2014

399-01 Thesis Review

Timothy Brownlee

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PHIL398 & PHIL399 - 01 – THESIS REVIEW

Instructor: Dr. Timothy Brownlee
E-Mail: brownleet@xavier.edu
Office Location: Hinkle Hall 228
Office Phone: 513 745 3697
Office Hours: Tuesday & Thursday 2:30-4PM, or by appointment
Class Meeting Time: TR 8:30-9:45AM in Fall 2013, when scheduled, Hailstones 3; TR4-5:15PM in Spring 2014 (tentative), when scheduled; Locations TBA
Section Number: 01

Note: Please include the course and section number in the subject line of any email correspondence.

COURSE AIMS

The primary aim of these courses is to prepare seniors majoring in Philosophy, or enrolled in the Philosophy, Politics, and the Public program to write their senior thesis projects. To this end, we will work together to learn about and engage in the process of planning, researching, and writing senior theses. In class, we will discuss the processes of deciding on a thesis topic, arriving at strategies for research, formulating a thesis and argument, and writing the thesis itself. In the fall semester, during which we will hold the majority of our meetings, students will decide on a thesis topic, begin to work with their thesis advisor on research, produce an annotated bibliography containing relevant materials, submit a formal proposal document, and a draft of a first section. In the spring semester, when we will meet less frequently, students will work primarily with their advisor in completing the writing and revision of their thesis, and then present and defend that thesis orally.

REQUIRED WORKS


Recommended for those interested:

GRADE BREAKDOWN

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Philosophy Majors</th>
<th>PPP Majors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PHIL398 (1 credit)</td>
<td>PHIL398 (1 credit)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annotated bibliography</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Proposal</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section Draft</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seminar Participation</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<tr>
<td>PHIL399 (2 credits)</td>
<td>PHIL399 (2 credits)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thesis, written &amp; oral</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comprehensive exam</td>
<td>25%</td>
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</table>

PHIL398
This portion of your grade will be awarded on the basis of the quality of your performance in the thesis course. It will be based on the written work that you submit for the seminar (your annotated bibliography, research proposal, and section draft), and your general engagement in the seminar (both in class and in light of your general dedication to the thesis project). Assignments will be
awarded one of three grades: 2 for satisfactory completion, 1 for unsatisfactory completion, and 0 for non-completion or late submission.

**Annotated bibliography:** This document should contain bibliographic information and annotations for at least ten (10) relevant secondary sources. For each relevant source, you will state (1) its primary thesis, (2) a brief sketch of its argument, and (3) a brief statement of its relevance to your project. This document is due *Tuesday, October 1* at the start of class.

**Research proposal:** This document will contain a clear statement of your project’s thesis, a brief outline of its argument, and a review of the relevant secondary research on which you will draw. It should be 6-8 pages in length. It will require the signature of your thesis advisor. It is due to your advisor no later than *Tuesday, October 15* and it must be submitted along with some reflections on your advisor’s response to it no later than *Tuesday, October 29*.

**Section draft:** You will be required to submit a draft of a portion of your thesis (8-10 pages). You will have an opportunity in class to discuss this draft in one-on-one meetings with your classmates, and with the group at large. A written copy of this section is due no later than *Tuesday, November 12*, though students are strongly encouraged to submit something to the class before then for feedback.

**Philosophy Majors**

**Thesis**
This portion of your grade includes both the written thesis itself and an oral defense. The written thesis is usually given about twice as much weight as the oral defense. Both grades are determined by the members of your thesis committee.

*Written thesis:* Your final written thesis should be between 20-40 pages in length. You will write it primarily in consultation with your thesis advisor. You will also be required to find two additional readers for your thesis. The written thesis must consider a specific philosophical topic in light of relevant primary and secondary research. A *completed draft* of your thesis must be submitted to your advisor no later than *Friday, January 31*. Your *final thesis* is due to your committee no later than one week before your scheduled defense.

*Oral defense:* Late in the spring semester, we will schedule an oral defense for your thesis project. Here you will present a brief, 5-10 account of the primary argument and significance of your thesis. Following your summary account, your advisor and readers will have about 45 minutes to ask questions of you. Defenses will be scheduled during the week of *April 28-May 2*.

**Comprehensive Exams**
The written comprehensive examination is usually held on the Friday of finals week or the Monday of the following week. It covers Ethics, Theory of Knowledge, Metaphysics, and three history of philosophy courses of your choice. On exam day, you are given a choice between two questions for each course, and are expected to write about a page for each course. They will likely be held on *Monday, May 5*.

**PPP Majors**

**Written Thesis**
Your final written thesis should be between 25-40 pages in length. You will write it primarily in consultation with your thesis advisor. Your written thesis will concern a specific topic of your choosing from any relevant discipline, though it must also contain some significant philosophical content. You will be expected to conduct research into primary and secondary sources. A *completed draft* of your thesis must be submitted to your advisor no later than *Friday, January 31*. Your *final thesis* is due to your advisor no later than one week before your oral presentation.
On the day of the “Celebration of Undergraduate Student Research,” you will be required to give a brief 10 minute presentation of your thesis’s argument and significance. Any members of the public who attend your defense will have about 15 minutes to ask questions about it. Your advisor will award a grade based on the quality of your presentation and your responses. I currently anticipate that this year’s event will fall on Monday, April 14, but I will confirm this as details emerge.

**COURSE POLICIES**

**ATTENDANCE**

Attendance in class is mandatory. Students are expected to arrive promptly at the start of class, prepared actively to engage with the course material.

Students are permitted one (1) absence per semester. *Every two times a student is late to class, they will have one absence counted against this total.* After the first absence, each successive class missed will result in a final grade reduction of 1.0 grade points. For example, a student who has earned the grade of B but missed 2 classes would receive a C, one who has missed 3 classes would receive a D, and so on.

Any classes missed due to otherwise-sanctioned university activity, minor illness, or any other reason will count as an absence. Students who anticipate missing more than one class for any of these reasons should take special care. Exceptions will be issued only in order to observe a religious holiday.

In the event of extreme illness, it is *imperative* that students make arrangements to meet with the professor to discuss their ability to complete the minimum requirements of the course. While I am willing to make arrangements to enable students who have suffered from such illnesses to complete the course successfully, in the event that the student has missed a significant portion of the class, it may be impossible for them to complete the course. Concerned students should contact the professor as soon as possible.

**CLASSROOM ETIQUETTE**

Students are expected to arrive for class on time and prepared to contribute actively to the class discussion. Timely arrival and preparedness include addressing bodily needs (such as snacking and restroom use) prior to the start of class.

Use of electronic devices of any kind in class is prohibited, except in cases of documented need.

Obviously unacceptable in-class behaviors include: internet viewing, text-messaging, napping, and conversation of issues not related to the class discussion.

**ACADEMIC HONESTY**

The Xavier University Catalog states (http://www.xavier.edu/registrar/ugrd_policies.html#Academic_honesty): “The pursuit of truth demands high standards of personal honesty. Academic and professional life requires a trust based on integrity of the written and spoken word. Accordingly, violations of certain standards of behavior will not be tolerated at Xavier University. These include theft, cheating, plagiarism, unauthorized assistance in assignments and tests, unauthorized copying of computer software, the falsification of results and materials submitted in reports or admission and registration documents, and the falsification of any academic records including letters of recommendation.

“All work submitted for academic evaluation must be the student’s own. Certainly, the activities of other scholars will influence all students. However, the direct and unattributed use of another’s efforts is prohibited as is the use of any work untruthfully submitted as one’s own.

“Penalties for violations of this policy may include one or more of the following: a zero for that assignment or test, an ‘F’ in the course, and expulsion from the University. The dean of the college in which the student is enrolled is to be informed in writing of all such incidents, though the teacher has the full authority to assign the grade for the assignment, test, or course.”

Plagiarism of any kind will not be tolerated.
**TOPICS COVERED**
The following is a rough schedule of our class meetings for the semester. While I will do my best to alert you in advance of any additional meetings, please try to avoid scheduling other commitments during the Thursday session times.

8/27 – Course requirements, syllabus

9/3 – Choosing a topic, stating your topic (Turabian, pp. 3-23)

9/10 – Locating sources (Librarian visit)

9/17 – Locating sources, annotated bibliography (Turabian, pp. 24-36)

9/24 – Effective reading, working with sources (Turabian, pp. 37-48)

10/1 – The elements of argument (Turabian, pp. 49-62); *Annotated bibliography due*

10/8 – Building an argument (Turabian, pp. 63-72)

10/15 – Beginning to write (Turabian, pp. 73-83); *Research proposal due to advisor*

10/22 – Elements of your thesis

10/29 – Responding to suggestions and revision (Turabian, pp. 100-123); *Research proposal and reflection due*

11/5 – Draft of a section discussion and revision: _______________________, _______________________, ____________________________

11/12 – Draft of a section discussion and revision: _______________________, _______________________, _______________________; *Section draft due in class*

11/19 – Draft of a section discussion and revision: _______________________, _______________________, ____________________________

11/26 – Draft of a section discussion and revision: _______________________, _______________________, ____________________________

12/3 – Looking ahead (Turabian, pp. 124-132)

12/10 – Conferences as necessary
PHIL399 THESIS REVIEW
SPRING SEMESTER 2014 SCHEDULE

During Spring Semester 2014, students will complete work on their senior theses. Students will be required to submit drafts of their theses to their readers, and to revise their theses in light of their readers’ comments. Philosophy, Politics, and the Public students will present the results of their research during scheduled sessions during the Celebration of Undergraduate Student Research. Philosophy majors will be responsible for submitting their theses to their readers, and then giving an oral defense of their thesis during at a time scheduled in late April.

Our seminar will meet three times during the spring semester.

The following are the relevant dates for Spring Semester 2014:

Tuesday, January 14, 4-5:15PM – First seminar meeting, Hailstones 5 – Making progress, revision
Friday, January 31, 4PM – Draft of completed thesis due to advisor; Submit to “Assignments” page on course Canvas site – In addition to their primary advisor, philosophy majors must submit the names of two faculty who have agreed to serves as readers for their thesis
Tuesday, February 25, 4-5:15PM – Second seminar meeting, Hailstones 5 – The editing process
Tuesday, March 25, 4-5:15PM – Philosophy Majors only meeting, Hailstones 5 – Final thesis, defense, comprehensives
Monday, April 7, 4PM – PPP Students: Final, revised thesis due to your advisor; Submit to “Assignments” page on course Canvas site (your advisor may require that you submit a final version before this date)
Tuesday, April 8, 4-5:15PM – PPP Majors only meeting, Hailstones 5 – Final thesis, oral presentation
Monday, April 14 – Celebration of Undergraduate Research – PPP students give oral presentations during scheduled times
Monday, April 14, 4PM – Philosophy Majors: Final, revised thesis due to your advisor and readers; Submit to “Assignments” page on course Canvas site (your advisor may require that you submit a final version before this date)
Weeks of April 21-25 – Philosophy Majors Thesis Defenses scheduled throughout
Monday, May 5 1-4PM – Philosophy Majors Comprehensive Exam

Philosophy Majors

THESIS
This portion of your grade includes both the written thesis itself and an oral defense. The written thesis is usually given about twice as much weight as the oral defense. Both grades are determined by the members of your thesis committee.
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Oral defense: Late in the spring semester, we will schedule an oral defense for your thesis project. Here you will present a brief, 5-10 account of the primary argument and significance of your thesis. Following your summary account, your advisor and readers will have about 45 minutes to ask questions of you.

COMPREHENSIVE EXAMS
The written comprehensive examination will be held Monday, May 5 from 1-4PM. It covers Ethics, Theory of Knowledge, Metaphysics, and three history of philosophy courses of your choice. On exam day, you are given a choice between two questions for each course, and are expected to write about a page for each course. Students are encouraged to consult their professors prior to their exams.

PPP Majors

WRITTEN THESIS
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ORAL DEFENSE
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