

PHIL 560: SCIENTIFIC PERSPECTIVISM
UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON, WINTER 2023

Course time: Wed 3:30-5:20pm

Email: amnovick@uw.edu

Location: SAV 359

Office hours: Th 10:00am-12:00pm

Instructor: Rose Novick (she/her)

Office location: Sav M-392

1. Course description

This seminar will focus on two recent books: Michaela Massimi's [*Perspectival Realism*](#) and Hasok Chang's [*Realism for Realistic People*](#), supplemented by student-selected papers. Both may be roughly aligned with recent "perspectivist" and "pragmatist" approaches to philosophy of science. They seek to understand the sciences, not as bodies of knowledge, but as systems of practice. Within these systems of practice, they seek to understand how models are introduced, extended, refined, and abandoned, why these models feature non-trivial falsehoods (idealizations, approximations) and omissions (abstractions), and why single phenomena are so frequently understood using multiple (possibly contradictory) models. In the end, as the appearance of 'realism' in both titles suggests, they hope their analyses will help us understand what the sciences tell us about "what the world is really like".

2. Assignments & evaluation

Discussion. You are expected to show up each week ready to discuss that week's readings.

Discussion prep. Each week, students will turn in a piece of short writing that (a) summarizes the week's reading and (b) raises at least one substantial question for discussion.

Discussion leading. At least once per term, students will be responsible for leading discussion. There are a few ways this can be done; we'll discuss options in the first class.

Final paper. Each student will write a 4000-5000 word paper on a topic related to the course. I encourage you all to write papers linking the course readings to your research beyond the course. There will be various preliminary paper-related assignments due during the term, and each student will meet with me twice during the term to discuss their paper.

Grading scale. Course grades will be determined by the final paper, assuming satisfactory completion of other assignments. For graduate seminars, I use the following grading scale:

4.0: Appropriate graduate-level work

3.7: Acceptable graduate-level work, but with significant points for improvement

3.4: Passable graduate-level work, but you really ought to do better

3.0: Not sufficient to receive graduate-level credit for the course

PHIL 560: SCIENTIFIC PERSPECTIVISM
UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON, WINTER 2023

3. Reading and assignment schedule

Date	Readings	Assignments
01/04	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Massimi ch. 1 • Chang introduction 	<i>No assignments</i>
01/11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Massimi ch. 2 • Chang ch. 1 	Discussion prep
01/28	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Massimi ch. 3 • Chang ch. 2 	Discussion prep
01/25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Massimi ch. 4 	Discussion prep
02/01	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chang ch. 3 	Discussion prep Topic proposal Paper meeting #1
02/08	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chang ch. 4 • Evans, "Perspectival Objectivity" 	Discussion prep Bibliography
02/15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chang ch. 5, closing remarks • Giere, "How models are used to represent reality" 	Discussion prep Source annotations
02/22	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Held, "Truth does not explain predictive..." • Cevolani & Tambolo, "Truth may not explain..." • Creel, "Transparency in Complex..." 	Discussion prep Rough paper outline Paper meeting #2
03/01	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chakravartty, "Realist Representations of..." • Ashton, "Scientific Perspectives, Feminist..." 	Discussion prep Source annotations
03/08	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Final paper workshop; no readings</i> 	Detailed paper outline
FINAL PAPERS DUE 03/17		

PHIL 560: SCIENTIFIC PERSPECTIVISM
UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON, WINTER 2023

4a. Course policies, informal

The university desires that I include on my syllabus a great deal of cold and turgid block paragraphs laying out various UW policies. Those are provided on the next page. This page contains policies specific to this course, consistent with UW policies but in some cases specified further. They are also written in human English.

Plagiarism. Write your own work. Don't re-use work from other seminars without checking with me first. Cite your sources (I don't care about format, so long as it is consistent and all necessary info is included). If, at the graduate level, serious plagiarism is occurring, there are deeper issues than anything involving formal punishment by the university.

Disability & accommodations. If anything is interfering with your participation in the seminar (whether it is officially recognized by Disabled Students Services or not) please talk with me to work out a plan. Please do so sooner rather than later.

Incompletes. I *strongly* prefer not to give incompletes, and will not do so without working out a concrete plan (including a timeline) for when the course work will be completed *in advance*. If you think you might need one, please meet with me to discuss sooner rather than later.

Grade appeals. At the graduate level, grades are not especially important in themselves, and I use them only to convey coarse-grained feedback about overall performance. Fine-grained feedback is left to written comments. It is highly unlikely that I will fail someone who completes the work for this course. If, however, you believe that I have given you an unfair grade, please meet with me to discuss it. (If you receive a grade low enough to be worth contesting, you should probably do so regardless.) If what I say at that meeting does not satisfy you, you may formally appeal the grade – the procedure is described in the formal policies below.

Issues with the instructor. If something I am doing in the class is making you uncomfortable or is otherwise inappropriate, please come talk to me, and I will do my best to find a mutually agreeable resolution. If that fails, or if you do not feel comfortable approaching me directly, you should reach out to the interim chair of the philosophy department, Sara Goering (sgoering@uw.edu).

PHIL 560: SCIENTIFIC PERSPECTIVISM
UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON, WINTER 2023

4b. Course and departmental policies, rules, and resources (formal)

Plagiarism. Plagiarism is defined as the use of creations, ideas or words of publicly available work without formally acknowledging the author or source through appropriate use of quotation marks, references, and the like. Plagiarizing is presenting someone else's work as one's own original work or thought. This constitutes plagiarism whether it is intentional or unintentional. The University of Washington takes plagiarism very seriously. Plagiarism may lead to disciplinary action by the University against the student who submitted the work. Any student who is uncertain whether his or her use of the work of others constitutes plagiarism should consult the course instructor for guidance before formally submitting the course work involved. (Sources: UW Graduate School Style Manual; UW Bothell Catalog; UW Student Conduct Code)

Incompletes. An incomplete is given only when the student has been in attendance and has done satisfactory work until within two weeks of the end of the quarter and has furnished proof satisfactory to the instructor that the work cannot be completed because of illness or other circumstances beyond the student's control. (Source: UW General Catalog Online, "Student Guide/Grading")

Grade Appeal Procedure. A student who believes he or she has been improperly graded must first discuss the matter with the instructor. If the student is not satisfied with the instructor's explanation, the student may submit a written appeal to the chair of the Department of Philosophy with a copy of the appeal also sent to the instructor. The chair consults with the instructor to ensure that the evaluation of the student's performance has not been arbitrary or capricious. Should the chair believe the instructor's conduct to be arbitrary or capricious and the instructor declines to revise the grade, the chair, with the approval of the voting members of his or her faculty, shall appoint an appropriate member, or members, of the faculty of the Department of Philosophy to evaluate the performance of the student and assign a grade. The Dean and Provost should be informed of this action. Once a student submits a written appeal, this document and all subsequent actions on this appeal are recorded in written form for deposit in a School file. (Source: UW General Catalog Online, "Student Guide/Grading")

Concerns About a Course, an Instructor, or a Teaching Assistant. If you have any concerns about a Philosophy course or your instructor, please see the instructor about these concerns as soon as possible. If you are not comfortable talking with the instructor or not satisfied with the response that you receive, you may contact the chair of the program offering the course (names available from the Department of Philosophy, 361 Savery Hall). If you have any concerns about a teaching assistant, please see the teaching assistant about these concerns as soon as possible. If you are not comfortable talking with the teaching assistant or not satisfied with the response that you receive, you may contact the instructor in charge of the course. If you are still not satisfied with the response that you receive, you may contact the chair of the program offering the course (names available from the Department of Philosophy, 361 Savery Hall), or the Graduate School at G-1 Communications Building (543-5900). For your reference, these procedures are posted on a Philosophy bulletin board outside the Department of Philosophy main office on the 3rd floor of Savery Hall.

PHIL 560: SCIENTIFIC PERSPECTIVISM UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON, WINTER 2023

Equal Opportunity. The University of Washington reaffirms its policy of equal opportunity regardless of race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, age, marital status, disability, or status as a disabled veteran or Vietnam-era veteran in accordance with University of Washington policy and applicable federal and state statutes and regulations.

Disability Accommodation. The University of Washington is committed to providing access, equal opportunity and reasonable accommodation in its services, programs, activities, education and employment for individuals with disabilities. For information or to request disability accommodation contact: Disabled Students Services (Seattle campus) at (206) 543-8924/V, (206) 543-8925/TTY, (206) 616-8379/Fax, or e-mail at uwdss@u.washington.edu; Bothell Student Affairs at (425) 352-5000/V; (425) 352-5303/TTY, (425) 352-5335/Fax, or e-mail at uwbothel@u.washington.edu; Tacoma Student Services at (253) 552-4000/V, (253) 552-4413/TTY, (253) 552-4414/Fax.

Sexual Harassment. Sexual harassment is defined as the use of one's authority or power, either explicitly or implicitly, to coerce another into unwanted sexual relations or to punish another for his or her refusal, or as the creation by a member of the University community of an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working or educational environment through verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature. If you believe that you are being harassed, seek help—the earlier the better. You may speak with your instructor, your teaching assistant, the undergraduate advisor (363 Savery Hall), graduate program assistant (366 Savery Hall), or the chair of the Philosophy Department (364 Savery Hall). In addition, you should be aware that the University has designated special people to help you. They are: University Ombudsman and Ombudsman for Sexual Harassment (for complaints involving faculty members and teaching assistants) Susan Neff, 301 Student Union (HUB), 543-6028; and the University Complaint Investigation and Resolution Office, 616-2028. (Sources: UW Graduate School, CIDR, Office of the President)

Office of Scholarly Integrity. The Office of Scholarly Integrity is housed in the Office of the Vice-Provost. The Office of Scholarly Integrity assumes responsibility for investigating and resolving allegations of scientific and scholarly misconduct by faculty, students, and staff of the University of Washington. The Office of Scholarly Integrity coordinates, in consultation and cooperation with the Schools and Colleges, inquiries and investigations into allegations of scientific and scholarly misconduct. The Office of Scholarly Integrity is responsible for compliance with reporting requirements established by various Federal and other funding agencies in matters of scientific or scholarly misconduct. The Office of Scholarly Integrity maintains all records resulting from inquiries and investigations of such allegations. University rules (Handbook, Vol. II, Section 25-51, Executive Order #61) define scientific and scholarly misconduct to include the following forms of inappropriate activities: intentional misrepresentation of credentials; falsification of data; plagiarism; abuse of confidentiality; deliberate violation of regulations applicable to research. Students can report cases of scientific or scholarly misconduct either to the Office of Scholarly Integrity, to their faculty adviser, or the department chair. The student should report such problems to whomever he or she feels most comfortable. (Sources: <http://www.grad.washington.edu/OSI/osi.htm>; minutes of Grad School Executive Staff and Division Heads meeting, 7/23/98).