

## DLCL 333/PHIL 333

Philosophy, Literature, and the Arts Core Seminar

Winter 2018

Hours: Tuesday 10:30 AM - 1:20 PM

Classroom: [110-114](#)

### Instructors

Oded Na'aman  
Office: Building 90 room 92K  
Email: [onaaman@stanford.edu](mailto:onaaman@stanford.edu)  
Office Hours: Tuesday 2:30 to 3:30  
and by appt.

Blakey Vermeule  
Office: Building 460 room 413  
Email: [vermeule@stanford.edu](mailto:vermeule@stanford.edu)  
Office Hours: MW 3-4:30

### Course Outline

This course serves as the Core Seminar for the PhD Minor in Philosophy, Literature, and the Arts. It introduces students to a wide range of topics at the intersection of philosophy with literary and arts criticism. In this year's installment of the seminar, we will focus on issues about the role of narrative in emotion and self-understanding, about narrative as a mediator between solitude and community, and about narratives and philosophies of hope and despair. The seminar is intended for graduate students. It is suitable for theoretically ambitious students of literature and the arts, philosophers with interests in value theory, aesthetics, and topics in language and mind, and other students with strong interest in the psychological importance of engagement with the arts.

### Books (Available at Stanford Bookstore)

Baldwin, James. *The Fire Next Time*. Vintage Books (1993)

Benatar, David. *The Human Predicament: A Candid Guide to Life's Biggest Questions*. Oxford University Press (2017)

Coetzee, J. M. *Disgrace: A Novel*. Penguin Books, Ltd. (1999)

Goldie, Peter. *The Mess Inside: Narrative, Emotion, and the Mind*. Oxford University Press (2012)

Lear, Jonathan. *Radical Hope: Ethics in the Face of Cultural Devastation*. Harvard University Press (2006)

Thoreau, Henry David. *Walden: Introduction and Annotation by Bill McKibben*. Concord Library (1854/2004)

Woolf, Virginia. *To the Lighthouse*. Harcourt, Inc. (1927/1981)

Additional readings may be found online, via [canvas.stanford.edu](http://canvas.stanford.edu).  
*NB: it is your responsibility to bring copies of required reading to class.*

### Eligibility

This is a graduate seminar. If the class is not full, we will accept applications from seniors. Applications must be submitted to the instructors, via email, by the end of the first week of classes; *they must include an indication of preparation for the course* (previous classes in literature and/or philosophy that have a bearing on this material).

### Units and Requirements

The following options are available:

- (1) 2 units, **CR/NC**: no paper required. Credit will be awarded for doing the reading, attending class, contributing to discussion, and doing a **relaunch** or **coda**. (See below for definitions.)
- (2) 2 units, letter: in addition to the above, you will be required to write a **book review**. (See below.)

This option is available only to PhD students.

- (3) 4 units, letter: attendance, relaunch/coda, plus **final paper** (3,300-3,500 words).

**NB**: this means that **unless you are taking the class CR/NC, you will have to write something**. Students who wish to count this class for the core seminar requirement of the PLA minor must select the 4-unit option or consult the instructors.

### Final Paper Option

Please make sure to clear your final paper topic with one of the instructors before February 27, whether in person or over email. With our permission, your paper may focus on a literary work that is not on this syllabus. For this to be the case, the work in question must be one that we know well; check to see whether that is the case. Please make sure you do not reuse work from another class or submit (part of) your paper for DLCL 333 to another class.

Bibliographical requirements vary with subject matter and career stage. From a senior, we expect a minimum of 2-3 items, at least one of which should be something you found yourself. From a cotermin / MA student, we expect a minimum of 3-5 items, at least one of which should be something you found yourself. From a PhD student, we expect a minimum of 6-8 items, but you may well wish to go beyond that, depending on the topic.

### Book Review Option

If you are taking the class for 2 units, your final project will be a review of an academic book (a) *on a topic relevant to the course* and (b) *published within the last year*. You should attach a statement of 50-100 words explaining how the book connects directly to the themes of the course. The review must be ready for submission to a journal you have in mind and should be formatted to meet that journal's requirements. Please attach one or two sample reviews from past issues of the journal in question. Book reviews may well be shorter than a term paper, but will be held to this higher standard of presentation.

## Relaunch and Coda

There will be no formal presentations in this seminar. Instead, each week one student will be responsible for relaunching discussion in the second half, and another student will be responsible for delivering a coda. Relaunchers should be ready to move in different directions depending on what has preceded, and sensitive to the direction the discussion has taken. Coda- composers should work to tie together disparate threads, find connections that might have gone unnoticed, and point to interesting questions that have not yet found an answer.

## Schedule

### January 9: Narrative and the Self (1)

- Goldie, Peter. *The Mess Inside: Narrative, Emotion, and the Mind*. Oxford University Press (2012) chapters 1-4.
- Woolf, Virginia. *To the Lighthouse*. Harcourt, Inc. (1927/1981) pp. 3-124.

### January 16: Narrative and the Self (2)

- Goldie, *The Mess Inside*. Chapters 5-7.
- Woolf, *To the Lighthouse*, pp. 125-end.

### January 23: Debates about Narrativity

- Velleman, David. "Narrative Explanation." *The Philosophical Review* 112 (2003), pp. 1-25.
- Moran, Richard. "The Story of My Life: Narrative and Self-Understanding." In *The Philosophical Imagination: Selected Essays*, Oxford University Press (2017), available online through Oxford Scholarship Online.
- Strawson, Galen. "Against Narrativity." *Ratio* 17 (2004): 428-454.
- *Recommended*: Velleman, David. "Well Being and Time." *Pacific Philosophical Quarterly* 72 (1991) 48-77.

### January 30: Narrative, Solitude, and Community (1)

- Thoreau, Henry David. *Walden: Introduction and Annotation by Bill McKibben*. Concord Library (2004). (first half)
- Cavell, Stanley, "The Senses of Walden." in *The Senses of Walden*, The University of Chicago Press (1972), pp. 3-69

### February 6: Narrative, Solitude, and Community (2)

- Thoreau, *Walden*, second half.
- Cavell, "The Senses of Walden," pp. 70-120.

February 13: Despair (1)

- Benatar, David. *The Human Predicament: A Candid Guide to Life's Biggest Questions*, Oxford University Press (20017) pp. 1-91.
- Coetzee, J. M. *Disgrace: A Novel*. Penguin Books, Ltd. (2000) chapters 1-12.

February 20: Despair (2)

- Benatar, David. *The Human Predicament*. Pp. 92-213.
- Coetzee, J. M. *Disgrace*. Chapters 13-24.
- *Recommended*: Kahane, Guy. "If Nothing Matters." *Nous* 51 (2017) 327-353.

February 27: Hope (1)

- Lear, Jonathan. *Radical Hope: Ethics in the Face of Cultural Devastation*. Harvard University Press (2006) chapters 1 & 2.
- Baldwin, James. *The Fire Next Time*. Vintage Books (1993/1963) pp. 1-47.

March 6: Hope (2)

- Lear. *Radical Hope*. chapter 3.
- Baldwin. *The Fire Next Time*. pp. 47-106.
- *Recommended*: Griswold, Charles L. *Forgiveness: A Philosophical Exploration*. Cambridge University Press (2007), chapters 4 and 5, pp. 135-215.

March 13: Wrap up and conclusion

**Final paper due March 19, 2018.**

## Policies

### Students with Documented Disabilities

Students who may need an academic accommodation based on the impact of a disability must initiate the request with the Office of Accessible Education (OAE). Professional staff will evaluate the request with required documentation, recommend reasonable accommodations, and prepare an Accommodation Letter for faculty dated in the current quarter in which the request is being made. Students should contact the OAE as soon as possible since timely notice is needed to coordinate accommodations. The OAE is located at 563 Salvatierra Walk (phone: 723-1066, URL: <http://studentaffairs.stanford.edu/oa>).

### Honor Code

The Honor Code is the University's statement on academic integrity written by students in 1921. It articulates University expectations of students and faculty in establishing and maintaining the highest standards in academic work.

The Honor Code is an undertaking of the students, individually and collectively:

1. that they will not give or receive aid in examinations; that they will not give or receive unpermitted aid in class work, in the preparation of reports, or in any other work that is to be used by the instructor as the basis of grading.
2. that they will do their share and take an active part in seeing to it that others as well as themselves uphold the spirit and letter of the Honor Code.
3. The faculty on its part manifests its confidence in the honor of its students by refraining from proctoring examinations and from taking unusual and unreasonable precautions to prevent the forms of dishonesty mentioned above. The faculty will also avoid, as far as practicable, academic procedures that create temptations to violate the Honor Code.
4. While the faculty alone has the right and obligation to set academic requirements, the students and faculty will work together to establish optimal conditions for honorable academic work.