

**THE MCANULTY COLLEGE & GRADUATE  
SCHOOL OF LIBERAL ARTS  
DUQUESNE UNIVERSITY**

**FALL 2020**

**GRADUATE TEACHING SEMINAR**

**PHIL 690-01 (I) & 689-01 (II)  
Wednesdays 12:00-2:40 pm**

**Dr. Daniel Selcer**



Students at the University of Bologna  
Jacobello Dalle Masegne, c. 1386

We philosophers like to think that teaching is something that happens naturally, at least given the right situation. After all, many of us enthusiastically encountered the notion that learning is recollection during the early weeks of our first philosophy class. Yet effectively teaching philosophy in a modern university requires both theory and craft as much as it does reflective knowledge or love of wisdom. Your other seminars are meant to allow you to develop as a philosopher; this one will assist you with becoming a sophist: like it or not, at the end of the PhD-road (immediately following your inevitably triumphant dissertation defense) lies a moment when all your energy will be directed toward ensuring your elevation into the ranks of the professoriate by demonstrating your mastery of a circumscribed domain of knowledge, claiming the technical expertise to teach it to others, and demanding money in return for your performance. This seminar is therefore intended both as a practicum for graduate students preparing to teach philosophy and a workshop for those already in the classroom. It will also provide a forum for philosophical reflection on teaching and learning that may help bridge the philosopher-sophist divide we all face when we sing for our conceptual supper.

Students in the first section of the seminar (PHIL 690) will learn to construct and teach an effective introductory-level philosophy course, developing skills associated with formulating course goals, planning learning activities and employing a variety of effective pedagogical techniques; considering different types of assignments; conceptualizing a plan for readings and assignments; preparing a syllabus; and learning the basics of assessing and responding to student work. Seminar members will also consider ways that diverse forms of student identity (race, class, gender, sexuality, religious belief, etc.) can impact the pedagogical situation. Students in the second section of the seminar (PHIL 689) will revisit and further develop techniques for assessing and responding to student work as well as pedagogical issues connected to student and professor identity. They will improve their teaching by collectively addressing real issues (both problems and success) they encounter in their classes.

The required course text is John C. Bean, *Engaging Ideas: The Professor's Guide to Integrating Writing, Critical Thinking, and Active Learning in the Classroom*, 2nd edition (San Francisco: Bjossey-Bass/Wiley, 2011), referred to by a former Duquesne PhD now about to receive tenure as "the *Anarchist Cookbook* of pedagogy". Via PDF, we'll also read some interesting philosophical work on teaching and pedagogy, belonging both to Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL) literature and to philosophy proper (bell hooks, John Dewey, Paolo Freire, Robert Solomon, etc.).

Second year PhDs should register for PHIL 690. Interested MA students should plan to attend the sessions for PHIL 690 without registering (credit-free registration for MAs is no longer possible, but we will provide a formal certificate for completion of the course, to be used as a credential in PhD program applications). Third year PhDs should register for PHIL 689.