Introduction:
The purpose of the Graduate Proseminar is twofold: to develop (1) the ability to do philosophy, in writing, reading and in speaking and in public and (2) the mastery of those skills and methods one needs to succeed in graduate school and the profession, including skills and practices necessary for what it takes to give a philosophy talk, prepare a handout, submit a paper for publication, participate in a panel discussion, design and teach one’s own course, create a blog, start a philosophy band, organize a conference, produce a strong writing sample, and pull together and complete a thesis.

At the first meeting of the seminar three different, though related, ways to navigate through the curriculum will be proposed. The decision of which of the three to adopt will be open to discussion. Participants may reach a consensus on one as opposed to the others or decide on a combination of two or all three. Whatever way or ways the proseminar goes, the seminar will be modelled more along the lines of a workshop than as a lecture course where one person sits at one end of the table and holds forth about some especially knotty philosophical problem. Topics will include, the role of argument and the place of pictures in philosophy and the status of philosophical intuitions and pre-philosophical convictions in contemporary debates. A central question the seminar will address and try to answer: “Is there a mode of inquiry peculiar to philosophy?” If so, how might it be characterized? How does it distinguish itself from other modes of inquiry such as the ways of going about things in the sciences and the arts? Put slightly differently but no less importantly: “What do philosophers know?” And if there’s a body of disciplinary knowledge how ought anyone who wants to do philosophy master it?
Readings:
Recently analytic philosophy has been seen as a field in some disarray, an
arena of disconnected preoccupations, projects and concerns. If there is a grain
of truth in this, it makes the selection of a subject matter and readings for a
proseminar in analytic philosophy a bit daunting. Readings for the course will
be drawn from the beginnings of analytic philosophy: Gottlob Frege, Bertrand
Russell, Ludwig Wittgenstein, J. L. Austin, A. J. Ayer, W. V. O. Quine, and
Elizabeth Anscombe to more contemporary examples such as Saul Kripke, Paul
Grice, Donald Davidson, David Lewis, Bernard Williams, Philippa Foot, Judith
Jarvis Thomson, Barbara Herman, Elizabeth Anderson, Martha Nussbaum,
Thomas Kuhn, and Ian Hacking, all the while asking ourselves: “How do all
these examples of what might be called “doing philosophy” hang together
to form a discipline?”

Presentations and Writing:
Everyone will be asked to lead an in-class discussion of two of the readings and to
prepare a two to three page reader response for each reading assigned during the
course of the semester. Reader responses should not simply summarize the reading.
All that is required is a set of reminders of key points in the reading coupled with a
clear restatement of the main argument. Responses should also make a stab to bring to
light the implicit, albeit not immediately obvious, presuppositions of a reading, suggest
alternative ways of looking at the same problem or problems addressed by the
reading, and propose one or more strong objections. There will also be a final paper
(6-8 pages) which may be an expanded version on one of your two presentations.

Class Times:
The seminar will meet on Tuesdays & Fridays from 11:00 to 12:20 PM in Rabb 338.

Learning Goals:
Learning goals in this class include the skills the course seeks to develop: sound
reasoning, an enlightened use of one’s imagination, the capacity to analyze
philosophical problems, to entertain points of view contrary to one’s own, to reflect
critically on a wide range of human activities and endeavors and to closely read a
philosophical text as well as pull from it its main arguments, sub-arguments and
distinctions on which those arguments turn.

These skills are invaluable in the study of every discipline and in the pursuit of any
vocation: the primary aim of philosophy is the study of ideas central to the ways we
think and live. Many of our key concepts, such as truth and justice, reason and faith, are
to a large degree hidden from us. We think we understand what they mean, but they
elude us. Philosophy makes the invisible visible. It teaches us to become, if not
absolutely clear, at least clearer about what matters to us most.

So, too, the Graduate Proseminar not only seeks to develop the ability to do philosophy,
to write and read it as well as to speaking in public, but also those skills necessary to
succeed in graduate school and in the profession, including what it takes to give a
philosophy talk, prepare a handout, submit a paper for publication, participate in a
panel discussion, design and teach one’s own course, create a blog, start a philosophy
band, organize a conference, produce a strong writing sample, and put together and
complete a thesis.
Course Requirements:
1) Class attendance.
2) Participation and class facilitation (presentations).
3) 2-3 page reader responses.
4) 6-8 page final essay.

Four-Credit Course:
Success in this four-credit course is based on the expectation that students will spend a minimum of 9 hours of study time per week in preparation for class (readings, reader responses, preparation of in-class presentations, and final paper).

Grading:
- Class attendance: 10%.
- Participation: 10%. This grade will be established on the basis of the quality of your contributions to discussions and class presentations.
- Reader responses: 40%.
- Final essay: 40%.

Policy on Attendance:
Attendance is mandatory and will be factored into your grade (see above). Each student is permitted no more than one excused absence; absences beyond that will require a written justification or excuse so as not to hurt your attendance grade plus a thoughtful two-to-three-page “response paper” to the reading for the missed day is still required.

Electronic Devices:
For this course (the Pro-seminar in Philosophy) I strongly prefer that you take notes by hand and refrain from using electronic devices. Exceptions can be made if you have a medical reason or accommodation.

Required readings:
There are no books to purchase for this course. All course materials are will be posted on LATTE.

Accommodations:
If you are a student with a documented disability on record at Brandeis University and wish to have a reasonable accommodation made for you in this class, please see me immediately.

Academic Integrity:
You are expected to be honest in all of your academic work. Please consult Brandeis University Rights and Responsibilities for all policies and procedures related to academic integrity. Allegations of alleged academic dishonesty will be forwarded to the Director of Academic Integrity. Sanctions for academic dishonesty may include failing grades and suspension from the university.

Office Hours:
I will hold office hours (RABB 306) on Thursdays from 3:30 until 4:20 and by appointment. If you wish to leave messages for me, send me an email at teuber@g.harvard.edu or teuber@brandeis.edu.
TBA: Class Schedule:

Friday Sept 1
Tuesday Sept 5
Friday Sept 8
Tuesday Sept 12
Friday Sept 15
Tuesday Sept 19

Friday Sept 22; Rosh Hashanah NO CLASS
Tuesday Sept 26
Friday Sept 29

Tuesday Oct 3, "Brandeis Thursday"; NO CLASS

Friday Oct 6
Tuesday Oct 10
Friday Oct 13
Tuesday Oct 17
Friday Oct 20
Tuesday Oct 24
Friday Oct 27
Tuesday Oct 31

Friday Nov 3
Tuesday Nov 7
Friday Nov 10
Friday Nov 17th
Tuesday Nov 21

Friday Nov 24th — Thanksgiving Holiday; NO CLASS

Tuesday Nov 28
Friday Dec 1
Tuesday Dec 5

Friday Dec 8 – Last day of class