

Senior Literature Review

Philosophy 190, Fall 2017

SCHEDULE

1. August 30 *First day.* We talk about how the class will work and what topics you might be interested in.
2. September 6 *What makes a good literature review?* There are three things to do before class. (1) Speak with at least one faculty member about the topic you are considering. (2) Find a review of the literature on a topic in the area you are interested in and make a copy to share with the class. (3) Write down your opinions about the review in about two pages. These should concern what makes the review effective or ineffective and what aspects you would like to mirror or avoid in your own literature review.
3. September 13 *Initial reading list.* Continue working towards settling on a research topic. Before class, turn in two pages of writing describing the topic you are thinking of working on and the bibliographic information for the initial list of sources that you might use. In addition, you should have a faculty reader by this point; please turn in a signed reader sign-up sheet in class.
4. September 20 *Project presentations.* Prepare a ten minute description of your topic that can lead off discussion. Before class, turn in an annotated bibliography. An annotated bibliography is a list of readings, identified by a complete citation, coupled with notes explaining the relevance of the material to your project.
5. September 27 *Research presentation 1.* One of our members will (a) circulate one of the readings on his list a week in advance of this class and (b) present it to the class. "Presenting" means identifying things like the thesis, central argument, and possible problems. The class will discuss the reading, partly on its own merits and partly in order to identify the next steps that the presenter might take. Before class, turn in précis for two readings on your own list.
6. October 4 *Research presentation 2.* See the instructions for September 27. The presenter should give the class a reading a week in advance and everyone should turn in précis for two readings on their own lists.

7. October 11 *Research presentation 3.* See the instructions for September 27. The presenter should give the class a reading a week in advance and everyone should turn in précis for two readings on their own lists.
8. October 18 *Research presentation 4.* See the instructions for September 27. The presenter should give the class a reading a week in advance and everyone should turn in précis for two readings on their own lists.
9. October 25 *Research presentation 5.* See the instructions for September 27. The presenter should give the class a reading a week in advance and everyone should turn in précis for two readings on their own lists.
10. November 1 *Research presentation 6.* See the instructions for September 27. The presenter should give the class a reading a week in advance and everyone should turn in précis for two readings on their own lists.
11. November 8 *Research presentation 7.* See the instructions for September 27. The presenter should give the class a reading a week in advance and everyone should turn in précis for two readings on their own lists.
12. November 15 *Research presentation 8.* See the instructions for September 27. The presenter should give the class a reading a week in advance and everyone should turn in précis for two readings on their own lists.
13. November 22 *Final presentations.* Two members will circulate drafts of their final paper by Monday, November 27; we will discuss those drafts.
14. November 29 *Final presentations.* Two members will circulate drafts of their final paper by Monday, December 4; we will discuss those drafts.
15. December 6 *Wrap-up.* We will look back at the term. Final papers are due at 11pm.

GRADES

Grades will be based on participation in the seminar (10%), annotated bibliography (10%), all the précis together (30%), and the final paper (50%).

GOALS

The centerpiece of this course is a literature review on a topic of your choosing. A literature review summarizes and evaluates the scholarly literature on a topic. The summary should identify what the major ideas in the literature are and how they are related to one another. A

literature review involves evaluation in two ways. First, you have to exercise judgment in deciding which works are important enough to be included in the review. Second, you should seek to identify significant limitations in the works under review. At the end of the term, you should be able to explain both the major positions taken by scholars writing on your topic and also the chief strengths and weaknesses of those positions.

Having completed the literature review, you will have done the senior project required to graduate as a philosophy major. You will *also* be in a position to write a senior thesis in the spring; having done a critical review of the scholarly literature, you will be able to forge ahead with a contribution of your own.