David Faraci

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TEACHING PORTFOLIO
(updated October 28, 2016)

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Appendices

Supplementary materials, including sample syllabi and assignments, are available online at
http://davidfaraci.com

I. TEACHING EXPERIENCE[*]

Undergraduate Courses

Bioethics/Biomedical Ethics
> Spring 2013
> Fall 2013
> Spring 2014
> Fall 2014

Business Ethics/Social Responsibilities of Business
> Spring 2012
> Fall 2015
> Spring 2016
> Fall 2016

Computers and Philosophy/Philosophy of Information Technology
> Spring 2009 (TA)
> Fall 2009
> Fall 2010
> Spring 2011
> Spring 2013

Ethical Theory
> Fall 2012
> Spring 2013

Introduction to Ethics
> Fall 2005 (TA)
> Summer 2010
> Fall 2011
> Fall 2013
> Spring 2014

Introduction to Logic
> Fall 2006 (TA)
> Summer 2008
> Spring 2010

Introduction to Philosophy
> Spring 2007
> Spring 2008 (Honors)
> Summer 2009
> Fall 2011

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[*]All courses prior to Fall 2012 taught at Bowling Green State University, Fall 2012 to Spring 2013 at Virginia Tech, Fall 2013 to Spring 2015 at UNC Chapel Hill, and Fall 2015 to present at Georgetown University.

Introduction to Philosophy through Film
		Spring 2006 (TA)

Philosophy of Death and Dying
		Summer 2006 (Co-Instructor)

Philosophy of Mind
		Fall 2007 (TA)

Practical Ethics
		Fall 2014
		Spring 2015

Social Ethics and Political Thought
		Spring 2015

Undergraduate Online Courses

Introduction to Philosophy
		Fall 2008

Introduction to Symbolic Logic
		Fall 2014

Philosophy of Death and Dying
		Summer 2007 (Co-Instructor)

Graduate Courses

Metaethics
		Fall 2012

II. GENERAL APPROACH

At the core of my teaching philosophy lies my understanding of philosophy itself. More than any other discipline, philosophy is defined by methodology over subject matter. Accordingly, my primary goal is for students to learn how to approach philosophical questions, regardless of what those questions are about. I also believe that having modes of assessment that complement my pedagogical goals is nearly as important as the goals themselves, and thus continue to search for better ways to assess students' progress as philosophical thinkers.

III. THE APPROACH IN PRACTICE

Service Courses

My approach's distinctive features can be seen particularly well by looking to so-called "service courses"—courses aimed at students going into fields other than philosophy. Consider the ethics of software and media piracy, a common topic of discussion in Computers and Philosophy, a course for which I was nominated for a university-wide graduate teaching award in 2011 (see Appendix A). Rather than telling students what I believe the correct view to be, or even cataloguing the possible answers (though I do this to some extent), I explain and demonstrate the kind of reasoning by analogy that is useful in considering almost any applied ethical issue. (Is piracy more analogous to theft or to sharing with friends?) I then encourage students to engage in such reasoning themselves. Not only does this make for lively class discussion, but students learn what I take to be most important: how to think clearly about the issues at hand. Most students in service courses are not first-year students exploring educational possibilities; they are third- and fourth-year students, many of whom will soon be working in their chosen fields of study. If philosophical education is to benefit them in their professional lives (and I firmly believe that it can), it will be by helping them to answer the philosophical questions inevitably raised by their future work.

Respect for Student Knowledge

Many students take philosophy courses because of their interest in particular topics, rather than in philosophy generally. It is the bio or the business that brings them to the table, more than the ethics. Such students are frequently knowledgeable—perhaps even more so than the instructor—about the course's non-philosophical aspects. A group of medical pre-professionals is likely to know more than I about medical practices, a group of business students more about the economics of sweatshops. I am there to teach them how to think critically about those practices.

Accordingly, it is important that I demonstrate respect for my students' knowledge. In part, this is because of respect's inherent value. But it serves two further functions. First, all parties involved are more likely to learn if we each recognize the distinct intellectual strengths we bring to the table. Second, encouraging students to see themselves as experts fosters an environment in which, in my experience, they are more likely to engage with the material and in class discussion.

Assessment

Properly assessing philosophical skills is always a challenge (note our lack of a GRE subject test and the challenges inherent in developing MA exams). This is a particular problem at the undergraduate level, where it is difficult to isolate assessment of a student's *philosophical* skills from those of others kinds. This comes up frequently in the context of written assignments, such as term papers.

There seem to be three primary approaches to dealing with this. First, some choose to spend time teaching technical writing skills in tandem with the more directly philosophical aspects of writing. Others give their students written assignments, but do their best to compensate for or ignore technical issues while grading. Finally, some choose to give fewer and/or shorter such assignments, or even none at all.

I employ each these approaches as appropriate, depending on course content and level. But I am particularly proud of my work developing "objective" assessments aimed at gauging students' specifically philosophical skills. I have worked hard to create true/false, multiple choice, and matching questions that require detailed understanding of both the content and possible implications of various philosophical views: for example, asking students which of a number of objections succeeds or fails at addressing an argument, or asking them what the author of one paper would be most likely to say about an argument presented elsewhere. Creating these questions so that the answers are clear—and so that they involve more than just "reading comprehension"—is an extraordinary challenge, one I continue to struggle with in various iterations. Examples can be found in the Teaching section of my website (http://davidfaraci.com).

Enthusiasm

Finally, I believe my enthusiasm, both for teaching and *while* teaching, is a significant asset. Making class enjoyable is not simply an added bonus; it clearly facilitates learning. Students are more likely to engage with the material, with myself, and with each other when my passion for philosophy and philosophical pedagogy is evident.

IV. SUMMARY OF TEACHING EVALUATIONS (INDEPENDENT CLASSROOM TEACHING)

Bowling Green State University

Term/ Course	Teaching Ability	Course Structure	Ability to Help	Educational Value
Su '06 Death & Dying	3.71	3.21	3.64	3.62
Sp '07 Intro to Phil	2.95	2.73	2.95	2.50
Sp '08 Intro to Phil (Honors)	2.90	2.52	2.81	2.76
Su '08 Intro to Logic	3.50	3.20	3.60	2.90
Su '09 Intro to Phil	3.12	2.62	3.00	2.50
Fa '09 Computers & Phil	2.81	2.84	2.94	2.35
Sp '10 Intro to Logic	3.17	3.17	3.44	2.39
Su '10 Intro to Ethics	3.25	2.62	3.37	3.12
Fa '10 Computers & Phil	3.53	3.53	3.73	3.60
Sp '11 Computers & Phil	2.94	2.82	3.06	2.88
Fa '11 Intro to Phil	2.76	2.24	2.74	2.60
Fa '11 Intro to Ethics	1.91	1.88	2.47	2.13
Sp '12 Intro to Phil	3.76	3.33	3.62	3.43
Sp '12 Business Ethics	3.46	3.13	3.42	3.13
Sample Dept. Avg.	*3.09*	*2.93*	*3.12*	*2.94*
Personal Avg.	**3.13**	**2.85**	**3.20**	**2.85**

0 – Below Average   1 – Average   2 – Above Average   3 – Superior   4 – Outstanding

Select Written Comments:

"Taught in a very educational and fun way. Might have been my favorite class yet in college." *(Computers)*

"Awesome instructor. Energetic and engaging. One of the best instructors I have ever had. Wished I had a class like this earlier in my college career." *(Ethics)*

"He's very good at going in depth and helping student to grasp a better understanding of concepts. He makes you step back and take a 2nd deeper look." *(Ethics)*

"Dr. Faraci was always willing to answer questions + he always offered assistance. He made the classroom feel comfortable + the arguments we read were always related to a big idea." *(Intro)*

"He definitely knows his stuff. He made it enjoyable and I really have started applying philosophical thinking to everyday life." *(Intro)*

"Dave had a lot of enthusiasm & great sense of humor. His interest & enthusiasm made me more interested in philosophy (I wouldn't say it if I didn't mean it!). I also really liked how knowledgeable Dave was – he knew a lot of stuff without being preachy." *(Intro)*

"The instructor was one of the best I've had here at BG. He answers all questions, helps all students, and is always willing to explain things again. Excellent instructor." *(Logic)*

"Best teacher I have had. Explains everything pin point until each student understands. Loved this course." *(Logic)*

Virginia Tech

Term/ Course	Well- Prepared	Clear Presenter	Provided Feedback	Fostered Respect
Fa '12 Ethical Theory	5.70	5.30	5.60	5.70
Fa '12 Metaethics (Grad)	5.57	5.57	5.29	5.86
Sp '13 Biomedical Ethics	5.45	5.05	4.65	5.55
Sp '13 Ethical Theory	5.40	5.20	5.20	5.80
Sp '13 Phil of IT	5.50	5.67	5.00	5.33
Sample Dept. Avg.	*5.47*	*5.04*	*4.82*	*5.40*
Personal Avg.	**5.52**	**5.36**	**5.15**	**5.65**

	Deepened Understanding	Stimulated Interest	Overall Effective
	5.20	4.80	5.30
	5.86	5.86	6.00
	5.55	5.50	5.35
	5.60	4.60	5.40
	5.33	5.33	5.50
	5.04	*4.61*	*5.09*
	5.51	**5.22**	**5.51**

1 – Strongly Disagree	2– Disagree	3 – Somewhat Disagree
4 – Somewhat Agree	5 – Agree	6 – Strongly Agree

Select Written Comments:

"Dr. Faraci is a fantastic orator. He presented material that can easily become overwhelming and confusing very clearly and in a manner that enhanced overall comprehension. He also lead class discussion well and allowed a large amount of student contributions. Address multiple sides of arguments well and without apparent bias." *(Biomedical Ethics)*

"Very good teacher, very good guy. Helped me with material that wasn't graded, always there to help improve his students. Strict yet intelligent and well focused." *(Ethical Theory)*

"This is definitely an instructor who cares about the subject and his students." *(Ethical Theory)*

"What can you say about an instructor who once stayed after class for five hours to further discuss the subject matter? Dr. Faraci is a phenomenal professor, and I'm disappointed that he won't be on staff next year." *(IT)*

"David is very good at clarifying the material and helping us see the bigger picture of debates that are currently going on in Metaethics. (He also makes the discussion stimulating and fun.) He is also very helpful in improving my writing." *(Metaethics – Graduate)*

"You clearly know your stuff, I learned as much from the reading as from your lectures on relevant tangents. Even on some of the less interesting readings, maintaining interest in discussions never felt a chore. Frequent references to other thinkers and ideas within the broader contemporary field helped in synthesizing arguments between the various positions." *(Metaethics – Graduate)*

UNC Chapel Hill

Term/ Course	Excellent Course	Effective Teacher	Learned A Lot
Fa '13 Bioethics	4.36	4.58	4.39
Fa '13 Intro to Ethics	3.59	4.15	3.91
Sp '14 Bioethics	4.38	4.52	4.30
Sp '14 Intro to Ethics	3.70	4.15	3.67
Fa '14 Bioethics	3.44	3.94	3.78
Fa '14 Practical Ethics	3.59	4.06	4.00
Sp '15 Social/Political	3.21	3.86	3.64
Sp '15 Practical Ethics	4.08	4.50	4.00
Sample Dept. Avg.	*3.74*	*4.04*	*3.97*
Personal Avg.	**3.79**	**4.22**	**3.96**

1 – Strongly Disagree	2– Disagree	3 – Neither Disagree Nor Agree
4 – Agree	5 – Strongly Agree	

Select Written Comments:

"Dr. Faraci was an amazing professor! He is so engaging and really makes you want to discuss the topics, even though they may not be the most fun. He has a great sense of humor which makes class more exciting, and he is encouraging us to think deeper. He is always willing to answer questions and never makes students feel silly for asking a question. He makes confusing ethics principles seem easy and is very good at explaining things and coming up with relevant and easy to understand examples. Honestly, it saddens me that he is only a visiting professor; I truly think he should be hired full time!" *(Bioethics)*

"Hands down, one of the best professors/teachers I've ever had, and easily one of my favourite. Always relaxed, always funny, always excited, and always respectful. Content was intriguing, poignant, and it was the right amount of outside work for each topic. all around, very well done. Grading was slightly harsh." *(Bioethics)*

"Great course, Dr. Faraci was engaging and very good at explaining concepts I had never understood before as a non-philosophy major. I would recommend him to any of my friends looking for an interesting and morally illuminating course." *(Bioethics)*

"Great class, the professor was fantastic, very good at making esoteric material accessible and even amusing." *(Intro Ethics)*

"Very interesting class and Dr. Faraci is a strong lecturer. Managed to make often tedious subject material interesting and engaging." *(Intro Ethics)*

"Always excited, always engaged, always looking at home in front of students." *(Practical Ethics)*

"Dr. Faraci was incredibly excited about what he lectured on, and his enthusiasm was contagiously inspiring. The course was also structure in a unique way that kept the material interesting and relevant, while still fully examining the necessary knowledge it required" *(S/P)*

Georgetown University

Term/ Course	Objectives Met	How Much Learned	Instructor Preparedness	Instructor Overall Quality
Fa '15 Soc Resp Bus	4.30	3.73	4.57	4.09
Sp '16 Soc Resp Bus	4.30	3.80	4.80	4.20
Personal Avg.	**4.30**	**3.77**	**4.69**	**4.15**

Scale: 1 (low) – 5 (high)
Average overall evaluation for business admin courses (levels 200-349): **4.28**

Select Written Comments:

"Faraci is fantastic! This class definitely has the potential to be boring (purely because of the nature of the material), but he did a phenomenal job teaching it! His personality is a plus – the guy is hysterical. I would highly recommend taking SRB with him."

"Dr. Faraci is fantastic. He's funny, energetic, and engaging. He's also very concerned that we learn and that things click for us. I greatly appreciate that from a professor."

"Professor Faraci is a great, nice, and enthusiastic professor whose flexibility and eagerness to engage students I really appreciated."

"Professor Faraci was a great professor for SRB who is very knowledgeable about business ethics. I hope he has the opportunity to teach more sections of this course in the future."

"The group projects were particularly enjoyable and were a useful way to apply what we discussed from the readings."

"I loved the Business Plan as a way for us to work with our groups throughout the semester to react to ethical dilemmas."

"I really liked the business project/moral dilemma part of the class and I thought this part was super interesting and stimulating."

Letter of Recommendation for David Faraci

     My name is ██████, and I had David Faraci as a graduate student teacher for *Computers and Philosophy* last semester. The vast majority of my class were Computer Science majors, and at the start none of us really knew what we were in for. I'd like to start to explain what our class was like by recounting a conversation which I had with several of my fellow students one day after a particularly spirited class. One of my classmates, also named David, commented on the fact that if his other classes were like this one he'd have no problem keeping his interest in any of them, or something to that basic effect. Another of our classmates agreed whole heartedly, laughing, as did I.

     This is what I felt to be David's strongest point – he never put himself above the class. Instead it was more like a conversation between us students, which although it got a bit raucous at times was always guided smoothly back to the point of discussion, without having the high energy of the class drained away. Never allowing things to go too far, nor stray completely off the topic, he always avoided dominating the conversation. He had an excellent way of taking students comments and helping shape them to the philosophical points at hand. None of us were Philosophy majors, although I believe one student was considering it for a minor. Despite this limitation of our class, David always managed to inject our conversation with his greater knowledge of the philosophical principles at the heart of our studies, and make it seem like it was simply a natural extension of our own words.

     A second great thing about David Faraci, in my humble opinion, was the way that he would take any of the issues under discussion, and with ease break it down into its logical components. He had a great way of dissecting the current point and showing how it fit, not only into the present subject, but also the previous topics of the semester. While I am quite positive that this was due to his strong philosophy background, which he applied with superlative skill, I am certain that there was also something more. I believe it has much to do with his basic manner of relating to students, and I am sure other people at large. He was both personable, and polite, yet always managed, with subtlety, to guide the class to the root of any matter, and further to show its correlation to the issues under discussion.

     One of his methods was to give each student a day of class. S/he would then teach their assigned day based upon one of the many topics which we had selected together. This kept us all interested, and lent great diversity to the many conversations which were held. Another thing which David did was to encourage us to always be scanning the news for any article or event relating to our class and discussions. He would regularly add to these himself, and it made for a great way to tie current events into our myriad points of discussion. Through both of these tactics, and our study of the core philosophical issues pertaining to the computer field today, David not only engaged our interest, and kept it, but he managed to drastically expand our knowledge of the ethical, and moral implications which are very much an important part of any field of work. All in all, he took a course which before we began, to be honest, many of us were questioning the value of, and transformed it into a truly remarkable, enlightening experience. I am absolutely certain that I am not the only one who felt this way about David Faraci, and indeed about this course.

                                 Sincerely,

                        ██████████

VirginiaTech

May 21, 2013
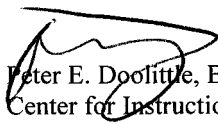
David Faraci
Philosophy
(0126)

David Faraci:

You have received a "Thank a Teacher" note from one of your students. Below is the note that your student sent to our website, highlighting the positive impact you have had on student achievement and development.

> *Thank you so much for making your class interesting and entertaining. My freshman year I took a philosophy course and the professor made it incredibly hard and uninteresting. I dropped it within three weeks and it completely turned me off from the philosophy department. I went into your class skeptically and with doubts because I was trying a philosophy class again, but you turned my view of the department around and biomedical ethics ended up being the best class I've taken at Tech, and my personal favorite as well. Thank you for a wonderful semester and being such an effectively teaching professor and making the class a joy to be a part of.* (███████)

The Center for Instructional Development and Educational Research (CIDER) formally recognizes unsolicited student feedback and praise of Virginia Tech instructors through our Thank a Teacher program. We add our thanks to you for the contributions you make to the academic and personal development of students.

Sincerely,

Peter E. Doolittle, Executive Director
Center for Instructional Development and Educational Research (CIDER)

Tiffany Shoop, Coordinator for Program Development
Center for Instructional Development and Educational Research (CIDER)

Invent the Future