PHILOSOPHY OF BIOLOGY  
Philosophy 190-F; Senior Seminar  
SYLLABUS

Instructor: Prof. Rasmus Grønfeldt Winther  
Classroom: Porter 250  
Meeting Times: Thursdays 12 noon – 3 pm  
Office Hours: Cowell A-104 Tuesdays 4.15 – 5.30 pm; Thursdays 3.20 – 3.50 pm; by appointment; (N.b. meeting sign-up required).  
Email: rgw@ucsc.edu  
Webpage (teaching): http://www.rgwinther.com/Courses.html  
There is an eCommons page for this course.

1. COMMUNICATION  
Please ask all questions about the content or format of the course during classtime. If you’re wondering about X, almost certainly some of your peers also will be. A non-asked question is a lost teaching opportunity and potentially a question never answered! We’ll have “open questions” session for a few minutes during every class. Please consult my webpage (teaching) for my policy regarding student emails.

2. COURSE REQUIREMENTS  
1. A bi-weekly (max) 1 page answer to assigned questions. Due in class. (25% of your grade)  
   You have the option of redoing any think piece. In that case, turn in the old think piece with my comments and grade on it together with your revised work. Do not expect further comments.
   N.b. All think pieces must be typed and turned in on paper. Do not email think pieces.

2. Group Project (30% of your grade; see below)

3. Paper. It can be 3-10 pages long. The shorter the better! First version of a complete paper is due on Monday November 11 @ my office. REWRITE REWRITE REWRITE. Second version is due on Monday November 25 @ my office. (30% of your grade)

4. In-class participation, via small group discussions and cold-calls. (15% of your grade)  
   + All assignments are mandatory. You will fail the course if you miss even a single think piece [if you are absent (see below), you have no more than two weekdays to turn in your think piece].
   + Attendance is mandatory. Attendance will be taken. Although I do NOT recommend that you do so, you may miss up to one class, no questions asked. The second class missed requires a serious medical excuse, or you will fail. Missing more than two classes results in failing the course.
3. GROUP PROJECT
For the group projects, you will work on a specific course-relevant theme of your choosing. Use the class readings, but also do your own research (e.g., at McHenry Library, on the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, etc.). You will be divided into a group of 3-5 people. These are your peers for the entire quarter. You will also evaluate one another. For the projects you have four options (which do not exclude one another):

i. a poster of your chosen theme, which can be made directly physically or through PowerPoint

ii. a well-organized skit or dialogue of your chosen theme

iii. a board game or card game showing extensive knowledge of your theme, and that perhaps points to the dialectics among a variety of other themes. What would the objective of the game be? What would the rules be?

iv. A video. Here is an example from another class Prof. Winther taught: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l3OrcXi1mw

Timeline
Week 8: show preparatory materials, including a bibliography, to the Professor during class.
Week 9: mini dry-run (part of classtime)
Week 10: in-class presentations

Each of the three milestones will be part of your group project grade! Moreover, you will also evaluate your group peers as part of your grade.

4. WRITING ADVICE
Writing is essential to our craft as philosophers. Your writing can always improve. Here are some relevant online resources. Read and enjoy!

1. Guidelines for philosophical writing:
http://www.public.asu.edu/~dportmor/tips.pdf
http://www.hps.cam.ac.uk/research/wp.html

2. Guidelines for essay writing, in general:
http://www.westmont.edu/~work/material/writing.html

3. Oxford English Dictionary. You have online to this extraordinary resource at:
http://www.oed.com.oca.ucsc.edu/

4. “Politics and the English Language.” Please read this funny and useful essay by George Orwell (author of 1984) here:

5. From the inimitable Kurt Vonnegut:
5. STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES
If you qualify for classroom accommodations because of a disability, please submit your Accommodation Authorization Letter from the Disability Resource Center (DRC) to me, after class or in office hours, **as soon as possible**, preferably within the first week of the Quarter. Contact DRC by phone at 831-459-2089 or by email at drc@ucsc.edu for more information.

6. WARNING
Academic misconduct will not be tolerated. Please consult:
http://www.ucsc.edu/academics/academic_integrity/index.html

7. COURSE READINGS
The three books, and course reader, are available at Literary Guillotine (204 Locust St, Santa Cruz, CA 95060)

Week 1. 9/26. **Introduction.**


Week 2. 10/3. **Modeling I.** (Guest: Otávio Bueno, University of Miami)


Week 3. 10/10. **Modeling II.**
*American Scientist* 54: 421-431. (You can “skip” the section “Robust and Non-robust 
Theorems,” pp. 423-7.)


11. Recommended: Review of Stephen Stich *Collected Papers. Knowledge, Rationality, and 
Morality* by RGW 
http://ndpr.nd.edu/news/41480-collected-papers-volume-2-knowledge-rationality-and-
morality/

**Week 4. 10/17. “Kinds of People” & Classifying Persons.**

Academy* 151:285-318.


Its Consequences.* Cambridge: MIT Press. Introduction: “To Classify is Human” (pp. 1-32) and Ch. 10 “Why Classifications Matter” (pp. 319-333)

**Week 5. 10/24. Values I.**

Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective.” *Feminist Studies* 14 (3): 575-599.

104: 383-397.

**Week 6. 10/31. Values II.**


Reprint.

**Week 7. 11/7. Case I: Race.**


Its Consequences.* Cambridge: MIT Press Ch. 6 “The Case of Race Classification and 
Reclassification Under Apartheid” (pp. 195-225).

21. Kaplan, Jonathan M, Winther, Rasmus G. Submitted. Realism, Antirealism, and 
Conventionalism about Race.
Week 8. 11/14. **Case II: Intelligence.**  


Week 9. 11/21. **Case III: Sex&Gender.** (Guest: Jocelyn Hoy, UCSC)  


Week 10. 12/5  
Group Projects

**SUPPLEMENTARY material in Course Reader**  
26. “Tips on Writing a Philosophy Paper” (Douglas Portmore)  
27. “How to write with style” (Kurt Vonnegut)  
28. *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* “the banking model” (Paolo Freire)