

# Spring 2018

## Philosophy Department Course Descriptions

### ***Philosophy 101 Philosophical Problems—GE***

**MTWR 0900-0950 303 GER**

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.

### ***Philosophy 102 Ethics—GE & Professor Lundquist***

**Two sections: MTWR 0900-0950 in 199 ESL and TR 1000-1150 in 101 ALL**

A study of basic views on how we ought to live our lives. The following kinds of questions are examined: What is goodness? Can we, and if so how can we, justify our basic ethical principles? Can ethical statements be true (or false), or are they solely a matter of preference? This course canvasses several of the main ethical theories in the history of philosophy. According to virtue ethics, the aim of ethics is to cultivate good character, from which right action naturally flows. According to deontological ethics, the aim of ethics is to formulate and act upon universalizable rules – rules that anyone, anywhere, at any time should follow. According to consequentialism, the aim of ethics is to act so as to produce the best possible resulting state of the world. We will discuss the strengths and weaknesses of each view, from both theoretical and empirical points of view.

### ***Philosophy 103 Critical Reasoning—GE***

**Two sections: MTWR 0900-0950 105 FEN and MTWR 1500-1550 303 GER**

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**

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—Professor Brence***

**MWF 1300-1350 123 PAC**

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, Society, and Philosophy—GE***

**MTWR 0900-0950 189 PLC**

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—GE***

**MTWR 1500-1550 199 ESL**

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.

***Philosophy 170 Love & Sex—Professor Mann***

**MWF 1400-1450 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—GE***

**MW 1200-1350 105 FEN**

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.

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

**MW 1400-1550 104 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, gender and sexuality, class, popular cultural products, and transnationalism. Course work will consist of Ten 1-2 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 311 History of Philosophy: Modern—GE***

**MW 1200-1350 301 CON**

This course is the second of a three-course introduction to the history of western philosophy. The purpose of this course is to examine the history of western philosophy in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries as well as to consider the importance and relevance of the history of philosophy for us today. The course will focus on three key subjects relevant to the history of philosophy in this period. Primarily, we will engage with readings from canonical figures in the modern traditions of Rationalism (selections may be from Descartes, Spinoza, and Leibniz) and Empiricism (selections may be from Locke, Berkeley, and Hume). Additionally, we will also consider works from figures not normally in the canon (most notably early modern women philosophers) who played a more central role in the development of these philosophical traditions than is often acknowledged.

***Philosophy 312 History of Philosophy: 19<sup>th</sup> Century—Professor Brencce***

**TR 1400-1520 101 LIB**

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 322 Philosophy of the Arts—Professor Johnson***

**MW 1000-1150 199 ESL**

Survey of classical and contemporary theories of art and aesthetic experience, with examples from various arts. We will examine five basic views about the nature of art and aesthetic experience that have been dominant in the Western philosophical tradition. These include conceptions of art as (1) imitation, (2) emotional expression and communication, (3) form, (4) institutionally-defined artifacts, and (5) consummation of human meaning and experience. The question arises whether any one of these theories adequately covers the full scope of the arts throughout history and across different cultures, or whether we have to combine all five into a more comprehensive view of the role of art in human existence. The study of the nature of aesthetic experience sheds light on how humans make and experience meaning. Texts will range historically from the Greeks up through 20th century hermeneutics. Examples of arts will be drawn from painting, sculpture, poetry, music, dance, and architecture.

***Philosophy 323 Moral Theory—GE***

**TR 1400-1550 102 DEA**

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 325 Logic, Inquiry, Argument—GE***

**MW 1400-1550 301 CON**

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—GE***

**MW 1400-1550 276 ED**

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 335 Medical Ethics—GE***

**MW 1200-1350 106 FR**

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 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 Felípe 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 399 Practicing Philosophy With Teens—Professor Bodin***

**MW 1600-1750 117 ED**

The philosophical life comes naturally to most teenagers. They ponder fundamental questions about themselves and their relationships, about their reason to be alive and their place in the world. They are often skeptics regarding the wisdom of adults and the changing rules of society. They are immersed in the pressures of consumerism but struggle with identity and superficiality. This course will draw from pre-college philosophical writings as well as effective strategies for leading discussions with middle and high school students around topics that engage the passions and curiosity of teens. Seminar students will translate conceptual understandings in ethics, metaphysics, epistemology and aesthetics into philosophical practice by leading weekly discussions in public school classrooms under the guidance and support of the instructor and graduate employee. The course requires travel once-a-week during eight consecutive weeks to a designated school in Eugene or Springfield by car or carpool, bus, bicycle or on foot, depending on the distance of the school from campus.

***Philosophy 452 Philosophy and Race—Professor Russell***

**TR 1200-1350 106 CON**

In this course, we will explore how various philosophers (and philosophically-adjacent scholars) have taken up questions of race. We will begin with the question, “What is race?” We will look at early articulations of the race concept and then at various more recent critiques. Next, our readings will focus on questions of identity, considering how identity should be understood, why identity is important, and whether a political focus on identity is problematic. The third section of the course will be dedicated to more explicit discussion of ethical and political issues related to race. Finally, we will conclude the course with narratives about issues of race within the discipline of philosophy itself, with concern for what it’s like to be a person of color and a professional philosopher. The requirements will also include student presentations, the topics of which will have a major influence on the direction of our discussion and the course as a whole.

***Philosophy 463/563 20<sup>th</sup> Century Philosophers: Dussel—Professor Vallega***

**T 1600-1850 121 MCK**

In his philosophy of liberation Mexican-Argentine philosopher Enrique Dussel seeks a transformative critical engagement with Western philosophy and the articulation of new ways of thinking from outside this tradition. This is a thought that seeks to open a space-time for ways of thinking grounded on and developed out of the distinct narratives, histories, memories, epistemologies, ways of being, and concrete lives of those discarded by the Western modern project as understood in terms of instrumental rationalism and capitalism. At the heart of this project is the attempt to rethink intersubjectivity, a transformation of consciousness: This course focuses on the possibilities and limits found in this attempt. The course will focus on Dussel's attempts to rethink the concepts of life, experience, time, space, history, nature, poiesis, desire, and power. We will study carefully how Dussel rethinks these concepts through his use and critique of phenomenology, hermeneutics, and deconstruction. Some of the main figures discussed with respect to Dussel's work will be Nietzsche, Schopenhauer, Marx, Heidegger, Benjamin, Ricoeur, and Levinas. We will do close readings of Dussel's seminal text *Philosophy of Liberation* (1977) and of parts of his *Ethics of Liberation* (1988). The seminar's work will be supplemented by lectures on the historical and conceptual structures underlying the readings and Dussel work.

**Philosophy 463/563 20<sup>th</sup> Century Philosophers: Plumwood—Professor McKenna**  
**TR 1000-1150 122 MCK**

Val Plumwood is an ecofeminist philosopher who has a unique perspective that is important to consider at this time. For her, the current ecological crisis is tied to various threats to democratic processes, to rising intolerance, to increased distancing and remoteness, and to the limits of male-coded rationality. She argues that given our status as “earth-dependent beings” we need to develop practices of contextual eating, respectful use rooted in a version of vitalism, and a partnership ethic rooted in mutual communication and understanding. She argues that we need to develop “an environmental culture that values and fully acknowledges the non-human sphere and our dependency on it, and is able to make good decisions about how we live and impact on the non-human world” (EC 3). In this class we will read her book *Environmental Culture: The Ecological Crisis of Reason* and essays from the *Eye of the Crocodile* collection. This course should be of interest to students in philosophy, environmental studies, food studies, and women and gender studies.

**Philosophy 607 Seminar: Philosophy and Teaching—Professor Vallega-Neu**  
**T 1400-1450 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 625 Philosophy of Language—Professor Johnson**  
**MW 1600-1750 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.

**Philosophy 641 Pragmatism and the Ideal Theory Debates in Political Philosophy—Professor Koopman**  
**TR 1200-1350 250C SC**

This course will ask what pragmatist political theory might contribute to recent debates in political philosophy concerning the metaphilosophical orientations of “ideal theory” and “non-ideal theory” (which is closely related to a third orientation labeled “realist theory”). Where ideal theory holds that political philosophy ought to arrive at correct principles of justice, right, or legitimacy as a standard against which political reality should be measured, non-ideal theory and realist theory argue that we need to begin with the concrete terms of the political situations in which we find ourselves as the starting point of theorizing. The practice-centered perspective of pragmatism would seem to have something to contribute to the debates between these two perspectives. The course will not presume endorsement of any particular conceptions stemming from pragmatist, ideal, or non-ideal theory; all it will presume is a willingness to rigorously engage the philosophical stakes of these three approaches to political theory. We will be interrogating this debate in only one of its possible forms—for the most part we will take as our focus fairly mainstream views of pragmatist political theory as well as mainstream contributions to the debates over ideal and non-ideal theory. The course will begin with a brief review of mainstream literature in ideal theory and non-ideal theory. We will begin the class with selections from the most important statement of ideal political theory over the past half-century: Rawls’s work in *A Theory of Justice* and *Justice as Fairness* (students lacking any familiarity with his work are strongly encouraged to read from these books prior to the first class). We will next move to a brief overview of recent literature on ideal and non-ideal methods in political theory. The majority of the course will then be focused on (again, mainstream) contributions to pragmatist political theory from both its classico-pragmatist and neo-pragmatist phases. We will then move to discussions of contemporary contributions to pragmatist political

theory, reading work by Elizabeth Anderson, Alexander Livingston, Noortje Marres, José Medina, Melvin Rogers, and others. Student work will involve regular reading responses and a final research paper in which detailed engagement with both primary and secondary literature is expected.

***Philosophy 643 Feminist Phenomenology—Professor Mann***  
**MW 1000-1150 250C SC**

This course introduces students to feminist phenomenology, an emergent tradition in philosophy. In this particular class, we will focus on the concept of experience, key to both phenomenology and feminism. Can experience serve as authoritative footing on which to base philosophical or political claims? If the experiences we undergo most viscerally and deeply are constituted by and in power, stratified along various axes of injustice, don't we have to inquire into the fraught origins of experience before we can regard it as authoritative. Phenomenology in its traditional form claims to reveal the essential, universal structures of experience, but feminism tends to be skeptical of universalizing and essentializing claims. How can there be a feminist phenomenology then? How does feminism transform phenomenology in order to bring it up to the task of feminist inquiry? After an introduction to phenomenology more broadly, in this course we will read works by thinkers such as Alcoff, Scott, Oksala, Ahmed, Heinämaa, and Kruks, to explore these questions. This course will be co-taught by Bonnie Mann, and Dr. Marzena Adamiak, visiting Doctor of Philosophy from the Institute of Philosophy and Sociology, Polish Academy of Science, and Board Member, The Polish Phenomenology Association. Dr. Adamiak has made founding contributions to this area in Polish, particularly through her book, *O kobiecie, która nawiedza myśl. Kobieta jako figura inności w koncepcji podmiotu Emmanuela Lévinasa* (Of Woman Who Comes to Mind: Woman as a Figure of Otherness in The Concept of The Subject if Emmanuel Lévinas) WAiP, Warszawa 2007; and articles such as, "The Grey Zone of Subjectivity. Phenomenology of the Feminine Body in Emmanuel Lévinas's Thought." *Avant. Trends in Interdisciplinary Studies*, 4.1 (2015). 81-104. Dr. Mann has also made contributions to this area of thought, perhaps most notably through her work on Simone de Beauvoir (the founding figure of feminist phenomenology), and her monograph, *Sovereign Masculinity: Gender Lessons from the War on Terror* (Oxford University Press, 2014), which takes a phenomenological approach to understanding the entanglement of U.S. nationalism, practices of war, and masculinity formation.