

Fall 2013

Philosophy Department Course Descriptions

PHIL 101 Philosophical Problems—Johnson

MWF 1300-1350 PLC 180

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.

PHIL 102 Ethics—Duvernoy

MTWR 0900-0950 CON 360

This course is intended as an introduction into the rich philosophical tradition of ethics and ethical theory. It is structured primarily as a survey of differing traditions from the ancient Greeks to contemporary philosophers in the analytic, continental, and pragmatist traditions. We will consider the classical structures of ethical theory: deontological, consequentialist, and virtue ethics, as well as challenges to these structures. The goal will be to work together to consider the ways in which different ethical theories may lead to different prescription of appropriate responses to ethically challenging situations. We will also consider the inherent assumptions about human nature and the nature of the universe which are operative in the different ethical theories. Finally, the course will discuss the possible application of such theories to a range of issues in contemporary life. Thinkers read will include: Plato, Aristotle, Marcus Aurelius, Rousseau, Bentham, Hume, Kant, Marx, Mill, William James, Levinas, Beauvoir, Susan Wolf, and Peter Singer. Course work will consist in readings, 2 short papers, in-class quizzes and exams, and engaged participation and discussion.

PHIL 110 Human Nature—Vallega

MW 1400-1520 PLC 180

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.

PHIL 199 (130) Philosophy of Popular Culture—Brence

MWF 1200-1250 MCK 240C

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 216 Philosophy & Cultural Diversity—Ibrahimhakkioglu

MTWR 0900-0950 CON 260

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

PHIL 307 Social & Political Philosophy—Brence

TR 1200-1320 JAQ 101

The focus of this course is liberal political philosophy. We will consider prominent theories of liberalism, some contemporary problems facing liberalism today, and some of the fiercest critics of liberalism. Liberalism is worth studying because it has long been the most dominant theoretical tradition in Western politics. In the first part of this course (focusing on theorists) we will consider a range of canonical liberal thinkers, possibly including John Locke, John Stuart Mill, John Rawls, Friedrich Hayek, and John Dewey. In the second part we will discuss some of the most pressing problems on the political scene today with an eye toward their impact on standard liberal governance: these may include globalization, the politics of identity (focusing on gender and race), new media and internetnetworked media, the environment, and privacy law. In the final part of the course we will consider trenchant critiques of liberalism: these may include Marxist, Anarchist, and Communitarian critics.

PHIL 310 History of Philosophy Ancient-Medieval—Warnek

MW 1400-1520 CHA 207

PHIL 310 offers an introduction to Ancient Greek philosophy, primarily through a reading of selections from the texts of Plato and Aristotle. We will also look at other Greek philosophical figures, such as Parmenides and Heraclitus. The course also considers the emergence of Western philosophy in relation to tragic narratives, like those of Oedipus and Antigone. In this regard, Socrates is considered both as a foremost philosophical question and as a possible tragic figure.

PHIL 323 Moral Theory—Alfano

TR 1000-1120 PAC 30

An examination of the structure, content, and problems of utilitarian moral theory. This course critically investigates utilitarian theories of right action, well-being, and public policy. We begin with the core historical texts (Bentham, Mill, Sidgwick) and proceed to 20th-century and contemporary work. Students write papers on three assigned topics, and develop and defend a new thesis in their final paper.

PHIL 407/507 Seminar: Justice, Metaphysics, and Violence, from Bataille and Benjamin to Borges, Julio Cortazar, and Ricardo Piglia—Vallega

MW 1600-1750 PETR 101

This course focuses on the one hand, on the possibility of exposing and undoing the semi-transcendental nonrepresentational authoritative structures operative in society and in philosophical thought. On the other hand, we will follow alternative configurations and articulations of plural existences. Central themes to the course are the task of thinking in the des-integration of philosophy as a concept, the separation between affective embodied thinking and rationalist instrumental modern traditions, pre-reflexive experience, and the figuration of subjectivities beyond the identification of philosophical thought and inter-subjectivity with justification, betterment, and progress. These themes will be explored in the fictional writing of Latin American thinkers Jorge Luis Borges, Julio Cortázar, and Ricardo Piglia. The course has as background the work of Martin Heidegger, Walter Benjamin, Georges Bataille, Jacques Derrida, and Michel Foucault. All lectures and discussion will be in English but students who are able to read the original texts are encouraged to do so.

PHIL 410/510 (451/551) Native American Philosophy—Pratt
TR 1000-1150 FR 214

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

PHIL 425 Philosophy of Language—Stawarska
MW 1000-1150 SC 250C

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.

PHIL 433/533 Kant's 1st Critique—Warnek
MW 1800-1950 DEA 209

This is an advanced course concerned with the task of the Kantian critical project as it is posed by the *Critique of Pure Reason*. In particular, the course will focus on the delimitation of metaphysics that is attempted in the Transcendental Dialectic, although the pivotal role played by the “schematism” of the pure concepts of the understanding will also be considered. As a way of aiding our interpretation we will have occasion to consider several historically decisive appropriations of the Kantian project, such as those carried by Hegel, Schelling, Heidegger, Adorno and Deleuze, but also by John Sallis, David Lachterman, Reiner Schurmann, and Slavoj Žižek. Given the constraints of time, a basic knowledge of Kant's work, especially the first Critique, will be assumed.

PHIL 443 Feminist Philosophy: Sex/Gender—Mann
TR 1000-1150 SC 250C

The main theme of this course is women's political power, understood in terms of women in government and the question of their interests. The historical and conceptual place of women in philosophy contributes to both forms of women's political power, as does women's identity. The core readings will consist of now-classic feminist sources, contemporary articles, and popular political analysis of the 2008 election. Student work will consist of reading, participation and four 3-4 page papers.

PHIL 452 Philosophy & Race—Zack
TR 1200-1320 LIL 111

The focus will be on scientific ideas of race, practices that have racially discriminatory effects, and contemporary controversies regarding race, as well as remedies for racism and social disadvantage. Subjects will include: biological racial taxonomy, evolution and skin color, white privilege, education and upward social mobility, and projects of development in a contemporary global context. Work will consist of reading (about 50pages/week), discussion, and 4 or 5 short papers.

PHIL 463/563 Dewey—Johnson**MW 1000-1150 WIL 112**

We will undertake a close reading of Dewey's *Experience and Nature*, which is generally considered to be his seminal work on the nature of experience, mind, thought, language, knowledge, and philosophy. We will focus on roughly one chapter per week, with some use of supplementary reading of other short articles by Dewey or from articles or book chapters by commentators on Dewey's philosophical project.

PHIL 471H Honors Thesis Workshop—Stawarska**MW 0900-0950 PLC 627**

This two credit fall seminar will meet two hours weekly and serve as a thesis workshop. The course will include presentations by philosophy faculty and discussions of how they develop research and write philosophical papers. Students will work on developing their own honors theses and will present their work in class. By the end of the term, students will have prepared a prospectus for an honors thesis (though this may not be the final version) and will have found an adviser for the project. To enroll, students must have completed at least 12 credits of upper division coursework in philosophy and have a cumulative GPA of at least 3.3 or instructor's permission.

PHIL 607 Philosophy and Teaching Seminar—Pratt**T 0900-0950 MCK 345**

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.

PHIL 607 Analytic Pro-Seminar—Zack**T 1600-1850 SC 250C**

A survey of Anglo-American analytic philosophy over the 20th century, to include the historical developments of logical atomism and logical positivism, ordinary language philosophy, neo-Pragmatism, and cognitive science. Important subjects and key figures in metaphysics, epistemology, philosophy of science, ethics, and philosophy of mind will form the content. From G.E. Moore to Jerry Fodor, the pace will be fast.

PHIL 614 Issues in Ethics: Naturalizing Virtue—Alfano**TR 1200-1350 FR 206**

An examination of naturalizing approaches to virtue theory, including both virtue ethics and virtue epistemology. The first half of this course deals with moral character and virtue, with special attention to the problem of cross-situational consistency. The second half focuses on intellectual character and virtue, with special attention to the research on heuristics and biases. We also have the honor of welcoming guest presentations from Paul Slovic, Sanjay Srivastava, Gerard Saucier, Abrol Fairweather, Carlos Montemayor, Matt Stichter, and Azim Shariff.

PHIL 615 Heidegger—Vallega-Neu**R 1800-2050 SC 250C**

Heidegger is often accused of neglecting the body in his focus on being and the history of being. The question of the body is tied to his thinking the difference between being and beings and his attempt to think the disclosure of being as such (and not of this or that being or entity) first. We will see that while on the one hand Heidegger's way of thinking makes it difficult to speak of the body and seems to exclude many aspects of the body, on the other hand he opens new possibilities of approaching the question of the body. These new possibilities of thinking the body have to do with approaches to the body that do not objectify it but articulate it out of our bodily being. We will read selected sections from *Being and Time*, *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics: World, Finitude, Solitude, Contributions to Philosophy*, and the *Zollikon Seminars*. The last two weeks we will read Derrida's *Of Spirit: Heidegger and the Question*, and Irigaray's *The Forgetting of Air in Martin Heidegger* and discuss their critiques of Heidegger regarding the question of body.

PHIL 625 Philosophy of Language—Stawarska

MW 1400-1550 SC 250C

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.

PHIL 643 Feminist Philosophy: Feminist Ethics—Mann

TR 1400-1550 MCK 345

This course will tackle several important themes in feminist political philosophy, potentially including the social contract, redistribution/recognition/representation, women's rights as human rights, and feminist analyses of and responses to sexual violence including rape (also in war) and sexual harassment. We will likely read texts from Carole Pateman, Nancy Fraser, Iris Young, Catherine MacKinnon, Andrea Smith, Martha Nussbaum and others. This is a graduate seminar and will be conducted as such, with students taking major responsibility for presenting texts and leading class discussion.