PHIL 398: EXPERIMENTAL PHILOSOPHY

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course will introduce students to Experimental Philosophy. Generally speaking, experimental philosophers conduct quantitative research in order to investigate philosophical questions. Most work in this field utilizes survey research in order to discern the source of the various intuitions people have to philosophical thought experiments. In addition to surveying prominent work in Experimental Philosophy, the course will consider potential limitations as well as potential further applications of this methodology.

COURSE GOALS

Experimental philosophy is a relatively new field of research. There are many philosophical topics that have yet to be examined at all, and many more that are only beginning to be examined experimentally. In addition to imparting to students an understanding of the important theoretical issues that are raised by the methodology of experimental philosophy and of some of the positive results in the field, the course aims to prepare students to be able to conduct research that may contribute to the development of this burgeoning field.

OFFICE HOURS

Office hours will be determined during the first week of class. Students may feel free to stop by the instructor's office to talk at other times, or may schedule appointments at times other than the scheduled office hours.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Students are expected to follow Lewis & Clark’s Academic Integrity Policy as stated in the College Catalog. Failure to do so will likely result in failing the course as well as any additional disciplinary action taken by the college’s Honor Board.

DISABILITIES

Students that have learning disabilities or learning differences, which may impact their ability to perform well in this class, may request special accommodation by submitting documentation to the Student Support Services Office on the ground floor of the Templeton Student Center across from the Cashier (ext. 7191). The office will notify the instructor directly concerning any accommodations for which a student is eligible.

REQUIREMENTS AND GRADES

You must attend class having read the assigned material carefully and must be willing to participate in classroom discussion and debate. Your grade for the course will be determined in the following way.

10%  In-class summary presentations of articles. One student will present each reading for roughly the first 10 minutes class (whenever there is a new reading assignment).

10%  Attendance and participation.
5% A quiz on the basic statistics needed to comprehend the results in experimental philosophy.

15% A 3-4 page paper that explains what experimental philosophy is and discusses some of the criticisms of this methodology.

20% 5 - 10 page APA (American Psychological Association) style literature review on a topic the student wishes to research.

10% A 2-3 page research proposal.

30% A 10 - 20 page research paper. Students will be responsible for writing a substantive research paper that follows up on some topic discussed in class. Papers must propose an experiment to test some specific philosophically interesting hypothesis. In some cases, it may be possible to conduct an actual quantitative study. In those cases, the research paper should report the results and say whether the results confirm or disconfirm the predicted hypothesis. In all other cases, research papers should contain a concluding section that draws out the implications of what results would help to confirm or disconfirm the predicted hypothesis.

The standard grading scale will be used

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<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<td>A</td>
<td>93</td>
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<td>A-</td>
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**READINGS**

The book for the course will be *Experimental Philosophy*, ed. J. Knobe & S. Nichols, Oxford University Press, 2008. All other readings will be placed on reserve in library and/or made available to students by the instructor electronically. The course will be roughly broken up into five topical units.

**SCHEDULE**

**Introduction to Experimental Philosophy: Research on Intentional Action**

M 8/31: Introductory Lecture / Course Overview


F 9/4: CLASS CANCELLED (instructor out of town)

M 9/7: NO CLASS (Labor Day)
Background Methodological and Critical Issues


M 9/28: Additional readings (from traditional philosophical sources) and classroom debate over the viability of experimental philosophy.

W 9/30: Additional readings (from traditional philosophical sources) and classroom debate over the viability of experimental philosophy.

F 10/2: Additional readings (from traditional philosophical sources) and classroom debate over the viability of experimental philosophy.

FIRST WRITTEN ASSIGNMENT DUE

Research on Cross-cultural Differences in Folk Intuitions

M 10/5: Short readings from Lehrer and Kripke, Overview of the philosophical debates relevant to this section.


F 10/9: NO CLASS (Fall Break)


F 10/16: Lecture on cross-cultural differences in other areas.
Research on Free Will, Moral Responsibility, Determinism, and Personal Identity

M 10/19: Short readings TBA, overview of the philosophical debates relevant to this section.


W 10/28: Classroom discussion and lecture on writing an APA style literature review.


W 11/4: Wrap-up discussion of issues raised in this section / brainstorming ideas for further research.

Experimental Philosophy of Consciousness

F 11/6: Short readings TBA, overview of the philosophical debates relevant to this section.


F 11/13: Classroom discussion and lecture on writing a research proposal.


M 11/23: Wrap-up Discussion.
RESEARCH PROPOSAL DUE

W 11/25:  Wrap-up Discussion.

APA LITERATURE REVIEW DUE

F 11/27:  NO CLASS (Thanksgiving Holiday)

M 11/30:  TBA*

W 12/2:  TBA*

F 12/4:  TBA*

M 12/7:  TBA*

W 12/9:  TBA*

S 12/12  Final Exam, 1:00 – 4:00 PM

RESEARCH PAPER DUE

*The readings to be covered during the last two weeks will be determined by the instructor on the basis of the topics students have chosen to work on for their final papers.