

PHIL 4900-002 (Spring 2018): "How to be a philosopher"

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In this course we'll be exploring different approaches, methods, and sets of questions that philosophers might take on. We will be reading Justin Smith's *The Philosopher* (Princeton UP), Daniel Dennett's *From Bach to Bacteria and Back* (Norton), and Peter Sloterdijk's *The Art of Philosophy* (Columbia UP).

Required of all students: All students will write book reports on these three books. The reports should be 4-5 pages (~1000 words). Each student will also write an essay of similar length on a topic of their choice, to be determined in consultation with me.

Optional additional work. Students may be interested in writing a longer essay (instead of the 4-5 page one) that articulates their own philosophy. Students may be interested in "workshopping" their essay (short or long) with the rest of the class. Students may be interested in leading class discussion for some of the readings. Beginning in the third week, I will start meeting with you individually to determine if you are interested in pursuing any of these "add-ons".