



STUDY GUIDE

Buenos Aires Spring 2020

Perspectives on a General History of Philosophy & Ecophilosophy

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1. Introduction

This Study Guide is a supplement to the [Course Description](#). It will give information about the course and advice on how best to study and carry out the different tasks. If you have any academic questions concerning the course content, please contact the course coordinator Dr. Martin Lee Mueller (martinleemueller@gmail.com).

For all other inquiries, please contact our office in Oslo:
mail@kulturstudier.no / +47 22358022

Attendance in all course activities is mandatory, and the minimum attendance requirement is 75%. If you are absent from a number of lectures, seminars or other mandatory activities resulting in 25% or more, you will fail the course. Although our teachers will be required to maintain an attendance list, it is your own responsibility to make sure that you achieve the required minimum hours of attendance. Should you be unable to attend a class, do make sure to contact your teacher.

Weekplan:

Week	Dates	Academic activity	Exams and deadline Papers
1	13 jan - 7 Feb	Self-studies	Deadline self-study papers Philosophy 7 Feb CSR 7 Feb
2			
3			
4			
1	10 Feb - 29 May	Lecture, seminars, workshops, writing papers	Diagnostic test Spanish
2			
3			
4			
5			
6			Mid term exam History
7			
8			
9			
10			
11			Paper History 24 April
12			
13			Paper CSR 8 May Paper Philo 8 May
14			Spanish writing skills 11-15 May
15			Paper Lit 22 May
16			Spanish grammar 28 May

2. Course Content

This section provides information about the different sections of the course and guidance on how the students should work. As part of the course, students have several written assignments throughout the semester (see “Studies in Argentina”).

The overall objective of the course is to introduce students to a general history of philosophy (in keeping with the Norwegian Ex Phil tradition), and to introduce them to the field of ecological philosophy specifically (which too has strong roots in Norway).

In this section we present how you, as students collaborating with each other and the teachers, are supposed to study the various parts of the course in order to reach this goal.

Self-Study Period (13 January – 6 February)

Most of the teaching will take place in Buenos Aires, but the learning should start before that, and the program starts with four weeks of self-studies. It is vital that you use these weeks well in order to follow the progression of the program once the classes start in Argentina. It is expected that you make yourself well acquainted with the curriculum during this period. You will get more out of the lectures if you have looked at the material beforehand, and a lazy start to the semester will make the stay unnecessarily overloaded with work.

Self-studies can be a challenge. It requires discipline to spend enough time reading and reflecting, but it will also help you develop an individual understanding of your curriculum. If you have any questions whatsoever, the course coordinator Martin Lee Mueller will be available to answer them during these four weeks. Please don't hesitate to be in touch. We'll be happy to hear from you.

You will further be assigned to compose a **written reflection** (see essay question below). This must be submitted by email **no later than 7 February** both to your main lecturer Dr. Pablo Pachilla (pablopachilla@gmail.com) and to the course coordinator Dr. Martin Lee Mueller (martinleemueller@gmail.com). This is a *working requirement* and must be passed in order to complete the course. Please note that you will also be given a tentative (!) grade for this working requirement. This grade will not formally go into your final course grade. The intention is to give you an early orientation of how you will be assessed, and what to expect from the other submissions you will be required to compose during the course.

Please read the following instructions carefully.

Essay question for the self-study period

Based on Chapter 1 in Singer's book, how would you describe ethics?

Formal requirements:

The reflection is to be comprised of approximately **1,500 words**. All submissions must be sent by email both to pablopachilla@gmail.com and martinleemueller@gmail.com no later than **7 February 2020**.

You must write your document in the following format: Times New Roman, 12 points, space 1.5 between lines, and margins 3.0 (both left and right). This gives approximately 400 words on one page. **It is absolutely essential that you adhere carefully to the formal requirements both of this written assignment and all others during the course.**

Reading in the self-study period is a rather extensive task, but it will pay off when the lectures begin in Buenos Aires. It is much more realistic to get through these readings in the four weeks before going to Argentina than during the first weeks after your arrival. It is in your own interest to take these readings seriously. *Please make sure to **buy the following two books in due time before the self-study period begins**, and to use the self-study period to **read both books**, from cover to cover:*

1. Ahmed, Sara (2010). *The Promise of Happiness*. Durham: Duke University Press.
2. Singer, Peter (2011). *Practical Ethics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Third Edition.

For a complete overview of required course readings, please see the Reading List below.

Studies in Buenos Aires (7 February – 8 May)

The major parts of the course take place in Buenos Aires, Argentina. The course is subdivided into three distinct yet overlapping parts:

Part I - Philosophy of Science

Part II - Ethics

Part III - Ecophilosophy

Participation is compulsory. It is essential that you have an overview of the readings prior to each lecture and seminar. You should use the course readings and lectures as background to your written assignments. A critical application of the curriculum is one of the criteria for awarding the grades. We want you to describe, reflect and discuss the chosen topics critically. More advice on the writing and content of the paper will be given below.

Much of the writing will require access to a computer. There are many internet cafés close to where you live. If you have a laptop computer, we recommend you to bring it with you. Make sure you have insurance that covers a possible loss.

Your course grade will be made up of 1) an average of your in-semester written assignments; 2) your in-semester oral presentation; and 3) the overall quality of your in-class engagement with the course. We have designed this grading system with the intention of giving you the best opportunity to maintain a steady flow of learning – including reading and writing – throughout the semester. It will be important for you to get into this flow, and to use it in your favor. There will be a clear pay-off towards the end of the semester: our grading system sees no need for a final exam. By that time you will see: your work will be complete already.

Grades are given according to the Argentinian scale (see figure below).

Description	Percentage
10 (A) Excellent	100-95
9 (A-) Very Good	94-89
8 (B) Good	88-83
7 (B-) Above Average	82-77
6 (C) Average	76-71
5 (C) Below Average	70-65
4 (D) Lowest Passing Grade	64-60
F Failure	59-0
W Officially withdrawn	Academic Advisor's approval

I	Incomplete	Only with Academic Advisor's approval
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(Fig. the Argentinian grading scale)

Seminars

As the study of philosophy is a multifaceted field, it demands a multiplicity of approaches. In addition to studying the curriculum through lectures, individual reading and group work, you are also expected to participate in seminars. Here you will have the opportunity to explore the field further. Everybody must participate in the seminar groups. You will find that discussing and sharing is a highly efficient way to learn. It is equally important to be able to question, reflect and criticize – both in written and verbally.

Field excursion

The course part on ecophilosophy in particular concerns itself with questions regarding our relationship as humans to the more-than-human world of rivers, woodlands, the air, or the oceans. There is a growing awareness in recent research about teaching this subject that it is essential to confront students with the experiential aspects of this. We will undertake an organized one-day field excursion, a so-called *Deep Time Walk* – the life history of the planet Earth from its very beginnings until the present moment, just when a new geological age, the so-called Anthropocene or age of humans, is beginning. Here we get to investigate some aspects of the curriculum in an experiential context. This excursion has been very popular in earlier semesters, and generally students find this a valuable and worthwhile contribution to the more theoretically oriented in-class work. Do please bear in mind that *participation in the excursion is compulsory*. More practical information concerning the excursion will be given to you as the semester unfolds.

Written assignments throughout the semester

During the semester, you will be assigned regular written, brief assignments of *one page each*. These assignments will be given an individual grade according to the above-mentioned scale. Those individual grades will then be drawn together and form one part of your overall grade – together with your oral presentation and your general in-class engagement with the course. We will guide you carefully into the process of writing these regular short papers, and we will be more than happy to discuss your thoughts/concerns/ideas with you both inside and outside the classroom. You will receive further details when you're in Buenos Aires.

Writing takes time and concentration, and usually also a good deal of routine & practice. This is part of the reason why you will be writing, not one long essay towards the end of the course, but several short pieces throughout the semester. Like many other academic skills, writing will develop the more you practice it. For that reason, we strongly suggest that you take each of the written assignments throughout the course very seriously, as they help you hone your voice and sharpen your ideas throughout the semester.

This implies that you begin writing on each respective piece as early as possible, rather than procrastinating the issue until the last minute. The quality of the writing will be decisively better if you do.

Another important aspect of writing is, indeed, reading. Please work actively with the readings we have given you. Study the work of others, look for clues as to why a piece of writing works (in your opinion), or why it doesn't work. Reading vastly deepens and widens your imaginative and conceptual landscape. Engage eagerly into it!

In-class group presentation

During your semester in Buenos Aires, you are going to prepare an in-class group presentation on an assigned topic. You will be given ample time to ask any questions you might have concerning this, to discuss the work, and to prepare this presentation. This in-class presentation will be part of your overall grade.

3. Reading List

1. Ahmed, Sara (2010). *The Promise of Happiness*. Durham: Duke University Press.
2. Arendt, Hannah (1971). "Thinking and Moral Considerations. A Lecture", *Social Research*, 38:3.
3. Ahmed, Sara (2010). *The Promise of Happiness*. Durham: Duke University Press.
4. Fox Keller, Evelyn & Longino, Helen (1996). *Feminism and Science*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. (Selected passages)
5. Hacking, Ian (1986). "Making Up People". *Reconstructing Individualism*, ed., T. Heller et al. Stanford: Stanford University Press, pp. 222-236.
6. Harding, Stephan & Margulis, Lynn (2010). *Water Gaia. Three and a half thousand million years of wetness on planet Earth*. In: Alliance for Wild Ethics. <http://www.wildethics.org/essays/water-gaia.html>
7. Heidegger, Martin (1977). "The Age of World Picture," *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays*, translated by William Lovitt, New York: Harper and Row, pp. 115-54.
8. Singer, Peter (2011). *Practical Ethics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 3rd Edition.
9. Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy. <http://plato.stanford.edu/> (selected readings)
 - "Aristotle's Ethics"
 - "The History of Utilitarianism"
 - "Kantian Ethics"
 - "Existentialism"

Do remember to buy Ahmed's and Singer's books, and to use the self-study period to read these.

FYI! Additional readings may be handed to you directly by your teachers.

4. Guidance on Writing Essays

There are two writing stages throughout this course. Let's sum them up again: *First*, you'll write one 1,500-word reflection during your self-study period, discussing ethics against the background of the first chapter of Singer's book. Reading the assigned material will certainly help you dive into this issue at more depth. *Second*, you will compose regular, short pieces throughout the semester.

Together with the oral in-class work, these written assignments shall serve to stimulate and document your:

- a. reading and understanding of the course literature and other relevant information,
- b. critical reflection upon the topics in question, and
- c. familiarity with the standards of academic writing.

We encourage you to be pro-active both during the lectures, seminars, and also outside class. We will gladly discuss any concerns/ ideas/ thoughts/ confusions you might have either via mail or in person. Show initiative! Our teachers are available and more than happy to engage with you.

Some guidelines concerning your short essays:

Although you are not expected to deliver original contributions to research, there are some basic guidelines that you ought to follow when writing your pieces. These guidelines are in accordance with normal standards for University/College assignments and will, in combination with the overall purpose defined above, serve as our criteria for assessment. They are as follows:

1. Define your topic, intention and structure in the introduction – and stick to them

Whether writing a short paper, a group paper or a home exam essay, you must have an introduction. Here you first present your topic/s. Then you formulate what question/s related to the topic/s that you intend to look into. These question/s and your intention must be clearly formulated and realistic. Finally, you outline the structure of your paper/essay, that is, how you will proceed in the following pages to critically reflect and explore your question/s. This structure must be simple and logical, normally resting on three building blocks:

- d. An introductory part as already described,
- e. A main part (normally consisting of various sub-chapters/sections) where you present your material, and discuss your results in relation to the overall topic/s and question/s raised in the introduction, and
- f. A concluding part where you summarise your study and draw some conclusions.

Once you have defined your topic/s, intention and structure in the introduction, it is important that you stick to them throughout the paper.

You have the right to guidance during the writing periods. We advise you to make use of this opportunity, for as we have mentioned before, writing consists in large part of re-writing, and it is often through the constructive and critical feedback of another person that we develop our ideas further.

2. Systematize your material

It is essential for the quality - and readability - of the text that you present and discuss your material in a systematic manner. By “your material” we mean the different views/theoretical approaches and empirical examples you use to study the topic/s in question. There is no standard way of doing this. What is important is that you give reasons in the text for why you choose to put the various elements of the material together the way you do. Each time you introduce a new idea or example, remember to ask yourself: Is it clear to the reader (and yourself) why this idea/example is being introduced here? If your answer is not a clear “yes”, the text needs revising.

3. Discuss and conclude your results

What is equally vital for the quality of the paper, but often forgotten, is that you *discuss* the material (the views/theoretical approaches and empirical examples) in relation to the topic and questions raised in the introduction. Actually, it is this element of discussion that makes the paper an academic study. We encourage you to use these papers as opportunities to further develop your own, critical voice.

Finally, in the end, you must summarize your study and draw some tentative conclusions on the basis of the above discussion.

4. Write clearly and smoothly

While academic writing demands a formal style, this does not mean using intricate formulations. On the contrary, you should search for phrasings that communicate your ideas as clearly and precisely as possible. In addition, and this is equally important, you should put effort in establishing good flow between the elements of the text. This implies that there must be a meaningful connection between the various phrases of a section, between the various sections of a chapter, and between the various chapters of the paper/essay. To obtain this, it is often helpful to begin papers by briefly stating what you are about to do, and how it relates to where you come from.

5. Get the technicalities right

References in the text

There must be references in the text immediately after quotations, and after paragraphs that refer to existing literature, views of others, and/or specific information that need to be documented. These references are to be written in parentheses in the appropriate place of the text (always after, not within, a paragraph), and should

simply consist of the author's surname/other source's name followed by the publishing year and the pager number.

Examples: (Steger 2003:76)
(UNDP 2004:218)

List/s of sources

All sources referred to in the text should be presented in full length in separate list/s at the back of the document. The first list, which can be called "Literature", should contain the full literature-references organized in alphabetical order. Each reference should have the following format:

Surname of author, first name or initial/s (publishing year) *Title*, Place of publishing which is normally a town: Name of publisher.

Example:

Pieterse, J.N. (2001) *Development theory. Deconstructions/reconstructions*, London: Sage Publications.

If the source is an article in an anthology (book with contributions from several authors), the reference in the literature list should have the following format:

Surname of author of the article, first name or initial/s (publishing year) "Title of article", in + full name/s of the editor/s, *Title of book*, Place of publishing which is normally a town: Name of publisher.

Example:

McGrew, A. (2000) "Sustainable globalisation. The global politics of development and exclusion in the new world order" in Tim Allen and Alan Thomas (eds.), *Poverty and development into the 21st Century*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

If the article stands in a periodical, the reference in the literature list should have the following format:

Surname of author, name or initial/s (publishing year) 'Title of article', In + *Name of periodical*, volume/issue number x, pp. z-y.

Example:

Castles, S. (2000) 'International migration at the beginning of the twenty-first century: global trends and issues', In: *International Social Science Journal*, n.165, pp. 269-280.

If you have downloaded a text from Internet, the reference should have the normal format used for references to books, anthologies or periodicals as described above, only adding the Internet-address in parenthesis. If you use information from the internet which is frequently updated (newspapers, magazines, etc.), you should also include the date when you downloaded the information.

Other types of sources, like conversations or information from web-sites that has not been published in printed form, should stand in a separate list (after the literature-list), which can be called "Other sources". These sources should also be organized in alphabetical order according to surnames/names. As for unpublished Internet-information, references should consist of the Internet-address (not in parenthesis) followed by the date of your downloading:

Name of Site. Date of Posting/Revision. Name of institution/organization affiliated with the site (sometimes found in copyright statements). Date you accessed the site <electronic address>.

Examples:

The Purdue OWL Family of Sites. 26 Aug. 2005. The Writing Lab and OWL at Purdue and Purdue University. 23 April 2006 <<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/>>.

Felluga, Dino. *Guide to Literary and Critical Theory*. 28 Nov. 2003. Purdue University. 10 May 2006 <<http://www.cla.purdue.edu/english/theory/>>.

For an individual page on a Web site, list the author or alias if known, followed by the information covered above for entire Web sites. Make sure the URL points to the exact page you are referring to, or the entry or home page for a collection of pages you're referring to:

"Caret." *Wikipedia: The Free Encyclopedia*. 28 April 2006. 10 May 2006 <<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Caret>>.

Remember to be very careful in your choice of Internet sources. Although being very informative, Wikipedia is for instance an un-authoritative source that should not be used as a regular encyclopedia or dictionary.

Only sources that have actually been used in the study and referred to in the text should be put on the list/s of sources.

Format

You must write your document in the following format: Times New Roman, 12 points, space 1.5 between lines, and margins 3.0 (both left and right). This gives app. 400 words on one page.

NB! Remember to paginate the text (i.e. number the pages) and to put the amount of words in the front page of your paper.

Finally, we look forward to welcoming you on this course, and to engaging with you on the journey you are about to take.

Warmly, Pablo & Martin