Philosophy Teaching Assistant Handbook
Cameron Fenton
Lead TA 2014-2015

This handbook contains a collection of resources designed to assist teaching assistants (TAs) in their duties. Though there are many challenges associated with being a graduate student, this handbook will focus on your role as a grader or tutorial leader. The advice within will provide you with effective approaches to common situations and problems you may encounter as a teaching assistant. This handbook is meant to serve as a starting point for your teaching and you are encouraged to tweak and experiment to figure out what works best for your teaching style. Each of the major sections is largely independent, which means you can jump around as new challenges present themselves throughout the year.

Contents

1. General Information and Duties Specification Letter

As a teaching assistant at Western you are an employee of the University and a member of the Public Service Alliance of Canada Local 610. For each term in which you are a teaching assistant you are expected to do 140 hours of work. This works out to about 10 hours per week, though you may end up doing more than that in busy weeks (usually grading related) and less in slow weeks. The most you can be required to work in any particular week is 20 hours. You are responsible for keeping track of your hours and alerting your instructor if something is taking longer than you thought. There is a template for keeping track of your hours included below.

Philosophy GTA Timecard for *NAME*				
Course Name	*Instructor Name*			
Fall 2014				
Date	**Time In**	**Time Out**	**Tasks**	**Total Hours**
Sept, 10	12:00	1:00	Tutorial	1
Sept, 15	3:00	6:00	Prep for tutorial	3

Your Duties Specification Letter is your contract with the University and it specifies what you are expected to do throughout the term. You will meet with the instructor of the course you have been assigned to early in the term, usually before the first day of class. You will often have some say in the allocation of hours for each task, but it is ultimately up to the instructor to determine what work you are required to perform. If you have a year-long assignment, then you can renegotiate the distribution of hours at the beginning of the second term.

There are two types of TA assignments in philosophy. The first is a tutorial leader. If you are a tutorial leader then you will be responsible for facilitating a one-hour tutorial each week. Tutorials vary in size from as small as five students to as large as thirty. In addition to facilitating a tutorial each week you will also have grading responsibilities. The second type of TA is a grader. Graders do not have a tutorial and will spend the majority of their hours grading. Since graders do not have to facilitate a tutorial each week, they are usually responsible for grading the work of more students than are tutorial leaders. This handbook contains useful strategies for both tutorial leaders and graders, though sections that focus on in-class activities may not be as relevant for graders.

In addition to leading a tutorial or grading, all TAs will have several hours set aside in their Duties Specification Letter for proctoring exams and attending mandatory department training. These activities are part of your contract and count toward your 140 hours of work per term.

2. What to do before your first tutorial

This section will cover some of the basic information that you should clarify with your instructor before your first tutorial. If you have a grading position, then only some of the following will apply. If you're reading this after your first tutorial, don't worry, but you still might want to ask your instructor about anything that's unclear.

2.1 Lecture Attendance

This should be clearly explained in your Duties Specification Letter, but sometimes it's not. Some instructors will require you to attend all of the lectures (usually with some wiggle room if the lecture overlaps with a grad course you want to take), some will only require you to attend lectures on topics you aren't familiar with, and others won't require you to attend any lectures. It is usually a good idea to go to lectures when you can, especially if you are a tutorial leader. Attending lectures allows you to get a better feel for how students are learning and what they are struggling with. Whatever the case may be, make sure the instructor's expectations are reflected in your Duties Specification Letter. If you are expected to attend two lectures per week, make sure those hours are accounted for in your Duties Specification Letter.

2.2 Office Hours

The main point you should clarify is if you should hold office hours at a specific time every week or if you should hold office hours by appointment. Having office hours by appointment can save you time sitting around in your office, but it can also be more intimidating for students. Having set hours every week is more common, and you can always make special appointments if your students have a time conflict with your regular office hours.

2.3 Preparation Time

You should find out how much time the instructor expects you to put into preparation for your tutorial. Again, this should be included in your Duties Specification Letter, but you might still have questions about what you should use this time for. Preparation includes reading the assigned texts and putting together a lesson plan or PowerPoint for the tutorial. You can ask if the instructor has any materials to help you. Let the instructor know if your preparation is taking too much of your time and ask if they have any suggestions. If you are having trouble preparing for your tutorial, you can contact the current Lead TA for help. The Lead TA won't do your work for you, but he or she can help. If there isn't a Lead TA, then you can ask a more senior TA or the course instructor for help.

2.4 Grading

You should ask when the major grading times will occur throughout the term. If you know when grading will be particularly heavy, you can better manage your time between grading and other commitments. You should also find out approximately how much you will be expected to grade. For example, will the assignments and papers be split evenly among the teaching assistants or will everyone be responsible for the students in their tutorial? Student distribution in tutorials is rarely even, so the workload can vary significantly if everyone is responsible for the students in their tutorial. If this situation arises, ask your fellow teaching assistants if they would be willing to split the assignments more evenly. Usually people are willing to make the effort to make the distribution fair.

2.5 Appeals

You should ask how the instructor wants to handle grade complaints and appeals. The department has an official policy for formal grade appeals, but minor complaints are often handled by the teaching assistant in consultation with the instructor. Generally it is a good idea for everyone to be on the same page about this. You don't want one TA to change grades all the time to make students happy while another TA refuses to ever change grades. Ideally, everyone should use the

same procedure and students should be responsible for providing compelling reasons for a grade change. One effective method is to implement a 24/7 rule for grade disputes. This requires students to wait at least 24 hours after the assignment is returned, but no more than 7 days to dispute a grade. This discourages students from rushing up to you as soon as they receive their grade and prevents them from disputing a grade at the end of term. It can also be useful to require students to submit a written statement prior to the meeting explaining why they deserve a better grade than they received. This forces students to really consider why their grade should be changed and minimizes baseless appeals. It also helps you to understand where the student thinks you might have overlooked something for which they deserve credit.

2.6 Anonymous Grading

You should ask if the instructor plans to use anonymous grading. Anonymous grading is a recommended practice in the department, but not all instructors use it. If your instructor doesn't want to use it, you can still ask them if you can use it with your students. There is a description of anonymous grading, an explanation of why it's important, and instructions on how to implement it in the grading section of this handbook.

2.7 Introductions

Ask if your instructor plans to introduce the TAs during the first lecture. If they aren't planning to, you should encourage them to do so. Introducing TAs helps establish your authority and allows the students to see who their TA will be.

2.8 Guest Lecture

If you are interested, you can ask to be a guest lecturer for one of the lectures in the term. This is a great way to gain experience lecturing to a large group. Not all instructors will agree to this, but many are happy to turn one of their lectures or a portion of a lecture over to a TA.

2.9 Illness

Ask what to do if you are sick or otherwise unable to make it to a tutorial. Usually it's up to you to find someone to cover it, but the instructor can often help by sending the other TAs an email encouraging them to help. If someone does cover for you, it's good to cover one of their tutorials in return later in the term.

3. What to do during your first tutorial

This section will provide some tips for your first tutorial. Your first tutorial can be intimidating and having a plan going in can help put you at ease. Usually the first tutorial serves as an introduction session, but it's also important to provide your students with some information about what a tutorial is for and how you can help them throughout the term.

It's a good idea to find your classroom before your first session. That way you won't be late, and you'll know what resources are available in the room. For example, if your classroom doesn't have a projector, then you probably won't be able to use PowerPoint. It's much better to find this out ahead of time than to show up and be unable to use the PowerPoint you spent time preparing.

Introductions are probably the most important part of the first tutorial. Be sure to introduce yourself and tell them a bit about your academic history. Telling your students about your academic history reinforces their perception of you as a qualified professional. You can then turn it over to the students and get them to introduce themselves. You won't remember everyone's name right away, but it's good to have some idea of who everyone is. You can make this an activity where they have to tell you something fun they did over the summer as well as their name, or you can keep it simple and just get names.

It's also a good idea to explain your plans for the tutorial. Will you help them reinforce concepts from the readings? Will you lecture or facilitate group discussions? Will you have any grades available for participation or attendance? Just let the students know a bit about your teaching style and how you're going to help them learn. If you aren't sure about your teaching style yet, then hold off on this step and come back to it when you've had a bit more experience. You could use the first few weeks to try different approaches and see what works best with your group of students.

Finally, it's helpful to explain some basic administrative information to your students. For example, will you be available outside of class to help them? What's the best way to contact you if they need help? How long should they expect to wait for a reply? What should they do if they miss a tutorial? What technology do you allow in the classroom? Where is your office?

4. Teaching Students How to Read and Write Philosophy Papers

Reading and writing philosophy papers are skills that students need to develop before they can produce good quality work. Unfortunately, as instructors, we often neglect teaching students these skills. We might devote one tutorial session to teaching the basics of essay writing, but even that is not universal. Almost no one devotes any time to teaching students how to read philosophy, even though it is both difficult and necessary if students want to write good papers. In this section, I'll provide four specific things you can do to make it easier for students to read philosophy as well as a step-by-step method you can provide to your students. I'll also provide suggestions you can use to help your students improve their writing.

4.1 Teaching Students to Read Philosophy

Reading philosophy is a lot different from almost anything an average first-year student has encountered before. In high school, students are expected to read novels and textbooks, both of which are very different from most philosophy. Remember the first time a professor asked you to read Kant or Wittgenstein? How was that experience for you? Wouldn't it have been helpful to have a professor explain how to approach the work of these authors?

Philosophy is so difficult to read because it is an active process. You have to look for arguments, pick out premises and conclusions, consider objections, etc. These are all skills that must be developed before a student will be able to read philosophy well. Like any skill, reading skills can be developed with practice, but as an instructor you can do a lot to help.

4.1.1 Making it Easier

First, it is beneficial to provide relevant historical information. For example, knowing that Hobbes was writing during a civil war is helpful when trying to understand why he thinks that sovereign power must be absolute.

Second, provide your students with the date and original language of whatever you are reading. The date is important because it helps situate the author somewhere in the history of ideas. If you explain when Descartes was writing and the development of science at the time, it's a lot easier to understand why his philosophy of mind seemed plausible and, more importantly, why it is historically important. The original language is important because students should be aware if they are reading a translation. It's great that we have so many translations in English, but translations rarely read smoothly. Students often have enough trouble understanding the ideas of a philosopher and can become frustrated when that philosopher also seems like a bad writer. If students know that they are reading a translation from German of a 17th century author, they'll have a better understanding of why it doesn't read so well.

Third, provide students with definitions of key terms. Doing so will help those terms stick in their minds and focus their reading on the important concepts. It can be bewildering to jump into a philosophy text without any idea of what's important, but giving your students some warning about the major concepts in the text will help. For example, you might provide your students with the definition of a perfect duty when they are reading Kant. If you think this is too generous, then just give your students a list of the important terms without definitions. The goal is to allow your students to focus on what is important and get as much as possible out of the limited time they will spend reading. You could even make a short assignment where they have to provide a short explanation of a few of the important concepts each week.

Fourth, be sure to explain what arguments are, how they work, and how they can be flawed. We tell students that philosophy is all about making good arguments, so we need to make sure they know what that means. You can't cover everything (unless you're TAing for critical thinking), but even a brief explanation can help a lot. Reading philosophy will be much easier and more rewarding for students if they know how to pick out and evaluate arguments.

4.2 David Concepcion's Model Step-By-Step

This section will provide a step-by-step guide through David Concepcion's model for reading philosophy. Concepcion's model is designed to make reading philosophy easier for students by helping them understand how to approach it. The model comes from "Reading Philosophy with Background Knowledge and Metacognition," if you're interested in the full article. (Teaching Philosophy, 27:4, December 2004).

Step one is the pre-read. During this step students look at the basic information available about the reading they have been assigned. This includes the table of contents, bibliography, section headers, footnotes, etc. After looking at these features, students should read the first and last paragraph of the paper to find the central thesis. The goal of this stage is to get a sense of the structure and aim of the paper.

Step two is the fast-read. During this step students read the entire paper quickly. While reading, students should be looking for the thesis statement, looking up definitions of unknown words, and flagging the article. Flagging involves making brief notes about content and identifying key structural features of the paper, like premises and conclusions (Concepcion has a whole model for

flagging that I won't get into). It is important not to get bogged down with any of this and keep reading. If students don't understand a paragraph or section, they should skip it for the time being and see what else they can get out of the paper. The goal of this step is to develop a basic understanding of the paper. By the end of this step, a student should be able to tell someone else what the paper is about.

Step three is reading for understanding. During this step students read the paper again, but this time they go slowly and take notes. They should also expand on the flagging they did during the fast-read. At the end of this step, students write a short summary of the article that is detailed enough that they won't have to read the whole article again when it comes time to study. By the end of this step, a student should be able to explain the author's main arguments and how they come together to support the conclusion of the paper.

Step four is evaluation. During this step students use the summary they created in the third step to evaluate the arguments in the paper. This may require students to re-read certain difficult arguments, especially if they haven't done detailed flagging. Students should fill out any objections they noted while flagging and identify any problems with the author's argument. Finally, students should think about how to make the argument stronger and determine if this would answer their objections.

4.3 Teaching Students to Write Philosophy

Writing a philosophy paper is probably relatively straight-forward for you at this point in your academic life. You know how to make arguments and how to structure a good philosophy paper. However, writing a philosophy paper requires several skills that most undergraduates don't have when they arrive in your class. Students will need practice to develop these skills, but you can help by being clear and specific when asking them to write a paper.

Make sure that your students know what kind of essay to write. Most philosophy classes will require argumentative essays, but some might use a mix of descriptive or expository essays as well. Many of the other courses your students are taking will only require them to write descriptive or compare and contrast style essays. While argumentative essays usually include a descriptive or exegetical component, they also require arguments for a thesis. Make sure that your students understand that they need to make an argument for a specific thesis, otherwise you will get a bunch of descriptive essays. This is especially important in classes that have a large number of non-philosophy majors. If your students are used to writing lab reports, they are going to have trouble with a philosophy essay if you aren't clear about what makes a philosophy essay different.

Don't assume that all of your students know how to write an argumentative essay. Some of them might, particularly if you are TAing for a second-year class, but a refresher won't hurt them. It's important to remember that your students come from many different schools, some of which are much better than others. You shouldn't assume that they are all equally well prepared or that they learned how to write an argumentative essay in high-school.

It is also important to explain to your students why they are being asked to write a paper. If your students don't care about what they are writing, then you're not going to get the best papers from them. You will get much better and more interesting papers if you can get your students engaged with the material and the writing process.

Some instructors don't put a lot of thought into why they are getting their students to write papers. If you are only getting your students to write papers because it gives you something to evaluate,

then it's time to seriously revaluate your course design. A much better way to use papers is as a skill building activity. Students get better at writing by writing papers. They also develop skills in critical thinking, argument analysis, and argument construction. If you explain this to students, you're much more likely to get them on board. Business and science students might not care much about the debate between consequentialists and deontologists, but they do care about being clear and critical thinkers, which writing philosophy papers facilitates. When you explain that learning to be a good critical thinker and writer is a skill that can be applied in many areas of life, you greatly expand student interest. Now, clearly not every student is going to be motivated by skill development, but it will motivate more of them than no explanation at all.

Another helpful strategy is to provide your students with examples of good philosophy papers at their course-level. It's important to make the example papers course-level appropriate, because your students will learn more if they can focus on the structure of the paper, rather than getting too tied up in the content. You want to give students something that is straightforward and in the style you want them to write. You might consider providing them with one of your own undergraduate essays, if you're comfortable doing so. You don't have to tell them you wrote the papers, if you don't want to. There are sample papers available on the OWL site (as of 2015) of first, second, third, and fourth year papers, if you want something to start with.

Finally, it's important to explain some of the common mistakes that many new writers make. Try to go over these mistakes before your students write their first essay. The list of mistakes I have below is by no means exhaustive, so feel free to add anything you've run into trouble with in the past.

First, students need to understand what can be done in a short paper. They have a tendency to be far too ambitious and try to reach a grand conclusion in 1000 words. It helps to give them an example of an overly ambitious thesis, for example, 'I will argue that utilitarianism is the best moral theory,' and a more restrained thesis, for example, 'I will argue that Mill's utilitarianism is superior to Bentham's because it accounts for higher and lower pleasures.'

Second, students should be encouraged to avoid writing essays with uncontroversial conclusions. Everyone wants to write a good paper and sometimes students think the best way to do that is to argue for a conclusion no one would reject. As you can probably imagine, this leads to really boring and trivial papers. Again, providing them with an example of a good and bad version of a similar thesis should help. For example, a bad thesis might be 'I will argue that it is wrong to kill someone without their consent.' While almost no one would object to this thesis, it's not very interesting; the paper isn't doing any work. A better version of a similar thesis would be, 'I will argue that physician assisted suicide is morally acceptable because it preserves equality rights protected in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.' This thesis is far more controversial and has been the subject of a few Supreme Court of Canada cases. This particular example might be too ambitious for a first-year paper, but it demonstrates the difference between a trivial and non-trivial thesis.

Third, students should defend a well-defined and concise thesis. You don't want your students to write really vague or confusing thesis statements because it makes the paper much more difficult to follow. Encourage them to be as clear and specific as possible when writing a thesis statement. For example, a bad thesis might be, 'I will argue that physician assisted suicide is bad.' Saying that something is bad isn't clear. Is it morally bad? Bad for society at large? Bad for the physician? A better thesis would be, 'I will argue that physician assisted suicide is morally wrong because it allows for abuse of those in a vulnerable position.' Regardless of the plausibility of this

revised thesis, it is clear and direct, it defines the type of wrong in question, and it gives a reason why the practice might be wrong.

Here's an example paragraph you can use to point out common mistakes. You could even make it a brief in class assignment to see how many mistakes your students can identify on their own.

"John Stuart Mills is the greatest philosopher of all time. He developed utilitarianism from the ground up and that alone makes him great. Anyone who reads on liberty can see his mastery of language. How can anyone argue with that?"

Here is a version with the mistakes in red,

"John Stuart Mills is the greatest philosopher of all time. He developed utilitarianism from the ground up and that alone makes him great. Anyone who reads on liberty can see his mastery of language. How can anyone argue with that?"

The mistakes in order of appearance are:

1. It's John Stuart Mill, not John Stuart Mills
2. This statement would be extremely difficult to prove and far too ambitious for a short paper.
3. This is false, Jeremy Bentham and others came before Mill.
4. Saying that anyone who reads a book will come to the same conclusion is very ambitious and makes a lot of assumptions about how others will interpret Mill.
5. *On Liberty* is a book and should be formatted appropriately.
6. His mastery of language has little to do with the claim that he is the greatest philosopher of all time.
7. This is a rhetorical question and a bad one at that. Lots of people would argue that Mill isn't the greatest philosopher of all time, especially if the only reason given is that he possessed a mastery of language.

After you return an assignment, it can be helpful to go over common mistakes that came up in the assignment. Students who made these common mistakes will feel better if they know lots of other people made the same mistakes. Going over them in class will also help your students to avoid those mistakes in the future. If many of your students had trouble with clarity or structure, then it's worth taking the time to explain the resources available at the university to help them with writing. They can come see you during your office hours or they can visit the Writing Centre. If you suggest the Writing Centre, tell them to check if a philosopher is available to help them. Usually a few philosophy grad students and adjunct professors are working part-time in the Writing Centre, so your students can often get advice from someone who is an expert at writing philosophy papers.

5. Grading

This section will focus on effective grading practices. There are many ways to grade effectively and there's only room in this handbook to go over a few. It's possible that you have a perfectly acceptable grading method that doesn't follow all of the suggestions in this section. Like most of this handbook, this section is meant to give you ideas and strategies to try out so that you can figure out what works best for you.

5.1 Explaining Grading to Students

First off, it's important to understand that many of your students will care far too much about their grades. Rather than focusing on what you are trying to teach them, they'll be focusing on how to get a good grade. Not only will they tend to focus on grades, but they'll also stress out about them. Student stress can be particularly bad in philosophy because some students think that grading in philosophy courses is arbitrary. Fortunately, as instructors, we know that grading in philosophy courses isn't arbitrary. We all know what an 'A' paper looks like because we've written them before. Don't keep this information a secret from your students. They can't read your mind, so you should be as explicit and detailed as you can about what you are looking for in a good philosophy paper. Keep in mind that things that seem obvious to you probably aren't obvious to most of your students. You've had a lot of practice writing philosophy papers and they haven't.

One excellent way to help students understand what you want on a particular assignment is to use a rubric. There are sample rubrics available in the appendix of this handbook, and a few more available on the Lead TA OWL site. If you're looking for a model that's easy to explain, then you can try the 'one' model. Tell your students that you are looking for a paper with one thesis, one argument in support of the thesis, one objection to the thesis, one response to the objection, and one conclusion. This model keeps students focused on one idea and forces them to create one (hopefully) strong argument instead of several weak arguments.

5.2 Implicit Bias and Anonymous Grading

Implicit biases are subconscious evaluations that we make about other people. They can be positive or negative and they are usually based on group membership. The most prominent implicit biases are based on race and gender. Implicit biases are important for grading because most people have negative implicit biases about members of certain racial groups and women. For example 97% of white people have negative unconscious attitudes toward black people (Dasgupta 2000 and Lazos 2012). This statistic is not meant to make you feel bad, but rather to point out that implicit biases effect almost everyone. To be clear, implicit biases aren't only a problem for white people. The same study cited earlier found that 45% of black people had negative unconscious attitudes toward black people. Women also suffer from the results of implicit bias, especially in fields that are predominantly occupied by men. So even if you don't have negative implicit biases based on race, you probably have negative implicit biases based on gender. Implicit biases can also overlap, which results in women of color often suffering the most as a result of the intersectionality of race and gender.

Now that we know what implicit bias is and that it very likely effects you, it's time to apply it to your teaching. Essentially, the result of implicit bias is that you are likely to unconsciously favor white male students over people who belong to other groups, particularly women of color. This is, of course, very bad when it comes to grading. For example, if you see a name that you associate with a particular racial group, you will be primed to assess that student's work differently. The problem with this priming is that it can make your grading unfair. Even though you aren't aware you're doing it, you are unfairly disadvantaging some students because your evaluation is being influenced by something other than the quality of the student's work.

Unfortunately, there is more bad news. You can't consciously overcome implicit bias. In fact, research suggests that consciously trying to avoid implicit bias tends to make it worse. If you are trying to take note of any negative reactions you have to a student you are only making these reactions more salient.

Fortunately, there is some good news. By using anonymous grading you can help avoid any implicit biases you might have. Anonymous grading involves asking your students to remove easily identifiable information from any written submissions. Instead of writing their name, ask them to write their student number. When you get your students to do this, you remove any information about whose paper you are grading. Since you don't know anything about the student, there is little room for implicit bias to creep into your grading process.

Anonymous grading helps your students because they will feel that they are being evaluated fairly. Since only their work is available to you, they won't think you are evaluating them based on arbitrary criteria. Even if your students don't know anything about implicit bias, anonymous grading helps to alleviate concerns that you are playing favorites while grading. Using anonymous grading can also make your students more comfortable speaking during class. Students don't have to worry that what they say in class will influence their grade.

Anonymous grading also helps you in your role as a TA. Students are much less likely to complain about their grades if they think their assignment was graded fairly. If they do complain, you should be able to easily explain to them why they received the grade they did, because your evaluation was only of the work they submitted. Anonymous grading can also give you peace of mind. When you grade anonymously you don't have to worry that you are unfairly disadvantaging any of your students.

5.3 Approaches to Grading

In this subsection you'll find several methods of grading. The methods are divided into group focused methods and individual focused methods. Group focused methods involve getting together with your fellow TAs to grade, while individual focused methods can be used by yourself. You can use a mix of these methods depending on what works best for a particular assignment.

5.3.1 Group Focused Methods

The first group focused method is the example method. This method begins with the instructor identifying an 'A', 'B', 'C', 'D', and 'F' paper with the TAs. This provides the TAs with an example of the quality of paper the instructor is looking for in each grade range. One of the biggest advantages of this method is consistency. Everyone has the same set of examples and the instructor has explained why each paper received the grade it did. The biggest disadvantage of this method is that it requires instructor participation. It requires the instructor to mark a batch of papers before giving them to the TAs and many instructors won't have time to do this.

The second group method is the discussion method. This method begins with the instructor selecting a paper and having all of the TAs read it. The group then meets to discuss how each person would grade the paper. Like the example method, the big advantage of the discussion method is consistency. By having everyone discuss how they would grade the paper, the TAs can learn from each other and come to a conclusion about how to grade as similarly as possible. It's fine if people disagree about a grade, but it ideally shouldn't be a large discrepancy. If one person wants to give a paper a 'B' and another wants to give it an 'F', then the group should talk through the discrepancy to see which, if either, grade is best. The biggest disadvantage of this method is that it takes extra time. Each TA has to read the paper and come to the discussion prepared to discuss what grade they would give it. The discussion itself will also take time, though it can be part of regular TA meetings.

The third group method is the collective method. This method involves the TAs getting together as a group to mark all of the assignments. The assignments are divided between the TAs and everyone marks their pile of papers. This method allows TAs to easily ask each other questions and compare assignments and grades. The collective method is particularly effective when grading tests or exams because each person can specialize in grading one section of the test or exam. For example, one person can grade the first ten short answer questions, another can grade the second ten, another can grade the first essay, etc. Finally, the collective method can also be a lot more fun than sitting in a room grading by yourself. The biggest disadvantage of the collective method is that it creates additional organization and scheduling work. It can be difficult to find a time when everyone is available, especially near the end of term.

5.3.2 Individual Focused Methods

The first individual method is called stacks. Stacks involves skimming through papers, getting some idea of the quality of each, then placing them into stacks sorted by grade. All of the 'D' papers go in one stack, all of the 'A' papers in another, and so on. Once you have done the initial sorting, you go back and read each paper closely before assigning a specific grade. It is fine if papers end up changing stacks because they were better, or worse, than you thought after your initial skim. The advantage of this method is that you have a chance to read every paper before assigning any grades. If you only read each paper once and then give it a grade, your first few papers might be graded more harshly than papers you grade near the end. If the papers are universally worse than you expected before grading them, the early papers are likely to suffer disproportionately when compared to the papers graded after you have adjusted your expectations. There are two disadvantages of this method. First, by sorting the papers into piles you may become convinced that each papers must stay in its pile. This would mean that a great paper might end up getting stuck in the 'B' pile because it didn't look great when skimmed. To counter this, you might consider simply reading each paper before grading any of them and forgoing the sorting process. Second, the stacks method takes longer than just reading each paper once and assigning a grade to each paper as you go.

The second individual method is called one question at a time. This method works best on tests and exams, as well as essays that have multiple question options. One question at a time involves grading each question individually, rather than grading a whole test or exam at once. For example, if the exam has a short answer section, then you might grade the first five questions on each exam, before moving on to other sections of the exam. When grading essays, it means grading all of the essays on the same topic before moving on to another topic, rather than grading them in a random order. The big advantage of this method is that it keeps you focused on a small section of an exam. This allows you to mark faster because you're evaluating roughly the same information over and over again. The disadvantage of this method is that it is easy to miss questions. If you pass over an exam, you can easily miss a whole section. One way to counter this potential problem is to assign a grade to each section, then when you add them up at the end ensure that you have an entry for each section.

5.3.3 Tips

This sub-section will provide you with tips you can use while grading to help you be more efficient and effective. These tips are not full methods like those outlined in the previous section and they can often be used with one of those methods.

First, you should consider reading five or six papers before you begin grading so that you can get a good idea of the quality of the papers. This is a good compromise between reading all of the papers before grading any of them and grading each paper as you read it for the first time.

Second, don't correct every grammatical and spelling error. Correcting every error takes far too long and is unlikely to help the student. Correct a few of the errors and then make a comment informing the student that many more exist and the student should work on improving this aspect of their writing. Western offers writing help for free to all students at the Writing Centre.

Third, you should consider using a timer when you are grading. Figure out how long you should spend on each paper, then set a timer to notify you when you reach that time. If you aren't close to finishing the paper you are working on, then set it aside and come back to it later. This prevents you from spending too much time with any individual paper.

Fourth, take a break. Grading is hard work and you become less reliable if you are tired or burned out. Grading while you are hungry tends to make you grumpier, so have something to eat before grading.

Fifth, consider grading electronic copies of student submissions. Typing your comments ensures that they are legible and it allows you to quickly paste common comments. Returning electronic copies is also very easy, and you always have a copy in the event of a grading dispute.

Sixth, you can save a lot of time by using a marking code for common mistakes. Come up with abbreviations for common errors like spelling and grammar mistakes. It may not seem like it saves you much time, but it does if you have dozens of papers to grade.

6. Feedback

Feedback is one of the most important aspects of grading. Good feedback allows students to improve both their understanding of the material and their writing skills. Effective feedback should be timely, encouraging, and tailored to the student.

6.1 Timely, Encouraging, and Tailored to the Student

Effective feedback should be timely because undergraduates have a lot going on. Remember that undergrads have four other classes and lots of assignments. If you hand back a paper or assignment a month after it was handed in, then the student has likely written ten other assignments and forgotten all about the one you are handing back. If your student barely remembers writing the assignment, then even the best feedback in the world isn't going to help them improve. As a rule of thumb, aim to have assignments handed back by the next class and essays and tests handed back within a week.

Effective feedback should be encouraging. Feedback is meant to help students, not make them feel bad. Focus on suggestions for improvement rather than criticisms of mistakes. That's not to say that you can't point out mistakes, but frame your feedback in a way that helps the student to improve. If they make a mistake, then tell them how to fix it. You want to be encouraging because if your student thinks you are being a jerk, they're going to get defensive and write off any feedback you give them.

Effective feedback should be tailored to the student. Students respond to feedback much better if they think you paid attention to their paper and offered them specific ways to improve their weaknesses. This is especially important if you include a summary of your thoughts at the end of their paper. Your comments should address specific parts of their paper and not sound as though they could apply to just about any paper.

6.2 Be Brief

It is also important to be brief with your feedback. Students aren't going to read two pages of feedback on a five page essay. It's overwhelming and difficult to absorb that much information. Even if your feedback is mostly positive, it can still be scary to get a paper back with that many comments and notes. It's much better to focus on any key problems in the paper and to emphasize anything you think the student did particularly well. Aim to write one paragraph of comments at the end, maybe two if the paper is longer than ten pages. Writing more than this takes up too much of your time that could be better spent on other duties and is unlikely to help your students.

6.3 Tips

1. When you make comments talk about 'the paper' rather than using 'you'. For example, you might say "This paper is missing a central argument and that makes it unclear which position it is meant to defend" instead of "You don't have a central argument here and that makes it unclear which position you are defending." When you focus your criticism on the paper the student is less likely to be upset or feel like you are attacking them. It also makes it clear that you are evaluating the paper and not the person writing it.

2. Use 'I' in your comments. For example, instead of writing "This is confusing" write "I got lost here." Both let the student know that there is something wrong with the section in question, but using 'I' is more personal and less accusatory.

3. Make suggestions rather than criticisms. For example, instead of writing "This is poorly explained" you might try "You should elaborate on this and here's how…" By using this method you are pointing out a part of the essay that the student could improve, and explaining how to improve it, rather than just pointing out a mistake.

4. Use questions to identify errors. For example, asking "What did you mean here?" or "Why does this follow?" rather than "This is wrong" or "This doesn't follow." This method encourages students to think about their mistake and how they might fix it in the future.

5. Use tutorials for peer feedback sessions. You can set aside a tutorial or even a section of a tutorial before a paper is due and encourage your students to bring drafts. The drafts can be anonymous and you can distribute them randomly among the students. Explain to your students that this is an excellent way to determine if their paper is clear enough. If their classmates struggle to understand the paper, then it likely needs to be clearer. Feedback is very important for improving papers and this method allows everyone who's willing to participate to get feedback from their peers.

7. Active Learning in Philosophy Tutorials

Active learning is a student-focused teaching style that emphasizes engagement with the learning process. It usually involves student participation in activities designed to encourage engagement with course material and reflection on what they have learned. Active learning encourages students to learn from each other, as well as from the instructor.

Active learning is usually contrasted with passive learning. In a university setting, lecturing is the most common form of passive learning. During a lecture, students passively receive information from the instructor with little or no interaction with the course material. Lecturing is a one-way learning process in which an expert imparts knowledge onto non-experts.

You might be wondering what's wrong with lecturing? The short answer is that there's nothing wrong with lecturing, but that doesn't make it the best way to teach. Using active learning techniques in your classroom also doesn't mean that you can't ever lecture. In fact, you should have some time devoted to lecturing in order to cover any background information and concepts students will need. However, you shouldn't use the whole class time to lecture. It's really boring to listen to someone talk for an hour without some kind of activity. When students get bored, it becomes much more difficult for them to focus and learn. Of course, some people are amazing speakers who can hold an audience's attention just by lecturing, but these people are rare and you probably aren't one of them. You want your students to be engaged with the material you are trying to teach them and this is much easier to achieve if you can get them talking, writing, or playing during your lesson. It's a lot more difficult for a student to zone out if they have a task to complete.

This handbook will explain the basics of active learning, but if you want an opportunity to learn more about some of these methods and try them out, please consider attending a workshop at the Teaching Support Centre.

7.1 The Evidence

Student engagement has been shown to assist learning. A study by Laws et al. of 6000 students in multiple sections of an introductory physics course examined the effects of interactive engagement methods (active learning). Test scores measuring conceptual understanding were roughly twice as high in the classes that used interactive engagement methods than in classes that used traditional lectures. For example, student knowledge of force, acceleration, and velocity was tested at the beginning and end of the course. The results are shown in the following chart:

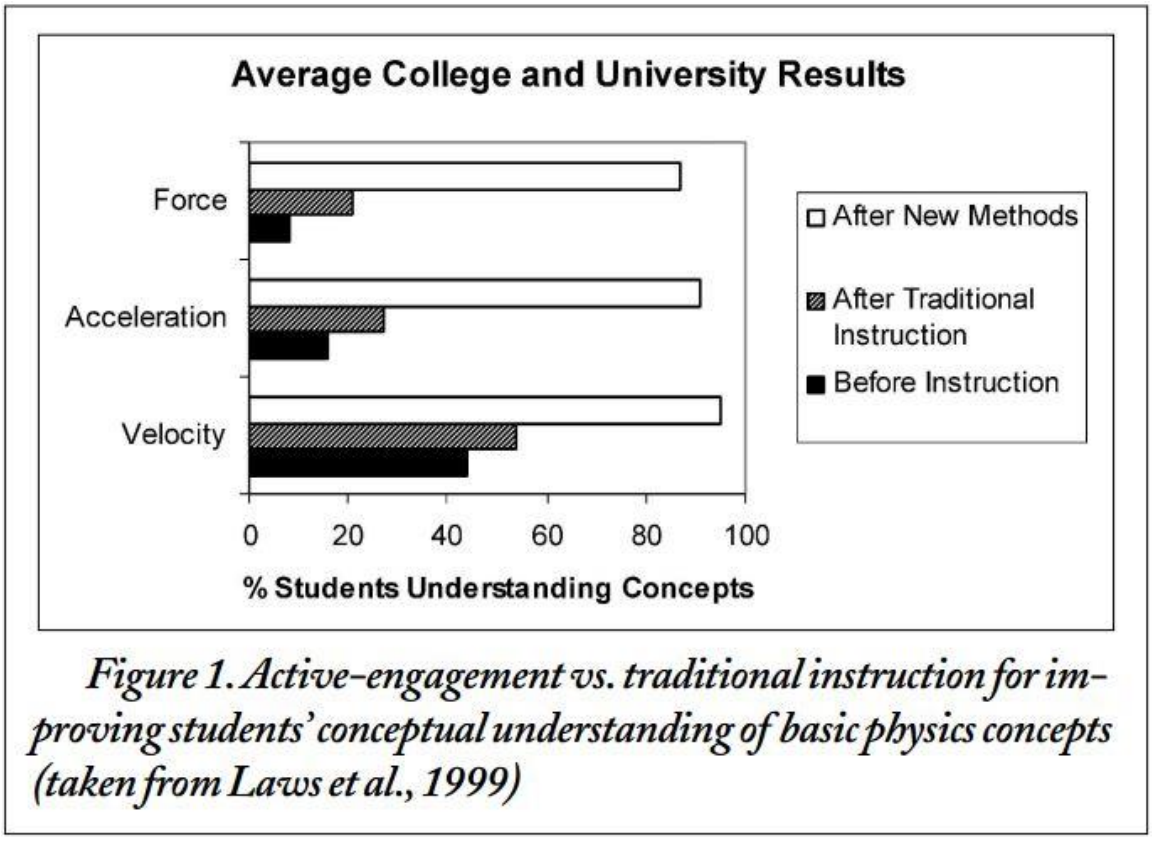

Figure 1. Active-engagement vs. traditional instruction for improving students' conceptual understanding of basic physics concepts (taken from Laws et al., 1999)

By using active learning, the percentage of students in the class who understood velocity went from roughly 45% to roughly 95%. Using traditional instruction (lectures) the percentage only went from 45% to about 55%. The difference is even greater for the concept of force. Classes that used active learning methods increased the percentage of students who understood force from roughly 10% to roughly 85%. Traditional instruction only increased the percentage from roughly 10% to roughly 25%. Of course, these are results from physics, not philosophy, but in philosophy courses we often put a lot of time and effort into getting our students to learn the concepts central to philosophy. If active learning can help our students understand these important concepts, then we should be using it.

Even simple active learning methods, like discussions, have been shown to surpass traditional lectures in terms of student retention of material, motivation for future study, and the development of thinking skills (Bonwell and Eison 1991). Breaking up a lecture with an activity or discussion can also reset students' attention span. The average student has a lecture attention span of 15 minutes, after that time student attention drops off rapidly resulting in low retention of the lecture material (Wankat 2002). For example, on average, students can remember about 70% of the material from the first ten minutes of a lecture, but only about 20% from the last ten minutes (Hartly and Davies 1978).

Finally, active learning methods often involve student collaboration, which has been shown to improve student performance. Johnson, Johnson, and Smith in a review of 168 studies from 1924-1997 found that collaboration consistently improved learning outcomes relative to individual work. Roughly, students who would score in the 50th percentile on an exam without collaboration during class improved to the 70th percentile with collaboration during class.

7.2 Implementing Activities

It's important to ensure than whatever activities you decide to use have a clear purpose. Activities won't help your students if they don't have a goal. Good activities emphasize understanding the important ideas students are expected to learn. If you use learning outcomes to design your lessons, then your activities should correspond to a particular learning outcome. For example, if one of your learning outcomes is to have students value the importance of careful argumentation, then the activity you design should demonstrate the importance of careful argumentation.

Unfortunately, you will almost certainly have students who don't want to participate or think that activities are a waste of time. That's fine, you can't force them to participate, but most people quickly come around when they see their colleagues getting a lot out of the activities. There are a few things you can do to encourage participation. If students are concerned that the activities are a waste of time, you can show them some of the research outlined above. Most students who think activities are a waste of time believe that lectures are the best way to learn, and if you can show them this belief is false they will usually come around. It's also important to explain why you are having your students participate in activities. If your activities are well designed, it should be easy for you to explain how participating in the activity helps students achieve the learning outcomes of the course.

7.3 Sample Active Learning Activities

This section contains several examples of active learning activities that you could use in a tutorial. These examples have been designed for use in a first-year philosophy class, though you will have to modify the content to suit your particular course. There are many other active learning activities described in general terms in the first appendix of this handbook.

7.3.1 Best Summaries

To begin this activity, the instructor asks each student to prepare a summary of the main points that have been covered so far in the session. It's also a good idea to tell your students at the beginning of class that you will be asking them to write a summary sometime during class. This will encourage them to take notes and avoid surprising them with something they aren't prepared for. Providing students with recipe cards is very useful for this activity, but students can use sheets of paper if recipe cards aren't available. Students then form small groups, shuffle their summaries together into a pile and pass the pile of summaries to another group. Each group then discusses the summaries they received and selects the best summary from the pile. The instructor then asks each group to read the best summary. The instructor can then collect and post the best summaries on the class website for everyone to use.

Best summaries is a useful activity because it rewards good note taking, it encourages students to reflect on the material they have been learning, and it is extremely versatile. You can use best summaries in any class size, though you might want to change how groups switch piles of cards if you have a particularly large class. Best summaries also requires very little preparation for the instructor. The first time you use it in class you'll have to explain how it works, but after that best summaries can be done very quickly. Finally, the resulting best summaries are a great study tool for students. If the instructor uses the best summaries activity regularly, then by the end of term, students will have created concise summaries of many classes. If the instructor chooses to post the best of the best summaries online, then everyone can benefit.

Here's a step-by-step breakdown that you can use in a tutorial. You can adjust the time allowed for each step to suit your class:

Topic: Summarize what we've discussed about Jeremy Bentham's utilitarianism.
Step One: Write your own summary on a piece of paper. (3 minutes)
Step Two: Form a group of three or four and exchange your summaries with another group. (1 minute)
Step Three: As a group, pick the best summary. (3 minutes)
Step Four: One student from each group will read the best summary. (2 minutes)
Step Five: I'll collect the best summaries. (1 minute)

7.3.2 Think Pair Share

Think pair share begins with the instructor asking the class a question about something they have learned. Students think about the question individually for a short time, then they pair up with another student to discuss their ideas. The instructor can then ask a few pairs to share what they discussed with the larger group.

Think pair share is a good activity because it works with any group size, it doesn't require any additional materials, everyone gets to participate, and it can be very quick. Depending on the complexity of the question you ask, a think pair share can done in as little as five minutes.

Here's a step-by-step breakdown that you can use in a tutorial. Again, you can adjust the time allowed for each step to suit the question you want your students to think about:

Question: Would you use the Ring of Gyges?
Step One: Think about this on your own (1 minute)
Step Two: Pair up with someone near you and discuss your answers (2 minutes)
Step Three: I'll pick two pairs to share what they discussed (2 minutes)

7.3.3 Snowball

Snowball is a useful activity for creating lists of questions, comments, or answers. The instructor begins by asking students to individually write down their top three responses to a question asked by the instructor. For example, you might ask students to list the three most interesting ideas from a particular text or lecture. Once students have their individual lists, they get into pairs and select the top three answers from their combined set of answers. Once the pair has narrowed their list down from six to three, they join another pair and the group of four has to select the top three answers again. By the end of the snowball, the group of four should have three high-quality responses to the question.

One of the best aspects of the snowball activity is that requires student interaction and compromise. Students get a chance to make an argument for their answer, but ultimately have to compromise with others to come up with the best list. Snowball also allows students to see what their peers think. Everyone gets a chance to write down what they think before coming together and sharing.

Here's a step-by-step breakdown of snowball that you can use in a tutorial:

Question: Which three logical fallacies are most troublesome?
Step One: Write down your answers individually (3 minutes)

Step Two: Get into pairs and agree on three answers (3 minutes)
Step Three: Get into groups of four and agree on three answers (3 minutes)
Step Four: I'll ask a few groups of four to share their answers. (2 minutes)

7.3.4 Quescussion (Ques-cuss-ion)

Quescussion is a good way to generate a list of questions quickly. The instructor starts by asking a question and then invites everyone in the class to yell out another question on the same topic or theme. All responses must be questions. If someone makes a statement, then everyone yells "statement!". In order to prevent one person from dominating the quescussion, students should allow two other people to yell out a question before offering another.

Quescussion isn't as versatile as some of the other activities, but it can be a lot of fun if students get into it. Quescussions also get students thinking quickly about questions they have, which can give you a better idea of how they are receiving the course content.

Here's a step-by-step breakdown (well, one step anyway) of quescussion that you could use on the first day of class as an ice-breaker:

Topic: Questions you might ask on the first day of class
Step One: Yell out any questions you have. (5 minutes)

7.3.5 Superlatives

The instructor asks students to identify the most interesting, confusing, troubling, exciting, boring, etc., concept or fact mentioned in the lecture. Students then pair up and compare their lists. The instructor may collect the lists to get insight into what the students are taking away from a particular lecture.

Superlatives is a great activity to use to get feedback on what your students are thinking. Students get an opportunity to tell you what they find boring or confusing without having to directly ask a question in class. You can then use this feedback to help plan your next lesson. If most of your students are having trouble with a particular paper or concept, you can spend more time on it in the next lesson. If many students find a particular paper exciting or interesting, you should consider making that paper an essay topic or exam question.

Here's a step-by-step breakdown of a superlative activity:

Question: What was the most interesting concept we discussed today? What was the most boring? What was the most confusing?

Step One: Make your list. You don't have to write something for every category if you don't think anything fits. (3 minutes)

Step Two: Pair up with someone near you and compare your answers. (3 minutes)

Step Three: I'll collect the lists. (1 minute)

8. Classroom Management Strategies

This section will discuss a variety of conflicts that can arise in your role as a TA. The focus will be on conflict in the classroom, but there will also be a short section on conflict that can occur outside the classroom.

8.1 Sources of Classroom Conflict

A survey of university professors in 1990 asked professors to identify student behaviors they found problematic (Appleby 1990). The study found that there are three broad sources of classroom conflict. The first is immature student behaviors, which includes talking during lectures, chewing gum, eating or drinking noisily, being late, and creating disturbances. The second is inattentive behaviors, which includes sleeping during class, cutting class, acting bored or apathetic, not paying attention, being unprepared, and packing up books and materials before class is over. The third is miscellaneous behaviors, which includes cheating, repeatedly asking "will this be on the test?" and expressing more interest in grades than learning.

Some of the particular student behaviors that can be problematic have changed since 1990, particularly the use of technology in the classroom. Though I don't have data to back this up, I'd guess that students using laptops and phones for purposes other than taking notes in class would be very high on almost any professor's list of problematic student behavior. Sitting at the back of a classroom, it is common to see many students using Facebook, Tumblr, and a wide variety of non-class related websites. Most of these behaviors would fall into the inattentive behaviors category, but if a student is distracting others, then the behavior would fall in the immature behaviors category.

8.2 Controversial Topics

Philosophy classes often involve discussions about controversial topics. When you challenge a student's core beliefs, they will sometimes respond with hostility. This can also happen if a student's core beliefs are challenged by another student. Unfortunately, as long as you are teaching a class with controversial subject matter, there is almost no way to avoid some kind of conflict. Fortunately, you can learn to better manage conflict when it does arise.

Some of the controversial topics that are often discussed in undergraduate philosophy classes include, abortion, euthanasia, terrorism, war, torture, animal rights, and genetic engineering. Some of these topics might not seem controversial to you, but they can be for your students.

8.3 Strategies to Manage Conflict

Now that we have examined some of the things that can cause conflict, we can look at a few strategies to manage conflict. Many of the strategies below are designed to prevent or minimize conflict rather than react to it. If you can prevent a conflict from occurring in the first place, you'll have less conflict to manage. Of course, these prevention and minimization strategies won't eliminate all conflict in your classes, so we'll also look at some case studies where conflict does occur.

8.3.1 Purpose

The first strategy is to clearly identify why you are discussing a particular controversial topic. Make it clear to your students that the purpose of the discussion is not to provoke or anger anyone, but rather to explore difficult parts of the world we live in. A good way to make clear the purpose of a lecture or discussion is to explicitly state the objectives. If the topic is torture, you might say that your goal is to help your students understand why consequentialists and deontologists might have different views on the acceptability of torture in certain circumstances. You are giving them a problem that people struggle with and showing how various ethical theories react to that problem.

8.3.2 Ground Rules

The second strategy is to develop ground rules with your students. It's best if you can discuss these rules with your students on the first day of class. The rules don't have to be fancy, but they should give you something to point to if a discussion gets out of hand. If a student says or does something that violates one of the ground rules, then you can point this out and ask the student to rephrase their concern.

You can make up the ground rules for the class yourself, but your students will be much more willing to take them seriously if you give them some input. I suggest writing up a few basic rules for the class, then asking your students for suggestions for further rules. If students feel that they had a hand in creating the rules, then when students break a rule they will feel like they are breaking rules they agreed were important rather than rules you imposed on them. It is, of course, ultimately up to you which rules are adopted, so don't feel compelled to accept everything your students suggest.

Here are a few examples of basic ground rules:

1. Don't interrupt other while they are speaking
2. Respect your fellow students even when they don't agree with you
3. Don't criticize other people directly, rather criticize their arguments. Telling someone they're stupid doesn't further the discussion, but pointing out a problem with their argument does.

8.3.3 Background

Remember that not all of your students have done the assigned readings. Try to go over a few arguments and responses before opening up the discussion. The goal of this strategy is to make sure your students all have some common background on the controversial topic. When they all share a common background they can engage with each other rather than talking past one another. Of course, they are still occasionally going to talk past one another and wander off topic, but you can use the common background you provided them to guide their concerns back on topic.

8.3.4 Framework

This strategy involves developing a framework to guide the discussion. You don't want the discussion to be too rigid, but you also don't want it to be a free-for-all. A simple way to provide a framework for discussion is to put a list of open ended questions on the board or screen. Try to focus each question on one problem and have some backup questions if no one feels like speaking. For example, you might ask them why the problem is difficult to discuss. If you can get them

thinking about what makes the problem difficult or awkward, you're well on the way to getting them to discuss the problem itself. You can also break them into small groups and ask them to answer at least one of the questions together. Students who are too shy to express their opinion in front of the whole class may be more comfortable in a small group, and turning the questions into a more explicitly directed task will make sure each group at least discusses the problem.

8.3.5 Inclusion

Part of your job as a facilitator is to make sure that everyone in your classroom feels comfortable speaking. Ground rules can help with this, but using group activities can also be very effective. Small groups allow students who aren't comfortable speaking in front of the whole class to stay included in the discussion. Small groups also encourage students to get to know one another. Large classes can be isolating for students, especially if they are shy. By breaking down the class into small groups everyone gets to know at least a few other people in the class. This helps to reduce conflict because people are generally less likely to be mean to others if they know them. It's a lot easier for students to say something mean about a random student they don't know than a person they speak with every class.

8.5.6 Active Facilitation

In your role as facilitator you should focus and refine the classroom discussion without imposing upon it. This is a difficult task and you will have to play an active role in the discussion to do it well. Here are three suggestions for being a good active facilitator:

1. Try to reword student questions so they make more sense or more directly address the topic. Students often have very good ideas that they have trouble expressing. You might ask "what did you mean by X?" or "when you said X, did you mean Y?" Try not to be too heavy-handed, but students usually won't mind if you interpret their questions with charity. No one is going to be offended if you make them look smart.
2. Gently correct misinformation. If a student says something that is mistaken, then you should intervene to correct their statement. If you don't, other students might assume the misinformation is correct.
3. Keep the discussion focused on course materials. Try to use examples from the assigned readings to further discussion. If someone says something interesting related to the readings, you can ask them how author X might respond to their statement.

8.6 Hostility

Sometimes you may encounter a situation where a student becomes hostile either toward you or another student. Remember that this is not appropriate or acceptable. It's fine for a student to ask questions or disagree with you, but they have to be respectful. It is not acceptable for a student to yell or act threateningly. If this does happen to you, there are several options available. Depending on the severity of the situation you can do the following:

1. Tell the student their behavior is inappropriate and that they should leave the room.
2. If you feel comfortable, take the student aside after class and tell them that their behavior was inappropriate. Sometimes students don't realize that their behavior was inappropriate and pointing it out to them will be enough to prevent it from happening again.
3. If you believe discrimination or harassment is taking place, you can bring the matter to the attention of the Department Chair (or you can let your instructor know and they should talk to the Chair). The Chair is required to contact Equity and Human Rights

Services if there is a complaint concerning discrimination or harassment in the Department.

4. If you feel threatened, consider discussing the matter with the Campus Police.

8.7 Annoyances

Though conflict and hostility are serious problems, they aren't nearly as common as annoying behavior. In almost every tutorial someone will be texting, listening to music, falling asleep, or talking with another student. Fortunately, ground rules are an effective solution to many of these problems. Being clear about your expectations for student behavior will make it clear to them what kind of behaviors you find distracting. For example, if you find students using their phones in class distracting, you can make it a rule that phones aren't allowed during class time. Generally, I think it's a good idea to let people check calls or text messages quickly, as some people have children or other family members who may need to contact them, but this is an exception to the rule.

Being clear about distracting behaviors is important, because students otherwise might not realize their behavior is distracting. For example, several articles I read when researching this issue listed students leaning back in their chair as a common distraction. That's the kind of thing a student might not realize they are doing, much less realize that it might be distracting. Similarly, many of your students have grown up with constant access to technology and may not realize using it in class can be distracting to you.

It's important that whatever rules you do decide to enforce are reasonable. You don't want your classroom to be inaccessible for a student because of an overly restrictive rule. For example, if you don't like students leaving for washroom breaks during class, then you should have a five minute break scheduled in the middle of class. Similarly, some students need to use certain technology in the classroom, so it's best not to be too restrictive.

8.8 Conflict Outside the Classroom

Sometimes conflict will arise outside the classroom. This includes any conflict you might encounter during your office hours or via email. This kind of conflict can be particularly troublesome because it often occurs one-on-one with a student.

The best way to provide suggestions for out of class conflict is to look at two case studies. The first I call 'The Intimidator'. Imagine a particularly large muscular student comes to your office and he is very upset about his grade on a recent assignment. The student is much bigger than you and he seems intent on yelling at you. He doesn't explicitly threaten you, but his movements and tone are very intimidating. This is a very tricky case, but there are a few things you can do. First, keep the door to your office open when meeting with students. It's a good idea to keep your door open anyway, and in a case like this it allows other people to hear what is going on. Second, be a good neighbor. If you hear someone getting yelled at, go over to their office and poke your head in to make sure everything is alright. If you feel too intimidated to do this, see if you can find someone else who is willing to do it. While it's unlikely the student will actually become violent, having another person in the room can go a long way toward keeping the situation under control. Third, once the student has left, make sure you follow up with someone about this incident. The student's behavior is absolutely unacceptable and it's important it doesn't go unreported. Speak to the instructor of the course, the department chair, or the Campus Police.

The second case, which is far more common, I call ‘My Friend’s TA.’ Imagine one of your students comes to your office hours to talk to you about a recently returned assignment. He starts by telling you that one of his friends wrote a very similar answer and when she went to see her TA the TA increased her grade from a 60% to an 80%. Your student then argues that his grade should be increased as well, otherwise you are being unfair and he’ll have to go the professor. This case is also tricky, but for a different reason than the first case. The student is trying to play on your lack of information to get you to change his grade. The most important thing to do in this case is to get the information you need before making a decision. The student will want an answer right away, but you aren’t under any obligation to give him one. Explain that you grade each paper on its own merits and encourage the student to submit a written explanation of why he thinks the paper merits a higher grade.

Appendix One: Description of Active Learning Activities

Fishbowl

The students who volunteers are "in" the fishbowl participate in the activity, while the rest of the students are "outside" of the fishbowl observing. Following the activity, the observers and participants debrief about what they learned, and their experience.

Round-table
Everyone sits in a circle where they can see each other. A question is posed, and each person states their opinions/ideas as we work our way around the table.

Advantages: All students have an equal opportunity to participate.
Disadvantages: Careful thought is required picking a discussion question, as there must be many potential answers.

Buzz groups
The class breaks into groups of 3-6 people. Each small group discusses the topic on their own for a few minutes, generating ideas. Once time is up, each small group is asked to share one idea with the whole class and the ideas are recorded on the board.

Advantages: There is a lot of interaction among students.
Disadvantages: This model is time-consuming.

Quescussion
The purpose of a Quescussion is to generate a list of questions that 'people might ask' in response to a stimulus. The discussion leader starts the Quescussion by asking a question related to the discussion topic. Participants may only respond in the form of more questions. This discussion model is very informal and participants shout out questions as they think of them. There are only 3 rules in a Quescussion:

Only questions can be asked.
If someone makes a statement everyone yells "statement!"
Two other people must speak before a participant can participate again.
The class can then focus on the questions one at a time, or simply leave the ideas bouncing around in students' heads while moving on to a more formal lecture style.

Advantages: Quescussions are non-threatening and frequently get students laughing, especially when someone inadvertently makes a statement.

Disadvantages: Quescussions can easily wander off topic.

Brainstorm

Brainstorming is a creative technique to generate a list of ideas on a particular topic or problem. During brainstorming sessions participants are encouraged to share their ideas as soon as they have them: there is no right or wrong answer in
Brainstorming. The key to brainstorming is not to interrupt the process. Frequently the TA or a member of the class will record ideas on the blackboard, whiteboard, or overhead projector.

Advantages: Brainstorming sessions encourage students to think freely and without inhibitions.

Disadvantages: It is easy to lose focus during a brainstorming session.

Snowball
During a snowball discussion everyone thinks about an idea/question/issue for one minute, generating three reactions, comments, answers, etc. Then two people come together and try to come up with three things they agree on. Then two groups of two join and try to come up with three things they agree on, then two groups of four join and try to come up with three things…etc.

Advantages: There is a lot of student interaction and ideas must be prioritized.

Disadvantages: This discussion model is time-consuming and for some issues it may be difficult to reach consensus on the "three most important issues".

Line-up
This model is an excellent tool for highlighting the "shades of gray" in polarized issues. Ask the entire group to line up along one wall of the class and then present an issue (i.e. Facebook is an appropriate forum for student-TA interaction). Tell the class that the right end of the line represents the position 'yes, I agree completely' and the left end of the line represents the position 'no, I completely disagree'. Students should mingle and discuss their opinion on the issue, eventually finding and taking their appropriate position within the continuum. Once students are in place, take a moment to discuss the thought processes experienced by students at various locations in the line-up.

Advantages: Line-ups focus on interaction and allow participants the opportunity to have one-on-one discussions with a number of people and to get an idea of the wide range of opinions that may exist about a certain issue.

Disadvantages: These can be time-consuming and require a lot of advance preparation, as it can be difficult to think of topics that generate polarized answers. Also, the nature of this discussion model means that each student must make a public stand about their opinion.

Source: http://www.uwo.ca/tsc/resources/resources_graduate_students/ta_handbook/leading_discussions/discussion_models.html

Think-Pair-Share
In its simplest form, students think about a particular question or scenario, then they pair up to discuss their ideas. They then share their results in a large class discussion. Think-pair-sharing forces all students to attempt an initial response to the question, which they can then clarify and expand as they collaborate.

Pro and Con Grid
The pro and con grid lists advantages and disadvantages of any issue and helps students develop analytical and evaluative skills. It also forces students to go beyond their initial reactions, search

for at least two sides to the issue, and weigh the value of competing claims. Let students know how many pros and cons you expect and whether they should use point form or full sentences.

One-minute Paper / Short Writes
Punctuating your class with short writing assignments is a powerful way to assess the degree to which students understand presented material. You might ask, "What was the most important thing you learned during this class?" "What questions remained unanswered?" or "Summarize the main point of today's lecture in one sentence." These activities are a flexible way to acquire candid feedback on the course material and your presentation style. The one-minute paper can be done especially quickly and it shows students that they can write quickly and spontaneously, and enhances general writing ability.

Modeling analytical skills
This involves viewing and analyzing passages of text, paintings, sonatas, graphs, charts, artifacts, etc. together with your students. You should make sure students have a copy of the document in front of them (or visual access through slides or overhead transparencies), and then follow three steps: model the analysis, let the students practice it, and then give them feedback.

Debates
Debates allow you to add a participatory dimension to your lecture without compromising your control of the class. One strategy is to divide students according to where they happen to sit. Another approach is to ask them in advance to seat themselves in the section representing a particular side of the debate. When some students refuse to choose one side or the other, create a middle ground and invite their reasons for choosing it. Before concluding, you should ask two or three volunteers to make summary arguments for each side.

Role playing
The first step in this lecture variation is to give a mini-lecture to establish the context and setting for the role playing. Then divide the class into a number of small groups of varying sizes (if you have a large class, you may have to assign duplicate roles). Each group is assigned a clearly delineated role and given a specific, concrete task – usually to propose a position and course of action. To bring closure to the topic, a debriefing exercise is necessary to help identify what students learned and make the transition to the next topic.

Case Study
Get source material (short story, news articles, account of a decision or procedure, video, role-play script, etc.) to use as the basis for the case study. Provide students with a focus or framework to use in doing their analysis. Give students time to analyze the case individually or in groups, and to write down their analysis. Begin a discussion of students' analyses. Act as a mediator of the discussion. Don't offer your own opinion except to provide guidance on the process (remind students of the framework if discussion becomes unfocused). After analysis has been completed, show how the case study illustrates application of theoretical or background concepts in course material.

Source: https://uwaterloo.ca/centre-for-teaching-excellence/teaching- resources/teaching-tips/developing-assignments/assignment- design/active-learning-activities
and
https://uwaterloo.ca/centre-for-teaching-excellence/teaching- resources/teaching-tips/alternatives-lecturing/active-learning/ varying-your-teaching-activities

Appendix Two: Rubrics

Sample One (by Chris Smeenk):

GRADING SHEET Student Name / ID Number: _____

WRITING: GRAMMAR AND DICTION

Good	Average	Poor
Easy to read: no grammatical mistakes, strong word choice	Some problems with sentence structure, grammar and word choice	Difficult to read: persistent poor sentence structure, word choice, etc.

STRUCTURE

Good	Average	Poor
Clear overall structure, good transitions, clear paragraphs	Structure somewhat confusing, hard to follow, transitions unclear	Reader often lost, no clear structure or argument, no transitions

EXPOSITION

Good	Average	Poor
Clear, accurate explanation of issues, concise presentation	Adequate presentation of main ideas; minor mistakes, poor explanation	Serious mistakes in exposition, failure to explain main ideas

CRITICAL ASSESSMENT

Good	Average	Poor
Thoughtful, engaging criticisms, clear and effective reasoning	Criticisms somewhat effective, not focused on main points	Argument ineffective due to errors, amounts to mere counterassertion

OVERALL COMMENTS

Sample Two with Comment Key (by Carolyn McLeod):

Grading: The following criteria will be used in grading essays.

[ARG]: Does the author use cogent arguments to support his or her position? Do the claims made in different parts of the paper follow from one another and are they consistent? [5 marks]

[ORG]: Does the author reveal a plan for the paper at the outset and does s/he follow that plan? Does the paper have an explicit overall direction? [5 marks]

[CLR]: Is the author's position clear and is the paper clearly written overall? Could another student at the same level who is not enrolled in the course understand the paper? [5 marks]

[UND]: How well does the author understand and make judicious use of the material relevant to the paper that is on our reading list? How well does s/he understand the complexity of the issues involved? [5 marks]

[OPP]: Has the author dealt with important objections to his or her position? To what extent is s/he aware of the possible difficulties with that position? [5 marks]

KEY TO GRADER'S COMMENTS

Con? What's the connection? This is marked when you jump from one subject to another without making clear what the connection between thoughts is, or when it seems to the marker that there is no connection.

NS Non-sequitur. A non-sequitur is the stating or implying that one statement follows from others when it doesn't.

R? Relevance? When you have written a draft of your paper, go through it and ask yourself whether each sentence bears on your topic, and moves you further toward a solution to the questions you're trying to answer. This mark is inserted when graders feel that you're getting off topic, or that you have not made clear the relevance of what you're saying.

Rep Repetition. Someone repeating some point in a different way makes for more clarity; but when you say something more than once in the same way, or when it was clear to begin with, that's just padding.

Sp Spelling error.

TNE This needs explanation. A very common problem, this comments marks a point at which you should have gone into things more deeply, to explain yourself better.

TNS This needs support. Any debatable point central to your paper should be carefully argued for.

UNC Unclear. This a very common error, and a very difficult one to guard against. Sometimes, you may think that things are very clear in your mind, but what you write doesn't communicate clearly to the reader. Start writing early enough so that you can write one

draft, put it away for a while, and then read it over when you're fresh, to see if it expresses what you want to say clearly.

WU Word usage. The suspicion is that you have picked the wrong word, and that you do not fully understand the meaning of the word you've chosen. Look up the meaning of any word you suspect you don't fully understand.

NW Nonexistent word. Used when you employ a word not found in any authorized dictionary or when you develop an unorthodox new construction of a word.

P Punctuation errors. Commas, semi-colons, etc. have rules governing their use and are not to be randomly inserted or omitted.

SL Sexist language. Try to avoid language that suggests only male experiences are relevant. Use gender inclusive language.

Auth Illegitimate *appeal to authority*. There are no authorities in philosophy. That is, there is no person such that if he or she said something about a philosophical issue or problem, what he or she said is thereby true. In general, if the only argument for a philosophical claim is that someone else (Plato, Nietzsche, your teacher) has made it, then there is no argument for the point and it is best dropped.

BQ *Begging the question.* You beg the question when you fail to answer it either by assuming in your reasoning what you're trying to prove or by answering another much simpler question instead.

EN *Example needed.* This indicates that well-chosen illustration would greatly increase the effectiveness or intelligibility of a particular claim or argument.

GP *Good point, well expressed.*

NAQ *Not answering the question.* Paper assignments are designed to lead you into an interesting, difficult, and important philosophical question or problem. By not answering the question, you often avoid the problem to the detriment of your paper. Make sure you always answer the question that's being asked. Then, when you have adequately done so, you may, if you wish, discuss related matters if you have the time and space.

PTC *Preaching to the converted.* What you say would only be clear and persuasive to readers who already understand and agree with you.

URP *Un-referred pronoun.* Make sure every pronoun is completely and unambiguously referred to some suitable noun or noun phrase.

UTT *Unexplained technical term.* When you use a term in a special sense, you should explain exactly what you take it to mean. Failure to do so prevents the reader from fully understanding your point.

TBS *True by Stipulation.* Instead of showing or proving that something is true or false, you try to make your point by redefining words. For example, in response to the question of whether euthanasia is permissible, you respond: "Of course it is. By 'euthanasia' I mean

'legitimately ending a person's life to relieve suffering' and it's always permissible to relieve suffering." Such an argument by redefinition is a special case of BQ.

BRQ Bad rhetorical question. It's a good idea to avoid rhetorical questions in philosophical writing. Rhetorical questions are used legitimately when the answer to the question is obvious and the obvious answer is correct. A rhetorical question is bad when one or other of these conditions is not fulfilled. Here's an example taken from a student paper. "Who would ever suppose that man should act from duty alone?" The answer the student thought was obvious is "No one." The correct answer is, "For one, the great German philosophy Immanuel Kant."

Sample Three (by Douglas W Portmore at Arizona State University):

GRADING RUBRIC FOR PHILOSOPHY PAPERS

Argumentation (40%)

An exemplary paper:	.95	.85	.75	.65	.55	An unsatisfactory paper:
Presents, in a clear manner, strong and well- developed arguments in support of its central claims. Successfully rebuts any relevant counterarguments and also anticipates and defuses potential objections. Is in many ways subtle, original, and insightful.						**Fails to adequately defend its central claims. Fails either to successfully rebut relevant counterarguments or to anticipate and defuse potential objections. Is always trite, trivial, or unoriginal.**

Exposition and Mastery of the Pertinent Material (30%)

An exemplary paper:	.95	.85	.75	.65	.55	An unsatisfactory paper:
Demonstrates mastery of the pertinent philosophical views, concepts, and arguments. Gives an accurate and charitable exposition and interpretation of the pertinent philosophical texts and views, providing textual support where appropriate. Fully explains key philosophical terms, concepts, and distinctions in an illuminating way, using the author's own words, examples, and descriptions.						**Fails to demonstrate mastery of the pertinent philosophical views, concepts, and arguments. Provides an incomplete, inaccurate, and/or uncharitable exposition and interpretation of the pertinent philosophical texts and views. Fails to provide adequate explanations for key philosophical terms, concepts, or distinctions.**

Introduction and Conclusion (10%)

An exemplary paper:	.95	.85	.75	.65	.55	An unsatisfactory paper:
Has an introduction that motivates the project and defines a sharp focus by clearly stating its central aim(s), e.g., a thesis or controlling idea relating to the assigned topic.						**Has an inadequate introduction, one that fails to motivate the project or to establish a clear focus by stating a thesis or controlling idea that relates to the assigned topic.**
Has a conclusion that summarizes results clearly, explores implications/limitations of those results, and leaves readers with a sense of the paper's importance.						**Has an inadequate conclusion, one that fails either to summarize results or to explain their implications, limitations, and importance.**

Organization (10%)

An exemplary paper:	.95	.85	.75	.65	.55	An unsatisfactory paper:
Has a clear and logical organizational plan, wherein the ordering of ideas, sentences, and paragraphs build naturally towards the achievement of its central aims. Provides a user-friendly guide to that organizational plan. Uses transitional words/phrases/sentences to show how the various ideas, sentences, and paragraphs relate to the paper's central aims and to each other.						**Has an illogical or indiscernible organizational plan—the paper is a hodgepodge of ideas. Fails to provide a clear guide to the organizational plan. Fails to use adequate transitions. Jumps from one idea or point to another without establishing any connection between them or to the paper's central aims.**

Writing (10%)

An exemplary paper:	.95	.85	.75	.65	.55	An unsatisfactory paper:
Exhibits a sophisticated (but unpretentious) writing style. Presents its ideas clearly, concisely, and precisely, such that what's being said is almost never open to misinterpretation and contains almost no unnecessary words, imprecision, or irrelevant content. Employs good diction. Contains virtually no errors in grammar, spelling, or punctuation. Documents sources properly. Is free of typos.						**Has a writing style that significantly detracts from the argument, involving repetitive and simplistic sentence structures, unnecessarily inflated language, imprecise wording, and/or language that is unclear, wordy, or repetitious. Contains irrelevant content. Often employs poor diction. Is riddled with grammatical, spelling, or punctuation errors. Fails to acknowledge sources properly. Is riddled with typos.**

Sample Four (by Mara Harrell at Carnegie Mellon University):

	Excellent	**Good**	**Needs Improvement**	**Unacceptable**
CONTENT				
Argument				
Thesis	A clear statement of the main conclusion of the paper.	The thesis is obvious, but there is no single clear statement of it.	The thesis is present, but must be uncovered or reconstructed from the text of the paper.	There is no thesis.
Premises	Each reason for believing the thesis is made clear, and as much as possible, presented in single statements. It is also clear which premises are to be taken as given, and which will be supported by sub-arguments. The paper provides sub-arguments for controversial premises. If there are sub-arguments, the premises for these are clear, and made in single statements. The premises which are taken as given are at least plausibly true.	The premises are all clear, although each may not be presented in a single statement. It is also pretty clear which premises are to be taken as given, and which will be supported by sub-arguments. The paper provides sub-arguments for controversial premises. If there are sub-arguments, the premises for these are clear. The premises which are taken as given are at least plausibly true.	The premises must be reconstructed from the text of the paper. It is not made clear which premises are to be taken as given, and which will be supported by sub-arguments. There are no sub-arguments, or, if there are sub-arguments, the premises for these are not made clear. The paper does not provide sub-arguments for controversial premises. The plausibility of the premises which are taken as given is questionable.	There are no premises—the paper merely restates the thesis. Or, if there are premises, they are much more likely to be false than true.
Support	The premises clearly support the thesis, and the author is aware of exactly the kind of support they provide. The argument is either valid as it stands, or, if invalid, the thesis, based on the premises, is likely to be or plausibly true.	The premises support the thesis, and the author is aware of the general kind of support they provide. The argument is either valid as it stands, or, if invalid, the thesis, based on the premises, is likely to be or plausibly true.	The premises somewhat support the thesis, but the author is not aware of the kind of support they provide. The argument is invalid, and the thesis, based on the premises, is not likely to be or plausibly true.	The premises do not support the thesis.

Counter-Arguments	The paper considers both obvious and unobvious counter-examples, counter-arguments, and/or opposing positions, and provides original and/or thoughtful responses.	The paper considers obvious counter-examples, counter-arguments, and/or opposing positions, and provides responses.	The paper may consider some obvious counter-examples, counter-arguments, and/or opposing positions, but some obvious ones are missed. Responses are non-existent or mere claims of refutation.	No counter-examples, counter-arguments, or opposing positions are considered.

Understanding				
Text	The paper contains highly accurate and precise summarization, description and/or paraphrasing of text. The paper uses appropriate textual support for these.	The summarization, description and/or paraphrasing of text is fairly accurate and precise, and has textual support, but other passages may have been better choices.	The summarization, description and/or paraphrasing of text is fairly accurate, but not precise, and the textual support is inappropriate.	The summarization, description and/or paraphrasing of text is inaccurate and/or has no textual support.
Ideas	The paper contains a highly accurate and precise description of the issue or problem, along with a careful consideration of possible alternatives or solutions. The paper contains relevant examples, and indicates the salient issues the examples highlight.	The description of the problem or issue is fairly accurate and precise, and possible alternatives or solutions are considered. Examples are given, but similar examples may have been better.	The description of the problem or issue is fairly accurate but not precise, and possible alternatives or solutions are either not considered, or ill-described. Examples are given, but it is not made clear how they are relevant.	The description of the problem or issue is inaccurate, and possible alternatives or solutions are not considered, and examples are not provided.
Analysis	The paper successfully breaks the argument, issue, or problem into relevant parts. The connections between the parts are clear and highly accurate.	The paper successfully breaks the argument, issue, or problem into relevant parts. The connections between the parts are fairly accurate.	The paper breaks the argument, issue, or problem into parts, but some parts may be missing or unclear. The connections between the parts are somewhat accurate.	The parts identified are not the correct and/or relevant ones. The connections between the parts are completely inaccurate.
Synthesis	The paper successfully integrates all relevant parts from various places into a coherent whole. The connections between the parts are clear and insightful.	The paper integrates most relevant parts from various places into a mostly coherent whole. The connections between the parts are generally clear.	The paper integrates some parts from various places into a somewhat coherent whole. The connections between the parts are somewhat unclear.	The parts to be integrated are not clear and/or relevant. The connections between the parts are unclear.

Evaluation				
Argument	The paper evaluates the argument in question by checking for adherence to various standards (validity, soundness, etc.), and checking for informal fallacies. The paper suggests how the argument could be made better according to the appropriate standard.	The paper evaluates the argument in question by checking for adherence to various standards (validity, soundness, etc.), and checking for informal fallacies.	The paper evaluates the argument in question by checking only the truth of the premises and/or the conclusion, and does not check for informal fallacies.	The paper evaluates the argument in question by whether the author agrees or disagrees with the conclusion or a premise.
Position	The paper evaluates the position in question by checking for support in an argument and internal consistency, and by exploring unmentioned plausible alternatives.	The paper evaluates the position in question by checking for support in an argument and internal consistency.	The paper evaluates the position in question by considering its plausibility.	The paper evaluates the position in question by whether the author agrees or disagrees with it.
Creation				
Thesis	Thesis is original, interesting, and relevant.	The thesis is interesting and relevant.	The thesis is slightly off-topic, obviously true (or false), or not really worth writing about.	The thesis is totally irrelevant.
Examples	Examples are original, relevant, insightful, and well-used.	Examples are original, relevant, and well-used.	Examples are unoriginal, only somewhat relevant, and/or not well-used.	Examples are missing, irrelevant an/or misused.
Alternative Positions	Previously unmentioned alternative positions are explored.	Alternative positions are explored.	Alternative positions are mentioned but not explored.	Alternative positions are ignored.

STYLE				
Clarity	All sentences are complete and grammatical. All words are chosen for their precise meanings. All new or unusual terms are well-defined. Key concepts and theories are accurately and completely explained. Good, clear examples are used to illuminate concepts and issues. Information (names, facts, etc.) is accurate. Paper has been spell-checked and proofread, and has no errors, and no rhetorical questions or slang.	All sentences are complete and grammatical. Most words are chosen for their precise meanings. Most new or unusual terms are well-defined. Key concepts and theories are explained. Examples are clear. Information (names, facts, etc.) is accurate. Paper has been spell-checked and proofread, and has very few errors, and no rhetorical questions or slang.	A few sentences are incomplete and/or ungrammatical. Words are not chosen for their precise meanings. New or unusual terms are not well-defined. Key concepts and theories are not explained. Examples are not clear. Information (names, facts, etc.) is mostly accurate. Paper has several spelling errors, rhetorical questions and/or uses of slang.	Many sentences are incomplete and/or ungrammatical. The author does not acknowledge that key words have precise meanings. Information (names, facts, etc.) is inaccurate. Paper has many spelling errors, rhetorical questions and/or uses of slang.

Organization				
Introduction	Thesis is clear, and contained in the introduction. The topic is introduced with minimal fanfare. It is made clear how the paper will get to this conclusion, not in a detailed outline of the paper, but rather in a concise summary of the steps in argument.	Thesis is contained in the introduction. The topic is introduced with little fanfare. It is generally clear how the paper will get to this conclusion, not in a detailed outline of the paper, but rather in a description of the steps in argument.	Thesis is not contained in the introduction. The topic is introduced with too much fanfare. The flow of the paper is described as an outline, and not as a description of the steps in argument.	Only the topic is introduced, with no description of the paper. Or, the paper is described inaccurately.
Body	It is very easy to follow the argument. It is made explicit which claims are being used as premises, and how these premises are supposed to support the thesis. New premises are each introduced in new paragraphs or sections. If there are sub-arguments, it is made explicit which argument is the main one, and which are the secondary ones.	It is generally easy to follow the argument. It is clear which claims are being used as premises, and how these premises are supposed to support the thesis. Usually, new premises are introduced in new paragraphs or sections. If there are sub-arguments, it is clear which argument is the main one, and which are the secondary ones.	It is somewhat difficult to follow the argument. It is somewhat unclear which claims are being used as premises, and/or how these premises are supposed to support the thesis. Separate premises are lumped together in the same paragraphs or sections. If there are sub-arguments, it is not clear which argument is the main one, and which are the secondary ones.	It is impossible to follow the argument. It is completely unclear which claims are being used as premises. It is completely unclear how the premises are supposed to support the thesis. Premises are discussed randomly, or not at all. There seem to be many arguments, and it is completely unclear which is the main one.

Conclusion	The paper uses the conclusion to tie up loose ends. For example, the paper considers objections to the argument to which it is acknowledged there is no space or expertise to respond. Or, the paper briefly considers the implications of the acceptance of the conclusion for a larger argument, or for a larger issue or problem. Or the paper explains what further work may need to be done in this area.	The paper uses the conclusion to tie up some loose ends, but combines this with a restatement of the introduction.	The conclusion is merely a restatement of the introduction.	The conclusion is missing.

Sample Five (by Rob Stainton)

GRADING RUBRIC

	A+	A	B	C	D	F	
I. Clarity							**An exemplary paper:** Includes clearly delineated sections, ordered in a logical progression. Has individual sentences which are clear as well. Provides "sign posts" and transitional phrases where appropriate.
II. Exposition							**An exemplary paper:** Accurately and completely explains key philosophical concepts, arguments and views, preferably using the student's own words. Gives an accurate and charitable exposition and interpretation of the pertinent philosophical texts, providing textual support where appropriate. Properly documents sources.
III. Argumentation							**An exemplary paper:** Makes clear what the conclusions of the paper are, and provides solid support for them, including helpful analogies and examples where appropriate. Supports effectively its conclusions, and anticipates and rebuts obvious objections. Presents its arguments concisely and precisely, avoiding irrelevancies.
IV. Insight							**An exemplary paper:** Includes novel ideas and/or a novel conclusion, drawing on the student's own original arguments, analogies or examples. Introduces subtle distinctions. Makes progress on a philosophical issue to a degree appropriate to the student's level.
V. Writing Mechanics							**An exemplary paper:** Exhibits a sophisticated writing style. Displays care with choice of words, reflecting their precise and proper meaning in English. Contains no errors in grammar, spelling or punctuation, and is free of typos.

Appendix Three: Student Resources

Western offers a great deal of resources for students, but it can often be difficult to find them. This section contains a list of some of the important support resources available to you and your students. It's a good idea to be familiar with these resources so that you can direct your students to them if they are in need. The resources are divided into groups below to make them easy to find.

Teaching Support Centre:

TATP/ ATP

- The Teaching Support Centre offers free TA and Instructor training workshops

- These workshops provide you with teaching resources and give you a chance to practice and reflect on your skills

http://uwo.ca/tsc/graduate_student_programs/advanced_teaching_program.html
http://uwo.ca/tsc/graduate_student_programs/tatp.html

Future Professor Workshops

- Free workshops on best practices in university teaching

- Tons of topics and issues are covered

- Fall schedule will be published shortly at:

http://uwo.ca/tsc/graduate_student_programs/future_professor_workshop.html

Western Certificate in Teaching & Learning

- A free teaching training program:

http://uwo.ca/tsc/graduate_student_programs/western_certificate/index.html

Resources for your students:

- Writing Support Centre: http://www.sdc.uwo.ca/writing/index.html

- Learning Skills Services: http://sdc.uwo.ca/learning/

- Services for Students with Disabilities: http://www.sdc.uwo.ca/ssd/index.html

- Psychological Services: http://www.sdc.uwo.ca/psych/index.html

- Indigenous Services: http://indigenous.uwo.ca/

International & Exchange Student Centre:

- Peer support programs & English conversation groups

  http://www.uwo.ca/international/iesc/

Student Success Centre:

- Programs for first-year and mature students:

  http://success.uwo.ca/first_year_programs/current_students/index.html

  http://success.uwo.ca/mature_students/current_students/index.html

Arts & Humanities Academic Counseling:

www.uwo.ca/arts/counselling/

Western Mental Health Services:

Includes information regarding crisis services and local response lines:
www.health.uwo.ca/mental_health/

Campus Police:

http://www.uwo.ca/police/

Equity & Human Rights Services:

www.uwo.ca/equity

Accessibility at Western:

www.accessibility.uwo.ca