

Fall 2021

Philosophy Department Course Descriptions

Philosophy 101 Philosophical Problems—Professor Johnson **MWF 1300-1350**

Living a human life poses certain problems for each of us: Who am I? Is there some meaning to my life? How should I act? Using short philosophical readings, we will reflect on issues such as the role of reason in our lives, the nature of religious belief, whether human existence makes any sense, how our personal identity is shaped, and how we construct meaning in our lives. Grades based on written essays and discussion participation.

Philosophy 102 Ethics—GE TBD **MTWR 900-950**

Philosophical study of morality (e.g., ethical relativism; justification of moral judgments; concepts of duty, right, and wrong).

Philosophy 103 Critical Reasoning—Professor Alvarado **MWF 1200-1250**

Introduction to thinking and reasoning critically. How to recognize, analyze, criticize, and construct arguments. Through the practice of argumentation in relation to current and classic controversies, this course is designed to improve your reasoning skills as well as your critical writing capabilities. Along the way, students will also explore informal fallacies, basic rules of deduction and induction, issues pertaining to the ethics of belief, and some general reflections on the political dimensions and promise of argumentation. Typical assignments include argumentative journals, homework sets, and in-class exams. Class time involves a mixture of lecture, discussion, and group work.

Philosophy 110 Human Nature—Professor Vallega **MW 1400-1520**

What does it mean to be human? What makes us “human”? What is the place of humans in the world? This course will explore influential traditional, modern, and contemporary approaches to human nature. Thinkers examined include Plato, Hobbes, Foucault, Aníbal Quijano, and María Lugones. The course will consist in a close reading of Plato’s *Republic* in contrast with other ancient, modern, and contemporary ways of understanding the many senses of being human.

Philosophy 120 Ethics of Enterprise and Exchange—GE TBD **MTWR 900-950**

Moral examination of business by considering the nature of enterprise and exchange. Topics include corporate and consumer responsibility, meaningful work, and leadership.

Philosophy 123 Internet, Society, and Philosophy—GE TBD **MTWR 900-950**

Introduction to philosophical problems of the Internet. Primary focus on social, political, and ethical issues with discussion of epistemological and metaphysical topics.

Philosophy 130 Philosophy and Popular Culture—Sr. Instructor Brence **MTWRF WEB**

This course enables students to engage in the critical reflection central to the discipline of philosophy--that which would facilitate living an “examined life” -- about, in, and through popular culture. What is popular or mass culture? Is it something merely “manufactured” by special

interests, or is it still in any way genuine culture, the product of free and spontaneous human interaction? Are the products of popular culture (movies, music, games, sports, etc.) merely sources of entertainment or distraction, or might they serve other purposes such as providing for a sense of community and identity? Do they serve merely to bypass (or even undermine) reflection to inculcate particular perspectives or values into those who are exposed to or who participate in them? Might they rather, upon scrutiny, provide the basis for the kind of critical reflection commonly regarded as facilitated only by “high” culture? By way of testing the last of these perspectives, of the capacity for popular culture to facilitate genuinely critical reflection, a range of products of popular culture will be examined alongside texts that seek to illuminate and reveal the ideas at work in them, and in relation to some works of classical philosophy, ancient and modern. As a result, students should expect to develop an enhanced capacity for intelligent reflection upon popular culture and upon a range of central issues that have been the subject of considerable philosophical examination.

Philosophy 170 Love & Sex—GE TBD

MTWR 900-950

Philosophical study of love, relationships, marriage, sex, sexuality, sexual identity, and sexual representation.

Philosophy 216 Phil & Cult Div – GE TBD

MTWR 900-950

Philosophical investigation of the implications of cultural diversity for identity, knowledge, and community, from the perspectives of several American cultures.

Philosophy 225 Introduction to Formal Logic—Sr. Instructor Brence

TR 1200-1320

This course will serve as a substantial introduction to symbolic logic. At its completion students will be proficient in determining the formal validity of arguments with propositional (sentence) logic and predicate logic. Though often the course will resemble a math course, and mathematical techniques will be employed virtually throughout, the purpose of the course is to inquire into patterns of effective thought concerning potentially all manner of human interests. How do we draw correct inferences and think effectively? How do we avoid errors in reasoning and drawing unwarranted conclusions? What form does compelling evidence for a warranted conclusion take?

Philosophy 309 Global Justice – GE TBD

TR 1600-1750

Introduction to philosophical problems of globalization and justice related to global poverty, citizenship, human rights, and issues of identity, multiculturalism, war, terrorism, environmentalism and health care.

Philosophy 310 History of Philosophy, Ancient-Medieval—Professor Warnek

MW 1600-1720

PHIL 310 offers an introduction to Ancient Greek philosophy, primarily through a reading of selections from the texts of Plato and Aristotle. We will also look at other Greek philosophical figures, such as Parmenides and Heraclitus. The course also considers the emergence of Western philosophy in relation to tragic narratives, like those of Oedipus and Antigone. In this regard, Socrates is considered both as a foremost philosophical question and as a possible tragic figure.

Philosophy 315 Introduction to Feminist Philosophy—GE TBD

TR 1000-1150

Introduces basic questions of philosophy through topics central to feminism.

Philosophy 335 Medical Ethics—Professor Russell

MW 1000-1120

Medical Ethics (or, more broadly, Bioethics) is the branch of ethics that studies moral values in the biomedical sciences, and can include a very large range of issues. This course aims to offer an interesting sampling of the ideas and practices that can be considered and examined in this area. This sampling is centered on the critical philosophical examination of the various assumptions, values, and socio-political forces underlying clinical, research and biotechnological systems and practices. We will ask not only, “What are good or poor systems and practices and why?” but also, “What are the conceptual frameworks available for, assumed by or perpetuated through this system or practice?” and “What are the effects of this system or practice on people, on their lives, on possibilities for democracy/equality, and on potentials for injustice?” We focus on five major themes: Principles, Inequality, Normativity, Disability, and Enhancement. The work of this course should leave you better able to approach ethical dilemmas in your future work not only with reason and intelligence, but with sympathy and respect for human difference and an eye toward justice.

Philosophy 345 Place in the Cosmos—Professor Vallega-Neu

TR 1200-1320

This course aims at deepening a philosophical understanding and questioning of the human place in the cosmos mainly through close reading of seminal texts in the Western tradition. A close reading of Plato’s *Timaeus*, Descartes *Principles of Philosophy*, and Heidegger’s “Building, Dwelling, Thinking” will be supplemented with broader introductory lectures on Ancient cosmology, Medieval cosmology, as well as lectures that highlight the fundamental change in the Western understanding of our place in the cosmos through the mathematization of nature, which occurred in the 17th century along with the new astronomical theories of Kepler, Copernicus, Galileo, and Newton. We will end with a look at (non-Western) Inca cosmology in order to question the limits of our contemporary Western senses of being in the world. We will see how throughout the Western philosophical and scientific tradition, the understanding of our place in the cosmos has undergone significant shifts, which occur together with radical changes in how we understand ourselves and the physical world as well as ourselves in relation to the physical world. Understanding these radically different senses of the human place in the cosmos opens venues for reflecting critically on how we view or might view our place in the cosmos today.

Philosophy 407/507 Advanced Intro to Analytic Phil – Professor Alvarado

T 1400-1650 (will be added soon)

Philosophy 420 Philosophies of Resistance (American Philosophy) – Professor Pratt

MW 1000-1150

This course is an historical survey of American philosophy from the 1890s through the present. The course begins with the hypothesis that a significant strand of the American tradition developed as a philosophy of resistance against ideas inherited from Europe and against a social, political, and economic system whose practices led to oppression through assimilation or exclusion. As a consequence, these philosophies share a common interest in the nature of pluralism, agency, and liberation. While the various strands of this tradition of resistance share some concerns and methods, they also differ. John McDermott writes: “Historically considered [the American] tradition was faced with an ever-shifting scene, characterized by widespread geographical, political, and

social upheavals. These crises were built into the very continuity of the culture, and it was thereby fitting that basic . . . categories of understanding were transformed. The meaning of the reflective experience is to point precisely to the fact that such a transformation had its basis in the willingness of the culture, over a sustained period of time, to listen to the informing character of experience.” This tradition, while critical of established views and practices, is more focused on reconstruction than deconstruction. Rooted in a desire to understand particular experiences, and imagine ways those experiences could be transformed to make future experiences better or more fulfilling in any number of ways, this is a tradition that holds the problems of the world front and center. We will explore a variety of voices in this tradition, but this course will introduce only a very small portion of the tradition. However, by focusing on a range of major figures and themes, the course may also serve as a starting point for further inquiry into the American tradition and its connection with other philosophical traditions.

Course can be used to satisfy the Gender, Race, Class, & Culture (GRCC) and History (HSTP) requirements for the Philosophy major.

Philosophy 453/553 Topic – Hegel Professor Muraca
TR 1000-1150 (will be added soon)

Philosophy 463/563 Topic - Fanon—Professor Stawarska
MW 1400-1550

This course is dedicated to the philosophical writings of the 20th C. French Martinican author Frantz Fanon. We will be reading from the two major works published during Fanon’s lifetime: *Black Skin, White Masks (Peau noire, masques blancs)* from 1952 and *The Wretched of the Earth (Les damnés de la terre)* published in 1961. Selected essays from the collections *A Dying Colonialism (L’an V de la révolution Algérienne 1959)* and *Toward the African Revolution (Pour la révolution Africaine)*, posthumously published in 1964, as well as the unpublished writings from *Alienation and Freedom 2018 (Écrits sur l’aliénation et la liberté, 2015)* will round out the reading list. We will consider Fanon’s complex conceptions of sexuality, gender, race and racism, religion, and time; the violence of colonialism, anticolonial struggle, and postcolonial society and culture, as well as the pluralism of philosophical methods (phenomenology, existentialism, psychoanalysis, race theory, Marxism).

Philosophy 463/563 Topic - Dewey—Professor Johnson
TR 1200-1350

This course will examine Dewey’s moral theory as an exploration of the nature and possibility of an ethics that views humans as natural organisms whose values and ends arise through their interactions with their complex physical, social, and cultural environments. Our topic, then, is “ethics naturalized,” not in a reductive sense, but from a perspective that appreciates the depth, richness, and broad scope of recent empirical approaches to morality. We will place some of Dewey’s most influential writings on moral experience and cognition into dialogue with the work of selected contemporary writers whose theories are either influenced by, or relevant to, Dewey’s views.

Philosophy 607 Philosophy & Teaching Seminar—Professor Koopman
W 1100-1150 SCH 250C
R 1400-1520

This course is offered for philosophy graduate students who are also in their first year of service as graduate teaching fellows. The course runs for the entire year, each quarter offering a different core focus. All three quarters provide opportunity for reflection on pedagogical technique and philosophy of education. The first quarter offers ample opportunity for consideration of these

themes. The second quarter also includes attention to curriculum, course design, and syllabus construction. The third quarter extends to a wider range of issues in the philosophy of education. Throughout the year, the goal is to improve teaching effectiveness and to provide new teachers with a forum for discussing some of the challenges they face in the classroom. Note that this is a one credit course that meets weekly and involves a few additional assigned meetings outside of our regular meetings (for example, class observation visits that can be scheduled to fit each student's calendar).

Philosophy 615 Aristotle & Nancy – Professor Vallega-Neu
W 1600-1850

The course focuses on Aristotle's *On the Soul* (translation by Joe Sachs) and Nancy's *Corpus* that discusses the body in relation to Aristotle's *On the Soul*. We will also draw from Aristotle's *Physics* and Nancy's *Being Singular Plural*. While in the Western tradition, we have come to hear in the word "soul" human interiority, what is in question in Aristotle's and Nancy's notion of soul (*psyche*, *âme*) is the (not only human) living body. In different ways, Aristotle and Nancy challenge contemporary senses of bodies in terms of identities and invite us to think of living bodies in their dynamic relational exposure. (For an introduction to Nancy, read Marie-Eve Morin, *Jean-Luc Nancy* [Polity Press, 2012]).