Matters of Trust: 200/300 Level PHIL Course

Fall/Spring: Year

Instructor Information

Instructor	Email	Office Location & Hours
Prof. Kelly Cunningham	kelly.cunningham.1 @vanderbilt.edu	Furman Hall: 108 Monday: 12:30-1:30pm Thursday (via Zoom): 3:30-4:30pm

General Information

Description

Trust has been described as a "social glue" and as the "almost always unnoticed, ever-changing foundation of ethical life". Trust is essential not only in our relationships, but also for the production of knowledge, political stability, and cooperation. In this course we will explore recent and contemporary philosophical work on the concept of trust. We will begin by exploring the work of Annette Baier, whose 1986 essay "Trust and Antitrust" is considered the starting point of serious philosophical reflection on the topic. In this course, students will gain familiarity with key texts from the first wave of the trust literature, explore the relationship between trust and distrust, and engage with contemporary perspectives on trust from a variety of disciplines. We'll end by considering how trust operates in the applied contexts of education and healthcare.

Expectations and Goals

Attendance and participation in class discussions are expected. Student are also expected to conduct independent research for their final paper assignment. Disrespectful and disruptive behavior in class discussions will not be tolerated.

In addition to developing a familiarity with the trust literature, goals for this course include the refinement of argumentative writing and critical thinking skills. By the end of the course students will have the resources to articulate a philosophical definition of trust and how it relates to other key ethical concepts such as respect, friendship, and recognition.

Course Materials

Required Materials

Since most of our readings are contemporary essays from philosophy journals, they are available through the university library or are posted as PDFs on Brightspace. We will read most of Annette Baier's *Moral Prejudices* (1994), so a physical copy of this book would be worth purchasing. Note that this class will also make use of films and other forms of media.

Course Assignments

Journal Entries

Doing philosophy requires not only respectful discussion and debate, but also personal reflection, close reading, and writing. Over the course of the semester you **must complete 10 journal entries**, which will be graded on ✓-/✓/✓+ scale via Brightspace. For full points, all 10 entries must receive a ✓ or higher. You are welcome to complete more than 10, but only the highest 10 scores will count toward your final grade. Prompts for your journal entries will be available for the following week immediately after Friday's class on Brightspace. Journal entries are due **before** the class when we'll be discussing the reading that you respond to Responses posted for readings after the start of class will not be graded. There are **30 opportunities** for journal entries throughout the semester.

Short Papers

During the first half of the semester, students will complete two short papers on prompts related to the course readings. Prompts for short papers will be available two weeks before they are due. You should answer *only one* of the prompts. Papers should be no more than 1,000 words. Anything more than 10% over will be marked down by 2 points per 10% over. See final assignment for instructions on citations and formatting. A rubric is available on Brightspace.

Short Paper #1 Due Week 4, upload to Brightspace.
Short Paper #2 Due Week 5, upload to Brightspace.

Annotated Bibliography

Your final paper will be on a question about trust of your choosing. To help guide your research for this paper, you are required to complete an annotated bibliography. Your bibliography should include 5-7 sources, properly cited and accompanied by a one-paragraph description of the source's main ideas and how it might be useful for your final paper. We will go over an example in class two weeks before this assignment is due.

Due Week 12, upload to Brightspace.

Final Paper

Your final paper will be on a question about trust related to yourSince most of our readings are contemporary essays from philosophy journals, they are available through the university library or are posted as PDFs on Brightspace. We will read most of Annette Baier's *Moral Prejudices*, so a physical copy of this book would be worth purchasing. Note that this class will also make use of films and other forms of media.

One- paragraph description of question and idea, due Week 13.
Draft due Week 14, upload to Brightspace
Final Paper due by midnight on scheduled day for final exams, upload to Brightspace.

Course Schedule

Week	Topic	Reading	Assignments
0	Introduction to Course	N/A	Welcome Survey

Week	Topic	Reading	Assignments
1	Baier on Trust	Baier-"Trust and Antitrust" Baier- "Trust & Its Vulnerabilities"	Opportunities for Journal Assignment
2	Baier on Trust (cont.)	Baier- "Sustaining Trust" Baier- "Trusting People"	Opportunities for Journal Assignment Prompt for first paper available on Brightspace
3	Baier on Trust (cont.)	Baier- "Trust, Demoralization, and the Virtues" Baier- "Sympathy and Self-Trust"	Opportunities for Journal Assignment
4	Early Reflections	Holton- "Deciding to Trust, Coming to Belief" Jones- "Trust as an Affective Attitude"	Opportunities for Journal Assignment First Paper Due on Brightspace
5	Early Reflections (cont.)	Hardin- "Street-Level Epistemology of Trust" Hieronymi- "The Reasons of Trust Simpson- "What is Trust?"	Opportunities for Journal Assignment
6	Early Reflections (cont.)	Harwig- "The Role of Trust in Knowledge" Lagerspetz- "Legitmacy and Trust" Govier- "Distrust as a Practical Problem"	Opportunities for Journal Assignment Second Paper Prompt Available on Brightspace

Week	Topic	Reading	Assignments
7	Distrust	Hawley- "Trust, Distrust and Commitment" Jones- "Trust, Distrust, and Affective Looping"	Opportunities for Journal Assignment
8	Distrus	D'Cruz- "Trust and Distrust" D'Cruz- "Humble Trust"	Opportunities for Journal Assignment Second Paper Due on Brightspace
9	Historical Perspectives on Trust	Wee- "Xin, Trust and Confucius' Ethics" Krishnamurthy- "(White) Tyranny and the Democratic Value of Distrust"	Opportunities for Journal Assignment
11	Psychological Perspectives on Trust	Kriton- "Trust as a Matter of Attachment Security" Betts and Elder- "The Role of Social Identity Threat in Determining Intergroup Trust"	Opportunities for Journal Assignment Final Paper Description Available on Brightspace
12	Sociological Perspectives on Trust	Hou et al. "The Effect of Folk Belief on Social Trust" Fredericksen- "Dimensions of trust"	Opportunities for Journal Assignment

Week	Topic	Reading	Assignments
13	Contemporary Perspectives on Trust	Bennett- "Demoralizing Trust"	Opportunities for Journal Assignment
		Brennan- "Recognition Trust"	Annotated Bibliography Due on Brightspace
14	Contemporary Perspectives on Trust	Niker and Specker Sullivan- "Trusting Relationships and the Ethics of Interpersonal Trust"	Draft of Final Paper Due on Brightspace
		Kelp and Simon "What is Trustworthiness"	
15	Trust in Practice	Nys- "Autonomy, Trust and Respect"	Opportunities for Journal Assignment
		Englund- "The Potential of Education for Creating Mutual Trust: Schools as Sites for deliberation"	
16	Wrap-Up Week	Watch film *Triangle of Sadness*	Opportunities for Journal Assignment
			First Paper Due on Brightspace

Additional Information and Resources

Accessibility and Accommodations

Vanderbilt University is committed to providing reasonable accommodations for all persons with disabilities. To receive such accommodations students are to apply for services through the Student Access Center. The Center can be reached at disabilityservices@vanderbilt.edu and is located in the Baker Building, Suite 108.

Technology and AI Use Policy

The use of technology in the classroom (such as laptops or tablets) is often crucial for students with accessibility needs, but it can also be a distraction for some students. Similarity, AI is a powerful tool To ensure everyone's needs are met to the best of our collective abilities, we will co-author our technology and AI policy on the first day of class. After which, it will then be posted to Brightspace. Cell phones should be kept away during class.

FERPA Compliance Reminder

To protect student privacy, FERPA guidelines state that professors are not to discuss grades via email. If you would like to discuss your grades, please come to office hours, email me to make an appointment or use your private "journal" discussion board on Brightspace.

Academic Integrity

All student are required to make themselves familiar with and abide by the University Honor Code. I reserve the right to report cases of suspected misconduct, which includes use of AI prohibited by the class policy, will be submitted to the Honor Council for further review. If you are unsure if the way you are using a resource or AI tool is permitted, please consult the University policy and contact me with any further questions *before* turning in your assignment.

Grading Scale   Grading Breakdown

Letter Grade	Numerical Equivalent	Assignment	% of Final Grade
A A-	93-100 90-92	Participation	5%
B+ B B-	87-89 83-86 80-82	Journal Entries	10%
C+ C C-	77-79 73-76 70-72	Short Paper #1	20%
D+ D D-	67-69 63-66 60-62	Short Paper #2	20%
F	0-59	Annotated Bibliography	15%
		Final Paper Draft	5%
		Final Paper	25%