

Research and Placement Seminar

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Mondays, 2-4:45pm, Malloy 215

This course will teach students how to become professional academic philosophers. Research-related topics will include how to stay consistently productive throughout one's writing career, what to do when one is stuck, how to stay passionate about one's topic, how to deal with procrastination and writing avoidance, how to receive feedback and incorporate it into one's work productively, and how to achieve work/ life balance.

Professionalization-related topics will include how to give a good talk, how and when to submit to journals, how to interact productively and professionally with colleagues, and how to plan one's philosophical career.

Placement-related topics will encompass explanations of each step in the academic philosophy job market, including how to prepare one's job market materials, how to perform well in a first-round interview, how to give a good job talk and teaching presentation, and how to negotiate a job offer.

Students will also present their work in a supportive and encouraging setting. Sign up for presentation dates by **September 4**.

Course requirements: attendance, class participation, and one research presentation.

Schedule

August 28: Academic Philosophy as a Profession: Activities, Career Stages, Unwritten Rules; Institutional Structure in Higher Education

What are my duties as a graduate student, postdoc, junior faculty member, and senior faculty member?
How much research, teaching, and service will be expected of me at each stage?
What are the many ways of building an academic philosophical career?
Must my career look like my dissertation advisor's career?
Will I always suffer from imposter syndrome?
What are some unwritten rules of the philosophy profession?
What, exactly, is a department chair/ associate dean/ dean/ provost/ chancellor/ university president, and how do their roles differ? What will my professional relationship be with each one?

September 4: Types of Academic Jobs and Institutions

How do research-centered jobs differ from teaching-centered jobs, and what will my life look like if I am at either kind?
What is an "R1" institution, and why does it have that label?
What sorts of postdocs and temporary positions are there, and how do their duties differ?
How do I interpret job ads?
Should I apply for positions at religious institutions? Are all religious institutions alike?
When should I tailor my job market materials to specific institutions?
What does it take to get tenure in different sorts of tenure track positions?
How does the US academic system differ from others?

September 11: First Round Job Interviews

What sorts of questions will I be asked in a first-round interview?
How can I prepare for a first-round interview?
How long should my research spiel be?
How will my first-round interview be evaluated?
What should my Zoom background be?
What should I wear?
What does it mean if my interview went well, but I did not progress in the search?

September 18: Professional Talks and Commentaries

What makes a good philosophy talk?
How can I perform well in a talk q&a?
How do I avoid seeming defensive in a q&a?
How should I react if someone gets aggressive in a q&a?
How do I construct a talk from a paper or project?
Must I have an answer to every question and counterexample?
What makes a good commentary on another paper, author, or panelist?

September 25: Job Talks and Teaching Presentations

How is a job talk different than a normal talk?
How should the approach to q&a differ from that of a normal talk?
Should I use slides, handouts, both, or neither?
Should I read my talk?
Should I send the paper ahead of time?
What are teaching-focused institutions looking for in a teaching presentation?
How do I bond with students in my teaching presentation?

October 2: Flyouts at Research-centered and Teaching-centered Institutions

What sorts of things will I do on a flyout? How will I be judged?
How can I prepare for a flyout?
Do I need to read everything that each faculty member has ever written?
What is it like to meet with an associate dean, dean, provost, or president of a university?
How should I interact with groups of undergraduates or graduate students on my flyout?
How do flyouts differ between institutions?
How will I get reimbursed for a flyout?
What if I can't afford to pay for the airplane tickets in advance of a reimbursement?
What if I'm asked an illegal question? What are illegal questions?
What should I wear?
What should I expect at my job talk dinner?

October 9: Writing Productivity (I): Being a Writer

Um, how do I write a whole dissertation?
How do I keep writing a dissertation once I've started?
How do I get into a writing routine?
How do I pick up my dissertation again if I have not written for awhile?
Why does everyone else seem so much more productive than me?
When should I solicit feedback on my writing?
How do I avoid loneliness while I'm writing and dissertating?

October 23: Writing Productivity (II): Procrastination, Feeling Stuck, Feeling Bored

How do I avoid cleaning my house/ surfing the internet/ repainting my bathroom (and other procrastinatory activities) that prevent me from writing?
What if I've stared at a blank page for several writing sessions in a row?
What if I've been stuck on a project for weeks/ months/ years?
What if I've fallen out of love with my topic?
How do I write when I'm feeling discouraged?
Will writing always feel this hard?
How can I create writing accountability?

October 30: Publishing

When should I send something to a journal? When is a paper ready?
How do I know what sort of journal to target?
When should I approach an editor about the status of my paper?
How do I proceed with a revise and resubmit verdict?
What message should I take from a rejection, or many rejections?
How does the process of publishing differ between papers and books? What are the pros and cons of each?
What are best citation practices in academic philosophy?

November 6: Receiving and Giving Philosophical Feedback

How do I handle negative feedback (from my committee, from referees, from random hostile interlocutors?)
How can I get the feedback I need from my dissertation advisor?
How do I receive feedback without panicking or becoming depressed?
How should I interpret feedback from my dissertation advisor?
When should I revise my work in light of feedback, versus forging ahead?
How can I give good feedback to colleagues?
How can I be a good referee for journals and presses?

November 13: Balancing Teaching, Research, and Life

How do I prevent teaching and teaching prep from taking over my time?
How do I fit research into my schedule even when I am busy?
How do I draw boundaries with students, colleagues, and family to protect my writing time?
How can I enjoy both research and teaching if one or the other is not my favorite thing?
How do I remain energetic and innovative in the classroom when I have other career pressures?
Aside from talking to a mental health professional, what steps can I take to protect my mental health as I move through the profession?
How do I solicit support at each stage of my career?
How can I cultivate hobbies and selfhood outside of academic philosophy?
Do I have to travel for work?

November 20: Interacting with Colleagues; Conferences

How can I stop spending many hours composing a two-line email to my dissertation advisor?
How do I approach faculty members that I've never met?
How do I ask faculty for favors?
How do I ask faculty for letters of recommendation?
How do I interact with colleagues with whom I have nothing in common?
How should I interact with faculty at conferences? What if I want to send them work?

How do I network with graduate students at other universities?
What are the pros and cons of being on social media, and of posting on social media?
What makes a good colleague?

November 27: Job Offers, Negotiations, and Decisions

What is the process of receiving a job offer?
Will my job offer be written or verbal?
What is the timeline on receiving an offer, and on making a decision?
Should I negotiate? Will my job offer be revoked if I negotiate?
How can I negotiate without sounding demanding?
What sorts of things is it appropriate to ask for at different kinds of institutions?
What sorts of requests should I prioritize in a job negotiation?
Who will I be negotiating with?
What if some of my requests are turned down?
How do I decide between multiple job offers, if I get them?

December 4: Your Long-Term Career

I got a job! Now what?
What will it take to get tenure?
Do I have to mine my dissertation for articles, or can I pivot to a different research topic?
What do I want my next 5-10 years to look like?
What do I want my long-term contribution to the field to look like?
What if I'm burnt out after defending my dissertation/ getting a postdoc/ getting a tenure-track job/
getting tenure?
What if I'm not happy in my first job (due to department, location, nature of institution, salary, etc)?
What if I'm not happy in academia?