

UGRD 10041-1

Research Methods in Philosophy

M 8:30–10; 3:30–5 | Kaveri Kodagu (B2-AB), 2nd floor, meeting room

INSTRUCTOR:

Juliana Lima

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My Office: Kaveri Kodagu (B2-AB), 225 | Office Hours: M 12-3; W 10:15-12

COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES

The ability to pursue rigorous creativity, and other capabilities associated with research is best taught through doing, rather than through outlining abstract theories of research. The course will teach students how to do research in Philosophy by working in their honor thesis with constant feedback from the instructor and other students. In this way, students not only learn how to conduct their own research, but also how to collaborate with others, even if it's not in their area of research.

Because of the way the course is structured, it requires students to be independently working on a project. While guidance in doing research will be provided by the instructor, it is not their role to advise students in things specific for their projects, such as identifying the main theses, arguments, and the like.

The course is structured as a seminar with bi-weekly tutorials on research techniques. Every lecture, students will present their work in progress. Other students and the instructor will give feedback. At the end of the semester, students will produce their own research paper on their topic, and present it at a mini-conference.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

By the end of the course, students should:

- have the capability of pursuing their original ideas to make them rigorous, including by working closely alongside others.
- have the capability to express very complex ideas to non-experts with exceptional clarity.
- have the capability of writing very complex ideas for non-experts with exceptional clarity.

- be able to pursue research topics on their own, including a knowledge of where to find research



Weekly Journals (30%)

Each week until week 12, students will produce a journal of up to 300 words, based on their reading and research from that week. They will be submitted weekly to the instructor. Each journal is worth 4%. Only the **8 highest scoring** journals will be considered. They are due by **Friday, 11:59pm**.

No extensions will be granted, except for documented medical emergencies.

Research Paper (30%)

Each student will be expected to write a research paper on their research over the course. The paper may be of **no more than 5000 words**. Deadline: **Monday, November 27, by 11:59pm**.

Note: Students are required to meet with the instructor to discuss paper topics by **Sept 15th, Week 5** and every week or other after the first meeting.

No extensions will be granted, except for documented medical emergencies.

Conference Presentation (20%)

During **week 14**, we will hold a mini-conference, with all students presenting their research for 30 minutes, and answering questions for a further 10 minutes.

No extensions can be granted because the assignment is time sensitive.

In-class Engagement (20%)

Engagement with each other's work is necessary for successful achievement of the ILOs of the course. As such, a lot of weight will be given to student's engagement during the seminars. For each in which a student doesn't show engagement, they will lose 1% of their grade. Lack of engagement can be: not preparing for the presentation they are giving, or not actively participating in the discussion in someone else's seminar.

NOTE: Things change – the Fates are fickle. Information found on this syllabus is subject to revision as we progress through the semester: Readings and content may be added (or cut) depending on our rate of progress, and it may be necessary to amend the due date of the assignments. Revisions will be announced in lecture and posted online. It is each student's responsibility to keep informed of any changes.



If you are facing a major medical or another major difficulty that is keeping you from doing well in the class, contact me as soon as you can. I am happy to work with you to find the best course of action and, if possible, to help you complete the course successfully. But I can't help if you don't let me know about your circumstances as soon as they arise.



Don't wait until after the last week of classes to let me know about your circumstances. At that point there is virtually nothing I can do to accommodate you.

**MATERIALS**

- All course materials, information, assignments, etc. will be available on Moodle.
- All communications will be made through your school email address and Moodle. Please make sure you have turned on notification alert on Account Notification Settings to get an email when you receive messages.

GRADING

The standard university grading scale will apply: 0-39% U, 40-44% E, 45-54% D, 55-54% C, 65-74% B, 75-84% A-, 85-94% A, 95-100% O

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

You are expected to uphold the highest standards of academic integrity. Your work must be your own. Submitting work which you have not composed yourself, or using another person's ideas without due credit, or failing to mark another person's words with appropriate quotation marks all constitute plagiarism. The instructor reserves the right to assess penalties for violations of academic integrity, which may include giving a failing grade for an assignment, for the entire course, or referral to a University disciplinary committee.

STRUCTURE OF THE COURSE

Lectures in this course are tentatively organized in the following way.

Every 3 weeks, we'll focus on the topic of the honors dissertation of one of the students enrolled. For each topic/students we will, together: (a) identify the basic literature, that is a list of books/article to read that will give us basic understanding of the topic; (b) skim read some of the papers/books; (c) learn different theories and main arguments/objections; (d) use softwares to keep track of research and organize bibliography. The lectures will be organized in this way:

- Stage 1: presentation of the topic by the student, and finding basic literature;
- Stage 2: skim reading some papers, learning the background (understanding the question/thesis and main theories);
- Stage 3: discussing arguments and objections.

The remaining 3 weeks will be used for students to workshop their papers. At this point, students will have to have a well-developed draft. Everyone will read the paper, the student will give a presentation, and the audience will give suggestions to improve the paper. Since in the first part of the course everyone will have gained basic knowledge, they'll be in a position to help each other in a meaningful way.

The order of students will be decided randomly (drawing names), unless there's a consensus among students.

Throughout the semester, there might also be specific tutorials, which may be in person/synchronous, pre-recorded videos, or texts. The purpose of tutorials is to be a how-to guides.

Other kinds of support will be offered depending on how the course progresses.

Note: this course is a group activity. As such, it requires active engagement and participation from everyone. There won't be traditional lectures (except in some tutorials). It's only with active engagement coming from philosophical interest from students that the course will be enjoyable and interesting for everyone. The course won't be good unless everyone takes it seriously and prepare presentations, do the readings, and be mentally present in lectures.

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE OF ACTIVITIES

Unit 1 – Thought Experiments

- Week 1* Aug 14 Overview of the course
 Reading: “AITA, that if Jurassic Park were real, I would tell my husband that he cannot go” (https://www.reddit.com/r/AmItheAsshole/comments/chzjl5/aita_that_if_jurassic_park_were_real_i_would_tell/).
 Shoemaker,D. “Thought experiments in philosophy.” (<https://blog.oup.com/2015/04/thought-experiments-philosophy/>)
 Reading: Thought Experiments (SEP)
 Decide the order of topics
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Unit 2 – Knowing the Literature

- Week 2* Aug 21 Student A, Stage 1
 Tutorial: How to find more readings on a topic? SEP, IEP, Google Scholar, paper references, etc.
 Videos: 5 ways of finding papers for your research (<https://youtu.be/xD3CZuu5ikY>)
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- Week 3* Aug 28 Student A, Stage 2
 Tutorial: How to read a paper
 Video: How to read a philosophy paper (<https://youtu.be/kUdzvCBjO1g>)
 Video: 3 tips on how to read a philosophy paper (https://youtu.be/2dmlB5g_yJo)
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- Week 4* Sept 4 Student A, Stage 3
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- Week 5* Sept 11 Student B, Stage 1
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- Week 6* Sept 18 Student B, Stage 2
 Tutorial: Finding a research question
 Video: How to find a paper/research topic (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TkeWSuPxhs8&feature=youtu.be>)

<i>Week 7</i>	Sept 25	Student B, Stage 3
<i>Week 8</i>	Oct 9	Student C, Stage 1 Tutorial: How to write a paper Video: How to write a good philosophy paper (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nI2KkSVRON0)
<i>Week 9</i>	Oct 16	Student C, Stage 2
<i>Week 10</i>	Oct 23	Student C, Stage 3 Tutorial: Talking about research Video: How to talk about research? (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2NnFqX8_4QY)

Unit 3 – Workshopping papers & Presentations

<i>Week 11</i>	Oct 30	Paper workshop: Student A Tutorial: How to give feedback to a colleague's paper Video: How to give research feedback? (TBP)
<i>Week 12</i>	Nov 6	Paper workshop: Student B Tutorial: how to prepare a presentation Video: How to present a paper? (TBP)
<i>Week 13</i>	Nov 13	Paper workshop: Student C Tutorial: TBA
<i>Week 14</i>	TBD	Conference
<i>Week 15</i>	Nov 27	Research paper due

