



PHI 380<sup>1</sup>  
**Philosophy & Literature**

Tuesdays & Thursdays 3:00–4:20 p.m.  
<https://meet.google.com/hkr-aceb-kzv>

Professor Robert Harvey<sup>2</sup>  
Tuesdays & Thursdays 1:30–2:30 p.m. or by appt  
<https://meet.google.com/pjf-jysv-naz>  
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Here is how *the generic, catalogue descriptor* for PHI 380 reads: “An intensive study of the methods and principles of the philosophical analysis of literature and the relations between literature and philosophy.”

And here is my approach to the above project:

Just because it was the first of the two to be named, is philosophy an endeavor superior to that of literature? (Among activities of the intellect, what does superiority mean?) Can literature contribute to philosophical reflection? What is going on when philosophical discourse appeals overtly to literary methods in order to move forth? Does it make sense to cordon literature and philosophy off from each other? Might their projects be indistinguishable? These are a few of the questions which will concern us as we move through a necessary selection from the vast array of texts at the cusp of philosophy and literature.

## Required Readings

N.B. These are listed in the order in which we’ll read them. Indicated in parentheses is the number of sessions we’ll spend discussing each. Titles with \* need to be purchased and *only* in the edition specified by the ISBN number. PDFs of all other readings will be provided on BlackBoard (Documents).

N.B. Titles followed by  $\phi$  would most likely be categorized as philosophy texts; those followed by  $\lambda$  as literary... These designations are, however, somewhat fluid.

Friedrich Nietzsche, “On Truth and Lying in the Non-Moral Sense” (2)  $\phi$   
René Descartes, *Discourse on the Method*\* (Oxford UP) ISBN 9780199540075 (2)  $\phi$   
—, “First Meditation” in *Meditations in First Philosophy*.  $\phi$   
Michel Foucault, “My Body, This Paper, This Fire” from *The History of Madness* (2)  $\phi$   
Herman Melville, “Bartleby the Scrivener” (2)  $\lambda$   
Gilles Deleuze, “Bartleby, or the Formula” from *Essays Critical & Clinical* (1)  $\phi$   
Franz Kafka, *The Metamorphosis*\* (1915) \* ISBN 9780812985146 (Random House) (2)  $\lambda$   
Sigmund Freud, “The Uncanny” (1919) (1)  $\phi$

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<sup>1</sup> DEC category G or SBC category HFA+ (see page 3).

<sup>2</sup> N.B. – If you don’t hear from your instructor within 72 hours, please email [CAS\\_Dean@stonybrook.edu](mailto:CAS_Dean@stonybrook.edu)

Jean-Paul Sartre, *No Exit* (3) λ  
Albert Camus, *The Plague*\* ISBN 9780679720218 (Vintage) (3) λ  
Primo Levi, *If This Is a Man*\* ISBN 9780349100135 (Abacus) (3) λ  
Anne Carson, *Eros the Bittersweet*\* ISBN 9781564781888 (2) λ

## Recommended Reading

Friedrich von Schiller, *Letters on the Aesthetic Education of Man* (1795) φ  
Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Reveries of the Solitary Walker* (1776-1778) φ (or λ ?)  
Gilles Deleuze, *Kafka: For a Minor Literature* (1975) φ  
J.M. Coetzee, *Disgrace* (1999) λ  
James Baldwin, *The Fire Next Time* (1963) λ (or φ ?)  
Virginia Woolf, *A Room of One's Own* (1929) λ (or φ ?)  
Ralph Waldo Emerson, "The Poet," "Shakespeare" λ (or φ ?)  
Wallace Stevens, from *Collected Poetry & Prose* λ  
Jean-Paul Sartre, *Nausea* (1938) λ  
Vladimir Nabokov, *Despair* (1934–1965) λ  
Emily Dickinson, *Poems* λ  
René Char, *Formal Share* and *Leaves of Hypnos* (excerpts) adapted from *Furor and Mystery and Other Writings* λ  
Maurice Blanchot, *The Step Not Beyond* (1973) φ  
Fernando Pessoa, selected poems of Alberto Caeiro λ  
Albert Camus, *The Myth of Sisyphus* (1942) φ  
——, *The Stranger* (1942) λ  
Fyodor Dostoevsky, *Notes from Underground* (1864) λ  
Samuel Beckett, *The Unnamable* (1953) λ  
——, *Waiting for Godot* (1952) λ  
Jorge Luis Borges, "Pierre Menard, Author of the *Quixote*" and "The Aleph" λ  
Julia Kristeva, "Prolegomena" from *The Revolution of Poetic Language* (1974) φ  
Franz Kafka, *The Trial* (1925) λ  
——, *In the Penal Colony* (1919) λ  
Marguerite Duras, "Construction Sites" (1954) λ  
Michel Foucault, "Representing" from *The Order of Things* (1966) φ  
Cioran, *On the Heights of Despair* (1934) φ  
Søren Kierkegaard, *The Sickness Unto Death* (1849) φ

## Course Requirements

This course will be delivered remotely and synchronously. In other words, we will meet online on the scheduled days at the appointed times (Eastern North America time zone). Should exceptional circumstances arise where a student needs to miss a class session, they need to contact the professor or one of the TAs so that the recording can be made available to them.

For all classes (and office hours), all students will need to have or have access to the Internet via a reliable Wifi connection on a device (laptop or desktop preferably; tablet or smartphone in a pinch) equipped with camera and microphone.

- Beyond assiduous attendance (5%), **active participation in class and, especially, BlackBoard discussion groups** requires preparation and *a certain determination* to get one's thoughts heard by the community of peers. (5% + 15% = 20%)
- Frequent **reading responses**, including **thoughts & questions** you might suggest for discussion in the following week. Based on the latest or current reading, to be submitted in BlackBoard Assignment section...

What, to your view, is the most salient or productive point made by the writing thinker? Attempt to say something about how the point fits in the philosophy-literature nexus and formulate a question regarding the point.

Length: 200-300 words. (20%)

- A workshopped **medium-length essay** (6-8 pages) to which two peers will respond with **critical analysis**. Full credit for each student will be comprised of 30 points for a first draft, 20 + 20 points for constructive criticism of work by two peers, and 30 points for the final draft. This will be done on Google Drive. (25%)
- A **final essay** (10-12 pages) due Wednesday, 16 December, based on a topic driven by *one work* selected from the recommended reading list. The topic needs to be decided in *office hour discussion* or by appointment by Thursday, 19 November at the latest. (35%)

## Stony Brook Curriculum (SBC) Learning Outcomes met by successful completion of PHI 380

(HFA+) Humanities & Fine Arts

The Undergraduate Bulletin explains that “pursuing deeper understanding,” which is the meaning of the plus (+) sign above, entails “us[ing] the skills expected from their Versatility courses to study and practice them in greater depth, with further study applied to the area in which they are certified.”

The area in which students successfully completing PHI 380 will be certified is, obviously, philosophy. It is expected that skills from the following versatility categories will be used for such completion:

Address Problems Using Critical Analysis and the Methods of the Humanities  
(HUM)  
Write Effectively in English (WRT)

See

[https://www.stonybrook.edu/sb/bulletin/current/policiesandregulations/degree\\_requirements/categoriesandlearningoutcomes.php](https://www.stonybrook.edu/sb/bulletin/current/policiesandregulations/degree_requirements/categoriesandlearningoutcomes.php) for details about these categories.

## Semester Program

N.B. I shall endeavor to keep to the following schedule of readings and discussions. However, I reserve the possibility of modifications in order to favor critical thinking over the compulsion to complete.

- 25 August — introductions, including Friedrich Nietzsche  
read “On Truth and Lying...” pp. 2–7.
- 27 August — Nietzsche  
read “On Truth and Lying...” pp. 7–9.  
reader response due Sunday before midnight, 30 August.
- 1 September — Nietzsche & introduction to René Descartes  
read *Discourse on the Method*, pp. 5–20 and “First Meditation.”
- 3 September — Descartes  
read *Discourse on the Method*, pp. 21–63.  
reader response due Sunday before midnight, 6 September
- 8 September — Descartes & introduction to Michel Foucault  
read “My Body...” pp. 550–62.
- 10 September — Foucault  
read “My Body...” pp. 562–74.  
reader response due Sunday before midnight, 13 September
- 15 September — Foucault & introduction to Herman Melville  
read “Bartleby...” pp. 3–15.
- 17 September — Melville  
read “Bartleby...” pp. 15–41.  
reader response due Sunday before midnight, 20 September
- 22 September — Melville & introduction to Gilles Deleuze  
read “...the Formula” pp. [68]–90.
- 24 September — Deleuze & introduction to Franz Kafka  
read *The Metamorphosis*, pp. [3]–43.  
reader response due Sunday before midnight, 27 September
- 29 September — Kafka  
read *The Metamorphosis*, pp. [44]–64
- 1 October — Kafka & introduction to Freud  
read “The Uncanny,” pp. 824–41.  
reader response due Sunday before midnight, 4 October
- 6 October — Freud & introduction to Jean-Paul Sartre  
read *No Exit*, pp. 1–4.
- 8 October — Sartre  
read *No Exit*, pp. 5–13.  
*no* reader response this weekend  
work on midterm paper draft!

13 October — Sartre  
first draft of **medium-length essay** due by midnight Wednesday, 14 October

15 October — Sartre  
two **critical analyses of peer papers** due by midnight Sunday, 18 October  
read *No Exit*, pp. 13–26.

20 October — Sartre

22 October — introduction to Albert Camus  
final draft of your **midterm essays** due by midnight Sunday, 25 October  
start setting up appointments with Prof. Harvey to discuss topic for Final Paper  
read *The Plague*, pp. 3–121

27 October — Camus  
read *The Plague*, pp. 122–64

29 October — Camus  
read *The Plague*, pp. 167–308  
reader response due Sunday before midnight, 1 November

3 November — Camus & introduction to Primo Levi  
read *If This Is a Man*, pp. 15–43

5 November — Levi  
read *If This Is a Man*, pp. 44–92  
reader response due Sunday before midnight, 8 November

10 November — Levi  
read *If This Is a Man*, pp. 93–121

12 November — Levi  
read *If This Be a Man*, pp. 122–79

17 November — Levi & introduction to Anne Carson  
read *Eros the Bittersweet*, pp. xi–38

19 November — Carson  
last day to meet Prof. Harvey to discuss topic for Final Paper  
(see also above, Course Requirements)

**no classes 23–28 November**

read *Eros the Bittersweet*, pp. 39–158  
reader response due Sunday before midnight, 29 November

1 December — Carson  
read pp. 159–73

3 December — Carson & conclusions

Wednesday, 16 December — **Final Paper due**

Your final paper needs to be produced as a Word (.doc or .docx) document, 10-12 pages in length, double-spaced, with 1" margins, in 12pt font. Any and all quotes must be properly cited.

## Official University Statements<sup>3</sup>

### *Responsibilities in the Virtual Classroom*

Students are expected to attend each session of the class (see first point under Course Requirements above) unless other arrangements are made; arrive for class on time and leave the classroom only at the end of class; engage in class discussions and activities when appropriate; exhibit classroom behavior that is not disruptive of the learning environment. Any use of a cell phone or other unauthorized electronic device during an examination may lead to an accusation of academic dishonesty.

### *Absentee Policy*

Students are expected to take their examinations and do the graded coursework as scheduled. If a student is unable to report for any examination or to complete graded coursework on time, the student must contact the professor or a TA immediately.

### *Academic Integrity*

Each student must pursue his or her academic goals honestly and be personally accountable for all submitted work. Representing another person's work as your own is always wrong. Faculty is required to report any suspected instances of academic dishonesty to the Academic Judiciary. Faculty in the Health Sciences Center (School of Health Technology & Management, Nursing, Social Welfare, Dental Medicine) and School of Medicine are required to follow their school-specific procedures. For more comprehensive information on academic integrity, including categories of academic dishonesty please refer to the academic judiciary website at [http://www.stonybrook.edu/commcms/academic\\_integrity/index.html](http://www.stonybrook.edu/commcms/academic_integrity/index.html)

### *Student Accessibility Support Center (SASC) Statement*

If you have a physical, psychological, medical, or learning disability that may impact your course work, please contact the Student Accessibility Support Center, 128 ECC Building, (631) 632-6748, or at [sasc@stonybrook.edu](mailto:sasc@stonybrook.edu). They will determine with you what accommodations are necessary and appropriate. All information and documentation is confidential.

### *Critical Incident Management*

Stony Brook University expects students to respect the rights, privileges, and property of other people. Faculty are required to report to the Office of University Community Standards any disruptive behavior that interrupts their ability to teach, compromises the safety of the learning environment, or inhibits students' ability to learn. Faculty in the HSC Schools and the School of Medicine are required to follow their school-specific procedures. Further information about most academic matters can be found in the Undergraduate Bulletin, the Undergraduate Class Schedule, and the Faculty-Employee Handbook.

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<sup>3</sup> for further information, see

[https://www.stonybrook.edu/commcms/provost/faculty/handbook/academic\\_policies/minimal\\_instructional\\_and\\_student\\_responsibilities.php](https://www.stonybrook.edu/commcms/provost/faculty/handbook/academic_policies/minimal_instructional_and_student_responsibilities.php)