

CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, NORTHRIDGE

Liberal Studies 250 & 250F: Reason, Belief, and Education

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is an introduction to the concepts essential to the identification, analysis, and evaluation of philosophical arguments for students in the Integrated Teacher Education Program. The course is organized around five big philosophical topics: Logic, Metaphysics, Philosophy of Mind, Epistemology, and Ethics. We will read philosophical arguments for different positions on these topics, critically discuss them, and strive to develop our own views.

Alongside these discussions we will think about how to use this philosophical education in the elementary school classroom. As we've all commonly observed, children are natural philosophers – they are curious and full of questions. Through this course you will learn to tap into the philosophical potential of children and encourage them to ask their questions, listen to different points of view, critically engage with each other, and (on occasion) take a position and provide sound reasoning to support it.

REQUIRED TEXTS

- ♦ *Think – A Compelling Introduction to Philosophy* (1999) by Simon Blackburn
- ♦ *Big Ideas for Little Kids: Teaching Philosophy through Children's Literature* (2014), 2nd edition by Thomas E. Wartenberg
- ♦ *Fantastic Mr. Fox* by Roald Dahl
- ♦ There will be other readings that will be posted on the course Moodle page

ASSIGNMENTS AND ASSESSMENT

Paper

You will write a 4-6 page **paper**: you will first turn in a **draft** on which you will get comments, and then submit a **final version**. A philosophical paper is one where you critically engage with the relevant readings. This involves carefully reconstructing the author's arguments, evaluating them critically, and then offering your own position backed by arguments. The more original the arguments, the better. For the draft, you will submit an outline of the paper with your central thesis and key points of your arguments, and the final paper will be a more polished version with more fully developed arguments.

Exams

There will be two in-class **exams**: a **midterm** and a **final**. These will test you on your understanding of the course material and will consist of short and long answer questions.

Triple Entry Journal (Reading Response)

Divide your paper into three sections (see below): Left column should include quotes that stood out for you from the assigned reading. The middle column (which should be the widest) is for your reflection/reaction to what you have written in the left column. Leave the right column blank; a peer will respond in class to what you have written. Written responses are to be typed, 1-2 pages, single-spaced, 10 pt. font. Remember to be reflective!

Quotes	My Reflection	Peer Response

Presentation

With a peer, you will be asked to present on a chapter(s) from Wartenberg. You and your partner will be asked to:

- ◆ develop questions that will stimulate a discussion on the reading(s)
- ◆ search for additional materials that will enhance the reading(s), such as a short video, an article/book, etc. and will deepen our understanding of the topic

Your presentation should be approximately 30 minutes in length.

Please see rubric for details.

Field Work Reflection

During your 15 hours of observation/participation, you will be asked to:

- ◆ observe in the classroom and take field notes
- ◆ explore specific questions (such as: What kind of thought-provoking or deep questions are teachers asking? Are questions encouraged in class? Do teachers ask probing questions, such as, “Why do you think that?”
- ◆ collaborate with the classroom teacher in selecting at least one student who demonstrates critical thinking

- ♦ describe what you would do to foster children's critical thinking

Lesson Plans & Reflections

You will be asked to develop two lesson plans, teach these lessons to your students, and write a reflection afterward. Your lesson plan will serve as a guide for sharing a book with children and teaching about a philosophical theme. The first lesson plan will be developed in small groups. The second lesson plan will be created independently.

Class Participation

Three points will be given each class for prompt attendance and active, thoughtful participation in class activities, discussions, and written responses. Points will be deducted for lateness, absence, and lack of participation (see rubric below for more details), etc. Students must bring the assigned reading(s) to class each day. Discussion is key to doing philosophy. This is where you get to wield your philosophical axe, brainstorm, exchange ideas, and learn from your peers. Importantly, you have to keep up with all assigned reading regularly. It is not possible to do well in this course if you consistently come to class without having closely and carefully read the assigned material.

You are expected to "be in the moment" while in class. Please turn cell phones off. Refrain from texting/ talking on phone / surfing the web/ checking email/ completing course assignments during class. If you engage in inappropriate use of technology, the result will be the loss of all participation points for that class. The use of iPads or laptop computers is only permitted for the purpose of note taking or other class work assigned by the instructors. If you like to take notes on your iPad/ laptop, remember to look up from time to time and continue to be an interested, highly engaged member of the class. This is a designated iPad class, so please always have it with you during class. We will use it for class activities.

Participation Rubric

3 points:

- ♦ Always comes to class prepared
- ♦ Always comes to class on time
- ♦ Maintains a cheerful, professional, constructive attitude
- ♦ Contributes positively to group and class dynamics
- ♦ Participates enthusiastically in whole class activities and small group activities
- ♦ Offers relevant, insightful and constructive comments during class, but

does not dominate discussions.

2 points:

- ◆ Sometimes comes to class unprepared
- ◆ Sometimes late to class
- ◆ Sometimes displays an unprofessional attitude
- ◆ Sometimes tends to be very quiet or frequently dominating discussion
- ◆ May participate in class activities, but not fully engaged
- ◆ Does the minimum or sometimes fails to participate appropriately, or contributes hardly anything positive to group or class dynamics.

1 point:

- ◆ Often comes to class unprepared
- ◆ Displays an unprofessional attitude
- ◆ Often late to class
- ◆ May make irrelevant comments
- ◆ Often fails to participate constructively.

0 points:

- ◆ Often comes to class unprepared
- ◆ Displays a rude or unprofessional attitude
- ◆ Often late to class
- ◆ Often makes irrelevant comments
- ◆ Often fails to participate constructively
- ◆ Engages in inappropriate use of technology.

COURSE GRADE BREAKDOWN

Paper Draft – 10%

Final Paper – 15%

Midterm Exam – 10%

Final Exam – 15%

Triple Entry Journal – 10%

Presentation – 10%

Field Work Reflection – 5%

Lesson Plans & Reflections – 15%

Class Participation – 10%

POLICY ON CLASS ATTENDANCE

Attendance will be taken at each class session. You are expected to arrive promptly and attend each class session. More than two unexcused absences from class will affect the final grade. An unexcused absence is an absence without supporting documentation citing valid reasons. If an emergency arises and you must miss class:

1. Notify us prior to class by email or phone message
2. Arrange to have a student from class pick up assignments and distributed handouts for you and
3. Arrange to have a fellow student discuss the class session with you.

POLICY ON ACADEMIC HONESTY

The core of a university's integrity is its scholastic honesty. Cheating, fabrication, facilitating academic dishonesty and plagiarism are considered gross violations of the University's academic and disciplinary standards. In particular, all assigned work for this class must be completed individually unless explicitly specified as group work. Students have the responsibility to be familiar with University policies and to seek clarification if anything is not clear. For further information about the various forms of academic dishonesty see the University Catalog or contact the office of any Instructional Dean or the Student Development office.

STUDENTS REQUESTING ACCOMMODATIONS

Students in need of reasonable accommodations under the Americans with Disabilities Act need to register through the NCOD or Center on Disabilities prior to the first day of classes, provide the instructor with written documentation explaining the specific accommodation(s) needed to meet the student's identified learning needs; and schedule an appointment with the instructor immediately to discuss all the specific accommodations needed to ensure the student's learning success in the course.

EQUAL TREATMENT

The instructor and students in this course will act with integrity and strive to engage in equitable verbal and non-verbal behavior with respect to differences arising from age, gender, race, physical ability, and religious preferences.

WRITTEN, LATE, AND MAKE-UP WORK

All assignments should be typewritten in Times New Roman 12pt. font with 1-inch margins on all sides and double-spaced. Late work is accepted only when advance arrangements have been made with the professors. Otherwise handling of late work is entirely up to the instructors' discretion. Late work may receive a grade penalty or in some cases may not be accepted at all. Each assignment will have specific information on policy on late work.

RUBRIC FOR FINAL COURSE GRADE

A	A-	B+	B	B-	C+	C	C-	D+	D	D-	F
≥ 94	90- 93	87- 89	83- 86	80- 82	77- 79	73- 76	70- 72	67- 69	63- 66	60- 62	<60

Class 1	Tuesday, January 24th
Items Due: No reading	Key Topic/In-Class Activity: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Introduction, overview of course, assignments, course policies ▪ Discussion: What is philosophy and why philosophy for kids?
Class 2	Thursday, January 26th
Items Due: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read ‘Philosophy can teach children what Google can’t’ in The Guardian • Read ‘Schools are finally starting to teach kids philosophy’ in Business Insider • Bring Big Ideas for Little Kids (Wartenberg text) • Read the course syllabus carefully 	Key Topic/In-Class Activity: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion of assigned articles • Introduction to Philosophy: Discussion of big questions and thought experiments including Descartes on the Mind-Body problem, Mary’s room, the Trolley problem, etc. • Select Wartenberg chapter(s) for presentation with peer
Class 3	Tuesday, January 31st
Items Due: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read Think: Introduction • Read Philosophical Arguments (Routledge) 	Key Topic/In-Class Activity: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Basics of Arguments • Introduction to Deductive and Inductive arguments
Class 4	Thursday, February 2nd
Items Due: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read Wartenberg, Chapters 1, 2 and 3 • Triple Entry Journal on Chapters 1, 2, and 3 	Key Topic/In-Class Activity: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Natural-Born Philosophers • How I Became a Children’s Philosophy Teacher • Learning-Centered Teaching • Wartenberg website • Field experience description <p>TPEs: 1.1, 2.1, 6.3, 6.6; PS: 1</p>
Class 5	Tuesday, February 7th
Items Due: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read Wartenberg, Chapters 4 and 5 • Triple Entry Journal on Chapters 4 and 5 • Read Fantastic Mr. Fox, Chapters 1-6 	Key Topic/In-Class Activity: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The “Game” of Philosophy • Elementary School Introduction to Philosophy Course

Class 6	Thursday, February 9th
<p>Items Due:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read Wartenberg, Chapters 6 and 7 • Triple Entry Journal on Chapters 6 and 7 • Read Fantastic Mr. Fox, Chapters 7-12 	<p>Key Topic/In-Class Activity:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preparing for a Philosophy Discussion • Facilitating a Philosophical Discussion <p>TPEs: 1.5, 2.1, 2.2, 6.2; PS: 1</p>
Class 7	Tuesday, February 14th
<p>Items Due:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read Wartenberg, Chapter 8 • Triple Entry Journal on Chapter 8 • Read Fantastic Mr. Fox, Chapters 13-18 	<p>Key Topic/In-Class Activity:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deepening and Extending the Discussion • Field Work discussion <p>TPEs: 1.1, 1.5, 2.1, 2.2, 6.2; PS: 1</p>
Class 8	Thursday, February 16th
<p>Items Due: No readings</p>	<p>Key Topic/In-Class Activity:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Logic: Recap Deductive and Inductive Arguments • Types of Deductive Arguments: Modus Ponens, Modus Tollens, Formal Fallacies
Class 9	Tuesday, February 21st
<p>Items Due: No readings</p>	<p>Key Topic/In-Class Activity:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Logic contd.: Informal Fallacies • Inductive Arguments
Class 10	Thursday, February 23rd
<p>Items Due:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read Wartenberg, Chapter 14 • Triple Entry Journal on Chapter 14 • Bring O/P Documentation Log 	<p>Key Topic/In-Class Activity:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teaching Logic • Field Work discussion <p>TPEs: 1.1, 1.5, 6.2; PS: 1</p>
Class 11	Tuesday, February 28th
<p>Items Due:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read Essential vs. Accidental properties in the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy: Sections 1-3 	<p>Key Topic/In-Class Activity:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Metaphysics: Identity: Essential and Accidental Properties; Particulars and Universals
Class 12	Thursday, March 2nd
<p>Items Due:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read Think: Chapter 4 	<p>Key Topic/In-Class Activity:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Metaphysics contd.: Personal Identity

Class 13	Tuesday, March 7th
Items Due: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read Think: Chapter 4 • Read 'The Self is Moral' in Aeon 	Key Topic/In-Class Activity: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Metaphysics contd.: Personal Identity
Class 14	Thursday, March 9th
Items Due: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read Wartenberg, Chapter 11 • Triple Entry Journal on Chapter 11 	Key Topic/In-Class Activity: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teaching Metaphysics • Field Work discussion <p>TPEs: 1.1, 6.2; PS: 1</p>
Class 15	Tuesday, March 14th
Items Due: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review all material covered so far • Read 'The case for Philosophy in K-12 classrooms' 	Key Topic/In-Class Activity: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Catching up/ review/ recap • Clarify any doubts
Class 16	Thursday, March 16th
Items Due: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read Think: Chapter 1 • Read Descartes' First and Second Meditations 	Key Topic/In-Class Activity: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Epistemology
No Classes	March 21st & March 23rd - Spring Break
Class 17	Tuesday, March 28th
Items Due: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read Think: Chapter 1 • Read Gassendi's objections to Descartes' First and Second Meditations and Descartes' replies 	Key Topic/In-Class Activity: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Epistemology
Class 18	Thursday, March 30th
Items Due: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read Epistemological Relativism by Harvey Siegel 	Key Topic/In-Class Activity: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Epistemology contd.: Epistemological Relativism
Class 19	Tuesday, April 4th
Items Due: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read Wartenberg, Chapter 15 • Triple Entry Journal on Chapter 15 • Read The Knowledge Argument by Frank Jackson 	Key Topic/In-Class Activity: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teaching Epistemology • Field Work discussion • Topics for paper posted on Moodle <p>TPEs: 1.1, 6.2; PS: 1</p>

Class 20	Thursday, April 6th
Items Due: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read everything covered up to this point 	Key Topic/In-Class Activity: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Midterm Exam • Discussion on how to write a philosophy paper
Class 21	Tuesday, April 11th
Items Due: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read Think: Chapter 2 • Read Where am I? by Daniel Dennet 	Key Topic/In-Class Activity: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Philosophy of Mind/ Personal Identity
Class 22	Thursday, April 13th
Items Due: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read Wartenberg, Chapter 12 • Triple Entry Journal on Chapter 12 	Key Topic/In-Class Activity: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teaching the Philosophy of Mind
Class 23	Tuesday, April 18th
Items Due: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read The Knowledge Argument by Frank Jackson • Paper Draft 	Key Topic/In-Class Activity: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Philosophy of Mind contd.: Qualia, Knowledge Argument
Class 24	Thursday, April 20th
Items Due: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lesson Plan #1 and Reflection • Lesson Plan Presentations • Bring O/P Documentation Log 	Key Topic/In-Class Activity: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Present lesson plans • Field Work discussion <p>TPEs: 1.1, 1.5, 2.2, 6.2, 6.3; PS: 1</p>
Class 25	Tuesday, April 25th
Items Due: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read Think: Chapter 8 • Read Introduction to Ethics by Donaldson and Werhane 	Key Topic/In-Class Activity: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ethics • Drafts returned with comments
Class 26	Thursday, April 27th
Items Due: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read Virtue Ethics in the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy: Sections 1-2 	Key Topic/In-Class Activity: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ethics contd.: Virtue Ethics
Class 27	Tuesday, May 2nd
Items Due: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read Virtue Ethics in the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy: Section 3 	Key Topic/In-Class Activity: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ethics contd.: Virtue Ethics

Class 28	Thursday, May 4th
Items Due: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read Wartenberg, Chapter 9 • Triple Entry Journal on Chapter 9 • Draft - Written reflection based on your fieldwork 	Key Topic/In-Class Activity: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teaching Ethics • Field Work discussion TPEs: 1.1, 6.2; PS: 1
Class 29	Tuesday, May 9th
Items Due: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review everything done so far • Come prepared with questions • Final version of paper • Written reflection based on your fieldwork • O/P Documentation Log 	Key Topic/In-Class Activity: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Debrief, recap, review for final • Share written fieldwork reflections with peers TPEs: 1.1, 1.5, 6.2, 6.3, 6.6; PS: 1
Class 30	Thursday, May 11th
Items Due: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lesson Plan #2 and Reflection • Lesson Plan Presentations 	Key Topic/In-Class Activity: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Present lesson plans TPEs: 1.1, 1.5, 2.2, 6.2, 6.3; PS: 1
Final Exam	Tuesday, May 18th from 3:00-5:00 pm in ED 1130

LRS 250 -- Linking

TPE 1 Engaging and Supporting All Students in Learning

1.1- pages I: 7, 8, 9, 10, 11

1.5- pages I: 8, 10, 11

TPE 2 Creating and Maintaining Effective Environments

2.1- pages I: 7, 8

2.2- pages I: 8, 10, 11

TPE 6 Developing as a Professional Educator

6.2- pages I: 8, 9, 10, 11

6.3- pages I: 7, 10, 11

6.6- pages I: 7, 11

Program Standard 1

Human Learning Theory- pages I: 7, 8, 9, 10, 11

Positive Behavioral Supports- pages I: 8, 10, 11