

PHYS 309/PHIL 389
Philosophical Issues in Physics
MWF 10:40-11:30
184 Nieuwland

Spring 2002

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Office Hours: TTh 1:00-2:00

Class Presentations:

Each student (*paired with another student*) will be responsible for setting the discussion agenda and leading the discussion for one class period. More specifically, you are to have a set of questions or observations prepared with which to begin the class on your assigned topic. These will form the basis for our discussion and for my own comments on them. I encourage you to stop in to see me to discuss your presentation. You must give me in writing, *at least one class in advance*, an outline of your comments and a list of your questions. You should give me your preferences (*i.e.*, a first, second, and third choice) in writing no later than Monday, January 28. If you have a particular student in mind for a partner, the two of you can submit a single request for topics. Those who have not given me their preferences by Monday the 28th will be assigned one of the remaining topics. I shall attempt to respect your choices of topics, but it is first-come, first-served, and there is a finite and fixed list of topics. Some may have to accept other than a first choice.

The student-led class discussions can begin as early as Monday, February 4 (*i.e.*, with the class on “The Copernican Model and Kepler’s Laws,” chapter 5). The classes on February 27 (“Determinism,” chapter 12) and March 1 (“Models of the Aether,” chapter 13) are not available for student-led discussions, since I will be out of town on those days, the class being led by my assistant, Brandon Fogel.

I expect you to raise issues *beyond* and *different from*, but related to, what you find in *Philosophical Concepts in Physics*. That is, you should do some outside reading for this assignment. Not only should you be prepared to answer and ask questions about the material contained in the text, but you should also bring something *new* to the discussion. A good place to begin is the references under “Further Reading” at the end of the chapter for your class.

Please feel welcome to stop in at my office during the first few days of the semester to discuss your choice of topic. Your term paper will be on the same topic as your class presentation.

Once again, during the week prior to your leading this discussion, you are to see me to discuss the details of your presentation. That is, at that time you should have in hand an outline of what you intend to cover, as well as the specific outside references that you will use for your presentation.