

As a teacher I aim to capture my students' natural interest in philosophical questions, and to help them think, talk, and write about them in a clear and comprehensible way. I try to orient my classes, especially in the beginning, around the kind of "big questions" students are already asking themselves, if only in a rough or inchoate form—questions about the beginning and end of life, about who they are, and what they know, and what they ought to believe.

Although asking these questions comes naturally to many students, engaging with them using reasoned arguments often does not. Many skills students need to master are general skills, which I hope they take with them into future endeavors. Philosophical writing, for example, requires not just writing composition skills, but the ability to organize one's thoughts, to project oneself into the position of a reader who has not already thought about things that way, and to explain one's thinking in a way that will be understandable.

But a philosophy education is not just about learning general skills, and it's definitely not just about memorizing a received body of views and arguments. I want my students to experience philosophy as an ongoing enterprise. In my 300- and 400-level undergraduate seminars, for example, I hardly ever use slides or lecture notes, which in my experience can set the wrong expectations for student participation. Instead, I come in with notes for myself, usually a basic outline of the points I want to cover, and a list of questions to get discussion going again if it starts to lag. The main goal in class is to just work through the readings together with students, figuring out the arguments and debating their merits.

Usually I begin individual class sessions with a specific question or problem drawn from the reading. Then I solicit answers—as many as possible—as I write them on the board. Beyond supplying material for later discussion, I have found that this practice allows for a low-stakes contribution from students who might be reluctant to jump into an animated discussion already underway. Getting these reluctant students to contribute is not always easy, but it pays off, even when the contributions are minor. When students no longer feel anonymous, they have more ownership of the course and are more invested in its success. After we have our rough ideas sketched out, we work through the connections between ideas, consider problems they face, and refine existing proposals to avoid those problems. Often I will have brief (5-10 minute) mini-lectures planned in advance, which I hold in reserve for when a topic comes up, or the discussion gets slow. But I try to be flexible, and give the feeling that we are actively doing philosophy, not just going through a pre-planned lecture with some breaks for Q&A.

I arrived at the University of Toronto in 2016, having previously taught for three years at Union College, a small liberal arts college in upstate New York. Coming from a SLAC, and having attended one myself, I immediately felt at home in my 300- and 400-level seminars at UofT. But my 200-level course, capped at 210 students, took some adjustment. It has taken practice to balance my teaching preferences with the realities of the class size. The main in-class delivery format is still lecture from powerpoint slides, but I have learned how to incorporate more activities to break up the lecture—polls, questions for the class, interactive thought experiments, and brief videos. I also incorporate some teaching tools that scale with the course size, like the example paper on animal minds that I have included in the sample teaching materials in this dossier.

I approach graduate teaching a bit differently. Graduate students are already hooked on philosophy, and know how to engage with philosophical material. And it is relatively more

important for them to take in views and arguments from existing debates, as opposed to just learning general skills. While I still like to have discussions in class, I am less shy about lecturing from handouts—a few examples of which I am including with my teaching documents.

*Summary of courses and advising:*

At the 200 level, I teach a recurring course, ‘Persons, Minds, and Bodies’. This serves primarily as the department’s introductory philosophy of mind course, though I also like to include some additional material on personhood and the ethics of life and death. We start with abortion and the moral status of fetuses, followed by animal minds and then artificial intelligence. I find that this introductory material helps to draw in students who are not philosophy majors, especially ones taking the course to fulfill a requirement. Then we switch to more traditional philosophy of mind topics, like consciousness, mental causation, and dualism vs. materialism. We finish with two weeks on personal identity, followed by a few sessions on death.

At the 300 level, I have taught courses in epistemology and the philosophy of mind. My first year, I taught ‘Issues in Philosophy of Mind’, with modules on consciousness, other minds, and self-knowledge. Since then, I have taught ‘Epistemology’ on a recurring basis. This is a more straightforward upper-level epistemology survey course, though with a mildly nonstandard selection of topics. I like to start with the question whether it can be rational to believe something because it makes you happy, and from there move into social epistemology, especially disagreement. I have had success with drawing a wider range of students into class discussion about these topics, which often continues on when we turn to more traditional topics like skepticism and the internalism/externalism debate.

At the 400 level I have taught seminars on a range of topics. All were listed as ‘Seminar in Epistemology’, but only in my first year was it a straight epistemology course, mostly focusing on disagreement, testimony, memory, and higher-order evidence. In 2019 and 2020, I taught courses on epistemology and ethics, where we covered topics like reasons, normativity, akrasia, and self-control. Finally, in 2022 I taught a course on self-consciousness and the self, which covered contemporary and historical readings from a variety of subfields.

Because of our department’s size, co-teaching is common in graduate courses, and I have co-taught all four of my graduate courses. All have been broadly in epistemology, though intersecting with other subfields. Probably all due to my co-teachers’ popularity, the courses have been well-attended, including by auditing students, visiting students, and postdocs. My course with Gurprett Rattan also featured several outside speakers presenting work in progress.

I have also been an active advisor, supervising four undergraduate research courses, and three Socrates projects. At the graduate level, I served on ten dissertation committees, including one as co-chair. I was also on the qualifying year committee for six of these students, and am on one more this year. I think this in part reflects my commitment to reading my students’ work carefully, and providing extensive feedback. I also try to maintain good personal relationships with my students. My hope is for them to see me primarily as a mentor engaged in a cooperative enterprise, rather than primarily as an examiner looking for flaws in their work.