

PHILOSOPHY 489-01
Senior Seminar

Old Main 111
Fall 2015

Prof. Diane P. Michelfelder

Office: Old Main 112

Office hours: Monday 12-1; Wednesday 9:30-10:30; and by appointment

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What you can expect from this seminar: The purpose of the senior seminar is to facilitate an intellectually engaging, collaborative and supportive context within which each of you can think about, read for, write, rewrite, and present your capstone paper on Senior Philosophy Day.

With a few exceptions, the focus in this class will be entirely on work-in-progress. You will be developing your own work and, by means of seminar discussions, helping your fellow philosophy seniors to develop their work as well. The logician and philosopher of information Luciano Floridi has written (in "Information Ethics: a Reappraisal") that doing philosophy is a form of digging, one where "every independent shovelful helps," but which unfolds in the overall context of a "collaborative enterprise." It is in the spirit of thinking of doing philosophy as being both an individual and a collective venture that this seminar is configured.

In *Culture and Value* Wittgenstein wrote that philosophical work was more like working on oneself. An informal and implicit purpose of this course is to offer you a space to reflect on how doing philosophy will continue to shape yourself and your future upon your graduation from Macalester College.

Seminar Schedule

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| 2 September | Dinner together at your professor's home
Overview of the seminar and getting organized |
| 9 September | Discussion of participant chosen readings begins |
| 16 September | Discussion of participant chosen readings continues |
| 23 September | For this meeting of the seminar, you should bring with you a 750-1000 word abstract that is your best summary at this point of your capstone paper. The focus of this class will be on discussing your abstracts. |
| 30 September | Please bring part of your first draft (roughly the first six pages) to this seminar meeting, along with the questions about your paper you have at this point in time. Together, we will "workshop" what you have written so far. |
| 7 October | Continue writing, so that you have completed roughly the first 2/3 of your first draft. We will continue "workshopping" when we get together. |
| 14 October | We will begin discussing the first drafts of your capstone papers. |

21 October	We will continue discussing the first drafts of your capstone papers.
28 October	This time will be held open for conversations relating to where your journey in philosophy might take you in the future. During this week you should be working on revising your first drafts.
4 November	We will continue discussing the revised versions of your capstone papers.
11 November	We will begin discussing the revised versions of your capstone papers.
18 November	Philosopher Harry Brighthouse from the University of Wisconsin—Madison will be on campus to speak at World Philosophy Day on Thursday. He has graciously offered to come to senior seminar to talk about his work. In preparation for his visit, we will read the paper that he will be giving the following day and one of his publications (the choice will be up to you).
25 November	Thanksgiving vacation—no class meeting
2 December	You will begin presenting your papers to your peers
9 December	One final run-through of presentations before Senior Day!
12 December	Senior Day in the Harmon Room of the Library—time to be announced.
18 December	Final draft of your paper due today

What should you strive for in writing your capstone paper? You should strive to produce a paper that is reflective of original ideas, high-quality argumentation, thoughtful scholarship, one which excites you as you work on it and that holds the interests of those who read it.

Further details: A good length for your capstone paper is 20 pages, or 5000 words. In addition, it is a requirement for the philosophy major that you write a senior paper and submit it to an undergraduate journal (it does not have to be accepted). Students often satisfy this requirement by submitting their capstone paper to the *Macalester Journal of Philosophy* in the Spring of their senior year. There are a number of other undergraduate philosophy journals to which you could submit your paper. Links to many of them are available on the philosophy department website (just click on “study resources” under “your toolbox” to find them).

How your work will be evaluated: Your capstone paper will count for 50% of your grade for the seminar. Your presentation of your paper will make up 20% of your grade. The remaining 30% will relate to your participation in the seminar, in terms of regular attendance, your respect for the deadlines in the schedule above, and the commitment you show, through your contributions to the seminar’s discussions, to furthering the work of your peers.

One more thing: Do know is a privilege for your professor to convene this seminar.