

## OBSERVATION REPORT: FALL 2013

OBSERVED: DANIEL RESTREPO

OBSERVER: SANDEEP SREEKUMAR

CLASS: MAJOR ISSUES IN PHILOSOPHY

DATE: 21<sup>ST</sup> NOVEMBER 2013

### I. General Observations:

This was an excellent class in philosophy. Mr. Restrepo combines intellectual rigor with philosophical depth and explanative clarity in an altogether admirable way.

The students were highly involved in the classroom discussions and contributed insights and intuitions enthusiastically. (This was especially impressive to me given that the class began at 7:50 AM.) Mr. Restrepo demonstrated great skill in handling and adjusting those insights so as to show them in their best light and in integrating those intuitions into his explanations seamlessly.

The rapport that Mr. Restrepo shares with his students revealed that he liked and respected them, and they him.

### II. Topics Covered in the Observed Class:

The class I observed examined a group of interrelated Sartrean ideas. Beginning with Sartre's dictum that existence precedes essence (which, I gathered, had been explained in general terms in a previous class), Mr. Restrepo traced Sartre's path between *essence* and *responsibility*. Having identified the crucial role that *choice* plays in linking the two notions, Mr. Restrepo proceeded to analyze the moral gravity possessed by the kind of choice critical to Sartre's existentialism. He illustrated by means of well-chosen examples three sources of that gravity: the inevitability of having to choose, the freedom enacted by such a choice, and the air of universality conferred upon any choice by the chooser's conviction that he chooses on behalf of all humankind. Mr. Restrepo then elaborated the connection between Sartrean responsibility and the existential forlornness sponsored by the absence of God. References were made to Sartre's dramatizations of these ideas in *The Respectful Prostitute* and *No Exit*.

### III. Evaluation:

What is especially to be commended in Mr. Restrepo's approach is not merely the effortless lucidity with which he clarified the relations of ideas in Sartre but also his unerring sense for informative examples and illuminating quotations. Mr. Restrepo possesses a wide range of reference, and he chooses well within it. He also has a nicely judged sense for when to allow classroom discussions to take their own free form and when to focus them upon philosophically salient points and structure them into shapely arguments.

In brief, then, this was a first-rate class in every respect. I found it enjoyable and thought-provoking, and have no significant suggestions to offer Mr. Restrepo regarding how either his teaching style or the content of his classes could be improved.

Observer:

*Vandeep Jacobumar*

Observed:

*Diego Restrepo*