

DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY FALL 2013 COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

PHIL 2300-004 00075	Beginning Philosophy	11:00-12:20 TR	MCOM
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Dr. Francesca DiPoppa

This class will offer an overview of important questions and topics addressed in ancient and contemporary philosophical debates. Some of these questions are: what is the nature of knowledge? What is right and wrong, and how can we know? Is there a proof for the existence of God? What is a just society? What is a meaningful life? Readings include Plato, Aristotle, Descartes, Hume and contemporary philosophers such as Armstrong, Nagel, Frankfurt and others

PHIL 2300-003	Beginning Philosophy	11:00-11:50 MWF	MCOM 83
PHIL 2300-005	Beginning Philosophy	10:00-10:50 MWF	ENG/PHIL 260

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 2310-001	Logic	10:00-10:50 MWF	ENG/PHIL 105
PHIL 2310-002	Logic	9:00-9:50 MWF	MCOM 00359
PHIL 2310-005	Logic	11:00-11:50 MWF	ENG/PHIL 260

Staff

Development of formal methods for evaluating deductive reasoning. Additional topics may include uses of language, definition, nondeductive inference. Satisfies the Core Curriculum mathematics requirement. (in conjunction with a mathematics course).

PHIL 2310-003	Logic	11:00-12:20 TR	MCOM 00353
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Dr. Christopher Hom

A central aspect of reasoning is the ability to give arguments for one's conclusions. Logic is the formal representation of arguments, so mastering logic is essential for good reasoning. In this course, we will investigate the underlying, logical form of sentences and the deductive relations that hold between them, thus giving us deeper insight into the notion of logical inference from premises to its conclusion. The course will present three logical systems, each in increasing expressive power: sentential logic, monadic quantificational logic, and polyadic quantificational logic. For each system, we will closely examine the syntax of the system, its relation to English, its particular semantic features, and the general properties of satisfiability, validity, implication and equivalence.

PHIL 2320-001 Intro to Ethics 9:00-9:50 MWF ENG/PHIL 163
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 2320-002 Intro to Ethics 9:30-10:50 TR
MCOM 00075

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 first part of the course, we will discuss the famous "trolley problem" and consider some important theoretical questions about the moral relevance of the distinctions between killing and letting die and between intending and merely foreseeing harm. THIS COURSE FULFILLS THE CORE CURRICULUM HUMANITIES REQUIREMENT.

PHIL 2320-H01 INTRO TO ETHICS 11:00-12:20 TR ENG/PHIL
264

Dr. Daniel Nathan

LIMITED TO ENTERING FRESHMEN ENROLLED IN THE HONORS COLLEGE. Introduction to Ethics

Discussion of moral problems and theories of morality. Includes the application of philosophical techniques to issues of contemporary moral concern. Fulfills Core Humanities requirement. (Writing Intensive)

PHIL 3301-001 Classical Greek Philosophy 12:30-1:50 TR
ENG/PHIL 163

Dr. Howard Curzer

"The philosophers have merely interpreted the world in various ways; the point, however, is to change it." – Karl Marx

"We are inquiring not in order to know what virtue is, but in order to become good." – Aristotle

In this course we will study (a) the ethical theories of Plato and Aristotle, (b) their theories about the metaphysics of change, (c) the ways in which their theories of change may have changed their theories of ethics, (d) and the ways in which their theories of ethics may have changed their theories of change.

"Life Is Change." – Madonna

PHIL 3320-001 Introduction to Political Philosophy 1:00-1:50 MWF
ENG/PHIL 163

Dr. Walter Schaller

This course will focus on several topics in political philosophy:

(1) Immigration: Is there a moral justification for restricting immigration between countries? On what grounds are the people of one country morally justified in preventing immigration by people from another country?

(2) The moral obligation to obey the law: Many people believe there is a moral obligation to obey the law just because it is the law. Is that true? Or should we be philosophical anarchists who think that all existing states are illegitimate. If there is a moral obligation to obey the law, is civil disobedience morally justified?

(3) Property: What is the nature of property rights? Is there a natural right to property (as John Locke argued) or are property rights purely conventional (as Thomas Hobbes argued)? Or is there a third alternative (as John Rawls thought)?

(4) Climate Change: Given that nearly every scientist believes that the earth is warming (owing to increased amounts greenhouse gases like carbon dioxide and methane in the atmosphere) and given that an increase of several degrees in the average temperature on earth could have catastrophic consequences (rising sea levels; flooding; droughts; more hurricanes), what are we morally obligated to do? What moral obligations do we have to the future generations (some unborn) who will be affected by these consequences?

PHIL 3321-001 Philosophy of Law 9:30-10:50 TR ENG/PHIL
260

Dr. Daniel Nathan

The United States Supreme Court regularly sends down decisions that engage broad popular interest. Court decisions have lately addressed the death penalty, gun control, homosexual rights, and the government's use of torture and intrusive surveillance techniques.

Each of these decisions has been viewed by the general public as highly controversial, and has generated a broad spectrum of political and personal responses. But popular political views rarely reflect an understanding of the nature of law and legal systems, or a familiarity with the Court's reasoning in relevant previous cases, or even a superficial acquaintance with philosophically and legally reasonable views of the ideas of justice, privacy, or liberty. This course will try to remedy some of these gaps in understanding, first by studying the nature of law and its relation to morality, then by turning its focus to the nature of justice, privacy, and liberty in specific relation to the legal issues raised by Supreme Court cases during the past several years.

PHIL 4331-001 Philosophy of Language 2:00-3:20 TR ENG/PHIL 163

Dr. Christopher Hom

How does language relate to the world? How do we manage to use words to talk about things?

What is the relationship between the words we use and the thoughts that they express? These are the central questions for this course. Along the way, we will explore the concepts of meaning, truth, and belief.

to them, the relationship between a name and the object it picks out is mediated by descriptive information. The differences between these two competing approaches will be brought out in our discussion of propositions and belief reports. We will go on to examine further implications of direct reference theories for meaning and thought. Other related topics in the course include: truth and meaning, the role of contemporary linguistics, pragmatics and context, metaphor, and pejorative words.

PHIL 4340-001 Metaphysics 9:30-10:50 TR ENG/PHIL
163
Staff
Consideration of the nature of what there is (ontology) or of the nature of the universe as a whole (cosmology)

PHIL 5125-001 Intro to Research Ethics 12:00-12:50 F ENG/PHIL 264
Dr. Jeremy Schwartz
Introduces future researchers to research ethics. Presents frameworks for moral reasoning and application of those frameworks to moral problems through a discussion of case studies.003

PHIL 5302-001 Studies of Modern Phil (1600-1800) 2:00-3:20 TR ENG/PHIL
264
Dr. Francesca diPoppa
Studies in major philosophical works of the modern period drawn from such philosophers as Descartes, Spinoza, Leibniz, Locke, Berkeley, Hume, and Kant. May be repeated as topic varies.

PHIL 5308-001 Basic Issues in Contemporary Phil 12:30-1:50 TR
ENG/PHIL 264
Staff
Major philosophical theories and controversies of the twentieth century. Works will be drawn from such philosophers as Wittgenstein, Russell, Heidegger, Husserl, Quine, Davidson, and Kripke. May be repeated as topic varies.

PHIL 5330-001 Philosophy of Science 3:00-4:20 MW ENG/PHIL
110
Dr. Joel Velasco
For this term we will look at a variety of views on three central topics in the philosophy of science - Causation, Laws, and Explanation - and the relationship between them. Questions to be addressed include: What are laws of nature? Are there laws other than those described by physics (for instance, are there laws of biology, meteorology, or economics?) Are there ceteris paribus laws (that is, laws which hold 'other things being equal')? What is the nature of causation and how does it relate to laws? What is a scientific explanation? Is it necessarily a causal one? Can we have scientific explanations that do not cite laws of nature? Readings will likely include large chunks of books by Jim Woodward and Stathis Psillos as well a number of contemporary papers by writers such as David Lewis and Marc Lange.

PHIL 5341 Great Figures in Philosophy 3:30-4:50 TR ENG/PHIL
264
Dr. Jeremy Schwartz
This class focuses on the *Critique of Pure Reason*, which is the greatest work of the enlightenment thinker Immanuel Kant. In this work, Kant ushered in his "Copernican revolution" and sought to radically change the questions that philosophers ask, the answers they give to the traditional questions, and their method of approaching philosophy as a whole. Kant himself claims that "there is not a single metaphysical problem

although few would agree with Kant on this claim, most everyone would agree that there is not a single metaphysical problem about which Kant has not advanced our thinking. At the end of this class, you should be able to read the *Critique* on your own such that you can refer to the text in order to evaluate the claims of commentators and come up with original textual interpretations of your own. Our procedure will be to read through the *Critique* slowly and carefully with an emphasis on understanding Kant at a sentence-by-sentence level and seeing how this sentence-level understanding fits in with a broader philosophical picture.

PHIL 5350-SEMINAR IN TEACHING PHIL. 5:00-7:50 M

ENG/PHIL 110

Staff

Theory, practice, and problems of teaching philosophy for beginning instructors. Development of course objectives, syllabi, and teaching techniques. Practical pedagogical and associated philosophical issues.

Required of all teaching assistants.