

DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY FALL 2019 COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

PHIL 2300-003 **Beginning Philosophy** **10:00-10:50** **MWF** **LVRMRC 101**

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** **2:00-3:20** **TR** **CMLL 105**

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 2300-D01 **Beginning Philosophy** **ONLINE** **TBA** **TBA**

Dr. Francesca DiPoppa

What makes us the same person over time? How do we figure out what is the right thing to do? Do non-humans have moral rights? What is the difference between an opinion and an argument? Is it true that morality and truth are just points of view? Can philosophy be used to prove or disprove the existence of God? Come to think of it, what does "philosophy" even *mean*? In this online class, you will be introduced to some of the most important philosophical questions, and you will realize that they are not just for philosophers. Come for the humanities requirement, stay for the cute puppy videos!

PHIL 2310-D01 **Logic** **ONLINE** **TBA** **TBA**

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 inference from premises to 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.

This is an online course, so all lectures, handouts, assignments and exams will be on Blackboard. Exams require a regular computer (Windows/Mac computer or laptop). You cannot take exams from mobile devices (e.g. iPhone, iPad, Android devices, etc.). You also need a working webcam and microphone, and your computer will need the Google Chrome web browser.

PHIL 2310-001 Logic 11:00-11:50 MWF ENG/PHIL 260

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 2310-004 Logic 10:00-10:50 MWF HUMSCI 226

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 2320-002 Introduction to Ethics 12:30-1:50 TR AGRI 214

Dr. Howard Curzer

Contemporary ethics is dominated by three systems (virtue ethics, utilitarianism, deontology) proposed by three great philosophers (Aristotle, Mill, and 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 two contemporary moral problems (abortion and economic justice).

PHIL 2320-004 Introduction to Ethics 1:00-1:50 MWF ENG/PHIL 164

PHIL 2320-005 Introduction to Ethics 2:00-2:50 MWF ENG/PHIL 164

Douglas Westfall

This class will examine questions like: Can personal choices be right or wrong? Are there things or acts that should appropriately be referred to as good or evil? Is there a right way to live, and why should I live that way? If there is one, how do you go about living it out in practice? Do I have obligations towards other people and if so, what are they? How should I think about conflicts between my self-interest and my responsibility to others? We will consider skeptical positions before turning to examine competing answers regarding these questions. This class will rely on original source materials (e.g. Plato's *Republic* and Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*) for us to understand the primary schools of ethics in hopes of becoming better people.

PHIL 2320-H01

Introduction to Ethics

9:30-10:50 TR

ENG/PHIL 300

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 2330-001

Science and Society

10:00-10:50 MWF

ENG/PHIL 163

PHIL 2330-H01

Science and Society

11:00-11:50 MWF

ENG/PHIL 264

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 3301-001

Classical Greek Philosophy

9:30-10:50 TR

ENG/PHIL 164

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.
- Aeschylus, the playwright, traces the evolution of the practice of retributive justice from vengeance through divine retribution to trial-by-jury in the *Eumenides*.
- Thucydides, the historian, distinguishes international justice from realpolitik in the *History of the Peloponnesian War*.
- Socrates, the activist, argues in *Apology*, *Crito*, *Euthyphro*, and *Republic I* that justice cannot be stipulated by jurors, laws, gods, or sophists. It cannot be encompassed by simple rules or a social contract.
- Plato, the idealist, presents his own account of justice and how to acquire it in the *Republic*. Justice for both people and states turns out to be a sort of psychic harmony acquired by a philosophic education.
- Aristotle, the philosopher, presents a different (better?) account in the *Nicomachean Ethics* and the *Politics*. He argues 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 3321-H01**Philosophy of Law****11:00-12:20 TR****ENG/PHIL 301****Dr. Daniel Nathan**

The United States Supreme Court regularly sends down decisions that engage broad popular interest. For example, court decisions have lately addressed questions of transgender rights, gun control, same-sex marriage, the government's use of intrusive surveillance, voting rights and restrictions, and immigration policy. 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 the 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. This course satisfies three hours of the Social and Behavioral Sciences Core requirement.

PHIL 3322-001**Biomedical Ethics****2:00-3:20 TR****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 4300-001

Topics in Philosophy

1:00-1:50 MWF

ENG/PHIL 260

Dr. Christopher Hom

The course will look examine issues of race and gender from the perspective of contemporary analytic philosophy along three distinct dimensions: 1) metaphysics: what *is* race/gender; 2) epistemology: how do race/gender affect knowledge; and 3) philosophy of language: how are race/gender represented in language and media. Specific questions will include:

Is race a natural kind or a social construction?

Should we eliminate the concept of race?

What is implicit bias?

What is stereotype threat?

What do racial and gendered slurs mean, if anything?

Does pornography harm women, and if so, how?

Should slurs and pornography be protected under the First Amendment?

Assignments will include weekly reading questions, a midterm exam, one short paper, and one longer, final paper. A previous course in philosophy is recommended.

PHIL 4340-001

Metaphysics

2:00-3:20 TR

ENG/PHIL 163

Dr. Joseph Gottlieb

This class will be an advanced introduction to metaphysics. We will mainly focus on two topics: the nature of consciousness and personal identity. On the former, we will explore whether consciousness is wholly reducible to physical processes, is a non-physical or emergent property, or is a fundamental, primitive feature of the world. Getting clear on these issues will require close attention to related topics in the philosophy of language, scientific explanation and reduction. On the latter, we will explore neo-Lockean psychological, phenomenalist, narrativist, and animalist approaches to synchronic and diachronic identity.

PHIL 4341-001

Great Figures in Philosophy

12:30-1:50 TR

ENG/PHIL 164

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 which has not been solved, or for the solution of which the key at least has not been supplied,” [A10] and 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. This class is meant to guide you in your first encounter with the text. 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.