

UWG PHILOSOPHY PROGRAM

PHIL 4300-01W

SENIOR SEMINAR (3 hours)

Fall 2016

TR 2-3:15pm

Classroom: Pafford 309

Prerequisite: Senior standing

Online course content available through CourseDen

Email: rlane@westga.edu*

Instructor: **Dr. Robert Lane**, TLC 2247

Office Hours:

T: 8:45-9:15am; 12:30-1:45pm

W: 8:30am-12:15pm; 1:15-4pm

R: 8:45-9:15am; 12:30-1:45pm

and by appointment

My office telephone: (678) 839-4745

English/Philosophy telephone: (678) 839-6512

**All email communication must be conducted from your official UWG email account. Students are obligated to check their UWG email accounts on a regular basis and to ensure that their mailboxes do not become full.*

N.b., I am not allowed to disclose grades over email.

This is a **Discipline Specific Writing (DSW)** course, fulfilling one of two DSW requirements for the College of Arts and Humanities. All DSW courses require that students write a minimum of 4,000 words across multiple assignments, not including revisions. There will be multiple written assignments that will be evaluated for subject matter, grammar, punctuation, spelling, accuracy, and organization, among other things.

COURSE DESCRIPTION. This course serves as a “capstone” to the study of philosophy at UWG. It is required for all philosophy majors. This year, our topic is different conceptions of **human identity** and their implications for selected issues within **bioethics**, including abortion, human enhancement, advance directives, and death.

LEARNING OUTCOMES. Students in this course will: read and discuss David DeGrazia’s *Human Identity and Bioethics* (2005); develop, research, and execute a rigorous philosophical argument relating to one or more issues dealt with in that book; and develop the skills of leading class discussion and presenting an academic paper. By the end of the semester students will be able to:

- clearly frame a philosophical question or issue for investigation;
- conduct research into primary and secondary sources relevant to the issue of human identity and its implications for bioethics;
- state and critically analyze philosophical arguments; and
- present a philosophical argument in both written and oral form.

These course-specific learning outcomes contribute to the departmental learning outcomes of the Philosophy Program by enabling students better to

- incorporate a philosophical position in oral and written communications;
- critically outline and analyze philosophical issues; and
- exhibit critical thinking skills.

TIME REQUIREMENTS: UWG grants one semester hour of credit for work equivalent to a minimum of (approximately) one hour (50 minutes) of in-class or other direct faculty instruction AND two hours of student work outside of class per week for approximately sixteen weeks. For this three credit-hour course, students are required to spend two and a half hours (150 minutes) in class each week and to conduct **at least an additional 6 hours of work relevant to this course outside of class each week**. You should expect to work more hours than this outside of class during periods when you are preparing for an exam or a working on a major writing assignment.

REQUIRED READING

- David DeGrazia, *Human Identity and Bioethics*, Cambridge University Press, 2005.
- Additional online readings may be assigned throughout the semester.

CONVERSION TO HONORS CREDIT

- Any student wishing to receive honors credit for this course must get the approval of the professor and complete all the necessary paperwork during **the first week of class**. No honors forms will be signed after this point.

METHODS OF ASSESSING LEARNING IN THIS COURSE

Participation in class discussion	20 pts
Intellectual autobiography	10 pts
Resume	10 pts
Prospectus for seminar paper	20 pts
Seminar paper (final draft)	60 pts
Presentation of seminar paper	30 pts
Leading class discussion	30 pts
Synopsis	20 pts
total	200 pts

GRADING SCALE:	A 200 – 180 pts	D 139 – 120 pts
	B 179 – 160 pts	F 119 – 0 pts
	C 159 – 140 pts	

Participation in class discussion. All students are expected to be fully prepared at the beginning of each class (this includes having read the assigned material for that day) and to make significant contributions to class discussions on a **DAILY** basis. This includes especially class meetings in which you are workshopping your seminar papers and in which others are presenting their papers.

Intellectual autobiography and resume. For purposes of program assessment, the Philosophy Program completes a Senior Portfolio for each philosophy major during his or her senior year; after the student graduates, the Portfolio is kept on file in the office of the Program Director. This Portfolio consists of: (a) a printed copy of the final version of the student's senior seminar paper, (b) a completed advising sheet (kept on file by your advisor until you graduate), (c) an **intellectual autobiography**, and (e) a **resume**. You will write your intellectual autobiography and resume as part of this course.

- The **intellectual autobiography** is a short essay that describes your growth as a scholar. It is *not* a traditional autobiography, in that it does not deal with every aspect of your life. It is limited to your intellectual growth as a philosophy student. Topics might include: your first memory of scholarly and/or philosophical interest; a favorite philosophical tradition, movement, theory or idea; the impact of the works of a specific philosopher or intellectual mentor; and/or one or more topics of past, present, or future research interest.
 - Length: **1000-2000 words**.
 - You must upload a copy of your autobiography (Word document format) to the appropriate DropBox within CourseDen by 1:45pm EST on **Thursday August 18**.
- Your **resume** should include details about all of your employment experience to date and relevant technical skills (including all computer programs with which you are proficient, e.g., Word, PowerPoint, Excel). If you have had papers published or made presentations at conferences, you should include that information but in such a way that it emphasizes the relevant skills involved (writing, public speaking) rather than the specific content (exclude the title of your paper or talk, for example). See the **sample resume** (in CourseDen). UWG's Office of Career Services provides helpful resources, including guidelines and sample resumes. <https://www.westga.edu/student-services/careerservices/resumes-cover-letters.php>
Note especially the resumes for English and History majors.
 - You must upload a copy of your resume (Word document format) to the appropriate DropBox within CourseDen by 1:45pm EST on **Thursday August 25**.

Prospectus for your seminar paper. This is a single document that includes three things:

- A detailed (300-600 word) **description** of your paper topic, including an explicit statement of your thesis and an account of the ways you will support it.
- An **outline** of the paper, which should be as detailed as you can manage at this early stage. You may use whatever outline format you like. The point is to show, to the degree possible at this early stage, the structure of the paper you think you will end up with.
- An **annotated bibliography** that describes and evaluates **at least three sources** other than DeGrazia's *Human Identity and Bioethics*. These sources must be either journal articles or book chapters. *Philosopher's Index* is an essential tool for finding sources. Many journals cited in *Philosopher's Index* are available online through UWG's library website. UWG also owns several relevant books; use the library's online catalog to find them.
 - Your prospectus must be uploaded to the relevant DropBox in CourseDen by 12pm noon EST on **Tuesday September 27**. I will print copies for everyone and bring them to class.
 - See the **Prospectus Instructions** for further details.

Seminar paper. Your seminar paper will be an original philosophical work dealing with the human identity and issues within bioethics. It should represent active engagement with recent work in the metaphysics of human identity and bioethics. The final draft of your paper should be a high-quality essay suitable for inclusion in your senior portfolio and for submission to undergraduate philosophy conferences and philosophy graduate programs.

- Some seminar papers will be included in this year's **Senior Seminar Anthology**. You have paid a special course fee of \$20 to cover the cost of this anthology. In order for your paper to be included in this collection, you must successfully complete all steps in this process and meet minimum criteria for the paper. **Not every paper is guaranteed to be published in the anthology—only those of sufficient quality will be included.**
- Because the seminar paper may be published in a collection and preserved by Philosophy Program, **your writing is a very public activity**. The class is now your peer group of editors; we begin with a healthy respect for each other's work, but part of your job is to criticize—in helpful ways—your peers' projects and in the same way be willing to use others' criticism of your own work.
- The work of this paper takes up the majority of the class after midterm. **So you must choose a project early and you must complete a draft early.** You must also show extreme discipline and maturity about scheduling and work.
- First draft must be uploaded to the correct DropBox by **1:45pm EST Tuesday October 25.**
- Final draft must be uploaded to the correct DropBox by **1:45pm EST Thursday December 1.**
- **See Seminar Paper instructions for more details.**

Presentation of seminar paper. Each student will present a near-final draft of his or her seminar paper and respond to questions posed by his or her fellow classmates and by me. Each presentation should take approximately 30 minutes, with a Q&A and discussion session following each presentation.

- To accompany your presentation, you must develop a **hand-out**, with key claims, arguments, quotations, tables, etc. ... whatever you think your peers will need in front of them to help them follow your presentation. You must **email your handout to me by 12:30pm on the day of your presentation.** I will make copies for everyone.
- Student presentations will begin on Thursday October 27. We will have one student presentations per class from that day until Thursday November 17.

Leading class discussion; synopsis. Each student will be required to lead discussion of a reading assignment once during the course of the semester. You will begin the class meeting by presenting a summary of the most important ideas, arguments, etc. covered in the relevant reading. This presentation should last between 15 and 20 minutes. You will also submit a written **synopsis** (1500-2000 words) of that reading.

- **See instructions for Leading Class Discussion for more details.**

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For the Americans with Disabilities Act, UWG Email, Credit Hour, and UWG Honor Code policies as well as information on Academic Tutoring, Student Services, and Technical Requirements, Privacy Policy, and Accessibility Statements, please see the **Common Language for Syllabus** document:
<http://www.westga.edu/UWGSyllabusPolicies/>

MISSED DUE DATES / MISSED CLASS / WORK FROM OTHER COURSES / EXTRA CREDIT

- **Papers (including drafts) and other materials will not be accepted late. Due dates are non-negotiable.**
- **Missed class presentations cannot be made up.** If you are absent on the day that you are scheduled to lead class discussion or present your seminar paper, you will receive a grade of 0% for that presentation.
- **Work completed for other courses will not be accepted in this course.**
- **Extra-credit work will not be given under any circumstances.**

ATTENDANCE, LATE ARRIVAL, EARLY DEPARTURE

- **You may miss two class meetings (one week of class) with no effect on your grade. Beginning with your third absence, you will lose ten points (out of 200) from your final grade for every class meeting you miss. This policy takes effect on the day of our second class meeting (Tuesday August 16).** I will make exceptions for absences necessitated by UWG-sponsored events or by other circumstances that were absolutely outside your control. However, I will make these exceptions **only if ALL of your absences can be accounted for in one of these ways** (e.g., if you miss three classes and you have documented, acceptable reasons for missing only two classes, then your third absence will still count against your grade). Documentation will be required in all cases in which I make an exception to this attendance policy.
- **Students who miss 6 or more class meetings (three weeks worth of classes) will not earn a passing grade in this course.** In this case the reason for your absences is irrelevant. If you are unable to attend class for a month due to medical reasons, a family emergency, or any other reason, you should withdraw from the course; if the withdrawal date has passed, you should apply for a hardship withdrawal.
- An early departure or late arrival may be counted as an absence, depending on the circumstances. I will decide in each case whether an early departure or a late arrival counts as an absence. If you know before class that you will not be able to stay for the entire class session, please inform me of this before class and sit as close to the door as possible, so as to cause as small a distraction as possible when you leave.

From the *UWG Undergraduate Catalog*:

- “Instruction begins the first day of class. In face-to-face courses, if students fail to attend the first day and have not contacted the instructor to explain their absence, they may be dropped during the Drop/Add Period to make room for other students.”
- “Class attendance policies are determined by each instructor for his or her courses and may be found in the syllabus. Since course policies differ, students are responsible for understanding attendance requirements for each course. Failure to comply with those requirements may significantly affect grades.”
- **“Students are expected to attend each class meeting.** Students absent from class while officially representing the University or observing religious holidays should generally not be penalized in the calculation of final grades, as long as they provide advance notice and expeditiously make arrangements to complete any missed work.
- “University-sponsored activities include but are not limited to the following: intercollegiate athletic competitions; musical/theatrical/art performances or exhibitions associated with a degree program; debate competitions; and research conferences. Activities not considered to be university-sponsored include participation in clubs, even if they are affiliated with UWG, or events associated with social organizations such as fraternities or sororities.
- “Regardless of the reason for the absence, each student is responsible for the material covered in class, for completing any assignments, and for making specific arrangements with the instructor for any work missed. The degree to which missed work can be made up will depend upon the nature of the work and its intended purpose. Make-up is at the discretion of the instructor.
- “Any student who must be absent for more than one week of class should notify the Patient Advocates in Health Services, telephone 678-839-6452. The student should also notify the instructor or department.”

COMMON COURTESY

- **You may use a laptop or tablet during class, but ONLY for taking notes. You are not permitted to access the Internet while class is in session.** If you will be using an electronic device to take notes, **you must DISABLE YOUR WI-FI at the start of class.**
- **You may not use smart phones while class is in session, for any reason** (talking, texting, Tweeting, capturing Pokemons, etc.). All phones must be turned off and put away at the beginning of each class.
- **Do not leave the room during class unless it is absolutely essential that you do so.** Leaving the classroom while class is in session (e.g., to visit the restroom) is both disrespectful and distracting. So when you come to class, be prepared to remain in the classroom for the full duration of the class period.
- **Do not study material from other classes while this class is in session.** While you are in this class, I expect your attention to be focused on it rather than on your other courses.
- **Students may be dismissed from any class meeting at which they exhibit behavior that disrupts the learning environment of others.** Such behavior includes – but is not limited to – arriving late for class, allowing cell phones to ring, speaking disrespectfully to the instructor and/or to other students, and using personal audio or visual devices. **Each dismissal of this kind will count as an absence and will be applied toward the attendance policy above.**

COURSE SCHEDULE. THIS SCHEDULE IS **TENTATIVE** AND MAY CHANGE AS THE SEMESTER PROGRESSES. If you miss class, it is your responsibility to keep up with changed due dates and reading assignments. **You are responsible for reading the indicated material *before* coming to class on the corresponding day and for participating in class discussion of that material.**

“ * ” indicates a student-led discussion

Aug.	Topic	reading due	items due
R 11	Introduction to course topic & to research methods; assignment of dates for student-led class discussions and seminar paper presentations; discussion of intellectual autobiography assignment	--	
T 16	The Psychological View: Locke and Parfit	DeGrazia 1-22	
R 18	The Intuitive Case Method; Essentialism; the Constitution View; discussion of resume assignment	DeGrazia 23-46	intellectual biography
T 23	The Biological Approach	DeGrazia 46-65	
R 25	Alternative Approaches: Johnston and McMahan	DeGrazia 65-76	resume
T 30	*Narrative Identity	DeGrazia 77-89	

Sept.	Topic	reading due	items due
R 1	Self-Creation	DeGrazia 89-114	
T 6	*Death: Appeals to Essence	DeGrazia 115-130	
R 8	Death: Appeals to Identity	DeGrazia 131-141	
T 13	*Death: the Organismic Conception; Policy Options	DeGrazia 142-158	
R 15	*Advance Directives: the Nonidentity Thesis & the Someone Else Problem	DeGrazia 159-173	
T 20	*Advance Directives: Narrative Identity; Precedent Autonomy	DeGrazia 173-189	
R 22	Advance Directives: Time-Relative Interests	DeGrazia 189-202	
T 27	Workshopping Day	--	prospectus
R 29	Enhancement Technologies	DeGrazia 203-228	

F 30: Last Day to Withdraw with a Grade of “W”

Oct.	Topic	reading due	items due
T 4	*Enhancement Technologies: Identity, Core Characteristics	DeGrazia 229-243	
R 6	FALL BREAK		
T 11	Prenatal Identity: Our Origins	DeGrazia 244-254	
R 13	*Prenatal Identity: Genetic Interventions	DeGrazia 254-268	
T 18	*Prenatal Identity: The Non-Identity Problem	DeGrazia 268-279	
R 20	Prenatal Identity: Abortion	DeGrazia 279-294	
T 25	Seminar Paper Presentation	--	first draft of seminar paper
R 27	Seminar Paper Presentation	--	

Nov.	Topic	reading due	items due
T 1	Seminar Paper Presentation	--	
R 3	Seminar Paper Presentation	--	
T 8	Seminar Paper Presentation	--	
R 10	Seminar Paper Presentation	--	
T 15	Seminar Paper Presentation	--	
R 17	Seminar Paper Presentation	--	
T 22	THANKSGIVING BREAK		
R 24	THANKSGIVING BREAK		
T 29	Overview and review of DeGrazia	--	

Dec.			
R 1	Final draft of seminar paper due (upload to DropBox by 1:45pm EST). Course Evaluations.		
T 6	Final Class meeting. Selection of anthology title. Completion of the Philosophy Program's Exit Survey.		