Fall 2017
Philosophy Department Course Descriptions

*Philosophy 101 Philosophical Problems—Professor Johnson*
MWF 1300-1350 182 LIL
Living a human life poses certain problems for each of us: Who am I? Is there some meaning to my life? How should I act? Using short philosophical readings, we will reflect on issues such as the role of reason in our lives, the nature of religious belief, whether human existence makes any sense, how our personal identity is shaped, and how we construct meaning in our lives. Grades based on written essays and discussion participation.

*Philosophy 102 Ethics—GE*
MTWR 0900-0950 303 GER
This course will offer an introduction to the central concepts of ethical inquiry and moral philosophy. What is of paramount importance for us as individuals and as a society? To guarantee equal rights for all? To provide better lives for those less fortunate? To treat well those with whom we interact? And can all of these be of paramount importance at once? In this course you will first learn the basic frameworks of the most influential classical moral theories (we will read selections from Aristotle on virtue ethics, from Immanuel Kant on rights-based deontology, from John Stuart Mill on utilitarianism, and from William James on pragmatist approaches to the very idea of moral philosophy). Following this background exposure to the basic organizing concepts of contemporary moral theory, you will then learn how to utilize, enrich, and critique these theories by examining some of the most pressing ethical conflicts we face today. Critical moral issues we will consider in this part of the class will include economic inequality, racial injustice, and the ethics of emerging technologies of surveillance (here we will read, among others, selections from Ta-Nehisi Coates, Cornel West, Michelle Alexander, John Rawls, and Peter Singer).

*Philosophy 103 Critical Reasoning—GEs*
Two separate sections MTWR 1200-1250 105 FEN and MTWR 1500-1550 123 LLCS
Introduction to thinking and reasoning critically. How to recognize, analyze, criticize, and construct arguments. Through the practice of argumentation in relation to current and classic controversies, this course is designed to improve your reasoning skills as well as your critical writing capabilities. Along the way, students will also explore informal fallacies, basic rules of deduction and induction, issues pertaining to the ethics of belief, and some general reflections on the political dimensions and promise of argumentation. Typical assignments include argumentative journals, homework sets, and in-class exams. Class time involves a mixture of lecture, discussion, and group work.

*Philosophy 110 Human Nature—GE*
MTWR 0900-0950 106 FR
Is there an essential human nature and if so, how does it relate to our concrete material and ethical lives? What is the relation of human nature to nature at large? Is human nature essentially good? If so, why and how? These are perennial philosophical questions which this course will consider from a variety of angles and traditions. As philosophical questions, we will operate with the idea that determinate answers are sometimes less important than becoming as clear as possible about how we ask the questions, and the manner in which this asking connects to other deep assumptions. The approach to the course is non-linear and pluralist. This means that we will place texts from different times and places into conversation with one another, and in this manner develop our own conversation with regard to their relevance for our context. Authors will include: Plato, Descartes, Nietzsche, Simone de Beauvoir, Simone Weil, Alfred North Whitehead, William James, Thich Nhat
Hanh, Freud, Judith Butler, and Spinoza among others. Traditions will include: existentialism, feminist care ethics, pragmatism, etc.

**Philosophy 120 Ethics of Enterprise and Exchange—GE**
**MTWR 0900-0950   105 PETR**
In a free market world, what are the limits that a society or government should impose on the corporate world? In the absence of universal ethical standards in business ethics, how should we hold individual entrepreneur players responsible? What is ethically problematic about Gordon Gecko’s famous proclamation “greed is good”? Is self-interested behavior determined by an individual’s character, or is it more the product of the capitalist system in which individuals operate? Are there moral obligations that go beyond legal restrictions? This course provides a moral examination of business by considering the nature of enterprise and exchange. Topics will include corporate and consumer responsibility, meaningful work, and leadership.

**Philosophy 123 Internet, Soc, & Phil—GE**
**MTWR 1300-1350   105 ESL**
Introduction to major ethical, social, and political problems of the Internet from a philosophical perspective. Our focus will be on better understanding the impact of the internet on three core topic areas: privacy (surveillance, Snowden, and the like), property (filesharing, torrents, and the like), and personhood (identity, self, and the like). The class will be based on lectures, seminars, and projects. We will have guest lecturers including a representative from the Electronic Frontier Foundation (EFF.org).

**Philosophy 130 Philosophy & Popular Culture—Professor Brence**
**MWF 1300-1350   129 MCK**
This course examines the role of popular culture in our lives and its inherent connections to philosophy. By analytically engaging with topics such as social media, selfies, and reality TV, we have the opportunity to think carefully and critically about phenomena that saturate our world and are, perhaps, some of our most enjoyable escapes. This also has the potential to demonstrate the inextricability of philosophy from daily life. The course is structured to address one cultural phenomenon per week; we will start from our own experiences on the subjects and proceed from there.

**Philosophy 170 Love & Sex—GEs**
**Two separate sections MTWR 0900-0950 301 CON and MTWR 1200-1250 199 ESL**
Love and sex are so central to human life that many would argue that our intimate relationships are the key to self-esteem, fulfillment, even happiness itself; in fact, our intimate relationships are probably more important to our sense of well-being than our careers. Yet we spend remarkably little time thinking about love and sex, even as we spend years preparing ourselves for the world of work. In this course you will be ask to reflect on the most intimate sphere of human existence. We will draw on historical, sociological, religious, feminist and philosophical work to shed critical light on a variety of questions, including: What is love exactly? Why do we continually associate love and sex with happiness and pleasure when they often make us so utterly miserable? Is there, or should there be, an ethics of love and sex? What is moral, what is normal, and who gets to decide? What happens to sex when it is associated with “scoring” (the conquest model of sex)? How are our understandings of masculinity and femininity tied in with what we believe about love and sex?
Philosophy 216 Philosophy & Cultural Diversity—Professor Zack
TR 1200-1320  240C MCK
Cultural events and cultural differences are created by individuals, but exceed individual intentions and actions. Because there are strong group differences within societies and between societies, culture is a constant process of negotiating diversity. There are two senses of culture—products such as books, paintings, music, and how people act and react in society. Our focus will be on how people act and react in society with readings about: policy, ideology, business, race and ethnicity, art, discourse, class, popular cultural products, and transnationalism. Course work will consist of five 2-3 page papers (no exams), with normal letter grading. The course can be applied to the Arts & Letters group requirement and the University multicultural requirement (as an “AC” or American Culture course).

Philosophy 220 Food Ethics—Professor McKenna
MW 1600-1720  214 MCK
Every time we eat, we either eat in a way that coincides with other ethical commitments we have about the environment, animals, and other humans, or we eat in a way that contradicts these commitments. This course will examine a variety of food related issues from animal welfare to labor justice and challenge students to examine their own ethical commitments and choices. This course will introduce the moral theories of virtue ethics, utilitarian ethics, deontological ethics, pragmatist ethics, and care ethics and apply these theories to a range of issues related to what, who, and how we eat.

Philosophy 307 Social & Political Philosophy—Professor Brence
MW 1600-1720  176 ED
The focus of this course is liberal political philosophy. We will consider prominent theories of liberalism, some contemporary problems facing liberalism today, and some of the fiercest critics of liberalism. Liberalism is worth studying because it has long been the most dominant theoretical tradition in Western politics. In the first part of this course (focusing on theorists) we will consider a range of canonical liberal thinkers, possibly including John Locke, John Stuart Mill, John Rawls, Friedrich Hayek, and John Dewey. In the second part we will discuss some of the most pressing problems on the political scene today with an eye toward their impact on standard liberal governance: these may include globalization, the politics of identity (focusing on gender and race), new media and internetworked media, the environment, and privacy law. In the final part of the course we will consider trenchant critiques of liberalism: these may include Marxist, Anarchist, and Communitarian critics.

Philosophy 309 Global Justice—GE
TR 1000-1150  303 GER
What is globalization? What was nationalization? What does the transition from one of these to the other imply? This course is intended as an introductory discussion of central philosophical problems of globalization and justice. Key philosophical problems here include: issues in distributive justice pertaining to global poverty and inequality, justice matters concerning global citizenship and global human rights, issues concerning global identity and the politics of multiculturalism, issues in retributive justice concerning transnational criminal tribunals, and thematic concerns including new global contexts of war, terrorism, environmentalism, and health care. This course will count as an upper division elective and satisfy the Gender, Race, Class and Culture requirements in the Philosophy major.
As a course that will satisfy the University multicultural requirement, Global Justice will consider international cultures in the contest of the issues of race and ethnicity, pluralism and monoculturalism, and prejudice and tolerance. Rather than studying a single culture in depth, this
course will look at the intersections of national and ethnic cultures around issues of justice. These intersections raise questions of differences, as well as helping to identify commonalities that can serve as means for understanding and resolving conflict. By explicitly taking up the relationship between cultural differences and justice, the course will consider issues of prejudice and tolerance and the resources for critically engaging the development of justice in international contexts.

**Philosophy 310 History of Philosophy, Ancient-Medieval—Professor Warnek**  
TR 1200-1320  101 LIB  
PHIL 310 offers an introduction to Ancient Greek philosophy, primarily through a reading of selections from the texts of Plato and Aristotle. We will also look at other Greek philosophical figures, such as Parmenides and Heraclitus. The course also considers the emergence of Western philosophy in relation to tragic narratives, like those of Oedipus and Antigone. In this regard, Socrates is considered both as a foremost philosophical question and as a possible tragic figure.

**Philosophy 315 Introduction to Feminist Philosophy—GE**  
TR 1400-1550  199 ESL  
This course examines basic concepts and important texts in feminist philosophy. We will talk about what the great philosophers have said about women’s ability to do philosophy, what it means to do philosophy as women, how feminism has challenged the most basic assumptions of the Western philosophical tradition, and contemporary issues in feminist philosophy. This course is a prerequisite for some upper division courses in feminist philosophy.

**Philosophy 320 Philosophy of Religion—GE**  
MW 1400-1550  199 ESL  
This course examines classical and contemporary religious topics in the Western philosophical tradition, including the existence and nature of God; the problem of evil; the relationship between faith and reason; the meaning of religious language; the justification of religious belief; and the philosophical problems raised by the fact of religious pluralism. The aim of the course is to introduce students to the philosophical investigation of religion: that is, to thinking deeply, clearly, and critically about religious issues, including your own religious views.

**Philosophy 323 Moral Theory—GE**  
MW 1400-1550  252 STB  
Where do moral values come from, and how absolute are they? We will examine major western theories about the source of our values, including the views that they come from God, from universal reason, from our emotions and feelings, or from our needs as social animals. These theories about the status of our ethical norms will be placed in their historical context, but we will also assess them from the perspective of recent work in moral psychology on how people actually make moral appraisals and judgments. Grades will be based on two short (5 p.) essays and one longer (10-12 pp.) essay.

**Philosophy 335 Medical Ethics—Professor Russell**  
TR 1200-1320  117 GSH  
The French writer Albert Camus opens one of his major writings, The Myth of Sisyphus, as follows: “There is but one truly serious philosophical problem, and that is suicide. Judging whether life is or is not worth living amounts to answering the fundamental question of philosophy. All the rest…comes afterwards.” In a biomedical society like ours, the value of life and our relation to it becomes one of the most relevant factors for understanding who we are as human beings. From the question of informed consent to the very recent debate on health care, this course spans some of the most important social questions of our time: Could an embryo be called a person? Is
abortion immoral? In a more secular society, are there arguments concerning the morality of abortion (pro and con) that make no appeal to a transcendent form of goodness (God)? Would it be moral to use embryos for the production of basic materials, such as stem cells, for medical research? Is there any moral difference between active and passive euthanasia? Should we experiment on human beings? If so, what are the necessary conditions to ensure the moral permissibility of such procedures? If one day humans can engineer themselves, should they do it? In a society of bionic human beings, what would be the place of disability? Lastly, do we, as members of an advanced society, have a right to health care? The goal of this course is to provide the essential elements for students to assess future difficult life situations in a critical manner.

**Philosophy 340 Environmental Philosophy—GE**
**MW 1400-1550  303 GER**
Considers the nature and morality of human relationships with the environment (e.g., the nature of value, the moral standing of nonhuman life). Environmental philosophy addresses the human relationship with the non-human world from a variety of philosophical perspectives: ethical, political, aesthetic, epistemological, and metaphysical. In what sense are human beings a 'part of nature'? Does the natural world have intrinsic value, and what are our ethical obligations toward it? Can a distinction be drawn between humans and animals? Can nature be compared aesthetically to a work of art? How is the exploitation of nature linked to the exploitation of women, indigenous people, and other groups? What political options are open for developing a sustainable relationship between society and the natural world? To address these questions, the course will begin with a survey of dominant movements in recent environmental philosophy, including animal rights, deep ecology, ecofeminism, social ecology, bioregionalism, environmental pragmatism, and eco-phenomenology. The second half of the course explores key topics of current debate in the field, such as human/animal relations, holism and individualism, our proper relationship with technology, environmental aesthetics, and the ethical and political implications of radical environmental activism.

**Philosophy 350 Metaphysics—GE**
**MW 1200-1350  121 MCK**
What is metaphysics? Why do philosophers talk about overcoming it? This course begins by considering the position established by Kant’s critical appropriation of metaphysics and then looks at a number of post-Kantian philosophers, such as Hegel, Schelling, Nietzsche, Heidegger and Derrida, who in various ways attempt to move beyond the limits of metaphysical thought. How are fundamental philosophical concerns, such as those having to do with truth and freedom, connected to this tradition of metaphysical thought? If metaphysics is grounded in the distinction between the sensible and the intelligible, how might it be possible to challenge this distinction itself? Students will be asked to write a number of short reflections on the readings. There will also be a take-home final.

**Philosophy 433/533 17th & 18th Century Philosophers: Hume & Berkeley—Professor Zack**
**T 1600-1850 121 MCK**
In the empiricist tradition, David Hume (1711-1776) is considered the leading skeptic and George Berkeley (1685-1783) the leading idealist. However, there is a sense in which Hume’s reliance on the notion of ‘ideas’ is a form of idealism, and Berkeley’s insistence on the reality of only those ideas that pass a stringent empiricist test is a form of skepticism. Moreover, Berkeley’s beliefs in the existence of minds, ideas, and God render him a realist. And, his attempt to create an egalitarian Christian college in Bermuda that would include “Negroes” and Indians and his quixotic project of growing food for that failed enterprise on a farm in Rhode Island, render him an “idealist”
in a social/political sense. By contrast, Hume’s pragmatic political philosophy which reduces ideas of justice to property rights takes him beyond skepticism into cynicism.

The main focus of this course will be on Hume and Berkeley’s epistemology and metaphysics. Both shared an emphasis on the principle that all we know is our ideas, a principle that did not vacate empirical philosophy through the efforts of the Scottish common sense philosopher Thomas Reid (1710-1796), but was finally evicted by G. E. Moore (1873-1958). We will primarily aim to understand Hume and Berkeley on their own terms, with some secondary assistance. Required readings will consist of Hume’s An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding, Berkeley’s A Treatise Concerning the Principles of Human Knowledge, and essays in The Empiricists: Critical Essays on Locke, Berkeley, and Hume (Critical Essays on the Classics Series) by Margaret Atherton.

**Required texts**
- David Hume, An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding, ed. Eric Steinberg, Hackett, 1993

**Philosophy 463/563 20th Century Philosophers: Arendt—Professor Warnek**
R 1800-2050 123 MCK
This course focuses on the early works of Hannah Arendt, Love in Saint Augustine, The Origins of Totalitarianism, and The Human Condition. This set of readings will raise the question of Arendt’s early encounter with Heideggerian philosophy and the Christian tradition, the transformation of her thought through the historical confrontation with totalitarianism, and her account of the human condition as fundamental to a theory of action. Secondary readings will be assigned, especially for graduate students. Expect a heavy reading load, close textual readings in class, small group work and lecture.

**Philosophy 463/563 20th Century Philosophers: Dewey—Professor Johnson**
MW 1000-1150 121 MCK
We will undertake a close reading of Dewey’s Experience and Nature, which is generally considered to be his seminal work on the nature of experience, mind, thought, language, knowledge, and philosophy. We will focus on roughly one chapter per week, with some use of supplementary reading of other short articles by Dewey or from articles or book chapters by commentators on Dewey’s philosophical project.

**Philosophy 607 Seminar: Philosophy & Teaching—Professor Vallega-Neu**
W 1400-1450 211B SC
This course is offered for philosophy graduate students who are also in their first year of service as graduate teaching fellows. The course runs for the entire year, each quarter offering a different focus. The first quarter concerns pedagogical technique, the second, course design, and the third, broader issues in the philosophy of education. During the fall quarter, the goal is to improve teaching effectiveness and to provide new teachers with a forum for discussing some of the challenges they face in the classroom. Note that this is a one credit course that meets weekly.

**Philosophy 607 Professional Seminar: American Philosophy—Professor McKenna**
TR 1000-1150 250C SC
This course is an historical survey of American philosophy from the 1890s through the 1930s. The course begins with the hypothesis that a significant strand of the American tradition developed as a philosophy of resistance against ideas inherited from Europe and against a social, political and
economic system whose practices led to oppression through assimilation or exclusion. These philosophies share a common interest in the nature of pluralism, agency and liberation. The course will open by considering a crucial moment in the history of resistance in the United States: the Ghost Dance movement among Native Americans of the northern plains and the response to it in 1890 at Wounded Knee. We will then consider the issues raised in the conflict from a variety of philosophies including the work of William James, John Dewey, Alain Locke, and Jane Addams. This course will introduce only a small portion of the tradition. However, by focusing on a range of major figures and themes, the course may also serve as a starting point for further inquiry into the American tradition and its connection with other philosophical traditions.

*Philosophy 607 Seminar: Deleuze's Foucault—Professor Morar*

**M 1700-1950 250C SC**

This course will primarily focus on a close reading of Gilles Deleuze’s book *Foucault* (Éditions de Minuit) that was published two years after Michel Foucault passed away in 1984. This book, which is a collection of six separate pieces on Foucault's *corpus*, is the only book that Deleuze devoted to one of his philosophical contemporaries. Roger-Pol Droit rightly claimed in *Le Monde* that "whether it be to support or oppose him, it will no longer be possible to read Foucault without referring to [Deleuze's book]." However, this dense and difficult book is, in multiple ways, simply a précis of the more detailed material that Deleuze had been presenting in his 1985-1986 seminar on Foucault's works. These lectures, which are now available in French (~ 400 pages) and will soon be translated in English thanks to an NEH grant, will complement our reading schedule and provide us with the most complete presentation of Deleuze's thought about Foucault's philosophy. Pairing the book with Deleuze's course on Foucault will help us to chart the various mutations and selections that his analysis traversed as well as the systematic interpretation his reading provides. Students are thus *strongly encouraged* to have some degree of proficiency in reading French - especially since we will be reading some untranslated lectures - and, also, we will be comparing both the French and the English editions of the book on Foucault.