

Teaching Dossier

Lauren Leydon-Hardy

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I. Teaching Statement

At the core of my character as a teacher is my commitment to the ideal *that later virtue redeems earlier sin*. I make this a policy in all of my classrooms, in part because it was a policy that helped me find my own footing as a first-generation college student. As a young person I had very few examples of what post-secondary education would look like or ask of me. It took courage to try and fail, and try again, in order to succeed. Today, I work to make that possible for all of my own students. What this means in practice is that I give marks for diligence, so that they have a chance to earn some extra credit by demonstrating marked and consistent improvement throughout the semester. This policy is fundamentally grounded in the belief that doing philosophy well is a skill and not simply a body of knowledge; one can be taught how to do it, and a part of learning how to do philosophy is in the practicing of it. For this reason, I encourage my students to approach their work with a sense of both curiosity and tenacity. Philosophy is hard! Maybe especially, at first. But, like anything else, it can be learned. And if, in the beginning, one isn't achieving the level of success that one is aiming for, or accustomed to, the policy is there as a life line, to encourage those students to keep practicing.

Given this emphasis on practice, my classes are generally writing-intensive. In addition to multiple for-credit papers, I like to assign short, ungraded writing assignments at the beginning of each meeting. For these exercises I ask my students to take 2-3 minutes to write down a question that arose from the readings for the day, a considered objection, or to identify an unanalysed assumption or implication—something that they have been mulling over and that they are bringing with them to class that day. Of course, this incentivizes the students to do the readings, but these short writing exercises also accomplish (at least) the following four goals: First, they get the students to practice putting philosophical thought to paper. Second, this practice gets them reflecting on the material, in the room. In my experience this can help to shake off the cobwebs; it is a way of warming up before we launch into a full-throated discussion. Third, this is a useful way for me to take the temperature of the room with respect to the readings since their reading responses give me a roadmap for where to begin, and where to focus, the discussion. And fourth, they provide an opportunity for discussion-shy students to write down something that they can then bring up or contribute as the conversation gets rolling.

I take a great deal of joy from seeing my students coalesce around the material and emerge as a team: tackling the readings, sussing out the details, converging around an objection, or identifying the heart of a disagreement. As often as possible, I want the practice of doing philosophy in my classroom to feel like a group endeavor. But we have all had that difficult experience of a classroom

full of crickets. To move past it, I prefer to use interactive learning techniques like the jigsaw puzzle. Here's how it works: I break down the assigned reading into, say, five parts. Then I divide the class into small groups of five students and assign one section of the reading to each student in each group. Amongst the groups, the students are then responsible to teach one another about their assigned sections. Next, the students reorganize themselves into section-specific groups—all the section ones together, the twos together, and so on. These section-focused groups discuss their assigned passage in depth, exploring one another's individual take on the section and collaborating to develop the fullest interpretation of the material. Finally, the original groups reconvene to learn what one another has discovered after exploring their assigned sections more deeply with their focused groups. Exercises like this can really help to break the ice. Instead of nervously looking to one another, wondering who will be the first to venture a comment or a question, the stakes get lowered: first, the group of people with whom they are interacting is (for now) constricted to their small group, and second, the chunk of text that they are tasked to master has been narrowed to just their individual assignment. Their individual tasks are bite-sized, and the full breadth of the text is distributed among them equally, making the overall project of learning the text less intimidating for any one person and more social for all of them.

The experience of working collaboratively to develop an in-depth understanding of the material is valuable to the students for a few reasons: they practice articulating philosophical material out-loud and they learn the value of engaging critically with one another's perspectives on a shared text. This is an important lesson for philosophers-in-training: that there is more than one way to read an argument or to interpret a thesis, and so the ability to step outside of one's own reading and take seriously the perspective of another offers a way of interrogating our own assumptions and of shoring up our analyses and arguments. To further encourage this practice of working collaboratively, I have my students peer-review their final papers. This process involves exchanging papers, providing supportive, but critical, feedback in the form of raising objections to the arguments in the paper, analysing the paper's assessment of the relevant material, and so on. I further ask that after exchanging this critical feedback, each student conveys to their partner what they learned from their peer's critical engagement with their own work. This last step is crucial for the fullness of the lesson: to learn not just how to read a peer's work and engage substantively with their arguments, but to reflect on what is to be gained from having another student critically engage with one's own work. I find that this helps students develop an appreciation for the value of developing multiple drafts, sharing their in-process work, and responding thoughtfully to critical feedback.

In my time in graduate school I have had the great fortune to teach philosophy in a host of institutional environments, including at Brandeis, Northwestern, Cook County Jail, and Stateville Correctional Center. I've been teaching in carceral classrooms since 2016, and the work I have done in prison education has given me some of the most joyful and engaging educational experiences of my life. I have co-created and co-taught courses for incarcerated men waiting to stand trial—a time in their lives marked by staggering uncertainty. And I have tutored incarcerated men serving natural life sentences: men who have spent years or decades in solitary confinement, and who yet find in themselves a willful dedication to their education. I have also had the opportunity to be a part of building a world-class, credit-granting prison education program. I served on the admissions

committee for our inaugural cohort, personally evaluating every application and interviewing our applicants. I have worked with dedication to bring dignity and a scholarly life to a group of students who inspire me every day.

In every setting in which I have taught, I have encountered brilliant minds, eager to devour the material, interrogate their assumptions, and challenge the arguments. And what I have seen time and again in each of those classrooms is the transformative power of education. I believe that studying philosophy makes all of us a little bit wiser, a little bit more discerning, and a little bit more patient with the opposition and ourselves. Experience has shown me that even in the darkest corners of this world, education can lift a person up, empowering them to invest in the life of their own mind; to turn inwards and give the project of educating yourself your energy, your attention, your care, is a profound act of self-love. And being a part of that is a privilege to me, everywhere I have the opportunity.

II. Teaching Awards

Thomas A. McCarthy Award for Teaching Excellence in Philosophy (2017)

III. Teaching Evaluations & Student Comments

6-point scale: 1=Very Low; 6=Very High

Course	<i>Introduction to Philosophy</i> (Winter 2013)	<i>Scientific Reasoning</i> (Spring 2013)	<i>Paradoxes</i> (Winter 2014)	<i>Theory of Knowledge</i> (Winter 2017)	<i>Early Modern Philosophy</i> (Spring 2017)
Answers questions adequately	5.19	5.63	4.76	5.00	5.38
Well prepared for sessions	5.22	5.88	4.81	5.00	5.38
Communicates ideas clearly	5.16	5.63	5.00	5.20	5.46
Showed a strong interest in teaching	5.70	5.75	5.29	5.40	5.54

Student Comments:

PHIL 210 Early Modern Philosophy

- Enthusiasm, clarity, logic, and willingness to teach and answer questions. The only things that made section less than perfect was the 50-minute time limit and the US Border Patrol.¹
- She's very friendly and easy to talk to. She explains things very well and is enthusiastic and interesting.
- TA Lauren was enthusiastic about the material and a very articulate communicator. Outside of class, she was always ready to help and patient with questions.
- Lauren was very approachable and knowledgeable
- Very enthusiastic about the subject and great at stimulating discussion
- Very passionate, nice, and knowledgeable

¹ This comment about the border patrol is a cheeky joke about my having been detained in Canada due to visa complications, mid-semester.

- Very helpful in office hours, always enthusiastic during sections

PHIL 255 Theory of Knowledge

- ILY LAUREN YOU'RE THE BEST. Keep doing what you're doing you were so helpful
- Super intelligent, insightful, and super helpful :)
- She's excited, even more so than the instructor. Leydon is younger, and can communicate ideas from the readings in ways perhaps more relatable to the students. I don't see any apparent weaknesses with Lackey, except for the fact that I just love it so much when Leydon teaches. She's selfless, and reaches out to students in need. One of the best TAs in the game.
- Super nice and helpful with all assignments
- She was engaging and knew a lot about the topics.
- Lauren was very helpful in her feedback for both the reading reports and for essays as well. She was very good at leading discussion sections as well and keeping students engaged, despite the fact that it was early in the morning.

PHIL 248 Paradoxes

- She is also very well-informed about her field, and it showed when she was answering questions. She knew what was going on at all times, and was able to field nearly every question thrown at her
- Shes dope. Really helpful, she kind of comes from the student side so it feels like she is approaching the problems not as an adviser, but as a helpful peer
- She was engaging, interested, and full of ideas and answers whenever they were needed.
- The teaching assistant actually made much more sense than the teacher. She is very intelligent and clear when she speaks to students.

PHIL 151 Scientific Reasoning

- Explained things well, went over homework problems in a comprehensive and not "too" helpful manner (so that we actually learned)
- Lauren cares about the students learning, is passionate, and is clear with the instruction of the ideas. No weaknesses really stand out.

PHIL 110 Introduction to Philosophy

- She really is passionate about the material. It's infectious.
- Lauren is great, she's very responsive and helpful and so enthusiastic about teaching. its great being in her section. hard grader, but a strong proponent about the 'learning curve'
- I really enjoyed Ms Leydon-Hardy's class. I felt she was relatable, kind, passionate, and smart. She was very good at facilitating discussion and asking and answering questions. I'd hope to have her again
- Lauren was very knowledgeable and always was able to get my discussion group fired up about the readings.

- Lauren was great! All my TA's so far have been great at explaining things, but Lauren is one of the best. She's super helpful and friendly too!
- She was knowledgeable and was good at explaining difficult topics. I liked the group work during discussion section since there were so many students
- Lauren is a great TA for this class - really engaging and challenging.
- Lauren is a very enthusiastic and knowledgeable TA. She was pretty good at explaining concepts, and she always wanted to help us. She was very available and responsive to students, and seemed like a fair grader. In section, she did a great job clarifying the material and presenting it in a slightly different light, allowing me to have a more complete understanding of it. I feel like it would have been better if we could have covered slightly more material each class, but I don't know how to balance the short time period with thoroughness better than Lauren did.
- She was always prepared to answer questions and was always prepared for class. No big weaknesses.

IV. Sample Syllabi

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Fall, 2018
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Office Hours: T, Th 9:00-11:00 AM
or by appointment
Kresge 3-3301

THEORY OF KNOWLEDGE

Course Description:

This course offers an introduction to epistemology—the branch of philosophy concerned with knowledge. What we know and what we believe, and how we form and evaluate the status of our beliefs, matter tremendously to how we live our lives. In this course we will explore questions about whether and how we acquire knowledge of the external world, how our beliefs are epistemically justified, and how we should understand the relationship between our beliefs and our reasons for those beliefs. No philosophical background will be assumed.

Course Work:

Students will be required to produce a short piece of writing for each meeting on one assigned reading—*no more than one page, double spaced*—which should include two things: (a) a summary of the reading, and (b) a philosophical critique, or engagement with, the arguments. These writing assignments will be due at the beginning of class for each assigned reading. These will be graded on a check-plus (excellent), check (adequate), check-minus (deficient or late), and N/C (not deserving of credit; the assignment must be redone) basis. In addition to regular reading reports, students will be required to produce two paper outlines and two papers.

Four-Sentence Papers:

One pedagogical tool we will employ in this course is the four-sentence paper.² A four-sentence paper is a brief writing exercise that emphasizes the consideration of opposing viewpoints and objections—crucial writing skills in philosophy. The general form of a four-sentence paper is:

___ says that ____.

I reply that ___, because ____.

One might object that ____.

I reply that ____.

Students should get used to this general format; they will produce four-sentence writing exercises regularly; this format will also provide the framework for outlines and term papers.

² <https://philpapers.org/rec/EARTFP>

Grade Distribution:

The final grade for the course will be determined in the following way:

- Two paper outlines, each worth 5% of the final grade.
- One 5-6 page, double-spaced paper, worth 25% of the final grade.
- One 6-7 page, double-spaced paper, worth 35% of the final grade.
- Reading reports and class participation, worth 30% of the final grade.

Grade Scale:

A+	98-100	B	83-86	C-	70-72	F	59-0
A	93-97	B-	80-82	D+	67-69		
A-	90-92	C+	77-79	D	63-66		
B+	87-89	C	73-76	D-	60-62		

Course Policies:

- (1) *Later virtue redeems earlier sin.* Extra credit may be earned over the course of the semester through the demonstration of consistent improvement.
- (2) In order for this course to succeed, attending and being well-prepared for class consistently are both essential. This requires, among other things, reading the assigned texts and articles closely and carefully and being engaged participants in class lectures and discussions.
- (3) In order to pass the course **all** assignments must be completed.
- (4) Extensions must be requested before the due date.
- (5) Students are permitted **two** unexcused absences. For every additional unexcused absence, the final grade in the course will be reduced by a percentage point.
- (6) Plagiarism will not be tolerated. All cases of alleged violation of academic integrity will be referred to the Assistant Dean for Advising and Academic Integrity. Possible penalties range from failing the course to permanent exclusion from the university. For more on plagiarism, see: <http://www.northwestern.edu/provost/policies/academic-integrity/index.html> and <http://www.northwestern.edu/provost/policies/academic-integrity/how-to-avoid-plagiarism.html>.

Students with Disabilities:

Any student requesting accommodations related to a disability or other condition is required to register with [AccessibleNU](mailto:accessiblenu@northwestern.edu) (accessiblenu@northwestern.edu; 847-467-5530) and provide professors with an accommodation notification from AccessibleNU, preferably within the first two weeks of class. All information will remain confidential.

Schedule of Readings and Assignments:

	Lecture	Reading	Assignment
Week 1	Introduction Skepticism	Descartes, Meditations I-II	
Week 2	Skepticism	Moore, "Proof of an External World" Moore, "Certainty" Unger, "An Argument for Skepticism"	
Week 3	Analysis of Knowledge	Gettier, "Is Justified True Belief Knowledge?" Nozick, "Knowledge and Skepticism"	
Week 4	Analysis of Knowledge	Klein, "A Proposed Definition of Propositional Knowledge" Zagzebski, "The Inescapability of Gettier Problems"	
Week 5	Foundations & Coherence	Chisholm, "The Myth of the Given" Sellars, "Does Empirical Knowledge Have a Foundation?"	1 st Outline Due Thursday
Week 6	Foundations & Coherence	Davidson, "A Coherence Theory of Truth and Knowledge" Haack, "A Foundherentist Theory of Empirical Justification"	1 st Paper Due Thursday
Week 7	Reliabilism & Externalism	Goldman, "What is Justified Belief?" Goldman, "Discrimination and Perceptual Knowledge"	
Week 8	Reliabilism & Externalism	Conee & Feldman, "The Generality Problem for Reliabilism" Nagel, "Knowledge and Reliability"	
Week 9	Naturalism	Quine, "Epistemology Naturalized" Kim, "What is 'Naturalized Epistemology'?"	
Week 10	Naturalism	Bonjour, "Against Naturalized Epistemology" Kornblith, "Naturalistic Epistemology and its Critics"	
Week 11	Contextualism	DeRose, "Solving the Skeptical Problem" David Lewis, "Elusive Knowledge"	
Week 12	Social Epistemology	Goldman, "A Guide to Social Epistemology" Reed, "Who Knows?"	2 nd Outline Due Thursday
Week 13	Social Epistemology	Lackey, "A Justificationist View of Disagreement's Epistemic Significance" Lackey, "False Confessions and Testimonial Injustice"	2 nd Paper Due Thursday

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SOCIAL EPISTEMOLOGY

Course Description:

What does good, or responsible epistemic agency consist in? How should our belief-forming practices respond to worries about bias that are likely to impact the credibility we afford to members of marginalized groups? How does the context for, and content of testimony impact our evidentiary standards for belief? Should we give the benefit of the doubt to our friends, or should we pay attention only to the truth? And how do we discriminate between sources of information that lead us to the truth, and those that are grounded in lies, bullshit, deception, and propaganda? When are we obligated to speak out against what is false or unjustified? In this course we will evaluate our epistemic lives in the context of our social world.

Course Work:

Students will be required to produce a short piece of writing **for each assigned reading due on Tuesdays**—*no more than one page, double spaced*—which should have two distinct components: (a) a summary of the reading, and (b) a philosophical critique, or engagement with, the arguments. These writing assignments will be due at the beginning of every Tuesday meeting. These will be graded on a check-plus (excellent), check (adequate), check-minus (deficient or late), and N/C (not deserving of credit; the assignment must be redone) basis.

On Thursdays, students will be required to write one-page, double-spaced reflection papers which apply the concept of the week to a current or recent piece of media (e.g., newspaper article, blog post, podcast, television episode). These papers might, for example, apply the concept of bullshit to a political speech, discuss testimonial injustice in the #MeToo era, or they might explore the relationship between the concept of “echo chambers” and ignorance. The key concept for your Thursday reflection papers is to take what we have been reading and discussing in class and project it outwardly onto your ordinary lives; to explore the media that you consume regularly and interrogate it using the epistemological concepts we are exploring in this course. Please include the link to your chosen piece of media in your reflection paper.

In addition to the reading reports, students are required to write two paper outlines and two papers during the quarter.

Four-Sentence Papers:

One pedagogical tool we will employ in this course is the four-sentence paper.³ A four-sentence paper is a brief writing exercise that emphasizes the consideration of opposing viewpoints and objections—crucial writing skills in philosophy. The general form of a four-sentence paper is:

___ says that _____.

I reply that ____, because _____.

One might object that ____.

I reply that _____.

Students should get used to this general format; they will produce four-sentence writing exercises regularly; this format will also provide the framework for outlines and term papers.

Grade Distribution:

The final grade for the course will be determined in the following way:

Two paper outlines, each worth 5% of the final grade.

One 5-6 page, double-spaced paper, worth 25% of the final grade.

One 6-7 page, double-spaced paper, worth 35% of the final grade.

Reading reports and class participation, worth 30% of the final grade.

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A+	98-100	B	83-86	C-	70-72	F	59-0
A	93-97	B-	80-82	D+	67-69		
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Course Policies:

- (1) *Later virtue will redeem earlier sin.* Extra credit may be earned over the course of the semester through the demonstration of consistent improvement.
- (2) In order for this course to succeed, attending and being well-prepared for class consistently are both essential. This requires, among other things, reading the assigned texts and articles closely and carefully and being engaged participants in class lectures and discussions.
- (3) In order to pass the course **all** assignments must be completed.
- (4) Extensions must be requested before the due date.
- (5) Students are permitted **two** unexcused absences. For every additional unexcused absence, the final grade in the course will be reduced by a percentage point.
- (6) Plagiarism will not be tolerated. All cases of alleged violation of academic integrity will be referred to the Assistant Dean for Advising and Academic Integrity. Possible penalties range from failing the course to permanent exclusion from the university. For more on plagiarism,

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Schedule of Readings and Assignments:

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Week 1	Introduction	Zagzebski, “What Is Knowledge?”	
Week 2	Testimonial Injustice and Epistemic Violence	Fricker, “Testimonial Injustice” & “Prejudice in the Credibility Economy” Dotson, “Tracking Epistemic Violence, Tracking Practices of Silencing”	
Week 3	Hermeneutical Injustice	Fricker, “Hermeneutical Injustice” Jenkins, “Rape Myths and Domestic Abuse Myths as Hermeneutical Injustices”	
Week 4	Epistemic Partiality	Stroud, “Epistemic Partiality in Friendship” Kawall, “Friendship and Epistemic Norms”	
Week 5	Ignorance	Peels, “What Is Ignorance?” Mills, “White Ignorance”	1 st Outline Due Thursday
Week 6	Epistemology and Race	Henning and Medina, “‘My Body as a Witness’: Body Language and Testimonial Injustice” Mills, “Seeing it in Black and White: Black Counter-Testimony under White Supremacy”	1 st Paper Due Thursday
Week 7	Lies and Bullshit	Carson, “The Definition of Lying” Frankfurt, “On Bullshit”	
Week 8	Deception and Propaganda	Stanley, “Propaganda Defined” Dougherty, “Sex, Lies, and Consent”	
Week 9	Epistemology & Sexual Consent	Liberto, “Epistemic Responsibility in Sexual Coercion and Self-Defense Law” Lackey, “The Total Evidence View of the Epistemology of Sexual Consent”	
Week 10	Epistemology and the Law	Crewe and Ichikawa, “Rape Culture and Epistemology” Lackey, “False Confessions and Testimonial Injustice”	

Week 11	Authority and Deference	Zagzebski, "Trust and Epistemic Authority" Jäger, "Epistemic Authority, Preemptive Reasons, and Understanding"	
Week 12	Intellectual Modesty	Ballantyne, "Epistemic Trespassing" Wiland, "Peer Disagreement and the Dunning-Kruger Effect"	2 nd Outline Due Thursday
Week 13	Distribution of Epistemic Labour and Goods	Berenstain, "Epistemic Exploitation" Kurtulmus and Irzik, "Justice in the Distribution of Knowledge"	2 nd Paper Due Thursday

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TOPICS IN APPLIED ETHICS

Course Description:

Our ethical commitments shape who we are, impact, and sometimes determine our relationships to one another, and guide our actions and responses to the world around us. Are there moral absolutes or is morality relative? What is the connection between belief in God and the existence of evil? What should our view be on abortion, the death penalty, punishment, incarceration, and the status of nonhuman animals? These are some of the questions that we will explore in this course, with a particular emphasis on how these issues are affected by our social status. The abilities to think, read, and write critically and to develop and defend arguments will be emphasized.

Course Work:

Students will be required to produce a short piece of writing for each meeting on one assigned reading—**no more than one page, double spaced**—which should include two things: (a) a summary of the reading, and (b) a philosophical critique, or engagement with, the arguments. These writing assignments will be due at the beginning of class for each assigned reading. These will be graded on a check-plus (excellent), check (adequate), check-minus (deficient or late), and N/C (not deserving of credit; the assignment must be redone) basis. In addition to regular reading reports, students will be required to produce two paper outlines and two papers.

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Schedule of Readings and Assignments:

	Lecture	Reading
Week 1	Introduction Moral Relativity	Ruth Benedict, "Morality Is Relative" James Rachels, "Morality Is Not Relative"
Week 2	The Problem of Evil	Fyodor Dostoevsky, "Why Is There Evil?" B. C. Johnson, "Why Doesn't God Intervene to Prevent Evil?" John Hick, "There Is a Reason Why God Allows Evil"
Week 3	What Makes the Moral Difference? The Will vs. Consequence	Immanuel Kant, "The Moral Law" John Stuart Mill, "Utilitarianism" Ian Parker, "The Gift"
Week 4	Democracies and Criminal Justice	Philip Pettit, "Is Criminal Justice Politically Feasible?" Heather Ann Thompson, "How Prisons Change the Balance of Power in American Democracy" Paul Butler, "Should Good People Be Prosecutors?"
Week 5	Is Abortion Morally Permissible?	Judith Jarvis Thomson, "A Defense of Abortion" Don Marquis, "Why Abortion is Immoral" First Outline Due Thursday
Week 6	Is Affirmative Action Morally Permissible?	Albert Mosley, "The Case for Affirmative Action" Celia Wolf-Devine, "Preferential Politics Have Become Toxic" First Paper Due Thursday
Week 7	Should Punishment Be Transformative?	Jennifer Lackey, "Punishment and Transformation" Ken Levy, "Why Retributivism Needs Consequentialism: The Rightful Place of Revenge in the Criminal Justice System"
Week 8	Do Prisons Promote Rehabilitation?	Angela Davis, Chapter 6 of <i>Are Prisons Obsolete?</i> Roger Lancaster, "How to End Mass Incarceration" Robert Martinson, "What Works? Questions and Answers About Prison Reform"
Week 9	Is Ethical Vegetarianism Morally Required?	Mylan Engel, Jr., "The Immorality of Eating Meat" Carl Cohen, "The Case Against Animal Rights" Michael Pollan, "An Animal's Place"
Week 10	Does Deception Undermine Consent?	Tom Dougherty, "Sex, Lies, and Consent" Hallie Liberto, "Intention and Sexual Consent"
Week 11	Is the Death Penalty Morally Permissible?	Burton Leiser, "The Death Penalty Is Permissible" Hugo Adam Bedau, "No, the Death Penalty Is Not Morally Permissible" David Grann, "Trial by Fire"
Week 12	What Are Our Obligations to the Poor & Hungry?	Peter Singer, "Famine, Affluence, and Morality" Garrett Hardin, "Lifeboat Ethics" John Cassidy, "How the War on Poverty Succeeded (in Four Charts)" Second Outline Due Thursday
Week 13	Can We Harm the Few to Save the Many?	Henry Shue, "Torture" Daniel J. Hill, "Ticking Bombs, Torture, and the Analogy with Self-Defense" Second Paper Due Thursday