

Research and Placement Seminar

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Mondays, 2-4:45pm, Malloy 215

This course will teach students how to become professional academic philosophers. Research-related topics will include how to stay consistently productive throughout one's writing career, what to do when one is stuck, how to stay passionate about one's topic, how to deal with procrastination and writing avoidance, how to receive feedback and incorporate it into one's work productively, and how to achieve work/ life balance.

Professionalization-related topics will include how to give a good talk, how and when to submit to journals, how to interact productively and professionally with colleagues, and how to plan one's philosophical career.

Placement-related topics will encompass explanations of each step in the academic philosophy job market, including how to prepare one's job market materials, how to perform well in a first-round interview, how to give a good job talk and teaching presentation, and how to negotiate a job offer.

Students will also present their work in a supportive and encouraging setting. Sign up for presentation dates by **September 4**.

Course requirements: attendance, class participation, and one research presentation. This course is pass/ fail.

Schedule

September 2: Introduction; Professional Talks and Commentaries; Institutional Structure in Higher Education

Why have a whole course dedicated to research and placement?
What are the ground rules for the course?

What makes a good philosophy talk?
How do I construct a talk from a paper or project?
What should go in a talk handout or PowerPoint presentation?
How can I perform well in a talk q&a?
Is a q&a just a big, scary quiz on my research?
Must I have an answer to every question and counterexample?
How should I respond to questions I don't know how to answer?
How do I avoid seeming defensive in a q&a?
How should I react if a questioner becomes aggressive in a q&a?
What makes a good commentary on another paper, author, or panelist?

What, exactly, is a department chair/ associate dean/ dean/ provost/ chancellor/ university president, and how do their roles differ? What will my professional relationship be with each one?
How do research-centered jobs differ from teaching-centered jobs, and what will my life look like if I have either kind?
What is an "R1" institution, and why does it have that label?

September 9: Academic Philosophy as a Profession: Activities, Career Stages, Unwritten Rules; Types of Academic Jobs and Institutions; Tenure (slot 1)

What are my duties as a graduate student, postdoc, junior faculty member, and senior faculty member?
How much research, teaching, and service will be expected of me at each stage?
Who will be evaluating me at each stage?
Will I always suffer from imposter syndrome?
How will my day-to-day life differ between graduate school and a tenure-track position?
What are the many ways of building an academic philosophical career?
Do I have to publish hundreds of articles and travel all of the time?
Must my career look like my dissertation advisor's career?
What, exactly, is tenure?
What does it take to get tenure in different sorts of tenure-track positions?
What sorts of postdocs and temporary positions are there, and how do their duties differ?
How does the US academic system differ from others?

September 16: Writing Productivity (I): Being a Writer (slot 2)

Um, how do I write a whole dissertation?
How do I keep writing a dissertation once I've started?
How do I get into a writing routine?
How do I pick up my dissertation again if I have not written for awhile?
Why does everyone else seem so much more productive than I am?
When should I solicit feedback on my writing?
How do I avoid loneliness while I'm writing and dissertating?

September 23: Writing Productivity (II): Procrastination, Feeling Stuck, Feeling Bored (slot 3)

How do I avoid cleaning my house/ surfing the internet/ repainting my bathroom (and other procrastinatory activities) that prevent me from writing?
What if I've stared at a blank page for several writing sessions in a row?
What if I've been stuck on a project for weeks/ months/ years?
What if I've fallen out of love with my topic?
How do I write when I'm feeling discouraged?
What if I have an existential crisis every time I sit down to write?
Will writing always feel this hard?
How can I create writing accountability?

September 30: Preparing Job Materials (slot 4)

What sorts of documents go into a job dossier?
What counts as an area of specialty versus an area of competence on a CV?
What is a research statement, and how does it differ from a dissertation statement?
What is a teaching statement?
What is a teaching dossier?
What sort of thing should I use for my writing sample?
What is a DEI statement? Should I prepare one?
What is a religious institution statement? Should I prepare one?
Should I apply for positions at religious institutions? Are all religious institutions alike?
Should I have a professional website? How fancy must it be?
How do I interpret job ads?
When should I tailor my job market materials to specific institutions?

October 7: First Round Job Interviews (slot 5)

What sorts of questions will I be asked in a first-round interview?
How can I prepare for a first-round interview?
How long should my research spiel be?
How will my first-round interview be evaluated, and by whom will it be evaluated?
What should my Zoom background be?
What should I wear?
What does it mean if my interview went well, but I did not progress in the search?

October 14: Job Talks and Teaching Presentations (slot 6)

How is a job talk different than a normal talk?
How should the approach to q&a differ from that of a normal talk?
Should I use slides, handouts, both, or neither?
Should I read my talk?
Which talk should I give as my job talk?
Should I send the paper to the hiring department ahead of time?
What are teaching-focused institutions looking for in a teaching presentation?
How do I bond with students in my teaching presentation?
What is being evaluated in a teaching presentation?

October 21: No class (Fall Break)

October 28: Flyouts at Research-centered and Teaching-centered Institutions (slot 7)

What sorts of things will I do on a flyout? How will I be judged?
How can I prepare for a flyout?
Do I need to read everything that each faculty member in the interviewing department has ever written?
What is it like to meet with an associate dean, dean, provost, or president of a university on a flyout?
How should I interact with groups of undergraduates or graduate students on my flyout?
How do flyouts differ between institutions?
How will I get reimbursed for a flyout?
What if I can't afford to pay for the airplane tickets in advance of a reimbursement?
What if I'm asked an illegal question? What are illegal questions?
What should I wear on each day of the flyout?
What should I expect at my job talk dinner?

November 4: Receiving and Giving Philosophical Feedback; Interacting with Colleagues (slot 8)

How do I handle negative feedback (from my committee, from referees, from random hostile interlocutors?)
How can I get the sort of feedback I need from my dissertation advisor?
How should I interpret feedback from my dissertation advisor?
How do I receive feedback without panicking or becoming depressed about my work?
Does my advisor hate me and my work?
When should I revise my work in light of feedback, versus forging ahead?
How can I give good feedback to colleagues?
How can I be a good referee for journals and presses?
How do I approach faculty members that I've never met but whose work I admire?
How do I ask faculty for letters of recommendation?
How do I interact with colleagues with whom I have nothing in common?
What are the pros and cons of being on social media, and of posting on social media?

What makes a good colleague?

November 11: Slots 9 and 10

November 18: Balancing Teaching, Research, and Life (slot 11)

How do I prevent teaching and teaching prep from taking over my time?
How do I fit research into my schedule even when I am busy?
How do I draw boundaries with students, colleagues, and family to protect my writing time?
How do I draw boundaries with work to enjoy my private life?
How can I enjoy both research and teaching if one or the other is not what I got into the field to do?
How do I remain energetic and innovative in the classroom when I have other career pressures?
Aside from talking to a mental health professional, what steps can I take to protect my mental health as I move through the profession?
How do I solicit support at each stage of my career?
How can I cultivate hobbies and selfhood outside of academic philosophy?
Do I have to travel for work?

November 25: No class (away at workshop)

December 2: Job Offers, Negotiations, and Decisions; Your Long-Term Career (slot 12)

What is the process of receiving a job offer?
Will my job offer be written or verbal?
What is the timeline on receiving an offer, and on making a decision?
Should I negotiate? Will my job offer be revoked if I negotiate?
Should I negotiate over the phone, or over email?
How can I negotiate without sounding demanding or entitled?
What sorts of things is it appropriate to ask for at different kinds of institutions?
What sorts of requests should I prioritize in a job negotiation?
Who will I be negotiating with?
What if some of my requests are turned down?
How do I decide between multiple job offers, if I get them?

December 9: Your Long-Term Career (slot 13)

I got a job! Now what?
What will it take to get tenure at my particular job?
Do I have to mine my dissertation for articles, or can I pivot to a different research topic?
What new duties will I have in a tenure-track position that I didn't have in graduate school?
What should I expect at faculty meetings?
What are my responsibilities to my new institution?
What do I want my next 5-10 years to look like?
What do I want my long-term contribution to the field to look like?
What if I'm burnt out after defending my dissertation/ getting a postdoc/ getting a tenure-track job/ getting tenure?
What if I'm not happy in my first job (due to department, location, nature of institution, salary, etc.)?
What if I'm not happy in academia?