PHIL 2300-001 Beginning Philosophy 10:00-10:50 MWF ENG/PHIL 109

Staff

This is a general introduction to philosophy, designed to acquaint students with certain significant problems as they are considered by major philosophical figures. These are not esoteric questions but instead ones central to ordinary human experience. Students will be encouraged to formulate and defend their own answers to these questions, using the concepts and methods of inquiry introduced in the course. This process will help improve students’ abilities to think more critically and to communicate with greater clarity and precision.

PHIL 2300-002 Beginning Philosophy 9:30-10:50 TR ENG/PHIL 160

Dr. Jacob Beck

In everyday life, we make a vast number of assumptions. We assume that God exists, and that it is wrong to commit murder. We assume that we are capable of freely choosing our actions, and that people are morally responsible for the actions they choose. We assume that human beings are conscious, but that rocks, tables and microwave ovens are not. We assume that the sun will rise tomorrow, though the stock market might not. Philosophy is the attempt to think through assumptions such as these and to ask whether and how they are justified. Is it really true that God exists, that murder is wrong, that rocks aren’t conscious, and that the sun will rise tomorrow? If so, how do we know? The primary aim of this course is to examine such questions by reading, writing, and thinking about philosophy. A secondary aim is to hone your critical reasoning skills.

PHIL 2310-001 Logic 9:00-9:50 MWF ENG/PHIL 151

PHIL 2310-003 Logic 10:00-10:50 MWF ENG/PHIL 164

PHIL 2310-007 Logic 11:00-11:50 MWF ENG/PHIL 151

PHIL 2310-008 Logic 2:00-2:50 MWF FORL 118

Shahin Kaveh

Logic is the study of human reasoning. Some believe that studying logic makes us more rational and better at critical thinking. Others think that logic makes us explicitly aware of the rules of good reasoning that all of us in a sense already know. Yet others believe that logic is a tool – like mathematics – that makes communication clearer and more efficient. Logic is indispensible for both philosophy and the sciences. But logic is also very helpful for those whose jobs have to do with argumentation and convincing others, like lawyers, journalists, and politicians. And finally, logic is good for life. In this course, we will study a variety of topics in logic, focusing on deductive logic for the most part. Deductive logic is the study of those forms of reasoning in which the conclusion in guaranteed with certainty when the assumptions are true. We will also learn about inductive and “abductive” logic (important forms of reasoning with less certainty). If time allows, we will also study fallacies, i.e. common forms of bad reasoning, and learn how to avoid them.

PHIL 2310-002 Logic 11:00-11:50 MWF ENG/PHIL 160

PHIL 2310-006 Logic 1:00-1:50 MWF ENG/PHIL 163

Dr. Jonathan Dorsey

This course focuses on the syntax, semantics, and derivation system for sentential and predicate logic.  Importantly, the student will learn not only the formal theory of logic but also how to use it to assess the validity of arguments in natural language.

PHIL 2310-004 Logic 9:30-10:50 TT ENG/PHIL 164

PHIL 2310-005 Logic 11:00-12:20 TT ENG/PHIL 160

Dr. Dustin Tucker

This course is an introduction to formal logic focused on two artificial languages, propositional logic and first-order logic. Studying these languages (and translating sentences of natural language--sentences of English--into them), we will develop some tools to help us understand and evaluate arguments built up out of ordinary English sentences. We will also develop a better understanding of important philosophical concepts, such as truth and meaning. Overall, we will learn to use mathematical and logical reasoning to evaluate the validity of an argument. Assessment will be by exams and homework, which will require you to apply various tools and techniques in making such evaluations.

PHIL 2320-001 Intro to Ethics 1:00-1:50 MWF ENG/PHIL 153

PHIL 2320-006 Intro to Ethics 12:00-12:50 MWF ENG/PHIL 163

PHIL 2320-007 Intro to Ethics 1:00-1:50 MWF ENG/PHIL 360

PHIL 2320-008 Introl to Ethics 9:00-9:50 MWF ENG/PHIL 150

Staff

Discussion of problems and theories of morality. Includes the application of philosophical techniques to issues of contemporary moral concern

PHIL 2320-002 Intro to Ethics 9:30-10:50 TR MLAB 100

Dr. Howard Curzer

Contemporary ethics is dominated by three systems (virtue ethics, utilitarianism, deontology) proposed by three great philosophers (Aristotle, Mill, Kant). Students in this course will come to understand these three moral systems. Students will be able to compare and contrast these three moral systems, weighing their strengths and weaknesses. Students will also apply each of these three moral systems to three contemporary moral problems (abortion, economic justice, marriage).

PHIL 2320-003 Intro to Ethics 10:00-10:50 MWF ENG/PHIL 163

PHIL 2320-004 Intro to Ethics 11:00-11:50 MWF ENG/PHIL 163

Dr. Walter Schaller

This course will be centered on the moral theories of John Stuart Mill and Immanuel Kant. We will read selections from Mill’s two most important books, UTILITARIANISM and ON LIBERTY. We will pay particular attention to Mill’s defense of individuality (and his criticism of social tyranny) in ON LIBERTY and try to figure out how it is consistent with utilitarianism. In the process we will also want to evaluate Mill’s argument for freedom of speech and his criticisms of paternalism, the offense principle, and legal moralism. We will also consider some important theoretical questions about the moral relevance of the distinction between killing and letting die, and between intending and merely foreseeing harm. THIS COURSE FULFILLS THE CORE CURRICULUM HUMANITIES REQUIREMENT.

PHIL 2320-005 Intro to Ethics 9:00-9:50 MWF ENG/PHIL 260

Dr. Jeremy Schwartz

How should we live? What is a good life? Ought I to forgo my own interests for the interests of another? Is it sometimes permissible to kill innocent human beings? Is it permissible to kill animals for food? Ethical philosophy attempts to answer these sorts of questions through reason and reflection. Within current ethical philosophy, there are three major schools of thought on how these sorts of questions should be answered: utilitarianism, virtue theory, and deontology. While each of these attempts to shed light on all of these questions merely through reason and reflection, each of them arrives at very different answers to these questions. In this class, we will investigate utilitarianism, deontology, and virtue theory in some detail by closely reading both the founding texts of each of the ethical theories as well as reading some modern re-interpretations and criticisms. In addition, in the last part of the class, we will seek to apply these theories to three test cases: abortion, animal rights, and global poverty. The application to test cases should both shed light on our intuitions about these morally contested issues but also shed light on the ethical theories themselves.

PHIL 2350-001 World Religions & Phil. 9:00-9:50 MWF ENG/PHIL 160

Dr. Mark Webb

This course is a study of seven major world religions: Hinduism, Buddhism, Taoism, Confucianism, Islam, Judaism, and Christianity.  We will study the doctrines and practices of each of these religions; then, for each religion, we will critically examine some element of doctrine or practice to see if it can be justified.  For example, we will critically examine the doctrines of karma and reincarnation, the doctrine of monotheism, the problem of evil, and the doctrine of the incarnation. This course satisfies the multiculturalism requirement.

PHIL 2350-002 World Religions & Phil. 10:00-10:50 MWF ENG/PHIL 153

Robert Reed

This course introduces students to the major world religions while placing a special emphasis on the philosophical issues related to religion. My approach is to cover each religion alongside the other religions of the larger tradition. I give special attention to the the different understandings of human nature and personhood, problems of human existence, and proposed solutions.

We cover the Vedic Tradition (Hinduism, Jainism, Sikhism, and Buddhism), the Chinese Tradition (Confucianism and Daoism), and the Abrahamic Tradition (Judaism, Christianity, and Islam). In addition to discussing the basic tenets, practices, and history of each religion, we consider some of the philosophical commitments entailed by various religious beliefs. When feasible, we will invite guest speakers representing different religions and take field trips to worship sites.

PHIL 3303-001 Modern European Phil. 11:00-12:20 TR ENG/PHIL 164

Dr. Francesca di Poppa

This course will offer an overview of the major philosophical debates in the age from Bacon to Kant (early 17th to late 18th century). Among the topics covered, issue in metaphysics and epistemology (such as the problem of causation and the quest for a clear and certain knowledge), ethics (questions on duty and human happiness), religious epistemology and some political thought. We will read, among others, Descartes, Bacon, Malebranche, Hobbes, Spinoza, Leibniz and Kant.

PHIL 3320-001 Intro. To Political Phil 2:00-2:50 MWF ENG/PHIL 163

Dr. Walter Schaller

This course will focus on three topics:

(1) The political philosophy of John Rawls, probably the most important American political philosopher in the last fifty years. We will read his book JUSTICE AS FAIRNESS: A RESTATEMENT, focusing on his argument for hit two principles of justice and his defense of political liberalism (liberal neutrality).

(2) Political Obligation: are citizens morally obligated to obey the law, or must we be anarchists? We will read A. John Simmons, .MORAL PRINCIPLES AND POLITICAL OBLIGATION and analyze the various arguments for the existence of political obligations.

(3) Nationalism and Cosmopolitanism: If we think that all human beings are morally equal, how is it possible to justify partiality toward our co-nationals (or fellow citizens)? Let us define nationalism as the idea that members of a nation are (often) permitted to be partial toward one another because being a member of a particular nation is a morally significant fact that creates special obligations (which one does not have toward members of other nations). How can that be justified? Offhand, it appears to be inconsistent with the widespread belief that all human beings are owed equal consideration--that they have equal moral worth. If that is true, then how can the fact of nationality--that someone does, or does not, belong to a particular nation be morally relevant? On the other hand, how much partiality does cosmopolitanism permit?

PHIL 3340-001 Minds, Brains, & Computers 12:30-1:50 TR ENG/PHIL 163

Dr. Jonathan Dorsey

This course is primarily a study in the philosophy of artificial intelligence.  Other main topics will include: i) computational versus connectionist models of the human brain and ii) the phenomenon of consciousness vis-à-vis brains and computers.

PHIL 3342-001 Philosophy & Film 2:00-3:20 TR ENG/PHIL 164

Dr. Anna Christina Ribeiro

This course covers a variety of philosophical questions related to motion pictures: What is film? Is film art? What is the difference between fiction and documentary films? How does narration work in film? What is the nature of our emotions for fictional characters? Who is the author of a film? Can we judge a film on the basis of the moral message it appears to endorse? Can we learn from films? We will read key works by contemporary philosophers in the analytic tradition as we consider these questions, such as Roger Scruton, Gregory Currie, Noël Carroll, Arthur Danto, George Wilson, and Mary Deveraux. The course also has a lab component on Wednesday, 3:30-5:30 pm, for movie viewing and discussion.

PHIL 4310-001 Advanced Logic 11:00-11:50 MWF ENG/PHIL 164

Dr. Dustin Tucker

Logic is the study of reasoning--logical systems are theories about how good reasoning works. But the theories are not perfect. The first-order logic covered in a standard introductory course, for instance, fails to correctly capture a great deal of everyday reasoning. We will study a variety of more sophisticated systems, along with their philosophical merits and demerits. This course will also introduce some of the logical notation and concepts that have become ubiquitous in some areas of contemporary philosophy, such as philosophy of language. Assessment will primarily be by homework sets, but there will be a final exam as well.

PHIL 4320-001 Ethics 1:00-1:50 MWF ENG/PHIL 164

Dr. Jeremy Schwartz

In the class, we will investigate the question, "how should I live?" by looking at various philosophical answers that have been proposed. Currently, there are three major philosophical approaches to this question: deontological, virtue theoretical, and consequentialist. Rather than surveying, a range of authors, I have selected one or two contemporary representatives of each approach, and we will study each of these authors in depth. By delving into the details of these theories, we will arrive at a deep understanding of what motivates each of these approaches.

PHIL 5125-001 Intro to Research Ethics 2:00-2:50 F ENG/PHIL 264

Dr. Howard Curzer

This course will introduce future researchers to research ethics. During the first few classes, the instructor will sketch two frameworks for moral reasoning (Consequentialism and Deontology) using a lecture-discussion format. These frameworks will then be applied to several issues, common to many disciplines, that can arise in the course of research. Faculty members from several disciplines will be invited to give guest lectures. Students will be encouraged, though not required to present case studies about which they have particular insight to the rest of the class. The format throughout the bulk of the course will be discussion of research ethics case studies. In each class period, the instructor, guest-lecturer, or student will present the moral issues and complexity of one or more cases, and then lead a discussion about these cases.

PHIL 5311-001 Sem. In Epistemology 3:30-5:00 MW ENG/PHIL 264

Dr. Dustin Tucker

Logic is the study of reasoning--logical systems are theories about how good reasoning works. But the theories are not perfect. The first-order logic covered in a standard introductory course, for instance, fails to correctly capture a great deal of everyday reasoning. We will study a variety of more sophisticated systems, along with their philosophical merits and demerits. This course will also introduce some of the logical notation and concepts that have become ubiquitous in some areas of contemporary philosophy, such as philosophy of language. Assessment will primarily be by homework sets, but there may be a final project as well. The exact topics covered may depend in part on student interests.

PHIL 5314-001 Contemporary Aesthetics 11:00-12:20 TR ENG/PHIL 264

Dr. Anna Christina Ribeiro

What counts as art? What function does art serve, if any? Do we experience art works differently from other things in the world? How do we interpret works of art? Can we have an aesthetic experience of nature, or only of art works? Is it right to evaluate art on the basis of the moral views they might express? We will discuss these and other questions as we consider particular art forms and art works.

PHIL 5320-001 Seminar in Ethics: 3:30-5:00 TR ENG/PHIL 264

Contemporary Virtue Ethics

Dr. Howard Curzer

In modern times Utilitarian and Deontological approaches have dominated moral philosophy. Recently a growing number of ethicists have become dissatisfied with these approaches. Virtue ethicists believe that insufficient attention has been paid to questions concerning the good life and the good person. Virtue ethicists maintain that the study of the virtues (and vices) should be central to ethics. What is a virtue? Are there virtues? Are integrity, care, and environmental reverence virtues? How are virtues acquired, maintained, and exercised? What role do reason, passion, and perception play? Do all virtues have the same psychological structure? In what sense do the virtues form a unity? Can virtue ethics generate concrete, plausible accounts of right action, irresolvable dilemmas, and moral luck? Will virtue ethics revolutionize role ethics, applied ethics, and the ethics of oppressed peoples?

We will read both founding and recent works by the reigning virtue ethics triumvirate: Hursthouse, Swanton, and Slote. We will also read essays by the current cool kids: Calhoun, Russell, Tessman, Doris, Stohr, and others.

PHIL 5340-001 Seminar in Metaphysics 2:00-3:20 MW ENG/PHIL 264

Dr. Jonathan Dorsey

The main purpose of this seminar is to clarify the metaphysical thesis of physicalism.  We will work through some of the more recent literature about defining the term ‘physical’ and about whether physicalism is best understood as a supervenience thesis.