

Philosophy of Science

Phil 360A · Prof. J. Dunn

Fall 2013
Tu, Th 10:00 - 11:30
Julian 156
DePauw University

Office: 210 Asbury
Office Hours: M 9-10:30, Tu 12:30-2, W 1:30-2:30, Th 8-9
Email: jeffreydunn@depauw.edu
Homepage: http://acad.depauw.edu/jeffreydunn_web

Description

Science has been very successful and holds an influential role in our society. But what *is* science? Perhaps it is a method, a set of theories, or a group of people. And what does science give us? Perhaps it gives us a true picture of the world, perhaps merely a useful set of theories, or maybe it just gives us one way of looking at the world among others. Finally, how does science fit in with other enterprises like politics or religion? Perhaps it should guide these other enterprises, or perhaps it should be subservient to them. Given the influential role that science has, these questions are important. In this course we'll try to address them. We'll start with an overview of some classic topics in philosophy of science, including the problem of induction, Logical Positivism, and the demarcation problem. After that we'll work through Thomas Kuhn's *Structure of Scientific Revolutions*. We'll finish off the course by reading most of Philip Kitcher's *Science, Truth, and Democracy*. This course will focus mainly on primary sources in philosophy of science. As a result, it will be challenging, but also rewarding.

Books

- ▶ *Theory and Reality*, Peter Godfrey-Smith, Univ. of Chicago Press.
- ▶ *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, Thomas Kuhn, Univ. of Chicago Press.
- ▶ *Science, Truth, and Democracy*, Philip Kitcher, Oxford Univ. Press.

(The books are available at Eli's Bookstore on the square.)

Other materials will be made available to you online through Moodle.

Grading

Participation	5%
Short Paper:	5%
Demarcation Papers (3):	15% (3%/5%/7%)
Midterm Take-Home Exam:	20%
Final Paper Peer Review:	5%
Final Paper:	20%
Final Exam:	30%

Course Requirements

Participation

One of the best and most engaging ways to learn philosophy is to participate in careful, informed discussion about the material being read. In this class I expect that we will have vigorous discussion and that you will be an active participant each day. For discussion to be profitable, they must be *informed*. This means that you are also expected to have *carefully* and *thoughtfully* have completed the reading for each class. A schedule of the reading assignments is available online. I will assess this aspect of your participation based on your engagement during class, your engagement outside of class, and your attendance.

Writing Assignments

Short Paper

The short paper assignment is a writing assignment where you will be asked to write a clear and careful response to one of the readings in class. Since it comes early in the semester, it will give you an early chance to assess your progress in the course. Specific information about this paper will be provided when it is assigned.

Short Paper Due: **Sep. 10**

Demarcation Papers

Good philosophical inquiry involves real debate between opposing viewpoints. For this assignment you will write a series of three papers on the same topic and respond to the viewpoints of your classmates.

The first paper will be a short piece (200-400 words) responding to a prompt about the *demarcation problem*.

I will look through these first papers, select 3-5 as *exhibits* and then post them to Moodle. Your second paper will be a slightly longer piece (800-1,000 words), which builds on your first paper and also responds in some way to one of the exhibits.

I will then look through this second batch of papers, select 3-5 as *new exhibits* and then post them to Moodle. Your third, and final paper (1,200-1,800 words), will build on your previous papers, and respond in some way to the new exhibits.

First Paper Due: **Sep. 19**

Second Paper Due: **Sep. 26**

Third Paper Due: **Oct. 8**

Final Paper

Your final paper for this course will be an argumentative paper on a topic of your choosing. It should be approximately a 2,500-3,000 words. There are three main parts to this assignment:

1. Write a first draft and bring a hard copy to class on **Nov. 14**. *Your first draft should focus on clearly presenting the view/topic you are writing about and presenting your argument clearly.* You will exchange papers with a classmate and you will provide written comments on each other's paper.
2. In response to the peer review, write a second draft. The peer review from your partner should be submitted with your second draft. Both should be submitted electronically on **Nov. 21**.

3. In response to comments I will give you on your second draft, revise your paper into a polished final draft. This is due on the last day of class, **Dec. 12**.

To give you an idea of what is expected, below are two examples of the kind of structure that would be appropriate for your paper. (For more detailed information about the paper, please see the document posted on the course website.)

Example 1:

1. Present a view discussed in class.
2. Present an objection to that view.
3. Consider possible replies to the objection.
4. Evaluate the replies and offer an assessment.

Example 2:

1. Present a key argument from a paper that you selected in the area of your topic.
2. Explain this argument, defining all technical terms, and providing the best possible reasons in favor of each premise of the argument.
3. Evaluate the argument, explaining how someone could criticize it.

* I strongly recommend that you take advantage of the Writing Center in the Academic Resource Center, located in 115 Asbury. After scheduling an appointment, you will have the chance to meet with a trained tutor who will read your work and offer feedback. This is a great way to improve your writing, however, slots can fill up quickly, so please plan ahead and take advantage of this great resource.

Exams

Midterm Exam

The midterm exam for this course is a take-home exam. Any material in the course readings or in the class discussions is fair game. It will be assigned on **October 17** and is due on **October 29**.

Final Exam

The final exam for this course is *not* a take-home exam. It will be taken during the final exam period. It is a cumulative exam. Any material in the course readings, handouts, or from class discussions is fair game.

Other Requirements

You should take control of your experience in this course: what you get out of the course will largely be a function of what you put in to it. If you are falling behind or are confused about something, please make arrangements to meet with me. I really like the material we're covering in this course, and I'm on campus every day. So come talk to me about it!

Things You Can Expect From Me

I will give clear and prompt feedback on your work.

I will assist you in choosing a paper topic, finding outside sources, and editing your paper.

I will be available to discuss the material outside of class, whether over email, during office hours, or at other times.

Special Considerations

DePauw University is committed to providing equal access to academic programs and university-administered activities and reasonable modifications/accommodations to students with disabilities in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990, as amended in 2008. Any student needing special accommodations due to a disability should contact the Coordinator of Student Disability Services, Pam Roberts, 302 Harrison Hall or call (765) 658-6267. It is the responsibility of each student to discuss implementation of approved modifications/accommodations with each faculty member and/or staff member within one week of the date of receiving a modification/accommodation approval memo or within the first two weeks of the academic semester.

Academic Integrity

Academic integrity is very important, and violations are serious offenses, which I take very seriously. There is a clear Academic Integrity Policy that can be found here:

<http://www.depauw.edu/univ/handbooks/dpuhandbooks.asp?ID=101parentid=100>

It is your responsibility to read the university policy. If you are unclear about what constitutes a violation of academic integrity, it is your responsibility to contact me with any questions so that you are clear about it. Ignorance is not an excuse. The *minimum* penalty for violations of Academic Integrity is a 0 on the relevant assignment and a further reduction in your overall grade.