My foremost objectives as an instructor are (i) to enable students to see the applicability of philosophy to their everyday lives and (ii) to foster students' confidence in their capacity to succeed, while (iii) helping to improve their abilities to read, write, speak, and think clearly, critically, and deeply about philosophical ideas. To achieve these objectives, I use a goal-based approach to course design and delivery which emphasises the importance of motivation for successful learning.[1]

Each class I have taught has had students with diverse academic backgrounds and learning preferences—e.g., some will have completed in-depth study in philosophy, while others are receiving their first introduction to the subject. This diversity highlights a key challenge I face as a professor: ensuring that my instruction is well-tailored to meet the level of individual understanding, motivation, and learning preferences of each class. In addition to differences in the students' backgrounds, motivation may differ depending on, e.g., class-size, type, and level—for example, those enrolled in an advanced undergraduate seminar with 15 students are probably more *self*-motivated than those enrolled in an introductory, survey-style lecture with 300 students.

I strive to meet these challenges by focusing on a set of core principles which consider the effects of *environment*, *expectancy*, and *value* on individual motivation. These general principles will apply widely, but their implementation can change from course to course; this allows me to accommodate tailor the course delivery and requirements as necessary to meet the particular needs and interests of the students registered.

Environment. An open, safe, supportive learning environment is essential in any classroom, but this is especially true in philosophy and ethics, where the content of the course may challenge the long-held beliefs of individual students, and discussions may involve sensitive or controversial topics like euthanasia or abortion. So, maintaining an inclusive and supportive classroom environment is paramount. One of the ways that I accomplish this for small, discussion-based seminars is to use the first day of class to collaboratively decide upon a set of expectations for how we will conduct ourselves in discussions throughout the semester. This exercise affords the students some agency in contributing to the tone of the class, it provides an opportunity to build trust by setting guidelines for respecting diverse points of view, and it allows me to better understand the particular needs of this group of students. Once the ground rules are collectively agreed upon, they are added to the foundational ground rules that I provide in every syllabus. This further ensures that they are common knowledge so the students can hold themselves and each other to their own collective standards.

Large, lecture-based environments provide different challenges. Here, I focus on maximising accessibility and minimising anxiety. For example, I ensure that all the required readings are easily accessible to all the students. I also utilise course notes or lecture slides and make these available in advance so students do not need to split their attention between listening and note-taking. When courses are delivered synchronously online, I record the lecture, and upload it to the course webpage so that students have an opportunity to revisit things they may have missed, in their own time and at their own pace. To empower my students and to accommodate neurodiversity, I set clear expectations for assignments by providing concrete examples. Since students (especially those receiving their first introduction to philosophy) may not understand how a philosophy paper differs from other papers they have written, concrete example helps students to see what expectations I have for these assignments, and how these papers can be approached.

Of course, the classroom environment is not static. To ensure continued engagement and efficacy, by the third week of class I solicit feedback from my students using a short anonymous questionnaire. ('What is going well?', 'What could be improved?', 'I would like more of… / less of…', etc.) Before doing so, I ensure that we have engaged in a variety of class activities (large-group discussion, small group work, etc.) so the students may comment on which activities they have found most conducive to their learning. This allows me to structure the rest of the course to their needs by weighting each student's feedback and shifting the frequency

[1] This approach derives from contemporary empirical research; see, e.g., S. A. Ambrose, M. W. Bridges, M. DiPietro, M. C. Lovett, and M. K. Norman. 2010. *How Learning Works: Seven Research-Based Principles for Smart Teaching*; A. Kruglanski, M. Chernikova, and C. Kopetz. 2015. 'Motivation science'; K. Murayama, and A. J. Elliot. 2009. 'The joint influence of personal achievement goals and classroom goal structures on achievement-relevant outcomes'; among others.

of course materials, and my teaching strategies, to align with the actual needs of the students registered in that class. By tailoring my classes to the diverse backgrounds and learning preferences of my students, the initial challenges that diversity presents are turned into an advantage and an opportunity for engagement.

Expectancy. When designing a course, I consider the ways in which expectancy might be increased for a diverse groups of students. I typically utilise the 'backward design model',[2] which begins by determining the learning outcomes, expectations, and goals for the course—written in specific and measurable language;[3] designing assignments with those goals in mind; and providing course content that would allow those assignments to be successfully completed. For example, standard objectives for a philosophy course may include (i) the ability to read and understand difficult philosophical texts, (ii) critical thinking and problem solving-skills, (iii) the ability to present philosophical views and arguments in a clear and logical way, and (iv) the ability to share ideas clearly in writing and conversation. By aligning and communicating the objectives, assessments, and my instructional strategies for the course, students know my expectations, and they are given opportunities to practice content, showcase their level of understanding, and receive feedback.

Since past experiences influence expectations for future performance, I make sure to provide students with early opportunities for success, in the form of short, low-stakes assignments. This helps to reinforce students' beliefs that they can do philosophy in the first place. Having assessments early and frequently also disperses the weight of grading. This helps to reduce anxiety and further allows me to calibrate the level of difficulty of the course, so students are appropriately challenged—if an assignment is too difficult, it will negatively affect expectancy, but if it is too easy, it will negatively impact the value students place on it.

For graduate courses, I additionally emphasise goals that are reflective of the practical skills required in professional philosophy, and I design course assignments based around these goals. For example, providing charitable and constructive 'referee reports', in response to a weekly reading; presenting a 10-min 'commentary' on a paper, as one might do at a professional conference; writing a good abstract for one's research paper; or, writing a short (3000-word) research paper, as is required for submission to professional association meetings.

Value. Being motivated to do something requires seeing some value in it, and the values that students place on their goals in a course can be mutually reinforcing. Although I cannot control whether students value philosophy in itself, I can affect the instrumental value that students put in philosophy, so that they may be motivated to partake actively in philosophical discourse in the first place. Being shown that they can succeed (increased expectancy) may positively affect attainment value and (hopefully) intrinsic value.

To affect the instrumental value that students place on philosophy, I try to illustrate how philosophical methods are widely applicable, and that philosophical content can be relevant to everyday life. I emphasise the instrumental value of philosophical skills—such as critical reasoning, facility with arguments, proficiency with communication—by showing their relevance to most any academic, professional, or personal pursuit. I highlight the relevance of philosophical content by incorporating real-world examples into lectures and assignments—for example, trolley problems can be couched in terms of autonomous vehicles to highlight how the ethical considerations of certain moral dilemmas are now pressing matters of immediate concern.

In sum, my approach to teaching is grounded in empirical research which suggests that learning and performance are supported by goal-directed behaviour. This, in turn, is guided by motivation, which itself is affected by value, expectancy, and environment. I can relate philosophy to my students' lives—both in terms of content and as a skill—to affect the value they place on succeeding in philosophy; I can help students see that they are capable of mastering philosophical concepts to increase expectancy; and, I can ensure an environment that is accessible and supportive. I look forward to continuing to advance my skills as a teacher and to developing additional strategies to be increasingly responsive to and supportive of my future students.

[2] G. Wiggins and J. McTighe. 2005. *Understanding by Design*.
[3] L. Anderson and D. R. Krathwohl. 2001. A Taxonomy For Learning, Teaching and Assessing.