, students used this knowledge in a small-scale group exercise to reconstruct Gettier’s argument, after which we compared the results together. Towards the end, I talked briefly about general features of analytic philosophy, and we discussed how Gettier’s text was representative of this tradition.

**Lectures.** I structure lectures around smaller units, each of which takes around 10-15 minutes to present, and contains one basic philosophical thought or claim. After each unit, I pause for clarificatory questions and brief debate. I prioritise presenting problems and paradoxes, encouraging students to weigh different solutions for themselves. In a lecture on the philosophy of economics, for example, I presented several philosophical problems for the claim that there are genuine laws in economics. One student decided to write a Bachelor’s thesis on one of these problems, and requested me as his supervisor.

**Assessment.** I prefer assessing students through essays, not exams. In essays, the emphasis is on students finding a narrow question on which they focus closely. I offer all students to meet with me to discuss a draft version of their paper, and provide them with extensive comments. In some courses, I have required students to send me brief text commentaries on mandatory literature before each session. This ensures that students have critically read the text, and also enables me to anticipate students’ interests and objections.

**Diversity.** I try to construct balanced reading lists which allow students to engage with a variety of perspectives. In guiding course discussions, I take a very active role to ensure that

everyone finds an equal voice. Above all, I try to create a welcoming atmosphere, in which everyone is encouraged to provide their view and grow intellectually.

## 2 Teaching Range

† taught before

<b>Introductory Courses</b>	General Introduction to Philosophy† Academic Skills† Mill† Analytic Philosophy
<b>Undergraduate Courses</b>	Moral Philosophy† Political Philosophy† Philosophy of Economics† Kant Philosophy of Law Decision/Game Theory† ( <i>with time to prepare</i> ) Philosophy and Public Policy ( <i>with time to prepare</i> )
<b>Graduate Courses</b>	Normative Ethics Topics in Social and Political Philosophy† Philosophy of Economics

### 3 Student Evaluations

#### 3.1 Structured Feedback: University of Bayreuth

The University of Bayreuth uses a standardised form to evaluate its courses. Students answer on a graded scale from very good (1.0) to very poor (5.0). Averages are shown below. The University does not provide comparative statistics. Columns:

[1]	Libertarianism (2016)
[2]	Advanced Introduction to Philosophy (2016)
[3]	Moral Contractualism (2016)
[4]	Advanced Introduction to Philosophy (2015)
[5]	Consequentialism (2015)
[6]	Advanced Introduction to Philosophy (2014)
[7]	Advanced Introduction to Philosophy (2013)
[8]	Democracy (2012)
avg.	(Weighted) Average

<b>A) Structure and Contents of the Course</b>	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[5]	[6]	[7]	[8]	avg.
1. Were concrete aims specified at the beginning?	1.5	1.4	1.2	1.1	1.7	1.8	1.4	1.8	<b>1.5</b>
2. Were the materials of the course well-structured?	1.3	1.1	1.1	1.0	1.5	1.5	1.1	1.4	<b>1.3</b>
3. Is the material dealt with important for your studies?	1.4	1.2	1.7	1.3	1.6	1.7	1.1	1.6	<b>1.5</b>
4. Could you make connections to the rest of your studies?	1.2	1.8	1.5	1.9	1.7	1.8	1.1	1.4	<b>1.5</b>
5. Were difficult contents clarified through examples?	1.3	1.3	1.6	1.2	1.4	1.3	1.1	1.5	<b>1.4</b>
6. How well were students included?	1.2	1.4	1.3	1.2	1.4	1.7	1.0	1.3	<b>1.3</b>
7. How much did you personally learn in this course?	1.5	1.2	1.5	1.8	1.9	2.2	1.4	1.8	<b>1.6</b>
8. How do you judge the quantity of material covered?	2.1	1.4	2.4	1.8	2.0	2.2	2.1	2.3	<b>2.0</b>
<b>B) Lecturer</b>									
9. How do you judge the lecturer's academic competence?	1.0	1.2	1.0	1.1	1.4	1.3	1.1	1.1	<b>1.2</b>
10. How do you judge the lecturer's didactic competence?	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.4	1.8	1.8	1.1	1.8	<b>1.4</b>
11. Are you satisfied with how materials were provided?	1.2	1.1	1.2	1.7	1.2	1.3	1.1	1.2	<b>1.2</b>
12. Did the lecturer present in an understandable manner?	1.2	1.3	1.4	1.3	1.6	1.8	1.0	1.6	<b>1.4</b>
13. How motivated was the lecturer?	1.0	1.2	1.0	1.1	1.6	1.3	1.0	1.5	<b>1.2</b>
14. How well did the lecturer react to student concerns?	1.4	1.5	1.2	1.1	1.6	1.3	1.0	1.4	<b>1.4</b>
<b>C) Overall Impression</b>									
15. How do you overall judge the course?	1.1	1.2	1.5	1.2	1.6	1.7	1.0	1.5	<b>1.3</b>

#### 3.2 Structured Feedback: Tutorials at Oxford

The University of Oxford has no standardised form for student feedback. You can find some written comments from my students in sec. 3.5.

#### 3.3 Written Feedback: 20th century Libertarianism (Undergraduate Course, 2016)

All written feedback shown.

#### 16. What was good about the seminar?

- Demanding high effort in advance which definitely benefitted the commitment/discussion of the participants
- Not "the lazy way": variation of organisation
- Extremely good structure, selection of texts
- Possibility of writing an essay (hopefully with helpful comments)

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Apart from content, creating a respectful and relaxed atmosphere</li> <li>- Introduction on clarification/philosophical method</li> <li>- Clear answers (even if sometimes seemingly harsh, beneficial for discussion)</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- I am really glad I took this seminar. I can easily say this was not only the best seminar I had in university but the overall best "Lehrveranstaltung".</li> <li>- M.B. seems to be very interested in his students actually understanding the topics covered, he gives very good examples and also does a great job engaging the students for the topic covered. Also his usage of "Methoden" like the Island Game were fun but also informative. I'd really like to see more of him during any coming semesters in BT.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- I liked the seminar was not structured like any seminar; presentations were informative and not too long.</li> <li>- I liked every kind of group work that we did although actually, I am not really a fan of group works/games etc.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Very refreshing and inspiring due to the variety of work &amp; forms (lecture, presentations input + getting involved in by/small group discussion + game and theatre sketch enable us to test and see for ourselves) =&gt; great progress, thank you for that!</li> <li>- Humour</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Seminargestaltung interaktiv; Dozent hat es geschafft, von Beginn an eine Atmosphäre der Offenheit und Partizipation zu schaffen, sodass Studierende motiviert mitgearbeitet haben ...</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Your idea of a "non-lazy" seminar really worked out! The seminar was far more interactive and challenging (positively) than any I have done so far. After this weekend I got the feeling that I've just learned more in those three days than in the whole "Political Philosophy I" lecture last semester. Please come back soon with another seminar.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Detailed preparation was needed and lead to good discussions</li> <li>- Games were involved with huge learning effect</li> <li>- Final summarize (comments on student's comments)</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- I think it was a very good seminar.</li> <li>- Content: Important aspects of libertarianism covered, clarified etc. Many real life applications + philosophical analysis and debate</li> <li>- Presentation: Nice structure with engaging exercises (play, game, group work) made it really fun! Also the fact that not everyone was giving a presentation was relieving.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Not everyone did a presentation, interactive methods (game, play, interrupting presentations for discussion) were great! + You forced us to actually prepare which was great!</li> <li>- Amount of topics covered was almost perfect, however the interest in "rectification" seemed limited so maybe scratch that.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The seminar has been fantastic. As you said, there are two ways in which the teachers make the seminars: the lazy way or the worker way. I prefer the second one, it's funier and – as it seems to me – you learn more in this way than in the "presentation-discussion" way in which one gets bored 3 hours after listening to presentations that talk about the same stuff and do not listen. I have attended 2 seminars before this one and I learn the first day, the two last days I was not productive because the lazy way to make seminars does not work for me. In my own opinion they are undidactic. So, congratulations! And thank you too for all the material that you gave to us and that I have not read yet but I will do because I am very interested in this kind of philosophy and I am planning to write my thesis about some moral foundations about society or the state.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Stick to the amount of diversity regarding different seminar modes. That's (before the content) most important.</li> <li>- Very good that you interrupt people when they start a monologue or talk about stuff which isn't relevant at the moment</li> <li>- You really know, what you're talking about and how to make it understandable</li> </ul>

(w/ e.g. sketches on the board); that's useful when the brain isn't working that fast anymore (early morning/Sunday)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The demanding character as compared to other blockseminars; so I learned a lot more in this seminar; not only earning 2cp</li> <li>- The structure and the chosen topics inside of the main topic</li> <li>- The interactive parts</li> <li>- The feedback on presentation and (hopefully) for the literature review</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Die geradezu extreme Interaktion gefiel mir unsagbar gut.</li> <li>- Roleplay on anarchism</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Gerade die praktischen Elemente (Anarchie Spiel, Gruppenarbeit, ...) habe mir sehr gut gefallen und sind sehr viel einprägsamer als nur Präsentationen. Das Seminar hat mir sehr gut gefallen—viel besser als erwartet und es war interessant, den Grundgedanken zu folgen.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- See front page. (One of) the most demanding seminars taken so far, great instructor, lots of information &amp; great weekend</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Really great seminar, liked the fact that I was actually learning not only from mediocre presentations but that the content was presented in fitting ways</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Different ways to engage with the topics made it interesting while yet informative.</li> <li>- Group discussion helped to understand.</li> <li>- We covered many topics</li> <li>- Lecturer took time to clarify important or crucial terms and concepts.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Diverse methods!!</li> <li>- Broad literature!</li> <li>- Nice, but challenging atmosphere</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- I really appreciated the different teaching/group work exercises which made the 3 days feel short and interesting. Also, the way you jumped in order to clarify concepts when the discussion was moving into an “unproductive” direction was good, and the balance of lectures, exercises and presentations. Although writing literature reviews is very time consuming, it was noticeable that everybody had read the most important texts (different from other seminars) And it was great to receive feedback in beforehand the presentation.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The interactive teaching that involved acting, group work, etc. Please keep that up! It might diminish the amount of knowledge that can be mediated (as it takes a lot of time) but the students will certainly always remember (at least myself) the topics that were taught this way (&amp; the content) =&gt; It is very effective!</li> </ul>

### 17. What was bad about the seminar?

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Time management, might have been annoying for those who prepared a presentation (though nobody seemed to have taken it in a bad manner, adjusting it as we go concept)</li> <li>- Cohen text would have been nice, cyber libertarianism</li> <li>- Announcement at begin of semester</li> <li>- No scheduled time for discussing “Hausarbeiten”</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- I think, besides the time-management, I would not change at thing. (Maybe ask the students to not form groups in the island game right before the game starts.)</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- What I found rather difficult was the amount of topics that we dealt with. I hence have some problems with connecting all of them. I can therefore not say to have a more consistent overview of libertarianism I had before – I rather realized how complicated the topic actually is and that I need to do a lot more work still to finally understand libertarianism as a whole!</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Slight improvement in time management possible, but not necessary other than that</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Seminar plan too full =&gt; we were too pressed with time to get properly into discussion sometimes</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Lecturer at times slightly impatient (maybe due to pressing time the schedule too full!)</li> <li>- Island game too long</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Lecturer could be more sensible in interrupting students</li> <li>- More explanation about relation to 20<sup>th</sup> century</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The workload in advance was immense. I couldn't do anything else for the last 2-3 weeks.</li> <li>- Because there was so much to read I forgot about much of the content. So maybe the reading list could be stripped down. =&gt; otherwise so much that pressure I can only concentrate on finishing the texts not critically engage with their content. OR maybe announce the seminar earlier</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Discussion of some issues fell short</li> <li>- Too little time to ask questions which were only slightly related. But maybe this could be fixed by sending in review earlier + list of additional questions.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The only problem I found was that I needed to do so much work before the seminar and, due to that (stress and nervous), I could not learn properly and take all the knowledge that I should</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- That was indeed a shitload of work to do in advance. I totally see the point of this and it's not "bad", but for me really hard to comply with beside usual university stuff I do, engagement in societies, sport etc. BUT: I learned in advance as well.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- It was quite long in the end (only a minor point)</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- An dem Zeitmanagement ist noch zu arbeiten ...</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Timetable</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Nicht so toll war, dass wir so sehr mit der Zeit überzogen haben.</li> <li>- Das required reading vor dem Seminar war viel zu viel Arbeit. Ich habe weit länger als die angedachten 2,5 Stunden für einen Text + Zusammenfassung gebraucht, da es einfach sehr viel Zeit benötigt, 30 Seiten englisch + keine leichte Lektüre zu lesen + zu verstehen. Das sollte vllt. beim nächsten Seminar bedacht werden. Ansonsten gutes Anwenden von Unterrichtsmethoden – sehr spannendes Seminar!</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The pizza, basically, that's it.</li> <li>- Thank you for returning to Bayreuth, looking forward to any future seminars!</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Room for improvement: found it quite hard to find a thesis for an essay about a topic I had to decide on before really having much thought about it. Some suggestions for thesis to defend might be useful even though that would obviously lower the niveau.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Group discussions also lead into confusion.</li> <li>- Time keeping was improvable</li> <li>- We had to read and prepare a lot before the seminar.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- I did not really get why we had presentations about texts we had to review</li> <li>- Sometimes we had to rush, even though we skipped topics.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- I liked the idea of the island game and the theater but I felt like they were a little bit too time consuming compared to their learning value (especially the theater. The game was a nice break, but still a little too long). I would have preferred to hear little about e.g. cyber libertarianism instead.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- I really don't have anything bad to say. You are a great talent in what you are doing and the last three days were highly enjoyable.</li> </ul>

### 3.4 Written Feedback: Advanced Introduction to Philosophy (Graduate Course, 2016)

All written feedback shown.

**What aspects of this course did you find particularly convincing?**

Atmosphere

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Flexibility regarding times

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To structure arguments logically

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The reading material was challenging but interesting

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The whole course was very good. In particular, I liked the presentation/outline of the different branches of philosophy

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The way in which the very basic distinctions and phil. methods were introduced

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Matthias did a great job in breaking down stuff and motivate a passion for philosophy. It never got boring

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Learned more in 5 days than ever before

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Learning about the methods and character of philosophy

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Motivation to think and discuss topics from many different fields

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reading/research suggestions

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advice on academic writing in philosophy

---

exercise/group activities

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interactive lecture

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the way how to reconstruct an argument

---

all the exercises

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introduction to the logical structure

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the structure was very clear and adhered to. Therefore, continuous learning & progress could be guaranteed

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the instructors knowledge about the subject matter

---

the way of bringing methods to the students

---

giving an introduction into all fields of that subject with the help of an example

---

interactivity

---

group size

---

choice of texts and topics

---

overview over philosophy schools

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student involvement

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**In what aspects of this course do you think there is room for improvement?**

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Would have been nice to get the texts earlier

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It could be longer!

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Perhaps a little more use of different media (film, pictures, ...)

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More preparation time before the first day of class

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Maybe the papers that were expected to be read could have been provided a bit earlier

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A tad more on the general approach to reading philosophical papers

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There might be too many papers to be read (we did not discuss them all)

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Sometimes the examples used in explanations weren't very good (e.g. "poisoned cake") / talk a little more about analytic philosophy (e.g. major figures, positions, schools) as practised in Bayreuth

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**Other comments or suggestions for the instructor**

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Really a great and helpful course!

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Excellent instructor. Fun way of teaching. Very engaging

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Give more courses in Bayreuth!

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Get rid of Oxford accent

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I was very much committed to and interested in the course, keep up the good work!

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Thank you

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All things considered, good intro to philosophy!

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### 3.5 Written Feedback: Tutorials at Oxford (2015-6)

Responses to an anonymous, voluntary feedback form across all courses given at Oxford. The 10 most recent responses to each question are shown without any redactions.

#### **What were your overall impressions of the tutorials?**

- I very much enjoyed the tutorials. I thought they were at the right level in terms of difficulty and amount of reading. Matthias was engaging and able to lead a fruitful discussion, knowing when was appropriate to raise questions or issues.
- The tutes were interesting, I felt we went over quite a lot of ground pretty quickly. It was particularly useful to round up at the end, summarising the main arguments. Overall they were well balanced and helped greatly with understanding the material.
- I mostly enjoyed the tutorials. The discussions are very detailed and are very helpful in terms of equipping me with logically thinking skills. I understand that given the breadth of each topic and the limited time we have for each tutorial, we can only focus on examining a small aspect of the readings. However, I deem it helpful if you could briefly walk us through the key debates in each topic either before or after a more focused discussion.
- Interactive and stimulating. Responding to others' essays and presenting was a natural way to start discussion.
- Very welcoming and engaging, but still delivering a lot of content which was particularly useful. Coupled with the additional examination-prep session, I felt like these tutorials prepared me and challenged me a lot more than any other classes.
- I found the tutorials really enjoyable, they were both challenging and engaging. I felt that I was able to build on my substantive knowledge of the topics whilst also becoming better at developing my reasoning skills through being pushed to defend arguments. They were definitely the most interesting tutes I've had.
- I learnt far more in the two tutorials that I had with you than I learnt in a whole term at St. Catz. I found the tutes very engaging and interesting and have almost certainly saved me for my final exam.
- Very much a discussion rather than a lecture, which was great. I felt like I was being stretched which helped me see the mistakes that I had made, but also in defending my point of view, I became more confident in what I had written.
- Mostly okay.
- Enjoyable, engaging.

#### **How can the tutorials be improved?**

- I felt that sometimes the essay questions/tutorials did not link fully with the reading list. If we could maybe have more structured reading list or more guidance with it it would be helpful.
- I can't think of anything that would improve it - it was excellent.
- Potentially having a 20 minute discussion at the end of the last tutorial to link up the various weeks work to get an overview could be helpful. I.e. discussing how would utilitarianism work in a broader, more complete picture, drawing from the various discussions had.
- Having slightly more time to round up, maybe after a certain section. Sometimes we seemed to go off on a tangent which is interesting but easy to lose track of the main lines of argument.
- As above.
- At the end of each tutorial, highlight the aspects which are key to a successful exam answer and which are interesting but superfluous.
- It would be helpful if, after an essay is read, you made your own brief criticisms before the others in the room - although the reader has already seen these, it would stop the sub-



sequent debate being based on a mistaken theses or argument, which occasionally happened in our group.

- I'm still a bit nervous about how to actually show what I know/can do in an exam situation. However, we do have our revision class this week which might address this. Other than that I wouldn't change anything.
- No negative comments.
- Perhaps there could be a greater level of critical analysis when we make a point that you think is not fully justified, because we often come away having an interesting chat but not necessarily with too much conviction about where the argument is strongest.

### **What aspects of the tutorials did you like?**

- The atmosphere was very good, I felt I could easily ask any questions, and they were good at making me think through the issues.
- Essay feedback was very helpful & your engaging discussions.
- The amount of time you spent explaining vs asking us questions I thought was good. Also it was useful to have something on the board, a couple of hints to keep things structured.
- I like how you always probe us with basic questions and allow us to think things through ourselves. I like the idea of presenting our work as it really helps us to write argumentative rather than descriptive essays and forces us to write in a clear and logical way.
- Allowed us to explore key ideas and understand your points through questions and examples, rather than lecture style responses. Helped us to develop/refine raw ideas to come to more sophisticated positions.
- (Definitely despite the above), I thought that structuring tutorials around a particular essay was incredibly useful in forcing us to improve our writing style itself, something which in legal topics tends to be neglected in favour of simply reaching the 'correct' answer. Stressing the importance of simplicity was central to this, and your pre-tutorial notes on the questions, the material and a general essay structure were invaluable: I know most tutors did not give their students such guidance, and they have found it much harder to change how they approach an essay. Thank you!
- I liked the framework of having one student present their essay and the other reply to it. I also liked the freedom of the tutorial to develop views and arguments about the key questions rather than having shallower discussion of every bit of material.
- I enjoyed that you seemed genuinely enthusiastic about teaching and that you explained things in such simple terms. The structure of the tutorials was also very good, a quick run through followed by time for some more in depth discussions if needed. I appreciated that you always allowed students a chance to answer before you gave your own point of view, it allowed us to work out where we were going wrong.
- I really appreciated the frank and honest assessments of my work which I think really helped me to improve.
- Liked the balance between talking between the tutorial partner and talking with you. The format where one presents an outline seems a good method to explore the question while also picking out the parts that we found most interesting.

### **3.6 Unsolicited Emails**

I have received some unsolicited emails from former students. Three examples:

I just wanted to say how grateful I am for your teaching and revision sessions over the past few terms; your advice was invaluable, and I felt much more confident going into the exam with that material behind me.

Thank you so much for your excellent teaching in [...] and your kind help and support throughout the course! I was at first intimidated by the subject but your well structured and clear teaching made learning much easier. I would also like to thank you for marking additional essays for me when I needed. I have to

say I was really surprised by my result. [The student received first-class honours.] Without your help this would not have been possible!

[after an invitation to a host a graduate reading group:] Thank you so much for leading our discussion today. There was real enthusiasm for the discussion, both during, and when talking to everyone afterwards. I really appreciated the opportunity to think about these issues and to be guided through them by you. I think that everyone else felt the same way. We are now very enthusiastic to continue reading and thinking about the philosophy of our subject!

# Sample Syllabus: Consequentialism

## General

**Audience.** Undergraduate students with a philosophy major or minor in their second year or higher.

**Overview.** This course deals with consequentialism, one of the major theories in normative ethics. We'll set aside the history of consequentialism, and directly turn to modern versions of the view. We'll focus on (1) the varieties of consequentialism, (2) main objections to consequentialism, and possible replies to these objections, and (3) practical implications of consequentialism.

**Evaluation.** 20% participation, 30% quizzes on readings, 50% term paper.

Readings marked with \* are required readings.

## Part 1: Forms of Consequentialism

### 1. Introduction

*In this lecture, I will clarify basic aspects of consequentialism, and ensure some terminological choices to ease discussion. I also explain the structure of the seminar and the ultimate questions I want to enable you to tackle for yourself.*

\*Hooker, Brad. "Consequentialism." In *The Routledge Companion to Ethics*, edited by John Skorupski, 444–55. London: Routledge, 2010.

### 2. Well-Being and Welfarism

*What is well-being? What different theories of well-being are there? What is welfarism? How can it be defended?*

\*Keller, Simon. "Welfarism." *Philosophy Compass* 4, no. 1 (2009): 82–95.

\*Parfit, Derek. *Reasons and Persons*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984. Appendix I, "What makes Someone's Life Go Best?"

Kagan, Shelly. "The Limits of Well-Being." *Social Philosophy and Policy* 9, no. 2 (1992): 169–89.

Sobel, David. "Well-Being as the Object of Moral Consideration." *Economics and Philosophy* 14, no. 2 (1998): 249–81.

### 3. Act- and Rule-Consequentialism

*How do act- and rule-consequentialism diverge? On what basis should we decide which to accept? How does Hooker avoid that his rule-consequentialism does not collapse into act-consequentialism?*

\*Hooker, Brad. "Rule Consequentialism." *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/consequentialism-rule/>.

\*Arneson, Richard. "Sophisticated Rule Consequentialism: Some Simple Objections." *Philosophical Issues* 15, no. 1 (2005): 235–51.

Hooker, Brad. *Ideal Code, Real World: A Rule-Consequentialist Theory of Morality*. Oxford University Press, 2000.

Rawls, John. "Two Concepts of Rules." *Philosophical Review* 64, no. 1 (1955): 3–32.

### 4. Consequentialism vs Deontology

*What does the denial of consequentialism imply? What is a side-constraint? Why is consequentialism incompatible with it? What is the "paradox of deontology" (or "paradox of constraints")?*

\*Kamm, Frances. *Intricate Ethics* (2007). Chapter 1, "Nonconsequentialism". Sections 1-4.A & 6-7 = p. 12-21 & 26-31. (Kamm's text is difficult and dense. Try to read it slowly and carefully.)

\*Nozick, Robert. *Anarchy, State, and Utopia* (1974). "Moral Constraints and Moral Goals" and "Why Side Constraints?", pp. 28–33.

Foot, Philippa. "Utilitarianism and the Virtues." *Mind* 94 (1985): 196–209.

Lippert-Rasmussen, Kasper. "Kamm on Inviolability and Agent-Relative Restrictions." *Res Publica* 15, no. 2 (2009): 165–78.

### 5. Agent-Relative Consequentialism

*What is “agent-neutral” and “agent-relative” value? Is consequentialism compatible with agent-relative value? If we accept agent-relative value, what is the difference between consequentialist and non-consequentialist views?*

\*Sen, Amartya. “Rights and Agency.” *Philosophy and Public Affairs* 11, no. 1 (1982): 3–39.

Dreier, James. “Structures of Normative Theories.” *The Monist* 76 (1993): 22–40.

Portmore, Douglas. “Combining Teleological Ethics with Evaluator Relativism: A Promising Result.” *Pacific Philosophical Quarterly* 86, no. 1 (2005): 95–113.

### 6. Rejecting Constraints

*Are side-constraints strange? Are they irrational? Should we prefer a moral theory which does not contain side-constraints?*

#### Readings

\*Scheffler, Samuel. “Agent-Centred Restrictions, Rationality, and the Virtues.” *Mind* 94, no. 375 (1985): 409–19.

\*Lippert-Rasmussen, Kasper. “In What Way Are Constraints Paradoxical?” *Utilitas* 11, no. 1 (1999): 49–70.

Otsuka, Michael. “Are Deontological Constraints Irrational?” In *The Cambridge Companion to Nozick’s Anarchy, State, and Utopia* (2011), edited by Ralf Bader and John Meadowcroft, 38–58.

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## Part 2: Objections and Replies

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### 7. Demandingness Objection

*What is the “demandingness” objection against utilitarianism? What role should demandingness play in choosing between different ethical theories?*

\*Mulgan, Tim. *The Demands of Consequentialism* (2001). Ch. 2.

Sobel, David. “The Impotence of the Demandingness Objection.” *Philosophers’ Imprint* 7, no. 8 (2007): 1–17.

### 8. Extremism about Demands

*Is our common sense about how demanding morality is mistaken? Does morality have very extreme demands? Is the only reason why we reject the high demands of morality because we’re lazy?*

Unger, Peter. *Living High and Letting Die: Our Illusion of Innocence* (1996).

Kagan, Shelly. *The Limits of Morality* (1989).

\*Singer, Peter. “Famine, Affluence, and Morality.” *Philosophy and Public Affairs* 1, no. 3 (1972): 229–43.

### 9. Friendship/Integrity Objection

*The person you most love requires your time, but you could do much more good for humanity using that time otherwise. Can consequentialism defend the claim that it’s permissible for you to spend time with him/her? How?*

\*Kapur, Neera Badhwar. “Why It Is Wrong to Be Always Guided by the Best: Consequentialism and Friendship.” *Ethics* 101, no. 3 (1991): 483–504.

Williams, Bernard. “A Critique of Utilitarianism.” In *Utilitarianism: For and against* (1973), edited by J. J. C. Smart and Bernard Williams, 77–150. (Focus on sections 1-5.)

### 10. Indirect Consequentialism

*What is indirect consequentialism? Can indirect consequentialism answer the friendship/integrity objection? Can it help us with the demandingness objection?*

\*Railton, Peter. “Alienation, Consequentialism, and the Demands of Morality.” *Philosophy and Public Affairs* 13, no. 2 (1984): 134–71.

\*Griffin, James. “The Distinction Between Criterion and Decision Procedure: A Reply to Madison Powers.” *Utilitas* 6, no. 2 (1994): 177–82.

Bales, Eugene. “Act-Utilitarianism: Account of Right-Making Characteristics or Decision-Making Procedure?” *American Philosophical Quarterly* 8, no. 3 (1971): 257–65.

Mason, Elinor. “Can an Indirect Consequentialist Be a Real Friend?” *Ethics* 108, no. 2 (1998): 386–93.

### 11. Impracticality Objection

*What is "subjective" consequentialism? Is it the best formulation of consequentialism? Can we apply consequentialism under realistic circumstances?*

\*Lenman, James. "Consequentialism and Cluelessness." *Philosophy & Public Affairs* 29, no. 4 (2000): 342–70.

\*Jackson, Frank. "Decision-Theoretic Consequentialism and the Nearest and Dearest Objection." *Ethics* 101, no. 3 (1991): 461–82.

Feldman, Fred. "Actual Utility, The Objection from Impracticality, and the Move to Expected Utility." *Philosophical Studies* 129, no. 1 (2006): 49–79.

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## Part 3: Applied Issues

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### 12. Repugnant Conclusion

*What are total and average utilitarianism? How do these views conflict? What is the repugnant conclusion?*

\*Parfit, Derek. "Overpopulation and the Quality of Life." In *The Repugnant Conclusion*, 7–22. Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2004.

Arrhenius, Gustaf, Jesper Ryberg, and Torbjörn Tännsjö. "The Repugnant Conclusion." *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*,

\*Huemer, Michael. "In Defence of Repugnance." *Mind* 117, no. 468 (2008): 899–933.

### 13. Animals

*If utilitarianism was true, what implications would it have for our attitudes towards animals?*

\*Hills, Alison. "Utilitarianism, Contractualism and Demandingness." *Philosophical Quarterly* 60, no. 239 (2010): 225–42.

Singer, Peter. *Practical ethics* (1993). Chapter 3, "Equality for animals?"

### 14. Esoteric Morality

*Should utilitarians sometimes deceive people about true morality? Should philosophers sometimes not tell the public inconvenient truths about morality?*

\*De Lazari-Radek, Katarzyna, and Peter Singer. "Secrecy in Consequentialism: A Defence of Esoteric Morality." *Ratio* 23, no. 1 (2010): 34–58.

\*Hooker, Brad. "Publicity in Morality: A Reply to Katarzyna De Lazari-Radek and Peter Singer." *Ratio* 23, no. 1 (2010):

### 15. Effective Altruism

*Should you become a banker if you wish to do the most good? What's the best way to spend your money if you're a consequentialist?*

\*MacAskill, William. "Replaceability, Career Choice, and Making a Difference." *Ethical Theory and Moral Practice* 17, no. 2 (2014): 269–83.

\*<http://80000hours.org/>, <http://www.givingwhatwecan.org/> (Have a look at these websites and find out what they advocate and why.)

# Sample Syllabus: Democracy

## General

**Audience.** Second- or third-year undergraduate students, or students who have already taken an intro course in political philosophy. Can also be modified to fit graduate students, or non-philosophy students with a political science background.

**Overview.** This course doesn't aim to provide a comprehensive overview on democratic theory. Instead, it focusses on five recent discussions in democratic theory: (1) the value of democracy, (2) borders, (3) social choice and democracy, (4) voting, (5) some applied topics.

**Aims.** (1) To introduce you to current debates in political theory; (2) To enable you to read and critically analyse current research in democratic theory; (3) To use democratic theory to make a contribution to real-world political debates.

**Evaluation.** 20% participation, 30% quizzes on readings, 50% research paper.

Readings marked with \* are required readings.

## Part 1: The Value of Democracy

### 1. Intrinsic Value of Democracy

*What does it mean to say that democracy has "intrinsic" value?*

*What is the best argument for the claim that democracy has intrinsic value?*

\*Christiano, Thomas. "The Authority of Democracy." *Journal of Political Philosophy* 12, no. 3 (2004): 266–290.

\*Anderson, Elizabeth. "Democracy: Instrumental Vs Non-Instrumental Value." In *Contemporary debates in political philosophy*, edited by Thomas Christiano and John Philip Christman (2009).

### 2. Instrumental Value of Democracy

*What is the best argument for the claim that democracy has only instrumental value? What implications would it have if it turned out that democracy has only instrumental value?*

\*Arneson, Richard. "Democracy Is Not Intrinsically Just." In *Justice and democracy: essays for Brian Barry*, edited by Keith Dowding, Robert Goodin, and Carole Pateman (2004).

Sen, Amartya. "Democracy as a Universal Value." *Journal of Democracy* 10, no. 3 (1999): 3–17.

### 3. Lottery Voting

*What are the advantages of lottery voting over standard forms of democratic voting? Is lottery voting more fair in distributing power than majority rule?*

\*López-Guerra, Claudio. "The Enfranchisement Lottery." *Politics, Philosophy & Economics* 10, no. 2 (2011): 211–233.

Saunders, Ben. "Democracy, Political Equality, and Majority Rule." *Ethics* 121, no. 1 (2010): 148–177. [Section 2 and 3 are very difficult. Focus on secs. 1 & 4-5.]

### 4. Democracy and Truth

*Should we choose democracy because it is the best way to find out about the truth?*

Estlund, David. *Democratic Authority* (2008). Chapter 2, "Truth and Despotism".

\*Anderson, Elizabeth. "The Epistemology of Democracy." *Episteme: A Journal of Social Epistemology* 3, no. 1 (2006): 8–22.

## Part 2: Boundaries

### 5. Who Is Part of the *Demos*?

*What is the best criterion for who should have a say in democratic decisions? Can we defend the claim that only Germans should have a say in decisions made by the German government?*

\*Whelan, F. G. "Democratic Theory and the Boundary Problem." In *Liberal Democracy*, edited by J. R. Pennock and J. W. Chapman (1983).

\*Miller, David. "Democracy's Domain." *Philosophy & Public Affairs* 37, no. 3 (2009): 201–228.

#### 6. Democracy and Borders

*Can we defend the idea of national borders if we take the idea of democracy seriously? Is there an inherent tendency in the idea of democracy to a global state?*

\*Abizadeh, Arash. "Democratic Theory and Border Coercion: No Right to Unilaterally Control Your Own Borders." *Political Theory* 36, no. 1 (2008): 37–65.

\*Miller, David. "Why Immigration Controls Are Not Coercive: A Reply to Arash Abizadeh." *Political Theory* 38, no. 1 (2010): 111–120.

### Part 3: Democracy and Social Choice

#### 7. Arrow's Theorem

*Does Arrow's Theorem show that the aggregation of votes is inherently flawed? Does it show that democracy is inherently flawed? Can we overcome the problems of aggregation by turning to a more deliberative conception of democracy?*

Riker, William. *Liberalism against populism*. (1982). Parts 1.D-1.E, 5, 10.A-10.C.

\*Elster, Jon. "The Market and the Forum: Three Varieties of Political Theory." In *Debates in Contemporary Political Philosophy: An Anthology*, edited by Derek Matravers and Jonathan Pike (2003).

#### 8. Condorcet Jury Theorem

*What are the assumptions that underlie the Condorcet Jury Theorem (CJT)? Are these assumptions realistic? If they're not realistic, can the CJT still tell us something about democracy?*

\*Grofman, Bernard, and Scott L. Feld. "Rousseau's General Will: A Condorcetian Perspective." *The American Political Science Review* 82, no. 2 (1988): 567–576.

List, Christian, and Robert Goodin. "Epistemic Democracy: Generalizing the Condorcet Jury Theorem." *Journal of Political Philosophy* 9, no. 3 (2001): 277–306.

#### 9. Judgment Aggregation

*What is the Democratic Trilemma? Which of the following should we relax in response to that trilemma – robustness to pluralism, basic majoritarianism, or collective rationality?*

\*List, Christian. "The Logical Space of Democracy." *Philosophy & Public Affairs* 39, no. 3 (2011): 262–297. (You only have to read sections I-V (up to p. 290).)

List, Christian. "The Discursive Dilemma and Public Reason." *Ethics* 116, no. 2 (2006): 362–402.

### Part 4: Voting

#### 10. Is It Rational To Vote?

*Which is the most promising avenue to solve the paradox of voting? Does the paradox of voting rest on a mistaken conception of what it means to causally bring about a result?*

\*Dowding, Keith. "Is It Rational to Vote? Five Types of Answer and a Suggestion." *British Journal of Politics & International Relations* 7, no. 3 (2005): 442–459.

Tuck, Richard. *Free riding* (2008). Chapter 2.

#### 11. Is There A Duty To Vote?

*Is there a good consequentialist argument for a duty to vote? Is there a good Kantian argument for a duty to vote? If there was no duty to vote, would this be a great problem?*

\*Lomasky, Loren, and Geoffrey Brennan. "Is There a Duty to Vote?" *Social Philosophy and Policy* 17, no. 1 (2000): 62–86.

Brennan, Jason. "Polluting The Polls: When Citizens Should Not Vote." *Australasian Journal of Philosophy* 87, no. 4 (2009): 535–549.

#### 12. Do We Have A Right To Vote?

*Do you agree with Brennan's argument for moderate epistocracy? If not, what is the best argument against Brennan's claim that incompetent citizens should have no right to vote?*

\*Brennan, Jason. "The Right to a Competent Electorate." *The Philosophical Quarterly* 61 (2011): 700–724.

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### Part 5: Other Positions

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#### 13. Deliberative Democracy

*How does deliberative democracy contrast with non-deliberative forms of democracy? Is the concept of deliberative democracy too vague to be helpful? Why should we deliberate?*

\*Gutmann, Amy, and Dennis Thompson. *Why Deliberative Democracy?* (2004). Chapter 1, "What Deliberative Democracy Means".

Freeman, Samuel. "Deliberative Democracy: A Sympathetic Comment." *Philosophy & Public Affairs* 29, no. 4 (2000): 371–418. [only sections 1 and 2, i.e., pages 371–396.]

#### 14. Judicial Review

*Does judicial review violate democratic principles? Is the common fear of a "tyranny of the majority" exaggerated?*

\*Waldron, Jeremy. "The Core of the Case Against Judicial Review." *Yale Law Journal* 115 (2006): 1346–1406. [Skip sections IV and VII.]

\*Lever, Annabelle. "Democracy and Judicial Review: Are They Really Incompatible?" *Perspectives on Politics* 7, no. 4 (2009): 805–822.



# Sample Syllabus: Introduction to Philosophy

## General

**Audience.** Academically advanced students with no or very little previous background in analytic philosophy. It's ideal for students wishing to change their major, or who are starting into a new MA degree. This course can also be modified to include units on academic writing. With some heavy changes, it could also be adapted as an introductory class for first-year undergraduates.

**Overview.** We'll look at some famous papers and selected debates in ethics, political philosophy, philosophy of science, and philosophy of economics. The aim isn't to be comprehensive, but to teach you how philosophy "works" through selected examples, and how to do it yourself.

**Method.** Roughly half of the course will be in the form of interactive lectures. Ideally, I should never speak for more than ten minutes before you interrupt me with questions. The other half of the course is given over to various exercises. These are guided by your initiative and interests, and I'm happy to modify contents accordingly.

**Aims.** (1) Become comfortable with (analytic) philosophy; (2) Get to know some fundamental positions and problems in philosophy; (3) Be able to identify fundamental argument structures and styles in philosophy; (4) Learn how to reconstruct and criticise arguments from papers in philosophy; (5) Acquire the tools to research philosophical questions by yourself.

**Evaluation.** 25% participation (you will be assessed by your preparation, dedication and teamwork, not your level of knowledge; making mistakes is expected and encouraged)  
25% debate performance in session 9 (similar remarks apply)  
50% test on philosophical method (the test will require you to apply some of the philosophical techniques we've learned, and will quiz you on some of the readings)

**Readings.** All readings are mandatory. There are only seven texts; try to read them carefully and thoroughly. I will email you with questions to guide your reading of the texts, and also with links to provide background to some of the texts. I'll also hand out a guide with optional further readings at the beginning of the course.

## Contents

### Session 1. Philosophy

Interactive Lecture. A very brief history of analytic philosophy

Text & Discussion. Gettier, Edmund. "Is Justified True Belief Knowledge?" *Analysis* 23, no. 6 (1963): 121–123.

Exercise: Basic Logic. We will do some exercises regarding (1) necessary and sufficient conditions, and (2) basic logical argument forms.

### Session 2. Normative Inquiry

Interactive Lecture. What's a moral argument?

Text & Discussion. Singer, Peter. "Rich and Poor." In *Practical Ethics* (1993), 191–215.

Exercise: Basic Logic. We continue with logical exercises regarding basic logical argument forms and how to identify them.

### Session 3. Applied Ethics

Interactive Lecture. Trolleyology

Text & Discussion. Foot, Philippa. "The Problem of Abortion and the Doctrine of Double-Effect." In *Virtues and Vices* (2002), 19–31.

### Session 4. Normative Ethics

Interactive Lecture. Consequentialism and Friendship

Text & Discussion. Kapur, Neera Badhwar. “Why It Is Wrong to Be Always Guided by the Best: Consequentialism and Friendship.” *Ethics* 101, no. 3 (1991): 483–504.

Exercise: Approaching a New Philosophical Problem. We’ll discuss how to find information on and literature for new problems you encounter, using tools such as PhilPapers and the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy.

### **Session 5.** Metaethics

Interactive Lecture. Moral realism and Mackie’s error theory

Text & Discussion. Mackie, John Leslie. *Ethics. Inventing Right and Wrong* (1977). Sections 1.1–1.3, 1.7–1.12 = p. 15–20, 30–49.

Exercise: Reconstructing an Argument. You will learn how to reconstruct an argument from a text, using basic logical tools, and how to do it well.

### **Session 6.** Political Philosophy

Interactive Lecture. Some problems from Rawls

Preparing Debate. We’ll have a debate in session 9. We’ll use some time today to prepare it.

### **Session 7.** Philosophy of Science

Interactive Lecture. Scientific Realism and the Miracles Argument

Text & Discussion. Laudan, Larry. “A Confutation of Convergent Realism.” *Philosophy of Science* 48, no. 1 (1981): 19–49. If pressed for time, skip section 6.

Exercise: Understanding the Structure of a Text. Laudan’s text has a very clear logical structure which we’ll analyse and discuss together.

### **Session 8.** Philosophy of Economics

Interactive Lecture. Unrealistic Assumptions in Economic Models

Text & Discussion. Friedman, Milton. “Methodology of Positivist Economics.” In *Essays in Positive Economics* (1966).

Exercise: Criticising a Text. We’ll discuss how to critically assess a text.

### **Session 9.** Discussion: *Is morality relative?*

Interactive Lecture: Presenting Philosophical Ideas and Good Behaviour in Philosophical Discussion

Debate. In this session, you will split in two groups, one arguing for, the other against moral relativism. (If you wish to debate some other topic, raise the issue at the beginning of the seminar.) The structure is as follows: (1) opening statements from both groups, (2) cross-examination of each group by the other, (3) open debate, (4) brief closing statements from both groups. The aim of this session is to train your abilities to freely present a philosophical position, and to be a valuable and charitable discussion partner.

### **Session 10.** Your future in philosophy

Open Question Session. Still confused? Any questions about anything (in philosophy)? Bring them here. If there’s a particular topic you’re very interested in, we can also tackle it today.

Closing Lecture. Things to do and read to become a better philosopher.

Course Evaluation.