

Spring 2019

Philosophy Department Course Descriptions

Philosophy 101 Philosophical Problems—GE

MTWR 0900-0950 189 PLC

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

MTWR 0900-0950 106 FR

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—Professor Russell

MWF 1000-1050 150 COL

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 105 FEN

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 1100-1150 145 STB

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 130 Philosophy & Popular Culture—GE
MTWR 1300-1350 303 GER

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 1300-1350 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 199 Logic—GE
MTWR 0900-0950 303 GER

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—Professor Zack
TR 1200-1320 240A MCK

Cultural events and cultural differences are created by individuals, but exceed individual intentions and actions. Because there are strong group differences within societies and between societies, culture is a constant process of negotiating diversity. There are two senses of culture—products such as books, paintings, music, and how people act and react in society. Our focus will be on how people act and react in society with readings about: policy, ideology, business, race and ethnicity, art, discourse, gender and sexuality, class, popular cultural products, and transnationalism. Course work will consist of four short 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 312 History of Philosophy: 19th Century—Professor Zambrana

TR 1600-1720 220 CHA

This course will provide a survey of the development and significance of 19th century philosophy in various philosophical traditions, including American, Latin American, and European thought. We will examine convergent and divergent conceptions of self, society, knowledge, rationality, emphasizing questions of history, power, gender, and race.

Philosophy 315 Introduction to Feminist Philosophy—Professor Stawarska

T 1400-1650 276 ED

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 330 Philosophy & Disaster—Professor Zack

TR 1600-1750 121 MCK

After 9-11 the world seemed to become more dangerous, including visible threats from hurricanes, earthquakes, floods, chemical spills, fires and pandemics, as well as terrorism and climate change. Hurricane Katrina brought a new dimension, the inability of government to respond immediately to emergencies, which leaves an ill-prepared public on its own. The aim of this course is to develop philosophically a humanistic approach to disaster preparation and emergency response, from the standpoint of civilian individuals and communities, and vulnerable populations. The purpose of this course is to contribute to the new multi-disciplinary academic field of "Disaster Studies" and to improve the quality of life in emergencies—for students in the class, the UO community, the Eugene community, and beyond. The focus will be on the importance of individual choice, reflection, and practical emergency preparation, as well as the philosophical/theoretical background. Students in this course will critically consider thought and action concerning disaster---that is, the philosophical contribution---but there is a second focus on policy considerations and becoming knowledgeable about the realities of contemporary disasters. Students will have the option of course credit for acquiring a new disaster-relevant skill, but it will not be required. Most readings will be available on BB. Philosophy & Disaster meets the criteria for Arts and Letters group in that it introduces students to the philosophical aspect of disaster studies and includes components relevant to applied ethics, moral theory, social and political philosophy, and the history of philosophy. The course will also have a multi-disciplinary component, relating philosophical issues to social science, public policy, and current journalism; and an interactive component that engages students in learning a new skill, such as CPR, water safety, first aid, and relating this to course themes. The course fits with the department focus on engaged philosophy.

Philosophy 331 Philosophy in Literature—Professor Vallega

MW 1600-1750 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 340 Environmental Philosophy—Professor Muraca

TR 1000-1120 302 GER

Considers the nature and morality of human relationships with the environment (e.g., the nature of value, the moral standing of nonhuman life). Environmental philosophy addresses the human relationship with the non-human world from a variety of philosophical perspectives: ethical, political, aesthetic, epistemological, and metaphysical. In what sense are human beings a 'part of nature'? Does the natural world have intrinsic value, and what are our ethical obligations toward it? Can a distinction be drawn between humans and animals? Can nature be compared aesthetically to a work of art? How is the exploitation of nature linked to the exploitation of women, indigenous people, and other groups? What political options are open for developing a sustainable relationship between society and the natural world? To address these questions, the course will begin with a survey of dominant movements in recent environmental philosophy, including animal rights, deep ecology, ecofeminism, social ecology, bioregionalism, environmental pragmatism, and ecophenomenology. 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 345 Place in the Cosmos—Professor Vallega

MW 1200-1320 176 ED

The aim of this course is to deepen a philosophical understanding and questioning of the human place in the cosmos through close reading of seminal articulations of life in the Western tradition as well as in relation to non-western traditions of thought. In questioning our place in the cosmos we will reflect on the notions of cosmos and world, of place and space, time, movement, directionality, and we will also question our place in relation to other living and non-living beings, animals, plants, planets, stars, and the divine or divinities. But this also requires thinking oneself in relation to otherness, other humans, and the distinct of living beings, things, elements, sky, mountain, rivers and oceans, a geo-ecological being that situates us. The course takes into account the variety of articulations of being-in-the-world (myth, narrative, history, lineages, oral traditions, painting, etc.) The readings will engage Ancient cosmogonies and cosmologies, and will trace the development of different views of the cosmos in Medieval thought through to the fundamental changes occurring in our relation to the cosmos with the discovery of the Americas, the modern scientific revolution, more specifically, with the mathematization of nature in the 17th century. We will then consider critiques of the modern view of the cosmos and the place one finds from it or the displacement from it. The course requires close reading and text analysis, and leads to the critical comparison of different approaches to the question of the human place in the cosmos. Main figures: Plato's Timaeus, Descartes, Heidegger, Enrique Dussel, Aníbal Quijano, Maria Lugones, and Rodolfo Kusch. We will also consider popular and indigenous thinking and esthetics in the Andean indigenous traditions as well as the esthetics of ancient and contemporary Chinese painting.

Philosophy 399 Philosophy & Abortion—GE Pickard

TR 1000-1150 303 GER

Starting with Aristotle's arguments on ensoulment, questions of pregnancy and its termination have been a topic of philosophical discussion for over 2000 years. This class will look at the historical, ethical, and political approaches to abortion that have shaped its role in philosophical discourse. The term will be divided into three parts— metaphysical questions on the beginning of pregnancy and life, the bioethical debate over the morality of abortion, and philosophy that questions the role of abortion in politics and culture today.

Philosophy 407/507 Philosophy of Education—Professor Meens

F 1200-1450 360 CON

This course introduces students to philosophical issues of education and schooling. The course explores the major philosophical contributions to educational practice in the Western intellectual tradition, particularly in the United States. We will examine questions of the function and purposes of schooling, diversity, inclusion and equity, and issues of educational policy and practice. Along with surveying major historical contributions and perennial questions, we will consider the relationship of educational to contemporary democratic theory, and questions of practical ethics related to teaching and learning.

Philosophy 453/553 19th Century Philosophers: Hegel—Professor Zambrana
T 1000-1250 373 MCK

This course will serve as an introduction to Hegel's idealism and some strands of its reception history through a reading of his 1807 *Phenomenology of Spirit*. We will discuss Hegel's views on knowledge, action, politics, history, and philosophy, paying particular attention to the role of negativity and dialectics in Hegel's text.

Philosophy 463/563 20th Century Philosophers: Dewey—Professor Johnson
MW 1400-1550 123 MCK

This course is a study of Dewey's moral philosophy, which is naturalistic, non-foundationalist, and experience-based. We will do a close reading of his seminal book *HUMAN NATURE AND CONDUCT*, along with several important articles by Dewey that flesh out his moral theory. We will then evaluate Dewey's view in light of present-day moral psychology and cognitive science that supports and extends many of his key claims.

Philosophy 463/563 20th Century Philosophers: Kristeva—Professor Stawarska
R 1000-1250 132 GSH

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.

Philosophy 607 Seminar: Philosophy and Teaching—Professor Vallega-Neu
M 1200-1250 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 615 Continental Philosophy: Genealogy and Realism—Professor Koopman
MW 1600-1750 250C SC

This course will inquire into what, if anything, genealogical political theory might contribute to recent debates in political philosophy concerning the methodological orientations of "realist theory," "nonideal theory," and "ideal theory". Political philosophy has traditionally been identified with ideal theory, a perspective according to which political philosophy ought to arrive at correct principles of justice, right, or legitimacy as a standard against which political reality should be measured. By contrast, recent contributions to realist theory and nonideal 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. What can philosophical genealogy, specifically Michel Foucault's genealogies, contribute to these debates? Does genealogy's commitment to a combination of philosophy and history position it as contributing something distinct to realist theory? Does genealogy evince further commitments, for instance to an empirically-informed practice of philosophy, that offer distinctive contributions to realism? What, in light of all of this, is genealogy's status as a practice of critical philosophy? -- I offer an important note for students considering this course. This course will not presume endorsement of any particular conceptions stemming from genealogical, ideal, nonideal, or realist theory; but it will presume a willingness to rigorously engage the philosophical stakes of each of these approaches to political theory. -- In terms of specific course content, we will begin the class with a brief review of recent journal articles assessing the terrain of realist political theory and defining the debate between ideal theory and realist theory. We will then move to a consideration of prominent offerings in realist theory (focusing on work by Raymond Geuss and Bernard Williams). The majority of the course will then focus on Michel Foucault's genealogical political theory: we will read one of Foucault's major published works in conjunction with some of his other more occasional writings, interviews, and lectures. -- Student work will involve engaged seminar participation, regular reading responses, a brief in-class presentation of a supplementary writing, and a final research paper which must engage both primary and secondary literature.

Philosophy 645 Environmental Philosophy: Human Nature in Bioethics—Professor Morar
W 1800-2050 250C SC

In this course, we will explore the role of an evolutionarily informed conception of human nature in bioethics. First, we will revisit some of the recent debates in philosophy of biology regarding human nature. They have ignited a new appreciation for the differences between essentialist and variation-based views of human organisms. Second, we will explore whether a microbial understanding of human organisms sets up a challenge for any future conception of human nature. Third, in light of these conversations, we will assess the bioethical implications of human nature arguments for two specific debates: human-non-human chimeras and human enhancement. Last, we will ask ourselves if a new biological definition of human nature helps finding answers to any of these issues and whether, thinking about ourselves through the lens of natural sciences inevitably leads to forms of normalization that would inscribe our politics back into our genes. This class includes also an important professionalization component since graduate students will be strongly encouraged to participate in two bioethics events on our campus to discover how bioethics informs a number of professions and debates in healthcare and how bioethics relates to external grant writing.