

Spring 2016

Philosophy Department Course Descriptions

Philosophy 102 Ethics—GTF Busk

MTWR 0900-0950 303 GER

Ethics is the philosophical study of right action and moral value. It is the only branch of philosophy that is necessarily social—i.e., it involves a relation between two or more people. Its basic question is “how should we behave toward others?” In this course we will approach ethics as an attempt by philosophers to think about social relations and the problems they pose. We will spend a good deal of time on two “classic” ethical theories, John Stuart Mill’s utilitarianism and Immanuel Kant’s “metaphysics of morality.” We will also consider political violence and the idea of nonviolent resistance through the writings of Martin Luther King Jr. and Malcolm X. Finally, we will think about problems with and limits to the project of moral philosophy itself through an engagement with the work of Nietzsche and others.

Philosophy 103 Critical Reasoning—GTF Akbar Akhgari

MTWR 0900-0950 105 FEN

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—GTF Duvernoy

MTWR 0900-0950 204 CHA

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—Professor Stocker

TR 1200-1320 282 LIL

This course proceeds historically by first examining Aristotle’s ancient notions of money and commerce, and then examining Adam Smith’s (right at the beginning of culture’s shift to the values emergent with the industrial revolution) analysis of how the division of labor leads to the wealth of nations. Smith’s work on political economy then triggers Marx’s critique of capitalism., especially in his article “Alienated Labor”. Finally, we examine a contemporary analysis, Ruggie’s Just Business that lays out “Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights”, designed to offer a “road map” for “corporate social responsibility”.

Philosophy 123 Internet, Society, and Philosophy—GTF Baines

MW 1600-1750 176 ED

This course will serve as an introduction to the emerging field of internet and information ethics. We will be considering a number of the key ethical problems and challenges that have arisen alongside the introduction of new digital information technologies into contemporary society. Students will be exposed to a variety of arguments made by experts in the field for how best to approach thinking about and addressing these important ethical issues. Some of the questions we will be asking are: What does it mean to say that we are living in a post-industrial, information age? Given what we have seen thus far, what can we expect to happen to human social relations as more and more communication takes place over the internet? What new ethical challenges does the internet pose for intellectual property? How has the internet changed our relation to privacy? What new avenues for criminal activity and behavior have been opened by network computing and what should be done about? What has been the impact of new digital information technologies on the world of work and the creation and distribution of wealth?

Philosophy 130 Philosophy & Popular Culture—GTF Kerr
MTWR 0900-0950 106 FR

This course is a philosophical exploration of popular culture. What is popular culture? How does it function in contemporary life? What relation does it have to our experiences? These are some of the questions with which we will begin the course. In the middle portion of the course, we will look at a variety of examples of popular culture: photography (including “selfies”), music, sports, online relationships, etc. In each case, we will both use the philosophical approaches developed earlier in the course and develop new approaches in order to make sense of these cultural phenomena. Finally, we will end the course by asking ethical questions: what are the various ways we might interact with, immerse ourselves in, and resist popular culture, and which ones should we choose?

Philosophy 170 Love & Sex—Professor Mann
MWF 1200-1250 150 COL

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 211 Existentialism—Professor Vallega-Neu
MW 1600-1720 129 MCK

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 give insight into the thoughts of some important existentialist philosophers. 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? Required texts will be made available through a course reader. Work will consist of reading (about 30 pages a week), student participation, a journal, and short paper assignments.

Philosophy 216 Philosophy and Cultural Diversity—GTF Balskus
MW 1200-1350 303 GER

In this course students will investigate some of the philosophical issues raised by the recognition of the culturally diverse character of American society from the perspective of a number of philosophical traditions in America: European, African, Asian, Islamic, Latina, and Native. In the process of the investigation, students will also be introduced to the practice of philosophy where philosophy is understood, in part, as a mode of inquiry that can contribute to the resolution of social conflict. At the beginning of the last century, W. E. B. Du Bois asserted “the problem of the Twentieth Century is the problem of the color line.” To the degree that America at the beginning of the Twenty-first Century still faces the problem of how to be a culturally diverse society, philosophy provides a means to address the problem. The course can be applied to the Arts & Letters group requirement and the University multicultural requirement (as an “AC” or American Culture course).

Philosophy 312 History of Philosophy, 19th Century—Professor Zambrana
MW 1400-1520 221 MCK

This course will examine critiques of modernity in three key 19th century figures - Hegel, Marx, and Nietzsche. We will begin by considering Kant's Copernican Turn crucial for understanding these critiques. Moving beyond German thought, we will critically reflect on Hegel, Marx, and Nietzsche's texts by considering feminist critiques of modernity in Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Sojourner Truth, Anna Julia Cooper, and Emma Goldman's work.

Philosophy 325 Logic, Inquiry, and Argumentation—GTF Craig
TR 1200-1350 106 FR

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.

Philosophy 331 Philosophy in Literature— Professor Vallega

TR 1400-1550 123 MCK

This is an intensive upper level philosophy course with emphasis on the relationship between central issues in philosophy and the way these are articulated differently by literature. The central themes explored will be identity, narrative, writing, language, history, and time. The course will include introductory and methodological lectures on how to read philosophically, as well as close reading and interpretation of texts. The **goal** of the course is to introduce students to the philosophical reading of literature in order to ultimately expand their reading and interpretative philosophical skills and to challenge and expand the way they understand the limits and possibilities of conceptual philosophical knowledge. The course will focus on the writing of Italian author Italo Calvino. Particularly on *Six Memos for the Next Millennium*, which will be related to his fictional work in *Mr. Palomar*, *Invisible Cities*, and the *Cosmicomics*. All lectures will be based on the original Italian texts.

Philosophy 332 Philosophy of Film— Professor Brence

1200-1320 MW in 221 MCK and 1900-2050 Sundays in 129 MCK

Arguably now the predominant medium for the origination and communication of culture, film (along with associated media such as video and television) has nevertheless largely been ignored by philosophers. This course, however, will approach film as a manifestation of thought more than adequately rich, subtle, and meaningful enough to inform and guide genuine philosophical reflection and inquiry. In it, particular films will be allowed to raise problems of wide human import, and to advance claims about, and perhaps propose solutions to, those issues. Those problems, claims, and proposed solutions will then be carefully examined, measured and evaluated.

We will begin with an exploration of the particular medium that is film, rendering more accessible its unique ways of advancing meaning through the combined and controlled use of color, texture, sound, perspective, transitions, and time, as well as narrative content. As the course proceeds to the development of particular films, significant use will be made of an Internet-based discussion forum (filmtank.org, a kind of think-tank, created for this course and open to the wider public, that seeks to promote the cooperative development of genuine insight in and through films). Sunday evening screenings will begin in week two. Further student work will consist of contributions to filmtank, short readings, and two essays written on films that students will work with independently.

Philosophy 344 Introduction to Philosophy of Law—Professor Brence

MW 1400-1520 207 CHA

This course will move between the theoretical and the practical. It will first introduce students to several major philosophical approaches to the question, "What is the Law?", including Natural Law Theory, Legal Positivism, and Legal Realism, as well as several theoretical challenges to these views such as that offered by Legal Pragmatism, Critical Legal Theory, and Feminist Legal Theory. It will then seek to explore important ways in which these approaches inform operations of the law in respect to some contemporary, and often contentious, social issues, such as the legality of torture, obscenity, and legal protections of privacy.

In as much as we all live in a society meaningfully conditioned, if not constituted, by law, this course should be appealing to all students. It will aim to be especially valuable, however, for any students with a particular interest in law, and perhaps considering a career in law and/or attending law school. Work will consist of reading, in-class discussion, and both shorter in-class writings and assigned essays.

Philosophy 399 Trauma and Justice—GTF Rognlie

TR 1400-1550 303 GER

This course is a sustained philosophical engagement with contemporary scientific and humanities research on psychological trauma and thinks through the implications for creating a just society. Interdisciplinary in scope and method, students will think through a wide array of social justice concerns including, though not limited to: sexual violence, war, gender, race, colonialism, labor, the environment, and parenthood. This will be done in critical conversation with the Western philosophical canon by way of engaging Plato's ancient dialogue, *Republic* (prior familiarity with this text is encouraged, but not required). While students will never be asked to divulge personal information to each other, self-reflection and participation in class discussion are vital to one's individual success in this course, as well as the success of the course as a whole. Given the personal nature of the themes of this course, all participants are expected and required to agree to a code of confidentiality with regard to any personal information shared and conduct themselves in a respectful and sensitive manner so as to promote an atmosphere of openness and trust.

Philosophy 399 Philosophy of Architecture—Professor Stocker
MW 1600-1750 303 GER

The course objectives are threefold:

- 1) First, students will examine how sustainable values are framed and articulated, with an eye to their implications for the built environment. The goal is to sharpen our sustainable philosophy/rationale, equally relevant for presentation to a philosophy conference, a client, or an NGO).
- 2) Second, students will explore sustainability in practical terms, as well. The design of temporary sheltering of those fleeing violence or disaster, now numbering 60 million people, is arguably the biggest challenge planet-centered designers face today. Group projects will involve architecture and philosophy students collaborating together to evaluate a variety of emergency shelter/refugee housing models. Projects should reference best urban planning practices. How might one go about doing an environmental audit of how such shelters and their systems perform vis--à--vis the natural world?
- 3) Third, the goal, in general, is to be able to articulate sustainable values while proposing sustainable design choices. In particular, the goal is to practice sustainable values in our design responses to the world's refugee crisis while being able to articulate our rationale for doing what we can.

Philosophy 407/507 Women of Color Feminism—Professor Zambrana
MW 1600-1750 373 MCK

This is part one of a series of courses devoted to women of color feminisms. This course will examine key figures within Black feminism, Latina feminism, and postcolonial/decolonial feminism. The course will consider how oppression and resistance are conceptualized by these women, focusing on their attention to the intersection of gender, race, and class. We will read seminal texts by Angela Davis, bell hooks, Audre Lorde, Patricia Hill Collins, Kimberlé Crenshaw, Gloria Anzaldúa, María Lugones, Mariana Ortega, Linda Alcoff, Gayatri Spivak, Chandra Talpade Mohanty, Uma Narayan and Yuderkis Espinosa-Miñoso.

Philosophy 407 Post-Structuralism Seminar—Professor Stawarska
TR 1400-1550 121 MCK

This seminar will examine structuralism and post-structuralism within the context of contemporary philosophy and literary theory. We will begin by tracing the emergence of scientific structuralism within the linguistics of Roman Jakobson and Ferdinand de Saussure, and Lévi-Strauss's anthropology. We will then turn to the post-structuralist critique of scientific structuralism as developed especially in Derrida's classic work *Of Grammatology* (in a reissued and revised 2016 edition), as well as essays like *'Différance'*, and the interviews from *Positions*, with an emphasis on Derrida's deconstructive reading of Saussure and Levi-Strauss. We will conclude with selections from Julia Kristeva's *Revolution in Poetic Language*, where she challenges Derrida to include the semiotic (the living, desiring body) alongside an emphasis on the symbolic aspects of cultural signification. Throughout the term we will seek to identify the distinctive features of the poststructuralist approach, and situate them in relation to other contemporary schools of thought. Our focus is going to be thematic as well as historical, and we will address a number of themes lying at the intersection of language, social structures, subjectivity, desire, and the living body.

Philosophy 410/510 Home and Homelessness—Professor Zack
MW 1200-1350 123 MCK

Philosophical perspectives will be brought to bear on the multi-disciplinary subjects of home and homelessness. A variety of sources will be used, including: Heidegger's "Building, Dwelling, Thinking,"

<http://mysite.pratt.edu/~arch543p/readings/Heidegger.html>; George Orwell's *Down and Out in Paris and London*

<http://www.planetebook.com/ebooks/Down-and-Out-in-Paris-and-London.pdf>, and contemporary descriptions of homelessness and its history in the US, as well as internationally. Students will write and revise several papers and will have the opportunity to submit them for posting on the website of the UO Philosophy Department's Community Philosophy Institute's project on homelessness. <http://homelessness.philosophy.uoregon.edu>

Philosophy 433/533 Hume and Berkeley—Professor Zack
MW 1600-1750 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

George Berkeley, *A Treatise Concerning the Principles of Human Knowledge*, ed. Jonathan Dancy, OUP 1998.

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

The Empiricists: Critical Essays on Locke, Berkeley, and Hume (Critical Essays on the Classics Series) by Margaret Atherton, Rowman and Littlefield, 1998.

Philosophy 443 Eco-Feminism—Professor McKenna

TR 1000-1150 360 CON

This course will focus on ecofeminism. Concerned that some feminist theory uncritically accepted the identification of men with reason, culture, and theory and women with emotion, nature, and practice some feminists took up these linkages seriously. Ecofeminists generally critique the over-reliance on reason and the idea that the human (meaning male) goal is separation from, or domination over, the rest of nature. This course will begin with one of the early texts in this tradition, Carolyn Merchant's *The Death of Nature* in which she critiques the mechanized view of nature she sees emerging from scientific and positivist epistemologies. This will be paired with Val Plumwood's *The Ecological Crisis of Reason* in which she argues that the denial of human dependence on the non-human sphere results in a remoteness from the earth, other animals, and other human communities. These works will provide a framework within which to read the work of a number of contemporary ecofeminists.

Philosophy 451/551 Native American Philosophy—Professor Pratt

TR 1200-1350 121 MCK

The purpose of this course is to provide students with an introduction to Native American philosophy. In the first section of the course, we will consider the context of genocide in the Americas and the "Pan-Indian" philosophical tradition that emerged as part of the resistance to white American attempts to acquire native lands and eliminate native culture in the late 19th century and early 20th centuries. The second section examines the work of contemporary Native philosophers including Vine Deloria, Jr., in his efforts to present a Native philosophical perspective that has the potential to respond to the crises of cultural and environmental destruction; Robert Bunge, a Lakota philosopher whose work develops from a philosophical examination of Sioux cosmology and language; and Thomas Norton-Smith whose work connects Native American philosophy and the philosophy of Nelson Goodman. The third section takes up a critique of postcolonial and poststructuralist philosophy in the work of Sandy Grande and George Tinker and considers the implications of an indigenous alternative philosophy in the work Taiaiake Alfred and Winona LaDuke. The methodology of this course will involve close reading of primary texts, classroom discussions and presentations, written work and possible guest lecturers.

Philosophy 463/563 20th Century Philosophers: Dewey—Professor Johnson

MW 1000-1150 373 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 463/563 20th Century Philosophers: Bergson—Professor Vallega-Neu

MW 1400-1550 373 MCK

Through a close reading of two of Henri Bergson's major texts, *Time and Free Will* and *Matter and Memory*, this class will explore especially Bergson's thinking of time as duration in connection with his accounts of the mind, memory, and the body. We will see how in contrast to an abstract scientific approach to time, Bergson argues for an intuitive approach to time, taking time as it is felt in consciousness.

Philosophy 607 Seminar: Philosophy & Teaching—Professor Mann

T 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 Seminar: Philosophy & Poetry—Professor Vallega
R 1800-2050 250C SC

Poetics of Difference: Nietzsche, Heidegger, Derrida/Blanchot, Édouard Glissant

At least since Plato's Dialogues the ancient quarrel between poetry and philosophy does not offer two separate opposed ways of thinking but in the entanglement of the two appears a poietic force that infuses both poetry and philosophy. Thus, in question is the limit and delimitation of philosophy with respect to language and the question of language as poietic event. The aim of this course is to introduce the question of the possibility of a poietic philosophy, that is, by making explicit the way thought may arise through poietic (embodied) experiences. This is not merely an inversion of the mind-body rational-irrational relation, but the issue refers one to another way of thinking than that which sustains Westernized rationalist modernity. Some of the main issues discussed will be: the question of the origin/s of language, of words, the relation between silence and word and word and image, the relation between oral and written tradition, the working of the work of art, disposition as a basic element for thought, style versus feeling and affect, ritual and symbolic thought. Some of the sites of relation in which possibilities and openings for such thinking occur are in the way poetry and philosophy interact within and beyond westernized thought. This course moves from some of the encounters between poetry and philosophy within the Western tradition and the challenges that arise from these, to a poetics of relation that arises beyond this tradition. Where the latter transforms not only our understanding of poetry but offers a distinct way of articulating experience and finding senses of being in a dynamic pluriversal thought-experience. The main figures discussed will be Nietzsche (*Birth of Tragedy*), Heidegger, Derrida and Blanchot, and Édouard Glissant. The course will consist in close reading and interpretation of selected texts supplemented by lectures that will situate the material historically and conceptually in a broader context and with respect to contemporary issues. Reference will also be made to Plato and Aristotle, as well as to various modern and contemporary poets. Students are encouraged to use the original languages when sufficiently proficient.

Texts:

Nietzsche, *Birth of Tragedy*

Heidegger, *Poetry, Language, Thought*

Derrida/Blanchot, *Demeure: Fiction and Testimony / The Instance of my Death*

Édouard Glissant, *Poetics of relation; Caribbean Discourses*

Philosophy 607 Post-Structuralism Seminar—Professor Stawarska

TR 1000-1120 250C SC

This seminar will examine structuralism and post-structuralism within the context of contemporary philosophy and literary theory. We will begin by tracing the emergence of scientific structuralism within the linguistics of Roman Jakobson and Ferdinand de Saussure, and Lévi-Strauss's anthropology. We will then turn to the post-structuralist critique of scientific structuralism as developed especially in Derrida's classic work *Of Grammatology* (in a reissued and revised 2016 edition), as well as essays like 'Différance', and the interviews from *Positions*, with an emphasis on Derrida's deconstructive reading of Saussure and Levi-Strauss. We will conclude with selections from Julia Kristeva's *Revolution in Poetic Language*, where she challenges Derrida to include the semiotic (the living, desiring body) alongside an emphasis on the symbolic aspects of cultural signification. Throughout the term we will seek to identify the distinctive features of the poststructuralist approach, and situate them in relation to other contemporary schools of thought. Our focus is going to be thematic as well as historical, and we will address a number of themes lying at the intersection of language, social structures, subjectivity, desire, and the living body.

Philosophy 614 Seminar: Food Ethics—Professor McKenna

W 1800-2050 250C SC

This course will focus on a variety of ethical issues related to food. Food can bring up familiar ethical dilemmas in a new light.

Do we have duties to others, to future generations? How might such duties intersect with the risks of new food technologies such as genetically modified organisms, confined animal feeding operations, and labor issues?

What kind of character should society help foster in individuals and communities? How do the conditions of vertically integrated industries and the limited government oversight of food corporations impact the ability for individuals and communities to develop and sustain desired character traits?

How do we balance apparently competing claims to happiness—the desire for affordable food, the desire for fair labor conditions, the desire for farm conditions that meet welfare requirements for farmed animals?

Can we form caring relationships across national and species boundaries? Can humans care for animals whom they eat? Can real care exist when food that sustains the poor in one country is diverted to produce a luxury product for those in another country to consume?

These are just some of the questions raised by examining food ethics. In addition, the pressing need for food changes such moral questions from objects of theoretical contemplation to pressing (often immediate) needs. We will consider how approaching ethics through issues like this might change the nature of ethical discourse and decision making generally.

Philosophy 615 Continental Philosophy: Merleau-Ponty—Professor Toadvine

M 1800-2050 250C SC

The concept of chiasm may be the most significant legacy of Merleau-Ponty's later thought, even though the term rarely appears in the texts that he prepared for publication. From his working notes, we learn that chiasm is intimately related to other late concepts, such as flesh, encroachment, and reversibility, and that it takes on the status of a general structure of ontological mediation that characterizes philosophy as such. As Renaud Barbaras writes, "It is necessary . . . to picture the universe as intuited by Merleau-Ponty as a proliferation of chiasms that integrate themselves according to different levels of generality" (*The Being of the Phenomenon*, 307). Taking the concept of chiasm as our guiding thread, the seminar will begin by tracing its emergence from Merleau-Ponty's earlier figures for ontological mediation: *Gestalt* (in *The Structure of Behavior*) and radical reflection (in *Phenomenology of Perception*). We will then examine in close detail the logic of the chiasm as it is conceived in Merleau-Ponty's late writings, with particular attention to its role in perception, intersubjectivity, language, and ontology. Lastly, we will explore the vicissitudes of the concept of chiasm since Merleau-Ponty, especially in the work of Derrida, Irigaray, Nancy, and Rogozinski. In *Positions*, for example, Derrida writes that the "form of the chiasm, of the X, interests me a great deal, not as the symbol of the unknown, but because there is in it ... a kind of fork ... that is, moreover, unequal, one of the points extending its range further than the other: this is the figure of the double gesture, the intersection" (70). Our concern here will be with the future of the concept of chiasm, if it has one, and what transformations it must undergo to offer new paths for thinking.

Philosophy 625 Philosophy of Language—Professor Johnson

T 1500-1750 250C SC

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. We will also look at recent neural models of language processes that are being developed in cognitive neuroscience.