

Spring 2020

Philosophy Department Course Descriptions

Philosophy 101 Philosophical Problems—GE Nam

MTWR 0900-0950 PETR 105

This is an introductory course to some of the fundamental themes found in western philosophy, such as friendship, truth, love, and freedom. We will use philosophy as a tool to engage with difficult questions and think critically about the nature of these timeless problems.

Philosophy 102 Ethics—GEs Gamble & Ospina

Two sections: 0900-0950 & 1000-1050 both MTWR in ALL 101

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 Alvarado

MWF 1400-1450 GSH 123

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

Philosophy 110 Human Nature—GE Portella

MTWR 0900-0950 ANS 195

What does it mean to be human? What makes us “human”? What is the place of humans in the world? Much of the history of philosophy wrestles with these questions in one way or another. Religion, science, politics, and ethics are all informed by the various answers these questions have received and they, in turn, inform the answers. In this course we will look specifically at how some of the answers to these questions have resulted in legacies of sexism, racism, and speciesism with which we still live today. This means we will be addressing sensitive topics that demand respectful discourse.

Philosophy 120 Ethics of Enterprise and Exchange—Professor Brence

MWF 1500-1550 GSH 123

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

Philosophy 130 Philosophy & Popular Culture—GE Nobowati
MTWR 0900-0950 ANS 191

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 COL 150

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 225 Introduction to Formal Logic—GE Showler
MTWR 0900-0950 TYKE 204

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 309 Global Justice—GE Zimmer
MW 1000-1150 ANS 191

What is globalization? What was nationalization? What does the transition from one of these to the other imply? This course is intended as an introductory discussion of central philosophical problems of globalization and justice. Key philosophical problems here include: issues in distributive justice pertaining to global poverty and inequality, justice matters concerning global citizenship and global human rights, issues concerning global identity and the politics of multiculturalism, issues in retributive justice concerning transnational criminal tribunals, and thematic concerns including new global contexts of war, terrorism, environmentalism, and health care. This course will count as an upper division elective and satisfy the Gender, Race, Class and Culture requirements in the Philosophy major. As a course that will satisfy the University multicultural requirement, Global Justice will consider international cultures in the context of the issues of race and ethnicity, pluralism and monoculturalism, and prejudice and tolerance. Rather than studying a single culture in depth, this course will look at the intersections of national and ethnic cultures around issues of justice. These intersections raise questions of differences, as well as helping to identify commonalities that can serve as means for understanding and resolving conflict. By explicitly taking up the relationship between cultural differences and justice, the course will consider issues of prejudice and tolerance and the resources for critically engaging the development of justice in international contexts.

Philosophy 312 History of Philosophy: 19th Century—Professor Marren
MW 1000-1120 MCK 240A

This course will provide a survey of the development and significance of 19th century philosophy in various philosophical traditions, including Russian literature, psychoanalysis, and existentialist thought. We will study the works of Lou Andreas-Salomé, Nikolai Leskov, Søren Kierkegaard and others, aiming to put these authors in a conceptual dialogue about such themes and ideas as the subconscious, erotic power, temporality, as well as criticism and reevaluation of morality. We will aim to bring this dialogical philosophizing to bear on the pressing questions of our own times.

Philosophy 331 Philosophy in Literature—GE Ralda
MW 1400-1550 ANS 195

This is an intensive upper level philosophy course with emphasis on the relationship between central issues in philosophy and the way these are articulated differently by literature. The central themes explored will be identity, narrative, writing, language, history, and time. The course will include introductory and methodological lectures on how to read philosophically, as well as close reading and interpretation of texts. The goal of the course is to introduce students to the philosophical reading of literature in order to ultimately expand their reading and interpretative philosophical skills and to challenge and expand the way they understand the limits and possibilities of conceptual philosophical knowledge. The course will focus on the writing of Italian author Italo Calvino. Particularly on *Six Memos for the Next Millennium*, which will be related to his fictional work in *Invisible Cities*. The course will also engage the poetry of Wallace Stevens. All lectures will be based on the original Italian texts.

Philosophy 332 Philosophy of Film—Professor Brencce
MW 1200-1320 LIL 111

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—GE Friez
MW 1400-1550 ANS 191

Medical Ethics (or, more broadly, Bioethics) is the branch of ethics that studies moral values in the biomedical sciences, and can include a very large range of issues. This course aims to offer an interesting sampling of the ideas and practices that can be considered and examined in this area. This sampling is centered on the critical philosophical examination of the various assumptions, values, and socio-political forces underlying clinical, research and biotechnological systems and practices. We will ask not only, “What are good or poor systems and practices and why?” but also, “What are the conceptual frameworks available for, assumed by or perpetuated through this system or practice?” and “What are the effects of this system or practice on people, on their lives, on possibilities for democracy/equality, and on potentials for injustice?” We focus on five major themes: Principles, Inequality, Normativity, Disability, and Enhancement. The work of this course should leave you better able to approach ethical dilemmas in your future work not only with reason and intelligence, but with sympathy and respect for human difference and an eye toward justice.

Philosophy 342 Introduction to Latin American Philosophy—Professor Vallega

TR 1200-1320 MCK 125

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 345 Place in the Cosmos—GE Knowlton

MW 1200-1350 PETR 105

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

Philosophy 407/507 Philosophy of Education Seminar—Professor Meens

R 1600-1850 PETR 107

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

Philosophy 410/510 Media Archaeology—Professor Koopman

Combined lecture T 1200-1350 PETR 101, Undergraduate lecture 1600-1750 & Graduate lecture 1200-1350, both R in SC 250C

The course is intended to offer students a full introduction to, and experience in deploying the critical tools of new media theory, and in particular a family of prominent methodologies in contemporary new media critique known as media archaeology. A primary focus of media archaeology is an analysis of the social and political implications of media as studied through their technical dimensions. Rather than isolating technologies into social contexts in a way that treats them as passive, media archaeology expands the analysis of social context itself by situating technology as transformative of a range (political, legal, epistemological, communicative) of practices in which they figure. Our readings will include work by Friedrich Kittler, Cornelia Vismann, Geoffrey Winthrop-Young (who will also be delivering a guest lecture at UO this term), Jussi Parikka, and others, including light background readings of the work of Michel Foucault. In addition to regular reading and short writing responses, the main project for the term will involve focusing media archaeological methods on a contemporary media object of your choosing in order to develop either a paper or a digital project. *Additional notes for students considering this course. This course offers an advanced introduction and is suitable for advanced students (i.e., graduate students from any department as well as advanced undergraduates with a commitment to intensive study and a heavy reading load) —to facilitate this, all students (both graduate and undergraduate) will meet for our Tuesday sessions, while our Thursday sessions will be broken out into separate meetings for graduates and undergraduates. This course is designed to serve students from across a range of disciplines and does not presume advanced study in philosophy as a background (some advanced background with social sciences or humanities in a general sense will be presumed). This course will fulfill requirements for a ‘methods’ course for the New Media and Culture Certificate program for graduate students.*

Philosophy 453/553 19th Century Philosophers: Hegel—Professor Marren

M 1600-1850 PETR 103

This course will serve as an investigation of Hegel’s Lectures on Aesthetics and Fine Art (1835, 1842). The text, which was compiled by Hegel’s student, Heinrich Gustav Hotho, consists of Hegel’s own lecture notes as well as of the various student transcriptions of his lecture courses given at Heidelberg and Berlin between 1818-1829. We will supplement our study of Hegel’s analysis of fine art by drawing on the many examples from the history of aesthetics, which Hegel himself highlights and discusses in the course of the lecture series.

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

T 1600-1850 PETR 107

This course is an advanced introduction to decolonial philosophy, more specifically, to its fecund and affirmative elements. This is a thinking that does not only aim at a critical liberatory engagement with systems and internal/external forms of oppression, exploitation, and exclusion, but that begins to articulate the very possibility and sense of existence found in the thought and practices of the excluded. Such affirmations of life beyond coloniality do not only refer to the colonized. Rather, in light of the affirmation of those thoughts and ways of being new possibilities and potentialities for thought with and at the limit of traditional philosophy arise.

We will focus on the work and thought of the Caribbean poet and philosopher Édouard Glissant. While Glissant follows the lineages of Aimé Césaire and Frantz Fanon, in his main work he develops an aesthetic approach to decoloniality that brings together conceptual thought and concrete experience, even beyond the human, through a reinterpretation of existence as non-subjective, non-essentialist, relational and dynamic, memorial and transformative. His thought brings together with a diagonal inceptive thought the historical, the scientific, the rational, as well as the affective, embodied, and memorial aspects at play in the configuration of identities, subjects, communities, epistemic taxologies, systems, normative formations, languages, and authority. We will focus on Poetics of Relation with reference to his collection of essays titled Caribbean Discourses, the Collected Poems, and his novel The Fourth Century. Lectures will be based on the original French but we will work with the translations, although, student able to read the original are strongly advised to do so, given the richness and specificity of Glissant’s neologisms, his diction, and meter, all of which are part of his distinct way of enacting decoloniality through the appropriation of traditional French. Other figures pertinent to the course beside those mentioned are Deleuze and Guattari, Nietzsche, Heidegger, Kant, Hegel, Enrique Dussel, Aníbal Quijano, María Lugones, Silvia Winter, and Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui.

Philosophy 463/563 20th Century Philosophers: Merleau-Ponty—Professor Warnek
W 1600-1850 PETR 103

The concept of chiasm may be the most significant legacy of Merleau-Ponty's later thought, even though the term rarely appears in the texts that he prepared for publication. From his working notes, we learn that chiasm is intimately related to other late concepts, such as flesh, encroachment, and reversibility, and that it takes on the status of a general structure of ontological mediation that characterizes philosophy as such. As Renaud Barbaras writes, "It is necessary . . . to picture the universe as intuited by Merleau-Ponty as a proliferation of chiasms that integrate themselves according to different levels of generality" (The Being of the Phenomenon, 307). Taking the concept of chiasm as our guiding thread, the seminar will begin by tracing its emergence from Merleau-Ponty's earlier figures for ontological mediation: Gestalt (in The Structure of Behavior) and radical reflection (in Phenomenology of Perception). We will then examine in close detail the logic of the chiasm as it is conceived in Merleau-Ponty's late writings, with particular attention to its role in perception, intersubjectivity, language, and ontology. Lastly, we will explore the vicissitudes of the concept of chiasm since Merleau-Ponty, especially in the work of Derrida, Irigaray, Nancy, and Rogozinski. In Positions, for example, Derrida writes that the "form of the chiasm, of the X, interests me a great deal, not as the symbol of the unknown, but because there is in it ... a kind of fork ... that is, moreover, unequal, one of the points extending its range further than the other: this is the figure of the double gesture, the intersection" (70). Our concern here will be with the future of the concept of chiasm, if it has one, and what transformations it must undergo to offer new paths for thinking.

Philosophy 607 Philosophy and Teaching Seminar—Professor Vallega-Neu
M 1100-1150 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 614 Issues in Ethics: Whiteness—Professor Russell
TR 1000-1150 SC 250C

This course will explore the construction and uses of whiteness as a racial category, as "not merely a skin color but also a signal of power, prestige, and beauty to be withheld and granted selectively"(from the blurb of Nell Irvin Painter's The History of White People). Readings on whiteness (and white people) will be interdisciplinary in origin and nature, with books by philosophers and by historians, along with essays from law and literature and other fields. By design, the vast majority of class readings will be written by authors who do not identify as white. That is, the category will be assessed and analyzed by those whom it has excluded. Students should expect significant flexibility in choosing how they will focus their research and how they will be assessed.

Philosophy 643 Feminist Philosophy: Feminist Phenomenological & French Materialist—Professor Mann
MW 1200-1350 SC 250C

This course introduces students to feminist phenomenology, an emergent tradition in philosophy, and French materialist feminist philosophy, a nearly forgotten current of feminist philosophy. Why these two? If feminist phenomenology is always critical phenomenology (see PUNCTA: A Journal of Critical Phenomenology, inaugural issue), then feminist phenomenology necessarily has a relationship with Marxism or materialist philosophy and/or critical theory. The French materialist feminist tradition arose as a critical response to Marxist thinking and organizing that adapts and adopts many key Marxist concerns: class relations, the centrality of labor, etc. to feminist thinking and practice. We will read several works in feminist phenomenology, as well as several key texts from the French materialist tradition (Wittig, Delphy, Guillaumin) and work to understand and develop the possibility of their relation.