

Winter 2016

Philosophy Department Course Descriptions

Philosophy 101 Philosophical Problems—GTF

MTWR 0900-0950 105 PETR

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.

Philosophy 102 Ethics—Professor Stocker

MWF 1000-1050 150 COL

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 Vallega-Neu

MWF 1300-1350 145 STB

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—GTF

MTWR 0900-0950 106 FR

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 Felipe Guamán Poma de Ayala, Plato, Hobbes, Foucault, Frantz Fanon, Julia Kristeva, and Enrique Dussel. Teaching will take the form of large group lectures and dedicated discussion sections.

Philosophy 123 Internet, Society, & Philosophy—GTF

MTWR 0900-0950 105 FEN

Introduction to major ethical, social, and political problems of the Internet from a philosophical perspective. Our focus will be on better understanding the impact of the internet on three core topic areas: privacy (surveillance, Snowden, and the like), property (filesharing, torrents, and the like), and personhood (identity, self, and the like). The class will be based on lectures, seminars, and projects. We will have guest lecturers including a representative from the Electronic Frontier Foundation (EFF.org).

Philosophy 130 Philosophy & Popular Culture—GTF
MTWR 0900-0950 303 GER

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 199 Philosophy of Science Fiction in Film—Professor Brence
MW 1400-1520 & U 1900-2050 353 PLC

What is it to be a human being? Does technology enhance humanity (us, that which makes us human, or both) or threaten it? Could technology become human, combine with it, or even replace it? What do current or emerging trends, if extended into the future, mean? Are we on a path to transformation? Extinction? What would it mean to encounter extraterrestrial life? Will nature be (even more fully) replaced by something of our own creation, perhaps even a virtual reality? Will we have to live underground or in space? Will we all wear identical jumpsuits or have names spelled only with consonants? What if we invent time travel; won't we get really confused? These questions and many others, the serious among them essentially philosophical in nature, are raised by science fiction films. Sci-fi films also attempt to answer these questions, often in very subtle and insightful ways. Through careful viewings and in-depth discussion (in class and on-line), this course will explore how we may use some of the best of sci-fi films as kinds of philosophical texts to explore and evaluate ourselves, and the broader human condition, in the present.

Philosophy 213 Asian Philosophy—GTF
MW 1000-1150 105 FEN

This course is a general introduction to the philosophical traditions of India, China, and Japan, concentrating on significant and representative texts of the Hindu, Buddhist, Confucian, Daoist, and Zen philosophical traditions. Among these are the Upanishads, the Bhagavad Gita, the Dhammapada, the Analects, the Daodejing, and 101 Zen Stories. Several themes will be explored, including: human nature, identity, morality, mortality, and the relationship between philosophy and religion. Because of the time constraints of a four-week long summer session, this course should be regarded as providing a philosophical and historical foundation for students interested in Asian philosophy; students will be encouraged to build upon this foundation beyond this course, and will be provided with resources to help them to do so.

Philosophy 216 Philosophy & Cultural Diversity—Professor Zack
TR 1400-1520 101 LIB

We'll begin this course with a story about an ant colony, E.O. Wilson's "Trailhead," and end with excerpts from Brian Epstein's new theory of social science in *The Ant Trap*, OUP 2015, ISBN: 9780199381104. In between this focus on ants, course work will consist of short essays from *Cultural Studies: An Anthology*, Michael Ryan, ed. Blackwell. ISBN: 978-1-4051-4576-3. The main idea is that cultural events and cultural differences are both created by individuals and exceed individual intentions and actions. Because there are strong group differences within societies and between societies, culture is a constant process of negotiating diversity. There are two senses of culture—products such as books, paintings, music, and how people act and react in society. Our focus will be on how people act and react in society with readings about: policy, ideology, business, race and ethnicity, art, discourse, gender and sexuality, class, popular cultural products, and transnationalism. Course work will consist of Ten 1-2 page papers (no exams), with normal letter grading. The course can be applied to the Arts & Letters group requirement and the University multicultural requirement (as an "AC" or American Culture course).

Philosophy 308 Social & Political Philosophy—Professor Brence

TR 1000-1120 129 MCK

Major historical and contemporary social/political theorists. Inquiry into such ideas as freedom, ideology, identity, social/political reconstruction and revolution. We will focus primarily upon the social/political dimension and consequences of problems confronting human agency. How do we act in a world as organized, complex, and controlled as our own? Is there any possibility for meaningful self-determination in a globalized and technologically managed economy? Can we regard contemporary free-market capitalism as still democratic without a positive answer to that question? What is the nature of contemporary ideology such that these questions and their answers are often obscured?

Philosophy 311 History of Philosophy: Modern—Professor Stawarska

TR 1200-1320 214 MCK

This course is the second of a three-course introduction to the history of western philosophy. The purpose of this course is to examine the history of western philosophy in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries as well as to consider the importance and relevance of the history of philosophy for us today. The course will focus on three key subjects relevant to the history of philosophy in this period. Primarily, we will engage with readings from canonical figures in the modern traditions of Rationalism (selections may be from Descartes, Spinoza, and Leibniz) and Empiricism (selections may be from Locke, Berkeley, and Hume). Additionally, we will also consider works from figures not normally in the canon (most notably early modern women philosophers) who played a more central role in the development of these philosophical tradition than is often acknowledged. A third focus of the course concerns the relation between modern philosophy and contemporary conversations both in philosophy and in the sciences. This focus will help the students to appreciate the continued relevance of the problems and questions raised by the empiricists and rationalists in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries to present intellectual debates.

Philosophy 315 Introduction to Feminist Philosophy—GTF

TR 1800-1950 204 CHA

This course examines basic concepts and important texts in feminist philosophy. We will talk about what the great philosophers have said about women's ability to do philosophy, what it means to do philosophy as women, how feminism has challenged the most basic assumptions of the Western philosophical tradition, and contemporary issues in feminist philosophy. This course is a prerequisite for some upper division courses in feminist philosophy.

Philosophy 320 Philosophy of Religion—GTF

TR 1000-1150 105 FEN

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 322 Philosophy of the Arts—Professor Vallega

MW 1400-1520 250C SC

This course focuses on two questions around which philosophy of the arts is developed: 1. What is aesthetic experience? 2. What is its relation to conceptual knowledge? Out of these two questions a third appears: How does Aesthetic experience happen as a kind of knowledge that is **not** rational in the sense of the linguistic and logical, and yet may inform the interpretation of experience and the development of conceptual knowledge? The latter question has been raised and answered by poets, painter, filmmakers, dancers, musicians, and philosophers. In this course we will look closely at some of the responses in order to develop a sense of aesthetic experience and through this, a sense of the complexity of approaching the arts philosophically.

Philosophy 325 Logic, Inquiry, Argument—GTF

TR 1000-1150 303 GER and MW 1000-1150 105 PETR (two separate sections)

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 340 Environmental Philosophy—Professor Brence

MW 1200-1320 229 MCK

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 350 Metaphysics—Professor Stocker

TR 1200-1320 250C SC

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 399 Special Studies Teaching Children Philosophy—Professor Bodin

MW 1600-1750 117 ED

This is a course that will ask students to translate their understanding of philosophical ideas into a language of discourse that captivates the imagination of ten and eleven-year-old children. Working both independently and as partners, undergraduate students will plan lessons and lead weekly philosophical discussions in assigned elementary school classrooms near the university. Students will explore ways to use published children's picture books and short plays as prompts that invite 4th and 5th graders to employ critical thinking, inquiry and empathy as they participate in focused discussions in ethics, aesthetics, epistemology, political and environmental philosophy. Discussion topics will include questions like: *What is friendship? Why should we be moral? What does it mean to be brave? Should we accept traditional gender roles? What is beauty? Do animals have rights?* among many questions that connect to the experiences and concerns of children. During the process of leading eight weekly classroom discussions, students in this course will undertake the challenge of becoming skillful facilitators who teach children how to frame coherent thoughts and opinions, relate ideas to personal experiences and present hypothetical situations that challenge the logical thinking of peers.

Philosophy 399 Special Studies Animals & Philosophy—GTF
MW 1400-1550 303 GER

This course examines the place of animals in the Western philosophical tradition, historically and today. Among the questions raised and responded to are: how have animals been understood as essentially different from, or essentially similar to, human beings? How have various human treatments of animals been justified or criticized? And, how have animals been understood as belonging to, or as excluded from, human communities and institutions? By examining a wide selection of texts from the history of philosophy and closely related fields, students are shown that the place of animals in human systems of thought and values have and continue to be as varied as the lives of animals themselves. In light of this variety, students are urged to revisit their own views of animals, and to critically investigate the role of human/animal relations in their lives and in the world around them.

Philosophy 407/507 Seminar Border Philosophies—Professor Vallega
W 1800-2050 250C SC

This course explores the concept, situation, and movement of “border thinking” by looking at the thought of Jacques Derrida, Édouard Glissant, and Gloria Anzaldúa. As the selection of authors indicates the course also aims to introduce a thinking beyond the traditional colonial difference between Western and non-Western thought: this by recognizing the distinctness of the thought as well as by not situating the singularity of each philosopher’s thought within the power differential established by the coloniality of power, knowledge, and time. This is a seminar, so we will do close reading of selected passages in works by the authors and discuss them. Additional lectures will serve as conceptual and historical frame for the reading approach and discussions.

Philosophy 410 Information Ethics Seminar—Professor Koopman
MW 1600-1750 250C SC

What are the ethical stakes of emergent information technologies? Consider the newest devices currently buzzing away in our purses and backpacks (cell phones, fitbits, laptops, tablets, and all the complicated mini-computers inside that make these fun gadgets run). What concerns do these little devices raise about our being trackable to those who know how to mine this data? What issues do they manifest concerning our self-presentation when, between every class (or even in the middle of class), we instinctively reach for the device to post an update? At the most general level, this will be a class in *technology ethics* though more specifically it will be a course in *information technology ethics* and even more precisely than that we will focus specifically on *the ethics of privacy for information technologies*. Readings will focus on philosophical theories of information and of privacy. The emphasis will be on recent 'contextualist' models of privacy. Later in the course we will work to apply these models to historical and contemporary cases in which information privacy poses challenging ethical dilemmas ripe for the work of severe philosophical thought. Our primary authors will be Helen Nissenbaum, Daniel Solove, and Luciano Floridi – and along the way we will encounter a number of canonical 20th-century philosophers including John Dewey, Ludwig Wittgenstein, & Georg Henrik von Wright.

Philosophy 410/510 Philosophy of Biology—Professor Morar
MW 1200-1350 122 MCK

Recent findings emerging in microbial biology highlight numerous microbial interactions that affect biological organisms and thus, offer us new ways for understanding the living world. Are the functions of an organism the unique outcome of its own genetics? Are its physiological capacities the single product of its evolution? Are human psychological states and emotions, in a word our personality, nothing else than the expression of our organic properties? Ultimately, are biological organisms *truly* individuals? Today, microbial biology calls into question the most traditional understandings of individual organisms. This course examines the evolutionary explanations for the emergence of multicellular individuals, the notion of organism and agent of selection, and, finally, asks whether a symbiotic view of life calls into question our classical evolutionary framework.

Philosophy 421/521 Ancient Philosophers: Plato—Professor Warnek
MW 1400-1550 101 LIB

This course is devoted to a careful reading of Plato's dialogue, *The Republic*. The course will proceed as a seminar, and the emphasis will be on developing an interpretation of the dialogue as we proceed in discussion. We will also be asking general questions that concerns the unique challenges presented in

reading a Platonic dialogue. What is philosophical important about a dialogical text? How do the mythic and dramatic aspects of the texts bear upon the dialogue as it is presented. We will also consider how different interpretive assumptions lead to different conclusions concerning what this dialogue reveals. Is the account of the "best city," for example, meant to be taken programmatically, as a political project, or does it instead reveal something about the limits of philosophical discourse in being able to address the concerns of political life? What is the relation between the concern with the life of the individual as a *psyche* and the life of the community as a *polis*? How does the dialogue challenge us to think differently both about the nature of the political in general and about the political dimension of philosophical inquiry?

Philosophy 433/533 17th & 18th Century Philosophers: Spinoza—Professor Vallega-Neu
M 1800-2050 121 MCK

This course will consist mainly in a close reading and discussion of Spinoza's *Ethics*, which will be supplemented by his "Treatise on the Emendation of the Intellect." As we read Spinoza's *Ethics* we will learn how he conceives of God/Nature as a substance with infinite attributes and modes comprising everything that exists, how he explains the nature and origin of mind and emotions, what power we have of our emotions, and how we can find ultimate blessedness in the love of God/Nature. Spinoza was highly influential on German Idealism and on 20th century French philosophers. For most recent developments in the reception of Spinoza (especially "materialist" readings of Spinoza) we will look at some essays from *The New Spinoza*, edited by Warren Montag & Ted Stolze (Minneapolis/London: University of Minnesota Press, 2008). We will use the translation of the *Ethics* by Shirley (Hackett, 1999).

Philosophy 463 20th Century Philosophers: Gilman—Professor McKenna
TR 1400-1550 123 MCK

Charlotte Perkins Gilman (1860-1935) is best known for her short story "The Yellow Wallpaper," and her novel *Herland*. These works have made her a well-known early feminist figure. Her body of work, however, is much broader than these stories suggest and her influence on the feminist movement continues to this day. This course will involve reading some of her fiction in the context of her philosophical non-fiction. Texts will include *Women and Economics*, *Human Work*, and *The Man-Made World*. The course will also explore the connections between her work and the broader philosophical conversations that were emerging in the U.S. at the time she was writing and the relevance of her work today.

Philosophy 607 Philosophy and Teaching Seminar—Mann
T 1100-1150 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 American Pro-Seminar—Professor McKenna
MW 1600-1750 121 MCK

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

Philosophy 607 Genealogy Workshop—Professor Koopman
TR 1900-2050 250C SC

In this course students will write a genealogy of some problematic present practice that piques their interest and curiosity. In taking genealogy as our rubric we will focus primarily on the work of Michel Foucault. In the first portion of the course, we will read Foucault—not so much with a focus on interpreting his philosophical claims (or the philosophical consequences of his claims) as with an eye to grasping and specifying the mechanics of genealogy as a form of critical inquiry. Put differently, we will focus on Foucault's *methods* rather than on the *contents* of his claims. Prior to the start of the term every student must read (or reread) Foucault's 1975 *Discipline and Punish* in its entirety (this is a firm requirement and students who have not recently read this text will not be eligible to participate in the course). We will begin the course with a range of writings by Foucault, including some of his Collège de France lectures exhibiting genealogies-in-becoming such as the just-translated 1972-73 lectures titled *The Punitive Society*. With this methodological guidance in hand, we will turn in the second half of the course to a double-aspect project in which students (preferably working in collaborative fashion with others in the class) will both write their own genealogies and continue reading the genealogical writings of others who are also working after Foucault (we will draw on work by Arnold Davidson, Ladelle McWhorter, Andrew Dilts, and Verena Erlenbusch). There will be ample time throughout this portion of the course for students to share, workshop, and collaborate on their own genealogies-in-progress. **Note:** though 'D&P' is required pre-class reading, and some students are in a reading group (the 'CGC') focused on this text in Fall term, eligibility for this class does not require prior participation in the reading group, but only a recent reading of 'D&P', e.g., on your own over winter break.

Philosophy 607 Seminar Kant and Post-Kantian Idealism—Professor Zambrana
T 1600-1850 250C SC

This seminar will serve as an introduction to German Idealism. We will examine the development of idealism from Kant to Hegel by considering the notions of freedom distinctive of Fichte, Schelling, and Hegel's responses to Kant's critical philosophy.

Philosophy 643 Feminist Phenomenology and Political Philosophy—Professor Mann
MW 1000-1150 250C SC

This course will tackle several important themes in feminist political philosophy, potentially including the social contract, redistribution/recognition/representation, women's rights as human rights, and feminist analyses of and responses to sexual violence including rape (also in war) and sexual harassment. We will likely read texts from Carole Pateman, Nancy Fraser, Iris Young, Catherine MacKinnon, Andrea Smith, Martha Nussbaum and others. This is a graduate seminar and will be conducted as such, with students taking major responsibility for presenting texts and leading class discussion.