

Fall 2016

Philosophy Department Course Descriptions

PHIL 101 Philosophical Problems—Professor 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—GTF

MTWR 0900-0950 FR 106

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 103 Critical Reasoning—GTF

MTWR 0900-0950 CON 104

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

PHIL 110 Human Nature—Professor McKenna

MWF 1200-1250 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. Connections between the nature of human and other animal beings will also be examined. Teaching will take the form of large group lectures and dedicated discussion sections.

PHIL 120 Ethics of Enterprise and Exchange—GTF

MTWR 0900-0950 FEN 105

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.

PHIL 130 Philosophy & Popular Culture—Professor Brence

MWF 1500-1550 MCK 240A

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

PHIL 170 Love & Sex—GTF

MTWR 0900-0950 GER 303

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

PHIL 307 Social & Political Philosophy—Professor Brence

TR 1400-1520 LIB 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 internet networked 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—Professor Warnek

TR 1200-1320 LIL 111

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 315 Introduction to Feminist Philosophy—GTF

MW 1200-1350 ESL 199

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.

PHIL 325 Logic, Inquiry, and Argumentation—GTF
MTWR 0900-0950 PETR 105

In this course, we will examine the processes and practices of inquiry and argumentation by considering the logic that underlies them. In the first part of the course, we will consider the phenomenology of inquiry, the structure of arguments, the role of guesswork (abduction), and the practices of communicative action. In the second part, we will study the basics of Aristotelian logic and the role and practice of induction. In the final section, we will consider the idea of ordered systems and formal logic and will conclude with a discussion of the role of agency in logic and its implications for a normative theory of argumentation and what it means to be rational. Upon completion of this course, you will have developed both a facility with and understanding of formal and informal logic, but also an understanding and appreciation of their deep connections to the rational processes of an active social life. This course satisfies the logic requirement for a major in philosophy.

PHIL 331 Philosophy in Literature—GTF
TR 1200-1350 FEN 105

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 *Mr. Palomar*, *Invisible Cities*, and the *Cosmicomics*. All lectures will be based on the original Italian texts.

PHIL 340 Environmental Philosophy—Professor Toadvine
MW 1200-1350 MCK 473

Considers the nature and morality of human relationships with the environment (e.g., the nature of value, the moral standing of nonhuman life). 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.

PHIL 342 Introduction to Latin American Philosophy—Professor Vallega
TR 1400-1550 MCK 122

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 Felípe 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.

PHIL 345 Human Place in the Cosmos—Professor Vallega-Neu
TR 1000-1120 MCK 214

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 texts in the Western tradition. To question our place in the cosmos requires that we reflect on the notions of cosmos or world, of place and space, and that we question our place in relation to other living and non-living things, to planets, stars, and the divine or divinities. The course considers Ancient cosmogonies and cosmologies, traces the development of different views of the cosmos in Medieval thought, and highlights fundamental changes occurring in our relation to the cosmos with the scientific revolution and mathematization of nature in the 17th century. Among the primary texts we will read are Plato's *Timaeus*, Descartes' *Principles of Philosophy*, and texts by Heidegger. 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, as well as to questioning ourselves with respect to how we view our place in the cosmos today.

PHIL 350 Metaphysics—GTF
TR 1200-1350 MCK 121

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.

PHIL 433/533 Descartes & Locke—Professor Zack
MW 1400-1550 GER 303

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

PHIL 453/553 Nietzsche—Professor Vallega-Neu
TR 1400-1550 FR 214

We will approach some central themes of Nietzsche's philosophy by exploring how they emerge within the movement of his thinking. The emphasis will lie not simply on what Nietzsche says but on how he writes and puts into question principles of reasoning and beliefs pertaining to lineages he himself embodies. We will focus on *The Gay Science* but the course will draw as well from other texts. Class time will consist in close reading and interpretations of primary texts as well as in discussions emerging from the readings.

PHIL 463/563 Derrida—Professor Stawarska
TR 1200-1350 FR 106

This course introduces you to the philosophy of Derrida via a close reading of select primary texts, as well as relevant canonical texts that he subjected to a deconstructive reading. You will therefore be able to study the method of deconstruction in some detail, and become familiarized with some of its key themes, such as the metaphysics of presence, arche-writing, trace, etc. We will be reading from *Speech and Phenomena*, *Dissemination*, *Limited Inc*, *The Ear of the Other*, as well as select essays from anthologies.

PHIL 463 Dewey Education—TBA
MW 1000-1150 GER 303

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 607 Philosophy and Teaching Seminar—Professor Mann

T 1600-1650 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.

PHIL 607 Feminism Pro-Seminar— Professor Mann

TR 1000-1150 SC 250C

The course offers an introduction to the work and thought of F. W. J. Schelling. Schelling is now gaining attention as a thinker who anticipated many of the developments of philosophy in the 20th Century. We will begin with readings from his early period and move chronologically to his later works. The central text will be Schelling's controversial essay on human freedom. Important questions will be asking include: the relation between art and poetry and philosophical inquiry, the relation between human life, nature and the divine, the limits of rationality and language, and the extent to which a philosophical system is possible. We will also consider Schelling's relation to other key historical figures, such as Kant and Hegel.

PHIL 607 Kusch—Professor Vallega

R 1800-2050 SC 250C

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 American 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, poietic thinking, and decolonial and traditional epistemologies.

PHIL 645 An Ecological Conception of Human Nature—Professor Morar

M 1600-1850 SC 250C

Nature has occupied a privileged place within phenomenology since Husserl's critique of naturalism first cleared the path for an investigation of nature-as-experienced. "Ecophenomenology" brings the insights of the phenomenological tradition and method to bear on issues in contemporary environmental theory. The guiding thread of our investigation will be nature's withdrawal and self-concealment, its paradoxical presentation in absence, as the trace of its autonomous productivity. We first trace this motif through key moments in the tradition: Husserl's return to the lifeworld, Heidegger's investigations of the withdrawal of the earth and the self-concealing revealing of φύσις, Merleau-Ponty's account of the chiasmic intertwining of humanity and nature, and Levinas's descriptions of the elemental and the "there is." The final weeks explore the implications of nature's resistance and withdrawal for contemporary environmental theory and earth art.

PHIL 658 Philosophy of Mind—Professor Johnson

MW 1000-1150 SC 250C

After a brief look at Behaviorism and Functionalism, we will focus primarily on naturalistic views of mind that draw support from scientific research on mind, thought, and language coming especially from the cognitive sciences and neuroscience.