

**Phil 456:
Senior Colloquium**

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Course Description:

PH 456 is a year-long, extended format seminar centering on the practice of philosophical discourse, as exhibited by the works of the Philosophy Department's colloquium speakers. For 2013-14, colloquium series will explore the theme of "Bodies, Rights, and Knowledge," with the fall semester's speakers focusing on issues in social and political philosophy and the spring semester's lecturers investigating problems in bioethics and phenomenology. In advance of colloquium lectures, students read relevant background papers and engage in seminar discussions. Students also attend colloquia and interact with speakers during their visits. The course emphasizes critical engagement with contemporary philosophical research. Blocks 1-8. 1 unit. Pass/fail. *Open to philosophy majors with senior standing. Others admitted only by special permission of the instructor(s).*

Course Goals:

This course offers senior majors the opportunity to participate actively in an important component of philosophical practice: the focused study and discussion of philosophical works-in-progress. A philosophy colloquium is typically a project in an advanced stage of development but in pre-publication form. It provides an important opportunity for the speaker to respond to criticisms of and questions about the work. Colloquium meetings are central to academic philosophical practice, as students will experience firsthand in PH 456. For students seeking to pursue further work in philosophy, the course will provide an invaluable foundation for graduate training; and for all students, the Senior Colloquium seminar will provide an opportunity to draw together and develop their philosophical knowledge and skills. In addition, active engagement with colloquium speakers will allow students to broaden and enrich their understanding of philosophy by experiencing a diversity of philosophical questions, approaches, and areas of expertise.

Course Schedule:

The course will meet across the academic year, with most meetings timed to coincide with the Department's five colloquium talks. In a block featuring a colloquium talk, students will meet in an afternoon seminar discussion (2 hours) a few days before the lecture, attend the colloquium talk (1.5 hours), meet as a class with the speaker over lunch (~1 hour), and participate in an informal post-colloquium discussion (~1 hour). The initial block 2 meeting will differ, however: it will consist of a class session discussing texts concerning the character of philosophy in general, with some focus on the place (or lack thereof) of political philosophy and bioethics within the larger discipline.

When a colloquium speaker presents a talk, **the typical block schedule is as follows:**

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| • Pre-colloquium discussion: | Tuesday before the lecture, 3-5 pm |
| • Lunch with colloquium speaker: | Day of the lecture, 12:15-1:30 pm |
| • Colloquium lecture: | Thursday or Friday , 3:30-5 pm |
| • Post-colloquium discussion (recommended): | Evening after the lecture |
| • Colloquium papers due by 5 pm: | Monday after the colloquium |

Note that most talks will take place on either Thursday or Friday but the date for the block 8 lecture has not yet been confirmed, so events that block may deviate from this pattern.

Course Requirements:

- Completion of assigned readings (available on PROWL) prior to each seminar meeting
- Attendance and active participation at all course meetings
- Brief oral presentations at the first course meeting in block 2
- Five papers responding to colloquium talks and related readings (3 pages each)

Course Readings:

Except for the first meeting, the assigned works will consist of readings either by the colloquium speaker or suggested by the speaker. The readings will, in general, prepare students both to understand the specific kind of research being presented in the colloquium talk and to place that research within the larger project of or trajectory followed by the speaker. Because texts will be worked out between the course instructors and the colloquium lecturer, they may not be settled until shortly before the talks. In some cases, the actual title of a speaker's presentation also may not be available until near the time of her or his visit.

Course Grading:

This course is graded pass/fail (S/CR/NC). We expect students to attend all course meetings and turn in all colloquium response papers. Students who miss more than 2 class meetings or more than 1 colloquium, or who turn in fewer than 5 colloquium papers, will not earn better than a CR in the course. Students who miss more than 3 class meetings or more than 2 colloquia, or who turn in fewer than 4 colloquium papers, will fail the course (NC). Please mark your calendars and prioritize your activities accordingly. Please also note that grading is subject to our discretion and reflects your overall engagement in the course, so merely attending all events and turning in all papers does not guarantee an S grade. To earn an S, you should be well prepared for class, and your participation and written work should be thoughtful and of consistently high quality.

Honor Code:

Students will be expected to abide by the Honor Code. Among other things, the Honor Code specifies that each student will be responsible for producing all of his or her own work and that he or she will always cite the works or ideas of others used in his or her work. Note that discussing ideas and drafts with others is not a violation of the Honor Code. In fact, as the very idea of a colloquium suggests, it is a good idea to compare one's own ideas and writings with those of others and to ask others for criticisms. Using other people's ideas can also be a good idea – if their ideas are good and a student credits the individuals responsible for developing the ideas.

Disability Accommodations:

Any student who believes that she or he is eligible for learning accommodations as the result of a qualified disability should contact the instructors privately. A student who believes that she or he may have a disability that impacts learning, and who has not self-identified to the College's Disabilities Services Office, should please do so immediately. We will make appropriate learning accommodations in accordance with the Disabilities Service Office's instructions. Their office is in the Colket Student Learning Center at 152 Tutt Library. Students may also contact the College's learning consultant, Jan Edwards, at the Learning Center, at 227-8285, or by visiting this site: <http://www.coloradocollege.edu/offices/disabilityservices/>

Audio and Video Recordings:

With the exception of disability accommodations, no audio or visual recordings of class discussions or of class events may be made without the specific consent of those being recorded. All recordings made, including those produced as part of an authorized disability accommodation, may be used only for academic ends associated with this course. Both unauthorized recording and the publication or broadcast of recordings (including authorized ones), without the express consent to their publication or broadcast by those recorded, will be considered violations of the Honor Code.

2013-2014 Colloquia:

Colloquium talks will take place in the locations listed. Seminar discussions and lunches will take place in the Philosophy/Religion Seminar Room unless otherwise announced.

Fall 2013

Block 2 (Week 1):

“What Is Philosophy Today? Aims and Limitations”

Seminar Discussion: What is the practice of philosophical discourse? Why do philosophy? What counts as philosophy? How is philosophy in the United States different from philosophy in other countries? How do bioethics and political philosophy fit within the academic discipline of philosophy? How do they *not* fit in? More generally, how does philosophy accommodate difference? How do “different” people, ideas, or movements in philosophy gain legitimacy in the field? **Bring a discussion question to class for two of the four readings. Each question should be put into context with a few background sentences, so please bring two “question paragraphs” to class (legibly written or typed, as these will be collected).**

Seminar Discussion: Tuesday, October 29, 3-5 pm

Readings: Sven Ove Hansson, “Philosophy and Other Disciplines,” *Metaphilosophy* 39: 472-82.
Evangelia Sembou, “Introduction,” *Political Theory: State of the Discipline*, pp. 1-20.
Hugo Adam Bedau, “Problems of Political Philosophy,” *The Oxford Companion to Philosophy*, 2nd. ed. (www.oxfordreference.com)
Kristie Dotson, “How Is this Paper Philosophy?” *Comparative Philosophy* 3: 3-29.

Block 3 (Week 1):

“Why the Rich and Poor Don’t See Eye to Eye on Inequality and Why This Matters for Justice” Derrick Darby, University of Kansas

Abstract: Drawing on social psychological evidence showing that the perspective from which the economically advantaged and disadvantaged view economic inequalities matters a great deal for how they are appraised, for when they are considered unfair, and for what evidentiary standards individuals rely upon to reach their conclusions, we argue that choice egalitarianism is unsuitable for articulating the demands of justice when people not only disagree about the causes of inequality but also have motivated reasons to adopt different standards for appraising its fairness. Because choice egalitarianism requires us to take a stand on the causes of inequality it is an unsuitable ideal. This is a serious shortcoming when we are interested in getting people to assume collective responsibility for doing something about inequality in the real world.

Seminar Discussion: Tuesday, October 29, 3-5 pm (readings TBA)

Lunch: Friday, November 1, noon-1:15 pm

Colloquium: Friday, November 1, 3:30-5 pm

Block 4 (Week 3):

“When Rights Go Wrong: Hegel, Honneth, and Contemporary Social Pathologies”

Chad Kautzer, University of Colorado Denver

Abstract: In his latest book, *Das Recht der Freiheit* (2011), Axel Honneth develops a neo-Hegelian theory of social justice that dynamically incorporates negative, reflexive and social forms of freedom as well as the institutional conditions necessary for their development and reproduction. This account of justice, grounded in relations of mutual recognition, enables the identification of social pathologies or the systemic emergence of normative deficits that (1) frustrate individual efforts to reflexively relate their actions to a larger, normative order and (2) inhibits their ability to recognize the freedom of others as a condition of their own freedom. After an assessment of this project, I employ Honneth’s theory to diagnose a contemporary social pathology in the sphere of negative freedom (or legally defined individual rights), which impedes social recognition and contributes to social injustice. This particular social pathology is, I argue, giving rise to a pernicious form of subjectivity, which I call self-defensive.

Seminar Discussion: Tuesday, December 10, 3-5 pm (readings TBA)

Lunch: Thursday, December 12, noon-1:15 pm

Colloquium: Thursday, December 12, 3:30-5 pm

Spring 2014

Block 5 (Week 2):

“Disability and Quality of Life Judgments: Exploring the Disability Paradox”

Sara Goering, University of Washington

Abstract: To be announced later in the fall.

Seminar Discussion: Tuesday, January 28, 3-5 pm (readings TBA)

Lunch: Thursday, January 30, noon-1:15 pm

Colloquium: Thursday, January 30, 3:30-5 pm

Block 6 (Week 3):

Glenn and Ursula Gray Lecture – Title TBA

Professor Matthew Ratcliffe, Durham University

Abstract: To be announced later in the fall.

Seminar Discussion: Tuesday, March 4, 3-5 pm (readings TBA)

Lunch: Thursday, March 6, noon-1:15 pm

Colloquium: Thursday, March 6, 3:30-5 pm

Block 8:

Title TBA

Carl Mitcham, Colorado School of Mines

Abstract and dates: To be announced later in the fall. Colloquium is tentatively scheduled for May 1.