

Although I've taught many kinds of courses, the majority of my teaching has been in the history of philosophy. When teaching history, one is faced with the special problem of engaging students with seemingly outmoded views of a bygone era. The most effective strategy I've found for doing this is to get students to see why the issues we are discussing are relevant to themselves, the world, and how they want to live their lives. If they can do this, they are able to take on the questions of the class as their own, and to see why understanding the way these figures have thought about the issues is useful for developing their own nascent thoughts.

This became my core pedagogical strategy in the process of designing and teaching a course for the Saxifrage School. The Saxifrage School is a laboratory experimenting with non-traditional conceptions of how to structure the campus, courses, and finances of a higher educational institution. Partially inspired by my *alma mater* Deep Springs, all of their courses balance theory with practice and they aspire to offer a traditional liberal arts program in which students also learn some skill or trade. Designing and teaching a course for the Saxifrage School allowed me to create a course with the sole ambition of getting students to recognize the concrete lived ramifications of adopting different philosophical world views. The challenge was to create something philosophically interesting and nuanced, while still incorporating a concrete practical component. I did this by using the ancient question of the *summum bonum* and the classic answers of the Epicureans and the Stoics. This drew together the theoretical questions of how we should conceive of the world, our lives, and ourselves with the practical question of how we should concretely go about our day-to-day activities. Over the course of the semester, we all did Epicurean and Stoic exercises every morning and evening for ten to fifteen minutes. In these exercises, students were asked to consider either their upcoming day or the day gone by, their actions, and the events in their lives, as a Stoic or Epicurean would. This had the effect of making concrete the way in which these different answers to the theoretical questions of the course, when taken seriously, would lead to making decisions in different ways, and thereby to their lives taking on a quite different shape and texture.

With modern philosophy, getting students to recognize the relevance of the questions and figures of the course is more difficult. This is because there isn't an obvious connection between how one should concretely live and the epistemological and metaphysical questions of the modern era (e.g., What can we know with certainty? Can this serve as a metaphysical foundation for the discoveries of the scientific revolution? Does the origin of all of our knowledge lie in the senses, or is some of it innate? What is the fundamental nature of the soul, God, or extended beings?). Pre-philosophically, most students exhibit either rationalist or empiricist tendencies. Over the course of the semester I work to get students to recognize how Descartes's or Hume's theories are developments of these tendencies, and I try to get them engaged with each other in defending or attacking these positions. This, in turn, makes salient how this debate about the foundations of the scientific revolution is relevant to their own struggle for self-understanding, insofar as all of these questions connect together under the question "what can we human beings know?"