

Philosophy 2²3³: Intuitions and Philosophy
Fall 2011
Tuesdays and Thursdays, 2:30pm - 3:45pm

Hamilton College
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Syllabus

Course Description and Overview

We know a lot. We know that we exist, that we and others have conscious sensations, that seven and five are twelve, and that torturing innocent people is wrong. In part, we know these claims because we construct theories of knowledge, mind, mathematics, and ethics. But any theory must be checked against some data. Among these data are our intuitions: the way the world seems to us. *Intuitions and Philosophy* will explore the role of intuitions in our reasoning in epistemology, philosophy of mind, moral philosophy, metaphysics, and other areas. We will consider arguments in favor of using intuitions in philosophy, as well as research on the fallibility of ordinary reasoning. We will also examine some recent experimental results which call into question traditional philosophical methods and conclusions.

Texts

Michael DePaul and William Ramsey. *Rethinking Intuition: The Psychology of Intuition and Its Role in Philosophical Inquiry*. Rowman and Littlefield, 1998.
Joshua Knobe and Shaun Nichols. *Experimental Philosophy*. Oxford University Press, 2008.
Additional Readings, available on reserve, and on the course website.

On-Line Resources

The website for this course is:

http://www.thatmarcusfamily.org/philosophy/Course_Websites/Intuitions_F11/Course_Home.html

The course website includes an html syllabus, many of our readings, a course bibliography, class notes, assignments, other handouts, and links to websites specifically selected for this course. I will use the Blackboard site *only* to post grades.

Office Hours

My office hours for the Fall 2011, term are 10:30am - noon, Monday through Friday. My office is upstairs in 202 College Hill Road.

Assignments and Grading

Your responsibilities for this course include the following, with their contributions to your grade calculation in parentheses:

1. All the readings listed on the schedule below and seminar papers.
2. Twenty article précis (10%)
3. Two seminar papers (2-4 pages) and presentations (40%; 20% each)
4. Term paper (8-12 pages) (30%)
5. Final exam (20%)

The **readings** on the schedule and any seminar paper for the day are to be completed before the class indicated. For additional readings, including background on the philosophical topics in Part III of the course, and full bibliographical information, see the Course Bibliography, available on the course website and as a handout.

Article précis are 100- to 150-word summaries, or distillations, of some portion of an assigned reading. In preparing for most classes, you should write one précis before class. You may choose to write about an entire article or to focus on a small portion of the article. If there is more than one reading, you may choose one reading on which to focus. You need not complete précis for the two classes in which you are presenting a seminar paper. In lieu of up to five précis, you can write a list of six-to-eight detailed questions on the reading.

Your twenty précis are due at the end of the term, on **Friday, December 9**. I may collect some portion of them earlier, especially if you display a need for me to do so. You will mainly be graded on the completion of the twenty précis, rather than their quality. I expect that the précis will be useful to you in preparing both for classes and for the final exam.

Many classes will run as extended discussions of a 750- to 1500-word **seminar paper**. Each student in the course will write and present two seminar papers. We will sign up for seminar papers, by email, after the second class. Seminar papers should assimilate the assigned readings and summarize the main arguments. I also encourage you to include some critical analysis. You are instigating class discussion, focusing our thoughts on the central theses and raising questions. It is good practice to end a seminar paper with a few questions you believe will be useful for the class to consider. Each seminar paper is **due at noon by email to all seminar participants the day before the class in which it will be discussed** (i.e. Monday or Wednesday). This deadline is necessary for all participants in the seminar to be able to read the paper and prepare comments and questions for class.

You will lead the class on the day we discuss your seminar paper. You may be creative with your presentation. You may focus on the content of your paper. You may also discuss any particular difficulties in the material or topics that you were unable to cover in the paper. Your grade for the seminar paper will depend on both the paper and your presentation of it.

Your **term papers** will be completed in three stages. A one-to-two-paragraph abstract of your paper is due on Tuesday, October 18. A full draft of your term paper is due on Thursday, November 10. The final draft is due on Thursday, December 1. See the Paper Assignment for various options for topics. I will be happy to meet with you to discuss your topic, in advance. Failure to submit a draft or submitting an insufficient draft, will reduce your final paper grade by two steps (e.g. from B+ to B-).

The **final exam** will be on Friday, December 16, 2011, from 9am to noon. Preparatory questions will be posted on the course website.

On Grades: Grades on assignments will be posted on Blackboard, along with a running total, which I call your grade calculation. Your grade calculation is a guide for me to use in assigning you a final grade. There are no rules binding how I translate your grade calculation, which will appear in Blackboard as a percentage, into a letter grade. In particular, the Hamilton College key for translating your letter grades into percentages, used for graduate school admissions, is not a tool for calculating your final grade. I welcome further discussion of the purposes and methods of grading, as well as my own grading policies.

Both the [Writing Center](#) and the [Oral Communications Center](#) have an astoundingly wonderful set of resources to help you write and speak more effectively.

Schedule:

The readings listed are available from at least one of three different places:

DePaul and Ramsey, marked on the schedule as 'DR'

Knobe and Nichols, marked on the schedule as 'EP'

The course website, for everything else

Part I: Thought Experiments, Intuition and Reflective Equilibrium

Class	Date	Topic	Readings to do <i>before</i> class
1	Thursday 8/25	Thought Experiments, Intuitions, and X-Phi	Brown and Fehige, "Thought Experiments"
2	Tuesday 8/30	Foundationalism: Rationalism and Empiricism	Descartes, selections from <i>Meditations on First Philosophy</i> and <i>Objections and Replies</i> Locke, "Clear and Distinct Perception" Hume, selections from <i>An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding</i>
3	Thursday 9/1	Wittgenstein and the Logical Empiricists	Melchert, "Analysis" Ayer, "Are Mistakes About One's Own Immediate Experience Only Verbal"
4	Tuesday 9/6	The Myth of the Given	Sellars, "Does Empirical Knowledge Have a Foundation?"
5	Thursday 9/8	Reflective Equilibrium in Science	Goodman, "The New Riddle of Induction"
6	Tuesday 9/13	The Scientific Method	Papineau, "Methodology: The Elements of the Philosophy of Science," §1, §3, and §5
7	Thursday 9/15	Reflective Equilibrium in Ethics	Rawls, from <i>A Theory of Justice</i>
8	Tuesday 9/20	Reflective Equilibrium in Linguistics	Chomsky, from <i>Knowledge of Language</i> , Chapters 1 and 2

Part II: Worries About Rationality

Class	Date	Topic	Readings to do <i>before</i> class
9	Thursday 9/22	Cognitive Biases	Tversky and Kahneman, "Judgment Under Uncertainty: Heuristics and Biases" McNerney, "Shifting Paradigms" Note: Different students will read different selections; see handout on Idiotfest 2011 for specific assignments
10	Tuesday 9/27	Rationality and Experimentation	Cohen, "Can Human Irrationality Be Experimentally Demonstrated" Replies from Evans and Pollard; Kahneman; and Stich

Class	Date	Topic	Readings to do <i>before</i> class
11	Thursday 9/29	Against Intuitions	Stich and Nisbett, "Justification and the Psychology of Human Reasoning"

Part III: X-Phi Against Intuitions

Class	Date	Topic	Readings to do <i>before</i> class
12	Tuesday 10/4	Epistemic Relativism	Weinberg, Nichols, and Stich, "Normativity and Epistemic Intuitions" (EP 2)
13	Thursday 10/6	Descriptivism and Direct Reference	Machery, Mallon, Nichols, and Stich, "Semantics, Cross-Cultural Style" (EP 3)
14	Tuesday 10/11	Free Will and Moral Responsibility I	Woolfolk, Doris, and Darley, "Identification, Situation Constraint, and Social Cognition: Studies in Attribution of Moral Responsibility" (EP 4)
15	Tuesday 10/18	Free Will and Moral Responsibility II Abstract of Term Paper Due	Nahmias, Morris, Nadelhoffer, and Turner, "Is Incompatibilism Intuitive?" (EP 5)
16	Thursday 10/20	Free Will and Moral Responsibility III	Nichols and Knobe, "Moral Responsibility and Determinism: The Cognitive Science of Folk Intuitions" (EP 6)
17	Tuesday 10/25	Intentionality	Knobe, "The Concept of Intentional Action: A Case Study in the Uses of Folk Psychology" (EP7)
18	Thursday 10/27	Intuitions and Cognitive Equilibrium	Gendler, "Philosophical Thought Experiments, Intuitions, and Cognitive Equilibrium"
19	Tuesday 11/1	Gender Differences I	Buckwalter and Stich, "Gender and Philosophical Intuition"
20	Thursday 11/3	Emily Esch's class visit	Prinz, "Empirical Philosophy and Experimental Philosophy" (EP 10)
Bonus	Friday 11/4	Emily Esch's public talk (title TBA)	
21	Tuesday 11/8	Gender Differences II	Buckwalter and Stich, "Gender and Philosophical Intuition"

Part IV: How To Do Philosophy

Class	Date	Topic	Readings to do <i>before</i> class
22	Thursday 11/10	Intuition in Psychology Rough Draft of Term Paper Due	Gopnik and Schwitzgebel, "Whose Concepts Are They, Anyway? The Role of Philosophical Intuition in Empirical Psychology" (DR 5)
23	Tuesday 11/15	Sources of Intuitions	Cummins, "Reflections on Reflective Equilibrium" (DR7)
24	Thursday 11/17	Defending Intuition I	Bealer, "Intuition and the Autonomy of Philosophy" (DR 12)
25	Tuesday 11/29	Defending Intuition II	Bealer, "Intuition and the Autonomy of Philosophy" (DR 12)
26	Thursday 12/1	Naturalizing Intuition Final Draft of Term Paper Due	Kornblith, "The Role of Intuition in Philosophical Inquiry: An Account with No Unnatural Ingredients" (DR 8)
27	Tuesday 12/6	Intuitions and X-Phi	Sosa, "Minimal Intuition" (DR 14) and "Experimental Philosophy and Philosophical Intuition" (EP 12)
28	Thursday 12/8	Whither Reflective Equilibrium	DePaul, "Why Bother with Reflective Equilibrium?" (DR 16)

Twenty Article Précis Due: Friday, December 9, 4pm

Final Exam: Friday December 16, 9am to noon