

# Fall 2018

## Philosophy Department Course Descriptions

### ***Philosophy 101 Philosophical Problems—Professor Johnson***

**MWF 1300-1350 150 COL**

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—GE***

**MTWR 0900-0950 199 ESL**

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—Professor McKenna***

**MW 1600-1720 150 COL**

What does it mean to be human? What makes us “human”? What is the place of humans in the world? Much of the history of philosophy wrestles with these questions in one way or another. Religion, science, politics, and ethics are all informed by the various answers these questions have received and they, in turn, inform the answers. In this course we will look specifically at how some of the answers to these questions have resulted in legacies of sexism, racism, and speciesism with which we still live today. This means we will be addressing sensitive topics that demand respectful discourse.

***Philosophy 120 Ethics of Enterprise and Exchange—GE***

**MTWR 0900-0950 105 FEN**

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 1200-1250 303 GER**

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 170 Love & Sex—GE***

**MTWR 0900-0950 104 CON**

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 asked 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 199 (soon to be 225) Logic—Professor Brence***

**MWF 1100-1150 123 PAC**

This course will serve as a substantial introduction to symbolic logic. At its completion students will be proficient in determining the formal validity of arguments with propositional (sentence) logic and predicate logic. Though often the course will resemble a math course, and mathematical techniques will be employed virtually throughout, the purpose of the course is to inquire into patterns of effective thought concerning potentially all manner of human interests. How do we draw correct inferences and think effectively? How do we avoid errors in reasoning and drawing unwarranted conclusions? What form does compelling evidence for a warranted conclusion take?

***Philosophy 216 Philosophy & Cultural Diversity—GE***

**MTWR 0900-0950 301 CON**

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 307 Social & Political Philosophy—Professor Russell***

**MW 1200-1320 101 LIB**

The focuses of this course are liberal political philosophy and related struggles for justice. Liberalism is worth studying because it has long been the most dominant theoretical tradition in Western politics. We will look at the historical roots of liberalism, but will also focus on how we find it substantiated in contemporary American values. We will consider specifically four guiding ideals of American life: Property & Contract, Individualism & Meritocracy, Progress & Scientific Rationality, and The Melting Pot and Multiculturalism. We will explore the origins, promises, and pitfalls of these liberalist ideals through a philosophical lens, all the while reflecting seriously on how to be a participant (whether one identifies as an American or not) in our contemporary American (and always global) society.

***Philosophy 310 History of Philosophy, Ancient-Medieval—Professor Warnek***

**TR 1400-1520 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***

**MW 1600-1750 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 332 Philosophy of Film—Professor Brence***

**TR 1000-1120 111 LIL**

In its relatively brief history (scarcely more than a century), film has arguably developed into the most significant art form and medium for the origination and transmission of culture in our time. Perhaps because of the brevity of this history, or perhaps due to its dismissal as merely “popular” culture (a form of cultural production often deemed unworthy of serious reflection), it has received relatively little attention from philosophers. When, however, philosophers have attended to film, they have commonly sought only to adapt accepted “philosophical” problems to their study of the subject (traditional metaphysical and epistemological problems concerned with the relationship between experience and reality, for example, take the form of the examination of the relationship of film to reality), or worse still, they have regarded film as capable only of shallow, but perhaps more accessible illustration of already charted philosophical ground (regarding “The Truman Show” as crudely illustrative of Plato’s Cave Allegory). This course, premised upon the view that philosophy is a disciplined practice of criticism and does not have its own particular subject matter, will, instead, endeavor to examine films philosophically. That is to say, the films themselves will be

regarded as subject matter for philosophical analysis. They will be allowed to raise their own problems, advance their own claims, and propose their own solutions, all to be carefully examined, interrogated, and evaluated.

***Philosophy 340 Environmental Philosophy—GE***

**MW 1200-1350 130 GSH**

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 342 Introduction to Latin American Philosophy—Professor Vallega***

**TR 1200-1320 111 LIL**

This course is an introduction to Latin American philosophy. As such its aims are: 1. To give a firm ground in the history of Latin American philosophy; 2. To introduce some of the crucial ideas, issues, problems, and forms of thinking that occur in some of the most important periods, movements, and figures in Latin American thought; 3. To cultivate the ability to read this tradition in its own right, and to recognize its distinct and meaningful contributions to world philosophies. The course will involve close reading and analysis of texts, background lectures, and class discussions. Some of the central issues broached in this class will be: ethnic identity, border culture, race, exile, social justice, history, time, writing, memory, the relationship between poetry and philosophy, the configuration of Latin American, Hispano American, and Afro-Hispanic-American identities, alternative temporalities, and the role diverse manners of discourse and experiences may play in the configuration of philosophical ideas. Beginning from the challenges opened to Latin American thought by Gabriel García-Márquez in his Nobel acceptance speech in 1982, we will look back to crucial moments in the history of Latin American thought and read from philosophical writings, essays, journals, and literary works of such figures as Felipe Guaman Poma de Ayala, Bartolomé de las Casas, Simón Bolívar, Domingo Faustino Sarmiento, José Martí, José Vasconcelos, Carlos Mariátegui, Leopoldo Zea, Augusto Salazar Bondy, Enrique Dussel, Jorge Luis Borges, Aníbal Quijano, Ofelia Schutte, Linda Alcoff, and Sub-Comandante Marcos.

***Philosophy 407/507 Critical Epistemology Seminar—Professor Russell***

**TR 1000-1150 123 MCK**

The foundational insight of critical epistemology is that knowledge has a social character. In other words, the social and political contexts in which knowledge is both created and circulated matter. The social positions and experiences of knowers make a difference in both what they know and what they *do not* know. Knowledge is tied to power and can be used to perpetuate and maintain injustice. Furthermore, as knowers, we may have ethical and political duties to know or learn about certain things in order to promote justice. This course explores such topics as: feminist standpoint

theories, feminist and post-colonial critiques of science and research, the social production of ignorance, and epistemic injustice.

***Philosophy 415 Continental Philosophy Topic Key Problems—Professor Stawarska***  
**MW 1400-1550 123 MCK**

This course introduces you to some of the main trends in contemporary Continental Philosophy. Its point of departure is in the phenomenological school founded by Edmund Husserl, which favors a rigorous descriptive analysis of human experience and proposes an alternative to both the scientific and metaphysical discourses. We will read a representative text by Husserl and then trace the multiple ways in which the methods and themes of classical phenomenology were both embraced and challenged by leading Continental philosophers, including Jacques Derrida, Martin Buber, Emmanuel Levinas, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Judith Butler and Iris Marion Young. We will look especially into how the interrelated inquiries into the importance of language, social relations, embodiment, and gender enabled these philosophers to transcend some of the limitations of classical phenomenology and provided a rich and multilayered account of our place in the world.

***Philosophy 420 American Philosophy Topic Pragmatism—Professor Koopman***  
**TR 1400-1550 130 GSH**

This course will be an advanced upper-level seminar in pragmatist political philosophy. We will explore the anti-foundationalist and anti-absolutist character of pragmatism with an eye to how these perspectives can bring a renewed focus to questions of politics, sociality, and morality without thereby collapsing into relativism. Our readings will cover both classical pragmatisms of the early-twentieth century and more recent neo-pragmatist contributions. Authors, texts, and debates under our survey may include William James's contributions to metaphilosophy, the debate between John Dewey and Walter Lippmann over the role of expertise in democracies, and Richard Rorty's more recent defense of liberal democracy. In terms of course workload, students in this class will: be expected to actively and respectfully contribute to discussions (this will not be a lecture class), should expect a heavier-than-usual reading load, and will be required to write a final research paper and offer a team presentation to the class.

***Philosophy 425 Philosophy of Language—Professor Johnson***  
**MW 1000-1150 307 VOL**

We will begin with a brief examination of classic objectivist views of meaning and language (e.g., Frege) that have defined mainstream philosophy of language. This will lead to a consideration of speech act theory, as developed by Austin and Searle. The bulk of the course will then explore recent research in the cognitive sciences on the nature of concepts, meaning, and language. This research challenges many traditional views about mind and language, and it supports an alternative view that recognizes the central role our bodily experience plays in the generation of meaning. The indispensable role of metaphor in human conceptualization, reasoning, and linguistic communication is the focus of the last part of the course.

***Philosophy 433/533 17<sup>th</sup> & 18<sup>th</sup> Century Philosophers: Spinoza—Professor Vallega-Neu***  
**MW 1400-1550 142 HED**

This course will consist mainly in a close reading and discussion of Spinoza's Ethics, which will be supplemented by his "Treatise on the Emendation of the Intellect." As we read Spinoza's Ethics we will learn how he conceives of God/Nature as a substance with infinite attributes and modes comprising everything that exists, how he explains the nature and origin of mind and emotions, what power we have of our emotions, and how we can find ultimate blessedness in the love of God/Nature. Spinoza was highly influential on German Idealism and on 20th century French philosophers. For most recent developments in the reception of Spinoza (especially "materialist"

readings of Spinoza) we will look at some essays from *The New Spinoza*, edited by Warren Montag & Ted Stolze (Minneapolis/London: University of Minnesota Press, 2008). We will use the translation of the *Ethics* by Shirley (Hackett, 1999).

***Philosophy 463/563 20<sup>th</sup> Century Philosophers: Addams & Cooper—Professor McKenna***  
**TR 1200-1350 101 LIB**

Jane Addams (1860-1935) and Anna Julia Cooper (1858-1964) were both important figures in the settlement house movement and in promoting education for underserved populations. They both addressed questions of race, gender, and class. While best known for her work at Hull House in Chicago, Addams was also an influential philosopher who influenced figures such as William James, John Dewey, and Charlotte Perkins Gilman. Born into enslavement Cooper went on to earn a PhD in philosophy and was an influential educator whose work is foundational for black feminist thought. In this class we will read Addams and Cooper in a kind of conversation. They are contemporaries (though Cooper lives much longer than Addams) who wrote and lived their philosophies. While coming from very different backgrounds they both focused on important issues of their time that remain with us today: racism, sexism, classism, immigration, education, and democracy.

***Philosophy 607 Seminar: Philosophy & Teaching—Professor Vallega-Neu***  
**M 1000-1050 250C 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: Continental Philosophy—Professor Stawarska***  
**W 0900-1150 250C SC**

This course serves as a survey of the major traditions that emerged within the 20th C. Continental philosophy. The course is organized topically around the following debates: should classical approaches to subjectivity developed in phenomenology be overcome by ontology? Or should both phenomenological and ontological approaches be displaced by an ethics? Is philosophical practice best described as reflection, or rather language---based interpretation? What is the value of a structure---based approach, which captures the larger--- than---individual forces such as social determinations, unconscious processes, dominant discourses and myths? To what degree are structure---based approaches wedded to traditional conceptions of science and to the history of Western metaphysics – hence in need of deconstruction? Does deconstruction turn philosophy into a species of literature, and, if so, is this a problem? Can such a problem be resolved by a reconstruction of Modernity, and a turn to discourse ethics? Other questions and debates will be addressed, and participants are encouraged and expected to bring your own research interests into the conversation.

***Philosophy 657 Philosophy & Race—Professor Zack***  
**T 1600-1850 250C SC**

Examination of contemporary discussions regarding race through perspectives on race in Analytic, American, Feminist, and Continental Philosophy, including: race in history of philosophy, philosophy of science, gender, oppression and racism, current events.

**Philosophy 670 Issues in Metaphysics—Professor Warnek**

**R 1800-2050 250C SC**

What is responsibility? And how can we be responsible for answering this question, without yet being able to say what responsibility is? This course takes up the question of responsibility through an examination of recent philosophical contributions to our understanding of human freedom. We will be concerned with how freedom and responsibility are related. Are we responsible *because* we are somehow free? Or do we first become free only as we find ourselves already responsible? What would it mean to speak of an *irresponsible* freedom? How might we account for human freedom without any metaphysical grounding, without referring to God or nature and even, perhaps, without privileging human life, without having recourse to humanism? What is the difference between individuated and communal responsibility? We will consider a variety of texts from different authors, including Hannah Arendt, Simone de Beauvoir, F. W. J. Schelling, Martin Heidegger, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Jean-Luc Nancy, Jacques Derrida, Jan Patočka and Slavoj Žižek, among others.