

PHIL 607/682: Pro-Seminar

Topic for Fall 2022

Professional Skills or, What to Expect When You're Expecting (to be a Philosopher)

Seminar Description

In order to succeed in graduate school and have the opportunity for a career in philosophy, one has to develop a plan and cultivate a set of skills. Students have generally been expected to do this on their own. As professional philosophy has become more competitive, however, career planning and professional skills have become so important that they deserve to be a formal part of graduate education. The purpose of this seminar is to identify the skills required for professional success and provide an occasion to develop them.

Objectives

On successful completion of this unit, students will have gained experience in (a) revising a paper for publication; (b) writing an abstract for a conference; (c) giving talks; (d) writing a funding application; (e) writing a CV and preparing a professional website; (f) reviewing submissions for journals and conferences; (g) planning for your academic career in the short and long term.

Seminar structure

The seminar will be different from typical seminars. It will focus exclusively on career planning and professional skills. The work will be “practical”: the primary assignment will be revision of a paper for submission to a journal. Each student will choose a draft paper of their own (e.g., the paper submitted as part of the application to Ph.D. programs) at the beginning of the term. During the term, each student will write a critical review of two papers, and every student will get two reviews. Students will then revise their papers in response to the reviews. They will submit a second draft of the paper together with a report of how they responded to reviewers’ comments at the end of term. Students will be encouraged to submit the paper to an appropriate journal. They will also be encouraged to submit an abstract of the paper to an appropriate conference. As part of the seminar, students will present the paper (with slides and / or handout) in the form of a short talk. Students will also update their CV and create a personal website if they haven’t already done so. In addition, students will produce an application for a graduate scholarship, and a 1-year and 4-year work plan following a method to be reviewed in the seminar. During the weekly meetings, we will discuss strategies for approaching the assignments just mentioned as well as other topics useful for graduate and professional life, such as teaching and publishing.