Phil 54: FYS—Thinking about Time  
(Time and Time Travel)

Fall 2015 Syllabus

Class times: Mondays and Wednesdays, 3.35–4.50pm  
Class location: Caldwell Hall, Room 103  
Professor: Gillian Russell  
Email: gillian_russell@unc.edu  
Office hours: Friday 12.30–2.30pm  
Office Location: Caldwell Hall 203

COURSE DESCRIPTION: This course is a First Year Seminar in the philosophy of time. We will look at philosophical puzzles and paradoxes concerning time—including some arising from the Special Theory of Relativity—while focusing on developing important philosophical skills, such as the ability to analyse, critique and create arguments, and write philosophy papers.

REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS:
—*General Relativity from A to B* by Robert Geroch  
—*Einstein’s Dreams* by Alan Lightman

There will be many other readings for the course. Some will be posted as electronic library reserves for this course. The others are available online and the links are in the syllabus.

READINGS AND TOPICS

**Wednesday 19th August - First day of class**  
No pre-assigned reading. We will look at some short passages from Aristotle and Augustine.

**Monday 24th August—Introduction to Special Relativity**  
Reading: Geroch: introduction + chapter 1 (up to page 10)

**Wednesday 26th August**  
Reading: Geroch chapter 2: the Aristotelian view.

**Monday 31st August**  
Reading: Geroch chapters 3 & 4: the Galilean view + difficulties with the Galilean view

**Wednesday 2nd September**  
Reading: Geroch Chapter 5: The Interval (n.b. this chapter is longer than the others. Our study of it will extend into the next class but it would be good to read it all for this class.)
Monday 7th September
No class - labor day!

Wednesday 9th September
No class

Monday 14th September
No class

Wednesday 16th September
No class

Monday 21st September
Geroch Chapter 5: The Interval. We’ll also review what we’ve learned from Geroch so far.

Wednesday 23rd September
Geroch Chapter 6: The Physics and Geometry of the Interval

We’ve now read as far in Geroch as we need to for this class. But there are only two chapters left; I recommend that you read them for your own edification.

“29th May, 1905” in Einstein’s Dreams

Monday 28th September—Time and Existence


http://www.jstor.org/stable/2024493

“22nd June, 1905” in Einstein’s Dreams

Wednesday 30th September—Time and Freedom

“Alternate Possibilities and Moral Responsibility”—Harry Frankfurt

http://www.ucl.ac.uk/~uctytho/dfwCompatFrankfurt.htm

Monday 5th October—Time Travel


“16th April, 1905” in Einstein’s Dreams

Wednesday 7th October—Time Travel

Monday 12th October—Eternal Recurrence
(It’s University Day, but we still have class.)

Selections from The Gay Science, Frederick Nietzsche (on electronic reserve at the library.)

“14th April, 1905” in Einstein’s Dreams

Wednesday 14th October
Fall break

Monday 19th October—Identity over Time
“The Self and the Future”—Bernard Williams
http://www.jstor.org/stable/2183946

Wednesday 21st October—Identity over Time
http://www.jstor.org/stable/2184309

Monday 26th October—Identity over Time

Wednesday 28th October—Memory
“The Lost Mariner”—Oliver Sacks in The Man who Mistook his Wife for a Hat (on electronic reserves)

“20th May, 1905” in Einstein's Dreams

Monday 2nd November
No class.

Wednesday 4th November—Memory
“Lost in the Mall” in Opening Skinner’s Box—Lauren Slater (on electronic reserve)

Monday 9th November—Memory
“On the uses and abuses of history” in Untimely Meditations, Frederick Nietzsche (on electronic reserve).

Wednesday 11th November—Immortality
“9th June, 1905”, “11th June, 1905” and “8th May, 1905” in Einstein’s Dreams

Monday 16th November—Immortality
“The Midlife Crisis” by Kieran Setiya
http://hdl.handle.net/2027/spo.3521354.0014.031

Wednesday 18th November—More Time Travel
“Ethical Puzzles of Time Travel” (draft) by Sara Bernstein (on electronic reserve.)
Monday 23rd November
“How fast does time pass?” by Ned Markosian

http://www.jstor.org/stable/2108255

“How fast does time pass?” by Ned Markosian

14th May, 1905” from Einstein’s Dreams

Wednesday 25th November
No class (thanksgiving)

Monday 30th November
The logic of time (no pre-assigned reading for this topic.)

Wednesday 2nd December - last class.
There is no additional assigned reading for the last class.

Assessment: assessment will be by way of six assignments over the course of the semester. Two will contain problems related to the material we study in Geroch. Two will be argument maps based on philosophical texts we have studied, and two will be short papers. There are no exams for this course.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
<th>% of Course Grade</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Problem set 1</td>
<td>Wednesday 2nd September</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Problem set 2</td>
<td>Wednesday 30th September</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Argument map 1</td>
<td>Wednesday 7th October</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Argument map 2</td>
<td>Wednesday 28th October</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Paper 1 (5 pages)</td>
<td>Wednesday 18th November</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Paper 2 (5 pages)</td>
<td>Wednesday 2nd December</td>
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Work should be turned in by placing it in my mailbox on the first floor of Caldwell Hall. Late work will have a third of a grade deducted for each 24 hours that it is late, e.g. a paper that would have received a B, but which is 49 hours late, will in fact receive a C+.

The Center for Student Success and Academic Counseling: Located in the Student Academic Services Building, the CSSAC offers support to all students through units such as the Learning Center and the Writing Center.

Honor Code: All students must be familiar with and abide by the Honor Code, which covers issues such as plagiarism, falsification, unauthorized assistance or collaboration, cheating, and other grievous acts of academic dishonesty. Violations of the Honor Code will not be taken lightly.

Reasonable Accommodations Policy: Any student in this course who has a disability that may prevent him or her from fully demonstrating his or her abilities should contact Disability Services as soon as possible to discuss accommodations.