

## Course Syllabus: Philosophy Seminar, 2019

### Course Information

Name and Number: PHILOSOPHY SEMINAR PHIL495  
Title for the seminar: "What does a Philosopher do?"  
Philosophy Department, Carroll College  
Meets: Tuesday night, 6:30pm-9:00pm; Corette Library, Rm 233  
3 Credits

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*Description: Philosophy Seminar is the capstone course for the Philosophy Major, and fulfills a course requirement for the major and minor. The course also satisfies a CORE requirement in philosophy. The topic of this year's seminar will be the practice of philosophy, and we will be reflecting on this both as something to know (a question which people have tried to answer), and as something to do (an activity which people do). Most especially, we will reflect on philosophy as an activity that we try to do, as we try to do it. You can think of becoming more conscious of this as the overarching goal of this class.*

### Instructor Contact Information

Dr. Mark Smillie; 142 St. Charles; Ph: 447-5416. Email: [msmillie@carroll.edu](mailto:msmillie@carroll.edu)  
Office hours: 3:00-4:30, MTWTh; 2:30-4:00 F.

For issues about this course, students can contact me at my office hours, by phone or by email. I will respond to email and phone inquiries within one business day (Saturdays and Sundays are not business days). I will post notifications about the course (subsequent to this syllabus) in the Moodle News Forum. Be aware, too, that I use the Moodle Calendar to announce upcoming assignment deadlines.

### Course Prerequisites

This upper-level philosophy course requires one previous philosophy course as a prerequisite.

### Instructional Objectives

Consider the issue of doing philosophy, from a the point of view of experienced practitioners in philosophy, and the point of view of philosophy students.

### Student Learning Objectives

Upon successful completion of this course, students will

1. Interpret philosophical texts to understand how philosophers work
2. Identify argument strategies of a text or thinker
3. Formulate an effective objection to an argument
4. Express a well-reasoned argument for and against a position
5. Use conceptual analysis to develop their understanding of the process of philosophy
6. Research a paper, plan a paper strategically and structure a paper given the strategy
7. Comment on philosophical thinking of others in a respectful and professional manner

## Required and Recommended Materials

Mary Midgley, *What is Philosophy For?* London & New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2018. ISBN: 978-1350051072

Graybosch, Anthony J., Gregory M Scott and Stephen M. Garrison. *The Philosophy Student Writer's Manual and Reader's Guide*. 4<sup>th</sup> Edition. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2017. ISBN: 978-1538100929

Other readings will be linked on Moodle.

## General descriptions of Student Work

**Prospectus Assignment:** Students will produce a prospectus for an already published philosophical article, selected from a list provided by the instructor. The requirements for a prospectus will be presented prior to this assignment.

**Prospectus for your paper:** After choosing a topic for their seminar paper, students will write a prospectus for their project.

**Annotated Bibliography:** After choosing a topic for their seminar paper, students will research and produce an annotated bibliography for their semester paper.

**Strategy Assignment:** Students will review various strategies for philosophical articles and analyze them in written examples provided by the instructor.

**Criticism Assignment:** Students will review various critical strategies for arguments and provide criticisms for an argument.

**Commentary Assignment:** Students will review various commentary strategies and comment on other student's papers.

**Final Paper:** Students will submit a 5000-6000 word essay on a philosophical topic/question of their choice, chosen in consultation with the instructor, and the result of multiple drafts and reviews with the instructor and other students.

Course Meetings

	<b>“Track 1” What does a philosopher do?</b>	<b>“Track 2” What do we do when we do philosophy?</b>
T Aug 27	Introduction to Class	Accessing and researching the library database: Terence Kratz
T Sept 3	Discussion class. Read Plato, <i>Apology</i> ; Bertrand Russell, “The Value of Philosophy”, and Garrett Thomson, “Show What Others Hide”	
T Sept 10	Discussion class. Read Mary Midgley, “What is Philosophy For?” Parts I and II	Discuss the Prospectus and Bibliography. Assign the prospectus assignment. Begin to Identify a Question you’d like to pursue; work on a prospectus.
T Sept 17		Prospectus Assignment due prior to class; bring to class to discuss in groups.
T Sept 24	Discussion class. Read Mary Midgley, “What is Philosophy For?” Parts III and IV	Resources
T Oct 1		Prospectus and Bibliographies due. Discuss prospectus in class. Discussion about strategies.
T Oct 8		Strategy assignment due.
T Oct 15	No class, Fall break	
T Oct 22		Draft workshop:
T Oct 29		Assign #3 due; discuss in class
T Nov 5	No Class—Dr. Smillie is out of town	
T Nov 12		Commentary Class. Due?
T Nov 19		Draft Workshop and consultations. Prep for symposium
T Nov 26	No Class—Thanksgiving break	
T Dec 3	<b>Public Symposium</b> 6:30-9:00	
Dec 10	Final Versions of papers are due	

## Grade Definitions and Relevant Rubrics

**Final Grades will be assigned according to the following weighting**

- Prospectus Assignment: 10%
- Prospectus for your paper: 10%
- Annotated Bibliography: 10%
- Strategy Assignment: 15%
- Criticism Assignment: 15%
- Commentary Assignment: 15%
- Final Paper: 25%

*Letter grades for the course assigned as follows. (Check your grade throughout the semester on Moodle.)*

<u>Percentage pts</u>	<u>Grade</u>	<u>Percentage pts</u>	<u>Grade</u>	<u>Percentage pts</u>	<u>Grade</u>
93-100.....	A	80-82 .....	B-	60-69 .....	D
90-92.....	A-	77-79 .....	C+	Below 60 .....	F
87-89.....	B+	73-76 .....	C	P/F Grade .....	D (60)
83-86.....	B	70-72 .....	C-		

## Policy Statements

### Basic Etiquette

Please be on time for class! All students should practice good manners in class and show civility to all, especially in a seminar situation like this. Please remain alert (and awake!) in class, respecting and never interrupting others, limiting private conversations, turning cell phones off, and controlling any urges to text or use your electronic devices. Please, no eating or using tobacco products in class (a small beverage is allowed). Meeting deadlines will be particularly important in this class as we will be using your work as a basis for discussion and analysis in class. Laptops are allowed in class, and typically you will find them useful for completing what we are doing.

### Attendance And Tardiness

Regular attendance is a college policy (see College Catalogue). I keep attendance regularly and expect to be informed if some legitimate excuse keeps you from attending class.

Though tardiness is disruptive to other members of the class, I would rather you came to class late than not at all; so please slip into class quietly if you are late!

I do accept late assignments (turn them in by email or hand if you cannot submit them on Moodle); I reserve the right to penalize them one letter grade, more if they are egregiously late (now there's a new word for you!) Please plan to make up missed exams within one week of the exam date. The process for doing this will be announced in class shortly after semester beginning.

### Institutional And Course Policies On Academic Honesty

The CC Catalogue and the Student Handbook state Carroll College's policy on Academic Integrity. The policy reads: "Students at Carroll College are expected to have high standards of integrity. Any student who cheats or plagiarizes on examinations or assignments, falsifies college records, or fails to give

requested academic information on admission documents is subject to dismissal or other appropriate disciplinary action by the College.” Students violating the policy will be referred to the Vice President for Academic Affairs. Please see these publications for the correct procedures to follow if you have questions concerning the conduct of this class or the grading procedures (other than a final grade).

I expect all my students to have the high standards of integrity expected by the college. A college classroom is a social environment and honesty, responsibility, respect, and even honor are key components for its success. Cheating, plagiarism, fabrication, deception, and complicity undermine our ability to enjoy and profit from this class.

Plagiarism is a particular act of fraud that merits more attention. Plagiarism is both stealing someone else’s work and lying about it. It includes the following

- Turning anyone else’s work (including other students’) as your own
- Copying without giving credit (including copying from the internet)
- Not putting quotations in quotation marks
- Incorrectly identifying the source of a quotation

Plagiarism also includes copying the sentence structure of a source, even if you changed words, and copying so many words or ideas from a source that it makes up the majority of your work, whether you give credit or not.

I will investigate all suspected cases of plagiarism, and will penalize all verified instances; the penalty can be as severe as immediate failure in the course. If you are unsure about whether some actions constitute plagiarism, please ask me.

### Returning Work

I believe in the value of prompt feedback. My goal is to grade and/or return all assignments within 2 weeks of their due dates, if not sooner.

### Making Up Missed Work

Students having good reasons for missing a deadline or test should contact me in advance of the deadline. Good reasons include documented medical reasons, documented court obligations, and athletic team or other Carroll College commitments, family emergencies. Deadlines will be reset to mutually agreed times in these situations.

### Grade Challenges And Appeal Policy

If you do not understand a grade you received, please seek clarification! Under no condition, will a grade review result in a lowered grade. If you want to appeal a grade, please submit your appeal first in writing, explaining your question, or if you think your answer was correct, documenting that belief with evidence from the text. In the case where there is a rubric, please identify the assessments of the rubric that you believe are incorrect and why. After receiving your written request, I will review your documentation and the assignment and decide if a grade change is warranted, and return the test with some written comments. If your concern remains after that, then I will meet with you.

### Office Hours

Office hours are not just for those in trouble. My office hours are a time for you to come talk to me informally, to ask questions about the material or assignments, to review graded work, to get

suggestions for further reading, to discuss other topics related to the course. And if you are having trouble with the course work, we can talk about that too, of course. Make an appointment if you wish, or drop by during the posted times!

### Campus Support Services

The college is committed to making reasonable accommodations for qualified students with disabilities. If you believe that you may need accommodations based on the impact of a disability, please contact Dr. Kathleen Gilboy, Accessibility Services Coordinator, in order to discuss your specific needs and disability documentation requirements and to determine a reasonable accommodation plan. You may schedule a meeting through Handshake with Dr. Gilboy. Her office is located in O'Connell Hall room 126 and her extension is 406-447-4376.

### Copyright Statement

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### About Your Professor

I am a full professor in the Philosophy Department. I received a B.A. from Thomas Aquinas College (CA) in 1983; a Ph.D. in 1992, from the University of Notre Dame, where I studied Medieval Philosophy and the Philosophy of Human Being. I have taught at over a half-dozen institutions before I came to Carroll College in 1995.

I teach many philosophy courses here at Carroll, and I regularly teach Philosophy of Human Nature, Business Ethics, Bioethics, Environmental Ethics, and Medieval Philosophy. Recently I taught a course on the Philosophy of Artificial Intelligence, which would make a great second class if you are interested in the material in this class. My research interests are in Medieval Philosophy, especially the philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas, and applied ethics. I have given papers/presentations on: Thomas Aquinas, Catholic Identity, God's Omnipotence, End of Life Decision-Making, using technology in the classroom, and edited a book on St. Augustine and the environment.

I've been married 34 years and have eight kids (one Carroll grad!). I am involved in various community organizations in Helena and enjoy visiting historical sites, hiking, photography, building things from time to time (and even house remodeling).

### Concluding Disclaimer

The above schedule, policies, and assignments in this course are subject to change in the event of extenuating circumstances or by mutual agreement between the instructor and the students.

### Final Comments

I welcome everyone to the course. I'm glad you've chosen this class, and I promise to do my best to make it meaningful, useful, and enjoyable. Please feel comfortable giving me any comments or suggestions about the progress of the course as we go along. I am happy to make any adjustments to the course that I can.