

**The Florida State University
Department of Philosophy
Teaching Assistant Handbook**

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1. Introduction

Teaching Assistants (henceforth TAs) are an important part of both Florida State University and the Department of Philosophy. TAs are responsible for a substantial percentage of undergraduate instruction and provide indispensable support to instructors as graders and discussion section leaders. This handbook is a guide for new TAs without full instructional responsibility. The handbook clarifies the duties and expectations of TAs in the Department of Philosophy. In addition, the handbook addresses common issues and concerns that TAs face.

Teaching Assistantships are both a part of the professional training of a graduate student and a source of livelihood. As a part of professional training, TAs gain experience not only in teaching but also in the administrative aspects of life in academe. Furthermore, TAs are exposed to different pedagogical methods used in our discipline. Since an assistantship is a job as well as a part of graduate student training, TAs are expected to complete all work in a professional, responsible, and timely manner.

Florida State University recognizes the importance of TAs. As such, FSU offers many resources for TAs such as the Program for Instructional Excellence and the Preparing Future Faculty Program. The Program for Instructional Excellence (PIE) offers TA training and instructional development. The Preparing Future Faculty Program (PFF) provides TAs with further training and career development opportunities as well as mentors at participating institutions, like Tallahassee Community College and Valdosta State University.

The Department of Philosophy is also dedicated to improving TA performance. The PIE Associate works with the faculty advisor to provide a structured training plan for new teaching assistants as well as advanced training opportunities for TAs and Graduate Student Instructors.

2. Requirements, Duties and Expectations

2.1. University Requirements and Standards

Incoming graduate students (excluding students with provisional or special status) and current graduate students in good standing are eligible to receive University Assistantships. TAs are required to satisfactorily perform their duties, as determined by the department, and maintain at least a 3.0 cumulative GPA to remain eligible for a University Assistantship. Any student that does not maintain a 3.0 cumulative GPA cannot continue to serve a TA for more than one semester.

Florida State University requires that all TAs attend a Sexual Harassment and Sexual Battery training seminar. In addition, FSU requires that TAs, who are not serving as the primary instructor in a course, meet the following requirements:

Graders must:

- Satisfy department requirements.

Discussion Section Leaders must:

- Satisfy department requirements,
- Hold an undergraduate degree in the discipline or a related field,
- Have completed some graduate course work or be enrolled in graduate courses,
- Complete the PIE training program or a departmental equivalent, and
- Have faculty supervision.

2.2. Department Requirements

The Department of Philosophy has a set of requirements for TAs, in addition to those required by the University.

2.2.1 Training

The Department of Philosophy requires that all new TAs, as part of their formal training:

- attend the PIE Teaching Conference and complete the PIE certificate and
- attend department-sponsored training workshops.

Since training is not always formal, the department expects TAs to work closely with their instructors, who will provide their own guidelines and expectations for their TAs. TAs are also encouraged to observe other instructors' and TAs' teaching methods and styles.

2.2.2. New TA Orientation and the Annual Instructor/TA Meeting

New TAs are required to attend an orientation meeting with the PIE Associate and faculty advisor. At this meeting, the PIE Associate and faculty advisor will review the University and Department Requirements for new TAs.

In addition, all TAs are required to attend an annual meeting with the faculty. This meeting is held the week before the first class day of the Fall semester, the time and day to be announced.

2.3. Administrative Information

This section covers a number of administrative details. If you have questions about administrative matters (e.g., paychecks) that are not answered in this section, please see either the Office Manager or the Program Assistant.

2.3.1. TA Assignments

Assistantships are appointed for the Fall and Spring semesters. Sometimes, the Department of Philosophy has limited funds for summer graders. Summer grader positions do not carry the same stipend as TA positions in the Fall and Spring semesters. Furthermore, TAs should remember that summer positions are not guaranteed and make alternative plans if necessary.

Prior to each semester, TAs are required to complete a Course Preference Form. TAs must indicate their preference for each course according to the instructions attached to the Course Preference Form. Some instructors elect to hold discussion sections and these courses will be marked on the Course Preference Form. TA preferences are taken into consideration along with departmental needs during the TA assignment process.

TA assignments are first approved by the Curriculum Committee and then sent to the instructors for approval. Once the committee and instructors have reached a consensus, the assignments are distributed to the TAs, usually a week before the first day of classes. The department reserves the right to amend TA assignments as late as the first week of classes, if there are unexpected enrollment changes.

TAs will receive a desk copy of all the texts for their assigned courses.

2.3.2. Instructor Assignments

Sometimes TAs have the opportunity to serve as the primary instructors of an undergraduate course. The summer semesters offer the most opportunities for teaching assistants to instruct their own courses, but some of the opportunities occur in the Fall and Spring semesters as well. Instructors in the Fall and Spring semesters are paid half-time assistantships, and instructors in the summer semesters are paid slightly more. Under normal circumstances, only those who are ABD and who have been responsible for at least one discussion section will be permitted to be instructors. However, there may be exceptions. Graduate students who are not yet ABD, but who have satisfied the university-wide minimal requirements for teaching (see Appendix item 4.4), may certainly request to instruct courses, but preference will typically be given to those who are already ABD. Among those who are ABD and wish to instruct, every attempt will be made to distribute courses fairly among those with the requisite qualifications to teach the courses in question.

2.3.3. Workload

TAs with half-time appointments are expected to work an *average* of 20 hours per week. TAs with quarter-time appointments are expected to work an *average* of 10 hours per week. This includes time attending lectures, grading, meeting with the instructor, preparing discussion sections, holding discussion sections, and holding office hours. For many TAs, there will be several weeks that do not require 10 or 20 hours of work and a few that require more due to grading assignments that carry a heavy time commitment, i.e., papers and midterms. TAs are advised to speak with the course instructor at the beginning of the semester about grading loads.

If a TA finds that a course is requiring more time than an average workweek (see above), the TA should first inform the instructor. In most cases, the TA and the instructor can work out a way to reduce the TA's workload. If an accommodation cannot be reached, then the Course Supervisor should be notified.

2.3.4. Office Space and Mailboxes

TAs are assigned office space in Dodd Hall or Diffenbaugh and keys are distributed by either the Office Manager or the Program Assistant. Since space is limited, it is necessary that TAs share office space and equipment. TAs should be considerate of office mates both in using office equipment, such as computers, and in scheduling office hours. For example, the department suggests that office mates do not hold office hours at the same time.

TAs may request office assignment changes through either the Office Manager or the Program Assistant.

TA and Faculty mailboxes are located in 151 Dodd Hall. TAs are expected to check their mailboxes frequently.

2.3.5. Office Supplies and Equipment

Office supplies are located in the Office Supply Closet in the Philosophy Department Main Office - 151 Dodd Hall. TAs may use these supplies only for the course(s) for which they are assigned. Use of office supplies for personal use is prohibited.

TAs may use the copy machine, which requires an access number, to make copies only for the course(s) for which they have been assigned. TAs should use the copy machine located in the Philosophy Common Room before using the copier located in the main office. If the Common Room copy machine is out of service, then TAs should inform either the Office Manager or the Program Assistant. The copy access number is available from the Office Manager or the Program Assistant. Copies for research and personal use are not permitted.

Department telephones may not be used for personal, long-distance phone calls. Use of all other office equipment (e.g., fax, and scanner) requires the authorization of the Office Manager or the Program Assistant.

TAs should report broken or malfunctioning equipment to either the Office Manager or the Program Assistant.

Additionally, TAs should familiarize themselves with Florida State University's guidelines for proper computer usage.

2.3.6. Residency Requirements

TAs who are not Florida residents are expected to establish residency in their first year. TAs should begin this process as early as possible -- by obtaining a FL driver's license and registering to vote -- because the Assistantship tuition waiver covers out-of-state tuition for the first year of study only.

During the summer after the first year, TAs must file a Declaration of Domicile with the Leon County Courthouse and take a copy of the declaration along with proof of residency (e.g., FL driver's license, lease agreement) to the registrar's office. The registrar will then change the TAs status from out-of-state to in-state for tuition purposes.

2.4. Job Description

A Teaching Assistant, TA, is a graduate student who assists an instructor in the teaching of an undergraduate course. This may be done in a number of ways and the purpose of this section is to explicate the duties and expectations of TAs in the Department of Philosophy.

2.4.1. Duties

TAs may assist instructors by performing a number of duties.

Most often, these duties include (but are not limited to) grading, taking attendance, keeping the grade book, and leading discussion sections. Instructors should make TA duties clear at the beginning of the semester. However, TAs may find it useful to use the Job Duties Checklist for Teaching Assistants Form, located in the Sample Documents sections, to clarify duties and expectations.

Grading - Almost all TAs are responsible for grading at least a portion of course assignments. These assignments might include homework, tests, quizzes, short essays, or longer term papers. While grading homework assignments and objective tests may take little time, all things considered, grading essays and papers generally takes much longer. See Section 3.2 for advice on grading essays and papers.

Attendance - Many instructors do not have a mandatory attendance policy. However, some instructors - who, for example, use attendance and participation to make decisions about borderline cases - may still take daily, or even periodic, attendance. Some classes (discussion sections in particular), require attendance. If the instructor does not have a preferred method for tracking attendance, then the TAs are advised to be consistent in whatever method they choose.

Grade Book - Some instructors will choose to maintain the grade book themselves. However, this duty is often delegated to TAs. If the instructor prefers a written record, it is recommended that the TA keep a copy of all the grades in a separate folder in case the original is lost or damaged. If the instructor prefers an electronic grade book, then it is recommended that the TA keep a written record in case of file corruption or other computer issues.

Discussion Sections - Discussion section leaders are responsible for meeting with their assigned groups - usually of 20 to 30 students - regularly. The instructor will set the schedule and procure room assignments. Some instructors have very specific instructions and agendas for discussion sections. Other instructors prefer to provide TAs with just a basic outline for each discussion section. TAs should always

adhere to the instructor's guidelines and ask questions if clarification is needed. See Section 4 on Discussion Sections for more information. In addition to classroom duties, all TAs must hold scheduled office hours for student meetings. Half-time TAs must hold three scheduled office hours per week and quarter-time TAs must hold two scheduled office hours per week. The department strongly recommends that TAs spread office hours out over at least two days in order to accommodate students with varying schedules. Furthermore, TAs are also advised not to schedule office hours at the same time as their office mates. If a student has a conflict with scheduled office hours, TAs are expected to be flexible in scheduling meetings outside of office hours.

TAs are expected to be present for all scheduled office hours. If a conflict arises, such as an out-of-town conference, then the TA should inform the instructor and the students as soon as possible. If a TA must cancel office hours unexpectedly, then the TA should inform the instructor and contact either the Office Manager or the Program Assistant who will place a note on the TAs office door. Canceled office hours should be rescheduled promptly.

2.4.2. Expectations

TAs are expected to attend all classes and lectures. TAs are also expected to complete assignments, such as grading, within a timely manner. TAs should be prepared for class and take an active role in classroom duties. TAs should abide by the grading standards set forth by the instructor and complete all grading assignments in a timely manner. TAs are also expected to remain in town until the instructor turns in all grades. Grades are usually due the Tuesday after the finals week. TAs should not make any plans to leave town before grades are due. Furthermore, TAs are expected to maintain professional relationships with instructors and students.

If at any time a TA has a conflict that keeps him/her from fulfilling a duty or expectation, the TA is responsible for informing the instructor. Failure to do so will almost certainly reflect poorly on the TA's evaluation.

2.5 Evaluations and Awards

2.5.1. Evaluations

Instructors evaluate TA performance at the end of semester. A copy of this evaluation form is located in the Sample Documents section of this handbook. In addition, most TAs will lecture at least once each semester. Instructors use the Teaching Evaluation Form to evaluate these lectures.

A copy of the evaluation form is located in the Sample Documents section of this handbook.

Since there is no section on the University Teaching Evaluations for evaluation of TA performance, some instructors may develop their own evaluation forms. These are especially helpful for classes with discussion sections in providing feedback for discussion leaders.

The Philosophy Department faculty evaluates graduate student performance at the end of the Spring Semester every year. Teaching evaluations, together with the Student Activities Report, are reviewed at this meeting. The results of the evaluation are reported in the form of individual letters to the graduate students.

2.5.2 Outstanding Teaching Assistant Awards (OTAA)

TAs in the Department of Philosophy who exhibit instructional excellence as instructors may be nominated for the OTAA by an undergraduate, a faculty member, or their department chair.

A sample nomination form is located in the Sample Documents section of the handbook.

3. Common Issues

This section addresses some of the most common issues and concerns of TAs.

3.1. Professionalism

Although still students, TAs should begin thinking of themselves as professional philosophers. As such, they are expected to maintain professional relationships with their students, peers, and faculty. Some TAs find this transition difficult, particularly in the classroom. Dressing appropriately for class will help TAs establish professional relationships with their students. The department does not expect TAs to go to class in three-piece suits, but TAs should be careful about what they wear to class. In the classroom, TAs represent not only themselves but the department as well. If TAs are unsure whether something is appropriate for class, then they should bring their concerns to the instructor.

Additionally, TAs may maintain professional relations by keeping appointments, responding promptly to emails, and maintaining regular

office hours. TAs should keep their office door open during office hours and any time they are meeting with students.

3.2. Grading

Grading can be one of the most time-consuming and difficult tasks that TAs face. One of the biggest worries that TAs face is grading consistency. It is difficult, at best, to maintain consistency when only one person is grading. This problem is magnified when three, four, or even five people are grading for the same section.

TAs should meet with the instructor to discuss the assignments before any grading begins. TAs should be clear on what the instructor expects from the students. Some assignments, i.e., quizzes and multiple-choice tests, have a key. In these cases, consistency is less of an issue. However, for essays and papers, it is important that all of the graders are on the same page.

Grading rubrics are an excellent way to communicate expectations to TAs and students alike. Examples of rubrics can be found in the Sample Documents section of this handbook. Rubrics are not the only way to ensure grading consistency. Some instructors will have TAs grade a selection of papers, then meet to compare the grades assigned. These meetings give the instructor a chance to clarify her expectations and TAs a chance to ask questions.

If TAs are unclear about the instructor's expectations for an assignment, they should ask the instructor to be more explicit.

In addition to using rubrics and clarifying expectations with the instructor, TAs should also follow the following guidelines:

- Grade anonymously when possible. If you do know whose paper you are grading, you are less likely to read things into the paper.
- Do not grade more than 5 papers in one sitting. This is especially true when you are grading long assignments. The grades will be more consistent when you grade only a few at a time.
- Resist the urge to cover the paper in red ink. Instead of correcting every grammatical error, mark them and write "multiple grammatical errors" at the end of the paper. Also, do not overwhelm the students with comments and remember to keep it nice. It is sometimes hard not to take out your frustration after twenty students have made the same mistake, but you should always keep your comments professional.
- Resist the urge not to give comments at all. Students appreciate comments, even if they do not always follow your advice.

If a student has a grade dispute, then she should first discuss the grade with the person who graded the assignment. If the dispute cannot be settled between the grader and the student, then the instructor will become involved. If the dispute still cannot be settled, then the course supervisor will be notified.

Consistent grading and clear expectations will minimize the number of complaints and grade disputes.

3.3. Academic Dishonesty

Unfortunately, every semester some students will violate the academic honor policy. TAs should discuss honor code violations and penalties with the instructor before the beginning of the semester. This section addresses only two types of academic dishonesty - cheating and plagiarism.

It is sometimes difficult to catch students cheating during exams and quizzes. TAs may minimize cheating by requiring that students (1) sit with at least one empty chair between them (in rooms with enough space), (2) put all of their books, papers, cell phones, etc. under their desk, (3) take off baseball caps, and (4) sign the roll as they turn in their tests.

Plagiarism, like cheating, is an academic crime. However, unlike cheating, it is often easier to identify. There are several strategies that can help deter plagiarism.

- Talk to students about plagiarism. Explain your policies on collaboration. Be explicit.
- Use turnitin.com for all papers and essays. Turnitin.com checks papers against online content (websites, online journals) and every paper that has ever been run through the turnitin.com database. Besides, when students know that you are looking for plagiarism, they are less likely to commit it.
- Make assignments as specific as possible.
- For longer papers, require that students turn in a rough draft.

If a TA suspects a student of plagiarism, then the TA should bring the assignment to the attention of the instructor as soon as possible. Most instructors will want to meet with the student privately to discuss the violation and inform the student of the penalty. Whatever the penalty, a letter should be written to the Dean of Students regarding the violation. The Dean of Students will keep the letter on file. This will help the university identify habitual violators.

4.1.

The APA's Statement on Teaching

APA Statements on the Profession The Teaching of Philosophy

The following statement was prepared by the Committee on the Status and Future of the Profession, Richard Schacht, Chair, and the Committee on Teaching Philosophy, Gary Iseminger, Chair, and approved by the Board of Officers at its 1995 Meeting.

Teaching and inquiry are inseparable in philosophy. Philosophers and philosophy departments should be--and generally are--unsurpassed in their commitment to the quality of their educational efforts and programs. Both their students and their institutions have a right to expect this of them. They in turn are entitled to expect their institutions to be supportive of their efforts to provide educational experiences of high quality, and to expect students to endeavor to rise to their challenges.

These are times in which great emphasis is placed on the quality of teaching by critics as well as friends of higher education, and yet in which many forces are at work that can easily combine to erode that quality. It is crucial to the future of our discipline, our educational institutions and our society that faculty, administrators and students rededicate themselves to doing their parts to ensure that the best possible education occurs in our classrooms and on our campuses.

The study of philosophy makes a contribution that is central to the educational enterprise through its demands upon and refinement of a broad range of reasoning skills and intellectual abilities. This centrality endows the preservation and enhancement of the quality of education in philosophy with particular importance. These aims require the combined efforts of administrators, departments and instructors, and their mutual appreciation of the character of philosophical education and of the many things that affect its quality.

Philosophical Education. Philosophical education involves far more than imparting of information about figures and developments in the history of philosophy, training in the latest techniques, or of getting students to learn the correct answers to philosophical questions, or even teaching them about alternative possible answers to these questions. The development of an appreciation and grasp of philosophical methods, issues and traditions is an important part of it; and another is the cultivation of students' analytical, critical, interpretive and evaluative abilities in thinking about a variety of kinds of problems, historical texts, and issues, both "philosophical" and commonplace. Courses in the history and problems of philosophy are most appropriately designed in a manner that is conducive to these endeavors; and successful teaching and learning in philosophy should be conceived and assessed accordingly, rather than in terms of other sorts of (more easily ascertainable) outcomes.

Reading. The study of philosophy should involve the experience of coming to terms with texts in which philosophical issues are presented and argued at levels of increasing sophistication. Reading assignments of a substantial and demanding nature are therefore to be expected in most kinds of philosophy courses. Readings also may be expected to be highly diverse, even in different sections or versions of the same courses; for there is no single right way either to introduce students to philosophy or to structure upper-level courses in any areas of philosophical inquiry.

Writing. Writing is of great importance in philosophical education, as one of the ways in which the abilities it fosters can and must be developed. It is crucial that courses in philosophy be structured and staffed in such a way that significant writing assignments can be made and thoughtfully assessed. These assignments may include papers of varying lengths, reports on readings, pro-and-con arguments, short-answer and essay exams (both in-class and take-home), and course diaries.

Discussion. Verbal interaction, in which ideas can be articulated and examined, questions asked, positions debated, and arguments presented and criticized, is essential both to the activity and discipline of philosophy and to philosophical education. The structuring and staffing of philosophy courses should make provision for it. Instructors (and discussion section leaders in large lecture courses) should be encouraged and helped to develop strategies for stimulating and facilitating in-class philosophical discussion and for drawing students into it.

Teaching Loads. Since good philosophical education is instructor-intensive, it is crucial to its quality that philosophy faculty be assigned teaching responsibilities that do not preclude the forms of interaction, assessment and feedback it requires, either by the number of courses or by the number of students for which they are responsible. Practically speaking, this means that their teaching loads should be at the low end of the teaching load range for non-science faculty, with appropriate provision for assistance in large courses. (At institutions with significant expectations of their faculty in research, publication and professional activity, moreover, the teaching loads of philosophers must be compatible with these expectations.)

Teaching Assignments. Care must be taken, in the assignment of courses to faculty, to ensure that important courses-- e.g., introductory courses and other courses intended primarily for non-majors--do not suffer in their staffing. Serious efforts should be made to render the teaching of such courses attractive, and to render excellence in the teaching of such courses meritorious; and senior faculty should share in their teaching. This is of particular importance because it is often precisely through these courses that philosophy departments can have an impact upon the educational experience of the greater number of students.

Curriculum. Both the courses and the degree programs of philosophy departments should be designed with due regard to the character, needs and interests of the student populations they serve, and also to the traditions and contemporary developments of the discipline (as well as the particular interests and teaching preferences of the faculty). Departments are well advised to give careful attention to the balancing of these considerations, recognizing the need to adapt both course offerings and degree programs to changing realities in order to assure the continuing vitality of the study of philosophy at their institutions.

Innovations. Institutions and departments should be supportive of efforts on the part of philosophy instructors to experiment with new courses, novel modes of instruction and new forms of teaching technology, and should consider ways to encourage instructors to make such experiments. Incentives and recognitions of a variety of kinds may be desirable in this connection, to overcome the common tendency to keep doing the same things in the same ways.

Appeal. In many philosophy departments the courses available to undergraduates beyond the introductory level are designed and labeled in ways reflecting long-established rubrics and areas of philosophical inquiry. The importance and interest of such courses to many students is beyond question. There are also good reasons to develop alternative and special-interest courses appealing more directly and clearly to non-majors. This can be done both successfully and responsibly (philosophically as well as pedagogically) in a variety of areas of philosophical inquiry, to the benefit of students and departments alike. Departments and administrators are well advised to encourage and support course development efforts along these lines.

Seminars. No class setting is better suited to philosophical and liberal education than that of the seminar. Such experiences are valuable at the introductory level as well as subsequently. Institutions of all sizes should be supportive of efforts to offer freshman seminars, senior seminars, honors seminars and other forms of undergraduate (as well as graduate) seminars; and philosophers and philosophy departments should be actively involved in their promotion and development.

Lecture courses. Large lecture courses as well as smaller classes may be valuable educational experiences in philosophy as in other disciplines. The importance of discussion and writing in philosophical education, however, requires that lectures in such classes be supplemented with appropriately staffed discussion sections providing opportunities for interaction and writing assignments comparable to those available to students in smaller classes.

Teaching assistants. When the numbers of students taking philosophy courses exceed the capacity of faculty to provide students with sufficient opportunities for discussion and with assessment of their written work, the use of advanced (graduate and even undergraduate) students as teaching assistants may be both unavoidable and reasonable. At many institutions they serve as graders, discussion section leaders and even instructors. In all such cases, it is imperative that they be given such roles only:

1. when and to the extent that this is not detrimental to their own studies;
2. when they have been carefully assessed and found qualified for the particular responsibilities in question, in terms of their command of the spoken and written language of instruction, the course material, and the interpersonal dynamics of their assignments;
3. when they have been properly prepared for the kinds of tasks at hand and for their responsibilities in relation to both their students and their institutions; and
4. with appropriate faculty supervision.

Emeritus Faculty. Emeritus faculty represent a potentially valuable teaching resource, and may be involved in a department's instructional program to the benefit of all concerned. The fact that emeritus faculty typically do not bear extra-curricular departmental responsibilities may justify rates of compensation below department norms for full-time faculty on regular appointments; but departments of philosophy should not permit budgetary considerations to induce them to enter into arrangements that are fundamentally exploitative of their emeritus faculty.

Non-T-Track Faculty. The objectionability of exploitative practices should govern decisions made with respect to the employment of persons as teaching faculty in philosophy departments

) on a non-tenure-track, part-time, temporary, or other irregular basis. Full-time tenured and tenure-track appointments should be the norm. While there may be good reasons for departures from this norm under some circumstances, care should be taken to assure that rates of compensation, benefits, working conditions and departmental privileges are commensurate (by departmental standards) with assigned duties, and that the duties assigned (e.g. teaching load and schedule) do not preclude professional development.

Mentoring. It is helpful for continuing philosophy faculty members establish formal or informal mentoring relations with new faculty (including non-tenure-track faculty), and also with teaching assistants. This can do much to enable those who are new to instructional roles to be more effective in carrying out their assigned duties, and to develop as teachers, philosophers and members of the profession. Mentoring relationships also can be highly beneficial to other graduate students, and to undergraduate majors who may be considering graduate study and careers in philosophy.

) **Evaluation.** The primary criteria in terms of which philosophy teachers and courses should be evaluated are indicated by the characterization of "Philosophical Education" above. They defy precise measurement, and must not be reduced to quantitative measures of any kind. Student evaluations of their courses and teachers have many shortcomings; and data compiled from them and quantitative comparisons made by means of these data are highly questionable indicators of the quality of teaching. Such evaluations nonetheless are facts of modern institutional life; and in most institutions departments do well to cooperate in their collection. At the same time, departments also are well advised to supplement these evaluations with other means of course and teaching assessment. The evaluation process can be beneficial if it is conducted in a manner that is as sensitive as possible to actual educational quality, and if its main thrust is constructive (to give due recognition to quality and to foster improvement).

Visitation. The faculty visitation of lectures, classes, discussion sections and even seminars is a practice which, while far from universal in philosophy departments, can be useful if wisely implemented. It can contribute importantly to the teaching assessment process, and also can lead to improvements in teaching. Departments are encouraged to explore ways of making such visitations a maximally beneficial and minimally onerous standard practice.

Grade Inflation. Grade inflation has become a serious problem at many institutions. The importance of grades can be and often is greatly overestimated; but as a form of feedback as well as of motivation to students, they can play a significant role in the educational process. Philosophy departments do themselves a disservice--and send the wrong signals--if most students in philosophy courses receive high grades regardless of how much they have put into their courses and gotten out of them. Philosophy teachers cannot turn the grade inflation tide alone; but they can and should endeavor to be a part of the solution rather than of the problem.

) **Advising.** Good advising is crucial to the success of any instructional program with many options; and it is particularly important in philosophy, in which so many course titles and descriptions are likely to be either incomprehensible or inaccurately suggestive to students. Advising should not be left either to office staff or to a single "undergraduate advisor." It should be deemed a responsibility of a department's entire faculty. Advising about course selection

should be available to non-majors as well as majors. Detailed course description booklets prepared prior to each semester can be of considerable assistance in this connection.

Accessibility. Provision should be made and publicized for students to have access to their instructors and teaching assistants in timely fashion, as questions or problems in courses may arise, or as they may need special assistance. The same applies with respect to the department chair, advisors, and others with student responsibilities. Regular office hours (duly observed), supplemented by the opportunity to make appointments at other times when office hours do not suffice, should be standard procedure.

Grievances. Departments are well advised to establish clearly specified, publicized procedures available to students with grievances concerning, e.g., unfair grading, inappropriate conduct on the part of faculty or teaching assistants, their treatment by staff, the curriculum and course offerings, and deviations from institutional and departmental policies by instructors. Such problems are much better dealt with at early stages, before they either develop into major crises or adversely affect the educational experiences of students.

Reward Structure. The seriousness of institutions and departments about the importance of the quality of teaching is reflected in their faculty reward structure. Both campus-wide and departmental hiring, tenure, promotion, salary and other such decisions must clearly reflect the differing nature, magnitude and quality of contributions made to instructional programs. It is only in this way that faculty in philosophy and other disciplines can be expected to make this a high priority, and to do all they can to offer their students the best educational opportunities and experiences of which they are capable.

Originally published in Proceedings and Addresses of the American Philosophical Association, Vol. 69, No. 2, pp. 96-100.

4.2. FSU's Sexual Harassment Policy

(Copied from the 2007-2009 FSU Graduate Bulletin, online version:
http://registrar.fsu.edu/bulletin/grad/info/university_notices.htm#SexualHarassmentPolicy)

Sexual Harassment Policy

1. **Policy Statement:** Sexual harassment is a form of discrimination based on a person's gender. Sexual harassment is contrary to the University's values and moral standards, which recognize the dignity and worth of each person, as well as a violation of federal and state laws and University rules and policies. Sexual harassment cannot and will not be tolerated by Florida State University, whether by faculty, students, or staff or by others while on property owned by or under the control of the University.

2. **Office of Audit Services:** The Office of Audit Services (OAS) is charged with receiving and investigating sexual harassment complaints as set forth in this policy and shall maintain the records pertaining thereto. Within the OAS, the Coordinator of Sexual Harassment Resolutions has primary responsibility for leading these investigations.

3. **Definition:** Sexual harassment is defined as unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature directed at an employee or student by another when:

- a. Submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of employment, academic status, receipt of University services, participation in University activities and programs, or affects the measure of a student's academic performance; or
- b. Submission to or rejection of such conduct is used as the basis for a decision affecting employment, academic status, receipt of services, participation in University activities and programs, or the measure of a student's academic performance; or
- c. Such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with employment opportunities, work or academic performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work or educational environment.

4. **Examples of Sexual Harassment:** Incidents of sexual harassment may involve persons of different or the same gender. They may involve persons having equal or unequal power, authority or influence. Though romantic and sexual relationships between persons of unequal power do not necessarily constitute sexual harassment, there is an inherent conflict of interest between making sexual overtures and exercising supervisory, educational, or other institutional authority. Decisions affecting an employee's job responsibilities, promotion, pay, benefits, or other terms or conditions of employment, or a student's grades, academic progress, evaluation, student status, recommendations, references, referrals, and opportunities for further study, employment or career advancement, must be made solely on the basis of merit.

Examples of sexual harassment include, but are not limited to, the following, when they occur within the circumstances described in Section (3) above:

- a. Use of gender-based verbal or written language, including electronic communications offensive or degrading to a person of that gender, whether or not the content is sexual
- b. Inappropriate display of gender-based pictorial images offensive or degrading to a person of that gender, including but not limited to sexual posters, photographs, cartoons, drawings, or other displays of sexually suggestive objects or pictures
- c. Use of inappropriate gestures or body language of a sexual nature, including leering or staring at another
- d. Unwelcome requests or demands for sexual favors or unwelcome sexual advances
- e. Inappropriate nonconsensual touching of another's body, including but not limited to kissing, pinching, groping, fondling, or blocking normal movement
- f. Sexual battery. (**Note:** Some acts of sexual harassment may also constitute violations of criminal law, e.g., sexual battery, indecent exposure, sexual abuse, etc. In such instances, please refer to the FSU Sexual Battery Policy.)

5. Disciplinary and Other Actions: Sexual harassment is prohibited by Florida State University. The University will take appropriate action against any person found to be in violation of this policy.

Note: A person who has sexually harassed another or retaliated against another may also be subject to civil or criminal liability under state or federal law.

a. Disciplinary Actions. Any employee who has sexually harassed another employee or a student, retaliated against such person for bringing a complaint of sexual harassment, or otherwise violated this policy shall be guilty of misconduct and subject to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal, in accordance with applicable law, rules, policies, and/or collective bargaining agreements. In addition, any student who has sexually harassed another student or an employee, retaliated against such person for bringing a complaint of sexual harassment, or otherwise violated this policy may be subject to disciplinary action up to and including expulsion, pursuant to the Student Code of Conduct. The term "employee" includes all persons employed by the University including faculty and graduate teaching assistants.

b. Other Actions. The University will take such corrective action against any non-students or non-employees found to have violated this policy, as may be appropriate under the circumstances.

6. Retaliation: Retaliation against one who in good faith brings a complaint of sexual harassment or who in good faith participates in the investigation of a sexual harassment complaint is prohibited and shall be a violation of this policy and shall constitute misconduct subject to disciplinary or other action as described in Section (5) above.

7. Filing of False Sexual Harassment Complaint: Knowingly filing a false sexual harassment complaint is prohibited and shall be a violation of this policy and shall constitute misconduct subject to disciplinary action as described in Section (5) above. A complaint that is investigated and deemed unsubstantiated is not necessarily a false complaint.

8. Reporting Required: Any student or employee who has witnessed what is perceived to be a violation of this policy should promptly report that conduct to the OAS, who then will proceed as appropriate. Any supervisor who has witnessed or becomes aware of the alleged occurrence of sexual harassment by, or who receives a complaint of sexual harassment involving a person within that supervisor's purview is required to take prompt corrective action as appropriate, and to report the matter, if possible, within two work days to the OAS. Failure of the supervisor to take appropriate corrective action or to report the incident shall be a violation of this policy and shall constitute misconduct subject to disciplinary action as described in Section (5) above.

Note: For the purposes of this policy, the term "supervisor" shall be deemed to include vice presidents, deans, directors, department chairs, unit heads, supervisors, principal investigators, etc.; faculty when acting in a supervisory capacity or within the faculty-student role; and graduate research assistants, teaching assistants, lab technicians, residence hall coordinators, etc.

9. Complaint Procedure:

a. Filing of Complaint. Any student or employee who believes that he or she is a victim of sexual harassment in violation of this policy is encouraged to promptly notify the alleged perpetrator (the "respondent") verbally or in writing that his or her conduct is unwelcome. Such action may cause the unwelcome conduct to cease as well as help to maintain an environment free from sexual harassment. Assistance and support is available from the Office of the Dean of the Faculties (for faculty), the Office of the Dean of Students (for students), or the Department of Human Resources (for non-faculty employees). Regardless of having given notice to the respondent, the student or employee (the "complainant") may initiate a complaint under this policy by promptly bringing the matter to the attention, preferably in writing by completing the complaint form, of any of the following:

- The Office of Audit Services
- The Office of the Dean of the Faculties
- The Office of the Dean of Students
- The Department of Human Resources

- A student's college dean
- An employee's immediate or next immediate supervisor.

All complaints should be filed in a timely manner. Complaints filed for acts that occurred more than one year from the filing date of the complaint will generally not be investigated unless appropriate in the judgment of the OAS.

b. Preparing a Complaint: The complainant should provide the following information to facilitate a prompt and thorough investigation:

- The names, addresses, telephone numbers, administrative unit, and position or status of the complainant and the respondent, if known
- Specific acts alleged, including dates, times, and locations
- Names, addresses, and phone numbers of potential witnesses
- The effect the alleged acts have had on the complainant
- Actions the complainant may have taken to attempt to stop the harassment
- Complainant's suggestion of proposed action to address or resolve the harassment
- Other information the complainant believes is relevant.

c. Transmitting a Complaint to the OAS: The complaint shall immediately be forwarded to the OAS. If the complaint is verbal, the person receiving the complaint shall make a written summary thereof on the complaint form and request the complainant to sign it.

d. Reviewing a Complaint. The OAS will make an initial determination whether the alleged perpetrator is a student or employee. If the alleged perpetrator is identified as one who is not a student or employee, then the OAS will refer the matter to the Office of the General Counsel for appropriate action. If the OAS determines that the alleged perpetrator is a student or employee, the OAS will review the complaint to determine whether the acts complained of, as stated by the complainant, constitute a violation of this policy, and if not, the complainant will be so informed. If the OAS determines the alleged acts may constitute a violation of this policy, investigation will proceed as set forth in Section (10) below, unless the matter is satisfactorily resolved as in the following paragraph (e).

e. Notifying the Respondent and Supervisor; Informally Resolving a Complaint;

Withdrawing a Complaint: The OAS will notify the respondent and his or her appropriate supervisor of the allegations contained in the complaint. In an effort to informally resolve the complaint, the OAS will elicit from the complainant, proposed actions the complainant believes are necessary to address or resolve the alleged harassment. The OAS will discuss these proposed actions with the respondent and with appropriate levels of management. The respective parties will also have the opportunity to propose other means of resolution. Thus, if the matter can be resolved informally, or if the complainant chooses to withdraw the complaint, the complainant will sign a statement outlining the informal resolution and releasing the University from taking any further action. If the matter is not resolved at this stage, the complaint will be investigated as set forth in Section (10) below.

10. Investigation: The following procedures will govern all investigations of complaints alleging violations of this policy:

a. The OAS will thoroughly investigate complaints alleging violations of this policy with the assistance, as needed, of the following: the Office of the Dean of the Faculties, the Department of Human Resources, and/or the respondent's supervisor(s), except in cases where the respondent is a student. If the respondent is a student, the OAS will forward a copy of the complaint and any associated materials to the Office of the Dean of Students, which will, if appropriate, adjudicate the matter under the Code of Student Conduct. The Dean of Students shall notify the OAS of the outcome.

b. The investigation should include interviewing the complainant and witnesses suggested by the complainant who may have knowledge of the offending behavior. Employees and students shall fully cooperate in the investigation.

c. The respondent will be given an opportunity to respond to the complaint verbally and in writing and may suggest additional witnesses.

d. The investigation should also include interviewing such other witnesses as are deemed appropriate under the circumstances.

e. The investigation should include a review of any files and records of previous sexual harassment complaints against the respondent and any other documents deemed relevant.

f. All witnesses who provide relevant information should submit a written, signed statement attesting to their knowledge of the subject circumstances.

g. Confidentiality of the investigation will be maintained to the extent allowed by law.

11. Report of OAS: The OAS will prepare a report setting forth its findings and a determination concerning violation of this policy. The report should be completed within 120 days following the filing of the complaint, where feasible, and will be submitted to the appropriate vice president of the respondent's unit or department.

12. Subsequent Action: The vice president will make a determination upon review of the OAS's report, consultation with the Dean of the Faculties or the Director of Human Resources, and consideration of any other relevant information, including aggravating or mitigating circumstances, whether disciplinary action is warranted under the circumstances. If the vice president determines that disciplinary action should be initiated, then, consistent with due process requirements, the respondent will be notified in accordance with applicable Florida Board of Education and University rules and policies and collective bargaining agreements, and appropriate disciplinary procedures as provided for therein will be followed. Regardless of whether formal disciplinary action is initiated, the University may take such informal corrective action as may be appropriate under the circumstances. The vice president will notify the OAS of the outcome. The OAS will notify the complainant of the results of the investigation and subsequent disciplinary or other corrective action taken, if any, to the extent allowed by law. The OAS will notify the respondent of the results of the investigation when no policy violation is found and no further action planned.

13. Distribution of Policy: Copies of this policy are available to all current and future employees and students at Florida State University in hard copy (policy brochures, student handbooks, the *General* and *Graduate Bulletins*, etc.), electronic format (<http://www.auditservices.fsu.edu>), and will be made available in alternative format upon request. Any person involved in the process under this policy needing accommodations for a disability should notify the OAS.

14. Applicability: This policy supersedes any and all prior University policies regarding complaints of alleged acts of sexual harassment.

15. Effective Date: The effective date of this policy is July 1, 1998 as amended December 31, 2002, and January 6, 2004.

16. Where To Go For Help: Any member of the university community may report sexual harassment to The Office of Audit Services, 407 Westcott Building, (850) 644-6031, or by calling the Florida State University Sexual Harassment Hotline, (850) 644-9013. Staff is also available in the following offices to assist victims of sexual harassment: A student victim may report to Dean of Students, 4322 University Center A, (850) 644-2428; a faculty victim may report to Dean of Faculties, 314 Westcott Building, (850) 644-6876; an A&P, USPS or OPS victim may report to Human Resources, 6224 University Center A, (850) 644-6475.

4.3. Job Duties Checklist for TAs

Job Duties Checklist for Teaching Assistants*

Attend Lecture			
Read text/assignments			
Take Attendance			
Tack Class Notes			
Hold Office Hours			
Grade Homework			
Grade Essays/Papers			
Grade Exams			
Hold Discussion Sections			
Proctor Exams			
Arrange for Machine Grading of Exams			
Maintain Grade Book and Attendance			
Develop or maintain course website			
Meet with instructor or other TAs			
Prepare Mid-semester reports			
Communicate with Students online			
Lecture			
Assist with Computing Final Grades			
Make Copies/Prepare Teaching Materials			
Show Films/Videos			

*Adapted from the University of Texas at Austin's Job Duties Checklist for TA's.

4.4 University-wide Standards for TAs at FSU

University-wide Standards for Teaching Assistants at Florida State University

These are University-wide standards that any student must meet prior to assuming one of the various instructional roles. These are meant to be university-wide minimum standards; departments may adopt additional or more stringent standards. Graduate Programs which do not use graduate students in instructional roles would not be affected by these standards. They are meant to cover the formal use of teaching assistants in course instruction. Extra help sessions and voluntary tutorials in addition to regular class meetings would not normally fall under these requirements.

Certification of General Teaching Competence:

Each semester in accordance with guidelines of the Commission on Colleges (SACS) and the standards outlined in the following sections, the Academic Dean of each College is required to certify in writing to the Dean of the Faculties and the Dean of Graduate Studies that each student who serves as a Teaching Assistant is competent to teach and for International Teaching Assistants that they are also competent to teach in spoken English.

General:

It is recommended that each program have a discipline-specific teaching manual for its teaching assistants to supplement the university teaching manual, *Instruction at FSU* which can be viewed online

(<http://learningforlife.fsu.edu/ctl/explore/onlineresources/I@FSU.cfm>).

Minimum Requirements for Different Levels of Instruction:

1. Grader

- a program specific statement of standards for graders

2. Proctor for Computerized Exams and Laboratories

- undergraduate majoring in the discipline
- PIE fall conference or departmental equivalent
- PIE workshop on Sexual Harassment or equivalent (see below)
- supervision by the faculty member teaching the course

3. Lab section

- undergraduate majoring in the discipline
- specific instruction in laboratory demonstration
- PIE fall conference or departmental equivalent
- PIE workshop on Sexual Harassment or equivalent (see below)
- direct supervision by senior lab assistant /or faculty member in the teaching discipline
- planned and periodic evaluations of the teaching assistant

4. Recitation/discussion section

4/17/08 Revision

- undergraduate degree in discipline or related field
- some graduate work completed or enrolled for
- PIE fall conference or departmental equivalent
- PIE workshop on Sexual Harassment or equivalent (see below)
- direct supervision by faculty member in the teaching discipline
- planned and periodic evaluations of the teaching assistant

Course level types 5-8 presume the teaching assistant is providing the primary instruction in the course.

5. Lower-level course

- 18 hours of graduate work in teaching discipline
- PIE fall conference or departmental equivalent PIE workshop on Sexual Harassment or equivalent (see below)
- student participation in a “teaching in the discipline” course or equivalent departmental orientation
- direct supervision by faculty member in the teaching discipline
- planned and periodic evaluations of the teaching assistant

6. Liberal studies course

- 18 hours of graduate work in teaching discipline
- PIE fall conference or departmental equivalent
- PIE workshop on Sexual Harassment or equivalent (see below)
- student participation in a “teaching in the discipline” course or equivalent departmental orientation
- direct supervision by faculty member in the teaching discipline
- planned and periodic evaluations of the teaching assistant

7. Upper-level non-major non-liberal studies course

- Master's degree or equivalent
- PIE fall conference or departmental equivalent
- PIE workshop on Sexual Harassment or equivalent (see below)
- student participation in a “teaching in the discipline” course or equivalent departmental orientation
- direct supervision by faculty member in the teaching discipline
- planned and periodic evaluations of the teaching assistant*

8. Upper-level major course

- Master's degree or equivalent
- enrolled in doctoral level course work and strongly encouraged to have completed two semesters of doctoral level course work
- PIE fall conference or departmental equivalent
- PIE workshop on Sexual Harassment or equivalent (see below)
- student participation in a “teaching in the discipline” course or equivalent departmental orientation

4/17/08 Revision

- direct supervision by faculty member in the teaching discipline
- planned and periodic evaluations of the teaching assistant

Certification of Spoken English for Graduate Teaching Assistants:

As noted above Academic Deans are required to certify to the Dean of the Faculties and the Dean of Graduate Studies that the TAs in the college are competent to teach. This statement should also include certification that all graduate TAs whose native language is not English are competent to teach in spoken English.

All international graduate students who are not native speakers of English, and who are going to be TAs, should take the SPEAK test when they arrive on campus (as noted below, students who scored 26 or higher on the speaking portion of the IBTOEFL may be exempted from taking the SPEAK test). The Center for Intensive English Studies (CIES) administers and scores the SPEAK test, CIES also offers courses in spoken English (EAP courses). The SPEAK test is administered several times in the week(s) prior to the beginning of each semester, and the scores are available within three to four days of the date the test is administered. Departments are urged to take advantage of this opportunity to receive an initial estimate of speaking ability. In addition, the SPEAK is routinely administered as an end-of-term evaluation for students enrolled in EAP courses. TAs not enrolled in EAP courses may also take the test at that time. Course offerings, as well as test dates for SPEAK tests, are published in fliers distributed periodically to departments, as well as via email to TA coordinators. This information is also available on the CIES Web site (www.cies.fsu.edu).

The standards for certification of spoken English are as follows:

- A score of 50 or higher on the SPEAK test, or 26 or higher on the speaking portion of the IBTOEFL, certifies a student to teach at any level.
- A score of 45 certifies a student to teach at levels 1-2, and to teach at levels 3-4 if also enrolled in an appropriate CIES English language course.

In unique instances a Department Chair or Dean may appeal the application of these standards by submitting a request to the Dean of Graduate Studies. The Dean of Graduate Studies will convene a committee to consider the request. The committee will consist of the Director of the FSU Center for Intensive English Studies; the Chair (or designee) of the Undergraduate Policy Committee; the person making the appeal; and the Dean of Graduate Studies.

Equivalent Previous Experience and Emergencies:

With the exception of the 18-hours-in-the-discipline rule for primary instruction and in accordance with guidelines provided by the Commission on Colleges (SACS), the following options will be available to deal with special circumstances:

A student who through previous preparation or teaching experience has demonstrated knowledge and strong teaching skills, can be exempt from some of the requirements in 3-8, as appropriate, by certification of the program chair. 4/17/08 Revision

In an emergency a department may appoint a graduate teaching assistant who has not met all the University-wide requirements for that level of appointment if there is an assurance that the student will meet the requirements by the end of the term in which the student is teaching.

PIE workshop on sexual harassment policies and equivalency:

University policy on sexual harassment training is provided by Office of Audit Services (<http://www.auditservices.fsu.edu/services/training/index.html>). The office provides training sessions at the PIE Fall Teaching Conference. In addition PIE sponsors a workshop in the spring usually during the second week of classes. Departments can also set up departmental training by contacting the Office of Audit Services, and this office also offers training online.

Sample Documents

Sample Evaluation Forms

TEACHING ASSISTANT EVALUATION

Department of Philosophy
Florida State University

Form revised: 12-08

TA: _____

Instructor: _____ Term: _____

Course: _____ Course Supervisor: _____ Date: _____

1 = Poor 2 = Fair 3 = Good 4 = Excellent

General Fulfillment of Responsibilities

1. Attended class sessions.	1	2	3	4	N/A
2. Attended office hours.	1	2	3	4	N/A
3. Met grading deadlines.	1	2	3	4	N/A
4. Was prepared for class.	1	2	3	4	N/A
5. Took an active role in classroom duties.	1	2	3	4	N/A
6. Demonstrated command of the subject matter.	1	2	3	4	N/A

Grading and Assessment

7. Consistently adhered to grading standards set by instructor.	1	2	3	4	N/A
8. Graded and administered assignments and exams in a clear and thoughtful manner.	1	2	3	4	N/A
9. Provided quality comments on student work.	1	2	3	4	N/A

Interaction

10. Communicated respectfully and professionally with students.	1	2	3	4	N/A
11. Communicated respectfully and professionally with instructor.	1	2	3	4	N/A
12. Helped to foster a positive learning environment for <i>all</i> students.	1	2	3	4	N/A
13. Showed enthusiasm about the content of the class.	1	2	3	4	N/A
14. Inspired interest among the students.	1	2	3	4	N/A

15. Overall assessment of TA's lecture

****Please attach Teaching Observation Form****

16. Overall assessment of TA's performance	1	2	3	4	N/A
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SUMMARY COMMENTS

17. What were the TA's major strengths as demonstrated over the course of the term?

18. What weaknesses were observed? What suggestions do you have for improving them?

19. If the TA ran discussion sections, please evaluate in light of your observations, student feedback, or other information.

TA Signature: _____ Date: _____

Instructor Signature: _____ Date: _____

Course Supervisor Signature: _____ Date: _____

GRADUATE INSTRUCTOR EVALUATION

Department of Philosophy
Florida State University

Form revised: 12-08

Graduate Instructor: _____

Course Supervisor: _____ Term: _____

Course: _____ Date: _____

1) Did you observe the instructor teach a class? If so, please attach the Teaching Observation Form and add any further comments here.

2) Was the instructor's syllabus complete and well-designed?

3) As far as you know, did the instructor fulfill all requirements (e.g., attend lectures, attend office hours, design useful and fair assignments, grade in a timely and fair way, show respect towards students, guide TAs, etc.)?

4) Were any specific problems with the instructor or the class brought to your attention by the instructor's students or TAs? If so, were they resolved by the instructor?

5) Do you have any further comments about your overall assessment of this instructor (use back if needed)?

Graduate Instructor's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Course Supervisor's Signature: _____ Date: _____

TEACHING OBSERVATION FORM

Department of Philosophy
Florida State University

Form revised: 12-08

Lecturer: _____

Observer: _____ Date: _____

Course: _____ Observation # 1 2 3

1 = not effective

2 = needs more emphasis

3 = accomplished

4 = accomplished very well

Organization – Overall Judgment

	1	2	3	4	
1. Presented introduction to the lesson.	1	2	3	4	N/A
2. Presented topics in a logical, well paced sequence.	1	2	3	4	N/A
3. Related lesson to previous material.	1	2	3	4	N/A
4. Summarized major points and left students thinking.	1	2	3	4	N/A

Presentation – Overall Judgment

	1	2	3	4	
5. Explained content with clarity, defining terms and concepts.	1	2	3	4	N/A
6. Used good examples to clarify important points.	1	2	3	4	N/A
7. Used visuals/handouts effectively (when relevant).	1	2	3	4	N/A
8. Varied explanations for complex or difficult material.	1	2	3	4	N/A
9. Spoke at an effective volume and speed.	1	2	3	4	N/A
10. Used gestures and moved in the classroom effectively.	1	2	3	4	N/A

Interaction – Overall Judgment

	1	2	3	4	
11. Actively encouraged and responded well to student questions.	1	2	3	4	N/A
12. Monitored student understanding.	1	2	3	4	N/A
13. Waited sufficient time for students to answer questions.	1	2	3	4	N/A
14. Showed enthusiasm about the content of the class.	1	2	3	4	N/A
15. Maintained command of the class.	1	2	3	4	N/A
16. Treated all students with respect.	1	2	3	4	N/A

Content – Overall Judgment

	1	2	3	4	
17. Presented material at an appropriate level for the students.	1	2	3	4	N/A
18. Presented material relevant to the purpose of the course.	1	2	3	4	N/A
19. Demonstrated command of the subject matter.	1	2	3	4	N/A
20. Inspired students' interest in the material.	1	2	3	4	N/A

SUMMARY COMMENTS

21. What were the instructor's major strengths as demonstrated in this observation?

22. What weaknesses were observed? What suggestions do you have for improving them?

23. If this was a repeat observation, what progress did you discern in the instructor's skills?

24. (To be completed by the lecturer) Given this evaluation, what would you change about your teaching?

Lecturer's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Observer's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Sample Syllabi

Florida State University
PHI-2630-01: Ethical Issues and Life Choices
Fall 2004 (August 23 – December 10), MW 5:15 - 6:30, 128 DIF

Instructor: Peter Hanowell
Office: 182 E Dodd Hall
Office Hours: MW 3:30 – 5:00
Contact: 644-4336, phanowel@fsu.edu

Teaching Assistants

Alan Casselman, 182A Dodd Hall, 644-4129, aac03d@fsu.edu
Office Hours: M 2:00-3:30, T 12:30-2:00
Adam Feltz, 156CD Dodd Hall, 644-4127, adf04@fsu.edu
Office Hours: F 9:30-11:00, W 12:00-1:30
Rachel Roden, 182D Dodd Hall, 644-4132, rar04c@fsu.edu
Office Hours: MW 9:00-10:30
Shay Welch, 182C Dodd Hall, 644-4132, srw03e@fsu.edu
Office Hours: MW 1:00-2:00

Required Text

Olen, Jefferey, Julie Van Camp, and Vincent Barry. 2005. Applying Ethics: A Text with Readings 8th Ed. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.

Course Description and Objectives

This course is designed as an introduction to applied ethics. We will first survey some of the predominant ethical theories. This will provide us with a foundation for reading and analyzing provocative contemporary articles on topics such as abortion, euthanasia, social justice, animal rights, and terrorism. We will consider proposed solutions to common ethical questions in these areas by critically examining a variety of arguments. Our goal will be not to resolve these difficult issues, but to better understand the complex moral dilemmas that we all face.

Successful completion of this course will help students:

- gain an understanding of the variety of answers that have been given to the moral questions mentioned above;
- develop an appreciation of some contemporary philosophical texts;
- hone their skills in identifying and evaluating arguments;
- improve their ability to think, write, and speak clearly and critically; and
- develop more reflective and informed ethical opinions.

Assignments

- 1) **In-Class Writing:** On most days, students will write an in-class assignment. The format of this assignment will vary, as will its time during class. Missed in-class writings may not be made up, but a student's lowest 3 scores will be dropped. These writings will be graded on a 5 point scale.
- 2) **Papers:** There will be two papers, each a minimum of 3 pages long. The topic of these papers will be handed out during the semester.

- 3) **Midterm / Final:** There will be two exams (scheduled for October 18th and December 8th). Each will have multiple-choice, short answer, and essay sections.
- 4) **Class Participation:** In-class participation will count toward the final grade.

Policies

Grading

The final grade for this course is made up of the following weighted elements:

- 20% - In-Class Writings
- 30% - Papers (15% each)
- 20% - Midterm
- 25% - Final
- 5% - Class Participation/Attendance

The final grade will be determined according to the following grade scale: an A is 100-93%, an A- is 92-90%, a B+ is 89-87%, a B is 86-83%, a B- is 82-80%, C+ is 79-77%, C is 76-73%, C- is 72-70%, D+ is 69-67%, D is 66-63%, D- is 62-60%, and F is 59% and lower.

Late Papers / Make-up Exams

Make up exams will not be offered, nor will late papers be accepted, except in circumstances of documented illness or family emergency. If such circumstances exist, the student must contact the instructor in good time *prior* to the indicated date, to arrange an alternative date.

Gordon Rule

Because this is a Gordon Rule course, students must write a minimum of 3000 words in order to receive Gordon Rule credit. If a student completes all the assigned written work, this requirement will be satisfied. *Any student who does not complete 3000 words of written work will not receive a grade higher than D+.*

Office Hours

Please feel free to come to the instructor's or TAs' office hours to discuss any questions or problems that you have. If, for whatever reason, you are unable to make it to any of the posted hours, please make an appointment for another time.

Attendance / Participation

Attending class and keeping up with the readings are essential to your success in this class. Do not fall behind. In class participation is also required. There are different ways to participate in class, among them asking questions or raising issues that show you have done the reading thoughtfully, asking clarification questions, contributing your views to the discussion at hand, engaging with other students' views, and making thoughtful connections between views or arguments.

Email / Internet

Please feel free to email the instructor with any questions regarding the content of the course. However, neither the instructor nor the assistants **accept any assignments via email**. The course website is available at **<http://campus.fsu.edu/webapps/login>**. The course website (on Blackboard) will contain at least basic class documents.

Honor Code

Students are required to *strictly* uphold the Academic Honor Code. Please see the *Florida State University General Bulletin* for details, particularly as it pertains to plagiarism and cheating. Students found guilty of violating the honor code will *at least* fail the assignment on which they are working. If you have any questions about the requirements of the Honor Code, please see the instructor.

Students Registered with the Student Disability Resource Center

Any student with a disability requiring some special arrangement (e.g. a note taker or special test accommodations) should see the instructor sometime during the first two class periods and must present the required form letter from the Student Disability Resource Center.

Miscellany

Course Supervisor: Professor David McNaughton (<mailto:dmcnaugh@fsu.edu>)
Office: 286 Dodd Hall
Phone: 644-0823
Office Hours: T 9-11, R 10:20-11

Class Contacts:

Name: _____

Email: _____

Phone: _____

Name: _____

Email: _____

Phone: _____

Schedule of Readings (subject to minor revision)

Day	Topic	Reading	Notes
M, 8-23	First day, Syllabus	None	Welcome!
W, 8-25	Argumentation	pp. 47-66	Chapter 2
M, 8-30	Moral Reasoning	pp. 3-23	Part of Chapter 1
W, 9-1	DISCUSSION: Argument Clinic	Review argumentation readings and class notes	
M, 9-6	Labor Day – No Class	None	<i>Have fun!</i>
W, 9-8	Theory: Aristotle	pp. 24-31	<i>Nichomachean Ethics</i>
M, 9-13	Theory: Kant and Mill	pp. 31-39	<i>Groundwork and Utilitarianism</i>
W, 9-15	DISCUSSION: Theory Review	Review theory readings and class notes	Paper 1 Handout
M, 9-20	Abortion 1	pp. 117-128	Chapter 5 Introduction
W, 9-22	Abortion 2	pp. 128-133	Noonan
M, 9-27	Abortion 3	pp. 133-144	Thomson
W, 9-29	DISCUSSION: Abortion	Review abortion readings and class notes	Paper 1 Due
M, 10-4	Euthanasia 1	pp. 165-180	Chapter 6 Introduction
W, 10-6	Euthanasia 2	pp. 180-183	Gay-Williams
M, 10-11	Euthanasia 3	pp. 183-187	Rachels
W, 10-13	DISCUSSION: Euthanasia	Review euthanasia readings and class notes	
M, 10-18	MIDTERM	None	Good Luck!
W, 10-20	Social Justice 1	pp. 368-375	Hospers
M, 10-25	Social Justice 2	On website	Singer
W, 10-27	DISCUSSION: Social Justice	Review social justice readings and class notes	Nielsen
M, 11-1	Animal Rights 1	pp. 445-455	Chapter 11 Introduction
W, 11-3	Animal Rights 2	pp. 455-466	Singer
M, 11-8	Animal Rights 3	pp. 466-474	Regan
W, 11-10	DISCUSSION: Animal Liberation/Rights	Review animal rights readings and class notes	Paper 2 Handout
M, 11-15	Terrorism and Justice 1	pp. 303-313	Chapter 8 Introduction
W, 11-17	Terrorism and Justice 2	pp. 313-323	Luban
M, 11-22	Terrorism and Justice 3	pp. 331-337	Frey and Morris
W, 11-24	No Class Meeting	None	Paper 2 Due
M, 11-29	Parental Rights	On website	LaFollette
W, 12-1	DISCUSSION: Review	Review class notes	Come with questions.
W, 12-8	FINAL EXAM	5:30 - 7:30	Good luck!

Introduction to Philosophy

PHI 2010 (01)

Summer 2005

WMS #320

MTWRF 12:30pm-1:45pm

Instructor:

Thomas Nadelhoffer

Office: 105 Dodd Hall

Office Hours: TR 10:30-noon

Telephone: (850) 645-1530

E-mail: tan02@fsu.edu

Web Page: <http://garnet.acns.fsu.edu/~tan02>

Course Supervisor:

John Roberts

E-mail: jrobert@fsu.edu

Office: 284 Dodd Hall

Telephone: (850) 644-0215

Teaching Assistant:

Tracie Mahaffey

Office: 151E Dodd Hall

Office Hours: MW 10:30am - 12:00pm

Telephone: (850) 645-1531

Email: tlm03c@fsu.edu

Course Description:

This course is designed to provide students with a general introduction to some of the perennial questions of philosophy. The course will begin with a brief overview of basic reasoning and critical thinking skills. Then, we will spend the rest of the semester examining the following questions: Does God exist? What are the limits of knowledge? Do humans have free will? What is the nature of morality? What are the justifications for punishment? The goal of this course is to present students with a fair treatment of both sides of these philosophical issues so that they will be in a better position to develop well-founded opinions of their own about some of the fundamental problems of philosophy.

Text:

Reason and Responsibility, by Joel Feinberg (11th edition)

Course Objectives:

Help students a) gain an understanding of the variety of answers that have been given to the philosophical questions mentioned above, b) gain an appreciation of some historical and contemporary philosophical texts, c) hone their skill in identifying and evaluating arguments, and d) improve their ability to both think and write clearly and critically.

Assignments:

Because reading philosophy is often very challenging, I highly recommend that you read all of the assignments at least once before the lecture on that assignment. By reading the assignment before class, you will be in a better position to both understand the lecture and participate in the discussions.

Gordon Rule:

This course partially satisfies FSU's liberal studies area IV requirement. Since it is a 'W' (writing) course, each student must write a minimum of 3,000 words by the end of the course. Due to a university rule, **students who write fewer than 3,000 words cannot receive a grade higher than D+.**

Course Assignments and Grading:

- Two exams (30% each). Exams will consist of true/false, short answer, and essay questions.
- Quizzes/Homework Assignments (20% total).
- Participation in Discussion Groups (20%)
- Final Grades will be assessed using the following scale:

A	93-100	A-	90-92		
B+	87-89	B	83-86	B-	80-82
C+	77-79	C	73-76	C-	70-72
D+	67-69	D	63-66	D-	60-62
F	0-59				

Discussion Groups:

Group 1: A-H w/ Thomas in WMS #320

Group 2: J-Z w/ Tracie in WMS # 214

Policy on Late Papers and Missed Examinations:

All late work must be accompanied by written documentation from a health care provider (or other appropriate source) unless the student has some other legitimate excuse, e.g., religious holiday, university obligation, etc. When these conditions are satisfied, appropriate accommodations will be made for the student to complete the missed assignment. When these conditions are not satisfied, the following conditions hold:

1. All papers are due at the *beginning* of class. For papers received after the end of the class in which they are due, 10 points will be deducted for each 24 hour period following the end of that class. For example, 10 points will be deducted from a paper submitted 24 hours after the end of the class in which the paper is due. **Papers that are not handed directly to the instructor must be turned into a philosophy department staff member who signs and records the time and date on the paper before putting it in my department mailbox;**
2. Exams cannot be made up without a legitimate excuse in writing;
3. Quizzes cannot be made up.

Attendance and General Student Responsibilities

I both expect and strongly encourage students to attend all of their classes. The University reserves the right to deal at any time with individual cases of nonattendance. A student reported for excessive absence in any course may be required by the academic dean to drop the course with the grade of "F." Students reported absent for a period of two weeks or more may be readmitted only by permission of their academic dean.

Students are expected to be on time since late arrivals are disruptive and inconsiderate to both the instructor and fellow students. Leaving class early is equally disruptive. So, students who need to leave early should notify the instructor at the beginning of class, and sit where it will minimize disturbance. Likewise, all electronic devices (e.g., cellular telephones, pagers, etc.) must be out of operation during class.

Honor Code

The Academic Honor Code must be observed by students at all times in this course. (See General Student Bulletin, p. 75 or available on-line.) Violations of the Honor Code will likely result in an "F" for the course and may involve additional disciplinary action.

Students with Disabilities

Students with disabilities in need of academic accommodations should notify me (with the required documentation from Disability Services) during the first class meeting, or as soon as possible.

Web Resources

During the course of the semester students will be expected to download and/or print out on-line course materials.

Course Schedule:

May:

- 9th Syllabus
- 10th Introduction to Philosophy (**)
- 11th Reasoning and Critical Thinking (**)
- 12th Proofs of God: Anselm [pp.6-8] (*Guanillo)
- 13th Anselm (CONT) and Aquinas [pp.23-23]
- 16th Aquinas (CONT) and Paley [pp.40-45]
- 17th Problem of Evil: Dostoevsky [pp. 89-94] (*Mackie)
- 18th Kierkegaard (**) and Wittgenstein (**)
- 19th Introduction to Epistemology and Skepticism [pp.146-152]
- 20th **DISCUSSION GROUPS**
- 23rd Pollock [pp.152-154] and Descartes [pp.173-182]
- 24th Descartes and Locke [pp.209-216]
- 25th **REVIEW EXAM #1**
- 26th **EXAM #1**
- 27th **DISCUSSION GROUPS**
- 30th **NO CLASS**
- 31st Hard Determinism: Holbach [pp.462-467] and Honderich [pp.467-480]

June:

- 1st Honderich (CONT) and Libertarianism: Chisholm [pp.492-499]
- 2nd Chisholm (CONT) and Compatibilism: Stace [pp.486-491]
- 3rd **DISCUSSION GROUPS**
- 6th Strawson [p.513-522]
- 7th Egoism & Plato [pp.567-573]
- 8th Relativism: Benedict (**)
- 9th Utilitarianism: Mill [pp.694-707]
- 10th **DISCUSSION GROUPS**
- 13th Deontology: Kant [pp.679-694]
- 14th Virtue Ethics: Aristotle [pp.624-640]
- 15th Justice: Rawls [pp.654-663]
- 16th **REVIEW EXAM #2**
- 17th **EXAM 2**

* = suggested reading

** = material from lecture notes

*** = online material

THE SCHEDULE AND CONTENT OF THIS COURSE ARE SUBJECT TO REVISION.

PHI 2100-02 Reasoning and Critical Thinking
Spring Semester 2005
Florida State University
TR 5:15 – 6:30, 103 DHA

Instructor

Jason Zinser
Office: 156C Dodd Hall
Telephone: 644-4127
Email: jnz7947@fsu.edu
Office Hours: T 1:00 – 4:00, or by appointment

Course Supervisor

Professor Thomas Crisp
Office: 285 Dodd Hall
Telephone: 644-0227
Email: tcristp@fsu.edu

Teaching Assistant

Adam Feltz
Office: 156C Dodd Hall
Telephone: 644-4127
Email: adf04@fsu.edu
Office Hours: TR 10-11:30, or by appointment

Required Texts: *Understanding Arguments: An Introduction to Informal Logic* (seventh edition), Robert Foglin and Walter Sinnott-Armstrong.

How to Think About Weird Things: Critical Thinking for a New Age, Theodore Schick Jr. and Lewis Vaughn.

Course Description and Course Objectives:

The general goal of this course is to develop students' reasoning skills, that is, to help them become better reasoners. Some specific objectives that will aid in the attainment of the general goal are:

- Learning how some general features of language and discourse can affect one's understanding of a particular linguistic act.
- Acquiring the ability to reconstruct arguments contained in arbitrary samples of argumentative discourse.
- Learning to distinguish between valid and invalid argument forms.
- Learning how to evaluate an argument as either sound, strong, weak, or fallacious.
- Learning how, in writing, to communicate more effectively the results of such critical analysis.

Assignments: Reading, homework assignments and journal assignments will be issued on a regular basis during class. Since this is a skills-driven course, students are strongly encouraged to do the readings and homework before the following lecture. This practice will reinforce basic material while providing students the opportunity to formulate pertinent questions about difficult material for the next lecture. All assignments must be typed if they are to be turned in for a grade.

All quizzes will be "pop" quizzes and can occur anytime during class. Please do not ask if there will be a quiz on any particular day. The final exam is cumulative.

Graded assignments will include:

1. at least 10 quizzes; if there are more than 10, then only the best 10 will count towards the student's final grade,
2. at least 10 argument reconstructions and evaluations (journal assignments) of at least 300 words (look at each assignment for a word count); again, only the best 10 will count toward the student's final grade,
3. one mid-term exam, and
4. one final exam.

Grading

Graded assignments will be weighed as follows:

Quizzes and short assignments (average)	20%
Journals (average)	30%
Midterm Exam	25%
Final	25%

Final grades will be determined on the following scale:

100-93	A	86-83	B	76-73	C	66-63	D
92-90	A-	82-80	B-	72-70	C-	62-60	D-
89-87	B+	79-77	C+	69-67	D+	59-0	F

Gordon Rule: Students who do not write 3000 words or more will not receive a grade higher than D+ per University policy.

Late Policy: Quizzes cannot be made up (remember that you will be given more than). Journal assignments will be docked 10% per class that they are late. When possible, I should be informed before the assigned work is due. When this condition is met, appropriate accommodations will be arranged with the student to finish the work. The mid-term and final exam cannot be made up without a university approved absence notification (e.g. a note from a health care provider explaining why the student couldn't be there). Furthermore, you need to contact me immediately in order to reschedule the exam.

Honor Code: Students must uphold the Academic Honor Code published in the Florida State University Bulletin and the Student Handbook or online at <http://www.fsu.edu/~union/honor.htm>. Violations of the honor code may result in an "F" for the course and other disciplinary action may be taken.

Students with Disabilities: Reasonable accommodations will be made for students with disability. Such students must (1) register with, and provide documentation to, the Students with Disability Resource Center (SDRC), and (2) submit a letter from SDRC stating that such academic accommodations are needed. All relevant documentation should be submitted within the first two weeks of classes or as soon as a disability is identified.

Attendance: Attendance is not mandatory and will not be recorded. With that said, if you do not attend class on a regular basis you will do poorly. The material covered in this course builds throughout the semester; i.e. skills learned later in the course rely on skills developed earlier. Furthermore, quizzes and assignments will be administered on a regular basis.

PHI 2630-02: Ethical Issues and Life Choices
Reference # 04441
Spring 2005
TR 11:00 - 12:15
103 DHA

Instructor: Mr. Sean Millard
Office: 156C Dodd Hall
Phone: 644-4128
Email: smillard@fsu.edu
Office Hours: TR 12:30 – 2:00

Teaching Assistant: Michael Sprague
Email: msprague@fsu.edu
Office: 182A Dodd Hall
Phone: 644-4129
Office Hours: W 12:30-3:30

Course Supervisor: Joshua Gert
Office: 287 Dodd

I. Required Text:

Jeffrey Olen and Vincent Barry eds. *Applying Ethics: A Text with Readings*, 8th edition (Wadsworth Publishing, 2005).

II. Course Description

This course is designed to provide students with a general introduction to ethical theory and various ethical issues that are surrounded with disagreement. The course will begin with an explanation of the nature of arguments and an introduction to basic philosophical concepts. Subsequently, the course will be divided into two main parts: a survey of (1) the important historical sources of ethical theory, and (2) an analysis of a number of ethical issues such as free speech, sexual morality, war and terrorism, abortion, environmentalism, and others. Part (1) will allow us to come to more or less determinate answers to the issues surveyed in part (2) and aid in paper writing.

III. Course Objectives

- (1) Provide students with various analytic skills that improve the ability to think critically and philosophically;
- (2) Introduce students to basic philosophical concepts that will provide students the ability to engage in informed conversation about an important set of ethical issues;
- (3) Provide students with an understanding of both sides of the relevant issue;
- (4) Aid the student in recognizing the relationship between ethical problems and issues in everyday life.

IV. Gordon Rule

This course partially satisfies FSU's liberal studies area IV requirement. Since it is a 'W' (writing) course, each student must write a minimum of 3,000 words by the end of the course. Due to a university rule, **students who write fewer than 3,000 words cannot receive a grade higher than D+.**

V. Course Requirements and Grading

One paper (25%)	100 points total
Midterm Exam (25%)	100 points total
Final Exam (25%)	100 points total
5 Reading Précis (25%)	20 points each, 100 points total

400 total points

Papers that are not handed directly to the instructor must be turned into a philosophy department staff member *who signs and records the time and date on the paper before putting it in my department mailbox (151 Dodd Hall).*

Always save all returned work in order to avoid grading complications at the end of the semester.

VII. Attendance and General Student Responsibilities (excerpted from *Undergraduate Student Bulletin*)

Students are expected to attend all of their classes. The University reserves the right to deal at any time with individual cases of nonattendance. A student reported for excessive absence in any course may be required by the academic dean to drop the course with the grade of "F". Students reported absent for a period of two weeks or more may be readmitted only by permission of their academic dean.

Students are expected to be on time since late arrivals are disruptive and inconsiderate to both the instructor and fellow students. Leaving class early is equally disruptive. So students who need to leave early should notify the instructor at the beginning of class, and sit where it will minimize disturbance. Likewise, all electronic devices (e.g., cellular telephones, pagers, etc.) must be out of operation during class.

VIII. Honor Code (excerpted from the *General Student Bulletin*, p. 75)

"Each student has the responsibility (1) to uphold the highest standards of academic integrity in the student's own work, (2) to refuse to tolerate violations of academic integrity in the university community, and (3) to foster a high sense of integrity and social responsibility on the part of the university community."

The Academic Honor Code must be observed by students at all times in this course.

IX. Students with Disabilities

Students with disabilities in need of academic accommodations should (1) register with and provide documentation to the Student Disability Resource Center; and (2) bring a letter to me indicating the need for accommodation and what type. This should be done during the first week of class.

X. Web and Email Resources

The course will use FSU's Blackboard (Bb) web resource. Bb is a valuable resource that will be used regularly throughout the semester. Bb allows students to download and/or print out on-line course readings, check for important announcements, participate in discussion boards about the course, and access their grades at anytime. Students are also expected to check their FSU email accounts on a regular basis for important course updates. If students are unfamiliar with either Bb or FSU email, they must become familiar with both. The Blackboard login page is:

<https://campus.fsu.edu/webapps/login>

Sample Rubrics

Thomas Nadelhoffer
FSU Philosophy Department
Essay Grading System:

General Guidelines:

Excellent Essay (Grade—A):

An *excellent* essay is one that:

- Fully meets the length requirements
- Has *virtually no* spelling/grammar mistakes
- Is *very well* organized (i.e., clear and concise)
- Is *informative without being repetitive*
- Discusses *all* of the relevant information
- *Often* includes critical commentary

Good Essay (Grade—B):

A *good* essay is one that:

- *Nearly* (or fully) meets the length requirement
- Has *minimal* spelling/grammar mistakes
- Discusses *most* of the relevant information
- Often, good essays are organized, but not as well-organized as excellent essays
- *Sometimes* includes critical commentary

Average Essay (Grade—C):

An *average* essay is one that:

- *Usually* does *not* meet the length requirements
- Has a *number* of spelling/grammar mistakes
- Is *not* well-organized
- Fails to discuss *most* of the relevant information
- Often, average essays include incorrect or confused information

Below Average or Failing Essay (Grades—D or F):

A *below average* (or *failing*) essay is one that:

- Fails to meet the length requirements
- Contains *too many* spelling/grammar mistakes
- Fails to mention most of the relevant data
- Is *not* well-organized
- These essays give incorrect or confused information

Things to keep in mind:

- Be sure to consider how many points you missed on the essay section in relation to how many points you missed on the other sections of the exam. More often than not, these latter sections determine your grade.
- Given the size of the class, I do not usually have time to give any comments on your essays. So, if you have questions about what your essay was missing feel free to talk to me about it either during my office hours or after class. *I will be more than happy to look over your essays and provide detailed comments on an individual basis.* Although, I do want those of you who got B's to keep in mind that I thought your essays were GOOD (i.e., not BAD!)—students often forget what these letters mean.

Participation Grading Guidelines:

A	(95):	No absences & frequent participation
A-	(90):	No absences & occasional participation
B	(85):	Either (a) No absences & little participation, or (b) 1 absence & frequent participation
B-	(80):	1 absence & occasional participation
C	(75):	Either (a) 1 absence and little participation (b) 2 absences & frequent participation
C-	(70)	2 absences and occasional participation
F	(59)	3+ absences

frequent participation = making one or more comments during almost every meeting

occasional participation = making one or more comments during some of the meetings

GENERAL EVALUATION RUBRIC FOR PAPERS

Students sometimes do not understand how a paper is graded. The explanation of grading here derives from standards for *Advanced Placement* exams, and is called a "grading rubric". Note that this is the standard expected of good pre-college students. It outlines basic elements of a good paper, and attaches grades to them. The basic grade of a paper derives from its content. The difference between the higher and lower grades here may depend on issues such as presentation.

The Superior Paper (A/A-)

Thesis: Easily identifiable, plausible, novel, sophisticated, insightful, crystal clear.

Structure: Evident, understandable, appropriate for thesis. Excellent transitions from point to point. Paragraphs support solid topic sentences.

Use of evidence: Primary source information used to buttress every point with at least one example. Examples support mini-thesis and fit within paragraph. Excellent integration of quoted material into sentences.

Analysis: Author clearly relates evidence to "mini-thesis" (topic sentence); analysis is fresh and exciting, posing new ways to think of the material.

Logic and argumentation: All ideas in the paper flow logically; the argument is identifiable, reasonable, and sound. Author anticipates and successfully defuses counter-arguments; makes novel connections to outside material (from other parts of the class, or other classes) which illuminate thesis.

Mechanics: Sentence structure, grammar, and diction excellent; correct use of punctuation and citation style; minimal to no spelling errors; absolutely no run-on sentences or comma splices.

The Good Paper (B+/B)

Thesis: Promising, but may be slightly unclear, or lacking in insight or originality.

Structure: Generally clear and appropriate, though may wander occasionally. May have a few unclear transitions, or a few paragraphs without strong topic sentences.

Use of evidence: Examples used to support most points. Some evidence does not support point, or may appear where inappropriate. Quotes well integrated into sentences.

Analysis: Evidence often related to mini-thesis, though links perhaps not very clear.

Logic and argumentation: Argument of paper is clear, usually flows logically and makes sense. Some evidence that counter-arguments acknowledged, though perhaps not addressed. Occasional insightful connections to outside material made.

Mechanics: Sentence structure, grammar, and diction strong despite occasional lapses; punctuation and citation style often used correctly. Some (minor) spelling errors; may have one run-on sentence or comma splice.

The Borderline Paper (B-/C+)

Thesis: May be unclear (contain many vague terms), appear unoriginal, or offer relatively little that is new; provides little around which to structure the paper.

Structure: Generally unclear, often wanders or jumps around. Few or weak transitions, many paragraphs without topic sentences.

Use of evidence: Examples used to support some points. Points often lack supporting evidence, or evidence used where inappropriate (often because there may be no clear point). Quotes may be poorly integrated into sentences.

Analysis: Quotes appear often without analysis relating them to mini-thesis (or there is a weak mini-thesis to support), or analysis offers nothing beyond the quote.

Logic and argumentation: Logic may often fail, or argument may often be unclear. May not address counter-arguments or make any outside connections.

Mechanics: Problems in sentence structure, grammar, and diction (usually not major). Errors in punctuation, citation style, and spelling. May have several run-on sentences or comma splices.

The "Needs Help" Paper (C/C-)

Thesis: Difficult to identify at all, may be bland restatement of obvious point.

Structure: Unclear, often because thesis is weak or non-existent. Transitions confusing and unclear. Few topic sentences.

Use of evidence: Very few or very weak examples. General failure to support statements, or evidence seems to support no statement. Quotes not integrated into sentences; "plopped in" in improper manner.

Analysis: Very little or very weak attempt to relate evidence to argument; may be no identifiable argument, or no evidence to relate it to.

Logic and argumentation: Ideas do not flow at all, usually because there is no argument to support. Simplistic view of topic; no effort to grasp possible alternative views.

Mechanics: Big problems in sentence structure, grammar, and diction. Frequent major errors in citation style, punctuation, and spelling. May have many run-on sentences and comma splices.

The Failing Paper

Shows obviously minimal lack of effort or comprehension of the assignment. Very difficult to understand owing to major problems with mechanics, structure, and analysis. Has no identifiable thesis, or utterly incompetent thesis.

Source: Adapted from a internet post by Patrick Rael <prael@polar.Bowdoin.EDU>, " Re: what to say to students", [H-Teach@msu.net], 2 April 1996

RUBRIC 37

WRITING ASSIGNMENTS

DIRECTIONS: This form is designed to help you evaluate writing assignments. Read the statements below. Then indicate the number from the following scale that reflects your assessment of the student's work in this assignment.

1 = Weak 2 = Moderately Weak 3 = Average 4 = Moderately Strong 5 = Strong

1. Each paragraph in the assignment starts with a topic sentence.
1 2 3 4 5
2. The organization of the writing assignment is clear and easy to follow.
1 2 3 4 5
3. The assignment is concise and well written.
1 2 3 4 5
4. The assignment employs the appropriate information or facts.
1 2 3 4 5
5. The content demonstrates an understanding of the topic and related concepts.
1 2 3 4 5
6. The assignment is neatly typed or handwritten.
1 2 3 4 5
7. The spelling, punctuation, and grammar on the writing assignment are accurate.
1 2 3 4 5
8. If appropriate, the assignment appears to have been well researched.
1 2 3 4 5
9. The content fulfills all the requirements of the assignment.
1 2 3 4 5
10. Overall, the work represents the writer's full potential.
1 2 3 4 5

Additional Comments: _____

Total Points/Grade: _____