

Phil 5900 Research Seminar

Christine Koggel

Winter 2026

Thursdays: 2:35-5:25

Paterson Hall Seminar Room

Office Hours: Thursdays 12:00-2:00 or by appointment (meetings can also be by Zoom)

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Course Description (from the Calendar)

PHIL 5900 [0.5 credit]

Research Seminar

Students select a contemporary philosophical position or historical interpretation and the surrounding debate in the philosophical or scholarly literature upon which to base a thesis proposal using literature review and an essay.

COURSE DESCRIPTION (FOR WINTER 2026)

The primary objective of this seminar is to develop topics for theses or research essays. This will be done in the following stages:

- presenting and engaging in class discussion of what you take to be a key reading for your research project (one you need to consider, is important to your topic, will help to identify a possible research topic)
- presenting an extended search for literature on the topic you are considering - prioritizing what you find, and handing in the findings
- presenting a few other key articles or chapters, situating your view in relation to these
- presenting a short seminar paper that begins to develop and defend that position
- applying the knowledge and skills acquired in the previous stages to compose an MA research proposal, consisting of a bibliography and 1000 word statement of the subject matter and aims of thesis or research essay. This component will result in a draft of the “Thesis and Research Essay Approval Form”
- writing the longer paper, aiming either for a writing sample (PhD applications) or as a draft of a thesis chapter.

Students will consult with me (or I with you) about potential supervisors when individual research project topics are being delineated and solidified and when supervisors can then be identified (work with supervisors usually does not begin until the end of the semester).

READINGS (POSTED ON BRIGHTSPACE)

Articles selected and circulated by students, on their research topics.

Draft of papers to be circulated in advance of their presentation and discussion.

Academic Integrity. You are responsible for ensuring that you understand the nature of academic offences (such as plagiarism and unauthorized collaboration), as defined in the Undergraduate or Graduate Calendars, and to avoid both committing plagiarism and aiding or abetting plagiarism by other students. ([Section 10.1 of the Undergraduate Calendar Academic Regulations](#)). Also read the section “Plagiarism” in the Department Policies below (p. 5-6) and note the following: “As our understanding of the uses of AI and its relationship to student work and academic integrity continue to evolve, students are required to discuss their use of AI with the instructor to ensure it supports the learning goals for the course. Bottom line: talk to me or I may have to talk to you!

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Take the presentation and discussion times for each of the requirements below to be a guideline. There are some classes in which we do a lot, but the important message is to not go over the times suggested (not fair to other students who are also presenting).

- 1) TWO oral presentations and class discussion of a reading that is likely to be central to your research (worth 10% each for a total of 20% of the final grade).
The reading should be about 20 pages and no longer than 25 pages. It needs to be circulated to everyone in the class no later than the Monday before the Thursday class in which you present. It could be a scanned version of the reading or a link to an online journal article, and it can be submitted on Brightspace for our course. The task for each of the presenters will be to take about **15 minutes** of class time to present/discuss the reading. You should explain why the reading is/may be central to your research project as well as outline some of the strengths and weaknesses of the argument(s). The rest of the class will need to do the readings provided by each of the presenters in advance of the class. The class will then take about **15 minutes** to ask questions, discuss issues or problems presented by the reading, and to use the reading and presentation to probe and explore with each presenter the topic of their research paper or thesis. You will be expected to do this again with another 20-25 page reading in the class that follows in which you do a second presentation, and the class asks questions and engages in discussion.
- 2) Oral presentation of an extended search of literature you are likely to use and how it fits into your research (worth 10% of the final grade). You should prioritize this literature by distinguishing overviews, central contributions, main issues and debates, and peripheral articles. Each presentation should be about **25 minutes with about 25 minutes** for discussion. A written-up version of the search results should be handed in at the end of class.
- 3) Oral presentation in which you discuss three or four different positions on your research question and aim to situate yourself in relation to them (worth 15% of the final grade). The written-up version needs to be circulated to everyone in the class no later than the Monday before the Thursday class in which you present. Each presentation will be about **30 minutes with about 30 minutes** for discussion.
- 4) Oral presentation of a seminar paper (first draft of final paper) emerging from stages 1-3 above (worth 15% of the final grade plus 5% for **Part two**). Each presentation will be about **30 minutes with about 30 minutes** for discussion. The written-up version needs to be circulated to everyone in class no later than the Monday before the Thursday class.
Part two: the Thursday class that follows your oral presentation should have you submit an outline/your reflections on what you need to attend to in light of feedback on the seminar paper and for the writing up of your final paper.
- 5) Class attendance and participation (worth 15% of the final grade).
- 6) Oral presentation of a draft of the MA research proposal (following the format of the “Thesis and Research Essay Approval Form”). Each presentation will be about **10 minutes with 15 minutes** for discussion and feedback. I will collect all of these in the final class on April 2nd. This sets you up for the summer! We can also set some time aside to discuss the two options of Thesis or Research Essay and what is involved in the grading of these.

- 7) Final paper (7000-8000 words). Due no later than **APRIL 23 (university deadline for final assignments)** (worth 20% of the final grade).

WEEK BY WEEK COURSE SCHEDULE

Week 1: January 8

Organizational meeting

Week 2: January 15

Presentation and discussion of a reading (no more than 25 pages long and circulated to class the Monday before) that is likely to be central/key to your research topic (approx. 15 minutes for presentation and 15 for Q&A). We will do five of these.

Week 3: January 22

The second presentation and discussion of a reading (no more than 25 pages long and circulated to class the Monday before) that is likely to be central/key to your research topic (approx. 15 minutes for presentation and 15 for Q&A). We will do five of these.

Week 4: January 29

Presentation of a list of sources you are likely to use and why (an annotated and written version with the search results handed in at the end of class). Take approx. 25 minutes to present and 25 minutes to answer questions. We will do three of these.

If anyone would like to do more on one of their first two “key readings” in light of feedback on the first round (and if class time permits), let me/us know by the Monday before this class. If any of you want to take up this option, the class would read or reread the “key reading” and you would present, answer questions, and engage the class in discussion.

Week 5: February 5

Presentation of a list of sources you are likely to use and why (written version with the search results handed in at the end of class). Take 25 minutes to present and 25 minutes to answer questions. We will do two of these.

If anyone would like to do more on one of their first two “key readings” in light of feedback on the first round (and if class time permits), let me/us know by the Monday before this class. If any of you want to take up this option, the class would read or reread the “key reading” and you would present, answer questions, and engage the class in discussion.

Week 6: February 12

This class will be a “taking stock.” Each of you will discuss where you are so far: with your topic, with the literature review, with thoughts on how to proceed going into the winter break.

IF anyone has a third short “key reading” (10-15 pages) (especially if your topic has shifted), let me/us know by the Monday before this class. If any of you want to take up this option and if class time permits, the class would read the “key reading” and you would present, answer questions, and engage the class in discussion.

Winter Break – February 16-20

Week 7: February 26

Presentation that situates yourself (a position paper) with respect to the literature (30 minutes for presentation and 30 for Q&A). A written version of this presentation should be circulated to class the Monday before. We will do three of these. Time permitting you can update us on readings you did over the break.

Week 8: March 5

Presentation that situates yourself (a position paper) with respect to the literature (30 minutes for presentation and 30 for Q&A). A written version of this presentation should be circulated to class the Monday before. We will do two of these. Time permitting you can update us on readings you did over the break.

Week 9: March 12

Presentation of seminar paper (first draft of final paper) (30 minutes for presentation and 30 for Q&A). A written version should be circulated the Monday before the Thursday class and an outline of/reflections on what you will address/need to do to write up the final paper (in light of presentation and discussion) should be handed in at the beginning of the following Thursday class. We will do three of these. Time permitting, updates on position paper component welcome.

Week 10: March 19

Presentation of seminar paper (first draft of final paper) (30 minutes for presentation and 30 for Q&A). A written version should be circulated the Monday before the Thursday class and an outline of/reflections on what you will address/need to do to write up the final paper (in light of presentation and discussion) should be handed in at the beginning of the following Thursday class. We will do two of these. Time permitting, updates on position paper component welcome.

Week 11: March 26

Presentation of an outline of/reflections (Requirement 4, Part 2 worth 5%) on what you will address and need to do to write up the final paper in light of presentation and discussion (15 minutes for presentation and 15 for Q&A). A written version will be handed in at the beginning of class. We will do five of these.

Week 12: April 2

A discussion session that will have each of you present drafts of your MA proposal for the “Thesis and Research Essay Approval Form” (5-10 minutes for presentation and 10-15 minutes for Q&A). You will then hand these in at the end of the class. We can also set some time aside to discuss the two options of Thesis or Research Essay and what is involved in the grading of these.

All final papers due on final deadline for course work on April 23, 2026

Department of Philosophy and Carleton University Policies (Fall/Winter 2025-26)

Assignments:

Please follow your professor's instructions on how assignments will be handled electronically. We no longer allow hard copies to be placed in the department's essay box.

Evaluation:

Standing in a course is determined by the course instructor subject to the approval of the Faculty Dean. This means that grades submitted by the instructor may be subject to revision. No grades are final until they have been approved by the Dean.

Deferrals for Term Work:

If students are unable to complete term work because of illness or other circumstances beyond their control, they should contact their course instructor no later than *three working days* of the due date. Normally, any deferred term work will be completed by the last day of the term. Term work cannot be deferred by the Registrar.

Deferrals for Final Exams:

Students are expected to be available for the duration of a course including the examination period. Occasionally, students encounter circumstances beyond their control where they may not be able to write a final examination or submit a take-home examination. Examples of this would be a serious illness or the death of a family member. If you miss a final examination and/or fail to submit a take-home examination by the due date, you may apply for a deferral no later than *three working days* after the original due date (as per the University Regulations in [Section 4.3 of the Undergraduate Calendar](#)). Visit the [Registrar's Office](#) for further information.

Plagiarism:

The University Academic Integrity Policy defines plagiarism as '*presenting, whether intentionally or not, the ideas, expression of ideas or work of others as one's own.*' This includes reproducing or paraphrasing portions of someone else's published or unpublished material, regardless of the source, and presenting these as one's own without proper citation or reference to the original source.

Examples of sources from which the ideas, expressions of ideas or works of others may be drawn from include but are not limited to books, articles, papers, literary compositions and phrases, performance compositions, chemical compounds, artworks, laboratory reports, research results, calculations and the results of calculations, diagrams, constructions, computer reports, computer code/software, material on the internet and/or conversations

Examples of plagiarism include, but are not limited to:

- any submission prepared in whole or in part, by someone else, including the unauthorized use of generative AI tools (e.g., ChatGPT);
- using ideas or direct, verbatim quotations, paraphrased material, algorithms, formulae, scientific or mathematical concepts, or ideas without appropriate acknowledgment in any academic assignment;
- using another's data or research findings without appropriate acknowledgment;
- submitting a computer program developed in whole or in part by someone else, with or without modifications, as one's own;
- failing to acknowledge sources with proper citations when using another's work and/or failing to use quotations marks.

Plagiarism is a serious offence that cannot be resolved directly by the course's instructor.

The Associate Dean of the Faculty follows a rigorous [process for academic integrity allegations](#), including reviewing documents and interviewing the student, when an instructor suspects a violation has been committed. Penalties for violations may include a final grade of "F" for the course.

It is the responsibility of each student to understand the full meaning of 'plagiarism' as defined in the Undergraduate or Graduate Calendars, and to avoid both committing plagiarism and aiding or abetting plagiarism by other students. ([Section 10.1 of the Undergraduate Calendar Academic Regulations](#))

Statement on AI:

As our understanding of the uses of AI and its relationship to student work and academic integrity continue to evolve, students are required to discuss their use of AI in any circumstance not described in the course outline with the instructor to ensure it supports the learning goals for the course.

Mental Health:

As a student you may experience a range of mental health challenges that significantly impact your academic success and overall well-being. If you need help, please speak to someone. There are numerous resources available both on- and off-campus to support you. For more information, please consult <https://wellness.carleton.ca/>.

Academic Accommodation:

Carleton is committed to providing academic accessibility for all individuals. You may need special arrangements to meet your academic obligations during the term. The accommodation request processes, including information about the Academic Consideration Policy for Students in Medical and Other Extenuating Circumstances, are outlined on the Academic Accommodations website (students.carleton.ca/course-outline). Examples of special arrangements include:

- *Pregnancy or religious obligation:* write to your professor with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. For more details visit the [EIC](#) website.
- *Academic accommodations for students with disabilities:* The [Paul Menton Centre](#) for Students with Disabilities (PMC) provides services to students with Learning Disabilities (LD), psychiatric/mental health disabilities, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD), chronic medical conditions, and impairments in mobility, hearing, and vision. If you have a disability requiring academic accommodations in this course, please contact PMC at 613-520-6608 or pmc@carleton.ca for a formal evaluation. If you are already registered with the PMC, contact your PMC coordinator to send your Letter of Accommodation at the beginning of the term, and no later than two weeks before the first in-class test or exam requiring accommodation. After requesting accommodation from PMC, meet with your professor to ensure accommodation arrangements are made.
- *Survivors of Sexual Violence:* As a community, Carleton University is committed to maintaining a positive learning, working and living environment where sexual violence will not be tolerated, and where survivors are supported through academic accommodations as per [Carleton's Sexual Violence Policy](#).
- *Accommodation for [Student Activities](#):* Carleton University recognizes the substantial benefits, both to the individual student and for the university, that result from a student participating in activities beyond the classroom experience. Reasonable accommodation must be provided to students who compete or perform at the national or international level. Please contact your instructor with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist.

Important Dates:

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| Sept. 3 | Classes start. |
| Sept. 16 | Last day for registration and course changes for fall term and fall/winter (two-term) courses. |
| Sept. 30 | Last day for entire fee adjustment when withdrawing from fall term or two-term courses. Withdrawals after this date will result in a permanent notation of WDN on the official transcript. |
| Oct. 13 | Statutory holiday. University closed. |
| Oct. 20-24 | Fall Break – no classes. |
| Nov. 21 | Last day for summative tests or examinations, or formative tests or examinations totaling more than 15% of the final grade, before the official examination period. |
| Dec. 5 | Last day of fall term classes. <i>Classes follow a Monday schedule.</i> Last day for academic withdrawal from fall term courses. Last day for handing in term work and the last day that can be specified by a course instructor as a due date for term work for a fall term course. |
| Dec. 6-7 | No classes or examinations take place. |
| Dec. 8-20 | Final examinations for fall term courses and mid-term examinations in two-term courses. Examinations are normally held all seven days of the week. |
| Dec. 20 | All take-home examinations are due. |
| Jan. 5 | Classes begin. |
| Jan. 16 | Last day for registration and course changes in the winter term. |
| Jan. 31 | Last day for a full fee adjustment when withdrawing from winter term courses or from the winter portion of two-term courses. Withdrawals after this date will result in a permanent notation of WDN on the official transcript. |
| Feb. 16 | Statutory holiday. University closed. |
| Feb. 16-20 | Winter Break – no classes. |
| Mar. 15 | Last day for academic withdrawal from fall/winter and winter courses. |
| Mar. 25 | Last day for summative tests or examinations, or formative tests or examinations totaling more than 15% of the final grade, in winter term or fall/winter courses before the official examination period. |
| Apr. 3 | Statutory holiday. University closed. |
| Apr. 8 | Last day of two-term and winter term classes. <i>Classes follow a Friday schedule.</i> Last day for handing in term work and the last day that can be specified by a course instructor as a due date for two-term and for winter term courses. |
| Apr. 9-10 | No classes or examinations take place. |
| Apr. 11-23 | Final examinations for winter term and two-term courses. Examinations are normally held all seven days of the week. |
| Apr. 23 | All take-home examinations are due. |

Addresses:

Department of Philosophy:
www.carleton.ca/philosophy
520-2110

Registrar's Office:
www.carleton.ca/registrar
520-3500

Academic Advising Centre:
www.carleton.ca/academicadvising
520-7850

Writing Services:
<https://carleton.ca/csas/support/>
520-3822

MacOdrum Library
<http://www.library.carleton.ca/>
520-2735