How to Teach Introduction to Philosophy?

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The concern that teaching philosophy differs from doing philosophy is valid. In continental European high schools, philosophy is often taught as a historical narrative from pre-Socratics to Sartre or Heidegger, emphasizing cultural and historical facts over philosophical inquiry. This method can reduce philosophy to anecdotes about famous philosophers, neglecting clear theories and arguments. Consequently, teaching philosophy becomes detached from doing philosophy. Two main issues arise: it misrepresents philosophy and fails to prepare students for essay writing. In this paper, I argue that students are not ready to write a philosophical essay before the third year of university study in philosophy; they should focus on writing one-page summaries of theories and arguments. Thus, grading high school essays is ineffective. But they could all be taught – classical philosophical positions and arguments. I am summarizing 17 points, or guidelines, that may be useful for the future teachers of introductory courses.

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KAKO POUČEVATI UVOD V FILOZOFIJO?

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Skrb, da se poučevanje filozofije razlikuje od filozofiranja, je upravičena. V srednjih šolah kontinentalne Evrope se filozofija pogosto poučuje kot zgodovinska pripoved od predsokratikov do Sartra ali Heideggerja, pri čemer se poudarjajo kulturna in zgodovinska dejstva namesto filozofskega raziskovanja. Ta metoda lahko filozofijo strne na anekdote o slavnih filozofih, pri čemer zanemarja teorije in argumente. Posledično postane poučevanje filozofije ločeno od filozofiranja. Pojavita se dve glavni težavi: prvič, napačno predstavi filozofijo, in drugič, ne pripravi študentov na pisanje esejev. V tem prispevku trdim, da študenti niso pripravljeni pisati filozofskih esejev pred tretjim letnikom univerzitetnega študija filozofije; osredotočiti bi se morali na pisanje kratkih povzetkov teorij in argumentov. Zato je ocenjevanje esejev v srednjih šolah in prvih dveh letih fakultete neučinkovito. Vendar pa bi lahko bili vsi poučeni o klasičnih filozofskih stališčih in argumentih. Povzemam 17 točk ali smernic, ki bi lahko bile koristne za bodoče učitelje uvodnih tečajev.

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1 Introduction

Rudi Kotnik dedicated most of his professional career to the question "How to teach philosophy?" On this occasion, I would like to share my experience of teaching Introduction to Philosophy. I have been teaching philosophy since 1990. I have taught different courses at different institutions. But teaching Introduction to Philosophy was a special challenge and it still has a special charm. Where to start? What to teach? Being the first contact with the philosophy, or at least being the first university contact with the philosophy, brings a subtle and sweet responsibility. I started teaching Introduction in 1998. It was a two-folded task. I had students of Philosophy and students of other groups (History, Art, Croatian language, Mathematics, etc.) who, at that time, had Introduction to Philosophy as a compulsory course. They were all first-year students. The question was what to teach and how. Although there were differences between these groups, I realised soon that all of them can and should be taught one and the same things – classical philosophical positions and arguments. In spite of the differences between different groups, you cannot be wrong if you stick to the middle-of-the-road philosophy discussions. I will sum up my experience in 17 points, or guidelines, that might be useful for the future teachers of the introductory courses.

2 Guidelines for the future teachers of the introductory courses in 17 points.

2.1 Forget about didactics! Forget about methodics! Forget about pedagogy!

Do not waste your and your students' time. Go *in medias res*! Just do philosophy! Do not reflect on the situation. Just teach philosophy and everything will be OK. Obviously, you have to go slowly, step by step. Focus on the arguments! Of course, before you go to the arguments, you have to explain what these arguments are and what they are for. That is, you have to present theories about the subject matter, and then you can proceed to the arguments. Be clear about the names of theories, put them on the blackboard. Put definitions on the blackboard. Break arguments into premises, put them on the blackboard, and discuss them one by one. Be clear. Be simple. Do not have large digressions. Do not have digressions at all. Stay focused on the subject matter during the whole lecture! Follow the intrinsic red line of the philosophical discussion.

There is no special thing like *introduction* to philosophy, philosophical *propaedeutics*, or something like that. Therefore, if you have to teach introduction to philosophy, then just do philosophy. And that is it. There is no special thing like philosophical thinking. Philosophical thinking just is thinking. There are no special exercises you should do before you start doing philosophy. Of course, your teaching has to be clear and simple. You should choose simple arguments and examples and explain them in usual sentences of your mother tongue, or in whatever language you teach. Of course, clarity and simplicity are general virtues, not specific for introduction to philosophy. You have to be clear and simple no matter what you teach. Also, the introductory course is supposed to provide a systematic overview of philosophical disciplines like ethics, metaphysics, philosophy of mind, philosophy of religion, aesthetics, etc. Do not try to give students an encyclopaedic overview of philosophy. Do not list philosophical movements of the 20th century. Do not divide ancient philosophy into the cosmological and anthropological period. It means nothing. Choose a couple of central problems in each discipline and focus on them. Do not be afraid that it will be too hard for students. Go in depth! It is the only way you can show that philosophy is exciting.

2.2 Do not underestimate your students

How much they can understand and what is too hard for them? Do not worry. They can understand a lot. Without any prior knowledge, they can understand things that are regarded as hard and advanced. Be demanding! They are young, intelligent, and motivated people, generally with relatively high levels of literacy. After all, we are supposed to call them *colleagues*. In 1998 when I started teaching *Introduction to Philosophy*, I asked older colleagues for advice. What to do and how? Many of them told me that philosophy is very hard and that I have to start very slowly, perhaps with themes from literature or film, to sensibilise students for the philosophical problems and discussions they will go through in the following years of their study. Some of them even recommended books like *Sophia's World* or *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance*. They were completely wrong! Nothing can be further from the truth! Students who enrol in the study of Philosophy, as well as students who study something else but enrol in Introduction to Philosophy as an elective course, are motivated and hungry for knowledge. What they want is philosophy and that is what you should give to them. For them, everything else would be a disappointment. The idea that you have to sensibilise them for their future study is complete nonsense. Start right now! As I said in 1), you should go *in medias res*.

Among other courses, I teach Philosophy of *Star Trek*. This course cannot replace Introduction to Philosophy, and it should not be taught instead of it. In fact, it is much better that students who enrol in Philosophy of *Star Trek* already have a couple of courses in philosophy. If they do not, they cannot recognise philosophical problems when they encounter them. Philosophical problems of *Star Trek* are mostly problems of metaphysics, philosophy of mind, personal identity, etc. For this reason, some prior knowledge of philosophy is required. It is easy to explain why Parfit is afraid of teleportation – because that process would not transport *me* to the surface of the planet but rather annihilate me and create a copy of me on the surface of the planet. The paradox of patricide is also easy to explain. Although one has to be explicit about its consequences – that time travel is impossible. However, some things are more abstract and therefore harder to explain to those who encounter them for the first time. For instance, the Prophets in the wormhole do not understand what time is because they exist outside of it. For this reason, Captain Sisko cannot explain to them that he is a widower. They ask, "What does it mean that your wife did exist before and that she does not exist anymore? Either she exists or she does not! What do you mean by *before* and *after*?" Although this point is brilliantly simple, it can hardly be fully comprehended without a previous course in metaphysics. The same holds for the argument that temporal loops are impossible because events cannot cause themselves.

Literature also cannot replace introduction to philosophy, nor successfully serve as a sensibilisation for the future study of philosophy. In modern novel, there are excellent insights into the nature of the self. Pirandello's *Uno, nessuno e centomilla*, Svevo's *La coscienza di Zeno*, Musil's *Mann ohne Eigenschaften*, etc. contain brilliant analyses of the self. However, without some acquaintance with the main philosophical problems and the self, one can hardly recognise all the insights in these novels. Students should first take a classical course on personal identity (Descartes, Hume, Locke, Williams, Parfit, Nozick, Taylor, Giddens, etc.), and then proceed to the study of philosophical aspects of Pirandello, Svevo, Musil, and others. Where to break the hermeneutic circle is a notorious question. But the answer is obvious. At the place where things are stated in an explicit and simple way. For this reason, it is better to start with the philosophical theories and arguments and then proceed to literature, popular culture, etc.

If you want, you can start your course with *the definition of knowledge* and Gettier's counterexamples (1963). And you can do that with students who have no prior

knowledge on philosophy. Of course, you have to explain the elements of the tripartite definition, you should mention Plato who wrestled with the same problem and whose dialogues have the What is *X*? form, you should explain the meaning of *iff*, the idea of definition, etc. One hint here: *knowledge* is an intuitive notion, *truth* is also an intuitive notion, but *belief* is not. *Belief* is partly a technical term. Students can be confused with belief. Usually, they understand it in relation to religion. You have to spend some time to explain to them what belief is. You should say something about the propositional attitudes, about the belief/desire explanation of behaviour, about the so-called direction of fit, etc. Students can understand Gettier's counterexamples, but you have to start with simple examples. They understand that a lucky guess cannot count as knowledge (because they understand the concept of knowledge), but you have to be explicit about it. You should offer several solutions, like reliabilism or causal theory of knowledge. You can even mention relevant concepts like *safety* and *sensitivity*, but you cannot go further into it in the introductory course. Of course, you cannot do all this under 60 minutes. But the point is that it is not too hard nor too complicated for university students who have no previous knowledge in the field of philosophy.

In the free will debate, *compatibilism* is regarded as a more elaborated and more complex position than libertarianism and determinism. Therefore, it is regarded as harder to grasp. However, compatibilism is not hard to grasp. In a sense, it is a surprising position and it is a real pleasure to teach it. Students regard it as a discovery, as something they have never thought about before your lecture. The idea that, no matter whether determinism is true or not, you are free as far as nothing prevents you from doing what you want, is very simple and appealing. In 40 minutes of teaching, you can reach a state in which students have *Gestalt switches* between compatibilism and incompatibilism. The status of the self is constitutive here. It is not clear whether *you are determined* by your genes, upbringing, and environment, or *you just are* your genes, upbringing, and environment. As long as you are clear about the criteria (possibility of choice, absence of obstacles, etc.) and other relevant concepts, the free will debate requires no previous knowledge of philosophy. Frankfurt's and Dennett's intuition pumps are really great, as well as Van Inwagen's consequence argument. There really are very strong intuitions that pull us in opposite directions. You can and should teach all these things. Students understand them and love them.

3 Do not try to teach history of philosophy in the introductory course

It cannot be done. Do not try to make sense of the claim that everything is water or something like that. Students will not take you seriously. However, as you go through the problems, you should mention classical authors. If you teach definition of knowledge, go back to Plato. If you teach arguments against the fear of death, you have to go back to Epicurus. If you teach social contract theory, go back to Hobbes. If you teach personal identity, go back to Locke. Mention classical authors – they deserve it. This is the best way to pay tribute to them. Do not tell stories about them. Show why are they relevant. Quote them if you want. But focus on the problems and arguments. Generally speaking, history of philosophy is not the best place to start teaching philosophy. It is better that students already have some knowledge on philosophy when they start studying its history.

4 Choose the right textbook!

Remember, it has to be a textbook. Philosophical theories should be clearly stated. For example, a chapter on Free will has to contain subchapters on determinism, libertarianism, and compatibilism. A chapter on Epistemology must contain subchapters on foundationalism, coherentism, reliabilism, etc. A true textbook must have, so to say, an *a, b, c, d,-structure*. It has to be systematic and informative. It has to be "examable," such that it can serve for the exam at the end of the semester or year. Its content has to be organised in such a way that in the exam you can ask relevant and sensible questions like: What is utilitarianism? What is physicalism? What is compatibilism? Etc. Students have to have such a framework because they can properly evaluate arguments and examples only within such framework; for example, Berčić, 2012a and Berčić, 2012b.

The textbooks that I would recommend for a university introductory course in philosophy are books like John Hospers' *An Introduction to Philosophical Analysis* (1997) and Cornman, Lehrer and Pappas' *Philosophical Problems and Arguments: An Introduction* (1992). They are proper textbooks, suitable for the university course, in size, in content, and in structure. They are the role models of the introductions to philosophy. Of course, you cannot just give such books to students. You have to go through the chapters in your lectures. Roughly speaking, one chapter for one lecture. Without lectures, such books would be too hard for beginners in philosophy.

There are very nicely written introductory books in philosophy. But you cannot give them to students because they are just not written as textbooks, and it is not clear how you could test the students. Take, for instance, Thomas Nagel's short book *What does it all mean?* (1987). It is a brilliant book. I love it. It is definitely one of my favourite books. But can you give it to students as a text for an introductory course in philosophy? No! I tried and it did not work. The book is too short, too hard for beginners, and it does not have an *a, b, c, d,-structure*. Students were just not able to see the points. They just did not know what to do with it. Or take, for instance, Bernard Williams' *Morality* (1972). It is a beautiful book. So nicely written, with such nice and sensible insights. Also one of my favourites. But if you have to teach an introductory course in ethics, would you give it to students as a textbook? Of course not! It is too short, it does not contain enough information for a university course, etc. It is just not a textbook. Recently, Timothy Williamson published *Doing Philosophy* (2018). It is an excellent book and every teacher of philosophy should read it. But again, it is not a textbook. Of course, such books can and should be given to students as additional or elective literature, but they just cannot serve as the basic literature for the course. The same holds for many other nice and well-written books. For instance, Simon Blackburn's *Think* (1999) is bigger in size and it is divided into chapters by problems. Also, it is relatively well-received by students, they are able to follow and understand parts of it without the teacher's assistance. However, it is not a textbook. It does not contain enough information, it does not have the *a, b, c, d,-structure*, and it is not examable, so to speak. On the other hand, Nigel Warburton's *Philosophy: The Basics* (1995) fills the bill. It is a textbook. It is well received by students enrolled in introductory university courses. It should go into detail more than it does, and then it would be good for the university course. However, it is useful as it is. The same holds for Gerald Rochelle's *Doing Philosophy*.

Let me briefly mention a few more books here. Theodore Schick's and Lewis Vaughn's *Doing Philosophy* (1999) looks good. It focuses on thought experiments. It is structured as a textbook. It is large enough, too large for a one-semester course. I have never taught according to it so I cannot say with certainty, but it looks good. Phil Washburn's *Philosophical Dilemmas* (1997) is carefully written and it is written as a textbook. Although, in my opinion, it does not properly depict actual philosophical debates. Bertrand Russell's *The Problems of Philosophy* (1912) is still a good book, but it cannot serve as a textbook because it is not systematic enough.

Now, there are introductions to philosophy that are in fact anthologies. We can mention Robert Solomon's *Introducing Philosophy* (2001), and William Lawhead's *Philosophical Questions* (2003). Anthologies certainly are valuable because students get in touch with the original writings of the classical authors. In my opinion, anthologies are not the best way to teach introduction to philosophy. They are time-consuming and focus can easily be lost. The amount of information that is conveyed to the student is lower than with a written textbook. I have composed several anthologies for internal usage at the university and I was not satisfied. Perhaps anthologies can be suitable for seminars, but they are not suitable for lectures.

Of course, you can write your own textbook. But you need to keep in mind that it can be a very frustrating task because there is a significant discrepancy between spoken and written word. Although it is not easy, one can overcome it. If you want to write your own textbook, you should start with a manuscript for internal use and then adapt it according to the student's feedback. In my experience, a good length is 300 pages for a one-semester course. One semester has 12 to 15 weeks, and that makes 20 to 25 pages of written text per lecture. In the ideal case, lectures and chapters of the textbook should coincide. Since there was no adequate literature in the Croatian language, I wrote a textbook. I did not hold back. It is written in two volumes, 950 pages in total. That is too much even for the two-semesters course. So, I had to make a selection. After that, due to the Bologna declaration, all courses were reduced to one semester. Then, I made a selection of 300 pages and put it on the internet for the students. It is divided into 12 chapters, and each chapter corresponds to one lecture. So, the students go through the same content twice, once in the lectures and once in the textbook. Do not be afraid of repetition. It is needed. Students should go through the chosen problems and arguments several times. Push them – they have capabilities – but do not push them too hard.

5 Prepare your lectures

Before you give a lecture on *X*, see what good contemporary introductions to philosophy say about *X*. Also, see what textbooks about *X* say about the *X* and how they are structured; for example, textbooks in epistemology, ethics, etc. You have to see what is important and you have to make a selection. Go to the basics. Go through the relevant literature one day before the lecture. Prepare your lectures well and there is nothing you should be afraid of. Your knowledge on the subject matter and your focus is what gives you the authority in the classroom, and nothing else but that.

Stay focused on the subject matter and students will follow. If you are afraid that you will lose your common thread through the subject, make notes. After years of experience, you may not need notes, but you will always need preparation and focus.

6 Always assume that the prior knowledge of your students is zero

Since we are talking about the introductory course, it is natural to take such a stance. However, this is good advice for any course you teach, including doctoral courses. Of course, some students will know something, but you cannot assume that all of them have common prior knowledge. In continental Europe, philosophy is taught in high school. However, you cannot rely on that because it is taught 2 hours per week for one year. So, a high school graduate has 12 years of national language or mathematics and only one year of philosophy. Also, the quality and the motivation of high school teachers vary; although after a couple of years you can tell which high schools have good teachers. Advice No. 6 applies to all the teaching. Even if students have prior knowledge, it takes time to "warm them up," so you have to sum up things that they already know. For example, students mostly have some understanding of what behaviourism is. Some of them will know about Pavlov's dogs, etc. Nevertheless, it is not easy to explain the difference between the *methodological* and the *logical* behaviourism. The idea that mental states are by definition dispositions for behaviour is logically very simple, but not psychologically and didactically. In my opinion, this is because students are not familiar with the difference in logical status. It takes time and practice to distinguish between logical claim, factual claim, methodological direction, etc. Here, one has to use inverted commas and put things on the blackboard. One has to be explicit about the difference between things and concepts. In my opinion, the same holds for the naturalistic fallacy in meta-ethics. It is not easy to explain to students that the identity between goodness and happiness is conceptual. You have to be explicit about it and emphasise it. In short, you have to spend some time to explain what it means that claim is conceptual.

7 Repeat! Repeat! Repeat!

Central things in your lecture you have to repeat several times. If possible, in different words and from different perspectives, but you have to repeat them. Saying things only once is just not enough, it does not work. Students encounter new insights and new concepts. They need some time and some practice to achieve a

sufficiently good command of these new insights and concepts. Put essentials on the blackboard and come back to them several times during your lecture. Whenever several steps lead you to the point, stop and repeat these steps.

Colleagues often complain that students remember thought experiments but forget what they show. In my opinion, one thought experiment is not enough. If you present a known thought experiment to students, you have to add two more examples. The point cannot be extrapolated from a single case. If you teach Ned Block's Chinese nation, you have to add cases where water pipelines or wooden planks are connected in a way that is functionally isomorphic to the human brain. You have to emphasise several times that for the functionalist mental states *are* functional states and that every system that is functionally isomorphic to our brains has to have the same mental states as we have. You have to explain that Chinese nation, as well as pipeline and plank systems, are *reductio ad absurdum* of the thesis of functionalism. Chinese nation is a brilliant counterexample to functionalism. However, by itself, it is not sufficient for the full grasp of the objection. A student has to understand that, according to functionalism, *any* system that is functionally isomorphic to our brains has the same mental states as we do. Generally speaking, if you rush through the point, they will not get it.

8 Present theories in the best possible light

As obviously or at least intuitively appealing. Start the presentation of a theory with the strongest possible reasons. You have to explain the motivation for a theory. Only after that, say after 10 minutes, go to the critique and the counterexamples. But even then, come back to the motives for the theory. You have to show how intuitively appealing ideas lead to unacceptable consequences. For example, if you teach utilitarianism, you have to start with the obvious examples where it is better to save 5 people than 1, or where it is better to make 2 million people happy than 1 million, etc. Only after that, you can proceed to the counterexamples like throwing Christians to the lions for the enjoyment of the Roman crowd, or executing an innocent man for preventing violent racial riots or for some other greater good.

9 Present theories in contrast to each other

It is much easier to understand them in that way. If you teach Kuhn's *The Structure of Scientific Revolution*, you can talk for hours and you will not impress the students.

Their reaction will be weak. But if you first present the idea of progress, for instance, Popper's, their reaction will be much stronger and they will get Kuhn's points much better. You will see that later, during the oral or written exam, they will explain Kuhn's point in contrast to the idea of progress. If not put in contrast to the idea of progress, Kuhn's ideas do not make much sense. And they have to be taught that way.

This point is especially obvious when you teach directly contrasted theories, like presentism and eternalism, or actualism and possibilism. It makes no sense to present one without the other.

Consequentialism and deontology are usually presented in contrast, in the trolley problem, or other cases of the same type. And that is good. Of course, theories that are in conflict have to be explained before that. I would never start the lecture with the trolley problem itself. First, explain why consequentialism is good. Then, explain why deontology is good. Then, go to the cases where these two theories conflict. If you do not explain the motives for the theories, and perhaps their historical importance if they have it, students will not take cases like the trolley problem seriously. They will take them as tricks or sophisms. They will not get their theoretical weight and importance.

10 Focus on the arguments!

In every lecture, you should present and analyse at least one argument. If you do it, after one semester students will be able to recognise an argument, they will be able to tell when they encounter one. Presentation and analysis have to be detailed. Arguments should be presented in premises or steps. Put it on the blackboard and go through the steps one by one. Check whether the steps really follow from the previous steps. The analysis should be informal, in natural language, but the structure of the argument has to be obvious. You can tell them whether an argument is *constructive dilemma*, *modus ponens*, *reductio ad absurdum*, etc. But this is not the point. The analysis should be informal and you should focus on the content of the arguments. You can, and to a certain degree, have to introduce *p*, *q*, *law of excluded middle*, *box and diamond*, etc. But this is not essential. The point is that students become familiar with argumentation. Argumentation is the heart of philosophy and they should become familiar with it. After all, this is what philosophy is, and introduction to philosophy should be done that way. If you go through the steps of the arguments with students,

then you are *doing* philosophy together with them. And the point is that they *do* philosophy. It is one thing when you hear in the lecture that Spinoza was a monist and Descartes a dualist. It is a completely different thing when in the lecture you go through the steps of their arguments – that there is only one substance or that the mind is really different from the body. In the first case, you hear something *about* philosophy, while in the second case you *do* philosophy. Everybody can have thoughts about the meaning of life, death, destiny, etc. But these thoughts are often vague, murky, and confused. We are philosophers and we are doing that in a clear and non-confusing way. That is what makes us professionals. When you choose arguments for the lecture, do not invent cases or look for them in the news articles. Take the already existing important and famous arguments from the treasury of philosophy, classic and contemporary. Choose arguments that support important and interesting philosophical claims. Some of the ones that I tried and can recommend would be the following: Taylor's sea battle argument for fatalism (1963), Epicurus' and Lucretius' arguments against the fear of death, Descartes' modal argument for dualism, deterministic dilemma, van Inwagen's consequence argument, ontological and cosmological arguments for the existence of God, the fine-tuning argument, Searle's derivation of *ought* from *is*, Agrippa's trilemma, Aenesidemus' tropes, etc. Of course, here you should include things like Pascal's wager, Prisoner's dilemma, inconsistent trilemmas, etc.

11 Make students talk!

Students have to talk. They have to use newly acquired concepts and talk about newly acquired insights. Perhaps the most important thing is that they talk about the arguments. When you put an argument on the blackboard, make them discuss premises and their implications. This is the way you will make them do philosophy. Of course, clarification questions come first. When you teach, you have to be as clear as possible and still have to ask them whether you were clear enough. When you finish the natural part of the lecture (you should have 3 to 4 in one lecture), stop and ask them to make comments and ask questions. You may use formulations like: What do you think, is this true? Who is right and who is wrong here? Can you have both things at once? Is this argument good? Does it prove the point? Etc. Keep focus! Students should talk, but they should talk about the things that you are lecturing on that day. Do not ask them general questions like: What do you think about the religion? or Is man alienated in the contemporary society? That would be a disaster. You have to keep focus and teach students to keep focus. Philosophy is

an abstract discipline, and one gets lost easily. It takes effort to keep focus on the topics. Keeping focus is not a God's given talent, it is to be trained. Discussions have a tendency to lead astray. Do not let that happen. Keep the discussion on track.

12 Always interpret student's questions and comments in the best possible light

Student's questions and comments are often messy and confusing but "up to something." Help them articulate their views. Use formulations like "It seems that one of the things that you have in mind is ..." or "Perhaps you want to say the following ..." etc. Use "positive hermeneutics." If you can recognise views of well-known arguments or philosophers in students' questions and comments, emphasise that! You will build their self-confidence and encourage them. Of course, if students misunderstand something or if they are wrong in any other way, you have to tell them that they are wrong and you have to explain to them what the error consists in.

13 Introduce a philosophical toolkit when it is needed

Not before that and not independently of that. Authors of introductory books in philosophy often dedicate the first chapter to logic. Right at the beginning, they explain terms like "empirical," "deductive," "a priori," etc. Sometimes they give a list of logical fallacies and relevant distinctions. In short, at the beginning they explain philosophical technical concepts and then they use these concepts through the book or through the series of lectures. However, this is wrong. Do not do it! Students will be bored and they will not understand the purpose of the toolkit. First, you should explain the problem. Then, you should present the solutions. Then, you should go into the argumentation. And this is the place where you should introduce the philosophical toolkit. Not before that and not independently of that.

Take, for instance, *modal fallacy*. You should explain it in the context of fatalism - Taylor's sea battle argument for fatalism. From the fact that the disjunction is necessary, it does not follow that its disjuncts are. (From the fact that it is necessarily true the sea battle either will or will not happen, it does not follow that the sea battle is necessary if it happens.) This is an exciting place for introducing the modal fallacy. Students will understand the motive and they will be naturally led to the logical

analysis. They will not question its purpose. Its purpose will be obvious in the discussion about fatalism.

Quantifier shift fallacy is fun on its own: from the fact that *every* wife has a husband, it does not follow that *all* wives have one and the same husband. Nevertheless, the right place to introduce it is the cosmological argument for the existence of God: from the fact that *every* event has a cause, it does not follow that *all* events have one and the same cause.

Shifting the burden of proof, of course, has to be explained in analogy with jurisprudence. But the right place to introduce it is, say, the Stratonian presumption: who has the burden of proof, the theist or the atheist? This metaphilosophical discussion naturally comes into the theist/atheist debate. Students will easily get the point. Also, it can be introduced in epistemology, in the discussion between pragmatism and scepticism. Should we keep our beliefs until proven wrong or we should not accept them until proven true?

Some philosophy departments replaced *Introduction to Philosophy* with *Philosophical Terminology* or a course with a similar purpose. The idea was that students should first learn philosophical terminology and then use it later during their study. However, this is wrong. Not a disaster, but wrong. The best way to introduce philosophical terminology is to introduce it through the teaching of philosophical problems. After all, philosophical terminology is introduced for grasping and solving philosophical problems, and it should be taught that way. Introducing terminology first and going through the problems later is not the right way to introduce terminology. Introducing terminology cannot be divorced from the problems for which it was introduced.

14 Spend needed time on distinctions

You cannot expect students to know them. One might think that the *fact/value distinction* is part of general culture or general literacy. However, it is not. Students have the general idea but you have to train them to really grasp the difference. You have to explain to them that terms like, for instance, *courage* or *cowardice* have both factual and evaluative components. I usually explain to them Max Weber's idea of *Wertfreiheit* – that science has to be value-free. It helps. Hume's argument, that one cannot derive *ought* from *is*, is good. Students understand it, especially if you put *is*

and *ought* sentences on the blackboard. Searle's argument about how to derive *ought* from *is* is an excellent device for explaining the fact/value distinction. For years I was going through all five steps of the argument, but it seems that only two steps are enough: P: Jones borrowed 50$ from Smith, and K: Jones ought to turn back 50$ to Smith. Put it on the blackboard and discuss with students whether K follows from P or not. Students mostly understand the objection that one ought to give back what is borrowed is a factual social norm, not the true ought. The point is not that they agree with this objection. The point is that they understand it. And if you get to this point, it means that you have successfully explained the fact/value distinction. Only after you do this for 30 minutes or more, you can proceed to the naturalistic fallacy. Without this introductory part, students will not get the point of the naturalistic fallacy, they will not be able to recognise it in the discourse. Going directly to the open-question argument makes no sense. Asking whether A is A and whether A is B, by itself, means nothing. As I said, Searle's argument is excellent for teaching. On the other hand, Gewirth's argument is not. It is too abstract. You can do it with students, it is a good argument, but not in the introductory course. Although students tacitly understand the notion of logical consequence, in the discussion about Searle's argument the question that usually arises is What does it mean that K *follows* from P? The best answer is the usual one: it means that if *K* is true, then *P* has to be true. To sum up, you have to properly explain the fact/value distinction. If you do not, you cannot proceed to naturalism, emotivism, error-theory and other meta-ethical theories. In the exams, you should give them a question like: Make two factual statements and two evaluative statements! or explicate the evaluative and factual component in the following statements!

The same holds for the *physical/mental distinction*. Although intuitively appealing, you should not assume that students have full command of it. You have to go through the examples like: is angry, has higher level of adrenaline, has 80kg, has IQ 130, knows, thinks about Vienna, trembles, etc. Only after you explicitly go through such examples, you can proceed to the theories in the philosophy of mind: physicalism, dualism, etc. One hint: when you explain different possible relationships between the physical and the mental, you have to be very explicit about the difference between *identity* and *causation*. You have to explain to students that if A and B are identical then they are one and the same thing, and if A causes B then they are two different things. Students often conflate identity and causation, especially within the context of physicalism. You have to explain to them that there is a difference

between the two. It is not hard to explain it, it is a small task, but it has to be done. After all, conceptual clarification is the job of philosophy.

You should not assume that students understand the distinction between *the actual and the possible*. In fact, it is a delicate distinction. Grammatically, they all understand the distinction between the *is* and the *could have been*, but they do not see them as different domains. Students tend to conflate the *actual* and the *present*. That is, they conflate modality with temporality. Logically, the distinction is obvious and trivial. Psychologically, it is not. An intuitively appealing way to explain it is the comparison between the actual and the possible you (the student of philosophy and the student of law) and between the past you, the present you, and the future you (the elementary school pupil, the university student, and the high school teacher). It helps, it clarifies, but it still takes time and effort to achieve the full understanding. To make things worse, some authors, especially from the so-called continental tradition, identify past-present-future with necessity-actuality-possibility. So students can bring this idea from their high schools. Of course, students also conflate *possible* and *probable*. That distinction also has to be explained.

It is a real pleasure to explain the difference between the A and the B series of time. Students get it quickly but nevertheless, you have to dedicate some time to it, and you have to go through a number of examples. In the test, one question should be to give two statements from each series. Of course, without this distinction you cannot proceed to the philosophy of time: the difference between the A and the B theory of time, etc.

There are a number of relevant distinctions, like *a priori/a posteriori*, *analytic/synthetic*, etc. They all have to be explained, of course, if they are relevant to the subject matter of your lectures.

15 Keep things apart!

When you lecture on one thing, then lecture on one thing only. Forget about its ramifications and implications. Philosophical problems are mutually connected and interdependent but do not present them in that way. For instance, Aenesidemus' ten tropes support different views: scepticism, relativism, antirealism, appearance/reality distinction, etc. However, when you teach the tropes, forget about the antirealism, relativism, and other possible implications. Focus only on the scepticism. Within one

lecture, present them only as arguments that show that knowledge is not possible, and nothing else. If you start talking about other implications, you will confuse students. Of course, you can talk about other things as well, but leave that for another lecture. Do not mix things, keep them apart, and go step by step. Talking about the meaning of life, students easily understand the idea that life is meaningless, but hardly understand the idea that life is absurd. The idea that life is absurd is the idea that (1) life is meaningless, that (2) we know it, and that (3) nevertheless we behave as if it is meaningful. No matter how explicit you are, they stubbornly conflate the two. They simply take absurdity as meaninglessness. Absurdity is probably hard to grasp because it is meaninglessness plus something else. It seems that meaninglessness is easy to grasp, while meaninglessness + something else is not. Of course, this distinction can be taught, but it will take more time than you have. On the other hand, students without any previous knowledge can grasp advanced and sophisticated arguments like Taylor's sea battle argument for fatalism, or McTaggart's argument for the unreality of time. It is hard to explain this discrepancy. In my opinion, it is because these arguments, no matter how advanced and sophisticated they are, *focus on one thing*. It seems that our psychology is like that – we can and should focus on one thing.

16 Give them questions!

Give your students the questions that you will give them in the exam in advance. If you do that, students will know what to focus on and the results will be better. Mediocre students have a tendency to learn by heart the opening sentences of the chapter and then get lost through the rest of the chapter. By giving them questions in advance, you keep them focused on the most important things. In this way, they do not disperse their learning capacities. I give them 100 to 120 questions in advance, and then select 20 for the exam. The bad thing about such a practice is that students make concise lists of answers and then learn that list instead of going through the textbook. If they all make the same mistakes, you can be sure that they have learnt from one of these lists, not from the textbook. All things considered, I think it is better to give them questions in advance than not. It is a dumb method, stupid, but it works.

17 There is no difference between teaching philosophy and doing philosophy

Sometimes people make this distinction as if we are dealing with two different things. They are worried that philosophy teachers *teach* philosophy to students instead of *doing* philosophy with students. Do not worry about this objection! It is completely ill-founded! People who raise it are completely wrong. They just do not know what they are talking about. *Teaching philosophy just is doing philosophy!* The only way to teach philosophy is to do philosophy together with students. If students wrestle with Gettier's counterexamples and look for a satisfactory definition of knowledge, they are *doing* philosophy. If students wonder whether Hobbes' fool is really a fool, they are *doing* philosophy. When students wonder what we would decide behind the veil of ignorance, what else are they *doing* but philosophy? When students try to find out whether *ought* really follows from *is* in Searle's argument, they are just *doing* philosophy. When they try to find out whether the fifth step in Hartshorne's formalisation of ontological argument follows from the fourth, they are *doing* philosophy. In all these cases, students are doing philosophy because this is philosophy. If doing these things is not doing philosophy, then nothing is! The best way to teach philosophy is just to do philosophy. Going through the famous arguments step by step, finding out unacceptable consequences of *prima facie* acceptable theories, constructing counterexamples to definitions, etc. just is doing philosophy. Do not worry, follow point 1) of this article, and you will always teach philosophy by doing it. In fact, the only possible way to teach philosophy is to *do* it together with students.

18 Conclusion

Unfortunately, the worry that there is a discrepancy between teaching philosophy and doing philosophy can be well-founded in some circumstances. In high school education of continental Europe, philosophy was usually taught as *a story* – as *a single standard narrative* that runs from pre-Socratics to Sartre or Heidegger.[1] The idea was that a well-educated citizen has to have some knowledge of the history of philosophy just as they have to have some knowledge of the history of art or general history.

[1] This picture was generally true until the 1980's. However, things have changed. In Italy, they still teach the history of philosophy, while in France the emphasis is on the concepts and their application. In Germany, the stress is on the philosophical systematics, and in Croatia we currently have a mixture of historical and problematic approaches. I owe this point to Rudi Kotnik.

Some of my teachers had the slogan *Philosophy is its history!* However, the problem with such an approach is that it often amounts to anecdotes from the lives of famous philosophers: that Spinoza was grinding lenses, that Kant never travelled outside Königsberg, etc. Within such an approach, theories are not clearly stated and arguments are often not even mentioned. Philosophy is presented as cultural and historical fact, not as a pursuit of truth. Here, teaching philosophy really becomes completely separate from doing philosophy. Now, there are at least two problems with this approach. The first problem is that it does not give the right picture of what philosophy really is. The second problem is that student's progress is measured by grading their essays, while at the same time this approach does not prepare them for writing essays. In his article "Philosophy Textbooks: A Gap Between Philosophical Content and Doing Philosophy," Rudi Kotnik focuses on the second problem. In my opinion, this problem cannot be solved. First, this way of teaching philosophy does not prepare students for writing essays. Second, in my experience, students should not be required to write philosophical essays before the third year of the university study of philosophy. Although, they could and should write one-page summaries of theories and arguments that they went through in the lectures. Generally speaking, during the first two years of their study, students are not able to write proper essays and work independently on the original texts. However, the magic happens in the summer between the second and third year of their study. In the winter semester of the third year, they are able to do it, not before that. Having this in mind, it does not make much sense to grade high school students' essays and to measure their progress in that way. Of course, there will always be high school students with a general talent for thinking and writing, and they will be able to write an essay. Their talent has to be discovered and cultivated by their teachers. But their results will hardly be the products of the systematic teaching of philosophy or its history.

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