

DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY FALL 2014 COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

PHIL 2300-001	Beginning Philosophy	11:00-11:50 MWF	ENG/PHIL 264
PHIL 2300-002	Beginning Philosophy	9:00-9:50 MWF	ENG/PHIL 264
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 2300-003	Beginning Philosophy	10:00-10:50 MWF	MCOM 353
Dr. Anna Ribeiro			

This course is an introduction to some central philosophical questions:

- What is the moral way to conduct our lives?
- What is free will? Do we have it?
- Who am I?
- Is there a difference between the mind and the brain?
- How do we know the answers to these and other questions? How do we know that we know them? How do we justify our answers?

Readings will be both historical and contemporary.

Prerequisites: None.

This course satisfies the Texas Tech University core curriculum requirement in Humanities.

PHIL 2300-004	Beginning Philosophy	9:30-10:50 TR	AGED 102
Dr. Alex Grzankowski			

This course is an introduction to philosophy. There are two main aims in this class. One aim is to teach you to think critically and carefully – a skill everyone in *every* discipline should have. In order to achieve that aim we will consider a range of classical and contemporary philosophical issues (though the skills can be applied to anything). The issues selected tie into the second aim – to introduce you to some philosophy.

To meet our aims we will work through 4 topics:

Ethics (via consideration of major ethical theories and their application to contemporary issues)

Mind and Consciousness

The existence of God

Free will

PHIL 2310-001	Logic	10:00-10:50 MWF	ENG/PHIL 152
PHIL 2310-005	Logic	11:00-11:50 MWF	ENG/PHIL 152
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 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 2:00-3:20 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 9:30-10:50 TR ENG/PHIL 164
Dr. Howard Curzer

Love and friendship were important concepts in the ancient world, and of course they still are. In this class we will examine what Homer the poet, Empedocles the scientist, Euripides the playwright, Socrates the sage, Plato the dialectician, Cicero the essayist, and Aristotle the philosopher all thought about love and friendship. Their ideas about love and friendship will prove to be both intrinsically interesting and applicable to our own day. These ideas will also provide an intriguing route into epistemology and ethics. For love is a way of knowing, and friendship is a moral problem.

PHIL 3322-001 Biomedical Ethics 2:00-2:50 MWF ENG/PHIL 164
Staff

Discussion of conceptual and moral problems surrounding such issues as abortion, euthanasia, genetic research, behavior control, allocation of medical resources, health, and disease. Fulfills core Humanities requirement.

PHIL 3324-001 Philosophy of Religion 11:00-12:50 MWF ENG/PHIL 164
Dr. Mark Webb

This course is a survey of general philosophical problems that arise in connection with religion. Topics include the nature of religion, the existence of God, and the problem of evil. In addition, we will spend part of the semester considering the following questions about religious experience. Can people have direct experience of God, the Tao, Brahman, or whatever? What kind of grounds can it give them for religious belief? And finally, what kind of evidence can one person's religious experience provide for another person?

PHIL 3340-001 Minds, Brains, and Computers 11:00-12:20 TR ENG/PHIL 163

Dr. Alex Grzankowski

This course will take up a range of interconnected questions concerning the mind: What is the metaphysical nature of the mind?

-Is the mind a physical thing or is the mind something non-physical such as a soul?

-Are minds a kind of computer?

-What is the nature of consciousness?

What accounts for our identity over time?

-Can we survive death?

-Could our minds be uploaded to a computer?

What is the nature of perception?

-Do we see the world or only make contact with visual representations?

Do we have free will?

PHIL 3342-001 Philosophy and Film 12:00-12:50 MWF ENG/PHIL 260

Dr. Anna 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? How should we understand our emotions for fictional characters? Who is the author of a film? Can we judge the quality of 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; we will watch films every Friday afternoon.

PHIL 4310-001 Advanced Logic 3:30-4:50 TR ENG/PHIL 163

PHIL 5308-001 Basic Issues in Contemporary Phil 3:30-4:50 TR ENG/PHIL 163

Dr. Christopher Hom

The topic for the course will be the logical forms of sentences, and the deductive relations that hold between them. There will be a detailed treatment of first-order predicate logic, modal logic, quantified modal logic, and tense logic with a consideration of the syntax and semantics for each system, in increasing order of expressive power. The course will work precisely with such notions as logical formulae, models, validity, logical consequence, identity, definite descriptions, counterfactual conditionals and modal operators. Along the way, we will also reflect on metatheoretic observations about each system including soundness and completeness. Requirements include problem sets and in-class quizzes and exams.

PHIL 4321-001 Political Philosophy 1:00-1:50 MWF ENG/PHIL 163

Dr. Walter Schaller

Three Theories of Justice

John Rawls was the most influential and important political philosopher in the United States in the last fifty years. His theory of justice—which he called ‘justice as fairness’—was the focus of most debates about justice since the publication of his book, A THEORY OF JUSTICE, in 1971.

We will read his last book, JUSTICE AS FAIRNESS: A RESTATEMENT, and then two alternative theories of justice. From the right, Rawls was criticized by Robert Nozick who defended libertarianism in ANARCHY, STATE, AND UTOPIA. From the left, Rawls was criticized by G.A.

Cohen who defended a more egalitarian theory in a series of very influential articles. Once we understand Rawls’s theory, we will evaluate the criticisms made by Nozick and Cohen (as well as their own theories).

PHIL 5301-001 Studies in Greek Philosophy 2:00-3:20 TR ENG/PHIL 152
Dr. Howard Curzer

Love and friendship were important concepts in the ancient world, and of course they still are. In this class we will examine what Homer the poet, Empedocles the scientist, Euripides the playwright, Socrates the sage, Plato the dialectician, Cicero the essayist, and Aristotle the philosopher all thought about love and friendship. Their ideas about love and friendship will prove to be both intrinsically interesting and applicable to our own day. These ideas will also provide an intriguing route into epistemology and ethics. For love is a way of knowing, and friendship is a moral problem.

PHIL 5310-001 History of Aesthetics 11:00-12:20 TR ENG/PHIL 264
Dr. Daniel Nathan

This seminar will begin with a general overview of the history of theories of art and theories of beauty as they have evolved since Plato. After that initial overview and an exploration of certain aspects of classical Greek theories (specifically those of Plato and Aristotle), we will jump over two thousand years to a consideration of modern material, beginning with works from the eighteenth century. The main focus of the course will be on the last two hundred fifty years, with special emphasis on the development of theories of taste in the eighteenth century (especially in the writings of David Hume and Immanuel Kant), and the dominant theories of art of the first half of the twentieth century.

PHIL 5311-001 Seminar in Epistemology 6:00--8:50 W ENG/PHIL 264
Dr. Joel Velasco

Epistemology -- Introduction to Bayesian Epistemology -- Traditional epistemology considers all-or-nothing beliefs: you either believe that it's going to rain today or you don't. Bayesian epistemology supposes that individuals assign degrees of belief to propositions: you might be less confident that it will rain, or more confident without being entirely certain. These degrees of belief can be represented by numbers (I'm 70% confident it will rain today), and then subjected to mathematical constraints (if I'm 70% confident that it will rain today, I should be 30% confident that it won't). We will consider what degrees of belief are, how they relate to actions, what rational constraints on degrees of belief Bayesians propose, and why we should believe those constraints are rationally required. We will then apply Bayesian epistemology to better understand inductive reasoning, confirmation of hypotheses by evidence, and various puzzles and paradoxes. (Assignments include regular problem sets with both mathematical and philosophical questions, and a final paper.)

PHIL 5320-001 Seminar in Ethics 6:00--8:50 R ENG/PHIL 264
Dr. Jeremy Schwartz

Metaethics asks not about the virtues of any particular normative ethical theory but about the status of ethical claims. Are ethical claims a form of knowledge? Are they objective? Are they part of the fabric of the world? Are they projections of our attitudes onto the world? This course seeks to make progress on these questions.

PHIL 5350-SEMINAR IN TEACHING PHIL. 5:00-7:50 M ENG/PHIL 264
Dr. Daniel Nathan

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.