

Winter 2015

Philosophy Department Course Descriptions

PHIL 101 Philosophical Problems—GTF

MTWR 0900-0950 105 PETR

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—Professor Alfano

MWF 1200-1250 182 LIL

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 Vallega-Neu

MWF 1200-1250 240A MCK

Introduction to thinking and reasoning critically. How to recognize, analyze, criticize, and construct arguments. Through the practice of argumentation in relation to current and classic controversies, this course is designed to improve your reasoning skills as well as your critical writing capabilities. Along the way, students will also explore informal fallacies, basic rules of deduction and induction, issues pertaining to the ethics of belief, and some general reflections on the political dimensions and promise of argumentation. Typical assignments include argumentative journals, homework sets, and in-class exams. Class time involves a mixture of lecture, discussion, and group work.

PHIL 110 Human Nature—GTF

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? This course will explore influential traditional, modern, and contemporary approaches to human nature. Thinkers examined include Felipe Guamán Poma de Ayala, Plato, Hobbes, Foucault, Frantz Fanon, Julia Kristeva, and Enrique Dussel. Teaching will take the form of large group lectures and dedicated discussion sections.

Philosophy 120 Ethics of Enterprise and Exchange—GTF

MTWR 0900-0950 106 FR

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, & Philosophy—Professor Koopman

MWF 1300-1350 110 FEN

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).

PHIL 130 Philosophy & Popular Culture—GTF

MW 1000-1150 104 CON

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

PHIL 170 Love & Sex—GTF

MW 1000-1150 301 CON

Love and sex are so central to human life that many would argue that our intimate relationships are the key to self-esteem, fulfillment, even happiness itself; in fact, our intimate relationships are probably more important to our sense of well-being than our careers. Yet we spend remarkably little time *thinking* about love and sex, even as we spend years preparing ourselves for the world of work. In this course you will be asked to reflect on the most intimate sphere of human existence. We will draw on historical, sociological, religious, feminist and philosophical work to shed critical light on a variety of questions, including: What is love exactly? Why do we continually associate love and sex with happiness and pleasure when they often make us so utterly miserable? Is there, or should there be, an ethics of love and sex? What is moral, what is normal, and who gets to decide? What happens to sex when it is associated with "scoring" (the conquest model of sex)? How are our understandings of masculinity and femininity tied in with what we believe about love and sex?

PHIL 213 Asian Philosophy—GTF

MW 1200-1350 303 GER

This course is a general introduction to the philosophical traditions of India, China, and Japan, concentrating on significant and representative texts of the Hindu, Buddhist, Confucian, Daoist, and Zen philosophical traditions. Among these are the Upanishads, the Bhagavad Gita, the Dhammapada, the Analects, the Daodejing, and 101 Zen Stories. Several themes will be explored, including: human nature, identity, morality, mortality, and the relationship between philosophy and religion. Because of the time constraints of a four-week long summer session, this course should be regarded as providing a philosophical and historical foundation for students interested in Asian philosophy; students will be encouraged to build upon this foundation beyond this course, and will be provided with resources to help them to do so.

Philosophy 308 Social & Political Philosophy—Professor Brence

MW 1400-1550 105 FEN

Major historical and contemporary social/political theorists. Inquiry into such ideas as freedom, ideology, identity, social/political reconstruction and revolution. We will focus primarily upon the social/political dimension and consequences of problems confronting human agency. How do we act in a world as organized, complex, and controlled as our own? Is there any possibility for meaningful self-determination in a globalized and technologically managed economy? Can we regard contemporary free-market capitalism as still democratic without a positive answer to that question? What is the nature of contemporary ideology such that these questions and their answers are often obscured?

Philosophy 311 History of Philosophy: Modern—Professor Stawarska
TR 1000-1120 129 MCK

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 tradition than is often acknowledged. A third focus of the course concerns the relation between modern philosophy and contemporary conversations both in philosophy and in the sciences. This focus will help the students to appreciate the continued relevance of the problems and questions raised by the empiricists and rationalists in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries to present intellectual debates.

Philosophy 325 Logic, Inquiry, Argument—Professor Pratt
MWF 0900-0950 129 MCK

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 330 Philosophy & Disaster—Professor Zack
TR 0800-0920 101 LIB

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. 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 335 Medical Ethics—Professor Morar

MW 0830-0950 302 GER

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

MW 1600-1720 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 Felipe Guaman Poma de Ayala, Bartolomé de las Casas, Simón Bolívar, Domingo Faustino Sarmiento, José Martí, José Vasconcelos, Carlos Mariátegui, Leopoldo Zea, Augusto Salazar Bondy, Enrique Dussel, Jorge Luis Borges, Aníbal Quijano, Ofelia Schutte, Linda Alcoff, and Sub-Comandante Marcos.

Philosophy 399 Special Studies Teaching Children Philosophy—Professor Bodin

MW 1600-1750 144 HED

This is a course that will ask students to translate their understanding of philosophical ideas into a language of discourse that captivates the imagination of ten and eleven-year-old children. Working both independently and as partners, undergraduate students will plan lessons and lead weekly philosophical discussions in assigned elementary school classrooms near the university. Students will explore ways to use published children’s picture books and short plays as prompts that invite 4th and 5th graders to employ critical thinking, inquiry and empathy as they participate in focused discussions in ethics, aesthetics, epistemology, political and environmental philosophy. Discussion topics will include questions like: *What is friendship? Why should we be moral? What does it mean to be brave? Should we accept traditional gender roles? What is beauty? Do animals have rights?* among many questions that connect to the experiences and concerns of children. During the process of leading eight weekly classroom discussions, students in this course will undertake the challenge of becoming skillful facilitators who teach children how to frame coherent thoughts and opinions, relate ideas to personal experiences and present hypothetical situations that challenge the logical thinking of peers.

Philosophy 407/507 Seminar Decolonial Latin American Thought—Professor Vallega

MW 1400-1550 123 MCK

One of the major developments in Latin American philosophy has been the movement of “decolonial” thought. The movement focuses on the undoing of the system of coloniality that situates Western instrumental-rationalism as the center and apogee of human progress, and that accompanies the development of world order from the 16th century and the colonization of the Americas to today’s neo-liberal globalization projects. This has influenced the resurfacing of Latin American philosophy of liberation, and has opened new paths for rethinking both Latin American philosophical traditions, and the Western tradition in its modern historical development. These thinkers have also opened a space towards the development of world philosophies that engage each other’s traditions not in light of the Western North American and European modern philosophy. In this course we will read the work of some of the figures that are shaping these new philosophical spaces. Among them Enrique Dussel, Anibal Quijano, Santiago Castro-Gómez, Walter Dignolo, Nelson Maldonado-Torres, María Lugones, Ramón Grosfoguel, and Alejandro Vallega. The course will involve close reading and interpretation of texts, background lectures, and class discussion. Those who can will be encouraged to read the texts in the original language (when the original texts are in Spanish). Students will be expected to have some background in the history of Western philosophy, particularly Modern philosophy; some knowledge of Hegel, Marxism, critical theory, and post-structuralism will also be very helpful to them.

Philosophy 407/507 Seminar Touching Touch—Professor Toadvine

W 1800-2050 185 LIL

Our body’s remarkable capacity to touch itself, and more generally to sense itself, has been a constant theme for recent phenomenology and post-structuralism. This reflexivity or auto-affection of the body has wide-ranging implications for our understanding of embodiment, perception, ontology, intersubjectivity, sexual difference, ethics, politics, and religion. After a brief consideration of Aristotle on touch, we will examine Husserl’s detailed descriptions of the role of self-sensing in the constitution of the body, then trace Merleau-Ponty’s appropriation of this analysis for his ontology of flesh, with particular attention to the concepts of reversibility, chiasm, *écart*, and bodily reflexivity as thinking in figural form. We turn then to the ethical, political, and religious implications of the reflexivity of touch in the work of Levinas, Irigaray, Henry, Nancy, Derrida, and Rogozinski. Throughout, our guiding question will be to assess the relevance and significance of self-touch for future philosophy.

HC 431H Honors College Experimental Philosophy—Professor Alfano

MW 1400-1520 103 GSH

In the last ten years, a small group of philosophers has initiated a revolution in philosophical methodology. Instead of or in addition to analyzing concepts like intentionality, knowledge, and responsibility “from the armchair” by introspecting, these philosophers conduct experiments to see how real people really employ the concepts. The results can be surprising. This course begins with an investigation of the side-effect effect, a phenomenon discovered by experimental philosopher Joshua Knobe. It turns out that people are more willing to say that someone brought about a side-effect intentionally when that side-effect is bad than when it is good. Many explanations have been offered for this phenomenon, most of which we will canvass. The side-effect effect will then serve as a case study for the theory and methodology of experimental philosophy. How is scientific methodology best characterized? How is armchair philosophy’s method best characterized? Is the methodology of experimental philosophy fundamentally distinct from that of social science? Is its method fundamentally distinct from that of armchair philosophy and empirically-informed philosophy? We will consider some of the many objections to experimental philosophy. It is argued that philosophical problems do not admit of experimental or empirical solutions, that the only way to address them is via intuitions. It is also argued that while experimental philosophy is respectable as such, most of the extant work in the field is unsound. We will follow some of the primary threads of the dialectic between experimental philosophers and their critics.

Philosophy 433/533 17th & 18th Century Philosophers: Descartes & Locke—Professor Zack

TR 1200-1350 201 VIL

Descartes is usually considered the leading early modern rationalist, Locke, the leading early modern empiricist. Each is foundational for subsequent philosophical methodologies. The aim of the course is to consider Descartes and Locke’s metaphysics and epistemology, both separately and comparatively—with some attention to their “criss-cross” on rationalism and empiricism. We will concentrate on Descartes’ *Meditations*, with attention to *Passions of the Soul* and for Locke, selections from the *Essay*, especially his ideas of personal identity. Contemporary relevant secondary sources will be included. (Readings to be posted on BB.)

Philosophy 463/563 20th Century Philosophers: Beauvoir—Professor Mann

TR 1200-1350 107 PETR

This course will center on a close reading of as much as we can get to of a single text, Simone de Beauvoir's most famous work, *The Second Sex*. This is the text that is often credited with setting off the second wave of the feminist movement internationally, and has recently been studied as a text that revolutionizes phenomenology. After 50 years, in 2010 a new English translation of *The Second Sex* was finally prepared and released by Alfred Knopf. This translation, by two American linguists living in Paris, replaces the 1953 translation by a Zoology professor, and restores the more than 15% of the original text that was cut, paraphrased, or rewritten by the first translator without acknowledgement. We have a historic opportunity then, to finally read the entire text in English. The course will consider translation issues in some detail. We will attend closely to Beauvoir's philosophical method and its place in post-WWII European philosophy. We will read a good deal of secondary work on the text by Beauvoir scholars, and may read some additional literary or philosophical work by Beauvoir. Expect a heavy reading schedule. Graduate students will be required to do a presentation on one section of the text.

Philosophy 463/563 20th Century Philosophers: Peirce—Professor Pratt

MW 1000-1150 112 WIL

Charles Sanders Peirce (1839-1914) was described as the founder of pragmatism by his friend William James. Although he worked only briefly as an academic, Peirce was renowned for his philosophical work published in a wide range of venues including *The Nation*, *The Open Court*, *The Journal of Speculative Philosophy*, *Popular Science*, and many more. He was known in particular for his work in mathematics, set theory, and the development of the first predicate logic. However, he wrote on nearly every philosophical topic and left behind thousands of manuscript pages that are still being catalogued. This course will consider Peirce's work in metaphysics (both the series of essays published in *The Monist* in the 1890s and his lectures later published as *Reasoning and the Logic of Things*), his reformulation of pragmatism as "pragmaticism," and his theory of signs. For graduate students, the course will satisfy the American traditions requirement and either the "Knowledge, Rationality, and Inquiry" or the "Metaphysics" distribution requirements.

Philosophy 475H Continental Philosophy: Recognition, Self, and Society (Honors)—Professor Zambrana

TR 1400-1550 250C Susan Campbell Hall

To be a self is to have become a self through an other, and in a concrete social context. We are never self-sufficient; rather, our dependence on others makes possible our independence. For this reason, we can be radically undone by the other. This thought is the centerpiece of some of the most influential continental theories of self and society, and it continues to inform discussions in moral psychology and ethics, social ontology and politics within and beyond continental philosophy today. In this seminar, we will examine the concept of recognition as developed in the 18th, 19th, and 20th centuries by considering the work of Jean-Jacques Rousseau, J.G. Fichte, G.W.F. Hegel, Franz Fanon, Judith Butler, Susan Brison, Jean Améry, Jay Bernstein, and Axel Honneth. Class requirements include attendance and participation, a presentation, and a 3,000-word research paper that will be developed throughout the term.

COLT 607 Seminar Habitual New Media —

Professors Colin Koopman (UO) & Wendy Chun (Brown University, UO Wayne Morse Scholar)

MW 1400-1550 312 VIL

New media technologies provoke both anxiety and hope: anxiety over surveillance and hope for empowerment. Rather than view these as polar opposites, this course examines the extent to which these two reactions complement rather than oppose each other by emphasizing how exposure is necessary in order for networks to work. The perspectives we will examine will largely be drawn from contemporary new media theory, with a special focus on a range of historical approaches to new media including media archaeology, media genealogy, and histories of paperwork. This course will be co-taught by Colin Koopman and Professor Wendy Chun, who will be visiting from Brown University and in residence at UO for three weeks in the term as UO's Wayne Morse Scholar. A conference associated with the course will take place on Friday, Feb. 20th.

Philosophy 607 Seminar Aristotle—Professor Warnek

R 1800-2050 250C Susan Campbell Hall

The course will be a seminar and will be devoted to carrying out careful reading of selected passages from Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*. The philosophical concern of the *Ethics* will be considered in the context of Aristotle's work as a whole and in relation to Greek philosophy more generally.

Philosophy 610 Faculty Books Seminar—Professor Mann

T 1630-1720 250C Susan Campbell Hall

This course is designed as a forum for faculty and students to become familiar with faculty-authored books, establish greater understanding of the philosophical commitments and contributions of UO philosophy faculty, and foster richer intellectual exchange and community in the department. This is a collectively taught reading-only course which, it is hoped, will be robustly attended by both faculty and graduate students. This term's featured books are TBA. At least one session will be taught by a graduate student volunteer.

Philosophy 615 Time—Professor Vallega-Neu

M 1800-2050 250C Susan Campbell Hall

Especially in Modernity, time is understood as anchored in and constitutive of subjectivity. This goes along with a conception of Time with a capital "T" and a linear sense of History (with a capital "H") rooted in the Western idea of progress. But, as David Wood writes in *Time After Time*, "Time is dead in the sense that models of its overarching unity do no longer convince us." (12) The notion of Time fractures and disseminates, giving way to different senses of temporality in different contexts (subjectivities, histories, narratives, nature, things, and world). Since this dissemination occurs in departure from a fractured subjectivity, this course takes as its guiding thread the question of time beyond subjectivity. We will begin with Aristotle and the ancient Greeks, questioning the relation between the duration of things and time as a measure of counting. We will then look at Merleau-Ponty who in the *Phenomenology of Perception* partially embraces time as centered human subjectivity while at the same time paving the way for a decentering of time. We will look at how "anonymous time" (Merleau-Ponty) is a point of departure for more recent investigations into deep time (Ted Toadvine) and feminist temporalities. Next we will look at the ways Heidegger and Derrida shift the understanding of time away from subjectivity and relate it to the notions of event and history. All along this path of questioning, we will Wood's *Time After Time* as a resource for questioning time or temporalities after Time breaks up.

Philosophy 641 20th Century Marxism—Professor Zambrana

T 1800-2050 250C Susan Campbell Hall

This seminar will trace the transformation of central Marxist categories within (1) Western Marxism, via the work of Lukács and Korsch; (2) cultural and political hegemony, via the work of Gramsci and Laclau; (3) the theory of ideology, via the work of Althusser; and (4) Marxist feminism, via the work of Silvia Federici, Selma James, Mariarosa Dalla Costa.