

# Teaching Portfolio

Aaron Elliott

## Table of Contents

1. Teaching Statement	p. 1
2. Roles and Responsibilities	p. 3
3. Teaching Evaluations: Quantitative—Averages (Abridged Summary)	
a. As Instructor	p. 4
b. As TA	p. 5
4. Teaching Evaluations: Quantitative—Bar Charts (Unabridged)	
a. Environmental Ethics, S 2017 (TA)	pp. 6-10
b. Intro to Philosophy, F 2016 (TA)	pp. 11-14
c. Medical Ethics, SS 2016	pp. 15-17
d. Philosophy and Current Issues, S 2018	pp. 18-19
5. Teaching Evaluations: Written Comments	
a. Environmental Ethics, S 2017 (TA)	pp. 20-22
b. Intro to Philosophy, F 2016 (TA)	pp. 23-26
c. Intro to Philosophy, SS 2015	pp. 27-30
d. Medical Ethics, SS 2016	pp. 31-32
e. Philosophy and Current Issues, S 2018	pp. 33-34
6. Student Emails (Annonymized)	pp. 35-39
7. Sample Syllabi	
a. Medical Ethics, SS 2016	pp. 40-44
b. Philosophy and Current Issues, S 2018	pp. 45-50
8. Sample Assignments	
a. Medical Ethics, SS 2016, Three Papers	pp. 51-52
b. Philosophy and Current Issues, S 2018, Paper One	pp. 53-55

## **Philosophy of Teaching, and Goals**

My role as a philosophy teacher is to curate a meaningful and valuable interaction with the methodologies and literature of philosophy. Since I'm familiar with the different positions and arguments, my job is to construct an experience where students engage with issues and concepts in a useful and beneficial way. Part of my job is to select philosophical topics and materials that are motivating, and accessible yet challenging. Part of my job is to model good work in philosophy by showing students what reading philosophy well looks like, walking them through the structures of arguments, and modeling good reasoning. Part of my job is to enable students to develop these skills as their own.

The two main goals for my students, especially in my general ed. and 'special audience' (e.g. medical ethics) courses, are that they A) recognize how commitments in one area have implications for other areas, and B) develop the skills needed to evaluate stances and articulate why their own stance is reasonable. I take these as central because they are what will serve the students best in their other courses and after graduation (when they inevitably forget facts about the particular content covered). Accomplishing these goals requires teaching students how to read difficult texts, how to draw connections between readings, and how to effectively compose an argumentative paper.

These general goals manifest differently in different courses, depending on various facts about the course and of the students' particular needs. For instance, in medical ethics—as a variation on B—it's important for students to be able to make concrete decisions about non-idealized cases with limited information, since that's what nurses, doctors, and researchers will encounter. In introduction to ethics courses, it's important that students grasp the difference between normative claims and normatively relevant empirical claims. In advanced or upper-level courses, further skills and conceptual competencies are important. For instance, upper level philosophy students must be able to accomplish additional depth and sophistication of analysis. In both ethics and metaphysics courses, students must be able to distinguish metaphysical questions—what is the nature of X?—from epistemological questions—how can we know about X?

### **Goal A**

To accomplish goal A in a summer Introduction to Philosophy course, I had my students consider a set of apparently disconnected issues in philosophy. Specifically, the mind-body problem, personal identity, the (metaphysical) criterion of death, and the moral significance of death. The course culminated in a long term paper developing a "worldview," explaining and defending stances on the individual topics, as well as articulating and defending the set of stances as a coherent unit.

I also accomplish goal A with smaller projects. In what serves as Intro to Ethics at the UNL (Phil 106), a major goal is for students to recognize and articulate how commitments on one ethical issue have broader implications. The papers require making novel applications of the positions and arguments covered. For example, for one paper we cover some classic applications to famine relief (Singer, Harden, Nell), and a salient pair of papers on abortion (Marquis, followed by Thomson). From this, students must take a stance on whether we have an obligation to donate blood or organs. So, they must identify which parts of Singer, Nell, Marquis and Thomson's arguments are relevant to this question, explain why, and defend a final stance. As a follow up, they explain how their arguments relate to the original topics, and assess and respond to any inconsistencies and tensions. After this assignment in my spring 18 class, many students told me that they donated blood for the first time. This was gratifying, not because of my views on blood donation, but because of how it showed that my students were taking their own ethical analysis of the issue to heart

### **Goal B**

My medical ethics course is a great example of how I accomplish goal B. The last assignment is to find a news article about some medical event relevant to the final unit, explain what the moral

issue is (and why it's one), and argue for a relevant moral conclusion. To get them to be able to do this well, we work through a series of increasingly demanding tasks over the course of the term. First I lead the class through the steps for evaluating a simple case study. We evaluate another simple one as a class, then the students evaluate in small groups further cases. Each case is on the topic being covered at the time. Each step builds experience with the general task, develops the skills for engaging with a case study on their own, and clarifies expectations about what is to be accomplished. Next, students write two independent papers on case studies of their choice from a bank I provide for each unit; first on simpler cases, the second on more difficult ones. Now students are ready to find and respond to a case study "in the wild," which is especially important in a medical ethics class, as many students will go on to medical professions and will continually be faced with "wild cases."

### **Assessment and Improvement**

I self-evaluate how well certain methods are accomplishing my goals, and respond accordingly. For example, I changed from giving electronic comments on rough drafts, to holding in-person meetings about drafts, to only discussing the outline stage of papers. I made these changes because I found that when final drafts often weren't suitably revised from the original draft; students can feel committed to the text already on the page, and are more receptive to "preemptive" advice.

This past term, after seeing how my students were struggling, not just to reconstruct the main argument of an undergraduate level reading, but also to reliably assess how a paragraph relates to the ones surrounding it, I decided to greatly slow down the course (cutting about 1/3 of the content), in order to focus on developing this sort of skill. Even though this made some students feel like the course was a slog, I observed a marked improvement in their argument comprehension abilities, which translated to improved argumentative abilities.

I've had trouble getting buy-in from students when teaching on animal ethics. Most recently I attempted to foster buy-in by beginning with having students try to explain fact that dogfighting is wrong. This was supposed to foster buy-in by showing students their intuitive commitment to animals' moral status. This did improve on previous courses, but some felt this was too heavy handed of a rejection of "no status." Next time I need to begin with the *question* of whether dogfighting is wrong, since this will let them view the answer as their own. This will let me play devil's advocate and demonstrate the broader implications of "no-status," any let students come to the reject it on their own (or, feel more comfortable with the option of defending it).

### **Professional Development**

I take my continued development as a teacher seriously. To this end I attended the American Association of Philosophy Teachers (AAPT) Summer Seminar on Teaching and Learning in Philosophy (July 2016), took a Preparing Future Faculty (PFF) course at UNL (May/June 2016). In the AAPT seminar and PFF course we learned strategies for effective course design. Most significant for me was learning about backwards course design as a way to better align learning activities and the course goals. I recently completed training course for teaching online, which also helps me improve the online side of my in-person courses.

I have had two papers on teaching and learning in philosophy accepted into the AAPT biennial conference. The first is discussion of the relevance to course design and delivery of a "backfire effect" that happens with public information campaigns where corrective information reinforces the myth, and how to adapt the strategies for avoiding this. The second is on a course module for intro students about the way that thought experiments help us in philosophical reasoning, why the often-farfetched elements are needed, and why other sorts of stories (parables, movies, anecdotes) can't play this role. (For financial reasons, I had to decline the acceptance of this paper to the 2018 AAPT conference).

Roles and Responsibilities

University of Nebraska

Course	Title	Description	Level	Role	Dates	Enrollment
Phil 101	Intro to Philosophy	General survey of topics in philosophy. Meets various gen. ed. requirements.	Freshman	TA	Spring, 2013	55
				TA	Fall, 2016	67
				Instructor	Summer, 2013	31
				Instructor	Summer, 2015	14
Phil 106	Philosophy and Current Issues	An introduction to philosophical ethics with an emphasis on applied ethics. Meets various gen. ed. requirements.	Freshman	TA	Fall, 2011	75
				TA	Spring, 2012	76
				TA	Fall, 2012	75
				TA	Fall, 2013	70
				TA	Spring, 2014	47
				Instructor (w/ TA)	Fall, 2017	65
Phil 213	Medical Ethics	Specialized ethics course with focus on ethical issues in medical practice, medical research, and medical policy.	Sophomore, Junior	Instructor	Summer, 2014	25
				Instructor	Fall, 2014	28
				Instructor	Spring, 2015	30
				Instructor	Summer, 2016	16
				(Prereq. for admission into nursing school. Credit for Humanities in Medicine minor.)		
Phil 225	Environmental Ethics	Specialized ethics course, focusing on the scope and basis for ethical concern for the environment, and what this requires specific cases.	Sophomore, Junior	TA*	Spring, 2017	40
				(Credit for Environmental Science and Agriculture majors and minors.)		

**Explanations**

Instructor: Full responsibility for course design, selection of materials, instruction, and grading.

Teaching Assistant: Four “discussion sections” a week, with up to 19 students each, full grading responsibilities.

\* TA for Environmental Ethics did not include discussion sections, but included four “guest lectures.”

\*\* Special small cap section (25) for the W. H. Thomson Scholars program. Thompson scholarship students form a special learning-community for first generation, “high-risk” students who should be in college but wouldn’t without this scholarship (moderate GPA, low family financial contribution).

**Hebrew University of Jerusalem**

Research Seminar: “Evolutionary Debunking and Non-Naturalism;” Senior/MA level; Fall, 2018; 6 Students.

**Additional Courses I could teach by F19:**

- |                                      |                               |                      |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------|----------------------|
| Introduction to Ethics               | Advanced Ethics               | Environmental Ethics |
| Introduction to Political Philosophy | Advanced Political Philosophy | Advanced Metaphysics |
|                                      |                               | Metaethics           |

## Evaluations as Main Instructor

Term	S18	F17	SS16	SS15	S15	F14	SS14	SS13
Course #	Phil 106	Phil 106	Phil 213	Phil 101	Phil 213	Phil 213	Phil 213	Phil 101
Q2: Responsiveness to questions raised by students.	M: 4.0 A: 4.0	M: 4.0 A: 3.69	M: 4.0 A: 4.20	4.75	4.23	4.28	4.62	4.0
Q4: Feedback on written work (papers and exams).	M: 3.0 A: 3.43	N/A (TA)	M: 5.0 A: 4.47	4.33	4.14	4.04	4.0	2.89
Q5: Respect and concern for students	M: 4.0 A: 3.79	M: 4.0 A: 4.12	M: 5 A: 4.8	4.5	4.64	4.60	4.76	4.21
Q9: Development of your understanding of course subject matter.	M: 3.5 A: 3.29	M: 4.0 A: 3.45	M: 4.0 A: 3.87	4.08	3.82	3.36	3.76	3.62
Q10: Development of your interest in course subject matter.	M: 2.0 A: 2.29	M: 3.0 A: 3.17	M: 3.0 A: 3.67	3.67	3.23	3.32	3.86	3.38
Q11: Helpfulness of course in teaching you to read carefully.	M: 4.0 A: 3.43	M: 4.0 A: 3.72	M: 4.0 A: 3.67	4.0	3.59	3.4	3.9	3.61
Q12: Helpfulness of course in teaching you to think critically and independently	M: 3.0 A: 3.36	M: 4.0 A: 3.97	M: 5.0 A: 4.4	4.42	4.09	3.63	4.1	3.9
Q13: Helpfulness of course in teaching you to write on philosophical topics	M: 3.5 A: 3.21	M: 4.0 A: 3.66	M: 4.0 A: 3.93	4.25	3.55	3.52	4.19	3.69
Q14: Overall rating of the instructor	M: 3.5 A: 3.36	M: 4.0 A: 3.69	M: 4.0 A: 4.33	4.58	3.71	3.76	3.95	3.76
Q15: Overall rating of this course	M: 2.5 A: 2.64	M: 3.0 A: 3.21	M: 4.0 A: 3.71	4.08	3.29	3.52	3.67	3.41

For 2016 and 2017, M = Median and A = Average (mean). No median data recorded pre-2016; all values are the average (mean).

**Scale: 1 (low) to 5 (high)**

## Evaluations as Teaching Assistant

Term	S17	F16	S14	F13	S13	F12	S12	F11
Course #	Phil 225	Phil101	Phil 106	Phil 106	Phil 101	Phil 106	Phil 106	Phil 106
Q2: Responsiveness to questions raised by students.	M: 4.5 A: 4.0	M: 5.0 A: 4.41	4.32	3.84	4.2	4.41	4.34	4.24
Q4: Feedback on written work (papers and exams).	M: 4.5 A: 3.88	M: 5.0 A: 4.29	4.32	3.75	3.68	3.32	3.69	3.7
Q5: Respect and concern for students	M: 5.0 A: 4.27	M: 5.0 A: 4.56	4.44	4.06	4.04	4.36	4.24	4.34
Q9: Development of your understanding of course subject matter.	M: 4.0 A: 4.04	M: 4.0 A: 3.8	4.12	3.8	3.76	4.19	4.12	4.11
Q10: Development of your interest in course subject matter.	M: 4.0 A: 3.77	M: 3.0 A: 3.28	3.5	3.12	3.2	3.55	3.17	3.55
Q12: Helpfulness of TA in teaching you to think critically and independently	M: 4.0 A: 4.08	M: 4.0 A: 3.68	3.92	3.52	3.44	3.75	3.6	3.83
Q13: Helpfulness of TA in teaching you to write on philosophical topics	M: 4.0 A: 3.77	M: 4.0 A: 3.9	3.8	3.39	3.32	3.49	3.55	3.52
Q14: Overall rating of the TA	M: 5.0 A: 4.08	M: 4.0 A: 4.03	4.16	3.57	3.84	4.14	4.02	4.06

This is an abridged summary of my course evaluations. Questions are included based on relevance to teaching excellence. Unabridged summary, and complete set of evaluations available upon request.

**Scale: 1 (low) to 5 (high)**

# Elliott PHIL 225-001 Sp17

Form Type MB01

26

**2. TA's responsiveness to questions raised by students.**

Response	Frequency	Percent	Standard Dev: 1.08	Median: 4.50	Mean: 4.15
1	1	3.85			
2	1	3.85			
3	4	15.38			
4	7	26.92			
5	13	50.00			
NA	0	0.00			

**3. Availability of the TA outside of class.**

Response	Frequency	Percent	Standard Dev: 1.50	Median: 5.00	Mean: 4.38
1	2	7.69			
2	2	7.69			
3	2	7.69			
4	3	11.54			
5	12	46.15			
NA	5	19.23			

**4. TA's feedback on written work (papers and exams).**

Response	Frequency	Percent	Standard Dev: 1.37	Median: 4.50	Mean: 3.88
1	2	7.69			
2	3	11.54			
3	4	15.38			
4	4	15.38			
5	13	50.00			
NA	0	0.00			

**5. TA's respect and concern for students.**

Response	Frequency	Percent	Standard Dev: 1.28	Median: 5.00	Mean: 4.27
1	2	7.69			
2	2	7.69			
3	0	0.00			
4	5	19.23			
5	17	65.38			
NA	0	0.00			

**7. Clarity of the TA's presentation of the course material.**

Response	Frequency	Percent	Standard Dev: 1.21	Median: 5.00	Mean: 4.23
1	0	0.00			
2	4	15.38			
3	3	11.54			
4	3	11.54			
5	15	57.69			
NA	1	3.85			

**8. TA's command of course subject matter.**

Response	Frequency	Percent	Standard Dev: 1.36	Median: 5.00	Mean: 4.42
1	1	3.85			
2	2	7.69			
3	2	7.69			
4	7	26.92			
5	8	30.77			
NA	6	23.08			

**9. Helpfulness of TA in developing your understanding of course subject matter.**

Response	Frequency	Percent	Standard Dev: 1.37	Median: 4.00	Mean: 4.04
1	3	11.54			
2	1	3.85			
3	1	3.85			
4	9	34.62			
5	11	42.31			
NA	1	3.85			

**10. Helpfulness of TA in developing your interest in course subject matter.**

Response	Frequency	Percent	Standard Dev: 1.48	Median: 4.00	Mean: 3.77
1	3	11.54			
2	2	7.69			
3	5	19.23			
4	6	23.08			
5	8	30.77			
NA	2	7.69			

**12. Helpfulness of TA in teaching you to think critically and independently.**

Response	Frequency	Percent	Standard Dev: 1.47	Median: 4.00	Mean: 4.08
1	2	7.69			
2	1	3.85			
3	6	23.08			
4	4	15.38			
5	8	30.77			
NA	4	15.38			
No Response	1	3.85			

**13. Helpfulness of TA in teaching to write on philosophical topics.**

Response	Frequency	Percent	Standard Dev: 1.53	Median: 4.00	Mean: 3.77
1	4	15.38			
2	1	3.85			
3	4	15.38			
4	7	26.92			
5	8	30.77			
NA	2	7.69			

**14. Overall rating of the TA.**

Response	Frequency	Percent	Standard Dev: 1.32	Median: 5.00	Mean: 4.08
1	2	7.69			
2	2	7.69			
3	2	7.69			
4	5	19.23			
5	14	53.85			
NA	0	0.00			
No Response	1	3.85			

**16. Did the TA make it more likely or less likely that you would take other philosophy courses? (1 = "more likely", 2 = "less likely", 3 = "no change")**

Response	Frequency	Percent	Standard Dev: 0.90	Median: 2.50	Mean: 2.19
1	8	30.77			
2	5	19.23			
3	13	50.00			

**17. Do you feel the TA unfairly discriminated against any student or group of students in this class? (Answer 1 for "yes" and 5 for "no.") If you answer "yes", please use the back of the page to explain. Thank you.**

Response	Frequency	Percent	Standard Dev: 0.28	Median: 2.00	Mean: 1.92
1	2	7.69			
5	23	88.46			
No Response	1	3.85			

## Elliot, Aaron PHIL 101-152,155,156,157 Fall 2016

Form Type MB01

41

### 2. TA's responsiveness to questions raised by students.

Response	Frequency	Percent	Standard Dev: 0.77	Median: 5.00	Mean: 4.41
1	0	0.00			
2	1	2.44			
3	4	9.76			
4	13	31.71			
5	23	56.10			
NA	0	0.00			

### 3. Availability of the TA outside of class.

Response	Frequency	Percent	Standard Dev: 0.95	Median: 5.00	Mean: 4.44
1	0	0.00			
2	0	0.00			
3	9	21.95			
4	9	21.95			
5	19	46.34			
NA	4	9.76			

### 4. TA's feedback on written work (papers and exams).

Response	Frequency	Percent	Standard Dev: 0.84	Median: 5.00	Mean: 4.29
1	0	0.00			
2	1	2.44			
3	7	17.07			
4	12	29.27			
5	21	51.22			
NA	0	0.00			

### 5. TA's respect and concern for students.

Response	Frequency	Percent	Standard Dev: 0.63	Median: 5.00	Mean: 4.56
1	0	0.00			
2	0	0.00			
3	3	7.32			
4	12	29.27			
5	26	63.41			
NA	0	0.00			

### 7. Clarity of the TA's presentation of the course material.

Response	Frequency	Percent	Standard Dev: 0.94	Median: 4.00	Mean: 3.66
1	0	0.00			
2	7	17.07			
3	6	14.63			
4	22	53.66			
5	6	14.63			
NA	0	0.00			

**8. TA's command of course subject matter.**

Response	Frequency	Percent	Standard Dev: 0.99	Median: 4.00	Mean: 4.02
1	1	2.44			
2	3	7.32			
3	4	9.76			
4	19	46.34			
5	14	34.15			
NA	0	0.00			

**9. Helpfulness of TA in developing your understanding of course subject matter.**

Response	Frequency	Percent	Standard Dev: 1.07	Median: 4.00	Mean: 3.80
1	1	2.44			
2	5	12.20			
3	6	14.63			
4	17	41.46			
5	11	26.83			
NA	0	0.00			
No Response	1	2.44			

**10. Helpfulness of TA in developing your interest in course subject matter.**

Response	Frequency	Percent	Standard Dev: 1.18	Median: 3.00	Mean: 3.28
1	4	9.76			
2	5	12.20			
3	13	31.71			
4	12	29.27			
5	6	14.63			
NA	0	0.00			
No Response	1	2.44			

**12. Helpfulness of TA in teaching you to think critically and independently.**

Response	Frequency	Percent	Standard Dev: 0.88	Median: 4.00	Mean: 3.68
1	0	0.00			
2	3	7.32			
3	15	36.59			
4	15	36.59			
5	8	19.51			
NA	0	0.00			

**13. Helpfulness of TA in teaching to write on philosophical topics.**

Response	Frequency	Percent	Standard Dev: 0.96	Median: 4.00	Mean: 3.90
1	0	0.00			
2	2	4.88			
3	13	31.71			
4	13	31.71			
5	11	26.83			
NA	1	2.44			
No Response	1	2.44			

**14. Overall rating of the TA.**

Response	Frequency	Percent	Standard Dev: 0.84	Median: 4.00	Mean: 4.03
1	0	0.00			
2	3	7.32			
3	4	9.76			
4	21	51.22			
5	11	26.83			
NA	0	0.00			
No Response	2	4.88			

**16. Did the TA make it more likely or less likely that you would take other philosophy courses? (1 = "more likely", 2 = "less likely", 3 = "no change")**

Response	Frequency	Percent	Standard Dev: 0.75	Median: 3.00	Mean: 2.43
1	6	14.63			
2	11	26.83			
3	23	56.10			
Multiple	1	2.44			

**17. Do you feel the TA unfairly discriminated against any student or group of students in this class? (Answer 1 for "yes" and 5 for "no.") If you answer "yes", please use the back of the page to explain. Thank you.**

Response	Frequency	Percent	Standard Dev: 0.00	Median: 2.00	Mean: 2.00
1	0	0.00			
5	41	100.00			

**Elliott PHIL 213 Sec 501 Summer**

Form Type MB01

15

**1. Instructor's explanation of requirements for successful course performance.**

Response	Frequency	Percent	Standard Dev: 1.10	Median: 4.00	Mean: 4.07
1	0	0.00			
2	2	13.33			
3	2	13.33			
4	4	26.67			
5	7	46.67			
6	0	0.00			

**2. Instructor's responsiveness to questions raised by students.**

Response	Frequency	Percent	Standard Dev: 0.77	Median: 4.00	Mean: 4.20
1	0	0.00			
2	0	0.00			
3	3	20.00			
4	6	40.00			
5	6	40.00			
6	0	0.00			

**3. Availability of the instructor outside of class.**

Response	Frequency	Percent	Standard Dev: 1.79	Median: 5.00	Mean: 3.93
1	0	0.00			
2	0	0.00			
3	3	20.00			
4	0	0.00			
5	10	66.67			
6	2	13.33			

**4. Feedback on written work (papers and exams).**

Response	Frequency	Percent	Standard Dev: 1.13	Median: 5.00	Mean: 4.47
1	0	0.00			
2	2	13.33			
3	1	6.67			
4	0	0.00			
5	12	80.00			
6	0	0.00			

**5. Instructor's respect and concern for students.**

Response	Frequency	Percent	Standard Dev: 0.41	Median: 5.00	Mean: 4.80
1	0	0.00			
2	0	0.00			
3	0	0.00			
4	3	20.00			
5	12	80.00			
6	0	0.00			

## Elliott PHIL 213 Sec 501 Summer

Form Type MB01

15

**6. Learning materials used in this course (readings, handouts, overheads, etc.).**

Response	Frequency	Percent	Standard Dev: 0.59	Median: 4.00	Mean: 3.93
1	0	0.00			
2	0	0.00			
3	3	20.00			
4	10	66.67			
5	2	13.33			
6	0	0.00			

**7. Clarity of the instructor's presentation on the course material.**

Response	Frequency	Percent	Standard Dev: 0.85	Median: 4.00	Mean: 4.00
1	0	0.00			
2	1	6.67			
3	2	13.33			
4	8	53.33			
5	4	26.67			
6	0	0.00			

**8. Instructor's command of course subject matter.**

Response	Frequency	Percent	Standard Dev: 0.74	Median: 5.00	Mean: 4.40
1	0	0.00			
2	0	0.00			
3	2	13.33			
4	5	33.33			
5	8	53.33			
6	0	0.00			

**9. Development of your understanding of course subject matter.**

Response	Frequency	Percent	Standard Dev: 0.83	Median: 4.00	Mean: 3.87
1	0	0.00			
2	0	0.00			
3	6	40.00			
4	5	33.33			
5	4	26.67			
6	0	0.00			

**10. Development of your interest in course subject matter.**

Response	Frequency	Percent	Standard Dev: 0.82	Median: 3.00	Mean: 3.67
1	0	0.00			
2	0	0.00			
3	8	53.33			
4	4	26.67			
5	3	20.00			
6	0	0.00			

# Elliott PHIL 213 Sec 501 Summer

Form Type MB01

15

**11. Helpfulness of course in teaching you to read carefully.**

Response	Frequency	Percent	Standard Dev: 0.62	Median: 4.00	Mean: 3.67
1	0	0.00	<div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 15px; width: 100%;"></div>		
2	0	0.00	<div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 15px; width: 100%;"></div>		
3	6	40.00	<div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 15px; width: 100%; background-color: black; width: 40%;"></div>		
4	8	53.33	<div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 15px; width: 100%; background-color: black; width: 53.33%;"></div>		
5	1	6.67	<div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 15px; width: 100%; background-color: black; width: 6.67%;"></div>		
6	0	0.00	<div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 15px; width: 100%;"></div>		

**12. Helpfulness of course in teaching you to think critically and independently.**

Response	Frequency	Percent	Standard Dev: 0.74	Median: 5.00	Mean: 4.40
1	0	0.00	<div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 15px; width: 100%;"></div>		
2	0	0.00	<div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 15px; width: 100%;"></div>		
3	2	13.33	<div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 15px; width: 100%; background-color: black; width: 13.33%;"></div>		
4	5	33.33	<div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 15px; width: 100%; background-color: black; width: 33.33%;"></div>		
5	8	53.33	<div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 15px; width: 100%; background-color: black; width: 53.33%;"></div>		
6	0	0.00	<div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 15px; width: 100%;"></div>		

**13. Helpfulness of course in teaching you to write on philosophical topics.**

Response	Frequency	Percent	Standard Dev: 0.96	Median: 4.00	Mean: 3.93
1	0	0.00	<div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 15px; width: 100%;"></div>		
2	1	6.67	<div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 15px; width: 100%; background-color: black; width: 6.67%;"></div>		
3	4	26.67	<div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 15px; width: 100%; background-color: black; width: 26.67%;"></div>		
4	5	33.33	<div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 15px; width: 100%; background-color: black; width: 33.33%;"></div>		
5	5	33.33	<div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 15px; width: 100%; background-color: black; width: 33.33%;"></div>		
6	0	0.00	<div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 15px; width: 100%;"></div>		

**14. Overall rating of the instructor.**

Response	Frequency	Percent	Standard Dev: 0.72	Median: 4.00	Mean: 4.33
1	0	0.00	<div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 15px; width: 100%;"></div>		
2	0	0.00	<div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 15px; width: 100%;"></div>		
3	2	13.33	<div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 15px; width: 100%; background-color: black; width: 13.33%;"></div>		
4	6	40.00	<div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 15px; width: 100%; background-color: black; width: 40%;"></div>		
5	7	46.67	<div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 15px; width: 100%; background-color: black; width: 46.67%;"></div>		
6	0	0.00	<div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 15px; width: 100%;"></div>		

**15. Overall rating of course.**

Response	Frequency	Percent	Standard Dev: 0.61	Median: 4.00	Mean: 3.71
1	0	0.00	<div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 15px; width: 100%;"></div>		
2	0	0.00	<div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 15px; width: 100%;"></div>		
3	5	33.33	<div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 15px; width: 100%; background-color: black; width: 33.33%;"></div>		
4	8	53.33	<div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 15px; width: 100%; background-color: black; width: 53.33%;"></div>		
5	1	6.67	<div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 15px; width: 100%; background-color: black; width: 6.67%;"></div>		
6	0	0.00	<div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 15px; width: 100%;"></div>		
No Response	1	6.67	<div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 15px; width: 100%; background-color: #cccccc; width: 6.67%;"></div>		

## Elliott PHIL 213 Sec 501 Summer

Form Type MB01

15

**16. Course made it more or less likely that you would take other philosophy courses.**

Response	Frequency	Percent	Standard Dev: -	Median: -	Mean: -
1 <i>more likely</i>	<i>84</i>	0.00			
2 <i>less likely</i>	<i>84</i>	0.00			
3 <i>No Change</i>	<i>87</i>	0.00			
4	0	0.00			
5	0	0.00			
6	0	0.00			
<b>Multiple</b>	15	100.00			

**17. Instructor unfairly discriminated against any student or group in class.**

Response	Frequency	Percent	Standard Dev: -	Median: -	Mean: -
① <i>Discriminated.</i>	0	0.00			
2 <i>Yes</i>	0	0.00			
3	0	0.00			
4	0	0.00			
⑤ <i>Discriminated: 815</i>	<i>815</i>	0.00			
6 <i>NO</i>	0	0.00			
<b>Multiple</b>	15	100.00			



# Aaron Elliot PHIL 106-001 Eval Spring 2018

Form Type MB01

Forms Read 14 *Enrolled 23*

**1. Instructor's explanation of requirements for successful course performance.**

Response	Frequency	Percent	Standard Dev: 1.02	Median: 3.00	Mean: 3.50
1	0	0.00	<div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 15px; width: 100%;"></div>		
2	2	14.29	<div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 15px; width: 100%; background-color: black; width: 14.29%;"></div>		
3	6	42.86	<div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 15px; width: 100%; background-color: black; width: 42.86%;"></div>		
4	3	21.43	<div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 15px; width: 100%; background-color: black; width: 21.43%;"></div>		
5	3	21.43	<div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 15px; width: 100%; background-color: black; width: 21.43%;"></div>		
NA	0	0.00	<div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 15px; width: 100%;"></div>		

**2. Instructor's responsiveness to questions raised by students.**

Response	Frequency	Percent	Standard Dev: 1.04	Median: 4.00	Mean: 4.00
1	0	0.00	<div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 15px; width: 100%;"></div>		
2	1	7.14	<div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 15px; width: 100%; background-color: black; width: 7.14%;"></div>		
3	4	28.57	<div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 15px; width: 100%; background-color: black; width: 28.57%;"></div>		
4	3	21.43	<div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 15px; width: 100%; background-color: black; width: 21.43%;"></div>		
5	6	42.86	<div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 15px; width: 100%; background-color: black; width: 42.86%;"></div>		
NA	0	0.00	<div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 15px; width: 100%;"></div>		

**3. Availability of the instructor outside of class.**

Response	Frequency	Percent	Standard Dev: 0.77	Median: 4.00	Mean: 4.14
1	0	0.00	<div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 15px; width: 100%;"></div>		
2	0	0.00	<div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 15px; width: 100%;"></div>		
3	3	21.43	<div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 15px; width: 100%; background-color: black; width: 21.43%;"></div>		
4	6	42.86	<div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 15px; width: 100%; background-color: black; width: 42.86%;"></div>		
5	5	35.71	<div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 15px; width: 100%; background-color: black; width: 35.71%;"></div>		
NA	0	0.00	<div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 15px; width: 100%;"></div>		

**4. Feedback on written work (papers and exams).**

Response	Frequency	Percent	Standard Dev: 1.09	Median: 3.00	Mean: 3.43
1	0	0.00	<div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 15px; width: 100%;"></div>		
2	3	21.43	<div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 15px; width: 100%; background-color: black; width: 21.43%;"></div>		
3	5	35.71	<div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 15px; width: 100%; background-color: black; width: 35.71%;"></div>		
4	3	21.43	<div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 15px; width: 100%; background-color: black; width: 21.43%;"></div>		
5	3	21.43	<div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 15px; width: 100%; background-color: black; width: 21.43%;"></div>		
NA	0	0.00	<div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 15px; width: 100%;"></div>		

**5. Instructor's respect and concern for students.**

Response	Frequency	Percent	Standard Dev: 0.97	Median: 4.00	Mean: 3.79
1	0	0.00	<div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 15px; width: 100%;"></div>		
2	1	7.14	<div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 15px; width: 100%; background-color: black; width: 7.14%;"></div>		
3	5	35.71	<div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 15px; width: 100%; background-color: black; width: 35.71%;"></div>		
4	4	28.57	<div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 15px; width: 100%; background-color: black; width: 28.57%;"></div>		
5	4	28.57	<div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 15px; width: 100%; background-color: black; width: 28.57%;"></div>		
NA	0	0.00	<div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 15px; width: 100%;"></div>		

**6. Learning materials used in this course (readings, handouts, overheads, etc.).**

Response	Frequency	Percent	Standard Dev: 1.10	Median: 3.00	Mean: 3.14
1	0	0.00			
2	5	35.71			
3	4	28.57			
4	3	21.43			
5	2	14.29			
NA	0	0.00			

**7. Clarity of the instructor's presentation of the course material.**

Response	Frequency	Percent	Standard Dev: 0.99	Median: 2.50	Mean: 2.71
1	1	7.14			
2	6	42.86			
3	3	21.43			
4	4	28.57			
5	0	0.00			
NA	0	0.00			

**8. Instructor's command of course subject matter.**

Response	Frequency	Percent	Standard Dev: 1.08	Median: 3.50	Mean: 3.64
1	0	0.00			
2	2	14.29			
3	5	35.71			
4	3	21.43			
5	4	28.57			
NA	0	0.00			

**9. Development of your understanding of course subject matter.**

Response	Frequency	Percent	Standard Dev: 1.20	Median: 3.50	Mean: 3.29
1	1	7.14			
2	3	21.43			
3	3	21.43			
4	5	35.71			
5	2	14.29			
NA	0	0.00			

**10. Development of your interest in course subject matter.**

Response	Frequency	Percent	Standard Dev: 1.20	Median: 2.00	Mean: 2.29
1	4	28.57			
2	5	35.71			
3	3	21.43			
4	1	7.14			
5	1	7.14			
NA	0	0.00			

**11. Helpfulness of course in teaching you to read carefully.**

Response	Frequency	Percent	Standard Dev: 1.16	Median: 4.00	Mean: 3.43
1	1	7.14			
2	2	14.29			
3	3	21.43			
4	6	42.86			
5	2	14.29			
NA	0	0.00			

**12. Helpfulness of course in teaching you to think critically and independently.**

Response	Frequency	Percent	Standard Dev: 1.15	Median: 3.00	Mean: 3.36
1	0	0.00			
2	4	28.57			
3	4	28.57			
4	3	21.43			
5	3	21.43			
NA	0	0.00			

**13. Helpfulness of course in teaching you to write on philosophical topics.**

Response	Frequency	Percent	Standard Dev: 1.12	Median: 3.50	Mean: 3.21
1	1	7.14			
2	3	21.43			
3	3	21.43			
4	6	42.86			
5	1	7.14			
NA	0	0.00			

**14. Overall rating of the instructor.**

Response	Frequency	Percent	Standard Dev: 1.28	Median: 3.50	Mean: 3.36
1	1	7.14			
2	3	21.43			
3	3	21.43			
4	4	28.57			
5	3	21.43			
NA	0	0.00			

**15. Overall rating of the course.**

Response	Frequency	Percent	Standard Dev: 1.15	Median: 2.50	Mean: 2.64
1	2	14.29			
2	5	35.71			
3	4	28.57			
4	2	14.29			
5	1	7.14			
NA	0	0.00			

16. Did the course make it more likely or less likely that you would take other philosophy courses? (1='more likely', 2='less likely', 3='no change')

Response	Frequency	Percent	Standard Dev: 0.58	Median: 2.00	Mean: 2.21
1	1	7.14			
2	9	64.29			
3	4	28.57			

17. Do you feel the instructor unfairly discriminated against any student or group of students in this class? (1='Yes', 5='No'). If you answered 'Yes,' please use the back of the page to explain. Thank you.

Response	Frequency	Percent	Standard Dev: 0.00	Median: 2.00	Mean: 2.00
1	0	0.00			
5	14	100.00			

Written evaluations are from my most recent term as Instructor for each course I've taught, and my previous two courses as TA. Full set of written evaluations available upon request.

### **Teaching Assistant, Phil 225 Environmental Ethics, Spring 2017**

#### **1. What are the strengths of the Teaching Assistant? What would you like to remain the same?**

- He gave special optional lectures when Dr. Henderson was absent that helped my understanding! Big time!
- Has great command of the course content and is good at helping others to fully understand it as well.
- Organized
- Powerpoints & review sessions
- Clear notes and discussions. Good explanations
- Knowledgeable
- Able to clarify the subject really well
- Helps discussions in class
- He could redirect and answer any additional questions
- He helped make stuff easier to understand
- He knew when the class needed extra clarification from the instructor. Voiced concerns and made sure things stayed on track.
- He's very helpful when it comes to asking questions. Keep that please!
- He was always willing to help outside of class. Explained things very well until he knew I understood them.
- Consistently available during class. Provided helpful guest lectures to help us solidify our understanding of the material.
- Clarified instructor's material when there was confusion and gave very good feedback on writing assignments. Very knowledgeable about subjects. I liked how TA led classes to clarify subject matter.
- Chipped in what he knew for lecture. Added to the overall depth of the lecture.
- The TA primarily focused on attendance and grading/giving feedback on papers. His role is somewhat limited.
- TA didn't have any strengths
- He was able to tie material and make it more clear in a way the instructor couldn't. Helpful feedback on papers.
- Keep doing individual help sessions during class.
- Whenever the class was understanding something differently than our professor, the TA was able to help clarify

- Very clear presentations. Good synopsis when the instructor goes way off on a tangent.
- Available outside of class. Good job teaching and describing course material.
- Strong command of the material, helpful in learning concepts, able to help students individually.
- The strengths of the TA are his feedback and clarity.
- Communicated consistently with students and attended lectures frequently

**2. What are the weaknesses of the Teaching Assistant? What would you like to see changed?**

- Would have liked to get to know him more! Seems intelligent with a lot of valuable things to say.
- Judgmental, a little full of himself
- None
- Not a lot of interaction, could see more
- The TA graded the assignments a bit too strictly. Because this is a low level philosophy class, the papers should be graded as such.
- I wish he would have taught a few classes or joined in group discussions
- Can't think of anything
- This probably isn't helpful, but I really wouldn't change much. Maybe a tad more help in class with what to expect/what he's looking for on upcoming papers.
- I didn't notice any weaknesses other than he moved through notes on the word document too fast one day
- Only that he didn't teach more often!
- TA needs to clarify more of the basic ethical principles while they are being taught so good basics for class.
- Rarely chipped in. It was nice when he did.
- I would have appreciated if the TA were to monitor group discussions and promote topics to debate and mediate when talks went off-topic.
- Narrow minded and was always on his computer not helping with class.
- None
- Provide adequate and understandable feedback on essays. All he did was ask us more questions and not correct or tell us what we did wrong.
- He wasn't as good at making everyone's views seem justified - you could tell he was opinionated.
- Maybe not enough involvement in teaching? I liked Elliott's style of teaching better than Henderson's.
- None
- No weaknesses of the TA

**3. Has the Teaching Assistant made it *more* or *less* likely that you will take another philosophy course? Why did he do so?**

- Honestly, it wasn't much of a change. If anything, though, more likely! :) Loved the course.
- More. He provided an example of a successful graduate level philosophy student.
- Less likely. If all philosophy TAs are as self-righteous I don't want to take any more of these classes.
- No interest in philosophy
- More.
- More likely, but still want to take another course because he seemed more down to earth.
- More likely due to his helpfulness in understanding the material.
- Less likely, the grades received on papers were not reflective of knowledge/work put into them that was achieved through the class.
- No change.
- Made course enjoyable and helped with course work
- About the same.
- Neither.
- More likely, really made philosophy something fun and easy to learn and talk about.
- More likely, showed his passion and interest in class.
- I am neutral. The learning experience was nice.
- Less likely. I did not enjoy writing philosophical papers very much and getting feedback on these assignments didn't help too much.
- Less likely because when it came to grading assignments he was biased and if a student wrote about their own opinion and it was different than the TA's he took points off the assignment.
- He would have made it more likely due to his command of subject matter and making it something I would be more inclined to learn about.
- Less likely.
- More. He seems genuinely interested. That makes me interested, too.
- More, but this was an ACE requirement, so I won't.
- More. He made difficult concepts more accessible and therefore understandable. He made potentially arduous material interesting and exciting.
- The TA has not affected whether I will take another philosophy course.
- No, this was an ACE course for my major.

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**Teaching Assistant, Phil 101 Intro to Philosophy, Fall 2016****What are the strengths of the recitation/quiz section? What would you like to remain the same?**

- I really like that the quiz section didn't really have a plan or something we had to accomplish so we could discuss whatever we felt needed clarification. Aaron also did a really good job as a TA and graded our papers really well. The comments were extremely helpful.
- I think he helped clarify a lot of things for me. I also liked how he asked us what we wanted to talk about each week instead of choosing for us.
- I liked how when we did activities the whole class had to engage.
- I got a lot more useful details from it. No change.
- In depth understanding. The depth and the diagrams were good.
- Some strengths would be that he talked things out and helped as much as he could.
- Aaron is always very calm and thoughtful. He thinks critically and carefully.
- The ability to go further in depth for the topics discussed in lecture.
- Explained what questions I had and helped with notes.
- Was very helpful to review what we talked about in lecture. Letting us ask questions and choose what we went over instead of just talking about what you wanted was really nice.
- Open discussion. Asking what to talk about every time.
- Covers a lot of detail for only having a limited amount of time (efficient). Creative at explaining things to help understanding. Availability, helpfulness, understanding. Adaptive to students' understanding/learning.
- Opportunity to ask questions
- He is knowledgeable of topics. He makes topics easier to understand.
- Aaron knows the material he talks about. It helps to have a TA who can answer all your questions. I think heavy lecture would be good to remain the same.
- Discussions/explanations
- I like the concept of smaller classes each week after lecture.
- It was good to clear up any questions that came up in the lecture or readings that the professor didn't have time to cover or answer more in depth.
- Asking what we would like to go over and getting out input.
- He always made sure people were involved and were most prepared for our assignments.
- Good, detailed descriptions of course concepts with well thought out explanations. Good writings and visuals.
- The advice we received about papers. Also the advice we were given about the final exams.
- Aaron clearly had a passion for Philosophy and for teaching. He wanted to help us learn.

- Instructor was very knowledgeable on the topic and was able to communicate well with students when they had questions.
- Does a good job at explaining difficult arguments/ideas. Remains open for questions and explaining arguments in depth.
- I really liked how it was set up - we had a good opportunity to ask the questions we didn't understand in the readings and Aaron was always happy to answer them and lead a discussion.
- Topics were covered thoroughly and all questions were answered in a way that made the material much easier to understand.
- He asks us what we want to go over instead of going over what he wants.
- He was able to answer our questions and tried to explain even though we might have been confused.
- Letting the students ask questions to start the class instead of just teaching. That way we got information that we needed and not relearn information that we already knew.
- The instructor was passionate about the subject and asked what we wanted to work on instead of choosing what we should talk about.
- The TA was pretty good at explaining all materials needed and the content. For the most part I think it should remain the same.
- Makes class as engaging as possible with it being an 8:00am class.
- Did answer some questions but made the answer a little more confusing to me.
- I enjoyed being able to be in a smaller group to discuss the topics that were learned in lecture earlier in the week.
- He asks us what we need help with
- Sometimes it was a helpful review! You helped us think, that's for sure!
- We get to clear any questions we have. Keep discussions.
- The recitation helped me to further understand Philosophy concepts I didn't already understand.

**What are the weaknesses of the recitation/quiz section? What would you like to see changed?**

- Sometimes they seemed a little unnecessary if the topic we were discussing in lecture at the time were easily understandable. I kind of wish it was more of an optional thing and maybe you would just get extra credit for going.
- Sometimes he would kind of ramble about a topic which made it kind of confusing but this didn't happen very often.
- Maybe more one-on-one help
- Too short.
- The information isn't broken down enough. It's not interesting at all.
- He doesn't always have as much emotion or inflection so it is easy to let my mind wander even if I

don't mean to.

- It depended upon what the students want to discuss so there's never really any agenda.
- It seems like we focus on one thing at a time for too long. I always leave the class more confused than when I came in.
- I guess just time. Some weeks we would be in the middle of something and have to end abruptly but it's hard to cover everything from a philosophy lecture in 50 minutes.
- Not spurring conversation between students. More talking.
- More guidance in learning. Sometimes spend too much time figuring out what needs to be covered.
- When nobody asks questions, emphasize what you think will be useful/relevant
- He should do more interactive exercises.
- Not a lot of people participated and that was probably the worst thing.
- They were not very helpful. Students did not come with questions, so there was not much to discuss. To me, they didn't provide clarity.
- The material is a little difficult to understand.
- Need more clarity. Sometimes we got too far off the main topic. It was really hard to follow his train of thought.
- I never quite understood what I needed to know. After each week we never reviewed anything from previous weeks.
- Often, there was many different questions since two readings were given that week and there isn't enough time in recitation to answer them all. This is probably partly because of the amount of info covered by the class.
- Wellness in being able to explain answers to question
- Sometimes we would run out of things to talk about so it would drag on.
- Only weakness was sometimes he rambled on one subject for a long time.
- Sometimes I felt like I was getting even more confused than I already was when things were explained.
- Our recitation wasn't very engaged, but I'm not sure how much of that is Aaron's fault.
- People weren't as vocal about their opinions as I thought they would be. More group work would help this section a lot.
- Sometimes I was still confused on topics discussed in class. Go more in depth with topics students have struggled on in the past.
- This isn't necessarily on Aaron, but sometimes it seemed like there was no participation and 2 students leading the discussion. I don't know how to change this, but there were moments while it was just incredibly awkward.
- Nothing! Aaron did a great job.
- Sometimes waits a little too long for someone to answer or ask him something.
- The class never really talks, so when he asks what we need help on no one says anything. Maybe

trying bringing a little bit of material to go over.

-Time of recitation

-Some of these topics were hard to explain and you could tell that the instructor had trouble explaining them.

-I felt like not everything was always covered. Maybe more brief explanations.

-Doesn't come as prepared as I wish he would. Could have own reviews instead of relying on us.

-More precise answers to the questions and have more of a plan

-I think rather than re-lecturing maybe some activities for the class that could help learn/understand the material in another way.

-When he asks a question sometimes no one answers. Maybe start calling on random people.

-Too complicated sometimes. Try to make it simpler in recitation. Maybe ask more questions or do more class activities to apply and check our knowledge.

-No set agenda, not very exciting, add handouts/activities

### **Additional comments**

-The TA instructor was very helpful outside of class. Explained things creatively to adapt to students' understanding. Very understanding of students' situations and caring. Helpful with students with disabilities being able to pass the class. Highly recommend.

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**Instructor, Phil 101 Intro to Philosophy, Summer 2015**

**IN-CLASS PRESENTATION [lectures, class discussion, in-class activities - in terms of organization, clarity, thoroughness, responses to questions/problems. For example were the lectures/questions during discussion/instructions for activities clear and easy to understand?]**

-Lectures were very well planned out and presented. When students had questions, we would stop and make sure everyone understood the concept before moving on. Explanations were very clear, and he made it very easy to understand all topics, with great examples also.

-Yes, the instructor can explain patiently and clearly.

-The professor was prepared every day with material and examples. He provided detailed analysis and was able to explain concepts well. I did think he spent too much time on each topic, causing the class to fall behind.

-Overall, in-class lecture is quite organized and there seem to be just enough materials to cover the whole 3 hours or more.

-The class presentation was clear and understandable. With them we got better understanding of the readings and its topics.

-Yes, since it's a small class, we can express our ideas and instructor gives us feedback right away. He gives good lectures and organized notes for us to focus on study.

-The examples and all in class participation was well off and done properly.

-Did good job of lectures, and explained things with a lot of clarity.

-Yes, easy to understand and activities were good. Made me remember those theories/meanings.

-I thought all the instructions/lectures were clear and well organized. Although the discussion in class could get a bit confusing. I thought Mr. Elliott did a fine job on explaining the information enough to get an understanding.

-I thought the class was taught effectively and that Mr. Elliott made it clear as one of his priorities to make sure he was going slow enough when we were going through hard points in class.

-I believe everything was clear and well organized.

**SUBJECT MATTER (level of difficulty, your interest level, textbook(s) readings selected)**

-Selected readings were always very interesting and helped expand lectured knowledge

-A little too hard, b/c the course was just 3 weeks. The instructor so strict for the grade.

-I thought the readings were a bit challenging for a 101 level course, but they were pertinent to our class material.

-It was half and half. Some readings were understandable while others were beyond my comprehension. Mostly they were scientific ones with statistics.

-The readings were selected properly based on the topics we were going to discuss in class. There were readings that were hard to understand but in general they were fine.

-Since it's three week session, we covered a lot of materials but the difficulty for this class is average. Readings are helpful to construct our final papers.

-It was challenging but it did make you think on the subject.

-It was at a good difficulty level, and the interest level was pretty good.

-Not hard, but didn't really have interest in this subject except for the dualism part - mind and body.

-The discussions that make up Philosophy could be hard to understand. Especially when trying to read the argument vs. talking about them. I personally had a hard time keeping up with the readings due to my busy schedule and there was a lot to read. However, given the constraints, I thought it was fair.

-I found this to be more difficult than expected. I do acknowledge however I took a semester's worth of work in the span of three weeks. I did not find the reading too exciting, but I was grateful for the scanned versions of the book so I didn't have to spend more money than I already have.

-I tend to prefer physical reading material, instead of using a computer. The level of difficulty was manageable and my interest level stayed high.

### **ASSIGNMENTS, QUIZZES, EXAMS, PRESENTATIONS, PROJECTS (amount and difficulty of homework, fairness of quizzes/exams, etc.)**

-Assignments required thought and understanding of concepts but were not too difficult to do. Fairness on grading was superb.

-It's ok, but the instructor is so strict, we got lower grade for assignment.

-The homework was thought provoking

-For a 3 week session class, the final paper is fairly reasonable.

-There were times that the assignments were difficult because we did not have time to discuss and understand well the topic of the assignment.

-Assignments are helpful and not really hard. It's more like to test how much you know so far and how you think about it. Final project is tough, because we need to sum up all we know and understand the relationship between certain materials you pick up.

-For the most part everything was corresponding level of difficulty and fairness.

-There were periodic assignments and final essay was the big thing.

-Normal, assignments and final report are fairly normal and doable.

-I thought the readings were hard to get through and understand at times. I thought the assignments and final paper were fair, given that the class is only 3 weeks long.

-I was expecting more quizzes and multiple choice tests, especially for an intro 101 class, to be quite honest. I do think a ten page final paper was a bit much, considering I had taken a 374 level class and had a twelve page paper. I guess I was just expecting it to be a couple of pages shorter in requirement, given its course level.

-Overall, everything was extremely fair. I would however (if the same material is used) create quizzes or in-class assignments about the readings. This might force more engagement from the class.

**HELP OUTSIDE OF THE CLASSROOM (availability, usefulness)**

- Was available every day, and always had willingness to help
- A little bit. Not too much
- Professor Elliott was always available after class
- Give 1 to 1½ hour outside of class is a reasonable time
- He was available outside the class and its help was very helpful.
- Instructor is always being helpful and willing to talk after class.
- Very helpful. Helped when requested to.
- Yes, always available after class in office hours.
- Yes, email replies really quick.
- I am sure that there was always help, however I work every day 30 min after class and did not have time.
- Mr. Elliott always seemed available and was more than happy to answer my questions.
- As far as I know, you were always available, although I never utilized any help.

**What are the strengths of the course? What would you like to remain the same?**

- The lectures, because they were all really well explained with lots of great examples. But I would have everything remain the same as well.
- Instructor's explanations, notes
- The lectures are great themselves. The final paper is simple and straight to the point whether students paid attention during the 3 weeks or not.
- The explanations in class. There, it is when I could understand better the topics talked in the reading. The way he explained had better sense and the examples were helpful to understand better the topic.
- The notes and discussion is the best way to test our thinking. The readings help us to think logically and rethink if our idea is wrong or right. Even it's only three weeks class, but I can tell I learn the new way to think and doubt what I think sometimes.
- Strengths are the professor's enthusiasm in the class. He should remain the same in terms of ways he taught.
- Not too hard and interesting at some point. Maybe could watch more videos like those on brains.
- Giving many examples of arguments that make up Philosophy. I got a sense of how different questions have different answers and many different views.
- It really helps you develop thinking skills. I feel like for the most part it could all stay the same.
- The way you structured the lecture and went over everything piece by piece. I think this was vital to the understanding of the material, since interpretations can vary so drastically.

**What are the weaknesses of the course? What would you like to see changed?**

- No weaknesses at all! Wouldn't change anything
- Time is too short, too many stuff, can cut something during summer class
- In-class activities, such as more peer discussion. I'd love to see more of students forming some type of groups and argue for whichever side. I feel like those types of activities help students get a better understanding as we teach each other.
- It is a 3 weeks class, all happened too quickly. When we were doing the paper at the end of the session (the last week), there were readings to do that it was not about the paper and it took off time. I think it would be better that the paper is shorter and we can choose one or two questions to answer them.
- Too short for class. It's hard to cover everything. Instructor tried to cover the most important things in this class. I think maybe we can have some video clips on discussion board which is related to what we will discuss in class.
- There is no real weakness in the course.
- Too long per class. 3 hours is too long. Gets too tiring and I lose interest. Yes, change it to maybe 2 hours max.
- The weaknesses would be trying to broadly cover Philosophy in 3 weeks. I don't think the class needs to change, however it is definitely hard for some people.
- No real weaknesses, but if I could, I would knock the essay page requirement from ten to eight.
- I think the class might not be well suited for a 3 week session. After about 1.5 hours of class, interest declines noticeably.

**Additional comments**

- Aaron Elliott is a great professor that connects well with all students, and makes sure there is no one that is ever lost. Great experience!
- Thoroughly enjoyable class.

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### **Instructor, Phil 213 Medical Ethics, Summer 2016**

#### **What are the strengths of the course? What would you like to remain the same?**

-Aaron communicated in a way that is often non-linear, which helps me to stretch my mind and alter the way I naturally think things through. I now have a greater self-awareness on some ethical issues and am better prepared to voice the 'why' behind my beliefs. Articles were great. Instructor was great. Not having a textbook was great.

-The range of topics

-The good things about the course would be the readings, keeping those and being able to have them clarified in class.

-Encouraged critical thinking in an unbiased way. I think discussions should stay the same.

-Instructor is really good at explaining different subject matter to students. He was also extremely willing to meet with students outside of class. I would like the daily schedule to stay the same - mostly lectures over the readings and small class discussions.

-It touched a lot of topics that are highly controversial and taught us to look at them philosophically rather than with a one-sided opinion. It taught us to look deeper than the surface points that everyone uses. I liked not having to have a textbook because it could be more tailored to the class.

-I thought that the reading selected were very good and provided a variety of perspectives on controversial topics.

-The development of thought, topic, and material was logical and cohesive. Everything built nicely on each other and there weren't any strange jumps in ideas that seemingly came from nowhere.

-Some of the strengths of this course were the videos. I personally think they helped me visualize things in a much different way and helped to write my papers. The videos for sure and the case studies. The case studies were also good to have and discuss in class and with classmates.

-A thorough explanation of the readings. He did a good job of making sure to explain the readings where everyone can understand them in more simplistic terms.

-Open discussion, people can share freely. Instructor is well-versed on the subject matter and can provide immediate in class. Strong instructor = good class.

-The instructor knows what he is talking about.

-I liked the way the lectures were laid out. It helped that we went through the readings. I also think the grading scheme was very fair. The case study discussions and documentaries were also helpful in breaking up the class time and keeping it interesting.

-We covered a good variety of topics.

-Learning to make an ethical decision and being able to support your choice was a key skill for this class. Continue to do the short multiple class period case study readings. Loved not having a textbook.

#### **What are the weaknesses of the course? What would you like to see changed?**

-Too hard to keep brain fresh to discuss deep philosophy for 4 hours straight, need a longer break in the middle. Whiteboard :)

- Length of class, subjectivity of curriculum/papers
- Maybe instead of such long lectures and note taking, breaking it up with a relatable activity. Something that has to do with the topic learned.
- Maybe even more class discussion. We read about a lot of different theories but it would be beneficial to discuss as a class how we reason with the arguments.
- I think the instructor sometimes doesn't answer the students' questions enough for them to understand. It's nice that he tries to reword things for us, but sometimes it's confusing for the student and may make them feel uncomfortable under the 'spotlight.'
- The length of it during the summer was definitely a weakness. For the course material itself I think the only weakness would be that some of the readings were difficult to understand.
- I wish the class discussion would have been more engaging. Sometimes Aaron's questions were either too vague or too simple to make for good discussion. I would NOT recommend having this as a 4 hour night course! Having it spaced out in smaller increments would have been preferred.
- I'm not sure. I really think that the material is approached well and thoughtfully. Aaron was chronically over-prepared, which was oddly nice because he was over-prepared for a four hour lecture. That takes some doing. Aaron put time and effort into each and every class. I think the class was set up well.
- Long lectures over the items we just read. Maybe help explain the next reading a little without giving the questions in the reading responses away.
- It was a lot to read and a lot of information to cover in the amount of time we had. Also, the class was really long. I lost focus because of the length.
- Too much time lecturing on reading materials, got bored sometimes. More interactive/group stuff to get the juices flowing.
- Cramming all that reading into 5 weeks doesn't work well. We are two articles behind right now?
- I would have liked more instruction/feedback for writing papers. The time frame made it difficult to get papers back in enough time to improve on the next one. I also think class discussions weren't very productive and were sometimes hard to follow. The readings about equipoise were difficult to read and talk about in class.
- The course schedule sucked. A philosophy class should not be 4 hours 2 days a week. It made Tuesday filled with homework. Focused a lot on informed consent.
- The chalkboard was awful and I would like to see more visual examples and scenarios like the train tracks on day 1.

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**Instructor, Phil 106 Philosophy and Current Issues, Spring 2018**

**What are the strengths of the course? What would you like to remain the same?**

- I liked the change in pace of the class. It helped a lot to fully understand the readings. I can say I wouldn't have done super well if it was going fast
- I liked the note-taking style with draws and diagrams as those were helpful. I thought the readings were interesting though for some topics they were very one-sided (animal ethics specifically eating meat).
- Reading practice. Make you think for yourself. [Illegible. "was on"?] important topics.
- Explaining of the reading material in a simple way. Providing example always help me understand better.
- The in-class discussions, explanations of the readings and how the author got to their main point.
- Strong ideas and concepts. The material.
- The strength was the comprehensibility of the Animal Rights section. It was interesting and argumentable. Unlike the other readings that were hard to comprehend.
- The instructor was very clear about what he wanted and I personally felt it was taught in a way that didn't force any beliefs or opinions on us. I really liked that as I came in with the assumption that we HAD to have the same opinion as the instructor to get an A. Furthermore, some of the readings were actually able to spark enough interest that I looked them up after class in my free time. I'd like this to remain the same, especially the readings that appeal to people such as the dog and the guy that tortured it for the betterment of his life. [Norcross – "Pigs, Puppies and Peoples]
- No exams, solely papers and writing assignments—it helps to formulate thoughts by myself instead of memorizing materials for exam.
- I liked that there weren't any exams and instead papers. Liked the class discussion, but wished topics discussed were easier to understand. The journaling about each article was helpful, but it's easy to fall behind since it is not a graded assignment.
- I think the strengths are helping to break apart current issues that we see in today's society.
- It does make you think differently and to become open-minded. The stories should remain the same. I personally believe that people who are into philosophy enjoy the class, but as for others, we learn nothing. We just take notes and listen.
- Strengths of the course would be the papers and working on them with peers. It is very evidence on what he wants in the course.
- A strength of this course is to teach students a way to think logically and consistently. I suggest the way the instructor notifies students of coursework to stay the same.

**What are the weaknesses of the course? What would you like to see changed?**

- Out of preference, I would have liked to study more classical philosophers. Using more controversial topics could help the class and have students look at views outside from their own.
- I felt attacked by the way some materials were presented. Also being told there are right and wrong answers to every moral situation I found frustrating as some situation have several morally acceptable ways to handle them. I also felt some topics were not as relevant as they could have been

(morally acceptable to keep cats as pets) Though I liked the idea of the writing prompts and enjoyed writing some of them, sometimes I felt unprepared to write them or defend a side while arguing against another view. Sometimes material could be presented in a less offensive manner as at times it seemed certain viewpoints were being called out.

-Clarity of the theories. I want the course to go straight to the point. All notes are very hard to follow. Not everything we read applies to our [Illegible: "Papers"? "Viewpoints"? "Assignments"?]. Maybe cut out unnecessary info

-Some readings are too long to discuss with duration of the class. Make the reading a little shorter.

-Tons of reading, did a good job of slowing it down halfway through the semester. Writing prompts seem a bit unneeded.

-Confusing and not easy to learn. Simplified materials.

-The readings are really hard to comprehend and the instructor makes it even harder to comprehend. The discussions were complex and centered around the instructor's thought process only. The readings and instructor should change.

-I would like to see some more energy and possibly more in-class assignments just for the simple fact that it is sometimes boring to sit in a lecture-only class and still maintain enough interest to stay focused. So, I would add variety with more in class assignments.

-How the material is presented—little/no interaction from students. Would have liked it to be more interactive—more discussions. The topics are not very modern—would have liked to have discussed more world-day issues. The lectures are hard for me to follow—powerpoints would have been nice—something to refer to later. Maybe start doing clicker-type questions to test myself on info before writing papers.

-I don't like that the learning materials are just reading articles—would like to learn with more class discussion on topics that are relevant to college kids today—it was hard for me to connect & understand the subject matter. Would like to have a power point highlighting all the articles discussed to keep the class material more organized. I felt confused most of the time and wish grades were put on Canvas in order to see where I'm at in the class.

-At the beginning for those of us who had no philosophical background, we struggled to make connections between readings, lecture, and real life.

-It gets boring really fast when we just review the articles that we have been reading. There should have been more student involvement through different activities. Class discussions need to be more engaging. I would also hand in writing prompts every week or every other week at least. I would also say be more specific of what it needed in prompts.

-As a class, we had a small setback in tackling this new way of thinking. I believe discussing topics slowly and in depth would help.

### **Additional Comments**

-Thank you for being available to us when we needed the help. Also for answering our questions during class. You cleared up a lot of confusion after reading the readings. The explanation during class because you help us understand what the author's actual view is. I think a lot of us would get lost in reading and deciding what the point was being conveyed. As the semester has progressed we've been able to pick up on what their actual stances are. Thank you for a great semester!



Aaron Elliott &lt;ape444@gmail.com&gt;

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**WHT Ethics Class**

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XXXXXXX <XXXXXXX@gmail.com>  
To: aaron@apelliott.com

Thu, Sep 13, 2018 at 12:51 AM

Hi Dr, Elliott!

It was nice bumping into you at Guerrero today!

I wanted to thank you for a wonderful semester last semester! The class was not what I expected it to be as I thought we would be reading work by bigger philosophers like Plato, Aristotle, Lock, etc. However, throughout the course, I found that I enjoyed reading the works you provided for us. My favorites were Singer, Nell, and Marquis.

I will say that sometimes during class I felt really lost. But at the end of the day, I really enjoyed what we did in course! Some of my friends from class and I would hang around talking about philosophical concepts within and outside the discussions from the lecture. Those moments created a strong bond between us and it allowed us to be more open-minded about several topics!

The written assignments made a HUGE impact on my outlook on life! One assignment, in particular, has played a significant role in my life. The one about if we thought donating blood/bone marrow/organs should be required. After writing what I did, I was put to the test when I was asked if I'd like to donate blood. I stood next to what I said and donated blood for the first time. Since taking your philosophy course, I have become a registered blood donor, regularly donate, and am registered as an organ donor on my driver's license. In the near future, I plan to also become a registered bone marrow donor.

Once again, thank you for a spectacular semester! I greatly appreciate all the hard work you put into teaching us and for your dedication to helping us understand the concepts. You always did an outstanding job. The WHT program made a great choice in having you be our professor! You and your course impacted my life for the better! If I could, I would take another course with you as my professor. Thank you for the eye-opening/mind-opening readings! I wish you the best in your future and greatly appreciate all the time, effort, and dedication you put into your work!

Best of luck on your applications. Any institution would be insane to not hire you!

~XXXXXX



Aaron Elliott &lt;ape444@gmail.com&gt;

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**Good Luck!**

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XXXXXXXXXXXX <XXXXXXXX@gmail.com>  
To: Aaron Elliott <aaron@apelliott.com>

Tue, Sep 18, 2018 at 2:45 PM

Hi Aaron,

XXXXXXXX told me that she ran into you and that you're looking for jobs, and I wanted to reach out with encouragement.

When I took your course I was a software engineering major with a minor in philosophy. Part of me knew I enjoyed philosophy, but I was fearful of having it be my sole degree. If you remember, one of my scholarships requires me to meet with my professors and discuss grades. I didn't expect much from our meeting but a signature, small talk, and that would be the end of it. Of course, this isn't what had happened, instead we spoke for a good hour about what was discussed in class and how to broaden my horizons within philosophy. I eventually asked the question regarding all majors and minors- "What can I do with this?". Your response was something like "It will make you better at whatever you want to do." I didn't quite understand what this meant. As time went on, using the same consistent philosophies in my life unveiled to me what you meant. Whether it was talking about politics, ethics, or simply decision based conversations, it helped me make sound arguments. I finally understood what you meant. With all these positive changes in my mind, I finally changed my major to philosophy.

You helped me quite a lot, whether you're aware of it or not. The semester before taking your course I was placed on academic probation, attempted suicide, and was lost without direction. The class helped me gain footing in logic and allowed me to heal. You inspired me to follow my goals unafraid of the consequences, good or bad, and to allow myself growth. The class helped me change some of my bigoted views and ultimately towards a more positive lifestyle! Your style of teaching helped break down a lot of ideas and concepts in class in such a way that I started understanding it the first time when you would explain it. It came to a point where I could repeat the same information to my peers and help them understand if they didn't quite get it. It improved my ability to be a leader and helped me understand the material better. Your class helped me academically, but most importantly, helped me personally in finding my way through life and my college career.

Thank you a lot!

Best, XXXXX XXXXXX

[Quoted text hidden]



Aaron Elliott &lt;ape444@gmail.com&gt;

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**Medical Ethics Fall 2014**

3 messages

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**XXXXXXXX** <XXXXXXXXXXXX@gmail.com>

Tue, Aug 1, 2017 at 9:36 AM

To: Aaron Elliott &lt;ape444@gmail.com&gt;

Hi Aaron,

I was a student in your Medical Ethics class during the Fall 2014 semester. Even though it has been almost 3 years I wanted to send you a short email letting you know that I really appreciated all that I learned during that class. I have since graduated and work in clinical research. So many of the topics we discussed and wrote about that semester are relevant in my daily work. I truly believe that I am better at my work because of how much I grew during your class.

Anyway, I just wanted to say thank you.

Sincerely,  
XXXXXX

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**Aaron Elliott** <ape444@gmail.com>

Tue, Aug 1, 2017 at 12:59 PM

To: XXXXXXXX &lt;XXXXXXXXXXXX@gmail.com&gt;

Hi XXXXXXX,

This is really touching and validating. Thank you.

What kind of clinical work do you do, and what material from class do you now find most relevant?

I tweak the syllabus each time, and it's a rare opportunity to get this kind of feedback. I'd like to make sure I maintain the content and materials that you're continuing to find valuable.

Thanks again for reaching out!

Aaron

[Quoted text hidden]

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**XXXXXXXX** <XXXXXXXXXXXX@gmail.com>

Tue, Aug 1, 2017 at 1:15 PM

To: Aaron Elliott &lt;ape444@gmail.com&gt;

Hi Aaron,

I am a clinical research coordinator for an orthopedic surgeon. Right now the most relevant thing is the informed consent process. I inherited a bit of a mess when I started this job; the informed consent process was not done properly the first time around and needed to be redone. I've been working with our IRB to make necessary changes and re-consent research participants so I have spent a lot of time reading and learning more about this process. Some of our patients and research participants are elderly so we start to touch on the issues regarding mental competency and who can give consent. Some of the research we do spans several years and things can change a lot during that time period. A patient who was able to consent at the beginning of the study may not technically be able to do so at the end in some cases. Luckily the team I work with is very conscientious about issues like this.

Another topic we discussed in class that is relevant personally (as I explore my own career opportunities and goals) is the role of animals in research. I would love to work more within the realm of mental health care and drug development is a big part of that, a field of study that depends on using animal models. When I took your class I was very comfortable using animal models. As I've gotten older and gained more research experience my acceptance of

animal models has changed.

As for the structure of the class when I took it--I loved the way it was set up. I was able to see a marked improvement in my writing abilities from the first paper to the final project. My husband actually has a BA in philosophy so it made me feel quite proud to see that growth. I really enjoyed the discussions we had as a class as well. My degree was heavy in laboratory science classes so having the opportunity to have a class focused on reading and writing was nice.

Let me know if I can provide any more feedback!

Thanks,  
XXXXXX

[Quoted text hidden]



Aaron Elliott <ape444@gmail.com>

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**MEDICAL ETHICS PHIL213 SEC 501 SUMMER 2016: Curiosity killed the cat**

2 messages

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XXXXXXXXXX - XXXXXXXXXXXX@gmail.com <do-not-reply@blackboard.com> Wed, Jul 13, 2016 at 7:39 AM  
Reply-To: "XXXXXXXXXX - XXXXXXXXXXXX@gmail.com" <XXXXXXXXXXXX@gmail.com>

Good morning Aaron,

I hope you are doing well and had a good weekend. I just wanted to check in to find out when grades for our class will be posted? I know I'm probably not the first to ask you and I know it's a long process to read through all of our papers.. was just curious. :)

I also wanted to say thank you for a really good class. I learned a lot more about myself than I was expecting, which was a cool surprise. You have a great teaching style and I hope you keep teaching the 213 class.

Best,

-XXXXXXX

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Aaron Elliott <ape444@gmail.com> Wed, Jul 13, 2016 at 5:36 PM  
To: "XXXXXXXXXXXX - XXXXXXXXXXXX@gmail.com" <XXXXXXXXXXXX@gmail.com>

Hi XXXXXXXX,

Grades are due tomorrow, so they'll be up by then. I'll send out an email when they've all been posted.

And what a sweet thing to say! I hadn't thought of the class as teaching people about themselves, so bonus!

Glad you found it worth while!

Best,  
Aaron

[Quoted text hidden]

**PHIL 213: Medical Ethics**

University of Nebraska-Lincoln  
 Summer 2016, M/W 5:30-9:20, OLDF-  
 203

**Instructor Information:**

**Instructor:** Aaron P. Elliott  
**E-mail:** [ape444@gmail.com](mailto:ape444@gmail.com)  
**Office:** 1023 OLDH  
**Office hours:** T/Th 12:00 to 1:00.  
 (You can also talk to me before and after class, by appointment).

**Course Description:**

This course is intended for intermediate students with an interest in philosophy. However, no prerequisites are required. In this course, we will be investigating several basic, but very important issues facing medical practitioners. In particular, we will be discussing four broad topics: the doctor-patient relationship, medical issues at the beginning and end of life, distribution of healthcare, and research ethics.

In general, this course is concerned with developing students' critical thinking skills, especially when it comes to ethical issues. More specifically, this course aims to develop the following abilities in students:

- the ability to make informed decisions concerning very complex issues in medical ethics
- the ability to compare and contrast two views on the same issue
- the ability to discuss and critically evaluate philosophical arguments, both orally and in writing
- the ability to discern between empirical and non-empirical claims in moral arguments
- the ability to understand the roles of empirical and non-empirical claims in moral arguments
- the ability to identify and evaluate the morally relevant features of medical cases
- the ability to correctly apply abstract moral concepts to concrete cases.

**Textbook:**

**There is no textbook for this course.** All readings will be made available on Blackboard (under **Course Materials**) before the day they are to be read.

**Course Requirements and Policies:**

The course has several different components. This is not to make the course more difficult. In fact, having many kinds of assignments provides a variety of ways for the individual student to do well in the course, even if s/he is not particularly good at a particular kind of assignment.

<b>Assignments</b>	<b>% of Final Grade</b>
3 Short Papers (due <b>on Blackboard</b> ).....	15%×3=45%
Reading Response Questions.....	1%×30=30%
In-class Work and Miscellaneous Assignments.....	15%
Participation.....	10%

**Readings:** The readings for this course are to be read thoroughly before the class where they will be discussed. Philosophy is very difficult, and so the readings should be read carefully, multiple times if necessary. Each reading will be explained in class, and students will be expected to discuss the ideas contained in each. I will try to keep the number of pages of reading minimal to allow students to read the articles as carefully as possible. But each day of class is equivalent to four days of a three day a week course, so expect to have to compensate for this pace.

**Reading Response Questions:** For every reading (*not* just each PDF), each student is required to answer four questions and email them to me the night before the class in which they are to be discussed.

1. What is the main conclusion of the reading?
2. What is the main piece of support for this conclusion?
3. What is some point you found particularly interesting, insightful, or misguided? Articulate the point in your own words, and explain your reaction.
4. What is some point that you found particularly confusing? Do your best to explain the part you're confused about, and ask a clarificatory question about what is confusing you. If nothing is confusing, ask a further question that this reading raised for you but didn't answer.

**In-Class and Miscellaneous Assignments:** During the first few weeks, there will be some assignments designed to help you understand and accomplish what is expected and required in a good philosophy paper. Some of these will be in class and some will be done on your own time. Additionally, there will occasionally be group work to be completed in class.

**Short Papers:** Detailed instructions (and grading rubrics) for each paper will be available on Blackboard under "Assignments", and will be reviewed during class. Students are encouraged to meet with me to discuss drafts of their papers in advance. These papers are to be submitted to SafeAssign, on Blackboard, before the beginning of the class the day they are due. 1/3 of a letter grade will be deducted for every 24 hour period papers are submitted late (see "Course Late Policy" below). For the first two papers, students will evaluate a case study selected from a list that I will provide. For the third paper, students will find their own case from the news.

**Participation:** The participation grade for each student will be determined by two components:

- (i) The overall quality of your *in-class* discussion. You are expected to contribute to class discussion in a meaningful way *every class* meeting. Meaningful contribution is not limited to insightful comments; questions requiring clarification of difficult material can be helpful as well.
- (ii) Regular attendance.

**Grades.** Your final grade will be the weighted average of all your component grades, converted to letter grade using a guideline no stricter than the following:

A+: 97.0–100, A: 93.0–96.9, A-: 90.0–92.9  
 B+: 87.0–89.9, B: 83.0–86.9, B-: 80.0–82.9  
 C+: 77.0–79.9, C: 73.0–76.9, C-: 70.0–72.9  
 D+: 67.0–69.9, D: 63.0–66.9, D-: 60.0–62.9, F: 0–59.9

**Respect.** Many of the issues we will be discussing are highly controversial. It is of the utmost importance that even when there is heated disagreement, we are always respectful to the other parties in the discussion—especially, but not limited to the other students in the class. Furthermore, use of cellphones and other (non-computer) electronic devices are prohibited in class, and laptops will not be allowed during films or discussion.

**Course Late Policy.** Any paper handed in after class on the due date of the assignment *without* proper documentation of illness, family emergency, or university activity will be considered late. Proper documentation includes: doctor's note, **evidence** of family emergency (obituary, funeral card, etc.), or a letter from a university official. **Late papers will be docked 1/3 of a letter grade per calendar day.**

Any paper not received in hard copy by 5:00 p.m. on July 12th will automatically receive a 0 (hand it in at the department office if I'm not in).

**Academic Dishonesty.** This course will treat any instance of academic dishonesty very seriously. Academic dishonesty in this course includes but is not limited to: collaborating with classmates on papers, copying classmates' answers during quizzes, using other people's ideas in papers without attribution (plagiarism), fabrication and falsification, and making up an excuse to avoid or delay work. The consequences for academic dishonesty can range from a zero for the assignment to a zero for the course and the case being forwarded to Judicial Affairs for review. We will review in-class what behavior constitutes as academic dishonesty, so that everyone will be aware of what is expected. The official university policy on academic integrity can be found in section 4.2 of *Student Rights and Responsibilities* (<http://www.unl.edu/unlpub/undergrad/StudentRights.pdf>).

**Students with Special Needs.** Students with special needs should contact the instructor and UNL's Services for Students with Disabilities (Phone: (402) 472-3787; website: <http://www.unl.edu/ssd/>) as soon as possible so that we can accommodate any special needs that you may have.

**Extra Credit:** There will be no extra credit offered in this course.

## ***Tentative* Schedule:**

All readings will be available on Blackboard under 'Course Documents'. Readings need to be read by the date they are listed. That is, if a reading is listed on the row starting "6/6," that reading must be completed by the beginning of class on Monday, June 6.

Each course day is divided into two or three sections with separate material. This is done for two reasons. First is to extend the amount of time you have to think about each topic (philosophy is helped by extended consideration). Second is to make the long days more bearable (four hours is a long time to talk about one topic).

I reserve the right to make timely alterations to the schedule and syllabus.

(See next two pages for schedule)

## Schedule of Readings for Phil 213

## First Five Week | Summer 2016

Date	Section	Topic	Readings
6/6	1	Introduction	None
	2	Ethics Background	Kuhse and Singer – Bioethics Introduction Pierce and Randels – Bioethics Introduction (pp 1-17)
	3	Patient Autonomy	Beauchamp and Childress – “Respect for Autonomy” Beauchamp and Childress – “Surrogate Decision Making;” Casarett, et al. – Appropriate Use of Artificial Nutrition
6/8	4	End of Life	Bernat – The Whole-Brain Concept of Death Remains Optimum Public Policy LiPuma and DeMarco - Reviving Brain Death
	5	Patient Autonomy	Beauchamp and Childress – “The Meaning and Justification of Informed Consent.” Veatch - Abandoning Informed Consent
6/13	6	Futility Judgments	Gampel – Does Professional Autonomy Protect Medical Futility Judgments?
	7	Autonomy at the End of Life	Dworkin - Life Past Reason
6/15	8	The Sanctity of Life	Glover – The Sanctity of Life
	10	Assisted Suicide	(No Readings)
6/20	11	Euthanasia	Rachels/Sullivan – Active and Passive Euthanasia parts 1 and 2 (first two readings in PDF)
	12	Organ Donation	Kirby – Organ Donation: Who Should Decide? Kluge – Organ Donation and Retrieval;
	13	Maternal-Fetal Conflict	Hornstra – A realistic approach to maternal-fetal conflict
6/22	14	Euthanasia	Rachels/Sullivan – Active and Passive Euthanasia parts 3 and 4 (final two readings in PDF)
	15	Organ Donation	Shaw – Non-therapeutic (elective) ventilation; Baumann, et al. – Elective non-therapeutic: intensive care and the four principles of medical
	16	Abortion	Marquis – Why Abortion is Immoral

6/27	17	Abortion	Thompson – In defense of abortion
	18	Research on Human Beings	Freedman - Equipoise and the Ethics of Clinical Research Bagenda and Musoke-Mudido - We're trying to help our sickest
	19	Health Care Systems	Pence – Medicine and Inequality Pence - Ethical Issues with the Affordable Care Act
6/29	20	Research on Human Beings	Orentlicher – Making Research a Requirement of Treatment Schlichting - Destabilizing the 'equipoise' framework in clinical trials
	21	Allocation of Medical Resources	TBD
	22	Vaccination	Flanigan - A Defense of Compulsory Vaccination
7/4	<b>No class – Independence Day</b>		
7/6	23	Health Care Systems	Menzel and Light - A Conservative Case for Access to Health Care
	24	Vaccination	Navin - Resisting Moral Permissiveness about Vaccine Refusal
	25	Profit Structures (esp. in pharmaceuticals)	None

**Phil 106: Philosophy & Current Issues**

W. H. Thompson Program

University of Nebraska-Lincoln

Spring 2017, Tu/Th 3:30-4:45, Burnette 231

**Instructor Information:****Instructor:** Aaron P. Elliott**E-mail:** [aaron@apelliott.com](mailto:aaron@apelliott.com)**Office:** 1023 Oldfather Hall (10<sup>th</sup> floor, turn right out of the elevator)**Office hours:** M/W 10:30 to 11:30, and by appointment.**Course Description:**

Philosophy and Current Issues is an introductory level class on philosophical ethics. Philosophical ethics is characterized by systematic thinking and rigorous argumentation. This course will introduce students to central philosophical theories of ethics, arguments for and against these theories, and applications of these theories to contemporary ethical issues.

**Course Objectives:**

Upon completion of this course, students will be able to

- Understand and assess ethical arguments, at both the levels of theory and application;
- Identify connections between applications a given ethical issue and other ethical issues;
- Clearly express one's own stance on ethical issues;
- Provide clear and compelling arguments for why one's own stance is reasonable to hold.

**Course Materials:**

**There is no textbook for this course.** All readings will be made available on Canvas. I will post a zip file including every pdf for each unit, as well as each pdf individually. Note, while I will be providing electronic readings, research in cognitive science tells us that people remember what they have read better when they read physical (paper) copies. So, I encourage students in the course to print all the pdfs provided. Students are expected to have every reading covered to date available at each lecture and section.

**Each student must buy a composition book.** This is for responding to various writing prompts in one place throughout the semester. Students are expected to bring this composition book to each lecture. I may "spot check" these sporadically at my discretion.

**Course Requirements and Policies:**

**Requirements:** The course has several different components. This is not to make the course more difficult. Each component is included specifically to help students developed the skills needed to meet the course goals. All assignments are to be submitted to Canvas, unless otherwise noted. See "Course Late Policy" below.

<b>Assignments</b>	<b>% of Final Grade</b>
Argument Explanation Assignment .....	10%
Paper Outlines .....	3@ 5% each = 15%
Peer Review of Outlines .....	3@ 1 % each = 3%
Papers .....	3@ 16% each = 48%
Peer Review of Papers .....	2@ 1.5% each = 3%
Group Work .....	(various) 6%
Composition Books .....	(various) 10%
Final Essay.....	5%

*I reserve the right to modify the kinds and value of the assignments, with reasonable advance notification.*

**Readings:** The readings for this course are to be read thoroughly, as understanding them is crucial to successful performance in this course. Philosophy is very difficult, and so the readings should be read carefully, multiple times if necessary. I will try to keep the number of pages of reading minimal to allow students to read the articles as carefully as possible. But University standards are that students are expected to spend (over the semester) three hours on a course out of the classroom for every hour spent in the classroom.

**Argument Explanation Assignment (10%):** Detailed instructions and a grading rubric for this assignment will be provided one week before it is due, and will be reviewed during class. For this assignment, students will write a two page explanation of the main arguments from a paper that will be provided to them at the time of the assignment.

**Argumentative Papers (69%):** Detailed instructions and a grading rubric for each of the three papers will be provided two weeks before the final draft is due, and will be reviewed during class. Students are encouraged to come talk to me or Dan about their outlines, either for help constructing them or for feedback on ones already written. The papers will involve four components:

**Outlines:** Students are to write a detailed outline as a plan for their argumentative papers. Students are required to bring a paper copy to their Discussion Section the week after the paper is assigned.

**Peer Review of Outlines:** In class the week after each paper is assigned, students will give each other feedback and advice on the direction they are taking their papers.

**Final Draft:** By Friday 7:00pm, two weeks after papers are assigned, a final draft must be turned in on Canvas. Papers are recommended to be double spaced, 1 inch margins, and using a standard font. With such formatting, papers should be about 5 pages. Formatting aside, papers should be about 1350 words, as that is about what it takes to write a successful paper in response to the prompts given. There is no penalty for failing to meet or exceeding the suggested word count. Longer papers are discouraged as they will probably include irrelevant content. Shorter papers are discouraged as they probably omit important content, don't make successful arguments, and/or fail to be clear or explicit enough. Papers should be submitted anonymously by following guidelines to be given when Paper 1 is assigned.

**Peer Review of Papers:** Once papers have been submitted, students will receive a paper of another student from the class. Each student is to construct an outline that captures their best understanding of their peer's arguments and the structure of their paper, and complete a review worksheet. Peer Reviews are due one week after the Final Draft is due, also Friday at 7:00.

**Other Assignments (21%):** There will be occasional work, both in class and out of class.

**Group Work (6%):** There will be collaborative work in class aimed at helping students identify, understand, and assess novel philosophical arguments.

**Composition Books (10%):** Throughout the semester, both in and out of class, students will be asked to write on open ended prompts. The composition book is due at the end of the semester.

**“Final Exam” (5%):** The final exam for this course is scheduled for Monday April 30th at 8:30pm in Burnette 231. In lieu of a traditional exam, students will answer some short essay questions reflecting on the course and how it has affected and developed their moral reasoning. This will be take home, and the questions will be given Thursday the week before finals week. The final will be due on Canvas at the end of the final period (10:30pm).

**Extra Credit:** There will be a couple of opportunities for extra credit, one point each.

- Volunteer to do extra peer reviews. This is not guaranteed to earn extra credit, since it will be available only on an as-needed basis, in the case that someone does not receive adequate help. Students interested in volunteering should let me know, and opportunities will be distributed randomly as they become available.

**Grades:** Your final grade will be the weighted average of all your component grades, converted to letter grade using a guideline no stricter than the following:

A+: 97.0–100, A: 93.0–96.9, A-: 90.0–92.9  
B+: 87.0–89.9, B: 83.0–86.9, B-: 80.0–82.9  
C+: 77.0–79.9, C: 73.0–76.9, C-: 70.0–72.9  
D+: 67.0–69.9, D: 63.0–66.9, D-: 60.0–62.9, F: 0–59.9

**Respect.** Many of the issues we will be discussing are highly controversial. It is of the utmost importance that even when there is heated disagreement, we are always respectful to the other parties in the discussion—especially, but not limited to the other students in the class. Furthermore, use of cellphones and other (non-computer) electronic devices are prohibited in class, and laptops will not be allowed during films or discussion.

**Course Late Policy.** Any paper handed in after the due date of the assignment *without* proper documentation of illness, family emergency, or university activity will be considered late. Proper documentation includes: doctor’s note, **evidence** of family emergency (obituary, funeral card, etc.), or a letter from a university official. **Late papers will be docked 1/3 of a letter grade per calendar day.** Any paper not received in hard copy by 5:00 p.m. on May 5th will automatically receive a 0 (hand it in at the department office if I’m not in).

**Academic Dishonesty.** This course will treat any instance of academic dishonesty very seriously. Academic dishonesty in this course includes but is not limited to: collaborating with classmates on papers, using other people’s ideas in papers without attribution (plagiarism), fabrication and falsification, and making up an excuse to avoid or delay work. The consequences for academic dishonesty can range from a zero for the assignment to a zero for the course and the case being forwarded to Judicial Affairs for review. We will review in-class what behavior constitutes plagiarism, so that everyone will be aware of what is expected. The official university policy on academic integrity can be found in section 4.2 of *Student Rights and Responsibilities* (<http://www.unl.edu/unlpub/undergrad/StudentRights.pdf>).

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**Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS).** Transitioning to college can introduce new or exacerbate old mental health issues. If you are experiencing any issues, please contact CAPS to find out what support they can provide you. (Main Line: (402) 472-7450; Crisis Line: (402) 472-7450; Website: <http://health.unl.edu/counseling-and-psychological-services-caps>)

## Course Schedule:

Unit One: What is Morality? 1/8 – 1/18

1/11: *The Oatmeal* – “You’re Not Going to Believe What I’m About to Tell You”

<http://theoatmeal.com/comics/believe>

Justin P. McBrayer – “Why Our Children Don’t Think There Are Moral Facts” (pdf)

(Bring, don’t read) Paul Boghossian – “The Maze of Moral Relativism” (pdf)

1/16: Jonathan Bennett – “The Conscience of Huckleberry Finn” (pdf)

1/18: Plato – “Euthyphro” (pdf)

(Bring, don’t read) Louise M. Antony – “Good Minus God: The Moral Atheist” (pdf)

Argument Explanation Assignment:

Judith Jarvis Thomson – “Why Ought We Do What Is Right?” (pdf)

Assigned 1/23, due 2/2 by 7:00pm

Unit Two: Moral Theory and Application; 1/23 – 2/20

1/23: (Bring, don’t read) John Stuart Mill – The Greatest Happiness Principle (pdf)

Peter Singer – “Famine Affluence and Morality” (pdf)

1/25: Garrett Hardin – “Lifeboat Ethics” (pdf)

Blatman and Dercon - Everything We Knew About Sweatshops Was Wrong (pdf)

*Planet Money* – “The Risk Farmers” (podcast)

<http://www.npr.org/templates/transcript/transcript.php?storyId=492988779>

*Morning Edition* – “Cash Aid Could Solve Poverty—But There’s a Catch”

<http://www.npr.org/sections/goatsandsoda/2017/08/09/542357298/cash-handouts-could-solve-poverty-but-theres-a-catch>

*All Things Considered* – “How To Fix Poverty: Why Not Just Give People Money?”

<http://www.npr.org/sections/goatsandsoda/2017/08/07/541609649/how-to-fix-poverty-why-not-just-give-people-money>

1/30: Immanuel Kant – Synopsis of Kantian Deontology [from Michael Sandel – *Justice*] (pdf)

2/1: Onora Nell (O’Neil) – “Lifeboat Earth” (pdf)

2/6: Jonathan Glover – “The Sanctity of Life” (pdf)

2/7: Don Marquis – “Why Abortion is Immoral” (pdf)

2/13: W. D. Ross – Pluralism (pdf)

2/15: Judith Jarvis Thomson – “In Defense of Abortion” (pdf)

2/20: Review, and other empirical resources (for Paper 1) TBD

Paper 1 assigned 2/13

Outline due in class (and on Canvas) 2/22

Final Draft due 3/2 by 7:00pm

Peer Review due 3/9 by 7:00pm

## Unit Three: Moral Status of Animals; 2/22 – 3/15

- 2/22: Alasdair Norcross – “Pigs, Puppies, and People” (pdf)  
 2/27: Peter Singer – “All Animals Are Equal” (pdf)  
 3/1: Tom Regan – *The Case for Animal Rights* excerpts (pdf)  
 3/6: David DeGrazia – On the Ethics of Animal Research (pdf) 3/8: Catch up?  
 3/13: Empirical resources (for Paper 2)  
     *Radiolab* – “The Rhino Hunter” (podcast)  
     <http://www.radiolab.org/story/rhino-hunter/>  
     *New York Times* – “American Hunter Killed Cecil, Beloved Lion Lured Out of Sanctuary”  
     <https://www.nytimes.com/2015/07/29/world/africa/american-hunter-is-accused-of-killing-cecil-a-beloved-lion-in-zimbabwe.html>  
     *New York Times* – “Cecil the Lion’s Son Xanda Killed by a Trophy Hunter”  
     <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/07/20/world/africa/cecil-lion-son-xanda.html>  
     *New York Times* – “The Big Five: Africa's Most Sought-After Trophy Animals”  
     <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2015/08/10/world/africa/africa-big-game-hunting.html>  
 Other empirical resources TBD, as needed

Paper 2 assigned 3/6

- Outline due in class 3/16  
 (Spring Break 3/18-3/25)  
 Final Draft due 3/30 by 7:00pm  
 Peer Review due 4/6 by 7:00pm

## Unit Four: Political Philosophy: Social Contract Theory; 3/27 – 4/17

- 3/27: Social Contract Theory Overview  
 3/29: Thomas Hobbes – *Leviathan* excerpts (pdf)  
 4/3: John Locke - *Two Treatises of Government* excerpts (pdf)  
 4/5: John Rawls – Synopsis of *A Theory of Justice* [from Michael Sandel – *Justice*] (pdf)  
 4/10: Robert Nozick – Synopsis of *Anarchy, State and Utopia* [Peter Vallentyne] (pdf)  
 4/12: Catch up?  
     Social Contract Game  
     Maybe:  
     G. A. Cohen – *Rescuing Justice and Equality* short excerpts (pdf)  
     G. A. Cohen – *Self-Ownership, Freedom, and Equality* short excerpts (pdf)  
 4/17: Empirical resources (for Paper 3) TBD

Paper 3 assigned 4/10

- Outline due in class 4/19  
 Final Draft due 4/27 by 7:00pm  
 No Peer Review (EC?)

## Unit Five: Student Choice; 4/19 – 4/26

4/19, 4/24 & 4/26: Course Materials to be determined

Final Exam: 4/30 8:30 pm – 10:30 pm, Burnette 231

Composition Books and Course Reflection Essay (aka: final) due.

## Course Revisions:

- Unit 4 cut
  - New pacing for readings reflected in paper assignments schedule
- Paper 1 Deadlines
  - Outline and Peer Review: 3/8 in class
  - Final Draft: 3/16 online by midnight
  - Peer Review: 3/27 online by midnight
- Paper 2 Deadlines
  - Outline and Peer Review: 4/19 in class
  - Final Draft: 4/27 online by midnight
  - Peer Review: 5/4 online by midnight (extra credit)
- New Assignment Values
  - Miscellaneous Work: 10%
  - Argument Explanation: 10%
  - Outline Paper 1: 5 %
  - Peer Review for Outline Paper 1: 2.5%
  - Final Draft for Paper 1: 20%
  - Peer Review for Paper 1: 5%
  - Outline Paper 1: 5 %
  - Peer Review for Outline Paper 1: 2.5%
  - Final Draft for Paper 1: 20%
  - Writing Prompts: 10%
  - Final Self-Reflection: 10%
  - Peer Review for Paper 1: 1.5% extra

## Phil 213 Medical Ethics

## Instructions for Papers

**Type your name in WHITE TEXT (everywhere it appears in the document)**

**Name your file the same as the PDF for the case study you used (e.g. "Advanced Directives")**

Chose one of the uploaded case studies and write an evaluation of what you think is the central ethical issue of the case. I'll encourage you, but not require you, to let me know what you take the central issue to be in advance. For some of the cases, the authors raise some questions, but these aren't necessarily the central issue (or the best way to get at it).

Your paper is minimally expected to do the following (see the rubric for information on what the standards are for successful completion):

Explain the important details of the case (this shouldn't take much of your paper)

Explain the central ethical issue of the case, and why it is the central issue. Doing so will involve telling the reader which details of the case make this the central issue.

Provide clear and compelling reasoning in support of what you think is the proper response to the ethical issue. Doing this requires both stating which features of the case are relevant to supporting your conclusion, and explaining why these features are morally relevant (and sometimes why they're more important than other morally relevant features).

This last part should be the bulk of your paper.

- Doing all of this well will probably require around four or five pages.

You are encouraged to draw on or make connections to any of the readings we've done for class. Anywhere you do so, the reading must be adequately explained and properly cited. Direct quotes should be as short as possible, and paraphrases should be very clearly in your own words. (If the PDFs don't have adequate bibliographic information, ask me)

Any citations should be made as footnotes. Material from class only needs the author's last name, a summary title, and a page number. Any material used from out of class, requires a full author's name, full title, publication information, and url for websites. No bibliography necessary.

### **Paper 1**

Review the attached case studies, and select the one that you most interested in writing on.

The three are on different issues around on Informed Consent

Identify what you think is the central ethical issue or question. *This is the topic of your paper.*

After reviewing the case, relevant readings, and any important external empirical information about the treatments, conditions, etc. (this is not a requirement, but the cases can leave out crucial information), decide what you think the correct response to the ethical issue is. *This is your thesis.*

- If you express the central ethical issue as a question, make sure that your thesis is a grammatical answer to that question.
- If you do not express the central ethical issue as a question, make sure that it is clear how the thesis engages with the issue.

## **Paper 2**

Review the attached case studies, and select the one that you most interested in writing on.

There are three on physician assisted dying, and three on organ donation.

Identify what you think is the central ethical issue or question. *This is the topic of your paper.*

After reviewing the case, relevant readings, and any important external empirical information about the treatments, conditions, etc. (this is not a requirement, but the cases can leave out crucial information), decide what you think the correct response to the ethical issue is. *This is your thesis.*

- If you express the central ethical issue as a question, make sure that your thesis is a grammatical answer to that question.
- If you do not express the central ethical issue as a question, make sure that it is clear how the thesis engages with the issue.

## **Paper 3**

For the final paper, there are no provided case studies.

You must find a news report about some current event (research, practices, treatments, etc) relevant to the material covered in class. It is probably best to read several reports on the issue or event, to make sure you have as much detail as possible.

Do not select a current event that too closely resembles one of the case studies that you previously wrote on.

- Show me your (main) news article for approval by 6/29.
- Final draft is due before class on 7/6

Identify what you think is the central ethical issue or question. *This is the topic of your paper.*

After reviewing the case, relevant readings, and any important empirical information about the treatments, conditions, etc, decide what you think the correct response to the ethical issue is. *This is your thesis.*

- If you express the central ethical issue as a question, make sure that your thesis is a grammatical answer to that question.
- If you do not express the central ethical issue as a question, make sure that it is clear how the thesis engages with the issue.

Phil 106, Fall 2017  
**Course Alignment**

**Paper One Instructions: Obligations to Others**

Two important goals for this class are that

- Students will engage in clear, deep, and prolonged thinking about the issues covered
- Students will draw connections between different course materials, and make applications to other ethical questions.

This paper aims at both of these goals. The paper is developed incrementally and with peer feedback, to promote deeper and more extended consideration of the issues (feedback is also available from Dan and me, during office hours and appointments). For the second goal, the topic of the paper requires making connections between four different readings on two different topics, and applying them to a novel ethical question.

**Prompt**

Consider the arguments from the following readings:

- Singer – Famine, Affluence, and Morality
- Nell – Lifeboat Ethics
- Marquis – Why Abortion is Immoral
- Thomson – A Defense of Abortion

Based on your best assessment of these arguments, answer the following ethical question:

- Do we have a moral obligation to donate blood? To donate bone marrow? Kidneys?

You are welcome to use other material from class, but the only external material you should use is empirical information about blood and tissue donation (e.g. the harms and benefits, etc.).

**Substantive Requirements**

Papers should not be written as separate answers to each of these elements, but as a unified argumentative essay. Like the ones we've read for class, especially the early ones covered in sections.

To answer this question, you must:

1. Discern which parts of which articles are relevant to the question.
  - You are not required to discuss all four, only those that pertain to the argument you develop. Similarly, you may want to discuss other readings from the course, as relevant.
2. Explain, *in your own words*, the relevant parts of the articles you discuss.
  - Your explanations should be clear enough to get a student unfamiliar with the material to understand the relevant parts.
3. Explain the implications of these arguments on the issue of blood and tissue donation.
  - Explaining the implications means to both state the implications and explain why those are in fact the implications.
4. Explain and defend your overall assessment of whether we have an obligation to donate blood etc. Explain how you came to this assessment from consideration of the materials covered, and defend why this is a reasonable stance to take in light of the relevant considerations.

### Technical Requirements

Your (the author's) name is to be written in white text, so the assignment can be graded anonymously.  
(Select the text and change the font color)

Your assignment must be submitted as a MS Word compatible file format, .docx preferred.

You may not submit a .pdf.

You should use standard layout: double spaced, 1 inch margins, standard font (e.g. Calibri, Times New Roman, etc.). Because your submissions are electronic, we are able to fix any errors that make it difficult to read, but that's annoying.

Papers should be about 5 pages or 1350-1500 words. Length is a guideline, not a strict requirement. Papers will need about this length to be successful at meeting the goals and requirements.

If your paper looks like it will be shorter, **please talk to me**, so I can help you figure out what's missing.

### Due Dates

By the beginning of class on 3/8:

- Submit an outline of your planned paper on Canvas
- **Bring a printed copy to section for peer feedback**
  - Proving peer feedback is a graded component of the course, worth about 1/3 of a letter grade for your final grade.
  - Feedback will be graded on a completion basis, unless I hear that no effort was given for being helpful.

By 7:00 pm, Friday 3/16:

- Submit a final draft on Canvas.

By 10:00 pm, Tuesday 3/27 (pushed back from 3/23 because I don't want to mandate Spring Break homework—but, your review will be more helpful to your peer the earlier they can get it):

- **Submit an outline of your assigned peer's paper on Canvas**
  - This is like the argument explanation assignment for the Thomson article, though less formal.
  - Outline and bullet point format is acceptable, if it successfully communicates your best understanding of your peer's paper. "Full form" is also acceptable.
- **Submit a completed Peer Review worksheet on Canvas**
  - These will be available on Canvas.
  - The more thorough and thoughtful your responses are, the more helpful it will be.

### Extra Credit Opportunity

You can still volunteer to do extra peer review (on outlines) or extra peer outlines (on full papers). The number of opportunities is on an "as needed" basis. Volunteers will be selected randomly. If you would like more peer feedback (creating more extra credit opportunities for your peers), please let us know. Even if you have already received one round of feedback.

**Some Advice about Key Points and Central Ideas**

This is your first attempt at an argumentative essay for this class, so I'm flagging some important ideas to get you started.

Singer employs two versions of a moral principle in his argument for our moral obligation for famine relief. Pay attention to the differences between them. One is more demanding than the other. (Why?) Singer thinks the stronger/more demanding one is more plausible. (Why?) Can the weaker principle be defended?

Nell discusses a right to not be killed (unjustifiably). Pay attention to what other rights she says this does and does not entail. Pay attention to which rights she says she's neutral on whether or not we have them. She provides a criterion for killing that she says avoids a problematic distinction between "positive" and "negative" actions (positive actions are more common-sense actions, like standing; negative actions are more like refraining from X, like staying seated). What problems does she think this lets her avoid? How does this connect to blood and tissue donation? Relatedly, Nell thinks withholding food from (unentitled) stowaways counts as unjust killing. Why? How does this connect to blood and tissue donation?

Marquis suggests that it's wrong to kill us because we have valuable future lives. In other words, our right to life is founded on the value of our future lives. Does the support that Marquis gives for this idea commit him to agreeing with Nell that refraining from saving counts as killing? If not, is there any way for him to say that refraining from saving is just as wrong as killing?

Nell and Marquis both give views that say (or amount to) that our right to life is a right to not be killed unless there are overriding considerations. (Singer doesn't discuss rights, but his discussion of sacrificing something of comparable moral significance is very similar.) Thomson advocates basically the same view: a right to life is a right to not be killed unjustly. Are there any differences? Do those differences (if any) amount to significant changes in our moral requirements? What does she mean by "killed unjustly"? Thomson allows that a right to control one's own body can override someone's right to not be killed. How does this relate to the Nell and Marquis readings?