DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY SPRING 2015
COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

PHIL 2300-001	**Beginning Philosophy**	9:00-9:50	MWF	ENG/PHIL 151
PHIL 2300-004	**Beginning Philosophy**	11:00-11:50	MWF	ENG/PHIL 150

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**	1:00-1:50 MWF	ENG/PHIL 260

Dr. Darren Hick

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**	12:30-1:50 TR	CHEM 107

Dr. Anna Ribeiro

This course is an introduction to some central philosophical questions: what makes a self; how we acquire and justify knowledge; what is the difference between the mind and the brain; how do we know if we have free will; what is the moral way to conduct our lives and how do we know it; and whether one is justified in believing in a deity. Readings will be both historical and contemporary.

PHIL 2310-001	Logic	9:00-9:50 MWF	ENG/PHIL 150
PHIL 2310-003	Logic	11:00-11:50 MWF	ENG/PHIL 151
PHIL 2310-004	Logic	1:00-1:50 MWF	ENG/PHIL 164

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 2310-002	Logic	10:00-10:50 MWF	MCOM 75
PHIL 2310-D01	Logic	ONLINE COURSE	TBA

Dr. Jonathan Dorsey

This course focuses on the syntax, semantics, and derivation system for sentential and predicate logic. 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 2310-005   Logic   8:00-9:20 TR   ENG/PHIL 260
Dr. Christopher Hom
A central aspect of reasoning is the ability to give deductive 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.

PHIL 2310-H01   Logic   10:00-10:50 MWF   ENG/PHIL 151
Dr. Joel Velasco
Logic (honors): Factoring a large number, putting a huge list of names in alphabetical order, or solving a sudoku problem: each is an example of the kind of problem that can clearly be formalized and solved in a rote manner if you know the right method, or better, if you have access to the right computer program. But is every problem like that? What about analyzing the latest telescope data or even analyzing an editorial in the newspaper? Does the same logic underlie every type of problem? In this class, we will study notions like logical reasoning, logical consequence, and proof, and learn how to prove what follows (or doesn't follow) from what. Along the way, we will look at the scope and the limits of logic. To do this, we will see how logic connects with the real world (which we will explore through the history of the computer) and how it might extend into the most abstract of concepts such as the notion of infinity.

PHIL 2320-001   Intro to Ethics   6:00-7:20 TR   MCOM 00067
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 2320-002   Intro to Ethics   11:00-11:50 MWF   ENG/PHIL 310
Douglas Westfall
Discussion of moral problems and theories of morality. Includes the application of philosophical techniques to issues of contemporary moral concern.

PHIL 2320-003	Intro to Ethics	10:00-10:50 MWF	ENG/PHIL 164
PHIL 2320-004	Intro to Ethics	11:00-11:50 MWF	ENG/PHIL 164

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 2320-006   Intro 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 2350-001   World Religions & Phil.   9:00-9:50 MWF   MCOM 00075

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 3303-001 | Modern European Phil. | 12:00-1:50 TR | ENG/PHIL 153 |
| PHIL 3303-002 | Modern European Phil. | 2:00-3:20 TR | ENG/PHIL 153 |

Dr. Darren Hick

The period from roughly 1600-1800 is undoubtedly one of the most important times in the history of philosophy (and mankind!), ushering in the birth of modern science, the rise of empiricism, and with these, a game-changing upheaval of metaphysics and epistemology. About the last century of this period is known as the Age of Enlightenment, and saw probably more advances in political philosophy than at any time before it (or perhaps since). In this course, we will look to such philosophers as Descartes, Hume, Locke, Berkeley, and Kant. (Writing Intensive)

PHIL 3304-001   Existentialism & Phenomenology 12:30-1:50 TR   ENG/PHIL 260

Dr. Howard Curzer

What unites the existentialists is not their individual philosophies, but the nature of the problems that they set out to explore. We will discuss the following themes:

- **Primacy of the Individual**: Traditional philosophy, modern science, and the industrial revolution have reduced people to an abstraction. Existentialists maintain that the truths of human existence cannot be known through detached observation and contemplation, but must be inwardly appropriated through the experience of personal involvement growing out of one's own passionate concern.
- **Critique of Reason**: If reason is but part of human nature, rational fulfillment alone is not enough for a complete and authentic life. Moreover, the investigation of reality cannot be left to logic and reason alone.
- **Authenticity and Inauthenticity**: The inauthentic person never acquires a distinctive individual identity, but simply plays a part, acts out an assigned role, unquestioningly follows a pattern of behavior given by society. The authentic person seeks self-awareness and chooses to actualize a true self, discovered through introspection.
- **Boundary Situations**: Suddenly there comes a moment when a direct awakening is inescapable. Inauthenticities and illusions are exposed. Typical boundary situations include chance, choice, guilt, and especially death. Typical responses include alienation, nothingness, and dread.

PHIL 3321-001   Philosophy of Law 11:00-12:20 TR   ENG/PHIL 260

Dr. Daniel Nathan

Federal and state courts in the United States regularly send down decisions that engage broad popular interest. Recently, for example, US court decisions addressed the death penalty, gun control, same sex marriage, 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 such gaps in understanding, first by studying the nature of law and its relation to morality, then by turning its focus to the nature of liberty, privacy, and justice as they bear within the legal realm. In the process, we will also look at specific cases from this fall's Supreme Court docket as well as from other courts over the past several decades.

PHIL 4330-001   Epistemology   1:00-1:50 MWF   ENG/PHIL 163
Dr. Joel Velasco
In the first half of the class we will study epistemological concepts such as knowledge, justification, and rationality at an abstract level. In the second half of the class, we will look to more applied issues, many of which fall under the heading of 'social epistemology'. We will look at psychological literature about human cognitive biases and also at literature on group decision making and deliberation with the hope of figuring out ways to improve our thinking.

PHIL 4340-001   Metaphysics   9:00-9:50 MWF   ENG/PHIL 164
Dr. Jonathan Dorsey
This course focuses primarily on the study of ontology. Topics will include: i) The nature of objects and persons at a given time (synchronically) and over time (diachronically). ii) The ontological status of properties/universals and time. iii) Whether time travel is possible. Other topics may be covered in addition to or in place of these depending on timing and student interest.

PHIL 5125-001 Intro to Research Ethics   8:00-8:50 W   ENG/PHIL 264
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 5315-001   Topics in Aesthetics   300-6:00 T   ENG/PHIL 264
Dr. Anna Christina Ribeiro
Is beauty in the eye of the beholder, harmony in the ear of the listener, or are these real properties in the world? This course will be primarily about the realism/anti-realism debate about aesthetic properties—the beautiful, the garish, the ugly, the melodious, the elegant, and so on. We will start by discussing works on the nature of properties in general, and proceed to how philosophers have characterized the nature of aesthetic properties in particular. We will discuss various related debates, particularly that of the standard of taste. Most readings will be contemporary.

PHIL 5321-001   Social/Political Phil   3:00-4:20 MW   ENG/PHIL 264
Dr. Walter Schaller
Much of contemporary political philosophy has been influenced by the social contract philosophers of the 17th and 18th centuries. We shall read the three leading social contract theories–Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, and Jean-Jacques Rousseau–and a leading critic–David Hume. Of particular interest will be their accounts of political obligation (why are we obligated to obey the law?), property (is property a natural right or a conventional right?), and what it means to say that there is a 'social contract' (e.g., who 'signs' the contract? Who is obligated by it?).

PHIL 5331-001	Philosophical Psychology	12:00-2:50	W	ENG/PHIL 107
ENG 5337-001	Studies in Linguistics	12:00-2:50	W	ENG/PHIL 107

Dr. Alex Grzankowski and Aaron Braver

This course explores the various interactions between perception, cognition, and language. Some representative questions include:

Is the way things look influenced by the language you use? Some linguists, for example, believe that your perception of color varies based on the words for colors in your native language.

Can your beliefs make things look or sound different? Some psychologists and philosophers have recently suggested, for example, that chess boards look different to experts than to novices, and that speakers of a language hear utterances of their language differently than utterances of other languages.

If your language categorizes, e.g., snow in a fine-grained manner, are you in a better position to think about the varying kinds of snow than someone who speaks another language?

These questions all suggest various ways in which perception, cognition, and language interact with one another; at the same time, there is persuasive evidence that the mind is modular—that these systems are isolated from one another.

Topics we will discuss include:
- Modularity of mind: how much interaction is there between different cognitive processes
- The relationship between cognition and perception and language
- Whether language limits (or extends) the way we think

We will approach these topics from the perspectives of philosophy, linguistics, and cognitive science, with the goal of determining the extent to which our minds are shaped by forces other than pure reason.

PHIL 5333-001   Seminar in Philosophy of Language   3:00-6:00 R   ENG/PHIL 264

Dr. Christopher Hom

The seminar addresses the extent to which linguistic meaning is influenced by context. We will frame this question in considerably more detail by examining such linguistic categories as:

- indexical terms ('I', 'she', 'that')
- quantifiers ('all', 'some')
- vague terms ('bald', 'red')
- comparative adjectives ('tall', 'flat')
- attitude attributions ('believes', 'knows')
- moral and aesthetic attributions ('is good', 'is tasty')
- expressive terms ('damn', racial slurs)

The goals of the seminar include a deeper consideration of: the relation between semantics and pragmatics, the extent to which semantic relativism is plausible, and the extent to which this sort of linguistic analysis can also be a substantive tool for addressing non-linguistic philosophical problems. Though not required, a previous course in either linguistics or philosophy of language is recommended. Course requirements include a seminar presentation, one short paper, and one longer research paper.

PHIL 5341-001   Great Figures in Philosophy   12:30-1:50   TR   ENG/PHIL 260
Dr. Howard Curzer

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