

SPRING 2008

## PHIL 475: PROCESS PHILOSOPHY

Pat Shade  
Clough 402

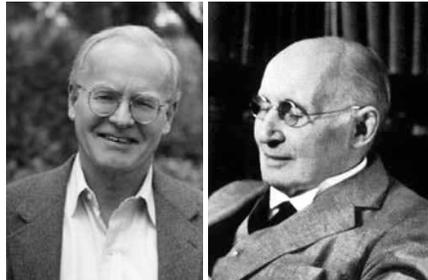
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Office Hours: 2:00-2:50 MW; 1-1:50 TR & by appt.

Unofficial Office Hours: I'm usually in my office MW 11-12 & W 3-4

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**I. COURSE DESCRIPTION AND GOALS:** Our work in this class differs from that of last semester. Then we were looking at a secondary text that defended an interpretation of the letter of Whitehead's philosophy. This semester we will explore a secondary text that seeks to show the usefulness of Whitehead's ideas (and so seeks to work with the spirit of his philosophy). I don't wish to suggest that these two approaches are mutually exclusive. A new interpretation likely brings to light new uses for the ideas, and an exploration of the usefulness of a text most likely unearths and challenges certain interpretative presuppositions. Nevertheless, the focus of each approach is distinctive.



DR Griffin

AN Whitehead

## II. COURSE OUTLINE

### A. Getting Started

Whitehead's *The Function of Reason*

### B. Extensions of Whitehead beyond metaphysics

David Ray Griffin's *Whitehead's Radically Different Postmodern Philosophy: An Argument for Its Contemporary Relevance*

Our calendar will consist in reading one chapter from the Griffin book each week.

## III. COURSE WORK:

### **Required Course Work:**

- 20% Participation
- 30% minor paper
- 50% Major paper

**A. Participation (20%):** Since this is a seminar, *careful* preparation and *regular high quality* participation are vital to your learning; they are expected throughout the semester.

**Discussion Participation:** Discussion participation involves (i) carefully listening to, questioning, and responding to the views of others, and also (ii) contributing your own views, questions, and reactions to the readings and class discussion. Aim to generate a range of participatory comments, from questions for clarification to interpretive hypotheses and suggestive comments (challenging questions or objections) that generate a "ripple effect" among your peers to help to advance the discussion. Contributions that

respond to those of others or that elicit feedback from your classmates are especially valuable. Also important is generating discussion that draws on and makes use of the day's reading assignment.

When determining your discussion participation grade, I look at the *quality* and *pattern* of your participation over the course of the semester. The *quality* of your work is gauged in terms of its (i) **clarity**, (ii) **insight**, and (iii) **sophistication**. In assessing the *pattern* of your work, I look at (i) **consistency**, (ii) **effort**, and (iii) **improvement** and **progress** (or regress) you make in critically discussing materials throughout the semester.

**Inquiry:** Each of you will create an inquiry on one chapter in the Griffin book. Given that you've all had plenty of experience with inquiries, I propose that you think about them creatively. They can certainly take the form of past inquiries (with an exploration, significance, and response section), but other approaches are possible and I encourage you to consider them. The guiding parameters are that every inquiry should provide (a) some exposition of a key idea or argument and (b) a sophisticated section that requires us to thoughtfully consider and assess the day's ideas. Inquiries can be up to 1200 words and should be emailed to the class by 5 PM on the day preceding your presentation. A follow-up in which you consider the success of the inquiry and what you learned from it is due 3 weeks of the day you present it.

**Attendance:** You are encouraged to attend all classes. If you must miss a class, you are responsible for material covered and assignments distributed or collected. Since attendance is a prerequisite for participation, I don't distinguish between "excused" and "unexcused" absences. (If you're not present, you can't contribute.) If you have more than 2 absences (the equivalent of 2 weeks), your prep/participation grade will drop 1/2 letter grade per additional day missed. Also, you are expected to contact me so we can discuss your attendance.

### **B. Papers (80%):**

There will be 2 papers. The first will be a 30% 6-8 page paper that reflects on Whitehead's relevance to one of two major philosophical figures, Kant and Dewey. The assignment for that paper is to explore the relation(s) between Whitehead's view of reason in *The Function of Reason* and the comparable view (or reason or a related concept, such as intelligence) in Kant or Dewey. The paper should include an exploratory and evaluative section and is due by 5 PM on Friday, February 8.

The second will be a 50% longer paper (10-13 pages) on your own project, due by Wed. April 30. More details will be provided at the appropriate time.

### **IV. MISCELLANEOUS:**

• **Grading Criteria:** See "Grading Criteria for Written Work" handout for specifics.

A	94 and up	B+	87-89	C+	77-79
A-	90-93	B	84-86	C	74-76
		B-	80-83	C-	70-73 etc.

• **Successful Classroom:** In our class everyone has a right to express a genuine observation, curiosity or criticism, but no one has a right to put one down. Respect towards all members of the class and to course content is the key. I work hard to generate a setting in which we can be honest and critical, but my efforts are futile without your individual contributions. Impediments to a successful classroom include tardiness, lethargy, excessive absences, and leaving the classroom before the end of the hour. We are biological creatures, but since we also have a certain mastery over our bodies, please take care of your biological needs before class.

• **Computer Component:** You are responsible for any notes, assignments, etc. that I send out via e-mail. In addition, you will be expected to check documents left on the Academic Volume. I will announce new documents which need to be read; if you are absent, you are responsible for reading these. If you're unfamiliar with computer use, please check with one of the computer staff; they'll be happy to help you.

• **Honor Code:** The Honor Code stipulates that *all* the work you submit is to be your own. You are encouraged to discuss topics and assignments with your colleagues, but the work you hand in must be your own, i.e., it must be formulated and written in your own words and style reflecting your own thoughtful treatment. If you have any questions about the Honor Code, please ask me.

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***\*\*\*This syllabus is subject to revision (but don't worry; I'll discuss any changes with the class before I make them).\*\*\****