

Pell Honors Seminar Fall 2018

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Course Description:

The Pell Honors Program is an intense, challenging experience that offers exceptional Philosophy and PPL students an opportunity to work at a level not normally available to undergraduate students. You will develop an original thesis paper through independent research, support it through extensive engagement with the relevant literature, and refine, modify and defend it through questions and criticisms from your peers and Philosophy / PPL faculty members.

There are two major components to the program: your work with your expert advisor, and your work in the seminar itself.

You will rely on your expert advisor's knowledge of the subfield in which you are working, and more specifically their knowledge of the literature that is relevant to your thesis topic. It is ideal to meet with your advisor weekly. You are required to meet with your advisor a bare minimum of five times during the semester, and to submit some kind of written work (notes, outlines, drafts, etc.) to your advisor in advance of each meeting; your advisor will either give you written comments on your work, or give you feedback verbally when you meet (or both). Find out how far in advance of each meeting your advisor would like to receive your work. It is your responsibility to arrange meetings with your advisor.

In the seminar itself, we will work on research, thinking, writing, and presentation skills, and all of the members of the seminar will engage critically with each other's thesis. Your thesis paper should be aimed at a non-specialist audience; this means that you should not assume that your readers are familiar with the same literature that you are. Your paper should supply all necessary background information, and should contain clear explanations not only of your own ideas, but also of the ideas or the texts with which you are engaging. I and the other members of the seminar will serve as your non-specialist audience, and will offer you constructive feedback on your presentations and on your paper (but for the most part, we will not be in a position to correct or challenge your interpretations of the literature you have read—that is part of your advisor's job).

At the end of the semester (Friday, Dec. 7th), there will be a public conference—the Pell Honors Conference—at which participants will present their work to a faculty jury (who will have also read the theses in advance). Family and friends are welcome to attend this conference. The best thesis or theses in Philosophy may be recognized with the Dillon Award, and the best thesis or theses in PPL may be recognized with the Pell Prize. The jury will also determine whether the participants' work qualifies for a level of Honors, and if so, what level is to be awarded (Honors / High Honors / Highest Honors).

Course Objectives:

- To pursue a chosen topic through independent research.
- To learn and practice the skills involved in writing a publication-length paper.
- To become familiar with the literature on the topic, to engage with the literature, and to make an original contribution to the literature.
- Learning Outcomes: This course satisfies the Humanities, Composition, and Oral Communication General Education Requirements with their associated Learning Outcomes.

Course Requirements:

Students are expected to attend and participate actively in *all* seminar meetings except in the case of illness or emergency (in which case please notify me by email as soon as possible). Students in this course will work closely together and depend on each other; please take this as a serious commitment. See schedule below for requirements and deadlines.

Grading:

To be awarded (any level of) Honors (which is determined by the faculty jury who serves at the Pell Honors Conference), a student must write a thesis that is of *higher quality* than what is expected of an “A” paper in any other 400-level Philosophy / PPL course. Any student who is awarded Honors will automatically earn an “A” on their thesis. Students who are not awarded Honors will have their thesis graded by standards similar to those in any other 400-level Philosophy / PPL course (and thus might still earn an “A”). Normally, the course grade will be the same as the grade on the thesis, so any student who is awarded Honors will also earn an “A” in the course; however, in the rare event that a student does not meet expectations in other areas, that student may have a lower course grade than the grade on the thesis; for instance, the grade could be adjusted downward for inadequate class participation, insufficient knowledge of works on the reading list, poor quality of drafts or class presentations, failure to meet deadlines, etc.

Students are responsible for being familiar with, and abiding by, the Student Academic Honesty Code. All students must pass an online test on how to recognize and avoid plagiarism. Any student who engages in academic dishonesty such as plagiarism will receive an F for the course, and further action may also be taken.

Schedule

Week 1: READ

Tues. Aug. 28th:

Introduction and research skills.

Fri. Aug. 31st:

Deadline to set up a meeting schedule with your advisor, and to find out from your advisor how far in advance of a meeting you should send them written work.

Week 2: READ

Tues. Sept. 4th:

Different kinds of (philosophy/interdisciplinary) papers, and identifying a model to emulate.

Read before seminar:

Anja Karnein, "Putting Fairness in its Place: Why There is a Duty to Take Up the Slack." *Journal of Philosophy* CXI (11) Nov 2014: pgs 593-607.

Tamar Gendler, "On the Epistemic Costs of Implicit Bias." *Philosophical Studies* (2011) 156: pgs 33-63.

Nancy Fraser, "Contradictions of Capital and Care." *New Left Review* (July/Aug 2016): pgs 99-117.

And read at least one of the following:

Stephanie Sheintul (winner of the 2014 Pell Prize), "Enabling Dignity and Flourishing: A Reformulation of Nussbaum's Capabilities Approach."

Chundzom Lopez (winner of the 2015 Pell Prize), "The Other War on Terror: Balancing the Need for Security and the Rights of Western Muslims in an Age of Radical Terrorism."

Mollie Teitelbaum (winner of the 2016 Dillon Award), "Combatting Peccadillic Implicit Bias: A Moral Imperative."

Zachary Nasca (winner of the 2016 Pell Prize), "Rehabilitation and its Implications on Instrumental Systems of Justice."

Winter Clark (winner of the 2017 Dillon Award), "Intrinsic Value, Intrinsic Motivation, and Education."

Hannah Shankman (winner of the 2017 Pell Prize), "Non-Liberal Decent Societies and Peace."

Bring to class (electronic or hard copy): any recent Philosophy/PPL paper you have written.

Fri. Sept. 7th:

Deadline for first meeting with advisor.

Week 3: READ

Tues. Sept. 11th: no class

Fri. Sept. 14th:

Due to me via email by midnight:

- 1) A pdf of a published article that will serve as your model, and a brief explanation of its features that you wish to emulate.
- 2) Your personal writing plan (weekly time/place for writing; personal deadlines for notes, outlines, drafts, etc; basic schedule for meeting with your advisor; "rewards"; what you'll do if you're stuck; etc).
- 3) The final version of your reading list.

Advisors please verify (via email to me) that you have approved the final version of the reading list.

Week 4: READ**Tues. Sept. 18th:**

Presentations: introduction to thesis topic, and explanation of why it is interesting (at least to you) (speak for 5 minutes).

Workshop: originality.

Complete the tutorials, and take the tests, on “How to Recognize Plagiarism” at:

<https://www.indiana.edu/~academy/firstPrinciples/index.html>

Before class time, please email me the certificate showing that you have passed the tests.

Bring to class: a few articles or books from your reading list.

Week 5: READ / form your thesis**Tues. Sept. 25th:**

Presentations: compare and contrast the positions of two authors on your reading list (or two lines of thought on the topic, etc) (10 minute time slot each, no Q&A).

Workshop: topic vs. thesis; developing a thesis (statement).

Wed. Sept. 26th:

Deadline for second meeting with advisor.

Week 6: READ / clarify what your thesis is**Tues. Oct. 2nd:**

Presentations: state your thesis, and compare and contrast your position with another author’s position (20 minute time slot each; speak for 10 minutes, 10 minute Q&A).

Fri. Oct. 5th:

Deadline for third meeting with advisor.

Deadline for having studied all works on your reading list.

Advisors please verify (via email to me) that your advisee has studied all works on the reading list and has adequate knowledge of the literature.

Week 7: WRITE**Tues. Oct. 9th:**

Writing workshop. Please bring to class whichever texts you may need.

Week 8: WRITE**Mon. Oct. 15th:**

Draft of thesis due to me via email (cc your advisor) by midnight.

Tues. Oct. 16th:

Thesis presentations I (35 minute time slot each; speak for 15-20 minutes, 15-20 minute Q&A).

Wed. Oct. 17th:

Individual meetings with me for students who presented on Oct 16th.

Week 9: WRITE / REVISE

Tues. Oct. 23rd:

Thesis presentations I (35 minute time slot each; speak for 15-20 minutes, 15-20 minute Q&A).

Wed. Oct. 24th:

Individual meetings with me for students who presented on Oct 23rd.

Fri. Oct. 26th:

Deadline for fourth meeting with advisor.

After your meeting with me, and before your thesis presentation II: visit the Public Speaking Lab (<https://www.binghamton.edu/public-speaking/index.html>) to deliver your presentation, receive feedback, and then watch the digital recording of your presentation. Make an appointment for this in advance.

Week 10: REVISE

Tues. Oct. 30th:

Thesis presentations II (40 minute time slot each; speak for 20-30 minutes, 10-20 minute Q&A).

Week 11: REVISE

Tues. Nov. 6th:

Thesis presentations II (40 minute time slot each; speak for 20-30 minutes, 10-20 minute Q&A).

Week 12: REVISE

Tues. Nov. 13th:

Workshop: abstracts; handouts and/or slides; citations, notes.

Fri. Nov. 16th:

Draft of thesis due to me via email (cc your advisor).

Week 13: REVISE / take a little break

Mon. Nov. 19th:

Deadline for fifth meeting with advisor.

Tues. Nov. 20th:

Individual consultations with me.
Peer feedback on full drafts.

Week 14: proofread / polish presentation

Mon. Nov. 26th:

Thesis due to me and to your advisor via email by 5:00 PM, to be distributed to faculty jury.

Optional: before your thesis presentation III, visit the Public Speaking Lab again.

Tues. Nov. 27th:

Advisors please verify (via email to me) that you approve the thesis in final form.

Thesis presentations III: dress rehearsal (but no need to dress up); speak for 20-30 minutes.
Class will meet in U UW 324.

Week 15: polish presentation / the big day! / celebrate!!

Tues. Dec. 4th:

Thesis presentations III: dress rehearsal (but no need to dress up); speak for 20-30 minutes.
Class will meet in U UW 324.

Friday Dec. 7th: Pell Honors Conference (all day—plan on 8:00 AM to about 9:00 PM).