

## Philosophy 797S

### **Dissertation Seminar**

Professor: Sara Bernstein (sara.bernstein@duke.edu)

Two types of challenges face dissertation writers: *intellectual* challenges, such as finding a topic, discovering that a topic is too large or too small, dealing with a shifting topic, writing clearly, and engaging current literature; and *psychological* challenges, such as writer's block, lack of confidence, non-productive ruts, and perfectionism. This seminar will address both types of challenges. We will discuss such issues as:

- Finding a topic and narrowing it appropriately
- Staying consistently productive throughout your dissertation career
- What to do when you're stuck
- Staying passionate about your topic
- How to get feedback and incorporate it into your work productively
- How to start writing rather than getting bogged down in reading
- Constructing dissertation chapters with an eye to the job market

#### Course Requirements:

- One presentation of a draft dissertation chapter
- Participation in class discussion

This course will meet once a month for two hours. Graduate students in their fourth year and beyond are required to take the course; others are strongly encouraged.