



PHI 199:
UB Seminar on Morality, Reality, and Meaning
with Dr. Sarah Vincent



Course Description

The advertised course description is as follows: “PHI 199 centers on questions that are relevant to college life. What kind of career do you want after college, and why? What kinds of relationships do you want? How does your race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, or gender identity impact how you understand yourself? Is it wrong to cheat on an exam or to illegally download a textbook? Should college campuses restrict certain kinds of speech? Do your personal choices, like how you act on social media, matter in the big scheme of things? This seminar will give us the chance to work through questions like these that bring one’s college experience into conversation with academic philosophy.”

Relatedly, here is the posted description of all UB Seminars: “The three credit UB Seminar is focused on a big idea or challenging issue to engage students with questions of significance in a field of study and, ultimately, connect their studies with issues of consequence in the wider world. Essential to the UB Curriculum, the Seminar helps students with common learning outcomes focused on fundamental expectations for critical thinking, ethical reasoning, and oral communication, and learning at a university, all within topic focused subject matter. The Seminars provide students with an early connection to UB faculty and the undergraduate experience at a comprehensive, research university. This course is equivalent to any 199 offered in any subject. This course is a controlled enrollment (impacted) course. Students who have previously attempted the course and received a grade of F or R may not be able to repeat the course during the fall or spring semester.”

To elaborate on the general descriptions above, my approach to this seminar focuses on college life – coupling relevant philosophical discussions with skill-building that will help you beyond this course. This semester, topics include the following: philosophical basics, meaning & careers, meaning & relationships, reality & race, reality & gender, reality & sexual orientation, morality & social media, morality & recreational drug use, morality & ending dating relationships, and morality & academic integrity.