Philosophy Courses
Spring 2019

Courses marked with * satisfy General Education Requirements

*PHIL 1000: Introduction to Philosophy
* Credit will not be given for both this course and PHIL 1001.

Section 1: TTh 9:00-10:20 Blakley

This course is an introduction to the academic discipline and activity of philosophy through pop culture. Popular movies and television shows like Inception, Westworld, South Park, Rick and Morty, Being John Malkovich, and The Walking Dead illustrate a variety of philosophical ideas and questions. How, if at all, can we know whether we are in the real world or a virtual world? How does the consciousness or the mind relate to the body? Do human beings have free will? How does the mind relate to the body? What is right conduct and good living? What is justice? This course will explore philosophical themes in pop culture and examine various arguments related to them by developed influential philosophers with the aim of developing our own abilities to think critically and logically.

Section 2: TTh 3:00-4:20 Blakley

This course is an introduction to the academic discipline and activity of philosophy through pop culture. Popular movies and television shows like Inception, Westworld, South Park, Rick and Morty, Being John Malkovich, and The Walking Dead illustrate a variety of philosophical ideas and questions. How, if at all, can we know whether we are in the real world or a virtual world? How does the consciousness or the mind relate to the body? Do human beings have free will? How does the mind relate to the body? What is right conduct and good living? What is justice? This course will explore philosophical themes in pop culture and examine various arguments related to them by developed influential philosophers with the aim of developing our own abilities to think critically and logically.

Section 3: TTh 10:30-11:50 Parsons

This course introduces students to the study of philosophy. We examine some influential works of philosophy with a view to understanding the role of philosophers in society and the methodology employed in philosophical thinking. Students will gain an appreciation for the history, scope, and influence of philosophy as well as acquire the skills needed for critical reflection on their own lives and the world around them.

Section 4: MWF 10:30-11:20 Wells

This course provides an introduction to philosophy through the lens of the concept of “enlightenment.” What we call “the Enlightenment” was a period of intellectual and philosophical development in 18th century Europe. However, more broadly speaking but in the spirit of that movement, we can describe enlightenment as a series of commitments: Commitment to the idea that humans are by nature rational things, to the idea of truth and the notion that such truth is discoverable through objective and rational inquiry, to the idea that individual liberty and individuality are paramount, and to the idea that the use of
our reason is the engine for human progress. Our course traces these commitments through a survey of a number of figures in the history of philosophy. It does so in (roughly) three sections. First, we sketch an argument in defense of the concept and the project of enlightenment. Next, we consider some challenges to the foundations of this enlightenment project: Is what we call progress really progress? Are we really transparently rational selves? Are we really free? What if all of this is simply a story we tell to justify control and conformity? Finally, we take up the critical tools of enlightenment to examine our own context, specifically with an eye toward gender, race, disability, non-human animals, and oppression. Throughout this course, we will keep three connected questions in mind: What is a self? What is the relationship between this self and rationality? How do the answers to these first two questions inform how we ought to act, as individuals and as communities?

Section 5: MWF 11:30-12:20 Wells

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*PHIL 1001: HONORS: Introduction to Philosophy TTh 12:00-1:20 Cogburn

We will learn about key philosophical issues concerning knowledge, reality, and the good. We will focus on Western Philosophy, but spend at least a third of the course exploring what Buddhist philosophy has to teach us about these same issues. Our key texts will be Simon Blackburn's two short books *Think* and *Being Good* and then Jay Garfield's *Engaging Buddhism: Why It Matters to Philosophy*. At the end of the class the students and instructor will better realize truth, beauty, and goodness.

*PHIL 2010: Symbolic Logic I TTh 10:30-11:50 Roland

Classical propositional and first-order predicate logic; syntax and semantics of formal languages; translation between formal languages and English; formal methods of proof.
This course is an introduction to ethics or moral philosophy through popular culture. Popular movies and television shows like *The Dark Knight*, *The Walking Dead*, *Rick and Morty*, *South Park*, and others illustrate philosophical ideas and questions about morality. Are there any objective/universal moral truths or is morality all a matter of personal attitudes or cultural mores? Is it wrong for Batman to kill Joker? Does the pursuit of self-interest give rise to morality? Is it morally wrong for Rick to sell weapons to an “unethical” assassin? Is Morty a good person? Is it morally wrong for Cartman to sell stem cells? This course will examine these questions and others like them along with various moral theories developed by influential philosophers with the aim of developing our own abilities to think critically and logically.

In this course we examine major positions in the history of ethical theory, as well as their applications and challenges to them. In the most basic sense, this course asks: What is right? How ought we act? How ought we live? In considering these primary questions, we will ask further: How ought we treat, and what do we owe, each other? Where do these obligations and responsibilities come from, i.e., what are their foundations? Our aim will be not only to understand these questions in theory, but to grapple with how they challenge us to live our lives, give us meaning, and determine what we value. Our task is to consider who we are and who we want to (or, perhaps, who we ought to) become. In the latter portion of the course we will examine the concept of oppression and its relation to ethics, especially through the lens of gender and race.

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This course will be divided into three parts, each part will focus on a cluster of questions surrounding a central issue. **Part One:** Peter Singer’s, *The Most Good You Can Do* will serve as a good introduction to ethics. This book raises questions about how we should live and while living give altruistically (far more than what we normally do); what constitutes effective altruism; who should be the benefactors when we give; and, finally, how far should we be concerned about the prospects of human extinction? **Part Two:** Rosen’s *Dignity* will take us through a brief history of the concept of dignity which plays a
cardinal role in Immanuel Kant’s moral philosophy. Now, what is significant, says Rosen, is the right to be treated with dignity, or proper respect. When a satirical German magazine depicted a politician, Franz-Joseph Strauss, as a copulating pig, Germany’s supreme court held that the magazine violated Strauss’s dignity. By contrast, when Hustler magazine portrayed Jerry Falwell having sex with his mother, the United States Supreme Court (1988) held unanimously in favor of the magazine under the First Amendment. Surely, both courts cannot be right. So, then, what is it to treat someone with respect? Part Three: We are going through an upheaval the like of which we have not encountered in recent American history. It is urgent, therefore, to ask questions about the limits of individual freedom and sovereignty, on the one hand, and the overpowering authority of the State, on the other. (We shall ask such questions whilst reading, G. A. Cohen’s Why Not Socialism?) And if we have reason to fear assault on our freedoms – freedom of the Press, freedom of speech, freedom to assemble peacefully, freedom of religion, and the like – we have reason to speak up and exhibit moral courage. Timothy Snyder, the distinguished Yale University historian, will instruct us by citing innumerable examples of men and women who stood up to tyrants and dictators and who believed – as Hannah Arendt (eminent philosopher) did (when confronted by the Nazis) and Andrei Sakharov (world-renowned physicist) did (when confronted by Soviet brutality) – that standing aside, or keeping quiet, was simply not an option. “For if we are silent,” asked Arthur Schopenhauer, the nineteenth century philosopher, “who then shall speak?” (I poached that last sentence from Karl Popper’s The Open Society and Its Enemies.)

Required Texts:

Section 5: MWF 3:30-4:20 Wells

In this course we examine major positions in the history of ethical theory, as well as their applications and challenges to them. In the most basic sense, this course asks: What is right? How ought we act? How ought we live? In considering these primary questions, we will ask further: How ought we treat, and what do we owe, each other? Where do these obligations and responsibilities come from, i.e., what are their foundations? Our aim will be not only to understand these questions in theory, but to grapple with how they challenge us to live our lives, give us meaning, and determine what we value. Our task is to consider who we are and who we want to (or, perhaps, who we ought to) become. In the latter portion of the course we will examine the concept of oppression and its relation to ethics, especially through the lens of gender and race.

PHIL 2025 Bioethics M 6:00-8:50 Rolfsen

This course will primarily cover Medical Bioethics and begins with a review of the history of Medical Bioethics in the United States including discussion of several landmark cases. After reviewing the history which helped form our approach to bioethics, we will present a basic framework for analyzing ethical problems with a major focus on Beauchamp and Childress’s “Four Principles approach” (see suggested textbook) and then briefly covering alternate approaches. The remainder of the course will
involve analysis of various current medical bioethical topics. This is a combination lecture and discussion based course and all students are strongly encouraged to participate in the discussion.

*PHIL 2035 Introduction to Modern Philosophy  TTh 9:00-10:20  Protevi

An honors course, PHIL 2036, is also available. Introduction to philosophy through a study of some of the main writings of modern philosophy (1492-1789). This semester’s theme will be “Freedom: Metaphysical and Political.” Readings from de la Boétie, Descartes, Hobbes, Locke, Spinoza, Kant, Wollstonecraft, and Cugoana.

PHIL 2036: HONORS: Tutorial in Modern Philosophy (1 hr)  
To be taken concurrently with PHIL 2035.  TBD  Protevi

PHIL 2786: Logic, Science, and Society  TTh 3:00-4:20  Goldgaber

This course is intended to help future STEM teachers, and future science communicators and policy makers learn how to think about math, science and technology “from the outside.” We will ask questions about what researchers in STEM fields do, how they do it and why. In addition to looking at the process of knowledge creation and dissemination, we will also look at the place of science in society, particularly liberal democracies like our own. We examine cultural sources of resistance to scientific knowledge and activity, including strategies to productively respond to this resistance, and engage with science skeptics.

This course is designed to meet the requirements of the GEAUXTeach Math and Science program. It is also highly recommended for students who will work in any area that involves communicating about and explaining science and technology to a larger public. This can include but is not limited to positions in government and NGO policy-making and outreach, public relations, grant writing and screen writing/non-fiction.

PHIL 3003: French Existentialism  TTh 1:30-2:50  Raffoul

The course is an exploration of French existentialism. After an introduction on the sources of existentialism with Arendt, Nietzsche and Heidegger, we will investigate several key figures, including Sartre, Merleau-Ponty, De Beauvoir, Levinas, Nancy and Derrida. Themes addressed will include: existence and thought; transcendence and metaphysics; the question of being; freedom and responsibility; the question of the body and perception; existence and gender; community and being-with; ethics and the other; forgiveness.

PHIL/POL 4098 Politics and Ethics  MWF 10:30-11:20  Eubanks

Our tasks in this course are many: to understand the relationship between thinking and moral judgment; to become acquainted with a variety of ethical theories; to consider the nature of Aristotle’s and Heidegger’s relevance to our understanding of ethics and politics in the 21st century; and, most importantly, to examine the role of moral thinking in our dialogue with ourselves and in our communities of discourse. Students will be required to write four reflection essays: On Sophia and
This course will be centered on Friedrich Nietzsche’s, *On the Genealogy of Morality* (1887). To aid our understanding of this remarkable book, we will read two first-rate commentaries, those by Christopher Janaway and Brian Leiter. Each commentary heckles the other. I shall aim to teach Nietzsche’s book as if it were trying to fathom a few solitary lines in the 1855 preface to Walt Whitman’s *Leaves of Grass*: “Argue not concerning God, … re-examine all you have been told at church or school or in any book, dismiss whatever insults your soul.”

**Required Texts:**

**PHIL 4924: Aristotle**
**TTh 4:30-5:50**
**Parsons**

*Prerequisite:* PHIL 2033 or equivalent.

This course is devoted to the study of Aristotle's work and thought. Students will gain in-depth acquaintance with Aristotle's contribution to the history of philosophy, including his psychological, ethical and political theories, as well as his metaphysics and ontology. Time permitting, we will also examine some differences between Aristotle and his predecessor, Plato. Aristotle, for example, rejected Platonic forms and differed importantly from Plato on the account of the human soul.

**PHIL 4941: Philosophy of Mind**
**TTh 1:30-2:20**
**Cogburn**

*Prerequisite:* PHIL 2033 or 2035 or equivalent.

The view that neurons firing causes consciousness is a very different kind of claim than the claim that neurons firing causes other neurons to fire. Yet in our culture both tend to be treated as the kind of thing that scientifically literate humans ought to believe. But does science really support the view that the brain produces consciousness? Pan-psychics not only deny the idea that science supports this view, but also deny the view itself, instead finding consciousness to be a fundamental property of the universe. We will examine the most prominent contemporary pan-psychics in analytic philosophy of mind as well as their critics.

**PHIL 4948 Phenomenology**
**MWF 12:30-1:20**
**Schufreider**

A detailed study of Heidegger's *Being and Time*.

**PHIL 7910: Seminar in Value Theory**
**TTh 12:00-1:20**
**Donelson**
What do moral statements mean? Can they ever be true? Even if they are true, why should we follow them? These are some of the foundational questions of metaethics. This class treats those questions in detail, reading one recent monograph about each. We will read Allan Gibbard’s *Thinking How to Live* for the first question, David Enoch’s *Taking Morality Seriously* for the second question, and Christine Korsgaard’s *The Sources of Normativity* for the last. Students will leave this class with a firm understanding of contemporary debates in metaethics and (hopefully) a newfound or renewed sense of wonder about moral thought.

Courses outside the Philosophy department

**HNRS 2030: Humanities Colloquium: Knowledge and Reality**  TTh 3:00-4:20  Roland

This course will be an introduction to contemporary metaphysics and epistemology, broadly construed. It will consist of three modules, one each in epistemology proper, philosophy of language, and metaphysics proper. The epistemology module will be concerned with skepticism about the external world as it comes to us in Descartes’s *Meditations on First Philosophy* and, in updated form, in Hilary Putnam’s “Brains in a Vat.” We will consider Putnam’s proposed semantic externalist solution to external world skepticism, which will lead us naturally into a discussion of causal theories of reference and meaning. This discussion will be the focus of our philosophy of language module. Here the work of Putnam and Saul Kripke will figure prominently. This discussion will raise the issue of causation, which will occupy us during the metaphysics module. We will examine the so-called *counterfactual analysis of causation* found in Hume’s *Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding* and later developed by David Lewis. This course is expected to be certified as a communication-intensive (C-I) course.

**WGS 3150: Survey of Feminist Theory**  TTh 1:30-2:50  Goldgaber

What is feminism? What is patriarchy? What and who is a woman? How does gender relate to sexuality, and to class and race? Should housework be waged, should sex be for sale, and should feminists trust the state? This course is an introduction to feminist political and social theory since the mid-twentieth century. It introduces students to classic texts of late twentieth-century feminism, explores the key arguments that have preoccupied radical, socialist, liberal, Black, postcolonial and queer feminists, examines how these arguments have changed over time, and asks how debates about equality, objectivity, work, and identity matter today.

**FRE 7410/CPLT 7120: Studies in Contemporary French Theory: French Deconstruction: Jacques Derrida and Jean-Luc Nancy**  W 3:00-5:50  Raffoul

French deconstruction, in particular the work of Jacques Derrida and Jean-Luc Nancy, has had a major impact on the Humanities in the Anglo-American world. It has had a transformative effect on various fields such as literary theory, comparative literature, political theory and historiography, theories of meaning, cultural studies and literary criticism, gender theory and feminism and environmental studies.
We will explore French deconstruction by addressing the following issues: the senses of deconstruction and “differance”; subjectivity and “touch”; the critique of humanism and the question of animality; ethics and responsibility; death, the secret, and the other; law, forgiveness and hospitality; community and being-with; the world and globalization. Texts will include (for Jacques Derrida): “Differance,” Positions, Points, Paper Machine, For What Tomorrow…, The Animal that therefore I am, Of Hospitality, Force of Law, On Cosmopolitanism and Forgiveness, On Touching—Jean-Luc Nancy. From Jean-Luc Nancy, we will read among other essays such texts as “Of Being-in-Common,” Being Singular Plural, Who comes after the Subject?, Justice, Legality and World, The Creation of the World of Globalization, The Truth of Democracy, and Identity.