

Phil 125 Section

GSI

Jackson Kernion

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Office Hours: Fri 12:30pm-2:30pm in 301 Moses

Section is a place to discuss what went on in lecture, ask remaining questions, and learn from each other. Discussion and debate are an important part of the philosophical process. It forces you to talk through your ideas and test them against others'. Respectful disagreement is encouraged. (Keyword: respectful.) And ask when you are confused. Especially in philosophy, confusion can be a sign that something we're teaching you is suspect or strange. Express that confusion.

Section attendance is required for the course. If you must miss section for some special reason, please email me in advance.

Sections will normally be structured as follows:

- Opening Q&A session for questions from lecture/reading
- *Very* brief review of key concepts from past lectures/reading
- Group discussion

How to Succeed in This Course

Read Carefully - Philosophical texts are dense and difficult. Don't let this scare you! There are relatively few readings for a reason. Slowly work through the text at about half your 'normal' speed (or slower). When reading, try to figure out: (a) What is the position under consideration? (b) What is the argument for the position? (c) Is the argument *good*? What are some possible objections?

Ask Questions - Always be asking yourself, "What do *I* think about issue x ?"'. Actively engage in the issues from lecture and from the text. The best way to do this is try to formulate questions. Scribble questions in the margins of the reading, raise your hand in lecture, and come prepared to ask questions in section. If you feel confused, or if you have a burning question about something from the text, come see me in office hours.

Write Clearly - Philosophy is a peculiar discipline. It places a high value on clarity and rigor. We want you to focus on making good arguments rather than writing pretty things. It's not enough to merely state a claim—we'll want you to provide reasons for the claim, give examples, and address objections. For more advice: <http://www.jimpryor.net/teaching/guidelines/writing.html>

Grading

Deadlines - Deadlines are firm. Your grade will decrease 1/3 of a letter grade for each day late (i.e. B+ to B).

Academic Honesty - Don't plagiarize. Assignments will be submitted electronically and checked for plagiarism.

Regrades - There will be no regrades. I'm happy to explain a grade, but regrades can actually be unfair.

Contacting Me

The best way to get in touch with me is by email (jacksonkernion@berkeley.edu). If you have a question that requires a short response it can be covered there, but it's a bad idea to do substantive philosophy over email. For such questions, come to my office hours.

Tech policy

Please don't use any technology—phones, laptops, tablets, etc.—in section. Using these devices takes your mind out of the discussion and makes you less likely to participate. It can also distract others. You don't need to take detailed notes in section. Just listen and participate.