Department of History and Philosophy  
Kennesaw State University

Styles of Critique: Major Themes (4460) / Senior Seminar (4499)
Semester: Spring 2015
Location: Social Sciences Building, Room 3023
Time: Mondays and Wednesdays, 12:30pm—1:45pm

Instructor: Dr. Amy Donahue
Email: adonahu3@kennesaw.edu
Phone: 470.578.6624
Office: Social Sciences Building, Rm. 4092
Office Hours: Mondays and Wednesdays, 11:15am — 11:45am, 2:15pm—3:15pm or by appointment. I’m happy to meet, in person or electronically, when my schedule allows.

Instructor’s Course Description: The course will examine the possibility of conceiving of ‘philosophy’, not as a field of competing truth claims concerning ethics, metaphysics, epistemology, logic and so on, but potentially more inclusively. We will attempt to reconcile seemingly irreconcilable philosophies associated with figures such as Kant, Maria Lugones, Judith Butler, Plato, Gangeṣa, and Zhuangzi, by conceiving of ‘philosophy’ as a study of methods that discipline allegedly infelicitous cognitive, interpersonal, affective, and/or bodily tendencies.

The first three or so weeks will introduce the class’s central problematic — how to conceive of ‘philosophy’ in ways that do not establish the Western tradition as universal philosophy’s equivalent while marking non-Western traditions as facsimiles of this “original.” This segment will primarily draw on Dipesh Chakrabarty’s “Postcoloniality and the Artifice of History: Who Speaks for ‘Indian’ Pasts” (Representations, No. 37, 1992) and excerpts from Marx’s Capital. The next two weeks will highlight classical Indian philosophies’ treatment of the avoidance of “defects” or “errors” (doṣa-s) as of at least equal importance to the pursuit of excellence (guṇa-s) or truth/reality (satya). In the process, students will be introduced to a provisional thesis: ‘philosophy’ may be conceived more inclusively and constructively, without either elevating any tradition to the status of philosophy’s original or collapsing to relativism, as the identification and yoking of infelicitous tendencies (cognitive, interpersonal, affective, bodily, or so on). Through the remainder of the course, students and the professor will explore and evaluate this hypothesis by conducting and presenting their own research. This research must, at a minimum, explore the possibility of reconciling two apparently irreconcilable philosophies by attending to the specific defects, and the existential/phenomenological/interpersonal contexts of these defects, that these philosophies call on their readers to discipline and critique.
**PHIL 4460 prerequisites:** At least two upper-division courses in Philosophy or permission of the instructor.

**PHIL 4499 prerequisites:** Departmental approval. PHIL 4450 or 4460 with a minimum of a “C.”

**PHIL 4460 Catalogue Course Description:** An in-depth examination of a major theme in the history of western or non-western philosophy. Themes may include time, justice, love, friendship, beauty, materialism, aesthetics, epistemology, and metaphysics. Course may be repeated if the course content is different.

**PHIL 4499 Catalogue Course Description:** The course is a combined tutorial and seminar in which students research and write a senior thesis in addition to making a computer based presentation in class.

**Required Texts:**
Select online articles and materials will be posted to D2L

**Recommended Texts:**


**Instructional Methods:** The course will run primarily as a discussion-based seminar and philosophical research workshop.

The course will culminate in an 8-12 page research paper for PHIL 4460 students, and a 10-15 page research paper for PHIL 4499.

**Learning Outcomes:** For a grade of “B” or better, students must demonstrate an ability to conduct proficient independent undergraduate philosophical research. Students who demonstrate this ability will:
- Develop a clear, relevant, manageable, and original paper proposal and thesis that reflects both the theme of the course and the student’s independent thought and interests, and do so by revising multiple drafts.
- Research and prepare an annotated bibliography of relevant primary and secondary scholarly sources, and do so by revising multiple drafts.
• Prepare, present*, and revise multiple drafts of a single research paper and do so on a timely* basis.
• Complete and present* a final research paper that reflects their independent and original philosophical engagement with the course topic and 4000-level undergraduate philosophical writing and research skills (8-12 pages for PHIL 4460 students, and 10-15 pages for PHIL 4499 students).

* Note — Students with documented conditions that interfere with their abilities to complete these or other learning objectives will receive appropriate accommodation. Please see the section below on ADA compliance.

Course Assessments / Assignments:

Grading:
Tentative thesis, paper proposal, and annotated bibliography — 10%
Refined thesis, paper proposal, and annotated bibliography — 10%
Final draft of thesis, paper proposal, and annotated bibliography — 20%
First draft of paper — 15%
Presentation of final paper — 10%
Final paper — 35%

Grading Scale:
A — 90-100
B — 80-89
C — 70-79
D — 60-69
F — <60
I — Indicates an incomplete grade for the course, and will be awarded only when a student has done satisfactory work up to the last two weeks of the semester, but for nonacademic reasons beyond their control is unable to meet the full requirements of the course. Incomplete grades are only valid after submission of the Incomplete Grade form (signed by both the instructor and student) to the Department Chair’s office.

Tentative thesis, paper proposal, and annotated bibliography: Early in the semester, students will draft a tentative proposal and thesis for their final research paper. The tentative thesis and proposal will be graded on relevance, completion, and effort. The thesis should demonstrate proficient understanding of the class’s central problematic. The proposal will include a rough outline of the paper, which will include a statement of the topic of each section. The tentative annotated bibliography may consist only of primary sources, but should explain how each entry is envisioned to be relevant to the paper proposal. The annotated bibliography will be graded on completion, effort, and its apparent fit with the tentative thesis and paper proposal.
Refined thesis, paper proposal, and annotated bibliography: After receiving feedback on their earlier tentative submission and conducting further independent reading and research, students will submit a revised and refined version of their thesis, paper proposal, and bibliography. The revised thesis and paper proposal will be graded in part on improvements in clarity/specificity, manageability, logical structure, and originality in relation to the previous version. The thesis must again demonstrate proficient familiarity with the class’s central problematic. The proposal will include a rough outline of the paper, which will include a statement of the thesis to be expounded and supported in each section, and an indication of the specific resources that the student will use to support each section’s thesis. The revised bibliography should include both primary and secondary sources, and more detailed/specific explanations of the relevance of each primary source to the thesis and paper proposal. The revised bibliography will be graded on its relevance to the paper proposal and the degree to which it demonstrates sustained research into, and a growing understanding of, the scholarly field that the proposed paper will address and the central problematic of the course.

Final thesis, paper proposal, and annotated bibliography: This final thesis, paper proposal, and annotated bibliography will serve as the course’s midterm assignment. It must be written clearly and grammatically, specify a clear, manageable and original thesis, and include a detailed outline featuring a statement of the thesis to be expounded and supported in each section along with detailed explanations of the concepts and arguments that the student will use to support each section’s thesis, and a detailed annotated bibliography of relevant secondary and primary sources.

First draft of paper: The first draft of the final paper should show that students are making sustained progress in their independent research and that they have begun to develop their arguments and analysis in the format of a formal written paper. First drafts should include a minimum of five complete pages for students enrolled in PHIL 4460, and a minimum of seven complete pages for students enrolled in PHIL 4499.

Oral Presentations: In the final weeks of class, PHIL 4460 students will read and present their works in progress to their classmates, respond to questions or concerns raised by class participants, and raise relevant questions or concerns about others’ presentations. PHIL 4499 students will read and present their works in progress to a general audience of the KSU community, and respond to questions or concerns raised by audience members and by each other.

Final Paper: Students’ final papers will culminate their efforts in the course.

Attendance Policy: The course requires sustained work over the course of a fifteen week semester and continued engagement and improvement. This is not the sort of class that students can let slip. Attendance is required.

Electronic Devices Policy: The volume on all electronic devices should be turned off in class. Students are welcome to use laptops, smart phones, etc. in class to take notes and to look up material relevant to class discussions. However, unrelated texting, chatting, web-surfing, etc. during class will negatively affect students’ class participation grades.
Academic Honesty:
The high quality of education at Kennesaw State University is reflected in the credits and degrees its students earn. The protection of high standards of academic integrity is crucial since the validity and equity of the University's grades and degrees depend upon it.

No student shall receive, attempt to receive, knowingly give or attempt to give unauthorized assistance in the preparation of any work required to be submitted for credit (including examinations, laboratory reports, essays, themes, term papers, etc.). Unless specifically authorized, the presence and/or use of electronic devices during an examination, quiz, or other class assignment is considered cheating. Engaging in any behavior which a professor prohibits as academic misconduct in the syllabus or in class discussion is cheating. When direct quotations are used, they should be indicated, and when the ideas, theories, data, figures, graphs, programs, electronic based information or illustrations of someone other than the student are incorporated into a paper or used in a project, they should be duly acknowledged. No student may submit the same, or substantially the same, paper or other assignment for credit in more than one class without the prior permission of the current professor(s).

Students suspected of violating the KSU statement of Academic Honesty will meet with the instructor to discuss the violation AND will be reported to the Department of Student Conduct according to the process outlined at the following link: https://web.kennesaw.edu/scai/content/scai-misconduct-procedures

ADA Compliance:
The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Public Law 101-336, gives civil rights protections to individuals with disabilities. This statute guarantees equal opportunity for this protected group in the areas of public accommodations, employment, transportation, state and local government services and telecommunications.

Should you require assistance or have further questions about the ADA, please contact: Ms. Nastassia Sanabria, ADA Compliance Officer for Students 770-423-6443.
Tentative Course Schedule
(reading assignments and activities are subject to revision)

Week 1: Introduction
1/7 — Class introductions, welcome, discussion of syllabus, and introduction to the class’s central problematic, and to the course’s preliminary hypothesis.

Weeks 2 — 4: Textual Background — The Central Problematic
(Week 2)
1/12 — Reading due: Dipesh Chakrabarty article (uploaded to D2L).
1/14 — Reading due: Marx excerpt (uploaded to D2L) on commodities and capitalism.

(Week 3):
1/19 — Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday. No class.
1/21 — Re-reading due: First Marx excerpt. Introduction to Marx’s concepts of the equivalent and relative forms of value.

(Week 4):
1/26 — Reading due: Second Marx excerpt. The peculiar differences between money and commodities. Extension to Chakrabarty’s suggestion that ‘Indian’ histories (or philosophies) are subaltern to a hyperreal, imaginary West.
1/28 — Re-Reading due: Chakrabarty and Marx readings. Introduction to the central importance of defect/error (doṣa) in Indian philosophical analyses.

Weeks 5—6: Textual Background — Doṣa-s and the defects of ethnocentrism and relativism
(Week 5):
2/2 — Reading due: Śrīnavasi Rao (uploaded to D2L) and Stephen Phillips (uploaded to D2L)
2/4 — Re-Reading due: Rao and Phillips. Discussion of the need for an adequate conception of ‘philosophy’ to avoid the defects of ethnocentrism and relativism.

(Week 6):
2/9 — Reading due: Kalyan and Donahue (uploaded to D2L). What are the prospects for Decolonial Philosophies that avoid relativism and new ethnocentrisms?
2/11 — Introduction to and discussion of the course’s provisional thesis. Does the threat of relativism show that, at a minimum, all philosophies must be capable of critique? Does this not also show that, at a minimum, all philosophies must be oriented to the identification and yoking of some defect or defects? Further, if philosophy were not primarily conceived of as the pursuit of truth, would it still require an equivalent/money-form? Perhaps ‘philosophy’ could be conceived more inclusively and
constructively, without either elevating any tradition to the status of philosophy’s original or collapsing to relativism, as the identification and yoking of infelicitous tendencies. Perhaps, too, the range of infelicitous habits that Western philosophies critique is unrepresentative of the multiplicity of infelicitous habits that Philosophy, as a discipline, ought to critique.

Weeks 7—8: Preparation of Tentative Paper Theses, Proposals, and Annotated Bibliographies
(Week 7):
2/16 — Discussion. In what ways might specific canonical Western philosophers/philosophies be understood differently if they were read to be primarily concerned, not with attaining truth, reality, perfection, etc., but with identifying and disciplining specific kinds of defects?
2/18 — Discussion. If philosophers/philosophies were understood to be primarily concerned with identifying and disciplining specific defects, could some apparently irreconcilable philosophies? Discussion of possible research paper projects.
(Week 8)
2/23 — Presentation and discussion of tentative theses, proposals, and annotated Bibliographies.
2/25 — Tentative thesis, proposal, and annotated bibliography due

Weeks 9-10: Suggested Theme: Test of our Preliminary Thesis through Plato
(Week 9):
3/2 — Euthyphro reading due.
3/3 — LAST DAY TO WITHDRAW WITHOUT ACADEMIC PENALTY.
3/4 — Euthyphro re-reading due
(Week 10):
3/9 — Apology & Crito reading due.

Weeks 11-12: Suggested Theme: Test of our Preliminary Thesis through Lugones, Zhuangzi, and Kant:
(Week 11)
3/16 — Reading due: Mariá Lugones’s “Playfulness, ‘World’-Traveling, and Loving Perception,” and excerpt from Zhuangzi (uploaded to D2L).
3/18 — Secondary source introduction to Kant’s moral philosophy and excerpt from Kant’s Groundwork (uploaded to D2L).
(Week 12):
3/23 — Lugones, Zhuangzi, and Kant continued. What styles of critique do these philosophers advocate, which defects do they aim to yoke, and in which existential/phenomenological/political contexts?.
3/25 — Lugones and Kant continued.

Week 13: Suggested Theme: Test of our Preliminary Thesis through Nyāya and Judith Butler
3/30 — Reading due: introduction to Nyāya theories of knowledge (uploaded to D2L) and excerpt from Butler’s *Undoing Gender*.

4/1 — Reading due: the function of *doṣa*-s and *guna*-s in Nyāya epistemological practice. If they are Butler’s and Nyāya’s philosophies are read as styles of critique, rather than as competing sets of truth claims, can we reconcile the Nyāya school’s realist philosophy with Butler’s poststructuralist queer theory?

Weeks 14: **Spring Break — No classes.**


(Week 15)

4/13 — **First draft of final paper due.**

4/15 — Class discussion and informal presentations.

(Week 16)

4/20 — Class discussion and informal presentations.

4/22 — Class discussion and informal presentations.

Week 17: Student Presentations

4/27 — Formal student oral presentations

4/28 — Last day of class. Formal student oral presentations

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**FINAL PAPER: DUE ELECTRONICALLY THURSDAY, MAY 4 BY 5:30PM.**

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