**Guidelines for Teaching Observations**

It is standard practice in the department to agree on a date for the classroom visit with the instructor to make sure the lesson is suitable to observe (and not just taken up by a quiz, or group presentations, or other activities that don’t put the instructor’s teaching on display very well).

The following aspects of the lesson should be observed and evaluated. An overarching question to be answered is: Did the lesson get *all the* students to *do* philosophy?

**Design of instruction:**

- Did the lesson have a clear aim or objective?

- Were the lesson activities geared towards this objective? (Those might include lecturing or explaining things, small group discussion, large group discussion, individually completed exercises, student presentations, etc.)

- Was there sufficient variation in activities to keep the students engaged?

- Did the lesson have components that required students to be actively engaged with the material instead of being passive listeners?

- Were there parts of the lesson that ensured that students would remember the material later? (Notes written on the board or copied down by students, handouts or slides the students could access later, students were given time to write their own notes, etc.)

- Was it made clear to the students how the material from this class fit into the broader goal of the course?

**Implementation:**

- Was the level of difficulty at which the material was presented appropriate for the students? (including use of possibly unfamiliar terminology, reliance on background knowledge, etc.)

- Did the instructor display appropriate familiarity with the material being taught? Were explanations factually correct and did the instructor display sufficient knowledge of the subject matter?

- Did the instructor use appropriate tools or media to conduct the lesson? (Board, slides, video/audio presentations, handouts, notecards, etc.)

- Were explanations of the material clear and well-structured?

- Were prompts and instructions presented clearly?

- Did the instructor provide clear and stimulating discussion questions, and structure and moderate discussions in a way that contributed to the aim of the lesson?

- Did the instructor incorporate feedback mechanisms to check the students’ level of understanding? (ideally more than asking “Does anyone have any questions?”)

- Was the lesson conducted at an appropriate pace, or did it move too slowly or quickly?

- Were activities structured in such a way to allow for many students to participate, or was participation concentrated around a small group of students?

**Classroom management:**

- Does the instructor know the students’ names? (More appropriate for small classes.)

- Did the instructor foster a welcoming and respectful classroom atmosphere?

- Did the instructor respond respectfully and constructively to student comments and questions?

- Are students encouraged to engage with each other or are all interactions only between a student and the instructor?

- If applicable: How does the instructor manage group work? Are students staying on track, and what happens if they don’t?

- If applicable: How did the instructor manage accessibility challenges, such as being able to be heard by students, or students talking very quietly, or students being unable to see projected slides?

- If applicable: How did the instructor handle disruptions, either by students or by external factors?

- If applicable: Did the instructor respond flexibly to student demands and interests, or did they stick strictly to their lesson plan?

**Further things to note:**

- Did the lesson start and end on time? If not, is there an explanation?

- Was the level of attendance acceptable? If it was low, is there an explanation?

- Did the students seem appropriately prepared for class? If not, is there an explanation?

- Did students at any point seem disrespectful or disruptive? If so, is there an explanation?