

DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY FALL 2018 COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

PHIL 2300-001	Beginning Philosophy	1:00-1:50	MWF	ENG/PHIL 163
PHIL 2300-002	Beginning Philosophy	12:00-12:50	MWF	ENG/PHIL 163

Douglas Westfall

This class will take seriously the questions that have bothered you since childhood. Questions like: What can we know? Do I have a soul? Free will? Is there a God? How should I live my life? What is justice? etc. This class will focus on classic texts in order to shed light on these problems while providing an introduction to the philosophic cannon.

PHIL 2300-003	Beginning Philosophy	10:00-10:50	MWF	MCOM 075
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Dr. Amy Flowerree

Do you have free will even if your actions are causally determined? Can you know that you are not living in a computer simulation? Can you survive your own death? Can you prove that God exists? Why should we be moral? What is morality? In this class, we will use the tools of philosophical reasoning to examine and evaluate these and other significant life questions.

PHIL 2300-004	Beginning Philosophy	11:00-1220	TR	CHEM 113
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Dr. Anna Ribeiro

What is philosophy? Has it always existed? Some of the questions that philosophers have tried to answer include what is the essence of all that exists, whether we have free will, what is the right way to live one's life, whether God's existence can be proven, and whether reason or sensory experience is the foundation of knowledge. We shall cover these and other questions in their historical context as we read through philosophical texts by some of the most influential thinkers in the Western tradition.

PHIL 2310-001	Logic	9:30-10:50	TR	MCOM 075
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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 2310-003 Logic 11:00-11:50 MWF MCOM 157

Dr. Bruno Whittle

Logic is the study of arguments. Here is an example of an argument: Freddy is an alien; all aliens can moonwalk; therefore, Freddy can moonwalk. There are two ways to assess an argument: (a) are the premises (i.e. starting points) *true*? (b) does the conclusion *follow from* the premises? We will be concerned exclusively with (b). (All of your other classes are, in one way or another, concerned with (a).) We will learn some completely general techniques for determining whether a conclusion does in fact follow from some premises. This will allow us to evaluate arguments---that is, stretches of reasoning---regardless of what they are about, be it politics, chemistry, or where to go for dinner. We will use a precise artificial language that will allow perspicuous representations of natural language arguments, and which will also allow rigorous methods for determining what follows from what. The ultimate aim is a much clearer appreciation of which arguments we should accept, and which we should produce ourselves.

PHIL 2320-001 Introduction to Ethics 12:00-12:50 MWF MCOM 057

Dr. Justin Tosi

What makes a human life go well? Can I be wrong about what is good for me, or is it just good to get what I want? Is figuring out the right thing to do in any case just a matter of figuring out what would do the most good, or are there some things we should not do no matter how much good results? And isn't all of this just subjective anyway? This course surveys some of the main philosophical views on these issues. Along the way we'll apply what we've learned to contested moral questions about issues like abortion, torture, and poverty relief.

PHIL 2320-002 Introduction to Ethics 9:30-10:50 TR ENG/PHIL 164

PHIL 2320-H01 Introduction to Ethics 11:00-12:20 TR 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-H02 Introduction to Ethics 2:00-3:20 TR ENG/PHIL 300

Dr. Daniel Nathan

How *ought* persons behave toward one another? Does it even make sense to *reason* about moral questions? After all, perhaps morality is just an individual subjective response, like one's taste in ice cream. Or maybe it's just a matter of religious dogma, so that one needn't think for oneself or bother trying to reason about it at all. Or perhaps all behavior boils down to self-interest anyway, so that talk of "moral obligation" is merely empty rhetoric. And, if it is not empty talk, what could possibly ground moral obligation? Imagine having one of those heavy late-night dorm discussions, but with Plato, Thomas Hobbes, John Stuart Mill, and Immanuel Kant sitting in. In this course, we will explore the potential of thinking hard and deeply about morality, and we will do so in the company of some of the giants of Western moral philosophy. (Limited to students enrolled in the Honors College.)

PHIL 2322-001	Business Ethics	10:00-10:50	MWF	ENG/PHIL 163
Douglas Westfall				
Discusses ethical theories as they relate to business practices. Concentrates on applications to concrete issues arising in the conduct of business.				

PHIL 2330-001	Science and Society	10:00-10:50	MWF	ENG/PHIL 164
PHIL 2330-H01	Science and Society	11:00-11:50	MWF	ENG/PHIL 164
Dr. Joel Velasco				
In this class we will not be doing science, but rather will be reflecting on the nature of science and the role that it should and does play in our modern lives. During the course we will examine such questions as whether there is a sharp dividing line between science and non-science (a “demarcation criterion”) and we will carefully consider the relationships between science and religion, between science and ethics, between science and the humanities, and between science, business, and politics. Finally, we will examine the role that science plays in a democratic society such as ours and how we as citizens should think about funding and directing scientific research.				

PHIL 2350-001	World Religion & Philosophy	9:00-9:50	MWF	ENG/PHIL 260
Dr. Mark Webb				
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 3301-001	Classical Greek Philosophy	9:30-10:50	TR	ENG/PHIL 163
Dr. Howard Curzer				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The theme of this course will be the development of the concept of JUSTICE in the bright Athenian morning of western civilization. • We begin with the <i>Oresteia</i>, a trilogy of plays wherein Aeschylus traces the evolution of the practice of retributive justice from vengeance through divine retribution to trial-by-jury. • In <i>Apology</i>, <i>Crito</i>, <i>Euthyphro</i>, <i>Meno</i>, and <i>Republic I</i>, Socrates argues that justice cannot be stipulated by jurors, laws, gods, or sophists. It cannot be encompassed by simple rules or a social contract. • In the <i>Republic</i>, Plato presents his own account of justice and how to acquire it. Justice for both people and states turns out to be a sort of psychic harmony acquired by a philosophic education. • Aristotle presents a different (better?) account in the <i>Nicomachean Ethics</i> and the <i>Politics</i>. He argues that that justice in the individual is a disposition, acquired via habituation and teaching, to feel and act toward others in moderate ways. A just state is a complex friendship network rather than an individual writ large. 				

HONS 3301-H02 Seminar in Humanities: 11:00-11:50 MWF ENG/PHIL 301

Buddhist Life and Thought

Dr. Mark Webb

This course will be an introduction to and survey of Buddhism from its inception in ancient India to its many varieties worldwide today. We will begin by examining the life of the Buddha in the setting of Indian culture of the time, to understand how it relates to earlier Vedic religion and to the other movements beginning at the same time. In the second part of the course, we will investigate Theravada Buddhism by looking at the Pali Canon, the body of texts they preserved to the present day, as well as a few very early post-canonical works. During this phase of the course we will pay special attention to the distinction between the monastic life and the lay life, and examine the philosophical and doctrinal issues that were argued and finally settled in this period, especially the doctrines of dependent origination and no-self. Then, in the third part of the course, we will address the Mahayana and Vajrayana movements, with a view to understanding a) what in Theravada they were reacting to, and b) how they accommodated themselves to local religious practices. In this phase of the course we will examine the doctrines of emptiness and Buddha-nature—how they developed and were defended, how they played out in the various Mahayana sects, and how they changed the character of Buddhism in North and East Asia. Finally, in the fourth part of the course, we will spend some time looking at how Buddhism survives in the modern world, especially in Europe and the Americas. In all four segments of the course, we will be concerned not only with what Buddhists believe, but also how they live. Recurring themes will include how Buddhist understanding of its central doctrines has changed; how Buddhism interacts with other religions as it moves around the world; and what is “essential Buddhism.”

PHIL 3320-001 Intro to Political Philosophy 10:00-10:50 MWF ENG/PHIL 260

Dr. Justin Tosi

What is the nature of a just society? Is it one in which people are as free as possible? Or is equality sometimes more important than freedom? Should states promote a particular vision of the good life, or try to remain neutral? More fundamentally, is freedom consistent with state authority at all? This course presents some attempts to answer these and similar questions by proponents of four political ideologies: liberalism, libertarianism, socialism, and conservatism. Figures discussed may include John Locke, J.S. Mill, John Rawls, Robert Nozick, G.A. Cohen, Michael Oakeshott, and Robert George.

PHIL 3322-001 Biomedical Ethics 11:00-11:50 MWF ENG/PHIL 260

Dr. Francesca DiPoppa

Is abortion always immoral? Is euthanasia? Are these morally permissible under certain circumstances, or maybe always? Everyone has an opinion about this. But there is a big difference between feeling a certain way about abortion, or euthanasia, or stem cell research, and having a philosophically informed opinion. This class will offer you the tools to be a philosophically informed participant in some of the most important debates in bioethics today.

PHIL 3324-001 Philosophy of Religion 11:00-12:20 TR ENG/PHIL 260

Dr. Joseph Gottlieb

This course is an introduction to analytic philosophy of religion. The core question to be explored is whether God—understood as ‘the greatest possible being’—exists. We will carefully formulate and scrutinize both arguments for God’s existence (the cosmological argument, the ontological argument, and the fine-tuning argument), and arguments against God’s existence (the argument from evil, the problem of divine hiddenness). We will also explore several related issues, including the nature of religious belief and faith, God’s so-called ‘middle knowledge,’ the Trinity, and the relationship between science and religion.

PHIL 3341-H01 **Philosophy of literature:** **2:00-3:20** **TR** **ENG/PHIL 304**
Dr. Francesca DiPoppa **Dante and Medieval Philosophy**

We will be reading parts of Dante Alighieri's *La Divina Commedia* (Divine Comedy) and explore several topics that form the philosophical backbone of his work, such as ethics, epistemology, political philosophy, philosophy of science, etc. We will also read philosophers that were part of Dante's background, including Augustine, Boetius, Bonaventure, and Thomas Aquinas.

PHIL 3342-001 **Philosophy of Film** **2:00-3:20** **TR** **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 Devereaux. The course also has a lab component; we will watch films every Friday afternoon.

PHIL 4330-001 **Epistemology** **1:00-1:50** **MWF** **ENG/PHIL 264**
Dr. Amy Flowerree

We find ourselves surrounded with information. Some voices call for us to believe one thing, and others call for the opposite. This raises an important question: what should we believe? Should we always believe the truth? And what justifies our beliefs? And can we ever truly know anything? In this class we will draw on historical and contemporary discussions of belief and knowledge. We will explore the nature of knowledge, evidence, and justification. We will consider whether practical and moral considerations ever bear on what we should believe. And finally, we will turn to the social dimension of belief and explore what we should do in cases of epistemic injustice and fake news.

PHIL 4340-001

Metaphysics

12:30-1:50 TR

ENG/PHIL 164

Dr. Christopher Hom

People ordinarily say things like:

- (1) Santa Claus doesn't exist.
- (2) Amy and Beth wore the same shirt yesterday.
- (3) Hillary could have won the election.
- (4) Shaq is bald.
- (5) Shaq is African-American.

On the surface, it seems that we know exactly what they are saying. But upon further reflection, complexities arise. For example, who are we talking about in (1)? If we are talking about someone, then (1) is false. If we are talking about no one, then how can we be saying anything? Either way, explaining the truth of (1) requires further inquiry. Consider sentence (2). They obviously did not literally step into the exact, same garment, so what do we mean? What is it for distinct objects to stand in the relation of being the same shirt? How do we assess the truth of (3)? Hillary Clinton didn't actually win the election, but what is force of the claim that she could have won? Does (4) commit us to saying that Shaq's scalp is completely hairless? What if it had one hair on it? Presumably one additional hair could not make a difference to his being bald. But what about two additional hairs? Or three? Or...? Although there are clear cases (hairless and Afro), there is no sharp delineation of the intermediary cases for when he goes from bald to non-bald. What then are we to say about the truth of (4) in the intermediary cases? And finally, in (5), what do race claims really say? In investigating the topics of existence, identity, fiction, modality, universals, vagueness, and race, we shall develop a fuller grasp of the complexities mentioned above, and inquire into a range of explanations for these seemingly mundane issues about the world.

PHIL 5125-001

Introduction to Research Ethics

2:00-2:50 W

ENG/PHIL 163

Dr. Jeremy Schwartz

There are norms that govern being a good brother, a good friend, and a good citizen. There are also norms that govern being a good researcher. Some of these norms, like intelligence, patience, and diligence have few if any ethical dimensions, but other norms, like academic integrity and honesty do have ethical dimensions. In this class, we will reflect upon the particular ethical challenges that face researchers. The ethical dimensions of research are increasingly being emphasized (in part due to the public outcry over their infringement), and reflection on these dimensions is increasingly being recognized as part of the training of a researcher. This class attempts to contribute to this training.

PHIL 5301-001

Studies in Greek Philosophy

12:30-1:50 TR

ENG/PHIL 264

Dr. Howard Curzer

- The theme of this course will be the development of the concept of JUSTICE in the bright Athenian morning of western civilization.
- We begin with the *Oresteia*, a trilogy of plays wherein Aeschylus traces the evolution of the practice of retributive justice from vengeance through divine retribution to trial-by-jury.
- In *Apology*, *Crito*, *Euthyphro*, *Meno*, and *Republic I*, Socrates argues that justice cannot be stipulated by jurors, laws, gods, or sophists. It cannot be encompassed by simple rules or a social contract.
- In the *Republic*, Plato presents his own account of justice and how to acquire it. Justice for both people and states turns out to be a sort of psychic harmony acquired by a philosophic education.
- Aristotle presents a different (better?) account in the *Nicomachean Ethics* and the *Politics*. He argues that that justice in the individual is a disposition, acquired via habituation and teaching, to feel and act toward others in moderate ways. A just state is a complex friendship network rather than an individual writ large.

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 5312-001 **Seminar in Logic** **2:00-3:20** **MW** **ENG/PHIL 264**

Dr. Bruno Whittle

We will work systematically through some area of formal logic. This might be the metatheory of predicate logic, or it might be modal logic.

PHIL 5331-001 **Philosophy Psychology** **2:00-5:20** **T** **ENG/PHIL 264**

Dr. Joe Gottlieb

Suppose I see a pencil in a glass of water. I see the pencil as bent. But it's not bent. This is a perceptual illusion. Suppose it perceptually seems as if there pencil before me. But there is no pencil at all. This is a perceptual hallucination. Taken together, the existence of both of these perceptual phenomenon constitute what is called the 'problem of perception': given the possibility of illusion and hallucination, is perception really an awareness of mind-independent objects, as we ordinarily assume it to be? This course employs the problem of perception as a springboard to examine several major theories of perception: representationalism, naïve realism, and (to a much lesser extent) adverbialism and sense datum theory.

PHIL 5350-001 **Seminar in Teaching Philosophy** **3:30-6:20** **W** **ENG/PHIL 264**

Dr. Joel Velasco

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.