

# Spring 2017

## Philosophy Department Course Descriptions

### ***Philosophy 101 Philosophical Problems—GE Busk***

**MTWR 0900-0950 117 GSH**

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. Grades based on written essays and discussion participation.

### ***Philosophy 102 Ethics—Professor Koopman***

**MW 1600-1720 182 LIL**

This course will offer an introduction to the central concepts of ethical inquiry and moral philosophy. What is of paramount importance for us as individuals and as a society? To guarantee equal rights for all? To provide better lives for those less fortunate? To treat well those with whom we interact? And can all of these be of paramount importance at once? In this course you will first learn the basic frameworks of the most influential classical moral theories (we will read selections from Aristotle on virtue ethics, from Immanuel Kant on rights-based deontology, from John Stuart Mill on utilitarianism, and from William James on pragmatist approaches to the very idea of moral philosophy). Following this background exposure to the basic organizing concepts of contemporary moral theory, you will then learn how to utilize, enrich, and critique these theories by examining some of the most pressing ethical conflicts we face today. Critical moral issues we will consider in this part of the class will include economic inequality, racial injustice, and the ethics of emerging technologies of surveillance (here we will read, among others, selections from Ta-Nehisi Coates, Cornel West, Michelle Alexander, John Rawls, and Peter Singer).

### ***Philosophy 103 Critical Reasoning—GE Cook***

**MTWR 0900-0950 189 PLC**

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 Ferrari***

**MTWR 0900-0950 105 FEN**

Is there an essential human nature and if so, how does it relate to our concrete material and ethical lives? What is the relation of human nature to nature at large? Is human nature essentially good? If so, why and how? These are perennial philosophical questions which this course will consider from a variety of angles and traditions. As philosophical questions, we will operate with the idea that determinate answers are sometimes less important than becoming as clear as possible about how we ask the questions, and the manner in which this asking connects to other deep assumptions. The approach to the course is non-linear and pluralist. This means that we will place texts from different times and places into conversation with one another, and in this manner develop our own conversation with regard to their relevance for our context. Authors will include: Plato, Descartes, Nietzsche, Simone de Beauvoir, Simone Weil, Alfred North Whitehead, William James, Thich Nhat

Hanh, Freud, Judith Butler, and Spinoza among others. Traditions will include: existentialism, feminist care ethics, pragmatism, etc.

***Philosophy 130 Philosophy & Popular Culture—GE Pickard***

**MTWR 0900-0950 303 GER**

This course examines the role of popular culture in our lives and its inherent connections to philosophy. By analytically engaging with topics such as social media, selfies, and reality TV, we have the opportunity to think carefully and critically about phenomena that saturate our world and are, perhaps, some of our most enjoyable escapes. This also has the potential to demonstrate the inextricability of philosophy from daily life. The course is structured to address one cultural phenomenon per week; we will start from our own experiences on the subjects and proceed from there.

***Philosophy 170 Love & Sex—Professor Mann***

**MWF 1200-1250 156 STB**

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 199 Special Studies: Black Resistance—Professor Zack***

**T 1500-1550 252 STB – Please note that all seats in this section are reserved for students in Academic Residential Communities (ARC)**

From slavery to Black Lives Matter, African American voices of resistance are insightful and inspiring. We will consider the thought of black writers as intellectual responses to anti-black oppression, with a focus on transformative discourse—texts that sustained and changed lives in their historical times and beyond. Over the first three weeks, readings will consist of excerpts from Henry Louis Gates’s account of Phyllis Wheatley’s encounters with Thomas Jefferson, Cornel West (with Christa Buschendorf), and James Baldwin in dialogue about racism with Margaret Mead. We then move on to Frederick Douglass’s abolitionism, followed by Booker T. Washington’s accommodationism, and W.E.B. DuBois’s reconstructions of black identity in the era of Jim Crow. Next, bell hooks and “flipping the script” in terms of hip-hop. In relating these sources to one another, themes of black identity, civil liberty, and moral equality will emerge as ongoing core concerns. The focus is on “Why is History important?” and “What can be done?” Course work will consist of about 20 pp. of required reading each week, class discussion, and 4 one-page papers.

***Philosophy 211 Existentialism—GE Balskus***

**TR 1200-1350 303 GER**

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 give insight into the thoughts of some important existentialist philosophers. 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? Required texts will be made available through a course reader. Work will consist of reading (about 30 pages a week), student participation, a journal, and short paper assignments.

***Philosophy 312 History of Philosophy, 19<sup>th</sup> Century—GEs Baines & Hayes***

**Two separate sections MW 1000-1150 105 FEN and TR 1000-1150 303 GER**

This course will examine critiques of modernity in three key 19th century figures - Hegel, Marx, and Nietzsche. We will begin by considering Kant's Copernican Turn crucial for understanding these critiques. Moving beyond German thought, we will critically reflect on Hegel, Marx, and Nietzsche's texts by considering feminist critiques of modernity in Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Sojourner Truth, Anna Julia Cooper, and Emma Goldman's work.

***Philosophy 323 Moral Theory—Professor Johnson***

**MW 1400-1550 101 PETR**

Where do moral values come from, and how absolute are they? We will examine major western theories about the source of our values, including the views that they come from God, from universal reason, from our emotions and feelings, or from our needs as social animals. These theories about the status of our ethical norms will be placed in their historical context, but we will also assess them from the perspective of recent work in moral psychology on how people actually make moral appraisals and judgments. Grades will be based on two short (5 p.) essays and one longer (10-12 pp.) essay.

***Philosophy 325 Logic, Inquiry, and Argumentation—GE Duvernoy***

**TR 1200-1350 106 FR**

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.

***Philosophy 332 Philosophy of Film— Professor Brence***

**MW 1000-1120 112 WIL and U 1900-2050 129 MCK -- Please note that all seats in this section are reserved for students in the College Scholars Program**

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 339 Introduction to Philosophy of Science—GE Goehring***

**MW 1200-1350 106 FR**

Science is the leading source of knowledge in our times. Yet, humanities majors are often innocent of its methods and content, and scientists are often unaware of how their facts are related to their theories, the nature of scientific truth and the question of whether they are studying the real world or an artifact of their practice.

***Philosophy 340 Environmental Philosophy—Professor Brence***

**TR 1400-1520 101 LIB**

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.

***Philosophy 344 Introduction to Philosophy of Law—Professor Brence***

**MW 1400-1550 303 GER**

This course will move between the theoretical and the practical. It will first introduce students to several major philosophical approaches to the question, "What is the Law?", including Natural Law Theory, Legal Positivism, and Legal Realism, as well as several theoretical challenges to these views such as that offered by Legal Pragmatism, Critical Legal Theory, and Feminist Legal Theory. It will then seek to explore important ways in which these approaches inform operations of the law in respect to some contemporary, and often contentious, social issues, such as the legality of torture, obscenity, and legal protections of privacy.

In as much as we all live in a society meaningfully conditioned, if not constituted, by law, this course should be appealing to all students. It will aim to be especially valuable, however, for any students with a particular interest in law, and perhaps considering a career in law and/or attending law school. Work will consist of reading, in-class discussion, and both shorter in-class writings and assigned essays.

***Philosophy 399 Teaching Middle School Children Philosophy—Professor Bodin***

**MW 1600-1750 ED 117**

The philosophical life comes naturally to most teenagers. They ponder fundamental questions about themselves and their relationships, about their reason to be alive and their place in the world. They are often skeptics regarding the wisdom of adults and the changing rules of society. They are

immersed in the pressures of consumerism but struggle with identity and superficiality. This course will draw from pre-college philosophical writings as well as effective strategies for leading discussions with middle and high school students around topics that engage the passions and curiosity of teens. Seminar students will translate conceptual understandings in ethics, metaphysics, epistemology and aesthetics into philosophical practice by leading weekly discussions in public school classrooms under the guidance and support of the instructor and graduate employee. The course requires travel once-a-week during eight consecutive weeks to a designated school in Eugene or Springfield by car or carpool, bus, bicycle or on foot, depending on the distance of the school from campus.

***Philosophy 443 Eco-Feminism—Professor McKenna***  
**TR 1200-1350 301 CON**

This course will focus on ecofeminism and ecowomanism. Concerned that some feminist theory uncritically accepted the identification of men with reason, culture, and theory and women with emotion, nature, and practice some feminists took up these linkages seriously. Ecofeminists generally critique the over-reliance on reason and the idea that the human (meaning male) goal is separation from, or domination over, the rest of nature. Ecofeminists and ecowomanists examine how race and class complicate the identification of women and nature. This course will take up an intersectional analysis of what ecofeminists call the “logic of domination” and examine issues such as food, pollution, and consumption by linking environmental justice with social justice.

***Philosophy 463/563 20<sup>th</sup> Century Philosophers: Dewey’s Ethics—Professor Johnson***  
**MW 1000-1150 123 MCK**

We will examine Dewey’s naturalistic, non-reductionist, non-absolutist, and pluralistic view of human moral appraisal, deliberation, and judgment. This will involve a close reading of *Human Nature and Conduct* (1922), parts of Dewey and Tuft’s *Ethics* (1932), and a couple of key articles Dewey wrote on morality. We will also discuss the adequacy of parts of Dewey’s moral philosophy in light of work in contemporary moral psychology and cognitive neuroscience on the nature of ethical appraisal and reasoning.

***Philosophy 463/563 20<sup>th</sup> Century Philosophers: Sartre—Professor Zack***  
**M 1800-2050 121 MCK**

We will begin with a shared reading of *Nausea* on Day 1. But the aim and scope of this course is first to concisely situate Sartre philosophically in terms of Descartes, Hume, Kant, Heidegger, and Derrida. On that basis, we will then build an understanding of his main ideas and their development over his life. We will read some of his autobiographical writing, fiction, and biographical studies, but concentrate on his ontology, theory of the self, and existential psychoanalysis from *Being and Nothingness*. Also considered will be Sartre’s later Marxism. The pace will be fast in a seminar format.

***Philosophy 463/563 20<sup>th</sup> Century Philosophers: Heidegger—Professor Warnek***  
**MW 1400-1550 214 FR**

The work of Martin Heidegger has always been provocative and controversial. Yet its influence on philosophical discourse and inquiry over the last century is undeniable and, arguably, inescapable. Beginning with selections from *Being and Time* (1927) we will work through a number of important texts written over three decades. The course will be reading intensive and proceed as a seminar.

***Philosophy 463/563 20<sup>th</sup> Century Philosophers: Iris Marion Young—Professor Morar***  
**TR 1000-1150 122 MCK**

This course proposes a close reading of Iris Marion Young's seminal book *Justice and the Politics of Difference*. We will focus primarily on the question of justice and the extent to which accounts of social justice exceed the traditional frameworks of distributive justice. We will also explore the

question whether an account of social justice requires a stable notion of human nature that informs both our sense of moral and political flourishing and also our conception of political oppression.

***Philosophy 607 Seminar: Philosophy & Teaching—Professor Mann***

**T 1230-1320 211B SC**

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: Data Genealogy—Professor Koopman***

**TR 1800-1950 250C SC**

This course will explore the possibility of a philosophical-historical engagement with our contemporary data-driven obsessions. What makes possible the formatting of selfhood that we perform on social media? What motivates our idyllic dreams for big and ever-bigger data? What historical cunning informs the obsessive surveillance of today's corporate and governmental surveillance regimes? How new—and how old—are new media, cutting-edge information technologies, and the informatics of our present? The course will have two aims in taking up these questions. First, the course will offer an opportunity to study the philosophical methodologies of archaeology and genealogy associated with the work of Michel Foucault. We will begin with a study of Foucault's work as well as that of the media archaeologist Friedrich Kittler. Second, and equipped with this methodological apparatus, we will consider various approaches to what might be considered a genealogy (in a broader sense) of contemporary informational assemblages. Here we will draw on a variety of disciplines and read (at a relatively quick pace) texts authored by philosophers and historians of science, historians of technology, historians of literature, and a range of other critical genealogists. Student work will include active participation in seminars, an in-class presentation leading discussion on a reading for one day, and a final term paper. (All students enrolled in this class will be expected to read a selection, to be distributed via email, from Foucault's *The Birth of the Clinic* for the first day of class.)

***Philosophy 607 Professional Seminar: Continental Philosophy—Professor Stawarska***

**F 0900-1150 250C SC**

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.

**Philosophy 670 Issues in Metaphysics Seminar: Freedom—Professor Warnek**

**W 1800-2050 250C SC**

What is responsibility? And how can we be responsible for answering this question, without yet being able to say what responsibility is? This course takes up the question of responsibility through an examination of recent philosophical contributions to our understanding of human freedom. We will be concerned with how freedom and responsibility are related. Are we responsible *because* we are somehow free? Or do we first become free only as we find ourselves already responsible? What would it mean to speak of an *irresponsible* freedom? How might we account for human freedom without any metaphysical grounding, without referring to God or nature and even, perhaps, without privileging human life, without having recourse to humanism? What is the difference between individuated and communal responsibility? We will consider a variety of texts from different authors, including Hannah Arendt, Simone de Beauvoir, F. W. J. Schelling, Martin Heidegger, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Jean-Luc Nancy, Jacques Derrida, Jan Patočka and Slavoj Žižek, among others.