

Fall 2015

Philosophy Department Course Descriptions

PHIL 101 Philosophical Problems—Johnson

MWF 1300-1350 PLC 180

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. 4 credits (3 lectures plus discussion section). Grades based on written essays and discussion participation.

PHIL 102 Ethics—GTF

MTWR 0900-0950 FEN 105

This course is intended as an introduction into the rich philosophical tradition of ethics and ethical theory. It is structured primarily as a survey of differing traditions from the ancient Greeks to contemporary philosophers in the analytic, continental, and pragmatist traditions. We will consider the classical structures of ethical theory: deontological, consequentialist, and virtue ethics, as well as challenges to these structures. The goal will be to work together to consider the ways in which different ethical theories may lead to different prescription of appropriate responses to ethically challenging situations. We will also consider the inherent assumptions about human nature and the nature of the universe which are operative in the different ethical theories. Finally, the course will discuss the possible application of such theories to a range of issues in contemporary life. Thinkers read will include: Plato, Aristotle, Marcus Aurelius, Rousseau, Bentham, Hume, Kant, Marx, Mill, William James, Levinas, Beauvoir, Susan Wolf, and Peter Singer. Course work will consist in readings, 2 short papers, in-class quizzes and exams, and engaged participation and discussion.

PHIL 103 Critical Reasoning—GTF

MTWR 0900-0950 PETR 105

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.

PHIL 110 Human Nature—Stocker

MWF 0900-0950 STB 156

What does it mean to be human? What makes us “human”? What is the place of humans in the world? This course will explore influential traditional, modern, and contemporary approaches to human nature. Thinkers examined include Felipe Guamán Poma de Ayala, Plato, Hobbes, Foucault, Frantz Fanon, Julia Kristeva, and Enrique Dussel. Teaching will take the form of large group lectures and dedicated discussion sections.

PHIL 120 Ethics of Enterprise and Exchange—GTF

MTWR 0900-0950 CHA 204

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.

PHIL 130 Philosophy & Popular Culture—Brence**MWF 1300-1350 MCK 221**

This course enables students to engage in the critical reflection central to the discipline of philosophy--that which would facilitate living an “examined life”--about, in, and through popular culture. What is popular or mass culture? Is it something merely “manufactured” by special interests, or is it still in any way genuine culture, the product of free and spontaneous human interaction? Are the products of popular culture (movies, music, games, sports, etc.) merely sources of entertainment or distraction, or might they serve other purposes such as providing for a sense of community and identity? Do they serve merely to bypass (or even undermine) reflection to inculcate particular perspectives or values into those who are exposed to or who participate in them? Might they rather, upon scrutiny, provide the basis for the kind of critical reflection commonly regarded as facilitated only by “high” culture? By way of testing the last of these perspectives, of the capacity for popular culture to facilitate genuinely critical reflection, a range of products of popular culture will be examined alongside texts that seek to illuminate and reveal the ideas at work in them, and in relation to some works of classical philosophy, ancient and modern. As a result, students should expect to develop an enhanced capacity for intelligent reflection upon popular culture and upon a range of central issues that have been the subject of considerable philosophical examination.

PHIL 170 Love & Sex—GTF**MTWR 0900-0950 CON 104**

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?

PHIL 211 Existentialism—GTF**MW 1000-1150 FEN 105**

In the 1950s, Existentialism was a cutting edge perspective on the world (European nihilism after World War II), a lifestyle for intellectuals (in smoke-filled coffee houses), and a glamorous corner of academic philosophy itself (Jean-Paul Sartre and Simone de Beauvoir). But the origins of Existentialism go back to at least the nineteenth century in the Western tradition---Dostoevsky, Nietzsche, and Kierkegaard. Is existentialism relevant today? Yes, if there are philosophical truths about human life that have to be lived, if individual subjectivity is important, and if we are responsible for our lives. The course will survey all of the figures just mentioned, and more. Our main work will be to address questions such as: Am I free? Is it my fault? Does life have a purpose? What does death mean? **All required reading** will be from *Existentialist Philosophy*, ed. Oaklander, 2nd ed. Prentice Hall isbn 0-13-373861-2 pbk. **Work** will consist of reading (about 30 pp a week) student participation (despite a large class) and 5 very short (2pp) papers out of a choice of 10.

PHIL 307 Social & Political Philosophy—Brence**TR 1200-1320 MCK 240C**

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 internetnetworked 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.

PHIL 310 History of Philosophy Ancient-Medieval—Warnek**MW 1400-1520 MCK 240C**

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.

PHIL 315 Introduction to Feminist Philosophy—Stocker**MW 1000-1150 ED 176**

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.

PHIL 323 Moral Theory—McKenna**TR 1200-1350 GSH 117**

An examination of the structure, content, and problems of utilitarian moral theory. This course critically investigates utilitarian theories of right action, well-being, and public policy. We begin with the core historical texts (Bentham, Mill, Sidgwick) and proceed to 20th-century and contemporary work. Students write papers on three assigned topics, and develop and defend a new thesis in their final paper.

PHIL 325 Logic, Inquiry, Argument—GTF**MTWR 0900-0950 ESL 107**

In this course, we will examine the processes and practices of inquiry and argumentation by considering the logic that underlies them. In the first part of the course, we will consider the phenomenology of inquiry, the structure of arguments, the role of guesswork (abduction), and the practices of communicative action. In the second part, we will study the basics of Aristotelian logic and the role and practice of induction. In the final section, we will consider the idea of ordered systems and formal logic and will conclude with a discussion of the role of agency in logic and its implications for a normative theory of argumentation and what it means to be rational. Upon completion of this course, you will have developed both a facility with and understanding of formal and informal logic, but also an understanding and appreciation of their deep connections to the rational processes of an active social life. This course satisfies the logic requirement for a major in philosophy.

PHIL 335 Medical Ethics—Morar**TR 1600-1720 STB 245**

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.

PHIL 340 Environmental Philosophy—GTF**MW 1000-1150 PAC 11**

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.

PHIL 342 Introduction to Latin American Philosophy—Vallega**MW 1400-1520 PAC 30**

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.

PHIL 399 Transgender Philosophy—GTF**TR 1000-1150 LIL 255**

A philosophical look at trans representation, identity, politics, and liberation. Topics include media representation; medical discourse; self-identity; feminism; resistance and inclusion; political economy; prisons; and emerging mediums of self-representation such as the Internet and fiction.

PHIL 453/553 Marx—Zambrana**MW 1600-1750 CHA 204**

This course will serve as an introduction to Marx's thought. We will pay particular attention to Marx's treatment of the relation between theory and practice consistent throughout his corpus. Readings will provide occasion to discuss the structure and contemporary relevance of basic concepts such as alienation, capital, class struggle, ideology, and emancipation.

PHIL 463/563 Kristeva—Stawarska**TR 1400-1550 SC 250C**

This course surveys philosophical works by the contemporary living French philosopher and psychoanalyst, Julia Kristeva, with a focus on some of the central topics found in her work, such as poetic and ordinary language; the meaning and possibility of revolt today; love; gender and women's experience. We will be reading from *Revolution in Poetic Language*, *Sense and Non-Sense of Revolt* and *Intimate Revolt*, as well as a selection of essays from Kristeva's other works.

PHIL 607 Philosophy and Teaching Seminar—Mann

T 1300-1350 SC 211B

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.

PHIL 607 Analytic Pro-Seminar—Zack

TR 1000-1120 SC 250C

A survey of Anglo-American analytic philosophy over the 20th century, to include the historical developments of logical atomism and logical positivism, ordinary language philosophy, neo-Pragmatism, and cognitive science. Important subjects and key figures in metaphysics, epistemology, philosophy of science, ethics, and philosophy of mind will form the content. From G.E. Moore to Jerry Fodor, the pace will be fast.

PHIL 615 Heidegger Seminar—Vallega-Neu

W 1800-2050 SC 250C

This course focuses especially on Heidegger's *Contributions to Philosophy: Of the Event* (1936-38), which opens up most of the basic themes of Heidegger's philosophy since the thirties. This volume belongs to Heidegger's non-public writings, i.e. to writings that were not conceived with a public in mind but constitute Heidegger's most radical attempts at finding a way of speaking that would articulate being in its historicity in an originary way. To these non-public writings belong as well *Mindfulness* (*Besinnung*, 1938) and *The Event* (1941) that we will take into consideration as well. We will see how during these years Heidegger's thinking shifts from a more Nietzschean tonality that seeks an empowerment of being, to a thinking that occurs in light of "what is without power" and in "releasement" (*Gelassenheit*). Themes we will discuss in relation to the readings are "the historicity of being," "the first and the other beginning," "machination and lived experience," "the abandonment of beings by being," "truth and abyss," "the appropriating event," "inceptive language," "the difference between being and beings." The thought Heidegger develops in these volumes is essential for any philosophical engagement with the much-discussed "Black Notebooks" that have not yet been translated into English.

PHIL 657 Philosophy & Race: Contemporary Issues—Zack

T 1630-1920 SC 250C

The course will focus on contemporary issues in philosophy of race and racial theory. Topics will include: political philosophy and ethics pertaining to race, race as a social construction, the discourse of white privilege, police racial profiling and homicide, and contemporary literature. Written work will consist of one 10-15 page paper, proposed, submitted in draft, and final form, and ultimately suitable for conference presentation.