

Winter 2011

Philosophy Department Course Descriptions

Philosophy 102 Ethics—Professor Zack **MWF 11-1150 180 PLC**

This course is about the moral aspects of our relations with others, and what we owe ourselves. The philosophical aim is for students to understand the intellectual basis of their own opinions and values, learn how to analytically defend and criticize them, and how to analyze and criticize opposing opinions and values. This process of analysis and criticism may lead to changes in moral views, or strengthen those already held. The source material consists of philosophical writings. The topics include moral theory, or the nature and purpose of morality, and three historical philosophical moral systems: Utilitarianism, Deontology and Virtue Ethics, as well as contemporary sources about morality and moral theory. The text used will be the anthology, Steven M. CAHN: EXPLORING ETHICS ISBN 2E P 9780199757510 Course work consists of reading, writing short papers, and active student participation in large and small group discussion.

Philosophy 103 Critical Reasoning—Professor Vallega-Neu **MWF 15-1550 240A MCK**

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 **MWF 10-1050 180 PLC**

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 Felipe Guamán Poma de Ayala, Plato, Hobbes, Foucault, Frantz Fanon, Julia Kristeva, and Enrique Dussel. Teaching will take the form of large group lectures and dedicated discussion sections.

Philosophy 308 Social & Political Philosophy—Professor Brence **TR 16-1750 301 CON**

Major historical and contemporary social/political theorists. Inquiry into such ideas as freedom, ideology, identity, social/political reconstruction and revolution. We will focus primarily upon the social/political dimension and consequences of problems confronting human agency. How do we act in a world as organized, complex, and controlled as our own? Is there any possibility for meaningful self-determination in a globalized and technologically managed economy? Can we regard contemporary free-market capitalism as still democratic without a positive answer to that question? What is the nature of contemporary ideology such that these questions and their answers are often obscured?

Philosophy 311 History of Philosophy: Modern—Professor Koopman **MWF 9-950 240A MCK**

This course is the second of a three-course introduction to the history of western philosophy. The purpose of this course is to examine the history of western philosophy in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries as well as to consider the importance and relevance of the history of philosophy for us today. The course will focus on three key subjects relevant to the history of philosophy in this period. Primarily, we will engage with readings from canonical figures in the modern traditions of Rationalism (selections may be from Descartes, Spinoza, and Leibniz) and Empiricism (selections may be from Locke, Berkeley, and Hume). Additionally, we will also consider works from figures not normally in the canon (most notably early modern women philosophers) who played a more central role in the development of these philosophical tradition than is often acknowledged. A third focus of the course concerns issues of the relevance, value, and method of the history of philosophy. Why should we study the history of philosophy? How should we study it? Who writes this history, who reads it, and with what purposes? Who gets included in these histories and who is excluded, and why?

Philosophy 323 Moral Theory—Professor Johnson
MWF 15-1550 242 GER

This course is centered on an exploration of what many have regarded as three major contributions to moral enlightenment in the Western philosophical tradition: Aristotle's virtue ethics, Kant's rationalist ethics, and Dewey's naturalistic view of morality. Along the way, we will also address the question whether there is any distinctive set of "moral" issues, assess the importance of Judeo Christian theological ethics in this historical development, examine the rise of utilitarian theory in the 19th century, and sample selected post-Deweyan moral developments, such as care ethics and the cognitive science of morality.

Philosophy 325 Logic, Argument, Inquiry—Professor Pratt
MWF 11-1150 240C MCK

In this course, we will examine the processes and practices of inquiry and argumentation by considering the logic that underlies them. In the first part of the course, we will consider the phenomenology of inquiry, the structure of arguments, the role of guesswork (abduction), and the practices of communicative action. In the second part, we will study the basics of Aristotelian logic and the role and practice of induction. In the final section, we will consider the idea of ordered systems and formal logic and will conclude with a discussion of the role of agency in logic and its implications for a normative theory of argumentation and what it means to be rational. Upon completion of this course, you will have developed both a facility with and understanding of formal and informal logic, but also an understanding and appreciation of their deep connections to the rational processes of an active social life. We will use a new textbook, *Logic: Inquiry, Argument, and Order*, that has been developed in this course over the last five years. This course satisfies the logic requirement for a major in philosophy.

Philosophy 399 Global Justice—Professor Zambrana
TR 12-1350 307 VOL

This course will serve as an introduction to the problem of global justice. We will examine the notion of human rights crucial for articulating and addressing forms of injustice as global problems. We will seek to reconstruct the source of the normativity of principles animating the human rights discourse (such as equality and dignity) by examining forms of global *injustice* – poverty, torture, war, violence against women, and the devastation of the environment. Concrete cases will allow us to examine the practical feasibility and applicability of abstract principles of justice, and to discuss the institutional conditions necessary for the promotion and protection of human rights. In this context, we will consider cosmopolitan, nationalist, and critical-theoretical approaches to the problem of global justice. In addition, we will reflect on the meaning and authority of principles of justice in light of foreseen and unforeseen consequences of attempts to address human rights violations at international, transnational, and national levels.

Philosophy 420 American Philosophy: Pragmatism—Professor Koopman
MW 12-1350 353 PLC

This course will involve the intellectual investigation and experimental enactment of pragmatist public philosophy. Pragmatism is one of the most vigorous and engaging philosophical traditions on the contemporary scene. From its beginnings in late nineteenth-century New England to its spread across America and beyond in the twentieth century, one thing that has distinguished pragmatist philosophers is their commitment to the public relevance of their philosophical work. According to pragmatism, the way to test a philosophical conception is to see what difference it makes in actual practice, action, and life. For many of the major pragmatist philosophers, this has meant putting their ideas into conversation with the public affairs, public events, and public life to which those ideas are meant to speak. In order to gain better experiential grip on what pragmatist public philosophy might be, this course will consist of two concurrent parts, one traditional and one rather more experimental. The more traditional part of the course will involve readings and advanced seminar discussion of key texts by central pragmatist figures: these are likely to include William James, John Dewey, Richard Rorty, and Cornel West. The reading load will not be light and the discussion will demand your intensive engagement with our texts, but no prior background in pragmatism is assumed. A second and more experimental part of the course will involve collaborative group work on a project in public philosophy: this may take the form of an enactment or installation of philosophy in a public venue or a piece of philosophical work that engages some pressing public matter. Collaborative work of this nature will help us better develop an experience of how philosophy can be generated in the context of engagement with others rather than in intellectual isolation.

Philosophy 421/521 Ancient Philosophers: Plato—Professor Warnek
MW 18-1950 204 CHA

The course is devoted to a careful reading of Plato's dialogue *Theaetetus*. We will consider how Socratic questioning in this text as it concerns the limits of knowledge (episteme) is an example of what Socrates refers to in the *Phaedo* as his "second sailing" or turn to speeches. This turn to speech (logos) will also be considered as a response to the prevailing nature philosophy of Ancient Greece.

Philosophy 441 Philosophy of Art: Aesthetic Experience in Word & Image—Professor Vallega
MW 12-1350 301 CON

This course explores the senses of esthetic experience by looking closely at the relationship between specific philosophical works and the works of art and poetry they attempt to articulate. In other words, esthetic experience will be explored through a double question: What may philosophical works have to say about images in poetry and works of art; and, inversely, what might images teach philosophy. Authors and artists discussed will include Heidegger, Gadamer, Foucault, and Derrida, Paul Celan, Goya, Wallace Stevens, and Antonin Artaud.

Philosophy 453/553 19th Century Philosophers: Hegel—Professor Zambrana
MW 12-1350 175 LIL

In this course, we will read Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit* as an introduction to his theory of determinacy. In the *Phenomenology*, Hegel sets out to transform what he took to be the most compelling insights of Kant's critical philosophy. He does so by showing that the norms that provide determinacy to our experience in the world are socio-historical institutions, and that the fact that such norms have a grip on us has to do with authority. We will therefore track Hegel's views on the relation between normativity and authority in his theory of concepts, action, morality, and history. More than providing an account of authoritative norms, however, Hegel is interested in tracking the way in which norms lose their authority over us. We will thus pay particular attention to the prevalent role of negativity, loss, and redemption in Hegel's theory of determinacy. As we advance in our reading, we shall compare and contrast various interpretive perspectives on the text, such as epistemological, historicist, ethical, and feminist readings of the *Phenomenology*.

Philosophy 463/563 20th Century Philosophers: Beauvoir—Professor Mann
TR 10-1150 307 VOL

This course will center on a close reading of as much as we can get to of a single text, Simone de Beauvoir's most famous work, *The Second Sex*. This is the text that is often credited with setting off the second wave of the feminist movement internationally, and has recently been studied as a text that revolutionizes phenomenology. After 50 years, in 2010 a new English translation of *The Second Sex* was finally prepared and released by Alfred Knopf. This translation, by two American linguists living in Paris, replaces the 1953 translation by a Zoology professor, and restores the more than 15% of the original text that was cut, paraphrased, or rewritten by the first translator without acknowledgement. We have a historic opportunity then, to finally read the entire text in English. The course will consider translation issues in some detail. We will attend closely to Beauvoir's philosophical method and its place in post-WWII European philosophy. We will read a good deal of secondary work on the text by Beauvoir scholars, and may read some additional literary or philosophical work by Beauvoir. Expect a heavy reading schedule. Graduate students will be required to do a presentation on one section of the text.

Philosophy 607 Pro Seminar Continental Philosophy—Professor Warnek
MW 16-1750 353 PLC

This course will serve as an introduction to some major figures, styles and themes in the Continental philosophical tradition. The course will be organized topically, and will take up recent concerns with freedom, community and truth. Authors read will include Schelling, Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty, Nancy and Irigaray.

Philosophy 607 Pro Seminar on Self-Knowledge—Professor Johnson
TR 14-1550 353 PLC

Who are we? What gives us our identity as a person? And in what ways can we become aware of that identity? We will approach these questions through a series of readings that represent a broad range of perspectives, including biology, neuroscience, phenomenology, psychology, pragmatist philosophy, gender studies, critical race theory, and accounts of the cultural construction of the self. We will focus our reading and discussion around the following issues: (1) What does it mean to be a "self"? Does each person have a single, unified self, or is each of us a cluster of interacting self-positions, some of which are inconsistent? (2) How does self-knowledge occur? Is self-understanding a solitary reflective practice, or does it require engagement in complex social activities? (3) What are the basic dimensions of the self that are revealed by our various ways of learning who we are? Are there first-, second-, and third-person approaches to self-understanding?

Philosophy 620 Native American Philosophy—Professor Pratt
MW 14-1550 353 PLC

The purpose of this course is to provide graduate students with an introduction to Native American philosophy. In the first section of the course, we will focus on the contact between indigenous Americans and European peoples and the ways in which Native thought emerged from this context of colonization. In the second section, we will consider the development of Native American philosophy as part of the Native resistance to European American attempts to acquire native lands and eliminate native culture in the late 19th century and early 20th centuries. The third section examines the work of contemporary Native philosophers including Vine Deloria, Jr., in his efforts to present a Native philosophical perspective that has the potential to respond to the crises of cultural and environmental destruction at the beginning of the 21st century; Thomas Norton-Smith and his work connecting Native American philosophy and the work of Nelson Goodman; and Sandy Grande and her challenge to post-structuralism. The methodology of this course will involve close reading of primary texts, classroom discussions and presentations, written work and several guest lecturers. The course can be applied to the philosophy department metaphysics and American tradition course requirements.