

Spring 2015

Philosophy Department Course Descriptions

Philosophy 101 Philosophical Problems—Staff

MTWR 0900-0950 106 FR

Philosophical study of morality (e.g., ethical relativism; justification of moral judgments; concepts of duty, right, and wrong). The course is about relations with others that concern human well being. Its philosophical aim is for students to understand the intellectual beliefs assumed in their opinions and values and to learn how to analytically defend those beliefs and engage in critical dialogue about them. Student participation is encouraged throughout and the focus is on the individual's moral or ethical system. Ideas that all moral beliefs are relative are challenged early on and a concept of moral universalism is built up through the practice of giving reasons for beliefs. The reading, thinking and writing in the course is abstract in its focus on philosophical views but also concrete through the use of literary and real life examples. Students are required to engage in moral theory by contrasting, comparing and choosing among the different moral systems of deontology, utilitarianism and virtue ethics.

Philosophy 102 Ethics—Staff

MTWR 0900-0950 105 PETR

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—Staff

MTWR 0900-0950 104 CON

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 120 Ethics of Enterprise and Exchange—Morar

TR 1000-1120 240A MCK

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—GTF

MTWR 0900-0950 105 FEN

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 1000-1050 156 STB

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 Special Studies Freshman Seminar (Philosophy in Film)—Professor Brence

M 1400-1450 471 MCK

This Freshman Seminar is a meta-discussion course corequisite with PHIL 332.

Philosophy 199 Special Studies Freshman Seminar (When Past Becomes Present: Memory in Literature and Philosophy)—Professors Mark & Veronica Alfano

MW 1400-1550 353 PLC

How – and why – do we remember the past, even when doing so is painful? Are you the same person you were five years ago? Explore what it means to nostalgically recall childhood days, to mourn loved ones, and to publicly recognize those who have died tragically (such as victims of the Holocaust and the 9/11 terrorist attacks). In order to forgive wrongs, must we also forget them? Do our memories ultimately determine our identities? Address these questions and more through poetry, short stories, novellas, graphic novels, and plays, as well as philosophical texts ranging from ancient Greece to the present day.

Philosophy 211 Existentialism—Professor Warnek

MWF 1500-1550 177 LA

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 312 History of Philosophy, 19th Century—Professor Zambrana

MWF 1300-1350 240C MCK

Hegel, Marx, and Nietzsche can be described as “masters of suspicion.” In different yet equally groundbreaking ways, they call into question perennial philosophical assumptions about reality, knowledge, and value. What they share, however, is a deep suspicion of abstract accounts of the self. In their texts we find accounts of the self as embodied—as bound to desire, need, and affect. We also find accounts of the self as social—other selves, relations of labor and power, and history are constitutive of the self. Albeit in different ways, then, the body, other selves, and socio-historical relations constitute the self. In this course, we will explore these themes by examining selections from Hegel’s *Phenomenology of Spirit*, Marx’s 1844 *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts*, *On the Jewish Question*, and *Capital*, and Nietzsche’s *Genealogy of Morals*. Although not exclusively, Hegel, Marx, and Nietzsche were responding to Kant’s Copernican Revolution. Therefore, we will begin the course by examining selections from Kant’s *Critique of Pure Reason*. We will end the course considering Emma Goldman’s work on anarchism and women’s suffrage in the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century. We will ask whether her work further complicates the nineteenth century critique of abstract notions of the self.

Philosophy 332 Philosophy of Film—Professor Brence

1200-1250 MWF 240C MCK and 1900-2050 Sundays, 182 LIL

In its relatively brief history (scarcely more than a century), film has arguably developed into the most significant art form and medium for the origination and transmission of culture in our time. Perhaps because of the brevity of this history, or perhaps due to its dismissal as merely “popular” culture (a form of cultural production often deemed unworthy of serious reflection), it has received relatively little attention from philosophers. When, however, philosophers have attended to film, they have commonly sought only to adapt accepted “philosophical” problems to their study of the subject (traditional metaphysical and epistemological problems concerned with the relationship between experience and reality, for example, take the form of the examination of the relationship of film to reality), or worse still, they have regarded film as capable only of shallow, but perhaps more accessible illustration of already charted philosophical ground (regarding “The Truman Show” as crudely illustrative of Plato’s Cave Allegory). This course, premised upon the view that philosophy is a disciplined practice of criticism

and does not have its own particular subject matter, will, instead, endeavor to examine films philosophically. That is to say, the films themselves will be regarded as subject matter for philosophical analysis. They will be allowed to raise their own problems, advance their own claims, and propose their own solutions, all to be carefully examined, interrogated, and evaluated.

Philosophy 335 Medical Ethics—Staff

MW 1200-1350 105 FEN

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 340 Environmental Philosophy—Professor Toadvine

MW 1400-1520 145 STB

In what sense are human beings "part of nature?" Is there anything left of "nature" today, or has our environment become entirely a product of human concepts and practices? Are we alienated from nature, or is this just nostalgia for a way things never actually were? Are certain groups of people "closer to nature," or is this a prejudice that results in oppressive institutions and unjust distributions of opportunities and resources? Is there still a place for "nature" in environmental philosophy, or should our focus be on the postnatural world instead? How might new understandings of animality, materiality, and hybridity inform the direction that future environmental philosophy should take? Our class will explore these and related questions through a consideration of texts from the history of philosophy, phenomenology, ecofeminism, science studies, animal studies, poststructuralism, new materialism, and environmental philosophy.

Philosophy 343 Critical Theory—Professor Zambrana

MWF 1200-1250 202 CHA

This course will examine the idea of imminent critique developed within three generations of the Frankfurt School. We will begin by discussing Horkheimer's interdisciplinary approach to imminent critique during the 1930s, and move on to examine Horkheimer and Adorno's account of the dialectic of enlightenment during the 1940s. We will then examine the turn to Jürgen Habermas' theory of communicative action and discourse ethics specifically during the 1980s. Finally, we will examine post-Habermasian approaches to imminent critique at the turn of the 21st century via Axel Honneth's concept of recognition and Nancy Fraser's norm of parity of participation. Throughout, we will assess notions of social suffering and reification, reason and rationalization, justice and justification at work in this tradition of social thought.

Philosophy 345 Place in the Cosmos—Professor Vallega-Neu

MW 1400-1520 101 LIB

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 texts in the Western tradition. To question our place in the cosmos requires that we reflect on the notions of cosmos or world, of place and space, and that we question our place in relation to other living and non-living things, to planets, stars, and the divine or divinities. The course considers Ancient cosmogonies and cosmologies, traces the development of different views of the cosmos in Medieval thought, and highlights fundamental changes occurring in our relation to the cosmos with the scientific revolution and mathematization of nature in the 17th century. Among the primary texts we will read are Plato's *Timaeus*, Descartes' *Principles of Philosophy*, and texts by Heidegger. 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, as well as to questioning ourselves with respect to how we view our place in the cosmos today.

Philosophy 407/507 Advanced Logic Seminar—Professor Pratt

TR 1200-1350 105 FEN

Undergrad Prereq: one 300-level PHIL course.

Philosophy 415 Continental Philosophy (Key Problems)—Professor Stawarska

TR 1000-1150 475 MCK

This course will serve as an introduction to some major traditions and themes in the Continental philosophical tradition. The course will be organized topically, and will take up recent concerns with subjectivity, and its overcoming; the personal and the political; embodiment and ethical responsibility; philosophical and literary language, and other. Traditions represented will include phenomenology, structuralism and post-structuralism, hermeneutics, Marxism, psychoanalysis, deconstruction, reconstruction, and critical theory.

Philosophy 420 American Philosophy: Pragmatism—Professor Koopman

TR 1400-1550 250C SC

Pragmatism is widely described as an attempt to focus philosophy on the differences that it can make in the social contexts in which it operates. This course will therefore focus on pragmatism's central idea that philosophy can and should be a practice of social, cultural, and political critique. Over the course of the term, we will adopt a variety of methods in an attempt to understand how philosophy can assume this role. Our readings will focus on the work of pragmatist philosophers, both classical and contemporary, with an eye toward how pragmatist arguments, themes, and orientations lend themselves to historical understanding, social inquiry, political critique, and cultural criticism. Our primary philosophical guide through these issues in classical pragmatism will be **William James**, but we will also draw on other canonical pragmatists (likely including **Richard Rorty**, **John Dewey**, **W.E.B. Du Bois**, **G.H. Mead**, **C.S. Peirce**, and others).

Philosophy 425 Philosophy of Language—Professor Johnson

MW 1000-1150 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.

Philosophy 453/553 19th-Century Philosophers: Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit—Professor Zambrana

MW 1600-1750 123 MCK

In this course, we will read Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit* as an introduction to his theory of determinacy (his 'metaphysics'), which we will see relies on a theory of modernity. In the *Phenomenology*, Hegel sets out to transform what he took to be the most compelling insights of Kant's critical philosophy. He does so by showing that the norms that provide determinacy to our experience in the world are socio-historical institutions, and that the fact that such norms have a grip on us has to do with normative authority. We will therefore track Hegel's views on the relation between normativity and authority in his theory of concepts, action, morality, and history. More than providing an account of authoritative norms, however, Hegel is interested in tracking the way in which norms lose their authority over us. We will thus pay particular attention to the prevalent role of negativity, loss, and diremption in Hegel's theory of determinacy. As we advance in our reading, we shall compare and contrast various interpretive perspectives on the text, such as epistemological, historicist, ethical, and feminist readings of the *Phenomenology*. Knowledge of Kant, while not required, will be most helpful.

Philosophy 463/563 20th Century Philosophers: Dussel—Professor Vallega

M 1800-2050 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 20th Century Philosophers: Husserl—Professor Vallega-Neu

MW 1600-1750 122 MCK

With the maxim "back to things themselves," Husserl's phenomenology has opened decisive paths towards rediscovering the world of phenomena without remaining trapped in the neo-Kantian division of mind and world. Husserl has had a major influence on many decisive 20th century philosophers such as Heidegger, Levinas, Sartre, Merleau-Ponty, Ricoeur, and Derrida. This course will consist in a close reading of his last and unfinished work from 1936, titled *The Crisis of European*

Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology: An Introduction to Phenomenological Philosophy as well as short text from the same time called "The Origin of Geometry." According to Husserl, the crisis of the sciences rests in the objectivism of modern science that has forgotten its meaning-giving foundation in the "life-world." In the *Crisis* Husserl investigates the origins of the crisis of the sciences and proposes a solution through the return to the life-world and to transcendental phenomenology. Our aim will be not only to understand what Husserl writes and to reflect on the questions his work opens up, but also to learn to think phenomenologically.

Philosophy 607 Seminar: Philosophy & Teaching—Professor Pratt
W 1100-1150 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 614 Seminar: The Emotions—Professor Alfano
MW 1200-1350 250C SC

An examination of the emotions from functional, neural, endocrinological, social, and normative points of view. This course is not a general theory of emotion but a tour of specific theories of particular emotions. We will consider the evolutionary history of emotions in humans and other animals, three functional role that emotions play in social and moral life, the rationality of emotions, and other topics. The course is highly interdisciplinary and should be of interest to, among others, graduate students in philosophy, psychology, marketing, religious studies, sociology, anthropology, and neuroscience.

Philosophy 614 Seminar: Dewey's Moral Theory—Professor Johnson
TR 1200-1350 250C SCH

The seminar will focus on Dewey's statement of naturalized ethics in his book *Human Nature and Conduct* (1922), parts of his *Ethics* (1932), and a number of Dewey's articles on various aspects of moral experience, deliberation, and value. We will also read selections from contemporary proponents of Dewey's general perspective, such as Gregory Pappas, Steven Fesmire, Thomas Alexander, Owen Flanagan, and others.

Philosophy 615 Continental Philosophy: Pro-Seminar—Professor Stawarska
TR 1400-1550 211B SC

This course will serve as an introduction to some major traditions and themes in the Continental philosophical tradition. The course will be organized topically, and will take up recent concerns with subjectivity, and its overcoming; the personal and the political; embodiment and ethical responsibility; philosophical and literary language, and other. Traditions represented will include phenomenology, structuralism and post-structuralism, hermeneutics, Marxism, psychoanalysis, deconstruction, reconstruction, and critical theory.

Philosophy 620 American Philosophy: Pragmatist Social Science—Professor Koopman
TR 1000-1150 250C SC

The focus of this course will be pragmatism as a philosophical approach to social science inquiry. We will focus on the work of pragmatist philosophers, both classical and contemporary, with an eye toward how pragmatist arguments, themes, and orientations lend themselves to historical understanding, social inquiry, political critique, and cultural criticism. Themes under consideration will include: method, action and conduct, habit and structure, doubt and problematization, contestation and power, identity and selfhood, and probability and chance. // With respect to the social sciences, our core focus will be on work now underway in the discipline of political science, though we will also consider connections to history, geography, anthropology, and sociology. Our primary philosophical guide through these issues in classical pragmatism will be **William James**, but we will also draw on others (certainly including **John Dewey**, **W.E.B. Du Bois**, and **C.S. Peirce**, and potentially others). In turning to more contemporary pragmatists, we will focus on the work of three thinkers who have put pragmatism into motion with themes prominent in Continental thought: these are the French sociologist-cum-philosopher **Bruno Latour**, the Berkeley anthropologist and Foucault editor **Paul Rabinow**, and the single-most important neopragmatist philosopher of recent vintage, namely **Richard Rorty**. With these more classical and contemporary pragmatists as our basis, we will then turn to approximately seven exemplars of contemporary pragmatist inquiry (with a political focus, and a critical intent). We will read from contemporary pragmatists working in the context of political science, African-American studies, science and technology studies, geography, education, and history. // Student work for the course will involve a term paper and regular reading responses.