

# Teaching Dossier

EMMA McCLURE

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# 1. Teaching Experience

## 1.1 Teaching Statement

In all my classes, I work hard to make the material relevant to my students' lives—whether I'm teaching feminism, bioethics, or existentialism. I know I've succeeded in this aim because every semester, students ask if they can bring friends to my class (and of course I say yes). Furthermore, on my teaching evaluations, students report that they've been inspired to discuss course material outside of class. I've also won awards for my teaching: my course, *Intersectional and Decolonial Feminisms*, won both the Philosophy Department's Martha Lile Love Teaching Award and the Faculty of Arts and Sciences Superior Teaching Award. This last was a particular honor given that it was open to graduate students from all disciplines in the arts and sciences.

Often, teaching statements make a number of very general statements about focusing on active learning and other mechanisms for student engagement. I will do something different here by making specific comments about each of the courses I've taught as a solo instructor, as well as my collaboration with two faculty members on a teaching project aimed at improving skills in reading and writing philosophy.

In my Introduction to Existentialism course, most of my students were 18-19 year-olds who were just beginning to become independent from their families—the perfect time to engage with existentialist views. However, texts which once felt incredibly modern and revolutionary risked seeming dusty and didactic now, so I decided I would freshen their relevance by showing how similar themes appear in current pop culture. I paired W.E.B. Dubois' "Of Our Spiritual Striving" and excerpts from Franz Fanon's *Black Skin, White Masks* with Kendrick Lamar's music video "Alright." When I planned this in-class activity, I'd only intended for students to find lyrics that echoed the reading we'd discussed earlier that day, but each group ended up making connections to theorists we'd discussed weeks—and even months—earlier. In fact, their discussions were so vibrant and detailed that the activity ended up filling the rest of the session: an hour of student-run close reading and debate. Another way I made existentialism feel personal was by having students write weekly reading journals. Students shared their struggles against restrictive parental expectations, bullying, and discrimination, and they connected these personal experiences to the struggles faced by existentialists searching for meaning. Several of my students revealed that they hadn't fully understood the course material until they had the opportunity to think about how it connected to their own experiences.

When I taught Bioethics, I faced a different challenge. Generally speaking, students already care about bioethical debates, but they also come to the course with many unexamined assumptions. During the five semesters I'd previously served as a teaching assistant for Bioethics, I'd always found that the best discussions occurred when students were exposed to perspectives that challenged their ideas about disability and health. I also knew from conversations with MDs I met at a Medical Humanities Conference that many medical schools don't teach doctors to think about the social pressures that their patients face, aside from their mental or physical diagnoses. Consequently, I chose to focus my course on the issue of medical discrimination—with regard to disability, race, gender, and class—and how to provide better care for patients within these marginalized groups. Students reported that the course caused them rethink their assumptions: "Professor McClure's inclusivity and manner of handling such sensitive bioethical issues has made change my perspective on certain things about the world." One

student went so far as to recommend: “I feel like everyone should take this course, especially if they plan to be a physician.”

Clearly, my courses often include sensitive personal and politically-charged topics, yet my students always talk about how comfortable they feel participating in class discussion. To achieve this, I foster a sense of community by being honest about my own struggles with the topics I’m teaching. For example, both times I taught Feminist Philosophy, I disclosed my status as a sexual assault survivor. I wanted to avoid the all-too-common pattern in philosophical debate of treating survivors as hypothetical problem-cases who can be discussed in an abstract and impersonal way—especially since I knew that some of my students would also be survivors of sexual assault and other traumas. The effects of the disclosure were better than I could have imagined. Students trusted me enough to disclose when something happened to them, and instead of isolating themselves, many students reported that the readings and class discussions helped them heal.

In addition to fostering philosophical discussion, my other teaching passion is for philosophical reading and writing. In 2019-20, I collaborated with U of T Philosophy professor Alex Koo and the English Language Learning Coordinator, Professor Paola Bohórquez, to create a set of skill-building reading and writing activities for use in the discussion sections of large, introductory Philosophy courses. The impetus for the project was that existing materials on philosophical reading and writing tend to be either general lists of advice or time-consuming sets of graded activities unsuitable for use in large classes. We created a series of in-class activities, approximately 20 minutes each, that don’t require outside grading time. Moreover, these activities can be incorporated into any topics-based introduction to philosophy. There is no need to change existing course readings, since all the activities are based around a single reading, Nozick’s Experience Machine, which is suitable for inclusion in metaphysics, mind, epistemology, or value courses. We tested these activities during the discussion sections of two different introductory courses (ranging from 250-400 students, taught at two separate campuses, with distinct reading lists, and six different discussion section leaders), and saw improvements in student writing, particularly when combined with scaffolded assessments. Equally importantly, these activities received overwhelming student support: when asked whether we should continue using these activities in future versions of the course, 80% answered “yes” and several students called for this kind of training to become mandatory in all introductory courses. Given this success, we applied and were accepted to the American Association of Philosophy Teachers annual workshop, where we will present our skill-building progression to philosophy professors across North America. (Unfortunately, the conference has been postponed, but we’ll be part of the rescheduled conference next summer.) I’ve attached an abbreviated version of these activities at the end of this dossier.

I am proud of the teaching I’ve done thus far, but also committed to exploring new directions. I continually work to revise and improve the courses I teach; for instance, I decided to focus my award-winning Feminist Philosophy syllabus on Intersectionality and Decolonialism because of student feedback from a previous version of the course in which we’d only covered Black, Latina, and Indigenous feminism in the last few weeks of term. I also love developing new courses. (You can see my planned syllabi for Philosophy and Literature, Philosophy and the Movies, and Introduction to Philosophy on my website, <https://www.emma-mcclure.com/teaching>.) I particularly look forward to developing upper-level courses in areas like Critical Race Theory, Philosophy of Sex and Gender, and Philosophy of Disability. Given my trajectory, I’m confident that I can meet the teaching needs of my next department.

## 2. Sample Course Syllabi

### 2.1 Introduction to Existentialism

#### 2.1.1 Syllabus

#### Existentialism

##### Course Description

When Jean-Paul Sartre first heard of phenomenology, he went pale with excitement. He had grown bored of traditional philosophical debates, and he leapt at the chance to study a philosophy inspired by the problems and passions of ordinary life. I hope many of you feel the same excitement as you break away from your past coursework and delve into this radically new form of philosophy.

In the first half of the course, we will introduce the concepts that drive existentialist thinking: authenticity and absurdity. Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, Sartre, Camus, and Beckett blur the lines between good/evil, truth/fiction, and philosophy/literature.

All these writers share a common experience: rich, white, European, male. In the second half of the course, we will consider other versions of existentialism. We turn first to de Beauvoir—the co-founder of the existentialist movement—for an articulation of Feminist Existentialism.

While de Beauvoir objects to Sartre’s overly-masculine assumptions, however, Spelman challenges de Beauvoir’s representation of a universal female experience—that excludes poor women and women of color. In light of these criticisms, we explore a second challenge to European existentialism: the Black Existentialism of Du Bois, Fanon, Lamar, and Jenkins.

Finally, we combine the two challenges into a discussion of Hurston’s *Their Eyes Were Watching God* and Beyoncé’s *Lemonade*. Do these count as existentialist works? Can we stretch existentialism so far beyond its roots in rich, white, mid-century France, or is existentialism necessarily limited to a particular cultural milieu? As with all truly existential questions, the answer is yours to decide...

##### Evaluation

Assessment	Percentage of grade	Due date
Reading Responses (200-400 words)	20%	Every Saturday, top 10 of 11
Essay 1 (1000-1250 words)	25%	June 26
Essay 2 (1000-1250 words)	25%	July 31
Final Exam	30%	TBD

**All assignments are due on the “Assignments” section of Blackboard by 11:59 PM. (You can edit/resubmit any time before the due date.) Essays must ALSO be submitted on Turnitin.**

As a philosophy student, you will complete traditional assessments (2 papers and a final exam). Since existentialism diverges from traditional philosophy, however, you will also be asked for more personal engagement with the texts: you will be asked to write 11 short reading responses (only the highest 10 grades will count). These responses will require you to provide a short description of a concept and then invite you to add your own reactions/objections/connections, drawn from your lived experience.

## Required Texts

Available from UTSC Bookstore:

- 1) Zora Neale Hurston, *Their Eyes Were Watching God*

Available for rent on Google Play or purchase on iTunes:

- 2) Barry Jenkins, *Moonlight* (film)

Available for purchase on Tidal or iTunes:

- 3) Beyoncé, *Lemonade* (music video)

All other readings will be available on the “Readings” section of the Blackboard course page.

## Course Schedule

Class 1: Introduction to the question, “How do we live a meaningful life?”

- Sarah Bakewell, “Sir, What a Horror, Existentialism!”

Class 2-3: Kierkegaard raises the possibility that we can find meaning through God

- Søren Kierkegaard, “Diary of a Seducer”
- Søren Kierkegaard, *Fear and Trembling* (Selections)

Class 4-5: Nietzsche counters that God cannot save us from the search for meaning

- Friedrich Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morality* (Selections)

Class 6-8: Sartre argues that each person is responsible for creating their own meaning

- Jean-Paul Sartre, “Erostratus”
- Jean-Paul Sartre, “Existentialism is a Humanism”
- Jean-Paul Sartre, *Nausea* (Selections)

Class 9-10: Camus recommends we revolt against the desire for meaning

- Albert Camus, *Myth of Sisyphus* (Selections)

Class 11-12: Beckett suggests friendship may be the solution to our quest for meaning

- Samuel Beckett, *Waiting for Godot*

**-- Paper 1 Due on Quercus, during Reading Week (no class)--**

Class 13-15: de Beauvoir shows how gender discrimination impacts the search for meaning

- Simone de Beauvoir, “Introduction to *The Second Sex*”
- Simone de Beauvoir, “The Narcissist”
- Simone de Beauvoir, “The Woman in Love” (Selections)

Class 16: Spelman expands de Beauvoir’s account to include all women, not just white women

- Elizabeth Spelman, “Simone de Beauvoir and Women”

**Course Schedule, continued...**

Class 17-18: Du Bois and Fanon show how race discrimination impacts the search for meaning

- W.E.B. Du Bois, "Of Our Spiritual Striving"
- Franz Fanon, "Introduction" & "The Lived Experience of the Black Man"
- Kendrick Lamar, "Alright" (watch music video in class)

Class 19-20: Jenkins presents different ways to answer the question, "Who is you?"

- Franz Fanon, "By Way of Conclusion"
- Barry Jenkins, *Moonlight* (watch film before class)

Class 21-24: Hurston and Beyoncé combine all the preceding themes

- Zora Neale Hurston, *Their Eyes Were Watching God*
- Beyoncé *Lemonade*
- Janet Mock, "'Lemonade' Is Beyoncé's Testimony of Being Black, Beautiful and Burdened"

**--Paper 2 Due on Quercus--**

**--Final Exam (TBA)--**

**Course Policies:**

Late Assignments:

There will be a 2% penalty for each day the assignment is late. Extensions of up to 1 week may be granted, at my discretion. If you need to miss the final exam (for whatever reason), you must petition the College Registrar's Office for an opportunity to sit a deferred exam.

Contact Policy:

You are required to check your university email accounts and Blackboard regularly. All announcements and grades will be posted on Blackboard, and papers will be returned over Blackboard.

You can reach me over email, in person before or after class, during my scheduled office hours, or by appointment.

Attendance and Participation:

Attendance is highly encouraged, though not strictly required. Handouts will be posted on Blackboard, but regular lecture attendance will be necessary in order to understand class material and succeed on assessments.

Similarly, while class participation is not mandatory, it is helpful to test out your ideas prior to being assessed on them. You will get more out of the class, and the class will be more enjoyable. In order to encourage participation, I will take steps to create a respectful and open atmosphere. I reserve the right to end any discussion that becomes mean-spirited, or to stop any student who attempts to dominate the conversation. I hope such steps will not be necessary.

**Academic Integrity:**

The purpose of the assignments is to improve your skills in reading, writing, and critical thinking. The purpose of grades is to reflect your competency in these skills. Plagiarism undercuts these aims. You have plagiarized if you a) include writing that is not your own AND b) do not cite your sources. If you have questions about what constitutes appropriate academic behavior, you are expected to seek out additional information from other institutional resources. (A good place to begin:

[http://writing.wisc.edu/Handbook/QPA\\_plagiarism.html](http://writing.wisc.edu/Handbook/QPA_plagiarism.html).)

I will investigate suspected cases of plagiarism and academic dishonesty, in accordance with the procedures outlined in the University of Toronto's Code of Behavior on Academic Matters (<http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/policies/behaveac.htm>).

NOTE: if you find yourself tempted to plagiarize because of time pressures or personal reasons, please get in touch. You might be able to get an extension or another accommodation.

**Writing Help:**

Writing a philosophy essay can be difficult. We will spend some time in class talking about techniques for good writing and argumentation. More detailed information is available here:

<http://www.sfu.ca/philosophy/resources/writing.html>

For in person help—especially with grammar or syntax—make an appointment at the UTSC Writing Centre: <http://utsc.utoronto.ca/twc/writing-centre-tutorial>

**Accessibility:**

I am happy to provide any accommodations necessary to ensure that all materials and activities are accessible to all students. It is your responsibility, however, to communicate your needs to me. I also recommend that you contact *AccessAbility* services if you are in need of accommodations for physical or mental health reasons: [www.accessibility.utoronto.ca](http://www.accessibility.utoronto.ca)

**Mental Health:**

Academic work is difficult and psychologically demanding. It's important to work hard and push yourself but it is even more important to be kind to yourself. The University has a number of resources available if difficulties arise: <http://discover.utoronto.ca/health-wellness>, <http://life.utoronto.ca/get-help/counselling/>, <http://mentalhealth.utoronto.ca/>

## 2.1.2 Sample Reading Response Questions

### Response 1: Kierkegaard

Answer about either Kierkegaard's "Diary of a Seducer" or Fear and Trembling:

Summary (150-200 words): What alternative to the ethical life is explored in your chosen text? What is the guiding ideal of this alternative?

Your response (150-200 words): Could you be satisfied by living your life according this ideal? Do you think it could be a good life?

### Response 6: de Beauvoir

In max 300 words: Explain what de Beauvoir was saying in this passage from "The Narcissist.":

"Woman is led into narcissism along two converging roads. As subject she feels frustrated... And what is much more important, masculine activities are forbidden her. She is occupied, but she does nothing; she does not get recognition as an individual through her functioning as wife, mother, housekeeper. The reality of man is in the houses he builds, the forests he clears, the maladies he cures... A man who acts must necessarily size himself up. Ineffective, isolated, woman can neither find her place nor take her own measure; she gives herself supreme importance because no object of importance is accessible to her." (597)

In max. 100 words: Remember that de Beauvoir was writing in the 1950s. Do you think what she has to say about women in this passage still applies today?

### Response 9: Jenkins

Watch 49:50 to 56:05 in Moonlight, the conversation on the beach between Kev and Chiron.

In max. 400 words, answer the following questions: How do they explore an alternative to the traditional form of black masculinity that we've been discussing in class? How do they make space for each other to choose a different path? Why do you think they feel the freedom to experiment with each other?

Then in max. 200 words: tell me if you've had a similar experience where something or someone helped you to think/act differently from how you'd been expected to act before. Who/what challenged you?

### 2.1.3 Final Exam

PART 1: SHORT ANSWER (7 points each, for a total of 56 points)

Answer 8 of the following 10 questions. Each answer should be about 1-2 paragraphs. If you answer more than 8, only your first 8 answers will be graded.

1. Søren Kierkegaard: In *Fear and Trembling*, Kierkegaard discusses the biblical story of Abraham. He outlines two different ways in which Abraham's story can be interpreted. Explain the two ways, and how Kierkegaard defends his preferred interpretation.
2. Friedrich Nietzsche: In *Genealogy of Morals*, Nietzsche introduces the hypothesis that 'goodness' has had two different meanings over the course of history. What are these two different meanings and what harms do they tend to cause?
3. Jean-Paul Sartre: In "Existentialism is a Humanism," Sartre writes, "existence precedes essence" (22). What does he mean by this phrase, and what role does it play in his recommendations about how to live a meaningful life?
4. Albert Camus: In *The Myth of Sisyphus*, Camus claims, "There is but one truly serious philosophical problem, and that is suicide" (1). Why does he think suicide is a serious philosophical problem and what answer does he give to this problem?
5. Samuel Beckett: In *Waiting for Godot*, Beckett focuses on a pair of men: Vladimir and Estragon. What can their relationship teach us about the search for meaning? (Consider how it compares to the other relationship in the play: Pozzo and Lucky.)
6. Simone de Beauvoir: In *The Second Sex*, de Beauvoir discusses the problem of narcissism. What is this problem, why does it occur, and who does she think should be held responsible for its occurrence?
7. Elizabeth Spelman: In "Simone de Beauvoir and Women," Spelman raises a nuanced critique of de Beauvoir's arguments. What is her main critique, and how does she think de Beauvoir could have used another part of her theory to fix the problem? (Spelman discusses three different parts of de Beauvoir's theory. You can pick any one of them.)
8. W.E.B. Du Bois: In "Of Our Spiritual Strivings," Du Bois introduces the concept of 'double consciousness'. Explain this concept and give an example from a black existentialist (Du Bois, Fanon, Lamar, Jenkins, Hurston, or Beyoncé). Is double consciousness unique to the black experience?
9. Franz Fanon and Kendrick Lamar: In *Black Skin, White Masks*, Fanon says, "I am not a prisoner of History" (204). What does Fanon mean by this phrase? How is this concept demonstrated in Lamar's music video, "Alright"?
10. Barry Jenkins: In "Moonlight," Jenkins critiques a certain kind of black masculinity. What are the problems he calls attention to and what solution does he suggest? (Consider the interconnected stories of Juan, Little/Chiron/Black, and Kevin.)

PART 2: ESSAY (44 points)

Answer 1 of the following 2 questions. Your answer should be about 5-10 paragraphs, including a short introduction and conclusion. DO NOT ANSWER BOTH QUESTIONS.

Note: you're welcome to disagree with the arguments I've presented in class, but you still have to compare the theorist to other existentialists we've studied. A simple "No" will not receive any points; nor will a simple "Yes". Whatever answer you give, defend your reasoning.

1. Do you think Zora Neale Huston's novel, *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, is a work of existentialism?

OR

2. Do you think Beyoncé's visual album, *Lemonade*, is a work of existentialis

## 2.2 Introduction to Bioethics (Online)

### 2.2.1 Syllabus

#### Introduction to Bioethics: Caring for Vulnerable Populations

##### Course Description:

The Physician's Pledge details the ethical duties of a physician. It focuses on protecting the autonomy and dignity of the patient, and it lists groups who are particularly vulnerable to mistreatment and require special attention: "I will not permit considerations of age, disease or disability, creed, ethnic origin, gender, nationality, political affiliation, race, sexual orientation, social standing, or any other factor to intervene between my duty and my patient" (World Medical Association Declaration of Geneva).

This course explores the implications of the Physician's Pledge. How do we care for the elderly without treating them like children? Should disability be treated as a medical or a social problem? Who takes on these caregiving roles? How can medical professions be trained to resist stereotypes about race and ethnicity? What role should gender and sexuality play in medical treatment recommendations? These issues have become particularly pressing in recent weeks. The current pandemic has shone a spotlight on health disparities within vulnerable populations. We will conclude the class with a discussion of how to balance competing healthcare needs and the opportunity we have to create a more just future, after this crisis passes.

##### Course Objectives:

- Improve critical reading and thinking skills
- Learn how to engage in ethical argumentation
- Be introduced to different topics in bioethics

##### Evaluation:

- Discussion Board Posts 12% weekly, except first and final weeks
- Summary 8% May 14
- Short Paper 1 20% May 30
- Short Paper 2 30% June 15
- Final Take-Home Exam 30% TBD

##### Required Texts:

All texts will be available on Quercus. Each class will require only 10-20 pages of reading, excerpted from longer articles and books. I can provide the longer readings, if you're interested, but you'll only be expected to know material in the assigned portions during papers and exams.

**Class Schedule:**

*CW: Ableism, Racism, Colonialism, Sexism, Classism, Homophobia, Transphobia, Suicide, COVID-19*

Many classes will touch on these topics, and sometimes they will be discussed in depth. I know this will make reading and participation difficult for some of you, and you may not always know in advance whether you can complete a particular reading or participate in discussion forums. I am open to accommodating your needs and providing make-up assignments, as necessary. However, when possible, I think it is important to work through these topics together. As a disabled person and someone who has experienced trauma, I know the costs of having conversations around these issues, but I also know the benefits of finding solidarity. I hope you, too, can take these discussions as an opportunity for growth and healing. See Class Policies for more information and resources. Please also let me know if you require CWs that are not listed.

**Week 1. Autonomy, Care, and Dependency**

Class 1: CW: Ableism, Suicide

- Ronald Dworkin, *Life's Dominion*
- Tom Shakespeare, "Happiness and Disability"

Class 2: CW: Ableism, Suicide

- Eva Feder Kittay, "Equality, Dignity and Disability"

**Week 2. Who Decides What's "Normal"?: Physical Health**

Class 3: CW: Ableism, Suicide

- Christopher Newell, "Disability, Bioethics, and Rejected Knowledge"
- Cheryl Misak, "ICU Psychosis and Patient Autonomy"

Class 4: CW: Ableism, Racism, Colonialism

- Chris Tindal, "[A Brief History of Eugenics and Sexual Sterilization in Canada](#)"
- Robert Sparrow, "Defending Deaf Culture: The Case of Cochlear Implants"
- Michael Sandal, "The Case Against Perfection"

*Assignment: Summary due on Quercus*

**Week 3. Who Decides What's "Normal"?: Mental Health**

--Only One Class This Week; No Class on Victoria Day--

Class 5: CW: Ableism, Sexual Trauma, Self-Harm, Colonialism, Racism

- Roe and Davidson, "Self and Narrative in Schizophrenia: Time to Author a New Story"
- Eleanor Longden, "[The Voices in my Head](#)" (TED talk)
- Susie Neilson, "[A Mental Disease by Any Other Name](#)"
- [Optional: Clifton Parker, "[Hallucinatory 'Voices' Shaped by Local Culture](#)"]

**Week 4. Cost to Caregivers**

Class 6: CW: Suicide, Sexism, Classism, Graphic Medical Descriptions

- Nancy Parker, "Nurses' Stories: The Search for a Relational Ethic of Care"
- Martha Holstein, "A Looming Dystopia"
- [Optional: Zosia Bielski, "[With a Looming Aging Crisis, Who is Helping the Caregivers?](#)"]

Class 7: CW: Sexism, Classism, Racism, Xenophobia

- Quill Kukla (Writing as Rebecca Kukla), "Measuring Mothering"

*Assignment: Short Paper 1 due on Quercus*

### **Week 5. Racism in Medicine and Research (Un)Ethics**

Class 8: CW: Racism, Sexism, Colonialism, Homophobia, Transphobia, COVID-19

- Lauren Freeman and Heather Stewart, “Microaggressions in Clinical Medicine”
- Tayo Bero, “In the States, Black Women are Three Times More Likely to Die in Childbirth Compared to White Women. In Canada, Things Must be Better, Right?”
- Various signatories, “Open Letter Regarding the Need to Collect and Use Socio-Demographic And Race-Based Data”
- Sachil Singh, “Collecting Race-Based Data During Coronavirus Pandemic May Fuel Dangerous Prejudices”
- [Optional: Diana Duong, “How Indigenous Midwives are Bringing Birthing Back Home”]

Class 9: CW: Colonialism, Racism, Past Research Atrocities

- Leslie Young, “What Happened to Jim? Experiments on Canada’s Indigenous Populations”
- Sushma Subramanian, “Guatemala Syphilis Experiments: Worse Than Tuskegee”
- Nuremburg Code (1947)
- Declaration of Helsinki (2000)

### **Week 6. International Research Ethics and LGBTQIA Healthcare**

Class 10: CW: Colonialism, Imperialism, Racism, Classism, COVID-19

- Lurie and Wolfe, “Unethical Trials of Interventions to Reduce Perinatal Transmission of the Human Immunodeficiency Virus in Developing Countries”
- Varmus and Satcher, “Ethical Complexities of Conducting Research in Developing Countries”
- Zulfiqar Ahmed Bhutta, “Ethics in International Health Research: A Perspective from the Developing World”
- [Optional: Carien du Plessis, “How South Africa’s Action on COVID-19 Contrasts Sharply with its Response to AIDS”]

Class 11: CW: Homophobia, Transphobia, COVID-19

- Dean, Victor, and Grimes, “Inhospitable Healthcare Spaces”
- [Optional: Naith Payton, “The Dangers of Trans Broken Arm Syndrome”]
- [Optional: Elizabeth Kuhr, “Gay Men Restricted from Donating Plasma to UK Coronavirus Trials”]

### **Week 7. Final Paper and Final Exam Review**

Class 12: Final Exam review in class

Opportunity to schedule one-on-one meetings about final papers

*Assignment: Short Paper 2 due on Quercus*

*Assignment: Final Take-Home Exam due on Quercus*

### **Course Policies:**

Contact Policy:

You are required to check your university email accounts regularly. All announcements and grades will be posted on Quercus, and papers will be returned over Quercus.

I can be reached at office hours or over email: [emma.mcclure@mail.utoronto.ca](mailto:emma.mcclure@mail.utoronto.ca) If you email me, you must include the course code (PHL281) in the subject line. I will reply to emails each day between the hours of 12-5 PM EST. Expect a response within 48 hours.

Office Hours:

If you'd like to speak to me, you can make 10 minute appointment Fridays 9:45-10:45 AM EST and 2-3 PM EST. To make an appointment, you'll use the Scheduler feature on Quercus Calendar. Here's a how to guide: <https://community.canvaslms.com/docs/DOC-10580-4212716665> The meeting will take place over BbCollaborate.

Class Attendance and Participation:

This class takes place online. Attendance is not required, but you'll have the option to ask questions Monday and Wednesday, 6-7 PM EST, over BbCollaborate.

You'll participate via weekly discussion boards, run by your TAs. You'll have the opportunity to practice participating during the first week. In weeks 2-5, you'll be required to participate. Week 6 will be an optional make-up opportunity. If you require further accommodation (due to sickness or other unexpected disruption) please get in touch with me as soon as possible.

Late Assignments:

Late assignments may be docked a 2% penalty/day, and late papers will not be accepted more than a week past the deadline. However, the late penalty can be waived and the deadline extended if you find yourself in exceptional circumstances (due to accessibility reasons, sickness, trauma, family problems, etc). Please reach out to myself or your TA if you are struggling to meet deadlines.

Accessibility:

I am happy to provide any accommodations needed to ensure that all materials and activities are accessible to all students. Class participation and late-assignment policies were constructed with an eye towards making this class as accessible as possible. Please let me know if you require any other accommodations, at any point throughout the term. If you know that you won't be able to perform a required activity, we can discuss alternative evaluation schemes.

Mental Health, COVID-19, and Other Traumatic Experiences:

Academic work is difficult and psychologically demanding. It's important to work hard and push yourself but it is even more important to be kind to yourself. Given the subject matter and timing of this course, you may also find yourself experiencing grief, anxiety, obsessive thinking, panic attacks, or other unexpected reactions to stress. Perhaps you are experiencing these mental health difficulties while simultaneously recovering from other trauma or grief. Here are some further resources that might help you through your particular struggles:

[https://www.oise.utoronto.ca/aphd/Home/COVID-19\\_Coping\\_Resources/index.html](https://www.oise.utoronto.ca/aphd/Home/COVID-19_Coping_Resources/index.html)

<http://discover.utoronto.ca/health-wellness>

<http://life.utoronto.ca/get-help/counselling/>

<http://mentalhealth.utoronto.ca/>

<http://www.safety.utoronto.ca>

Turn It In

Normally, students will be required to submit their course essays to Turnitin.com for a review of textual similarity and detection of possible plagiarism. In doing so, students will allow their essays to be

included as source documents in the Turnitin.com reference database, where they will be used solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism. The terms that apply to the University's use of the Turnitin.com service are described on the Turnitin.com web site.

#### Academic Integrity:

The purpose of the assignments is to improve your skills in reading, writing, and critical thinking. The purpose of grades is to reflect your competency in these skills. Plagiarism undercuts these aims. You have plagiarized if you a) include writing that is not your own AND b) do not cite your sources. I will investigate suspected cases of plagiarism and academic dishonesty, in accordance with the procedures outlined in the University of Toronto's Code of Behavior on Academic Matters (available online at: <http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/policies/behaveac.htm>).

If you have questions about what constitutes appropriate academic behavior or appropriate research and citation methods, you are expected to seek out additional information from other institutional resources. ([http://writing.wisc.edu/Handbook/QPA\\_plagiarism.html](http://writing.wisc.edu/Handbook/QPA_plagiarism.html) is a good place to start.)

#### Writing Help:

Writing a philosophy essay can be difficult. We will spend some time in class talking about techniques for good writing and argumentation. More detailed information is available here:

<http://www.sfu.ca/philosophy/resources/writing.html>

For in person help—especially with grammar or syntax—make an appointment at the Writing Centre:

<https://writing.utoronto.ca/news/writing-centre-summer-openings/>

You may also come to my office hours to receive advice from me. I will not read full drafts, but I will comment on particular paragraphs or discuss your ideas with you. I can also help you brainstorm ideas if you're having difficulty starting the assignment, or answer questions about the topics we've discussed in class.

### 2.3.2 Online Lecture Videos

All my lectures are available on a private channel on YouTube:

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLp8OufOoLrgla99qrDy4rix6liMGPnFrS>

Videos range from 8-20 minutes in length. Some of them feature me talking to the camera, to provide students with a sense of personal connection; others are recorded over my lecture notes, which I provided to help with note-taking and review.

### 2.3.3 Sample Lecture Notes

#### [Before Completing the Readings]

##### **Introduction to this week's topic: Schizophrenia**

Things to think about before you read this week's texts:

Role of narrative in recovery of unified self

- Misak's experience of temporary psychosis and her view on autonomy, involvement in decisions
- Dworkin's emphasis on the importance of self-authoring—choosing your own life story

How social model of disability applies (or fails to apply to) mental illness

- Newell's discussion of what happens when we remove stigma
- Sparrow questioning what it means to be normal

Role of medical professionals, community, and culture in supporting autonomy and recovery

#### [After Completing the Readings]

##### **I. Roe and Davidson, "Self and Narrative in Schizophrenia: Time to Author a New Story"**

Background: Traditional view in psychiatric literature and media

- Defines schizophrenia as loss of self and lack of awareness/insight into condition
- Recovery unlikely, most probably outcome = job loss, homelessness, isolation
- Stigmatized as violent, dangerous, crazy (note on the word, "crazy": this word has often been used to undermine and vilify disabled people—and also non-disabled women, trans and non-binary people, and people of color who protested the status quo—so it's often better to say schizophrenic or mentally ill)
- Narratives of schizophrenic patients are seen as a symptom

Leaves out voices of schizophrenic patients, rejects their knowledge and their role in recovery process

When pay attention to and encourage those narratives, see improvement

Roe and Davidson argue

- Stigma and shame are part of problem, a kind of self-fulfilling prophecy that creates isolation and loss of self-worth
- Exacerbated by forced acceptance of stigmatized condition
  - If accept diagnosis, must have schizophrenia and all other narratives are just symptoms
  - If reject diagnosis, must have schizophrenia and all other narratives are just symptoms
  - But patient might have good reason to resist or reconceptualize diagnosis:
    - e.g. avoiding shame, retaining sense of hope and self-worth
- Recovery comes with finding parts of self to value
  - May appear delusional, but allows patient to regain sense of control and self-authorship
- Medical community must give patient power to self-author and voice in treatment decisions

**Compare and contrast to Misak--value of giving autonomy to (temporarily) incompetent patients  
Also Dworkin--possibility of self-authorship without coherence**

## II. Longden, "The Voices in my Head"

An example of a recovery narrative:

- "As a very wonderful doctor once said to me, 'Don't tell me what other people have told you about yourself. Tell me about you.'"

Role of stigma in making condition worse:

- Remembers how voices felt before and after stigmatization: "A subtle conditioning process had begun, the implication that normal people don't hear voices and the fact that I did meant that something was very seriously wrong. Such fear and mistrust was infectious. Suddenly the voice didn't seem quite so benign anymore"
- Medical professionals speaking over her, ignoring her narratives: "subsequently interpreting everything I said through the lens of latent insanity. For example, I as part of a student TV station that broadcast news bulletins around the campus, and during an appoint which was running very late, I said, 'I'm sorry, doctor, I've got to go. I'm reading the news at six.' Now it's down on my medical records that Eleanor has delusions that she's a television news broadcaster"

Community and care provides path back to healthy relationship with voices and self:

- Learned to see value in voices: "my voices were a meaningful response to traumatic life events, particularly childhood events, and as such were not my enemies but a source of insight into solvable emotional problems... locates voice hearing as a survival strategy, a sane reaction to insane circumstances, not as an aberrant symptom of schizophrenia to be endured, but a complex, significant and meaningful experience to be explored"
- Not "what's wrong with you, but what happened to you." Schizophrenia may be linked to trauma.

Social model of schizophrenia:

- International Hearing Voices Movement advocates for social change: “Together, we envisage and enact a society that understands and respects voice hearing, supports the needs of individuals who hear voices, and which values them as full citizens.”
- Remember what Kittay argued: “normal” conditions or “good” genes shouldn’t be about traits that make you suited to a life lived alone, without dependency, vulnerability, or care. Instead, human dignity is about flourishing in a community with proper care and support.

### III. Neilson, “A Mental Disease by Any Other Name: For Frank Russell, reinterpreting his schizophrenia as shamanism helped his symptoms”

Another recovery narrative, highlighting role of family and culture, but not told by Frank himself

Overlaps with Longden narrative: diagnosis presented as death sentence, stigmatized, worsened

But highlights that elsewhere, the experience of schizophrenia can be very different with community

- Supported as part of household/family/village if can’t work
- Sometimes can work and become asymptomatic—much more frequently and rapidly than US
- Valued for symptoms: connected to alternative/deeper reality, special insight

Could value in Western culture: Rainer Maria Rilke, John Nash, maybe other creative/visionary artists

Or consider value of hallucinogens to counterculture movement

Why not value Frank’s art, music, mysticism?

Unlike Longden, Frank didn’t become independent, but did find more community, less shame

Remember Kittay: isn’t Frank leading a valuable life?

One of studies referenced but not discussed showed that culture may even change quality of visions/voices themselves: <https://news.stanford.edu/2014/07/16/voices-culture-luhrmann-071614/>

- US reported nightmarish/threatening
- India more playful, like family members
- Ghana voice of God, guiding you to goodness

Changing social context may do more than relieve stigma, may even remove negative experience/fear

**What about other mental illnesses? Could depression/anxiety/autism be seen as purely (or primarily) social problems or do some illnesses remain impairments even once stigma is removed?**

## 2.3 Philosophy of Feminism (Advanced Course)

### 2.3.1 Syllabus

#### **PHL 367: Decolonial and Intersectional Feminism(s)**

##### **Starting Point**

We all come from different backgrounds. Some of you will be new to feminism. Some of you may resist it: feminism asks too much of us or exaggerates its claims. Others of you will be experienced with feminist discourse—from previous classes or from social media. Perhaps this experience will also make you resistant: feminism doesn't go far enough to incorporate diverse perspectives.

Whichever group you find yourself in, welcome to my class. I look forward to introducing you to feminism, deepening your understanding of these philosophers, and debating topics relevant to our daily lives. The readings and discussions will be challenging, even disturbing. It may be hard to admit how we've participated in oppression. It may be equally hard to admit how we've been shaped and limited by oppression. You may feel guilty or ashamed. Fearful or angry. Hurt. Vulnerable. I know I've felt all these things at various times over the years.

I want us to learn to live with, and work through, these feelings of discomfort. Listen to your classmates and engage with them respectfully. Allow yourself to learn and change your mind. I expect to learn from this experience as well.

##### **Plan for the Course**

The course divides into four units:

1. (Weeks 1-3) Clears up common misconceptions and introduces key concepts. We'll discuss why feminism is still relevant, and what it means to be intersectional.
2. (Weeks 4-6) Considers tensions within the feminist movement: What is white feminism? Is it possible to be too woke? We'll conclude the first half with a recent hot-button issue: the #metoo movement.
3. (Weeks 8-10) Decolonial feminism pushes the boundaries still further. We will problematize not just white feminism, but Western and Eurocentric feminism—both abroad and here in Canada.
4. (Weeks 12-13) The semester culminates on a note of hope. We'll discuss non-toxic forms of masculinity, and watch Barry Jenkins' *Moonlight* on the last day of class. This film acknowledges the pressures of modern society but challenges us to choose "Who is you?"

##### **Required Texts**

All readings are available on the "Readings" section of the Quercus course page. Complete the readings before the scheduled class (~ 20-30 pages). You are expected to bring the readings to class—either print a copy or save one to your laptop/tablet/phone. Let me know if this isn't feasible for you.

## Course Schedule

### CW: Sexual Violence, Racism, Homophobia, and Transphobia

Most classes will touch on these topics, and sometimes they will be discussed in depth. I know this will make reading and attendance difficult for some of you, and you may not always know in advance whether you can write on a particular reading or attend that day's class. I am open to accommodating your needs and provide make-up assignments, as necessary. However, when possible, I think it is important to work through these topics together. As a survivor of sexual violence, I know the costs of being reminded of past experiences, but I also know the benefits of finding solidarity. I hope you, too, can take these intersectional feminist discussions as an opportunity for growth and healing. See Class Policies for more information and resources.

#### **Week 1: What is feminism?** (pre-reading is optional)

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January 11 bell hooks, *Feminism is for Everybody* Intro and Chapter 1  
 (cw sexual violence) Marilyn Frye, "Oppression"  
 Chimamanda Adichie and Trevor Noah, "Interview on *The Daily Show*"

#### **Week 2: What is gender?**

---

January 18 Sally Haslanger, "Gender and Race: (What) Are They? (What) Do We Want Them To Be?"  
 Katharine Jenkins, "Amerloration and Inclusion: Gender Identity and the Concept of *Woman*"

#### **Week 3: Intersectionality and Agency Under Oppression**

---

January 25 Patricia Hill Collins, "Learning from the Outsider Within"  
 (cw assault) Alisa Bierria, "Missing in Action: Violence, Power, and Discerning Agency"

#### **Week 4: White Feminism and Anger within the Feminist Movement**

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February 1 Marilyn Frye, "On Being White"  
 Audre Lorde, "The Uses of Anger"  
 Kat Blaque, "FAKE OUTRAGE AND WOKENESS ARE CANCELLED IN 2018"

#### **Week 5: The Importance of Small Harms**

---

February 8 Saba Fatima, "On the Edge of Knowing: Microaggressions and Epistemic Uncertainty as a Woman of Color"  
 Rachel McKinnon, "Allies Behaving Badly: Gaslighting as Epistemic Injustice"

**You must have submitted at least one reading response by February 8th.**

#### **Week 6: #metoo Movement \*\*\*Shorter Class: 12-1:30\*\*\***

---

February 15 (cw sexual violence) Katie Way, "I went on a date with Aziz Ansari"  
 Caitlin Flanagan, "The Humiliation of Aziz Ansari"  
 (cw sexual violence) Lauren Shields, "Me, Too? Aziz Ansari and the Crap I Don't Want to Process"

#### **Week 7: \*\*\*Reading Week (February 18-22): No Class\*\*\***

**Week 8: Latina Feminism and the Borderlands**

**March 1** Maria Lugones, "Playfulness, 'World'-Traveling, and Loving Perception" and "Hablando Cara a Cara/Speaking Face to Face: An Exploration of Ethnocentric Racism"

**Week 9: Western Feminism and Imperialism**

**March 8** (cw incest) Linda Alcoff, "The Problem of Speaking for Others"  
(cw assault) Martha Nussbaum, "Women and Cultural Universals"

**You must have submitted at least two reading responses by March 8th.**

**Week 10: Returning to Canada—Burqa Ban and Indigenous Traditions**

**March 15** Serene Khader, "Transnational Feminisms, Nonideal Theory, and 'Other' Women's Power"  
Renée Elizabeth Mzinegiizhigo-kwe Bédard, "Keepers of the Water: Nishnaabedwewag Speaking for the Water"

**Week 11: IN-CLASS EXAM**

**March 22** Bring several pens/pencils (whatever you can write legibly with). Study ALL the material we've covered (Weeks 1-10) using the reading response questions as a study guide. I anticipate that most of you will not need the full three hours, but you are welcome to use them. **If you need to make further accommodations through Test and Exam Services, please do so at least 2 weeks in advance.**

**Week 12: Masculinity and Machismo**

**March 29** bell hooks, *The Will to Change: Men, Masculinity, and Love* (selections)  
Aída Hurtado and Mrinal Sinha, "Toward New Masculinities: A Chicana Feminist Intersectional Analysis of Latinos' Definitions of Manhoods"  
Justin Baldoni, "Why I'm done trying to be 'man enough'"

**You must have submitted all THREE reading responses by March 29th.**

**Week 13: Application in Film (Watch in class)**

**April 5** Barry Jenkins, *Moonlight*

**April 5: Final Paper due on Quercus**

**Evaluation**

<i>Assessment</i>	<i>Percent of grade</i>	<i>Due date</i>
Participation	16%	ongoing
Reading Responses	24% (8% each)	before class
In-Class Exam	25%	March 22
Final Paper	35%	April 5

All written assignments are due on the "Assignments" section of Quercus. (You can edit/resubmit any time before the due date.)

## Evaluation, continued...

Participation (in-class, daily): Philosophy happens in conversation. Once you leave the classroom, you'll need to be able to defend your ideas and productively engage with the ideas of other people. Points are earned through completion of in-class writing activities and contributions to class discussion (8%, assessed by me). Points are also earned through active participation in small-group discussions (8%, assessed by you and your peers). We'll discuss how good participation requires preparation, attendance, and thoughtful contributions—but it also requires listening carefully to the rest of your group and not dominating the conversation, especially if you lack lived experience about the topic.

Reading Responses (max. 600 words each): Philosophy also requires charitable and active reading. Your philosophical education can continue long after graduation, but only if you learn how to engage with written texts. We will be practicing these skills in class, and I hope to see you improve over the course of your three responses (8% each). But the only way to know if you're improving your reading skills is to complete these assignments BEFORE we cover the topic in lecture. These responses will also help you to be prepared for group discussion and to study for the in-class exam. Note: You are welcome to complete more than three responses. Your best three grades will count towards your total class grade. You are also welcome to choose which weeks you write Reading Responses. I will post a prompt by Sunday before class, if not earlier.

In-Class Exam: Most of the benefits of taking tests come from studying for the exam. For this class, you will take a type of exam called a Quote Identification Test:

- *10 points.* You will be given ten quotes and asked to identify who the author is for each of them. This means you will need to study the readings so that you can recognize the passages and know how to spell the author's names.
- *40 points.* Then, for each quote, you will be asked to explain how the quoted passage fits with the author's main argument. This means you will need study the handouts (and read the comments on your reading responses) so that you know what the author's main argument is.
- Note: Even if you end up misidentifying the author, if you can make a plausible argument about how the quote is connected to a different reading, you'll still get some points. I'll give you a practice question a couple weeks beforehand so you can see how this works.

Final Paper (max 1800 words) builds on the skills we've been practicing throughout the course. You'll put an author from the first half in conversation with an author from the second half. This will require you to charitably summarize both authors, and most importantly, to find a tension between their two views. We'll generate possible topics during class discussions. You're also welcome to write on your own topic—if you get approval during office hours at least one week in advance of the deadline.

## Course Policies

### Contact Policy:

You are required to check your university email accounts regularly. All announcements and grades will be posted on Quercus, and papers will be returned over Quercus.

I can be reached at office hours or over email: [emma.mcclure@mail.utoronto.ca](mailto:emma.mcclure@mail.utoronto.ca)

If you email me, please include the course code (PHL 367) in the subject line. I will not answer substantive philosophical questions over email. My response time for other emails will be ~24 hours. If you haven't heard back within 48 hours, please email me again to remind me.

#### Office Hours:

Please feel free to drop by my office hours, or if you are unavailable during that time, email me to make an appointment. You are not bothering me by coming to my office hours. These are times I have set aside so that I can speak with you one-on-one. You can come with particular questions or you can come just wanting to chat about course material, philosophy, current events, graduate school, etc. My biggest regret about my own time as an undergrad was not taking advantage of office hours. Don't be like me! Come to office hours.

#### Class Attendance and Participation:

This class works best if you come to class and participate in discussion. However, I know that not everyone will be comfortable participating in large groups, so I'll offer many opportunities for small-group participation and in-class writing assignments.

If you know you will routinely have to miss class—due to work, family obligations, accessibility reasons, religious obligations, prolonged sickness, or trauma—please contact me as soon as possible so we can find an alternative method of participation. Note: If you are a caregiver, you are welcome to bring your infants/children to class with you.

#### Late Assignments:

The reading responses cannot be submitted late, but you are free to choose which weeks to submit. If you are unable to attend class on the day of the in-class exam, I will schedule a make-up exam the following week. I will accept the paper up to 3 days late (Monday April 7<sup>th</sup>, 11:59 pm) without penalty, and up to 7 days late (Friday April 12<sup>th</sup>, 11:59 pm) with a 3% penalty/day. The late penalty can be waived and the deadline extended if you find yourself in exceptional circumstances (due to accessibility reasons, trauma, family problems, etc). Please reach out if you are struggling to meet deadlines.

#### Accessibility:

I am happy to provide any accommodations needed to ensure that all materials and activities are accessible to all students. All readings and handouts will be available on Quercus in PDF form, and I will use a microphone during my lectures. Class attendance and late-assignment policies were constructed with an eye towards making this class as accessible as possible. Please let me know if you require any other accommodations, at any point throughout the term.

#### Mental Health:

Academic work is difficult and psychologically demanding. It's important to work hard and push yourself but it is even more important to be kind to yourself. The University has a number of resources available if difficulties arise: <http://discover.utoronto.ca/health-wellness>, <http://life.utoronto.ca/get-help/counselling>, <http://mentalhealth.utoronto.ca/>

#### Sexual Violence:

Given the subject matter of this course, you may also want to contact the Sexual Violence Prevention and Support Centre. As the SVPS Centre emphasizes and I'd like to echo, if you are a survivor of sexual violence: "You are not alone and this is not your fault."

E-Mail: [thesvpcentre@utoronto.ca](mailto:thesvpcentre@utoronto.ca)

Website: [www.safety.utoronto.ca](http://www.safety.utoronto.ca)

Phone: 416-978-2266

Academic Integrity:

The purpose of the assignments is to improve your skills in reading, writing, and critical thinking. The purpose of grades is to reflect your competency in these skills. Plagiarism undercuts these aims. You have plagiarized if you a) include writing that is not your own AND b) do not cite your sources. I will investigate suspected cases of plagiarism and academic dishonesty, in accordance with the procedures outlined in the University of Toronto's Code of Behavior on Academic Matters (available online at: <http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/policies/behaveac.htm>).

If you have questions about what constitutes appropriate academic behavior or appropriate research and citation methods, you are expected to seek out additional information from other institutional resources. ([http://writing.wisc.edu/Handbook/QPA\\_plagiarism.html](http://writing.wisc.edu/Handbook/QPA_plagiarism.html) is a good place to start.)

Writing Help:

Writing a philosophy essay can be difficult. We will spend some time in class talking about techniques for good writing and argumentation. More detailed information is available here:

<http://www.sfu.ca/philosophy/resources/writing.html>

For in person help—especially with grammar or syntax—make an appointment at the Writing Centre:

<http://writing.utoronto.ca/writing-centres/arts-and-science/> The Philosophy Essay Clinic is a particularly helpful resource: <http://philosophy.utoronto.ca/st-george/undergraduate-at-st-george/philosophy-essay-clinic/>

### 2.3.2.1 Sample Handout 1

#### **Week 1: What is Feminism?**

I. According to bell hooks, “**Feminism** is a movement to end sexism, sexist exploitation, and oppression” (*Feminism is for Everybody*, viii)

- Feminism seeks to end the **patriarchy**: the assumption that men are superior to women and should rule over women (ix). Feminism is not anti-male (viii): “Males as a group have and do benefit the most from patriarchy... But those benefits have come with a price. In return for all the goodies men receive from patriarchy, they are required to dominate women, to exploit and oppress us, using violence if they must to keep patriarchy intact. Most men find it difficult to be patriarchs. Most men are disturbed by hatred and fear of women, by male violence against women, even the men who perpetuate this violence. But they fear letting go of the benefits. They are not certain what will happen to the world they know most intimately if patriarchy changes. So they find it easier to passively support male domination even when they know in their minds and hearts that it is wrong... I believe that if they knew more about feminism they would no longer fear it, for they would find in feminist movement the hope of their own release from the bondage of patriarchy” (ix)
- Why do people think feminism is anti-male? Some versions of feminism have been (2). But newer versions of feminism acknowledge that since we have all been socialized into sexist thinking, women need to change too (3).
- For hooks, feminism is about more than just workplace equality or freedom from housework. It requires a radical overhaul of society (3-5): “Lifestyle feminism ushered in the notion that there could be as many versions of feminism as there were women. Suddenly the politics was being slowly removed from feminism. And the assumption prevailed that no matter what a woman’s politics, be she conservative or liberal, she too could fit feminism into her existing lifestyle. Obviously this way of thinking has made feminism more acceptable because its underlying assumption is that women can be feminists without fundamentally challenging and changing themselves or the culture... Feminist politics is losing momentum because feminist movement has lost clear definitions.” (5-6)

II. Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie offers a different definition of feminism during her interview with Trevor Noah on the Daily Show: “**Feminism** is about justice for everyone, but you have to name the problem. And the problem is it’s women who have been excluded. So we need to call it what it is.”

- Adichie: “The early feminists in the West shunned femininity because femininity had for so long been used as a way to put them down: The women were property; you’re supposed to look pretty and stay at home... But I think now we’ve come to a stage where we can accept that people can be many things. You can be feminine and feminist. It depends on whether you want to be. The problem is if someone is pushing you to be what you don’t want to be, then that’s not feminism. So I usually say to women who are thinking about it, ‘Just think of your individual self. What do you like? And, is that thing causing you harm?’”
- Noah: “Would you say it’s possible for a woman to say, ‘I’m a feminist. I believe in equality, but I still want a man to open the door for me.’”
- Adichie: “I think gestures like holding the door shouldn’t be gendered. I think it’s a lovely thing to hold the door, but we should hold the door for everyone. I hold the door for men, and women. So I think the idea of holding the door for a woman because she’s a woman [sigh] I have

trouble with it. I'm quite happy for people to hold the door for me, but I hope they're not doing it because of the idea of chivalry. Because chivalry is really about the idea that women are somehow weak and need protecting, but we know that really there are many women who are stronger than many men. So really what I think is that the people we should protect are the people who need protecting, whether men or women."

- "Men have to be on board. I think you can change women all you want, but if you don't change men, nothing changes. Because we share the world... Men need to speak up. Men need to be on board. Men need to not think of feminism as something that's attacking them. I think some men think that, but they need to understand that feminism is good for everyone because really when all of us are released from gender roles, we're all better off. And in the end it's about justice. Don't you want to live in a better world?"

**Do you think hooks and Adichie are disagreeing about what feminism is?**

III. Marilyn Frye offers a third account of **feminism**: "It is a fundamental claim of feminism that women are oppressed" ("Oppression," 10). Keeping hooks' and Adichie's discussions in mind, let's read Frye's piece together, and practice answering the kinds of questions that will be on your Reading Responses.

**Group 1:**

1. Read Passage 1, and explain the main terms (use quotes if they are helpful):

Oppression:

Double Binds:

2. Discuss the following questions (consider the bell hooks discussion of how patriarchy harms men): Do men also face double binds? Men are punished for demonstrating "feminine" traits like vulnerability—are they also punished for demonstrating "masculine" traits like aggression, violence, or dominance? If so, is there a kind of masculinity that avoids punishment? Alternatively, could a hyper-masculine man find validation in some circles? (Is the same true for hyper-feminine women?)

**Group 2:**

1. Read Passage 2, and explain the main term (use quotes if they are helpful):

Birdcage Metaphor:

2. Discuss the following questions (consider Adichie's discussion of door opening): Do you agree with Frye's first example of a wire in a birdcage—men opening doors for women? (How) does this action fit into a larger structure of domination? (How) are women caught in a double bind when men open doors for them? What would you say to a woman who says she enjoys having men open doors and doesn't feel oppressed by it?

**Group 3:**

1. Read Passage 3, and explain the main term (use quotes if they are helpful):

Barrier

2. Discuss the following questions: In what sense are barriers "intentionally" constructed? Do individuals always know what they are doing when they participate in oppression? Were all cages purposefully constructed with the aim to oppress particular groups? Is participation in oppressive structures 'motivated' in some other sense? Do the different kinds of oppression that Frye discusses in this passage (racism, sexism) fit different models?

### 2.3.2.2 Sample Handout 2

#### **Week 11: Feminism and Masculinity**

##### **I. Watch Justin Baldoni's TedTalk on Toxic Masculinity:**

[https://www.ted.com/talks/justin\\_baldoni\\_why\\_i\\_m\\_done\\_trying\\_to\\_be\\_man\\_enough/transcript?language=en#t-255277](https://www.ted.com/talks/justin_baldoni_why_i_m_done_trying_to_be_man_enough/transcript?language=en#t-255277)

##### **What do you associate with masculinity?**

##### **We're read about many negative features of traditional, "hegemonic" masculinity:**

- "The aspects of hegemonic masculinity that participants rejected included male bonding around the objectification of women, physical and sexual domination of women, and homophobia." (Hurtado and Sinha 338)
- The rules of patriarchy: "the insistence on blind obedience; the repression of all emotions, except fear; the destruction of individual willpower; and the repression of thinking whenever it departs from the viewpoints of authority figures." (hooks, 128)

##### **Patriarchal thinking harms men:**

- "Adhering to hegemonic conceptions of masculinity is associated with negative social and psychological consequences at the same time that it provides material privileges." (Hurtado and Sinha, 337)
- "What is different for black males, what makes it harder for them to survive than black females, is the dearth of healing theory and practice addressing black male pain and possibility (which includes support networks and therapeutic interventions), as well as the collective refusal on the part of black males to constructively use the resources that are available for their empowerment" (hooks, 128)
- "Unlike black females, who are given permission by sexist thinking to be emotional and therefore able to remain in touch with our feelings in childhood even when we are abuse or taught to mask them to appear "strong," black males are required by rituals of patriarchal manhood to surrender their capacity to feel. The soul-murdered black boy then has a much harder time recovering himself than the damaged girl has... While most black women do not identify with anti-patriarchal thinking or support feminism, they, like other groups of women, benefit from the feminist focus on healing. The feminist movement successfully put in place a politics of self-recovery and self-help that directly addresses female pain and offers strategies for transformation" (hooks, 130).
- "Most black men are clinging to outmoded survival strategies, of which patriarchal thinking is one, because they fear that if they give up what little "power" they may have in the existing system they will have nothing... Tragically, the patriarchal thinking the black man embraces is precisely the logic that will keep him mentally enslaved and mentally ill" (hooks, 130)

**Is hooks saying that men suffer more than women because of their lack of access to healing/self-help? Does she, like Hurtado & Sinha, acknowledge that men are also privileged, rather than oppressed? Are these the wrong questions to ask?**

##### **II. Feminism doesn't only provide resources to women; it can help men too:**

- “Given the negative consequences associated with adherence to hegemonic masculinity, feminist engagement on the part of men can be more constructive (and social justice oriented) response to the oppressive restrictiveness of masculinity as a social construct.” (Hurtado and Sinha, 337)
- “Collectively black males have yet to intervene on the negative cultural representations of the black male body because they simply cannot change how they are seen (as brutes, beasts, bastards) without challenging patriarchal notions of manhood as well as white-supremacist notions of black male identity. Black males can engage and learn from healthy self-loving black women strategies of self-recovery. The progressive writing that has challenged existing stereotypes and offered black females alternative ways to see ourselves was never written solely for a female audience. Yet to glean healing wisdom from the work of black female writers, black males do need to practice empathy.” (hooks, 131)
- “Individual black males searching for new life strategies utilize in a productive way the visionary work of black women. They embrace enlightened black women as teachers and comrades. Listening to healthy emotionally mature black females is essential to black male self-recovery. In interviews with recovering black males I asked them to name life strategies they utilized for self-empowerment and a large majority of them cited seeking help from black females.” (hooks, 133)

**Does this place too much of a burden on black women—to educate black men? Or is it good that women are being given a stronger voice and leadership roles within the community?**

### **III. What does it look like to follow feminists and create positive images of masculinity?**

- “Participants in this sample defined manhood in ways that emphasized emotional connections with others, being open to change and help from others, being collaborative, and being comfortable with one’s multiple (and in some cases, derogated) social identities. In other words, participants redefined masculinity in ways that allow men to experience the full range of the human experience... unencumbered by the restrictions imposed by traditional masculine gender roles. They defined manhood in ways that let men be *more than men*.” (Hurtado and Sinha, 348)

**Split into groups to discuss one of the following five theorists:**

- Maria Lugones
- Martha Nussbaum
- Linda Alcoff
- Serene Khader
- Renée Elizabeth Mzinegiizhigo-kwe Bédard

**For your chosen theorist, answer the following question:**

What resources can that theorist provide for theorizing a non-toxic form of masculinity?

### 2.3.3 Final Paper Instructions

<i>Due Date</i>	<i>Word Count</i>	<i>Percentage of Final Grade</i>
April 5th, <sup>1</sup> 11:59 PM on Quercus	Max. 1800 words	35%

This paper builds on the skills we've been practicing throughout the course. You'll put an author from the first half in conversation with an author from the second half. This will require you to charitably summarize both authors, and most importantly, to find and resolve a tension between their two views.

#### **Assignment Directions**

You are required to perform three tasks:

1) Summarize the argument(s) from two articles

- One from first half (Frye, Haslanger, Jenkins, Collins, Bierria, Frye, Lorde, Fatima, McKinnon)
- One from second half (Lugones, Alcoff, Nussbaum, Khader, Bédard, hooks, Hurtado and Sinha)

2) Show that there is a tension between the argument(s) presented in the two articles.

Here are a couple possibilities to get you started brainstorming ideas:

- In "Uses of Anger," Lorde extols the benefits of energetic anger when interacting with women of other races and social groups, but in "Playfulness, 'World'-Travelling, and Loving Perception," Lugones suggests a more playful and loving approach to crossing cultural boundaries. Do these two recommendations conflict?
- In "Women and Cultural Universals," Nussbaum argues that we can avoid essentializing other cultures by acknowledging women who resist their cultural norms, but would an outside observer be able to recognize the activism and resistant self-valuation that Collins discusses in "Learning from the Outsider Within"?

You are welcome to write on either topic, but you are not required to limit yourself to these two options. Instead, you are welcome to write about other tensions you've found between different pairs of papers we've studied for this course.

3) Explain the best way to resolve this tension.

Again, you have several options here. Here is a non-exhaustive list of possibilities:

- You could say that the two views only seemed to be in conflict, but they actually work well together if combined in the following way...
- You could say that the second philosopher raises a genuine problem for the first philosopher's view, but the first philosopher could respond to that problem by adding...
- You could say that the first philosopher has no way to answer the problem raised by the second philosopher, so we should adopt the second philosopher's approach to the issue.

#### **Here's how I suggest you organize your paper:**

---

<sup>1</sup> I will accept the paper up to 3 days late (Monday April 7th , 11:59 pm) without penalty, and up to 7 days late (Friday April 12th, 11:59 pm) with a 3% penalty/day. The late penalty can be waived and the deadline extended if you find yourself in exceptional circumstances (due to accessibility reasons, trauma, family problems, etc). Please reach out if you are struggling to meet deadlines.

100-200 words Introduction: give a short intro that states the thesis you'll be arguing for.

250-350 words Explain the first author's argument, focusing on the concepts you'll be problematizing.

- Be charitable. Give the strongest possible version of the argument, before you raise problems for it.
- Go into some detail, but make sure to stay focused on the parts of the article that you'll be raising problems for, rather than trying to summarize everything.
- Cite page numbers, even if you're paraphrasing!

350-450 words Explain the relevant concepts from the second author, and show how her view is in (apparent) tension with the first author's view.

- Be charitable. Give the strongest possible version of the argument, even if you'll end up raising problems for it.
- Go into some detail, but make sure to stay focused on the parts of the article that are in tension with the first article.
- Cite page numbers, even if you're paraphrasing!

600-800 words Explain the best way to resolve the tension you've raised.

- You are welcome to use the first person ("I" or "we"), but avoid hedging. (Don't say: "I think one possible way to respond would be something like...", instead, commit to your idea: "I propose that..." or "The best way to resolve this tension is...")
- Make sure to give reasons why your proposal is the best way to resolve the tension. Consider potential objections/complications that could pose a problem for your solution.

150-250 words Conclusion: Briefly summarize what you've accomplished in this paper and acknowledge any lingering tensions that you've left unresolved.

If you have any questions, please come to my office hours or email me to set up an appointment. I will not read full drafts, but I am happy to talk over your ideas or comment on an outline/section of your paper.

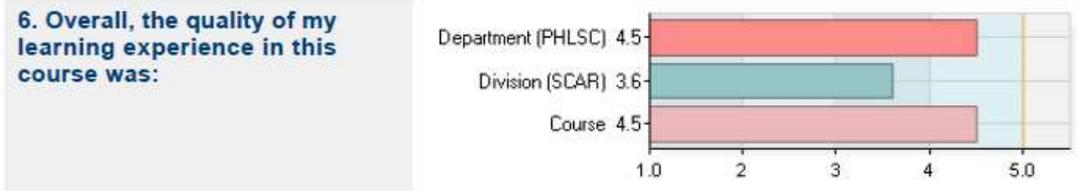
## 3. Student Evaluations

### 3.1 Course Instructor Evaluations

(in chronological order)

#### 3.1.1 Existentialism

Scale: 1 - Poor 2 - Fair 3 - Good 4 - Very Good 5 - Excellent



7. Please comment on the overall quality of instruction in this course:

- One of the best instructors I've experienced yet. She explains concepts VERY well and in a very simple manner. Also one of the easiest to work with in regards to having a disability. She's been very understanding and has given extensions when they were needed.
- Excellent, really opened my eyes to new points of view! Great use of current pop culture to help understand older philosophical writings.
- The overall quality of the instruction in this course was excellent. The instructor explained course concepts in a way that the student was able to flourish in course evaluations and still take the concepts of the course and apply them to the world outside of the classroom.
- The learning environment was comfortable and I find that always helps with constructive discussion. For a Philosophy course, being able to talk about what you're talking about is vital to learning the material. Overall great learning atmosphere.

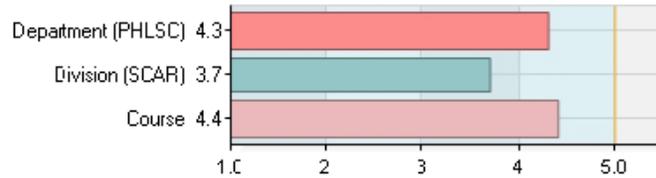
Other feedback from students:

- The instructor provided thorough and informative feedback on the weekly assignments to guide our understanding of the topics.
- Assistance from the professor was very prompt and efficient. I was able to email the professor and she would help greatly in ensuring that I understood the material. She is very approachable and made learning all the more enjoyable

## 3.1.2 Feminism and the World Wide Web

Scale: 1 - Poor 2 - Fair 3 - Good 4 - Very Good 5 - Excellent

**6. Overall, the quality of my learning experience in this course was:**



7. Please comment on the overall quality of instruction in this course:

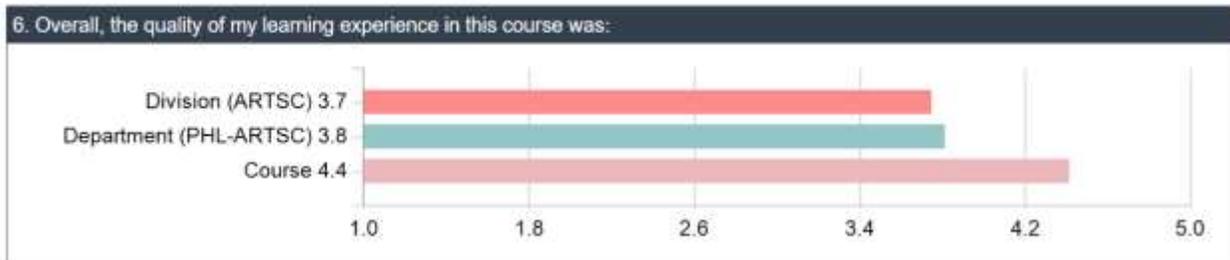
- Emma created a safe and inclusive space for students to engage in topics that were quite heavy in nature. It's very easy to allow your own biases to seep through when teaching a course on feminism but Emma did an incredible job in ensuring the material was presented in a fair and impartial manner.
- Great readings, good work explaining them in class, many opportunities for students to discuss their thoughts and have arguments respectfully
- Prof McClure was very interesting lecturer, who drew you into the material
- The course was well instructed, making the overall quality of the course great.

Other feedback from students:

- Best philosophy prof I've ever had (if it helps, philo is my minor). Thank you! Talking about your class got my boyfriend into philosophy, something he vehemently hated before.
- This course taught me a lot about Feminism, enabling me to see things in other fields (i.e. medicine and mental health) in a different way. I am glad that I took this course and look forward to learning more about feminism and philosophy.
- I really enjoyed taking this course. You did an excellent job helping me to see these issues from different angles and I am a better philosophy student for it. Thank you so much and good luck with your future endeavours :)
- Took this course mainly because it fit my schedule, but it has become my favourite course that I've taken so far in university.

### 3.1.3 Decolonial and Intersectional Feminisms

Scale: 1 - Poor 2 - Fair 3 - Good 4 - Very Good 5 - Excellent



7. Please comment on the overall quality of instruction in this course:

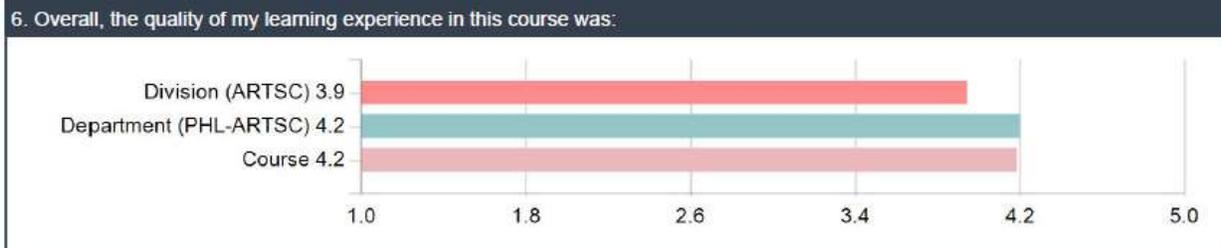
- Prof. McClure was an excellent instructor, approaching the issues we discussed with consideration, respect, and intellectual acuity. Her grading was fair, but my no means too easy, and her feedback on course assignments was invariably helpful. The syllabus and class discussions made PHL367 one of the most valuable courses I have taken in the Philosophy department.
- the course was very well designed. The reading material was clearly well picked and the professor deeply cares about the material. Overall it was a great learning experience
- Emma was so great! Really created a great discursive environment. I enjoyed her structuring and the flow of the course, it built quite nicely.
- Very clear, and in depth review of the readings. Openness to questions, and good guidance through, and encouragement of class discussion.
- The professor created a safe environment for students to contribute to class discussions and allowed for students to engage with the course material through discussion as well as reading and listening. The assignments were helpful for understanding the material more clearly and learning to extract key ideas from readings.

Other feedback from students:

- I really enjoyed this course, I loved being able to read perspectives in philosophy that weren't the same ancient 5 philosophers ad nauseum. I'd love to see these modern authors interlaced in other courses too.
- Great class. Interesting topics. As a visible minority, I can relate to many of the course topics from personal experience. However, there aren't too many places I can intellectually discuss them. So, discussing them in your class was rewarding.
- I have experienced a series of traumatic events in the past couple of months. <details redacted for anonymity>... I'd further like to express my appreciation for this course. With the ways these personal circumstances bled into other areas of my life, causing more emotional distress, I found it had the most impact on my performance in school. I struggled to pass this semester but did better in this course than I did my other ones. I found myself looking forward to attending this class and participating in discussions. I deeply enjoyed the topics discussed this semester and would have struggled a lot more had the instructor and organization of this course not been so accommodating.

### 3.1.4 Bioethics (Taught Online, Due to COVID-19)

Scale: 1 - Poor 2 - Fair 3 - Good 4 - Very Good 5 - Excellent

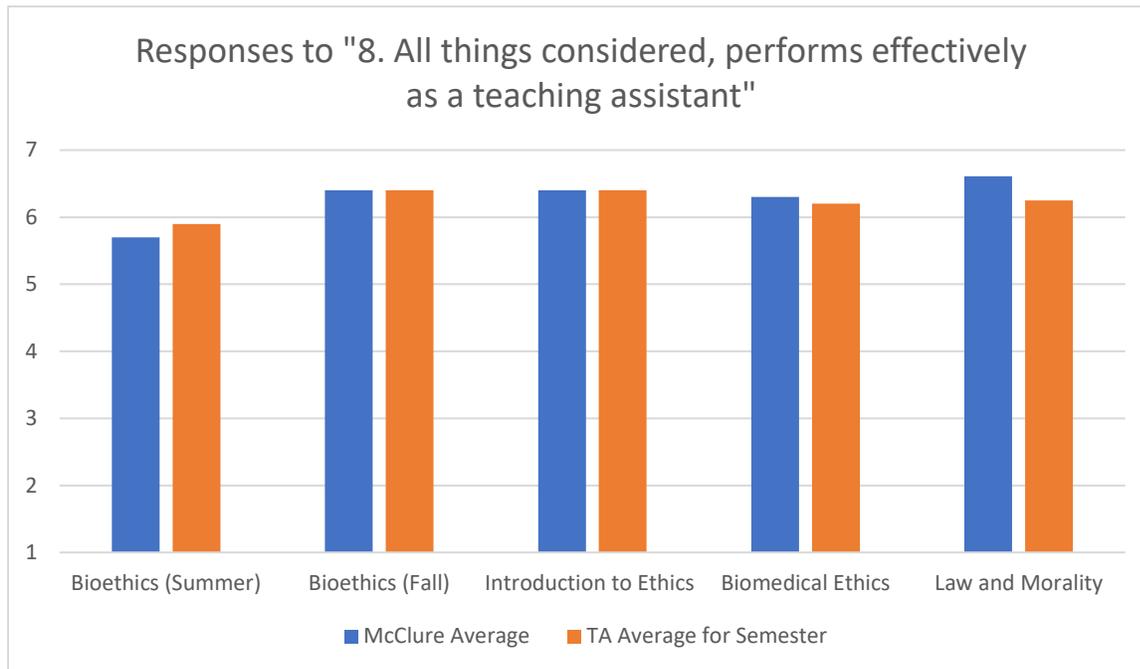


7. Please comment on the overall quality of instruction in this course:

- This course was basically perfect except for the fact it couldn't be held in person. Every new lecture was extremely interesting, Professor McClure was extremely accommodating and helpful. I really appreciated how the subject matter she chose to instruct us about was diverse and inclusive. It has been extremely illuminating to read thought-provoking material that wasn't written by a white man 50–2000 years ago. This course contained relevant, well-written material, with authors that reflect the society I live in. It made me even more invested in philosophy than I already am. The cherry on top is that Professor McClure made it easy to understand the readings with lectures that had accompanying lecture notes, and frequent office hours to ask any questions surrounding course material or the course in general. Furthermore, Professor McClure was easy to reach and empathetic. These are qualities that are so important in holding an online class in general, but especially in times like these. She made it clear in the way she communicated that it was perfectly alright to reach out to her for any aid necessary, and she was very reassuring when it came to my own personal circumstances and how they affected my ability to participate in the course. Professor McClure was there for her students in all the ways that count, and there really isn't anything I could ask more from a professor.
- The overall quality of the course was honestly incredible. This has been one of my favourite courses that I have taken. The material has all been extremely engaging and the navigation of the course was extremely user friendly. I really liked how the weeks were separated with all of the lectures and materials in one spot on Quercus in a super easy way to navigate. I have also found this course really expanded my understanding of a lot of topics and I feel like everyone should take this course, especially if they plan to be a physician. Professor McClure is a great instructor, it is clear that a lot of time was put into making the course interesting and to make the online interface extremely user friendly. I very much appreciated the way the course has been taught and how pleasant the overall experience of this course has been.
- The course was structured in a very organized way and the videos that Professor McClure made were just the right length to keep me focused. They were not too short and not too long. She also spoke in a very clear and easy-to-understand manner. Her content was very straightforward and very interesting. The course was so well taught that it has inspired me to discuss these topics with other people outside of class, including my friends and family. Professor McClure's inclusivity and manner of handling such sensitive bioethical issues has made change my perspective on certain things about the world as well.

## 3.2 Tutorial Leader Evaluations

(In chronological order)



Selected student comments:

### Bioethics (Summer 2016)

- Emma was a great TA. She held office hours & was very open to help clear up confusion about course material/assignments in person & over email. Tutorials were great & really helped me grasp the course material!
- She is well-prepared and is open to students. She is a person who is very easy to approach, because she is very friendly and is ready to help students. I think she was one of the best tutorial leaders I've had.
- I found the topics in tutorial interesting. I really liked how you encouraged class discussion and did not just lecture. It was interesting hearing others argument.

### Bioethics (Fall 2016)

- Most of my learning experience came from the tutorials. I got better insight into the material by attending the tutorial and most of this is attributed to how Emma conducted the tutorials. She was very organized, informed and encouraging. She also answered questions really well and provided exceptional feedback.
- Best tutorial I have had at my time at U of T. Most engaging. Created a safe, open environment where I felt I could speak up despite controversial topics covered in lecture/tutorial.
- Emma always was able to summarize all the points given in class and come up with some time of cohesive response. Considering how our tutorial spends most of our time at each other's throats for a turn to speak, her being able to do that helped keep not just the conversation on topic but gave everyone a good idea of what was actually discussed! This might be one of the best tutorials I've ever had.

- I really enjoyed my time in your tutorial. I found that the group work was a great way of sorting out our thoughts and opinions, where we could later discuss them. I found all discussions were very helpful in understanding the material. A suggestion I have is to perhaps go over the theories/brief summary before the group work is assigned so everyone is on the same page. I really enjoyed this course, thank you so much for a great semester!

#### Introduction to Ethics (Winter 2017)

- Emma's teaching techniques are excellent! She encourages powerful discussions and challenges students to think out of the box. She is greatly helpful in providing strong feedbacks for improvements in assignments. Overall, an amazing tutorial leader!
- I liked how organized the tutorials are, the worksheets were helpful & kept the tutorial structured. Also the tutorial was an open environment & even though I'm shy I still felt able to voice my opinion. The small groups was also nice because it allowed the more quiet people to have a chance to speak. Overall good job and enjoyable class.
- Great T.A. Very knowledgeable. I like how she writes down who volunteers in class. That encourages more people to participate. She doesn't leave it up to guess work whether people participated or not. Totally fair. Small group discussions are cool. Lets people have a chance to talk for those who are shy. Also, she provides AWESOME handouts.
- Really appreciate how all comments during class discussions (even those off-topic or not understanding the main concept) are taken into consideration and encouraged back to main point.

#### Biomedical Ethics (Fall 2017)

- I enjoyed this tutorial better than all my other tutorials; we engaged in discussions and got good feedback, and as someone who can be shy and not like group discussions, I felt very comfortable and excited to participate. The worksheets were very helpful to follow along in class.
- Great attitude, she actually wants you to learn & implement ideas taught in class in everyday life.
- I really enjoyed Emma as a TA. Her discussions were very helpful and aided my understanding of different concepts in the course. I used her handouts as some aid to study and found them very helpful. I don't think I'd change anything about her teaching style or the tutorial.
- Great TA! Great material! Emma knows what she is teaching, she is aware of her class, encourages everyone to speak and delivers information in an easy, understandable way. Very clear & concise. Best tutorial I had in 4 years, she would make a great prof.
- Loved coming to this class even though I'm not enrolled in this tutorial!

#### Law and Morality (Fall 2019)

- Emma is such a great TA! She is super helpful and takes the time to explain things 1-on-1. I felt quite intimidated by this course, as I had never taken philosophy, but Emma helped me a lot through tutorials and the paper writing workshop.
- Best tutorial I have been in. Worksheets each week are so helpful with highlighting main points and concepts in the readings. Very fair and not biased, welcomes all opinions which is not often common. Great TA very thorough and answers everyones questions.

- Tutorial was invaluable to my learning in the course. Reinforced and contextualized the readings effectively and also provided a safe and welcoming discussion forum where I did not hesitate to “think out loud,” as it were.
- Emma is very supportive and caring for her students. The detailed handouts she provides during each tutorial session help tremendously in students’ understanding of each philosopher + arguments. The course would have been difficultly challenging without her patient help and instruction.
- Emma is a wonderful TA, who is able to creatively present the information to her tutorial students in a concise and engaging manner. Very thankful to have had her. Keep up the great work :)

## 4. Building Philosophical Reading and Writing Skills

In 2019-20, I collaborated with U of T Philosophy professor Alex Koo and the English Language Learning Coordinator, Professor Paola Bohórquez, to create a set of skill-building reading and writing activities for use in the discussion sections of large, introductory Philosophy courses. The impetus for the project was that existing materials on philosophical reading and writing tend to be either general lists of advice or time-consuming sets of graded activities unsuitable for use in large classes. We created a series of in-class activities, approximately 20 minutes each, that don't require outside grading time. Moreover, these activities can be incorporated into any topics-based introduction to philosophy. There is no need to change existing course readings, since all the activities are based around a single reading, Nozick's Experience Machine, which is suitable for inclusion in metaphysics, mind, epistemology, or value courses. We tested these activities during the discussion sections of two different introductory courses (ranging from 250-400 students, taught at two separate campuses, with distinct reading lists, and six different discussion section leaders), and saw improvements in student writing, particularly when combined with scaffolded assessments. Equally importantly, these activities received overwhelming student support: when asked whether we should continue using these activities in future versions of the course, 80% answered "yes" and several students called for this kind of training to become mandatory in all introductory courses.

Here is an abbreviated version of the activities we created, that I used during a Zoom Writing Workshop (attended by 50+ students) in October 2020:

**Imagine that you were writing on this prompt:** *Summarize Nozick's experience machine thought experiment. (Make sure to paraphrase his points instead of giving exact quotes.) Then say whether you agree or disagree with his argument and explain why. Be specific!*

### **First we'd start by doing what's called "Reading for Understanding"**

Here's a simple technique to get you in the right mindset: read the first sentence of each paragraph

1. What matters other than how people's experiences feel "from the inside"?
2. What does matter to us in addition to our experiences?
3. Thirdly, plugging into an experience machine limits us to a man-made reality, to a world no deeper or more important than that which people can construct.
4. We learn that something matters to us in addition to experience by imagining an experience machine and then realizing that we would not use it.

**What would you guess the main point of this excerpt is?**

**Now you can check your guess and try to add more detail by reading through the whole passage** (See the attached document for the full reading)

**As you read, pause periodically to check your understanding: ask yourselves questions like "What is Nozick doing in this sentence/paragraph? Why does he mention this detail? Is he trying to explain his view, respond to potential objections, provide new arguments to support his position, or...?"**

**Once you've read through the passage, it's time to start writing!**

**Remember the prompt:** *Summarize Nozick's experience machine thought experiment. (Make sure to paraphrase his points instead of giving exact quotes.) Then say whether you agree or disagree with his argument and explain why. Be specific!*

**First you need to make sure you understand what the prompt is asking you to do.**

**Paraphrasing:**

**Paraphrasing** is putting someone else's idea into your own words.

- You can't just find synonyms for a couple words or rearrange a few phrases.
- You have to demonstrate that you understand the original author by finding a new way to restate their point.

Let's say we're trying to paraphrase this quote from Nozick:

"We learn that something matters to us in addition to experience by imagining an experience machine and then realizing that we would not use it."

You probably already have really good instincts about what a good paraphrase looks like! Here are three attempts to paraphrase:

1) We learn that one thing matters to U.S. additionally to expertise by imagining associate expertise machine and so realizing that we'd not use it.

**This paraphrase is from a free online paraphrasing tool. I bet you've already realized that this is a bad paraphrase. What is wrong with it?**

2) We learn that something matters to us additionally to experience by imagining an experience machine then realizing that we might not use it.

**This paraphrase is better than the first, but still has problems. What does this paraphrase do well? What does it do poorly?**

3) If we had the opportunity to plug into the experience machine, we wouldn't choose to do so. Therefore, we must care about something other than having pleasurable experiences.

**This paraphrase is much better. What does this paraphrase do well? What could still be improved?**

**Summarizing:**

You should paraphrase some parts of the argument, but don't try to paraphrase everything the philosopher said. A **summary** should only contain the main points of a philosopher's argument. A good summary shows that you understand the argument by presenting the main points as **clearly, succinctly, and charitably** as you can:

- **Clearly** means that your writing is easy to read and understand
- **Succinctly** means that your writing avoids repetition or unnecessary digressions.
- **Charitably** means that you make the philosopher's argument seem convincing by giving detailed explanations of each point and defining key terms.

Again, these guidelines become clearer if you consider some concrete examples. Here are three attempts to summarize Nozick's Experience Machine:

1) In the first paragraph, Nozick describes the experience machine and mentions a few reasons why you might want to plug in. Then in the next paragraph he gives three reasons why you wouldn't want to plug in. He concludes by saying that we wouldn't get in, which shows that we must care about something besides experiences.

**This summary is clear, but it's too succinct—it's so short that it doesn't go into enough detail to explain Nozick's argument charitably.**

2) Since the dawn of time philosophers have debated whether a good human life is anything more than the pursuit of maximum pleasure. Nozick breathes new life into this debate with his experience machine. This genius thought experiment asks the reader to imagine a machine that could simulate all the pleasurable experiences we could possibly desire, and afterwards poses the challenge: Would you plug in? Nozick thinks we wouldn't and provides three reasons that utterly destroy the opposing view. We want to do things. Additionally, we want to be someone, and finally, we want some deeper connection to the world. No one could read Nozick and fail to feel the force of these compelling reasons.

**This summary is based on a frequent mistake students make when they're trying to be charitable. It's engaging, almost like a news article, but it's not succinct. It's also not actually very charitable because it exaggerates so much. To be truly charitable, you should *show* the strengths of the arguments, not just tell us how great they are!**

3) Nozick's experience machine shows that we care about more than just pleasure. He asks us to imagine that we could choose all the experiences we'd like to have in our life, and then plug into a virtual reality where we have all those experiences. Nozick argues that even though this "experience machine" would provide all the pleasure we could possibly want, we would still be missing something important--actually accomplishing something with our lives, becoming a courageous person, or being connected to something outside ourselves. Whatever we decide is absent from the virtual reality, that's what we care about other than pleasure. In fact, we care so much that we wouldn't use the machine!

**This summary is much better. What does this summary do well? Could it still improve?**

Now that we understand the argument, the next step is to **decide whether you agree or disagree**. You do this by returning to the reading and asking **Critical Reading Questions**

**Clarificatory vs. Critical Questions:**

The first time we read “The Experience Machine,” some of you immediately raised objections, and I encouraged you to start by **reading for understanding**. We asked **clarificatory questions**:

- What is Nozick doing in this section?
- What does he mean by this phrase?

But now, the second time we read the text, we’ll start **reading for evaluation**. We’ll learn how to ask **critical questions**:

- Is this claim true?
- Am I convinced by Nozick’s answer to this worry?
- Could I imagine someone disagreeing with him?

**Reread this excerpt from the experience machine:**

Should you plug into this machine for life, preprogramming your life's experiences? If you are worried about missing out on desirable experiences, we can suppose that business enterprises have researched thoroughly the lives of many others. You can pick and choose from their large library or smorgasbord of such experiences, selecting your life's experiences for, say, the next two years. After two years have passed, you will have ten minutes or ten hours out of the tank, to select the experiences of your next two years.

**Here's an example of a critical question about this excerpt:**

- Nozick says you’ll get to preprogram the experiences you’ll have. But do you trust yourself to pick out the experiences that you’ll want to live through during the next two years? How could you know in advance what you’ll want to experience?

**Now in small groups, reread this longer excerpt from The Experience Machine:**

What does matter to us in addition to our experiences? First, we want to do certain things, and not just have the experience of doing them. In the case of certain experiences, it is only because first we want to do the actions that we want the experiences of doing them or thinking we've done them. (But why do we want to do the activities rather than merely to experience them?) A second reason for not plugging in is that we want to be a certain way, to be a certain sort of person. Someone floating in a tank is an indeterminate blob. There is no answer to the question of what a person is like who has been long in the tank. Is he courageous, kind, intelligent, witty, loving? It's not merely that it's difficult to tell; there's no way he is. Plugging into the machine is a kind of suicide. It will seem to some, trapped by a picture, that nothing about what we are like can matter except as it gets reflected in our experiences. But should it be surprising that what we are is important to us? Why should we be concerned only with how our time is filled, but not with what we are?

**In your group, come up with critical questions to ask about this excerpt. Pick your favorite, so you can share it with the class.**

## **How to Disagree: Turning Your Critical Questions into Objections**

Objections should be **specific** and raise a problem for a particular part of the philosopher's argument, preferably an essential piece of the argument that would be hard for the philosopher to change.

Objections should also be **compelling**, giving reasons why the reader should share this worry.

To quote from Prof. Alex Koo, the best objections are ones where "no response is obvious, even after a bit of reflection."

**Now we'll look at three example objections. Use the general advice I've given above to decide what they do well or poorly:**

1) Nozick thinks we wouldn't use the experience machine, but I would use it because I want to live a happy life.

**What does this objection do well? What does it do poorly?**

2) Nozick says that in the experience machine, we'd pick our experiences for the next two years, but two years seems like way too long of a time. I'd only want to pick my experiences for the next two months. Who knows what I'd want after that?

**What does this objection do well? What does it do poorly?**

3) Nozick says that people in the experience machine would not become any particular kind of person at all, and the machine is a kind of suicide. But I think that even people in the machine would still be learning and changing. Although your experiences would be preprogrammed, the machine wouldn't control your reactions to those experiences. Perhaps you'd start out choosing a life filled with pleasurable excitement, but then learn that you want something more fulfilling, like spending time with family or volunteering. You'd become the kind of person who wasn't just looking for the next rush.

**What does this objection do well? What does it do poorly?**

**[Optional] Now that you've seen some good and bad objections. Here's a list of worries about Nozick's argument. Decide which ones could be expanded into good objections and which ones won't work. (Hint the best objections are ones you can't immediately think of replies to):**

- Nozick says we care about actually doing things, instead of just imagining we're doing them. But I can still enjoy the experience of playing video games, even though I haven't actually fought a dragon or defeated Hitler.
- We could avoid so much suffering by going into the experience machine. Wouldn't you rather experience a fake life full of joy than a real life where you're starving or in pain?
- Nozick is wrong about the machine giving us pleasure because I would figure out that I was in the machine and be dissatisfied.
- For all we know we're already living in a simulated reality, and anything we think we're "actually" doing is just another level of imagined experience. Why should we care about entering a simulation of something that might already be simulated?

- Nozick says a person inside the machine would be an indeterminate blob. But would a prisoner in solitary confinement fail to be any particular type of person just because they're not interacting with the world outside their cell?

**What if you want to agree?**

I'm going through agreement last, because it's actually a much harder task than coming up with an objection. When you agree with a philosopher, you still have to figure out how to **add something of your own**, rather than just repeating their argument. You can focus on either adding further reasons to support the argument (e.g. a further point Nozick could have made, but didn't) or applying the argument in a new context (e.g. insights Nozick could offer about technology that didn't exist at the time he was writing).

**Look at the following examples of agreements and decide which ones add something new:**

**Example 1:** I agree with Nozick. Like him, I have the desire to actually do things, be a certain way, and discover deeper connections. After thinking about his thought experiment, I realized I couldn't accomplish those life goals in the machine, so I've decided that I wouldn't use it.

**What does this agreement do well? What does this agreement do poorly?**

**Example 2:** I agree with Nozick that we don't just want the experience of doing something. We want to actually do it. Imagine you had the choice between playing tennis video games and actually being as good as Serena Williams. Wouldn't you choose to be the greatest tennis player in real life? Being excellent at Wii Tennis is fun, but being a world champion is a much more meaningful accomplishment.

**What does this agreement do well? What does this agreement do poorly?**

**Example 3:** I agree that we shouldn't use the machine, but for a different reason. Imagine someone else has the same desires as I do. Given the option of preprogramming our life experiences, we'd both choose to be rock stars. While we're in the machine, we'd think we were special, but then we'd wake up to find that thousands of other people have been living the exact same rock star experience. I don't want that! I'd rather fail to be a rock star than live someone else's version of my dream.

**What does this agreement do well? What does this agreement do poorly?**

**[Optional] Now let's try to apply Nozick's argument in a new context.**

What could the experience machine tell us about how we should be using social media?

- Imagine someone who presents a persona or exaggerates their achievements on Instagram, Facebook, or Tik Tok. Is this at all like choosing to live in an experience machine?
- What do you think Nozick would say to an Instagram influencer? Would he recommend any changes to their life?
- Would you agree or disagree with his recommendations? Does applying his view to this new context make you support his view more or less?