

# Teaching Portfolio

Martín Abreu Zavaleta

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## 1 Teaching statement

I'd be happy to teach courses in logic (e.g. non-classical logics, modal logic, formal methods in philosophy) at introductory and advanced undergraduate levels, as well as introductory graduate levels. I'd also be happy to teach courses at every level on philosophy of language (traditional philosophy of language as well as formal semantics) and philosophy of mind. Furthermore, though Mexican philosophy is not among my areas of specialization, it is among my areas of interest; as such, I would be happy to teach courses in this area, especially in its connection with the philosophy of race.

I have two general aims when teaching an undergraduate philosophy course. The first is to give the students a taste for the way of approaching problems that I think is characteristic of philosophy. This

approach is characterized by rigorous examination of the available evidence, willingness to recognize the possibility of error, and careful consideration of alternative solutions. Regardless of a student's field, learning to approach a problem in this way can prove valuable to her career. Given that very few of the students in a philosophy class go on to pursue careers as professional philosophers, I believe that helping them become rigorous thinkers is one of the main tasks of a philosophy teacher.

In a regular course, and especially in introductory courses, I introduce my students to classical forms of argument. I usually introduce a particular form of argument informally, and occasionally follow up with slightly more formal explanations if I judge this will lead to better understanding. Discussion of classical debates in philosophy allows the students to learn to recognize and use basic valid forms of argument (e.g. modus ponens or disjunctive syllogism), as well as more sophisticated argumentative strategies (e.g. abductive inferences, arguments by reductio). To complement the materials presented in the lecture, my assignments and quizzes often include reconstruction and evaluation of arguments taken from primary sources.

My second aim is to help my students understand the crucial points and main views concerning the key philosophical questions in the area of philosophy I'm teaching, and the importance of philosophy for other scientific and humanistic disciplines. Especially in introductory courses, I examine classical debates starting with basic formulations of the problems and views under discussion, gradually introducing further distinctions and nuances. During a standard lecture, I also raise questions and recommend readings that will help interested students to deepen their understanding of the subject matter. In my opinion, such approach allows students to quickly become comfortable with the core issues at play in a philosophical debate, helps them maintain their interest in the topics discussed throughout the course, and at the same time puts them in a position to understand the more nuanced details of particular philosophical debates.

For example, in a typical unit on the mind-body problem, I start by introducing basic arguments for the distinctness of two objects (e.g. we know that a certain flower is different from another because they are different colors, because they have different shapes, etc.), and then generalize those arguments to show that they all appeal to Leibniz's law. During class, I ask students to form arguments for the distinctness of objects using Leibniz's law. Once I'm confident they understand the reasoning behind those arguments, I present them with basic arguments for dualism that appeal to Leibniz's law (e.g. my brain weighs x many kilograms, but my mind doesn't, so my mind is different from my brain), and continue by presenting a version of Descartes' conceivability argument for dualism. I use that argument to introduce a distinction between various kinds of possibility (metaphysical, practical, epistemic, and so on) and a discussion of the link between conceivability and possibility. By the time the unit is finished, students are familiar with standard views about the mind-body problem and arguments for those views, as well as with basic philosophical notions and terminology that will help them get a grasp of more subtle discussions in the future. Along the unit, the students are typically asked to use and analyze basic forms of inference through quizzes and assignments, thus training argumentative skills that will be of use to them throughout their careers.

My more particular goals when teaching introductory and advanced courses, respectively, are as follows. I have two main goals for introductory courses. The first is that my students be able to find the main arguments in a philosophical text, to formulate valid arguments of their own, and to formulate counterexamples to simple philosophical views. The second is that my students become familiar with the philosophical problems discussed and the different solutions to them, and understand the considerations that support or contravene the philosophical views discussed throughout the course. My main goals in more advanced courses are that my students be able to articulate and defend philosophical positions, and that they be well acquainted with the nuances of the particular debates discussed throughout the course.

Besides these pedagogical aims, I have two priorities regarding diversity and inclusivity in the classroom. First, I encourage students to engage in class discussion, especially when they are members of an underrepresented group. Second, I strive to establish a climate of mutual respect between students as parties to an intellectual debate, and to encourage openness to different opinions.

With respect to encouraging student participation, I have found that conversations with students during office hours provide an excellent opportunity to point out when a student has made an interesting point during class, or raised a good question. I believe such encouragement is especially important for members of underrepresented groups, given that members of those groups often suffer from impostor syndrome.<sup>1</sup> My hope is that through continuous encouragement, members of underrepresented groups can overcome impostor syndrome and recognize the value of their academic achievements and contributions.

With respect to the climate in the classroom, I believe producing a climate of mutual respect during class is crucial in the promotion of diversity and inclusivity. Just as we should encourage members of underrepresented groups to become active members of our discipline, we should ensure that members of well-represented groups treat their underrepresented counterparts as respectfully as they treat one another. To this end, at the beginning of a course I emphasize the importance of mutual respect between the parties to a dispute and of openness to new ideas. In my experience, this initial explanation, followed by gentle reminders throughout the course should the need arise, has not only made students from underrepresented groups more comfortable when discussing their ideas in class; it has also made class discussions more fruitful, even when discussing sensitive issues.

## **2 Summary of teaching experience**

I have four semesters of experience as a teaching assistant, and two terms of experience as an instructor with full responsibilities. As a teaching assistant, my main responsibilities were to direct two weekly discussion sessions per course (between twelve and twenty students per session, one hour and fifteen minutes per session), to grade assignments (three to five assignments per course per semester) and final exams, and to hold office hours (at least two hours per course per week). As instructor for summer

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<sup>1</sup>See e.g. Cokley, McClain, Enciso, and Martinez (2013), "An examination of the impact of minority status stress and impostor feelings on the mental health of diverse ethnic minority college students", *Journal of Multicultural Counseling and Development*, 41:82-95.

courses, my responsibilities included lecturing four times a week (one hour and thirty-five minutes each), writing and grading all assignments (three to four assignments, plus quizzes, and in one case a final exam), and holding office hours (at least two hours a week).

I have been a teaching assistant for Central Problems in Philosophy (Fall 2013), Aesthetics (Spring 2014), Minds and Machines (Fall 2014), and Political Philosophy (Spring 2015). I have been an instructor with full responsibilities for Philosophy of Mind (Summer 2014) and Central Problems in Philosophy (Summer 2015). Below are syllabi for those courses and teaching evaluations for all the courses I mentioned above.

### 3 Past syllabi

#### 3.1 Philosophy of Mind - Summer 2014

## PHIL-UA 80: Philosophy of Mind

Instructor: Martín Abreu Zavaleta  
MTWR 6–7:35pm

### 1 Contact Information

- Office hours: Thursday 10am–12pm  
Make an appointment at <http://goo.gl/fLR5yN>
- Office: 5 Washington Pl., room 514
- Email address: [martin.abreu@nyu.edu](mailto:martin.abreu@nyu.edu)

### 2 Course Description

Science fiction has taught us that robots could in principle behave very much like humans, but could they have minds? Could they experience the sweetness of a ripe peach? What does it take to have a mind in the first place? In this course we will examine various answers to these and other fundamental questions in the philosophy of mind. The topics include: the relation between the mental and the physical, the nature of conscious experience, the nature of beliefs and desires, how we represent the world in thought, and many others.

### 3 Grading and Requirements

There is a reading assignment for every session of the course. You should do the readings carefully, and be ready to discuss them in class. Participants in the course will have to write three papers. Importantly, the third paper will be a revision of the second one and must show substantive improvement. I will offer details during the first session.

There are two required textbooks for the course:

- Kim, Jaegwon. *Philosophy of Mind*. Westview Press, ISBN 978-0-8133-4458-4
- Chalmers, David (ed.) *Philosophy of Mind, Classical and Contemporary Readings*. Oxford University Press, ISBN 978-0-19-514581-6

If you can only get one, get Chalmers's anthology. However, the book by Kim will be an important companion to the course. The rest of the readings will be provided to you via NYU Classes.

Grades will be calculated as follows:

- 20% Participation

- 10% First paper
- 25% Second paper
- 45% Revision of second paper

## 4 Schedule of Topics and Readings

### Introduction

**May 27:** Kim, PoM, chapter 1.

### 4.1 The metaphysical nature of mind

#### 4.1.1 Dualism

**May 28:** Descartes. Meditations II and VI (provided by instructor), letter to Elizabeth (provided by instructor)

**May 29:** Smullyan. An unfortunate dualist (in anthology)

#### 4.1.2 Identity Theory

**May 30:** Smart, J. Sensations and Brain Processes (in anthology), Feigl, H. The “Mental” and the “Physical”.

#### 4.1.3 Functionalism

**June 2:** Putnam, H. The nature of mental states (in anthology), Turing, A. Computing Machinery and Intelligence. (provided by instructor)

**June 3:** Kim, J. Multiple realization and the metaphysics of reduction (in anthology). Block, N. What is functionalism? (provided by instructor)

**June 4:** Lewis, D. Psychophysical and theoretical identifications (in anthology), Block, N. Troubles with functionalism. (in anthology)

**June 5:** Searle. Can computers think? (in anthology), Lewis. Mad pain and martian pain. (in anthology)

#### 4.1.4 Mental causation

**June 9:** Yablo, S. Mental causation (in anthology), Kim, J. The many problems of mental causation (in anthology)

## 4.2 Thought

### 4.2.1 The nature of intentionality

**June 10:** Brentano. The distinction between mental and physical phenomena (in anthology). Kim, ch. 8

**June 11:** Chisholm. Intentional inexistence (in anthology)

**June 12:** Dretske. A recipe for thought (in anthology) Millikan. Biosemantics (in anthology)

**June 16:** Brandom. Reasoning and representing (in anthology)

### 4.2.2 Propositional attitudes

**June 17:** Frege. On Sense and Reference (provided by instructor). Optional: Frege. The thought.

**June 18:** Fodor. Propositional attitudes (in anthology)

**June 19:** Dennett. True believers: the intentional strategy and why it works (in anthology), Churchland. Eliminative materialism and the propositional attitudes.

### 4.2.3 Internalism and externalism

**June 23:** Putnam. Meaning and reference (provided by instructor). Putnam, The meaning of 'meaning' (in anthology)

**June 24:** Burge. Individualism and the mental (in anthology). McKinsey. Anti-individualism and privileged access (in anthology).

**June 25:** Jackson and Pettit. Some content is narrow (provided by instructor). Boghossian. The transparency of mental content (provided by instructor)

## 4.3 Consciousness

**June 26:** Block. Concepts of consciousness (in anthology). Nagel. What is it like to be a bat? (in anthology)

**June 30:** Jackson. Epiphenomenal qualia (in anthology), Loar. Phenomenal states (in anthology)

**July 1:** Dennett. Quining qualia (in anthology), Lewis. What experience teaches (in anthology)

**July 2:** Levine. Materialism and qualia: the explanatory gap (in anthology). Kim. Chapter 10

**July 3:** Chalmers, D. Consciousness and its place in nature (in anthology).

## 5 Written assignments

I'll grade your papers and be as fair as I possibly can. Since I may be unconsciously biased favorably or unfavorably towards some features that you or some of your classmates exhibit, the papers will be blinded. Blinding helps eliminate the effects of implicit bias, and this is why it is important.<sup>1</sup> Here are the rules and policies with respect to written assignments and class participation:

- I will **only** accept written assignments in PDF format. I will not accept assignments in any other format, including but not limited to Word, .rtf and hard copies.
- I will **not** change grades, unless I make an arithmetic mistake, e.g. I didn't sum up your points correctly. However, feel free to come to my office hours to discuss the comments I make to your written assignments.
- I will **not** accept assignments that are not properly blinded. An assignment properly blinded is one that satisfies **all** the following conditions:
  - The name of the file is your N-number.
  - Your name doesn't appear anywhere in the document.
  - The title of your paper (if it has one) doesn't appear in the name of the file.
- I will **not** accept late assignments, unless you have an excuse. If your assignment is going to be late, be sure to inform me **beforehand** and ask for an extension. If I grant you an extension, there will be still a penalization on the grade for that assignment.
- Cases of plagiarism will be thoroughly examined and taken to the competent authorities at NYU. The punishment for plagiarism can go from failing the assignment to expulsion from the university, depending on the verdict of the competent authorities. NYU's policy on plagiarism is clear, and you can consult it here: <http://cas.nyu.edu/page/academicintegrity>

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<sup>1</sup>Go here to learn something about implicit bias: [http://med.stanford.edu/diversity/FAQ\\_REDE.html](http://med.stanford.edu/diversity/FAQ_REDE.html)



### 3.2 Central Problems in Philosophy - Summer 2015

## PHIL-UA 1: Central Problems in Philosophy

Instructor: Martín Abreu Zavaleta

July 6 – August 15

MTWR 1:30 – 3:05pm

### 1 Contact Information

- Office hours: Thursday 10am–12pm  
Make an appointment at <http://goo.gl/fLR5yN>
- Office: 5 Washington Pl., room 514
- Email address: [martin.abreu@nyu.edu](mailto:martin.abreu@nyu.edu)

### 2 Course Description

This course is an introduction to the methods of Philosophy by way of some of its most interesting problems. The course will start by addressing some philosophical problems you may have already encounter and gradually build up to questions of a more theoretical nature. The topics include: the good life, personal identity, the nature of identity statements, the nature of the mind, among others.

### 3 Grading and Requirements

There is a reading assignment for most sessions of the course. You should do the readings carefully, and be ready to discuss them in class. Participants in the course will have to write three papers and take a final exam. Importantly, the third paper will be a revision of the second one and must show substantive improvement. I will offer details during the first session.

There are two required textbooks for the course:

- Aristotle. *The Nicomachean Ethics*. Translated by Terence Irwin. Hackett Publishing Company, ISBN 0872204642
- Perry, John. *A dialogue on personal identity and immortality*. Hackett Publishing Company, ISBN 0915144530

The rest of the readings will be provided to you via NYU Classes.

Grades will be calculated as follows:

- 10% Participation
- 10% Quizzes

- 10% First paper
- 20% Second paper
- 30% Revision of second paper
- 20% Final exam

## 4 Schedule of Topics and Readings

### 4.1 The Good Life

**July 6:** Nozick, R. *Anarchy, State, and Utopia*, pp. 42-45.

#### 4.1.1 Aristotle's Conception of the Good Life

**July 7:** Aristotle. NE, book 1

**July 8:** Aristotle. NE, book 1

**July 9:** Aristotle, NE, book 2

#### 4.1.2 Consequentialism

**July 13:** No reading for this session.

**July 14:** No reading for this session.

#### 4.1.3 The Meaning of Life

**July 15:** Railton, Peter, 1984. "Alienation, Consequentialism, and the Demands of Morality", *Philosophy and Public Affairs* 13: 134-71.

**July 16:** Wolf, Susan, 1997. "Happiness and Meaning: Two Aspects of the Good Life" in *Social Philosophy and Policy* 14: 207-25. Nagel, Thomas, 1970. "The Absurd", *Journal of Philosophy* 68: 716-27

#### 4.1.4 The value of death

**July 20:** Excerpts from Lucretius.

**July 21:** Williams, B. "The Makropulos case: reflections on the tedium of immortality" in *Problems of the Self*.

### 4.2 Personal Identity

**July 22:** Locke, John. *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, Book II, Chapter XXVII ("On Identity and Diversity")

**July 23:** Perry, John. *A Dialogue on Personal Identity*, first and second nights.

**July 27:** Perry, John. *A Dialogue on Personal Identity*, third night.

### 4.3 Frege's puzzle

**July 28:** Frege, G. "On Sense and Reference"

**July 29:** Same as July 28

**July 30:** Russell, B. "Knowledge by Acquaintance and Knowledge by Description".

**August 3:** Russell, B. "On Denoting"

**August 4:** Excerpts from Kripke, S. "Naming and Necessity"

**August 5:** Perry, John. "The essential indexical"

### 4.4 The Nature of the Mind

**August 6:** Descartes. Meditations II and VI. Exchange with Elizabeth.

**August 10:** Smart, J. Sensations and Brain Processes

**August 11:** Turing, A. Computer Machinery and Intelligence.

**August 12:** Putnam, H. The Nature of Mental states, Searle. Can computers think?

**August 13:** Final exam

## 5 Written assignments

I'll grade your papers and be as fair as I possibly can. Since I may be unconsciously biased favorably or unfavorably towards some features that you or some of your classmates exhibit, the papers will be blinded. Blinding helps eliminate the effects of implicit bias, and this is why it is important.<sup>1</sup> Here are the rules and policies with respect to written assignments and class participation:

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- I will **not** change grades, unless I make an arithmetic mistake, e.g. I didn't sum up your points correctly. However, feel free to come to my office hours to discuss the comments I make to your written assignments.
- I will **not** accept assignments that are not properly blinded. An assignment properly blinded is one that satisfies **all** the following conditions:
  - The name of the file is your N-number.
  - Your name doesn't appear anywhere in the document.
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- I will **not** accept late assignments, unless you have an excuse. If your assignment is going to be late, be sure to inform me **beforehand** and ask for an extension. If I grant you an extension, there will be still a penalization on the grade for that assignment.
- Cases of plagiarism will be thoroughly examined and taken to the competent authorities at NYU. The punishment for plagiarism can go from failing the assignment to expulsion from the university, depending on the verdict of the competent authorities. NYU's policy on plagiarism is clear, and you can consult it here: <http://cas.nyu.edu/page/academicintegrity>

## 4 Course evaluations

### 4.1 Summary

Due to variations in the questions asked in student evaluations each semester, courses don't have student scores for all questions, and the results are distributed along two tables. When a question was not asked in the evaluation for a given course, this is marked with '-' in the corresponding cell. Instructor's name is abbreviated 'MAZ' when applicable.

	Central Problems Fall 2013	Aesthetics Spring 2014	Minds & Machines Fall 2014	Political Philosophy Spring 2015
Overall, the instructor is a good teacher	4.21	4.00	-	-
The instructor presents the material in a stimulating way	4.03	3.75	-	-
The instructor presents the material in a clear way	4.14	3.88	-	-
The instructor is well-prepared and organized	4.34	4.38	-	-
The instructor is receptive to questions and responds well to them	4.28	4.38	-	-
The instructor is available for consultation/is accessible to students	4.48	4.38	4.6	4.5
The instructor gives helpful comments on written work/assignments	4.55	4.50	4.4	4
The instructor treats students respectfully and considerately	4.52	4.50	-	-
The instructor's grading is fair	4.41	4.38	-	-
Compared with other courses, the work-load is demanding	3.69	3.63	-	-
I have learned a lot in this course	3.97	4.00	-	-
All things considered, this has been a good course	4.14	4.25	-	-
Overall, the recitation/lab was useful for achieving the goals of the course	-	-	4.4	4.2
MAZ was effective at helping me learn	-	-	4.2	4

	Philosophy of Mind Summer 2014	Central Problems Summer 2015
Overall, the course was effective at helping me learn	3.9	3.2
The objectives of the course were achieved	3.6	3.3
The classes were well organized	3.7	3.3
The classes were informative	3.9	3.8
The course was intellectually challenging	4.1	4.3
The course increased my knowledge of the subject	3.9	3.7
The course stimulated my interest in this subject	3.1	2.5
Overall, the instructor was effective at helping me learn	3.0	3.5
The instructor created a supportive learning environment	3.4	4.2
The instructor encouraged student participation	4.1	4.5
The instructor was effective at facilitating class discussion	3.9	4.2
The instructor was open to students' questions and points of view	4.2	4.3
The instructor provided helpful feedback on assignments	3.9	4.0
The instructor was accessible to students (e.g. via e-mail and office hours)	3.9	4.3

## 4.2 Central Problems in Philosophy, Fall 2013

Instructor: Martin Zavaleta Course: Central Problems Semester/Year: Fall 2013													Instructor: Martin Zavaleta Course: Central Problems Semester/Year: Fall 2013																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																		
Student Number	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8	Q9	Q10	Q11	Q12	Strongly Disagree	# of Disagrees	# of 50/50's	# of Agrees	# of Strongly Agrees	Average																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																													

### 4.3 Aesthetics, Spring 2014

[illegible]



#### **4.4 Minds and Machines, Fall 2014; Political Philosophy, Fall 2015; Philosophy of Mind, Summer 2014; Central Problems in Philosophy, Summer 2015**

The scale is from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

For a typical course (with about 8 of 16 students responding) the 90%-confidence interval for each score reported here is +/- 0.5. For example, a score shown as 3.9 could have easily ranged from 3.4 to 4.4 if additional students had completed evaluations. Courses with lower response rates would range even more widely.

#### **PHIL-UA 5 002,003: Martin Abreu Zavaleta; Fall 2014**

**Responses:** 17

**Enrollment:** 36

Overall, the recitation / lab was useful for achieving the goals of the course.

4.4

Martin Abreu Zavaleta was effective at helping me learn.

4.2

Martin Abreu Zavaleta provided helpful feedback on assignments (e.g., exams, papers, homework, lab reports, etc.).

4.4

Martin Abreu Zavaleta was accessible to students (e.g., via e-mail and office hours).

4.6

Feedback and suggestions for Martin Abreu Zavaleta

Describe the *one* best thing about the recitation / lab or Martin Abreu Zavaleta that was effective in helping you learn. If you could suggest *one* thing to improve the section, what would it be?

- Martin was indispensable in a course like this - he was utterly knowledgeable about the material and greatly helped us understand and learn it. To improve section, I think the course itself needs to be more clear. This way, we might use the recitation for discussion (like it was meant to be) and less for clarification of lecture.
- Very good in balancing teaching and class discussion.
- Feedback already given to the philosophy department, but Martin's use of visual diagrams was highly effective, as it not only presented material but responded to students' ad-hoc concerns.
- Recitation was good because it showed me that everyone was just as confused as I was. Martin frequently ignored comments, and would sometimes just say, "I don't understand what you just said," and then call on another student. Totally disrespectful. So I'd improve the course by severely slashing the TA's ego.

- I really liked recitation sessions and the instructor. I learned a lot from the discussions, but it would have been even more helpful if the recitations could include a section where students discuss the assignment due that week specifically, to clear doubts about the questions that are pertinent to the final exam. The rest of the class could be an open discussion about other questions that arise from the material, but that are not tackled in the assignments.
- Very good at helping to clear up confusion on a subject (putting it in layman's terms). He should call on the people who never spoke.
- martin knew what he was doing. He went over the material much more clearly than ned. HHe was always able to explain concepts and answer our questions. He also encouraged us to discuss and share our thoughts and acted as a guide sometimes instead of a lecturer.
- Martin is an excellent recitation leader and will be an outstanding professor one day. I have no suggestions for improvements because I have never experienced a recitation leader that loves teaching so much and just wants the concepts to be accessible to everyone.

## Political Philosophy; PHIL-UA 45 004,005: Martin Abreu Zavaleta; Spring 2015

**Responses:** 6

**Enrollment:** 13

Overall, the recitation / lab was useful for achieving the goals of the course.

4.2

Martin Abreu Zavaleta was effective at helping me learn.

4.0

Martin Abreu Zavaleta provided helpful feedback on assignments (e.g., exams, papers, homework, lab reports, etc.).

4.0

Martin Abreu Zavaleta was accessible to students (e.g., via e-mail and office hours).

4.5

Feedback and suggestions for Martin Abreu Zavaleta

Describe the *one* best thing about the recitation / lab or Martin Abreu Zavaleta that was effective in helping you learn. If you could suggest *one* thing to improve the section, what would it be?

- Martín is excellent at managing recitation -- stepping in to clarify points when needed, while at the same time letting students' discussion run their course. One improvement may be to have more people attend the recitation, but again I understand if elevating the penalties for not attending are not feasible.
- Martín's recitation structure of answering questions was extremely helpful as he was easy to approach and good at explaining things that students had doubts about. However, one thing that he could improve on would be to follow up on promised written email explanations that were important in understanding certain arguments we discussed.

## **Central Problems in Philosophy; PHIL-UA 1 002; Martin Abreu Zavaleta; Summer 2015**

**Responses:** 7

**Enrollment:** 12

Overall, the course was effective at helping me learn.

3.9

The objectives of the course were achieved.

3.6

The classes were well organized.

3.7

The classes were informative.

3.9

The course was intellectually challenging.

4.1

The course increased my knowledge of the subject.

3.9

The course stimulated my interest in this subject.

3.1

**Martin Abreu Zavaleta**

Overall, Martin Abreu Zavaleta was effective at helping me learn.

3.0

Martin Abreu Zavaleta created a supportive learning environment.

3.4

Martin Abreu Zavaleta encouraged student participation.

4.1

Martin Abreu Zavaleta was effective at facilitating class discussion.

3.9

Martin Abreu Zavaleta was open to students' questions and points of view.

4.2

Martin Abreu Zavaleta provided helpful feedback on assignments (e.g., exams, papers, homework).

3.9

Martin Abreu Zavaleta was accessible to students (e.g., via e-mail and office hours).

3.9

Feedback and suggestions for Martin Abreu Zavaleta

Describe the *one* best thing about the course or Martin Abreu Zavaleta that was effective in helping you learn. If you could suggest *one* thing to improve the course, what would it be?

- Martin encouraged questions and was knowledgeable on the subject, but he was very unclear when teaching. Whenever I asked questions and he would explain I still would not know what was going on.
- The concepts in the course were very difficult to understand and the strategy utilized to teach the material was dull and unclear. It would have been more helpful if the students were given specific themes/topics to focus on in each of the assigned readings. Because it is an introductory course, teaching students a strategy (or strategies) of how to read philosophy would have been more helpful. I thought the overall material was interesting and gave a good overview of major topics addressed in philosophy.

# **Philosophy of Mind; PHIL-UA 80 001; Martin Abreu Zavaleta; Summer 2014**

**Responses:** 6

**Enrollment:** 11

Overall, the course was effective at helping me learn.

3.2

The objectives of the course were achieved.

3.3

The classes were well organized.

3.3

The classes were informative.

3.8

The course was intellectually challenging.

4.3

The course increased my knowledge of the subject.

3.7

The course stimulated my interest in this subject.

2.5

**Martin Abreu Zavaleta**

Overall, Martin Abreu Zavaleta was effective at helping me learn.

3.5

Martin Abreu Zavaleta created a supportive learning environment.

4.2

Martin Abreu Zavaleta encouraged student participation.

4.5

Martin Abreu Zavaleta was effective at facilitating class discussion.

4.2

Martin Abreu Zavaleta was open to students' questions and points of view.

4.3

Martin Abreu Zavaleta provided helpful feedback on assignments (e.g., exams, papers, homework).

4.0

Martin Abreu Zavaleta was accessible to students (e.g., via e-mail and office hours).

4.3

Feedback and suggestions for Martin Abreu Zavaleta

Describe the *one* best thing about the course or Martin Abreu Zavaleta that was effective in helping you learn. If you could suggest *one* thing to improve the course, what would it be?

- Best -- the readings in the course were very interesting. Improve --I would suggest improving the presentation of the reading material in class. The lectures were not always coherent and I often left class very confused.
- The course had interesting material at times and fostered much discussion. Unfortunately, some of the material required for us to read hadn't been introduced or explained previous to some of the readings, leaving us in a position in which it is very difficult to understand the assigned reading. Also, when feedback is given on the papers, it would be nice to see more positive comments instead of just questions and criticisms. Even though at the end of the paper, he often says how the attempt was good or argument was well constructed, that is the only point at which I know my writing is good.
- Best thing: he was knew a lot about the subject. Worst thing: I hope the class was a bit more interactive with more multimedia (charts, pictures, videos, etc.)

## 5 Student comments

### 5.1 Central Problems in Philosophy, Fall 2013

Comments for Summer courses and Political Philosophy (Spring 2015) are included above. Below are comments for the rest of the courses, compiled by NYU's administrative staff.

I think that Martin did a very good job. He allowed a lot of room for discussion without inserting himself too much—only when really needed. He was very patient which is also important for classes of this nature and made a point to talk with students about the material. It felt like he really wanted us to succeed.

Thanks Martin.

I greatly enjoyed this class, especially recitation where we had the opportunity to discuss. At the beginning of the year, we spent a lot of time reconstructing the arguments presented in lecture, which I found a bit dull and elementary. Later, as we were able to spend more time on a free-form discussion, I felt like I got a lot more out of it. But I know Martin wanted to make sure everyone at least understood the arguments and, for an intro class, I guess that is to be expected.



The recitation has been a lot more stimulating and helpful for me as a philosophy student because it is a lot more interactive. I wish the lecture portion would be slightly decreased and that time added to additional recitation time.

Try to ~~help~~ help class avoid long periods  
of silence during discussion periods

Discussions run well. clts good ~~at~~<sup>that</sup>  
we can ~~to~~ speak freely in sections, and  
nice when we relax and make things  
relatable. I enjoyed the class.

## 5.2 Aesthetics, Spring 2014

At first I thought the instructor was a bit intimidating, but as it went on he seemed to interact with the students. Also I think he is very clear when answering questions which I like.

Interesting, thought-provoking & recitations.

Martín is a really good TA. Always receptive to questions from students and clear in his teaching. Was usually available when I needed help outside of class and answered my questions well. A little tough on grading but otherwise helpful w/ papers.

### 5.3 Minds and Machines, Fall 2014

Very good recitation. Would recommend this class to a friend.  
I don't think it would be a bad thing if  
we had more written assignments.

sometimes I wish you  
could have spent ~~the~~  
the 1st 15 min. of  
class clearly explaining  
what we discussed in  
lecture like a  
spark notes type of  
thing.



The grading comments were unclear and  
I still feel at a slight loss as to why  
I received the deductions I did.  
Martin is a great lecturer & teacher but  
is an uneloquent and vague grader.