

Spring 2021

Philosophy Department Course Descriptions

Philosophy 101 Philosophical Problems—GE

MTWR 0930-1030 REMOTE

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—GE

MTWR 1100-1200 REMOTE

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—Professor Brown

MW 1215-1345 REMOTE

“The heartbeat of critical thinking is the longing to know—to understand how life works”, writes feminist and dissenting writer and thinker bell hooks. Critical thinking as a longing to understand life cannot be, as is often the case, a set of disjointed skills that we throw at each other to make a point. If critical thinking is part of life, if, as Hannah Arendt puts it, “to think and to be fully alive are the same”, then critical thinking has to be a community affair. The question is then: *what forms does critical thinking take in our lives and what does it make possible?* In exploring this question, we will understand critical reasoning as encompassing three broad skills:

- a) **Writing:** the identification, reconstruction, assessment and response to the arguments we encounter.
- b) **Reading:** the engagement with the philosophical issues associated with the activities of thinking and reasoning.
- c) **Facilitating:** the creation of ways to share the critical thinking skills we built with our communities.

We will build these skills by working through, together, a critical thinking textbook by William Huges et al. titled *Critical Thinking: An Introduction to the Basic Skills*, the work of 20th century political philosopher Hannah Arendt and her text *The Life of The Mind: The Ground-breaking Investigation on How to Think* and bell hooks’ *Teaching Critical Thinking: Practical Wisdom*.

Philosophy 110 Human Nature—GE

MTWR 0930-1030 REMOTE

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 Plato, Hobbes, and Foucault. The course will consist on a close reading of Plato’s *Republic* in contrast with other ancient, modern, and contemporary ways of understanding the many senses of being human (Hobbes, Foucault, contemporary decolonial theory and Latin American popular and indigenous thought).

Philosophy 120 Ethics of Enterprise and Exchange—Professor Brence

WEB lecture with REMOTE discussion sections

This course aims to provide an introduction to ethical theories and the study of issues related to ethical concerns around a free market world, corporation responsibility, capitalism and labor, globalization, neoliberalism, economic and social rights, and the environment. We will begin the first part of the course investigating the nature of some ethical theories, to get a sense of how the ethical notions and questions function in these broad inquiries pertaining to the corporate world. We will look then a wide variety of approaches and arguments, both in terms of ethical theories and practical ethical problems faced by corporations, consumers, and other agents and institutions within the corporate capitalist world.

Philosophy 123 Internet, Society, and Philosophy—GE
MTWR 0930-1030 REMOTE

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 130 Philosophy and Popular Culture—GE
MTWR 1100-1200 REMOTE

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—GE
MTWR 1230-1330 REMOTE

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 223 Data Ethics—Professor Alvarado
MW 1615-1745 REMOTE

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 225 Introduction to Formal Logic—GE
MTWR 1700-1800 REMOTE

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 312 History of Philosophy: 19th Century—Professor Muraca
MW 1215-1345 REMOTE

This course will provide a survey of the development and significance of 19th century philosophy in various philosophical traditions. In this class we will particularly focus on 19th Century German philosophy (Kant, Romanticism, Hegel, Marx, Nietzsche) with some relevant additions (Salomé, Kierkegaard, James, Darwin) and on critical discussions from the point of view of contemporary perspectives, including feminist and decolonial interpretations. The class will track the controversial stories of the rise and fall of the Western, modern subject from its being the foundation of knowledge and protagonist of the world history to its breaking apart into alienation, historical contingencies, class struggles, psychological stratifications, and the less glorious story of its own evolution.

Philosophy 320 Philosophy of Religion—Professor Warnek
TR 1615-1745 REMOTE

This course examines classical and contemporary religious topics in the Western philosophical tradition, including the existence and nature of God; the problem of evil; the relationship between faith and reason; the meaning of religious language; the justification of religious belief; and the philosophical problems raised by the fact of religious pluralism. The aim of the course is to introduce students to the philosophical investigation of religion: that is, to thinking deeply, clearly, and critically about religious issues, including your own religious views.

Philosophy 335 Medical Ethics—GE
MTWR 1230-1330 REMOTE

In this course we will study questions and concepts in Medical Ethics with an emphasis on three topics: disability, technology, and incarceration. Concerning disability, we will consider resonances and dissonances between Medical Ethics discourse, Critical Disability Studies, and Disability Justice frameworks. Concerning technology, we will consider ethical questions pertaining to wearable medical technologies and medical documentation technologies. Regarding incarceration, we will consider the imbrication of medical and prison industrial complexes in a US-context with a particular focus on COVID-19 in Oregon prisons and jails.

Philosophy 340 Environmental Philosophy—Professor Muraca
WEB lecture with REMOTE discussion sections

The idea of 'nature' is vague and obvious at the same. Rooted in the Western tradition of thought, it seems at the same time unavoidable and problematic due to its colonial load. In this course we will follow the adventures of this idea, trace its history and contradictions, and explore alternative paths for environmentalism. Topics addressed in class include a critical analysis of wilderness and 'wild nature', natural capital, political ecology, ecofeminism, decolonial studies, and global environmental justice. We will discuss and compare different models of relationship to 'nature' and discuss the different forms of environmentalism that stem from them.

Philosophy 342 Introduction to Latin American Philosophy—Professor Vallega

TR 1615-1745 REMOTE

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 350 Metaphysics—GE

MTWR 1100-1200 REMOTE

What is metaphysics? Why do philosophers talk about overcoming it? This course begins by considering the position established by Kant's critical appropriation of metaphysics and then looks at a number of post-Kantian philosophers, such as Hegel, Schelling, Nietzsche, Heidegger and Derrida, who in various ways attempt to move beyond the limits of metaphysical thought. How are fundamental philosophical concerns, such as those having to do with truth and freedom, connected to this tradition of metaphysical thought? If metaphysics is grounded in the distinction between the sensible and the intelligible, how might it be possible to challenge this distinction itself? Students will be asked to write a number of short reflections on the readings. There will also be a take-home final.

Philosophy 452 Philosophy and Race—Professor Russell

TR 1015-1145 REMOTE

In this course, we will explore how various philosophers (and philosophically-adjacent scholars) have taken up questions of race. We will begin with the question, "What is race?" We will look at early articulations of the race concept and then at various more recent critiques. Next, our readings will focus on questions of identity, considering how identity should be understood, why identity is important, and whether a political focus on identity is problematic. The third section of the course will be dedicated to more explicit discussion of ethical and political issues related to race. Finally, we will conclude the course with narratives about issues of race within the discipline of philosophy itself, with concern for what it's like to be a person of color and a professional philosopher. The requirements will also include student presentations, the topics of which will have a major influence on the direction of our discussion and the course as a whole.

Philosophy 463/563 20th-Century Philosophers: Plumwood—Professor McKenna

TR 1815-1945 REMOTE

Val Plumwood is an ecofeminist philosopher who has a unique perspective that is important to consider at this time. For her, the current ecological crisis is tied to various threats to democratic processes, to rising intolerance, to increased distancing and remoteness, and to the limits of male-coded rationality. She argues that given our status as "earth-dependent beings" we need to develop practices of contextual eating, respectful use rooted in a version of vitalism, and a partnership ethic rooted in mutual communication and understanding. She argues that we need to develop "an environmental culture that values and fully acknowledges the nonhuman sphere and our dependency on it, and is able to make good decisions about how we live and impact on the non-human world" (EC 3). In this class we will read her book *Environmental Culture: The Ecological Crisis of Reason* and essays from the *Eye of the Crocodile* collection. This course should be of interest to students in philosophy, environmental studies, food studies, and women and gender studies.

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

MW 1415-1545 REMOTE

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. 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: Rodolfo Kusch—Professor Vallega
TR 1215-1345 REMOTE

This course focuses on the recently published translation of Rodolfo Kusch's *Indigenous and Popular Thinking in America* (originally published in Spanish in 1970; this work gathers the material Kusch develops while living in the Andean Highlands in 1967), as well as on translations of other previously untranslated major texts. Rodolfo Kusch was an Argentinean philosopher who engaged indigenous thought in Andean native peoples and popular thinking as ways of thinking fundamental to the development of Latin American philosophy and distinct from the Western tradition. Kusch develops a philosophy situated in Latin American experience with implications for modern philosophical thought in general. He does so by engaging distinct ways of being-in-displacement or being-in-between, which entail the senses of being in Latin America in light of the history of coloniality (being between European and native identities and traditions, between the colonizer and the colonized). This distinct sense of being-in-between is found and articulated particularly by exposing native experience (and its configurations in popular thinking) as central to contemporary Latin American consciousness. Rodolfo Kusch was a student of Heidegger's work and of the history of Western thought, and in his later writing engages Freud, Hegel, and Derrida, besides thinking in departure from Heidegger's *Dasein* analysis and the understanding of being-in-the-world in *Being and Time*, as well as from Heidegger's later understanding of language. Some of the central issues discussed will include, time, space, identity, metaphysics and ontology, poetic thinking, and decolonial and traditional epistemologies.

Philosophy 607 Seminar: Philosophy and Teaching—Professor Koopman
W 1100-1200 REMOTE

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 core focus. All three quarters provide opportunity for reflection on pedagogical technique and philosophy of education. The first quarter offers ample opportunity for consideration of these themes. The second quarter also includes attention to curriculum, course design, and syllabus construction. The third quarter extends to a wider range of issues in the philosophy of education. Throughout the year, 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 and involves a few additional assigned meetings outside of our regular meetings (for example, class observation visits that can be scheduled to fit each student's calendar).

Philosophy 607 Seminar: Philosophy and Violence—Professor Stawarska
M 0905-1200 REMOTE

This seminar considers philosophical perspectives on violence in contemporary moral, social and political thought, including feminism and critical race theory. The goal is to raise the question of the meaning of 'violence' anew, in order to re-examine entrenched concepts and beliefs, including within contemporary feminist theory. Violence usually connotes a morally condemnable and politically destructive force. However, violence also indicates a life-affirming and constructive force when deployed to defend vulnerable subjects, including the self. Self-defensive violence thus raises a considerable moral ambiguity to the stance of pacifist absolutism – especially for subjects routinely exposed to state violence, extralegal violence, gendered and domestic violence, and other forms of public and private dominance tied to white racial supremacy and heteronormative patriarchy. Considering the broad semantic spectrum occupied by the term 'violence' (from *vis*: a morally neutral vital force and energy), it may be possible to reconsider the work done by the various regimes of gendered, racialized, and other forms of violence in the body politic.

Outline: we will consider how the classic European philosophers (Walter Benjamin, Max Weber) articulated the state monopoly on the use of force, and the concomitant condemnation of forceful action by non-state actors. Hannah Arendt's political philosophy adopts this statist perspective on violence as a dangerous and apolitical force. In more recent literature, Judith Butler offers the so-called 'force of nonviolence' (the title of the 2020 book), coupled with an ethical reclamation of vulnerability, as an alternative to violent opposition (including in response to state, gendered, and racialized violence). The antiviolence stance adopted by Butler and other white feminists has been likened to a carceral feminism that empowers the state to manage social ills by expanding the criminal legal system, policing, and prisons. We examine how Black abolition feminists, notably Beth Richie, Angela Davis, and Kimberly Crenshaw, provide critical tools against a statist solution to societal, notably gendered violence against women, especially Women of Color, and document the expansion of a punitive criminal and carceral state. We consider arguments in favor of organized community self-defense, including the theoretical perspectives on militancy by the Black Panthers within the US civil rights movement. Graduate participants are encouraged and expected to contribute relevant readings and intellectual perspectives to the seminar.

Philosophy 615 Continental Philosophy Pro-Seminar—Professor Warnek
M 1600-1900 REMOTE

This course serves as a survey of the major traditions that emerged within the 20th C. Continental philosophy. The course is organized topically around the following debates: should classical approaches to subjectivity developed in phenomenology be overcome by ontology? Or should both phenomenological and ontological approaches be displaced by an ethics? Is philosophical practice best described as reflection, or rather language---based interpretation? What is the value of a structure---based approach, which captures the larger--- than---individual forces such as social determinations, unconscious processes, dominant discourses and myths? To what degree are structure---based approaches wedded to traditional conceptions of science and to the history of Western metaphysics – hence in need of deconstruction? Does deconstruction turn philosophy into a species of literature, and, if so, is this a problem? Can such a problem be resolved by a reconstruction of Modernity, and a turn to discourse ethics? Other questions and debates will be addressed, and participants are encouraged and expected to bring your own research interests into the conversation.

Comparative Literature 618 Histories, Theories, and Cultures of New Media—Professor Koopman
T 1505-1800 REMOTE

What is new about new media? How does the distinction between analog and digital media expand the field of representation and alter the possibilities of techno-practice? What do the history of technology and the history of data offer to the study of media? Our class will provide an orientation to the theory and history of new media by exploring different traditions in media theory across generations, regions, languages, and methodologies. We will explore distinctions between comparative media studies, media archaeology, new media, and the history of technology with readings drawn from scholars working in distinctive theoretical traditions and different national contexts. In addition to weekly readings, enrolled students will be working on a final project of their own in dialogue with debates and conversations from class. Authors we will read include: Marshall McLuhan, Friedrich Kittler, Cornelia Vismann, Bernhard Siegert, Wendy Hui Kyong Chun, Simone Brown, Bernard Harcourt, Lisa Gitelman, and others. (*Note: this course is designed for graduate students from any discipline, presumes no background in media theory, and satisfies the core 'Common Seminar' requirement for the New Media & Culture graduate certificate. Please contact instructor with any questions.*)