

Winter 2020

Philosophy Department Course Descriptions

Philosophy 101 Philosophical Problems—GE Knowlton

MTWR 0900-0950 ESL 199

To what extent is philosophy relevant anymore? Is it relevant at all? If so, how? This course provides an introduction to philosophical thinking by means of investigating philosophical conceptions of the body, its status in the world and connection with broader philosophical topics. The body as a starting point will allow us to explore and incorporate gender, race, politics, and history, and hopefully demonstrate the immediate relevance philosophical thinking brings to your everyday life. We will explore these topics through careful reading of select philosophical texts, as well as discussion and written reflection on the themes and arguments of those texts. By the end of the course, students will identify relevant elements of philosophical arguments, critically assess those arguments, and begin to develop original philosophical responses in both written and oral form.

Philosophy 102 Ethics—Professor Russell

MW 1200-1320 COL 150

Ethics, or moral philosophy, is the branch of philosophy that tries to understand and justify concepts of right and wrong in human conduct. It also tries to identify rules or principles that will both allow people to recognize right and wrong courses of possible action and encourage them to adopt the right one. In this course, we will cover a number of foundational texts within the Western ethical tradition, along with several more recent elaborations and criticisms of those texts. We will also examine a number of concrete ethical issues, chosen for their contemporary relevance. The trajectory of the course starts with an introduction through meta-ethics, offers a review of key normative ethical theories, and then spends the entire second half of the term in applied ethics, investigating questions surrounding free speech, sexual morality, terror and torture, political resistance and responsibility, and racial justice.

Philosophy 103 Critical Reasoning—GE

MTWR 0900-0950 CON 301

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—GEs Ralda & Friez

Two sections: MTWR 0900-0950 & MTWR 1300-1350, both in STB 252

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 & Exchange—GE Showler

MTWR 0900-0950 STB 253

In a free market world, what are the limits that a society or government should impose on the corporate world? In the absence of universal ethical standards in business ethics, how should we hold individual entrepreneur players responsible? What is ethically problematic about Gordon Gecko’s famous proclamation “greed is good”? Is self-interested behavior determined by an individual’s character, or is it more the product of the capitalist system in which individuals operate? Are there moral obligations that go beyond legal restrictions? This course provides a moral examination of business by considering the nature of enterprise and exchange. Topics will include corporate and consumer responsibility, meaningful work, and leadership.

Philosophy 123 Internet, Society, and Philosophy—Professor Alvarado
TR 1000-1120 MCK 240C

What are the new forms of ethical, social and political interaction that the Internet enables? What new ways of knowing and practices of scientific research emerge in an Internet-focused context? What old forms does it render obsolete, problematic, or perhaps even impossible? This course focuses primarily on engaging some of the most pressing social, ethical and political problems posed by the Internet. The course will also cover some of the epistemological, metaphysical, and ontological difficulties and challenges raised by the Internet. While the course will consider ways in which philosophy might enable us to respond to these problems, the aim will not be to deliver definitive solutions by the end of the course. The focus rather will be on the preliminary, challenging and critical task of finding ways to articulate the problems emerging around us. What we need are concepts that help us understand the massive transformations we are all living in the midst of. Since philosophy involves, among other things, the practice of inventing, analyzing and criticizing concepts, the goal of the course will be to practice philosophy for the sake of better understanding the contemporary world in which we live.

The practice of philosophy in this course will involve both traditional methods (the reading of texts, the discussion of ideas, the analysis of cultural phenomena) and newer collaborative methods facilitated by our increasingly web-based world (online and in-class collaborative research projects, the opportunity to develop an individual research project in an online context). The goal is to both expose the Internet to traditional philosophical analysis and to expose philosophical practice to new Internet technologies and practices.

As a course that will satisfy the Group 2 (Social Science) general education requirement, Internet, Society & Philosophy will present a variety of approaches to studying contemporary social phenomena, with a focus on the Internet and new media as the privileged topics for this course. The course will present students with a representative cross-section of philosophical perspectives and modes of analysis used by philosophers and social scientists working in the field. Readings will be drawn primarily from philosophy, but will also include selections by legal theorists, political scientists, sociologists, and various areas in cultural studies. Students who successfully complete the course will have an understanding of what makes the Internet a worthy topic of philosophical investigation; an understanding of recent theoretical developments in the field of Internet studies; improved reading, writing and critical thinking skills; and awareness of contemporary political, ethical, legal and policy issues.

Philosophy 170 Love & Sex—GE Zimmer & TBA GE

Two sections: MTWR 0900-0950 in STB 254 & MTWR 1300-1350 in FEN 105

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

Philosophy 211 Existentialism—Professor Warnek

TR 1600-1720 LLCS 101

In the 1950s, Existentialism was a cutting edge perspective on the world (European nihilism after World War II), a lifestyle for intellectuals (in smoke-filled coffee houses), and a glamorous corner of academic philosophy itself (Jean-Paul Sartre and Simone de Beauvoir). But the origins of Existentialism go back to at least the nineteenth century in the Western tradition---Dostoevsky, Nietzsche, and Kierkegaard. Is existentialism relevant today? Yes, if there are philosophical truths about human life that have to be lived, if individual subjectivity is important, and if we are responsible for our lives. The course will survey all of the figures just mentioned, and more. Our main work will be to address questions such as: Am I free? Is it my fault? Does life have a purpose? What does death mean? All required reading will be from *Existentialist Philosophy*, ed. Oaklander, 2nd ed. Prentice Hall isbn 0-13-373861-2 pbk. Work will consist of reading (about 30 pp a week) student participation (despite a large class) and 5 very short (2pp) papers out of a choice of 10.

Philosophy 216 Philosophy & Cultural Diversity—GE Nobowati
TR 1600-1720 ESL 199

This course provides a philosophical engagement with cultural diversity through engaging with texts from the Western philosophical canon as well as postcolonial and decolonial literature. We will contextualize the history of our modern concept of cultural diversity, as well as notions such as culture, difference, race, racism, and (white) privilege. Additionally, we will reflect on the ways in which recognition or misrecognition of one's cultural identity/difference can have deleterious effects—in terms of both material welfare and the development of positive conceptions of self-identity. Furthermore, we will be grappling with border epistemologies and indigenous epistemologies, paying attention to the ways in which social positionality matters when it comes to the development of knowledge and engaging with non-western works that grapple with these questions. This framework will allow us to explore and incorporate gender, race and politics, and hopefully demonstrate the immediate relevance philosophical thinking brings to understanding and rethinking cultural diversity. We will explore these topics through careful reading of selected philosophical texts, as well as discussion and written reflection on the themes and arguments of those texts. By the end of the course, the goal is for the student to be able to identify the relevant elements of philosophical arguments, critically assess those arguments, and begin to develop original philosophical responses in both written and oral form.

Philosophy 225 Introduction to Formal Logic—Professor Brence
MWF 1200-1250 STB 245

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 308 Social & Political Philosophy—Professor Brown
TR 1000-1150 LLCN 125

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 Marren
TR 1200-1320 GER 302

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, or Leibniz), Empiricism (selections may be from Hobbes, Bacon, or Hume), and the mediation of these two traditions that can be found in the Transcendental philosophy of Kant. Additionally, we will also consider works from figures not normally in the canon (most notably early modern women philosophers) who played a more central role in the development of these philosophical traditions than is often acknowledged.

Philosophy 315 Introduction to Feminist Philosophy—Professor Mann
MW 1000-1120 JAQ 101

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 322 Philosophy of the Arts—Professor Vallega
MW 1200-1350 TYKE 240

This course investigates the ways art exposes us to our ways of seeing and interpreting the world. Art makes vision visible. In this sense art articulates fundamental dimensions at the heart of philosophical knowledge, in terms of how one comes to find and see the phenomena and meaning of things.

In order to get these insights and knowledge we will read closely works from hermeneutics and phenomenology, among them Martin Heidegger, Walter Benjamin, Hans-Georg Gadamer, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Stan Brackage, John Berger, James Elkins, and John Sallis. The discussion will focus on aspects of experimental film as well as contemporary painting. We will match what philosophers tell us about art with what art tells us about understanding and interpreting the world.

Philosophy 340 Environmental Philosophy—Professor Muraca
TR 1600-1720 CHA 220

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 eco-phenomenology. 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 344 Introduction to Philosophy of Law—Professor Koopman
MW 1400-1520 GER 242

What is the law as a system of social rules? How do legal rules differ from other kinds of rules, such as rules of custom or of morality? This course will introduce students to both contemporary legal theory and to philosophical approaches to case law research. This course will sharpen analytical skills for anyone planning to attend law school or graduate school, but the course is also more widely geared to any student interested in the role of law in society. Part I of the course will focus on the two most important thinkers in contemporary philosophy of law, namely H.L.A. Hart and Ronald Dworkin. We will read sections from Hart's masterpiece, *The Concept of Law*, and Dworkin's hugely influential *Taking Rights Seriously*. Since both Hart and Dworkin approach law from perspectives in Analytic Philosophy, this part of the course will also offer an introduction to prominent analytical methodologies in philosophy. Part II of the course will focus on philosophical aspects of U.S. constitutional law with a focus on issues of freedom in speech (First Amendment), information privacy (Fourth Amendment), and equal treatment (Fourteenth Amendment). In this part of the course we will read both case law and brief selections from a range of legal theorists, probably including: Danielle Allen, Derrick Bell, Judith DeCew, and Daniel Solove.

Philosophy 407/507 Data Ethics Seminar—Professor Alvarado
T 1600-1850 FR 214

In this course we will explore fundamental aspects of the ethical implications particular to data science practices such as artificial intelligence, machine learning and big data analytics. This course will survey recent efforts to elucidate the challenges of bias, error and opacity found in these technologies and practices. However, we will also delve in to more fundamental issues related to (moral and epistemic) agency, (social and individual) autonomy and accountability, which persist even when bias, error and transparency are accounted for.

Philosophy 433/533 17th & 18th Century Philosophers: Kant—Professor Marren
MW 1000-1150 LLCN 125

We will undertake a close study of Kant's theoretical philosophy in the *Critique of Pure Reason*. In the First critique, Kant lays out the structure of consciousness and argues for a transcendental ground of experience, which itself cannot be experienced, but only indicated through a deduction. The text determines the extent of that which we can securely know and serves as a response both to the Rationalist and to the Empiricist projects. To supplement and enrich our understanding of Kant's transcendental philosophy, we will read selections from his texts entitled, *Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics* and *Metaphysical Foundations of the Natural Science*. To get a sense of Kant's development, we will also examine his essay "Concerning the Ultimate Ground of the Differentiation of Directions in Space."

Philosophy 463/563 20th Century Philosophers: Arendt—Professor Mann
MW 1400-1550 FR 214

This course will focus on what Richard Bernstein recently called, “The Urgent Relevance of Hannah Arendt” (<https://www.philosophersmag.com/opinion/187-the-urgent-relevance-of-hannah-arendt>). We will focus on *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, *On Violence*, *Crises of the Republic*, and others of Arendt’s political writings which seem eerily relevant to our contemporary world. Secondary readings will be assigned, especially for graduate students. Expect a heavy reading load, close textual readings in class, small group work and lecture.

Philosophy 463/563 20th Century Philosophers: Heidegger—Professor Vallega-Neu
M 1600-1850 STB 254

This course focuses on one of the most influential works of the 20th century: Heidegger’s *Being and Time*. It introduces the project of *Being and Time* and then focuses on Heidegger’s analysis of *Dasein*, i.e. of human being understood as being-in-the-world. We will explore what Heidegger calls the “ontological difference”, the fundamental “existentials” constituting human being (projection onto and thrownness into possibilities of being), truth, care, authenticity and inauthenticity, temporality, and being towards death.

Philosophy 607 Seminar: Philosophy and Teaching—Professor Vallega-Neu
T 1400-1450 SC 250C

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 607 Seminar: Border Philosophies—Professor Vallega
W 1600-1850 SC 250C

This seminar will focus on beginning to articulate what may be meant by “border thought” or in this sense “border philosophy.” In order to do this we will read intersectionally from Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari’s *A Thousand Plateaus*, Giorgio Agamben’s *Means Without End* and *Homo Sacer*, and Gloria Anzaldúa’s *Light in the Dark/Luz en lo Oscuro*. The classes will consist on close reading and analysis of the primary texts with reference to the original language, supplemented by historical, contextual, and technical lectures.

Philosophy 620 Professional Seminar: American Philosophy—Professor McKenna
TR 1000-1150 SC 250C

This course is an historical survey of American philosophy from the 1890s through the 1930s. The course begins with the hypothesis that a significant strand of the American tradition developed as a philosophy of resistance against ideas inherited from Europe and against a social, political and economic system whose practices led to oppression through assimilation or exclusion. These philosophies share a common interest in the nature of pluralism, agency and liberation. The course will open by considering a crucial moment in the history of resistance in the United States: the Ghost Dance movement among Native Americans of the northern plains and the response to it in 1890 at Wounded Knee. We will then consider the issues raised in the conflict from a variety of philosophies including the work of William James, John Dewey, Alain Locke, and Jane Addams,. This course will introduce only a small portion of the tradition. However, by focusing on a range of major figures and themes, the course may also serve as a starting point for further inquiry into the American tradition and its connection with other philosophical traditions.