MAJOR

Philosophy is a discipline that has been integral to human culture for thousands of years. It explores a wide range of questions about the nature of reality and the human experience. From ancient civilizations to contemporary society, philosophers have grappled with fundamental questions about the meaning of life, the nature of knowledge, and the role of the individual in society. This major is designed to provide students with a solid foundation in philosophical inquiry, preparing them for a variety of careers and further academic pursuits.

Prerequisites: None

PHIL 109 (F) Skepticism and Relativism (W)

This course will introduce students to the philosophical arguments for and against skepticism and relativism. We will examine the nature of knowledge and the limits of human understanding. We will discuss the implications of these ideas for our understanding of the world and our place in it. We will also consider the role of philosophical inquiry in shaping our understanding of these issues.

PHIL 112 (F) Philosophy and Human Nature (W)

This course will explore the philosophical questions of what makes us human, and what it means to be human. We will consider the nature of human consciousness, the role of rationality and the human will, and the relationship between the individual and society. We will also consider the implications of these ideas for our understanding of the human condition.

PHIL 115 Personal Identity (Not offered 2013-2014) (W)

This course will explore the philosophical questions of what makes us who we are, and what it means to be the same person over time. We will consider the nature of personal identity, the role of memory and selfhood, and the implications of these ideas for our understanding of the human condition.

PHIL 114 (S) Freedom and Society (W)

This course will explore the philosophical questions of freedom and the nature of society. We will consider the role of personal autonomy and the limits of political power, and the implications of these ideas for our understanding of the human condition.

PHIL 401 (Senior Seminar)

This course will be an opportunity for advanced philosophy majors to engage in independent research and to present their findings in a seminar setting. Students will be expected to demonstrate an advanced understanding of philosophical inquiry and to present their ideas in a clear and concise manner.


Format: seminar. Requirements: class attendance and participation; significant research paper.

To engage in philosophy is to ask a variety of questions about the world and our place in it. What can we know? What should we do? What may we hope? What makes human beings human? In various forms, and others like them, are not inventions of philosophers; on the contrary, they occur to most people simply as they live their lives. Many of us ask them as children, but later either ignore them, or accept answers we can live with. Philosophers, however, seek to keep such questions open, and to address them through reasoned discussion and argument, instead of accepting answers to them based on opinion or prejudice. The program in philosophy is designed to aid students in thinking about these issues, by acquainting them with influential work in the field, past and present, and by training them to engage with these issues themselves. The program emphasizes training in clear, critical thinking and in effective writing. Philosophy courses center around class discussions and the writing of interpretive and critical essays.

Enrollment limit: 19 (expected: 19). In case of overenrollment, preference will be given to first-year students and sophomores.

Format: tutorial. Requirements: frequent short papers (some graded, some p/f), class participation, and one 5-page paper. The required courses are: any 100-level course and Philosophy 201 or 202 by the end of their sophomore year. Courses taught in other departments at Williams or at other institutions will not count toward the distribution requirement (Williams-Exeter tutorials may count, however, with the approval of the Department Chair).

Up to two cross-listed courses taught in other departments may count as electives toward the major. No more than one 100-level course may count toward the major.

The department chairs in Philosophy are assigned to the student who has demonstrated outstanding achievement in a program of study that extends beyond the requirements of the major. The extension beyond major requirements may take the form either of independent work culminating in a senior essay or thesis (the independent-study route) or of additional course work (the directed-study route). Participants will have the opportunity to present substantial written work in the tutorial every other week, and will be responsible for commenting on their tutorial partners work.?


Format: tutorial. Requirements: frequent short papers (some graded, some p/f), class participation, and one 5-page paper.

No prerequisites; open to first-year students. Requirements: frequent short papers (some graded, some p/f), class participation; small group meetings; weekly short writing assignments.

PHIL 114 (S) Freedom and Society (W)

Enrollment limit: 19 (expected: 19). In case of overenrollment, preference will be given to first-year students and sophomores.

Format: tutorial. Requirements: frequent short papers (some graded, some p/f), class participation, and one 5-page paper.

No prerequisites; open to first-year students. Requirements: frequent short papers (some graded, some p/f), class participation; small group meetings; weekly short writing assignments.

PHIL 115 Personal Identity (Not offered 2013-2014) (W)

Format: lecture/discussion. Requirements: class attendance, preparedness and participation; small group meetings; weekly short writing assignments.

No prerequisites; open to first-year students. Enrollment limit: 19 (expected: 19). In case of overenrollment, preference will be given to first-year students and sophomores.

PHIL 401 (Senior Seminar)
PHIL 116(S) Perception and Reality (W)
An introduction to philosophy through two of its central themes, the nature of the mind and the limits of knowledge. Topics include skepticism, the mind-body problem, reason, knowledge of the external world, and subjectivity. Our discussions will range over historical and contemporary works, and will draw from both Western and Eastern philosophical traditions. We will pay special attention to whether and to what degree science sheds light on these issues.

Format: seminar. Requirements: active participation; five (4-6 page) essays.
Hour: 11:20-12:35 TR

PHIL 117(F,S) Arguing about God (W)
"Faith is a fine invention," according to Emily Dickinson’s poem, "when gentlemen can see; but microscopes are prudent in an emergency." This introduction to philosophy will see how some microscopes of reason and logic can carry us in traditional arguments about the existence and nature of God. We will closely analyze classical arguments by Augustine, Anaxagoras, Aquinas, Anselm, Maimonides, Descartes, and others. Pascal’s wager is a different approach: it argues that even though proof of the existence of God is unavailable, you will maximize your expected utility by believing. We will examine the wager in its original home of Pascal’s Pensees, and look at William James’ related article, "The Will to Believe." The millennia old problem of whether human suffering is compatible with God’s perfection is called "the problem of evil." We will examine this issue in Hume’s Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion, classic sources and contemporary articles.

Students should be aware that, in the classic tradition, this class resembles a logic course.
Hour: 10:10-11:50 MWF
10:00-10:50 MW

PHIL 120(S) Existentialism: An introduction (W)
Existentialism is considered to be one of the 20th century’s most important philosophical movements, with key figures such as Sartre, Beauvoir and Merleau-Ponty. In the aftermath of Nietzsche’s famous claim that God is dead, together with the sensation of a loss of a foundation for human and moral values after the two world wars, existentialism seeks to examine the philosophical and ethical conditions for human existence that can no longer take transcendent foundations for granted. What becomes of moral responsibility, if no moral values are absolutely given? What is freedom, if no longer granted by divine or human essence? How can meaning be created, and on what grounds, if no higher meaning is given anymore? In this course, we will explore a number of existentialist questions and themes, such as meaning, nihilism, humanism, the absurd and anguish, but also hope, ethics and intersubjectivity through various texts by such as Nietzsche, Kierkegaard, Sartre, Camus, Beauvoir, Heidegger and Arendt, and also through literature and films inspired by or inspiring for the existentialist movement: Beckett, Kafka, Dostoievsiki and Bergman among others.

Format: seminar. Requirements: each week, you will write a 1–2 page paper corresponding to the reading assignment. In addition to that, you will write a 5–6 page paper on assigned topics and for finals. Active participation in class discussions is required.
Hour: 9:55–11:10 TR

PHIL 121(FS) Truth, Goodness and Beauty (W)
In our everyday lives, we routinely assume that our clocks can tell us the truth about what time it is, that commuting murder is wrong, and that there are people, landscapes, and works of art that are beautiful. But we are also aware that people can and often disagree about what is true, what is good or right, and what is beautiful. Should the fact of such disagreement lead us to conclude that truth, goodness, and beauty are in some basic sense relative to human beings, perhaps as individuals, perhaps as members of societies or cultures? Some philosophers defend such conclusions, but others argue that truth, goodness, and beauty are “objective,” in some important sense, despite the fact that people disagree about them. This introductory course addresses these and related issues.

Format: seminar. Requirements: attendance, frequent short papers totaling about 30 pages, class participation.
Hour: 9:00-9:50 MW
11:00-11:50 MW

PHIL 122 Philosophical Approaches to Contemporary Moral Issues (Not offered 2013-2014) (W)
In this course we will examine a number of prominent and controversial social issues, using our study of themes both as an opportunity to better understand the moral dimensions of those issues in and of themselves, and to consider the ways in which selected classical and contemporary moral theories characterize and address those moral dimensions. Topics will depend to some extent on student interest, but are likely to include concerns that fall under such headings as euthanasia, famine relief, abortion, capital punishment, terrorism and torture, food ethics, environmental ethics, and the like. Writing assignments will employ a “target essay” approach that involves writing groups in which students share their work with each other. For each issue we cover in class, one student in each group will write a five to seven page “target essay” on an assigned topic; all of the remaining members of each group will then read that essay and write a two page response to it. Depending on the number of students in the class, each person will write either one or two target essays, as well as four or five response essays throughout the course of the term. In addition, students will be required to substantially revise and expand one target essay in light of the peer response papers and written comments from the instructor, and to submit it as a final paper for the course.

Format: lecture/discussion. Requirements: class attendance and participation, four or five short response papers (h/p/f, 2 pages each), one or two target essays (graded, 5-7 pages each), and one revised final essay (7-10 pages).
No prerequisites; open to all. Enrollment limit: 19 (expected: 19). Preference given to first-years and sophomores.
Hour: 10:10-11:00 TR

PHIL 123(F) Objectivity in Ethics (W)
It is often claimed that morality is subjective or just a matter of opinion. In this course we’ll examine several influential attempts to provide a rational foundation for morality, along with Nietzsche’s wholesale rejection of these efforts. Readings will include work by Plato, Hobbes, Kant, Mill, Nietzsche, and contemporary authors.

Format: seminar. Requirements: participation in discussion; a few short response papers; four or five 5-page papers.
Hour: 11:20-12:35 TR

PHIL 126 Paradoxes (Not offered 2013-2014) (W)
There are three grains of sand on my desk. This is unfortunate, but at least there isn’t a heap of sand on my desk. That would be really worrisome. On the other hand, there is a heap of sand in my backyard. I don’t know how many grains of sand are in this heap, but let’s say 100,000. My daughter removes one grain of sand. I don’t know why, she just does. It seems like there is still a heap of sand in my backyard. In fact, it seems like you can’t change a heap of sand into something that isn’t a heap of sand by removing just one grain. This is a problem! But now we have a problem. By repeated application of the same reasoning, it seems that even after she removes 99,997 grains of sand-I don’t know what she wants with all this sand, but I’m starting to worry about that girl-there is still a heap of sand in my backyard. But three grains isn’t enough for a heap. So there is not a heap in my backyard. Now I’m confused. Where did my reasoning go wrong?
What we have here is an example of the sorites paradox. It is a paradox, because I started with seemingly true statements and used valid reasoning to arrive at contradictory conclusions. This is a paradox, because I started with seemingly true statements and used valid reasoning to arrive at contradictory conclusions. This is a paradox, because I started with seemingly true statements and used valid reasoning to arrive at contradictory conclusions.

We’ll also work on writing lucid prose that displays precisely the logical structure of arguments, engages in focused critiques of these arguments, and forcefully presents arguments of our own. Other topics could include: Zeno’s paradoxes of motion and plurality, the liar’s paradox, the surprise exam paradox, paradoxes of mater nucleation, Newcomb’s Problem, and the Prisoner’s Dilemma.

This is an introductory course.
Format: seminar. Requirements: several short writing assignments and a longer final paper.

PHIL 201(F) History of Ancient Greek Philosophy (Same as CLAS 203)
Very few people believe that everything is water, that we knew everything before birth, that philosophers ought to rule the state, or that some people are natural slaves. Why then should we spend our time studying people who in addition to having these surprising beliefs have been dead for 2500 years? First of all, Greek thinkers, especially Plato and Aristotle, radically shaped the trajectory of western thought in every area of philosophy. No one can have an adequate understanding of western intellectual history without some familiarity with the Greeks, and we might think that an understanding of our intellectual history can deepen our understanding of our own situation. More importantly, many of the thinkers in this class are simply excellent philosophers, and it is worthwhile for anyone interested in philosophical problems to read treatments of these problems by excellent philosophers. We will begin the course by looking briefly at some of the Presocratic philosophers active in the Mediterranean world of the seventh through fifth centuries BCE, and some of the sophists active in the fifth century. We will then turn to several of Plato’s dialogues, examining Plato’s portrayal of Socrates and his development of a new and profoundly powerful philosophical conception. We will then read some of Aristotle’s works on metaphysics, epistemology and ethics, considering some of the
ways Aristotle’s thought responds to that of predecessors.

Format: lecture/discussion. Requirements: short papers, possibly supplemented by one or more exams.

No prerequisites; open to first-year students. Enrollment limit: none (expected: 20-40).

Hour: 11:00-11:50 MW

PHIL 202(S) History of Modern Philosophy

European philosophy in 17th and 18th centuries both responded to, and shaped in its turn, major revolutions in scientific and political thought. The legacy of this intellectually fertile period is still felt in contemporary epistemology, metaphysics, ethics, and political philosophy. We will consider some of the questions that are both central to the modern era and philosophically important today: What are the origins, nature and limits of human knowledge? How should scientific inquiry proceed? What is the nature of reality, and how can it be known? What is the relationship between the mind and the body? How should we think about causality in the material world, and how about causality that involves persons at all? Are we free or determined? Are there compelling reasons to be moral? What is the nature of moral thinking and acting? How can our social and political institutions be explained and justified? We will read a necessarily limited selection of writings by the most important thinkers of the modern period: Descartes, Spinoza, Hobbes, Locke, Berkeley, Leibniz, Hume, Reid, Rousseau and Kant.

Format: lecture with some discussions. Requirements: class attendance and preparedness; participation in weekly discussion groups, with rotating short reports on these meetings; 8 short assignments; a midterm and a final exam.

No prerequisites; open to first-year students. No enrollment limit (expected: 30).

Hour: 11:00-12:15 MWF

PHIL 203(S) formerly 103 Logic and Language (Q)

Logic is the study of reasoning and argument. More particularly, it concerns itself with the difference between good and bad reasoning, between strong and weak arguments. We all examine the virtues and vices of good arguments in both informal and formal systems. The goals of this course are to improve the critical thinking of the students, to introduce them to sentential and predicate logic, to familiarize them with enough formal logic to enable them to read some of the great works of philosophy, which use formal logic (such as Wittgenstein’s Tractatus), and to examine some of the connections between logic and philosophy.


No prerequisites. No enrollment limit (expected: 50-80).

[Contemporary Metaphysics and Epistemology]

Hour: 9:00-9:50 MW

PHIL 205 (formerly 201) Continental Philosophy: Reading the Critics of Reason (Not offered 2013-2014)

Nineteenth- and twentieth-century European philosophy gave rise to an astounding number of brilliant thinkers (including Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, Heidegger, Arendt, Lacan, Adorno, Cixous, Derrida, Irigaray, Deleuze, and Derrida), who in turn initiated an equally astounding number of important philosophical movements (including existentialism, structuralism, critical theory, hermeneutics, French feminism, and post-structuralism). Fortunately, this bewildering diversity comprises a recognizable tradition in virtue of a common theme: the relentless critique of the conceptions and projects of reason inherited from the Enlightenment, Kant, and Hegel. Unfortunately, because many of these critiques are written in ways that attempt to undermine and transform our notions of rationality, they can be maddeningly difficult to read.

This course is intended to introduce students to continental philosophy through guided readings of these challenging texts at developing students interpretative skills.

Format: lecture/discussion. Requirements: several short papers, final 8- to 10-page paper, regular attendance and participation.


This course is part of the Critical Reasoning and Analytical Skills initiative.

AWAIKCI

PHIL 207(S) Contemporary Philosophy of Mind (W)

The philosophy of mind has been one of the liveliest and most active areas of philosophical inquiry over the last century, and it has taken a place at the center of the field. Part of the explanation for this is the rise of compelling scientific accounts of who and what we are. The question of whether the mind can be fully understood within a physicalist, materialist framework has taken on an urgent urgency. In this course we will investigate the mind/body problem, mental representation, the conceptual and nonconceptual content of mental states, and the nature of consciousness. Throughout we will attend to the relevant empirical literature.

Format: seminar. Requirements: weekly two-page papers on focused topics and two 8- to 10-page papers.

Prerequisites: at least one prior 100 or 200 level PHIL course. Enrollment limit: 19 (expected: 14). Preference given to prospective majors in philosophy and concentrators in cognitive science.

[Metaphysics & Epistemology]

Hour: 1:10-2:25 MR

CRUZ

PHIL 208(S) Philosophy of Education: DuBois versus Washington

At the beginning of the last century Booker T. Washington and W.E.B. DuBois engaged in a great debate about the nature of education. Their dispute raised some of the deepest questions in philosophy: consequentialism versus deontology, the goals of happiness versus dignity, long term versus short term goals, and more. We will begin with Washington’s classic article “Individual Education for the Negro” and DuBois’ classic “The Talented Tenth.” We will continue with J. S. Mill’s Utilitarianism and Kant’s Grounding for the Metaphysics of Morals, considering these books as works in the philosophy of education. We will read the great 20th century philosopher who saw education as the foundation of democracy: John Dewey. We will also study contemporary philosophers who have written on education, such as Martha Nussbaum and Cornel West.

Format: seminar. Requirements: short papers and a longer final paper.

No prerequisites. Enrollment limit: 25 (expected: 25). Preference first to Philosophy and Africana Studies majors, next to sophomores, then to first years.

Hour: 12:00-12:50 MWF

GERARD

PHIL 209(F) Philosophy of Science

It is a generally held belief, in our time and culture, that science is the best source of our knowledge of the world, and of ourselves. The aim of this course is to examine the origins, grounds, and nature of this belief. We will analyze and discuss various accounts of scientific method, structure and justification of scientific theories, scientific choice, change, and the idea that we can know parts of nature/our knowledge of the world that science can never know.

The course will begin with the “received view” of science, advanced by logical empiricists, which assumes the objectivity and the rationality of science. We will then discuss philosophies of science which emerged out of various criticisms of this view—especially those of Popper, Lakatos, Kuhn and Feyerabend—and the challenges to the assumptions of scientific objectivity and rationality their works provoked. This discussion will naturally lead us to the relativist and social-constructivist views developed within contemporary science studies. Finally, we will analyze the current debate about cognitive credentials of science and proper approach to the study of science, which came to be known as “the science wars.”

Format: seminar, with a short lecture component in each class. Requirements: class attendance, preparedness and participation; three short assignments; three 5 pages long papers, the last of which will be the final paper, due a week after the end of classes.

Prerequisites: one PHIL course, or declared major in a natural science, or consent of the instructor. Enrollment limit: 19 (expected: 10-15). Preference will be given to declared and intended Philosophy majors.

May not be taken on a pass/fail basis.

[Contemporary Metaphysics and Epistemology]

Hour: 9:55-11:10 TR

MLADENOVIC

PHIL 210(T) Nietzsche: How One Becomes, What One Is (W)

It might seem curious to read Nietzsche starting out from his very last book: his autobiography, Ecce Homo. Indeed, this book was written right before his mental and physical breakdown, leading many more commentators to assume that its unusual tone – with chapters bearing titles such as “Why I am so wise” or “Why I write such good books” – already constitutes a prelude to Nietzsche’s final collapse and thus invalidates itself as philosophy. However, a closer reading reveals this book to be not only one of the best possible statements to Nietzsche’s own philosophy precisely because he gives us an overview and a critical analysis of his whole project through a reading of his previous books, but also makes it possible for us to raise a certain number of questions central to philosophy itself. What is the self, the “auto” concerned in a philosophical autobiogra- phy, and what does it mean to, as Nietzsche says, “become what one is”? How can the history of philosophy be understood if we apply a Nietzschean genealogy to its Socratic heritage of “knowing oneself”, and how can we understand its necessary and continuous overcoming of itself? Through Nietzsche’s own re-reading of a number of his books – The Birth of Tragedy, The Genealogy of Morals, Human, all too Human, Thus Spoke Zarathustra, Beyond Good and Evil and The Gay Science, among others, he invites us to undertake an investigation of some of his key questions – body and mind, health and illness, knowledge and creation, morals and ethics, nihilism, affirmation and Amor Fati. Hereby, is rendered possible an open discussion about the power and destiny of philosophical thinking, about its relation to history and its need for “unnecessiveness”, about its critical capacity to question its own foundations, and its ability to create while – sometimes – also destroying.

Literature:

Friedrich Nietzsche: Ecce Homo

Selections of: The Birth of Tragedy; The Genealogy of Morals, Human, all too Human, Thus Spoke Zarathustra, Beyond Good and Evil, The Gay Science, The Will to Power, Posthumous Fragments.
Secondary literature, chapters and articles by, among others, Gilles Deleuze, Michel Foucault, Martin Heidegger, Walter Kaufmann, Sarah Kofman, Plato.

Format: tutorial. Requirements/evaluation: Each week one student will write a 5–6–page paper on the assigned reading and the other student will write a 2–3–page critical response paper. Roles will be reversed the following week. In all, each student will write 5 papers and 5 critical response papers. Papers will not be graded but you will receive feedback and an oral evaluation after every session. The final grade will be set after an individual evaluation meeting at the end of the term.

Prerequisites: at least one previous course of philosophy, or permission of instructor. Enrollment limit: 10 (expected: 10). Preference given to current and prospective Philosophy majors and students with a sufficient background in political or critical theory. May not be taken on a pass/fail basis.

PHIL 212 Ethics and Reproductive Technologies (Same as WGGSS 212) (Not offered 2013-2014) (W)

In her groundbreaking book, *The Tentative Pregnancy*, Barbara Katz Rothman writes that “[t]he technological revolution in reproduction is forcing us to confront the very meaning of motherhood, to examine the nature and origins of the mother-child bond, and to replace—or to let us think we can replace—chance with choice.” Taking this as our starting point, in this course we will examine a number of conceptual and ethical issues in the use and development of technologies related to human reproduction, drawing out their implications for such core concepts as “motherhood” and “parenthood,” family and genetic identity, the commodification of reproduction, and society’s interests in reproductive activities. Topics will range from consideration of “mundane” technologies such as in vitro fertilization (IVF), prenatal genetic screening and testing, and surrogacy, to the more extraordinary, including pre-implantation diagnosis (PID), post-menopausal reproduction, post-mortem gamete procurement, reproductive cloning and cloning of embryos, and in vitro medical interventions. Background readings include sources rooted in traditional modes of bioethical analysis as well as those incorporating feminist approaches.

Format: discussion. Requirements: active participation in class discussions, four to five short reflection papers, and two longer papers (5-10 pages).

No prerequisites; but introductory-level course in Philosophy and/or Women’s, Gender and Sexuality Studies highly recommended. Enrollment limit: 19 (expected: 19). Preference given to Women’s, Gender and Sexuality Studies majors.

[Contemporary Value theory]

PHIL 213(F) Biomedical Ethics (W)

Much like the construction of medical knowledge itself, it is from specific cases that general principles of biomedical ethics arise and are systematized into a theoretical framework, and it is to those cases they must return, if they are to be both useful and comprehensible to those making decisions within the biomedical context. In this tutorial we will explore this characteristic of biomedical ethics by using a case-based approach to examining core concepts of the field. The first portion of the course will be devoted to developing and understanding four moral principles which have come to be accepted as canonical: respect for autonomy, beneficence, nonmaleficence, and justice. The remainder of the course will consider key concepts at the core of medical ethics and issues for the field, such as privacy and confidentiality, the distinction between killing and “letting die,” therapy vs. treatment, terminal illness, and the history of the bioethical discourse. Each week we will (1) read philosophical material focused on one principle or concept, and (2) consider in detail one bioethics case in which the principle or concept has special application or relevance. In some weeks, students will be asked to choose from a small set which case they would like to address; in others the case will be assigned. Students will meet with the professor in pairs for approximately one hour per week, writing and presenting 5–7-page essays every other week, and commenting orally on partners’ essays in alternate weeks.

Format: tutorial. Evaluation will be based on written work, on oral presentations of that work, and on oral critiques.

No prerequisites. Enrollment limit: 10 (expected: 10). Preference will be given to declared and prospective philosophy majors and students committed to taking the tutorial.

[Contemporary Value theory]

PHIL 219 Philosophy of Animal Life (Not offered 2013-2014) (W)

This course will investigate the nature of non-human animals and our relationship to them. Throughout we will aim to fuse a rigorous scientific perspective with more humanistic themes and moral inquiry. Topics will include animal minds and cognition, empathy and evolution, the history of domestication, animal rights, cross-cultural views on animals, arguments against and for vegetarianism and veganism, and pets and happiness.


No prerequisites. Enrollment limit: 19 (expected: 19). Preference given to students with at least one previous philosophy course.

[Metaphysics & Epistemology]

CRUZ

PHIL 222(F) Minds, Brains, and Intelligent Behavior: An Introduction to Cognitive Science (Same as COGS 222 and PSYC 222)

(See under COGS 222 for full description.)

[Contemporary Metaphysics and Epistemology]

CRUZ

PHIL 225 Classics in Western Feminist Thought (Same as WGGSS 225) (Not offered 2013-2014) (W)

This course provides an introduction to feminist thought through readings of seminal feminist texts from the Enlightenment to the present. Special attention will be given to feminism within the canon of women’s literature, liberal, critical and cultural feminisms, as well as transnational feminism. Authors read may include the following: Mary Wollstonecraft, John Stuart Mill, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Alexandra Kollontai, Sojourner Truth, Harriet Jacobs, Emma Goldman, Adrienne Rich, Marilyn Frye, Gloria Anzaldúa, Audre Lorde, Catherine MacKinnon, Judith Butler, Iris Young, Nancy Fraser, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, and Chandra Mohanty. We conclude the course with an exploration of the wide range of feminist analyses of issues concerning prostitution and pornography.

Format: discussion. Requirements: several 2-page essays, one 4-page essay, one 6-page essay (including a draft) and participation in in-class exercises including short oral presentations.

Enrollment limit: 19, or PHIL 101, or permission of instructor. Preference: WGGSS 101, or PHIL 101, or permission of instructor. Enrollment limit: 19 (expected: 10). Preference given to Women’s, Gender and Sexuality Studies and Philosophy majors.

Satisfies the Women’s, Gender and Sexuality Studies theory requirement for the major.

SAWICKI

PHIL 227 Death and Dying (Not offered 2013-2014) (W)

In this course we will examine traditional philosophical approaches to understanding death and related concepts, with a special focus on the ethical concerns surrounding death and care for the dying. We will begin with questions about how to define death, as well as reflections on its meaning and function in human life. We will move on to examine ethical issues of truth-telling with terminally ill patients and their families, decisions to withdraw or withhold life-sustaining treatments, the care of seriously ill newborns, physician-assisted suicide, euthanasia, and posthumous interests. In addition to key concepts of death, dying, and terminal illness, we will develop and refine notions of medical mutuality, paternalism and autonomy, particularly within the context of advance directives and surrogate decision making.

Format: lecture/discussion. Requirements: class attendance and participation, periodic short essays (3 or 4 total, 2-3 pages each), two mid-length papers (5-7 pages each); possible experiential learning component.


[Contemporary Value theory]

J. PEDRONI

PHIL 228(S) Feminist Bioethics (Same as WGGSS 228) (W) (D)

In this course we will explore the ways in which feminist approaches to moral thinking have influenced both the methodology and the content of contemporary bioethics. The first portion of the course will address the emergence of the “Ethics of Care,” critically assessing its origins in feminist theory, its development within the context of the caring professions, and its potential as a general approach to bioethical reasoning. The second portion of the course will use feminist philosophy to inform our understanding of the ways in which gender structures the individual’s interactions with the health care system. To do this we’ll explore topics that might traditionally be considered “women’s issues” in health care, such as medicine and body image (e.g., cosmetic surgery, eating disorders), reproductive technology, and research on women and their health care needs. In addition we’ll also look at feminist analyses of topics that traditionally have not been regarded as “gendered,” such as resource allocation and end of life issues. As a course offered under the Exploring Diversity Initiative, this class is designed to improve students’ ability to recognize both the existence and the effects of gender disparities within the health care context, and in particular, how power and privilege have within and beyond medicine contribute to gender inequalities in health and medical treatment. Moreover, students will study ways of conceptualizing and reforming health care interactions in order to reduce or eliminate those gender inequalities.

Format: lecture/discussion. Requirements: active participation in class discussions, two mid-length papers (7-10 pp. each), one oral presentation, and periodic short writing assignments (four or five, app. 2 pp. each).

No prerequisites, although previous coursework in Women’s, Gender and Sexuality Studies is desirable; not open to first-year students. Enrollment limit: 19 (expected: 8-10). Preference given to Women’s, Gender and Sexuality Studies and Philosophy majors.

[Contemporary Value theory]

Hour: 2:35-3:50 TF

J. PEDRONI
PHIL 231(F) Ancient Political Thought (Same as PSCI 231)
(See under PSCI 231 for full description.)

PHIL 232(S) Modern Political Thought (Same as PSCI 232)
(See under PSCI 232 for full description.)

PHIL 235T Morality and Partiality: Loyalty, Friendship, Patriotism (Not offered 2013-2014) (W)
The aim of this tutorial is to critically examine the nature, importance, and ethical value of personal attachments and loyalties. Loyalty is frequently expected by family, friends and lovers, by political communities, and by the state. A person incapable of loyalty is often characterized as fickle, cold, self-serving and sometimes even pathological. However, the status of loyalty as a virtue has always been suspect: it has been argued that it is incompatible with impartiality, fairness and equality, and claimed that it is always exclusionary. So, some relationships with other people—such as friendships, familial ties, love, patriotism—seem to be ethically desirable, central to the quality of our lives, and yet prima facie in tension with the widely held belief that morality requires impartiality and equal treatment of all human beings. Are we ever justified in placing more concern, and doing more, for our friends, family, community or nation? Does morality require that we always subordinate our personal relationships to universal principles? Is patriotism incompatible with cosmopolitanism, and if so, which of the two should we value? If loyalty is a virtue, what are the proper limits of its cultivation and expression?

Format: tutorial. Requirements: two tutorial partners will meet with the instructor for one hour each week; each student will write a 5-page paper every second week, and comment on the tutor’s partner’s paper on alternate weeks; no final paper; the final grade will be based on the cumulative quality of papers (which will not be individually graded), quality of the responses to the tutor’s partner’s written work, preparedness for tutorial meetings, quality of oral contribution, and overall progress in the course; I will meet individually with each student for a midterm evaluation.

No prerequisites: open to first-years. Enrollment limit: 10 (expected: 10). Preference given to preference to Philosophy majors and then to sophomores.

May not be taken on a pass/fail basis; not available for the Gaudino option.

[Contemporary Value Theory]
MLADENOVIC

PHIL 236(F) Contemporary Ethical Theory (W)
Is sacrificing an individual’s welfare for the sake of the community ever justified, or does each individual have an inviolable status that must be respected? Should moral considerations always take priority over personal projects and intimate relationships, or are there some spheres in which we have a direct right to pursue our goals without concern for morality? We will explore these related questions by systematically comparing and contrasting two dominant ethical theories of the 20th century, consequentialism and deontology.

In both these theories, philosophers have tried to articulate and defend normative principles that guide individuals and groups to classify what the right action is in any particular case. In this course we will examine whether such normative principles exist, as well as whether, and how, these theories are compatible with one another.

Format: seminar. Requirements: several short response papers; an 8- to 10-page midterm paper; a 10- to 12-page final paper.

Prerequisite: at least one PHIL course, or permission of the instructor. Enrollment limit: 19 (expected: 10-15). Preference given to Philosophy majors.

[Contemporary Ethical Theory]
MCPARTLAND

PHIL 237(S) Current Issues in Metaphysics (Same as WGS 277T) (W)
In this course, we will examine a number of issues in contemporary metaphysics. Possible topics include: realism and anti-realism, the problem of universals, the nature of necessity, causation, material constitution, the nature of time, personal identity, and freedom of the will. While we will be concerned to place our discussions of these issues in historical context, almost all of the reading for the class will consist in articles written by contemporary philosophers working in what is sometimes called the “analytic” tradition.

Format: lecture and discussion. Evaluation: two long papers (at least one of which will be re-written), short response papers, and active participation in class.

Prerequisites: one PHIL course (familiarity with formal logic helpful but not required). Enrollment limit: 15 (expected: 10-15).

[Contemporary Metaphysics and Epistemology]
WHITE

PHIL 271T Woman as “Other” (Same as WGS 271T) (Not offered 2013-2014) (D) (W)
At mid-century, Simone de Beauvoir, existential philosopher and perhaps the greatest feminist theorist of the twentieth century, described woman as “living in a world where men compel her to assume the status of the Other.” At the same time, Beauvoir asserts, “One is not born a woman, one becomes one.” How, given their objectification, can women become subjects for themselves? Is authenticity even possible? Must the relation between self and other inevitably be one of objectification and domination? Is reciprocity and mutuality in other-woman relations possible? In our efforts to deepen our understanding of these important philosophical questions, questions that have been at the center of social and political thought at least since Hegel introduced the dialectic of master and slave, we will engage in close readings of writings by Beauvoir (including autobiography and biography), as well as philosophers responding to her—Franz Fanon, Luce Irigaray and Judith Butler.

Format: tutorial, students will work in pairs. Requirements: each student will write and present orally a 5-page essay every other week. Students not presenting essays will prepare oral critiques of their partners’ essays. Evaluation will be based on written work, oral presentations of essays, and oral critiques.

Prerequisites: one course in either PHIL or WGS. Enrollment limit: 10 (expected: 10). Preference given to current and prospective Philosophy and Women’s, Gender and Sexuality Studies majors.

[History]
MCPARTLAND

PHIL 272T Free Will and Responsibility (Not offered 2013-2014) (W)
In moral and legal decisions we hold people responsible for their deliberate actions. This practice seems justified as long as people are free to make the choices that they do. But which criteria must a decision meet in order to qualify as free? Clearly, a free decision must not be the result of external coercion. But must the decision also be free from any inside influence at all? If so then freedom may seem impossible; for we are all deeply influenced by external factors ranging from the general laws of nature to specific features of our genetic endowment and social environment including religion, political ideology, and advertising. These affect not only our particular choices but also, more fundamental-ly, who we are and what we value. Since it is undeniable that we are pervasively influenced by such forces, the real question is whether, and how, free choice is possible amidst all of these influences. In this course we will examine the best-known recent philosophical attempts to make sense of the nature of free will and responsibility. Since these issues have a direct bearing on which theory of legal punishment we should accept, we will also examine influential theories of punishment. Our focus will be on works by contemporary authors. Emphasis will be placed on developing skills in reading, interpretation and oral argument as well as critical reasoning and writing.

Format: tutorial; students meet with the instructor in pairs for roughly an hour each week. Requirements: each student will write a 5- to 6-page paper every other week and comment on his or her tutorial partner’s paper in alternate weeks. Emphasis will be placed on developing skills in reading, interpretation and oral argument as well as critical reasoning and writing.

Prerequisite: a 100-level PHIL course, PHIL 201, or PHIL 202. Enrollment limit: 10 (expected: 10). Preference given to current and prospective Philosophy majors.

[Metaphysics & Epistemology]
MCPARTLAND

PHIL 274(S) Messing with People: The Ethics of Human Experimentation (W)
The Tuskegee Syphilis Study and Stanley Milgram’s Obedience experiments are infamous. Yet, other lesser known experiments are equally important landmarks in research ethics, as they illustrate the perils of open-ended experimentation. The Willowbrook experiment, in which residents of a state home for mentally impaired children were intentionally infected with a virus that causes hepatitis, and the Kennedy-Krieger Lead Abatement study, which tested the efficacy of a new lead paint removal procedure by housing young children in partially decontaminated homes and testing those children for lead exposure. In this sophomore tutorial we’ll closely examine a series of contemporary and historical cases of human experimentation (roughly, one case per week) with an eye toward elucidating the moral norms that ought to govern human subjects research. A number of conceptual themes will emerge
PHIL 280 Frege, Russell, and the Early Wittgenstein (Not offered 2013-2014)
The last line of Ludwig Wittgenstein's Tractatus famously reads: "Whereof one cannot speak, thereof one must be silent." Are there things that cannot be put into words? What are the limits of language? What is the nature of language? How do logic and language relate? We will examine these (and other questions) in the context of the great philosophical revolution at the beginning of the last century: the linguistic turn and the birth of analytic philosophy. We will see how a focus on language affects our understanding of many traditional philosophical questions, ranging from epistemology and metaphysics to aesthetics and ethics. Our texts will include Gottlob Frege, The Foundations of Arithmetic, Bertrand Russell, Principles of Mathematics, and Ludwig Wittgenstein, Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus.

PHIL 281T(S) Philosophy of Religion (Same as REL 302T) (W)
Our goal in this course will be to try to determine how far reason can justify belief in God. We will spend at least half of the semester examining the best-known philosophical arguments for and against the existence of God (including the ontological argument, the cosmological argument, the teleological argument, the argument from religious experience, the argument from evil, and the argument from religious disagreement). For each one, we will first look at historically important formulations of the argument and then turn to contemporary reformulations. Our aim will be to identify and then evaluate the strongest version of each argument. After working through these arguments, we will want to be even more generally familiar with the principles of reason and faith in justifying religious belief. In the final sections of the course we will examine the relationship between god and morality. Authors will include Plato, Anselm, Aquinas, Pascal, Paley, Hume, Kant, Kierkegaard, Freud, Marx, and several contemporary philosophers.

PHIL 282T Philosophy and Narrative Fiction (Same as COMP 294T) (W)
Narrative fiction, we will discuss both narrative works of art and theoretical approaches to their analysis. We will consider the ways in which narrative fiction presents and engages philosophical questions. To properly address a number of interrelated questions concerning philosophy in literature and film, and philosophical problems of meaning, interpretation and evaluation of narrative fiction, we will discuss both narrative works of art and theoretical approaches to their analysis. We will consider the ways in which narrative fiction presents and engages philosophical questions.

PHIL 283T Socrates (Same as CLAS 289T) (Not offered 2013-2014) (W)
Socrates was executed in 399 BCE on the charges of impiety and corruption of the youth of Athens. Apparently he corrupted the youth by engaging with them in philosophy. In this class, we will attempt to carry on the noble tradition of corruption by philosophy. We will read works by three of Socrates' contemporaries: Aristophanes, Xenophon, and especially Plato. Through an examination of these works, we will try to get some feeling for what Socrates' controversial positions and his arguments for these positions may have been. While he never wrote any philosophical works of his own, Socrates is one of the most influential thinkers in the western tradition. His thought influenced the thought of subsequent generations of philosophers. In fact, Socrates seems to have been thought of as a kind of intellectual saint in the Hellenistic world. The stoics and skeptics both claimed a Socratic foundation for their own thought. Stoicism and skepticism, however, are wildly divergent schools of thought. How could proponents of each be claiming to follow in the footsteps of Socrates? We will read some representative works from each of these schools of thought to see how each approaches Socrates. If time permits, we may also look at how the figure of Socrates has been thought about in the works of more modern thinkers.

PHIL 284T(M) Principles of Ethics (Same as PHIL 102T) (W)
Prerequisites: none. 

PHIL 285T (W) The Foundations of Arithmetic
While you're debating whether to take this class, consider the following puzzle. There is a village where the barber shaves (a) all those and (b) only those who do not shave themselves. Now, ask yourself: who shaves the barber? You will see that if the barber does not shave himself, then by condition (a) he does shave himself. And, if the barber does shave himself, then by condition (b) he does not shave himself. Thus, the barber must not shave himself! If and only if he does not shave himself. See if you can figure out why this is sometimes called a paradox, and then ask yourself what this has to do with our opening questions.

PHIL 286T Ethics and Experimental Psychology (Same as PHIL 386T) (W)
Specific issues will include the ethics of placebo research, deception in research, studies of illicit/illegal behavior, genetic research, experimentation with children, pregnant women and fetuses, and persons with diminished mental capacity, among other topics. Format: tutorials. Meetings to be arranged.

PHIL 287T(S) Philosophy and Narrative Fiction (Same as COMP 294T) (W)
What is it for a novel, a story, a play or a film to be a philosophical narrative? It is not enough for it merely to be about a character who happens to be a philosopher; nor is it just that philosophical positions are reviewed in the narrative, as in Gaarder's Sophie's World. Milan Kundera tried to answer this question by saying that a good philosophical novel does not serve philosophy but, on the contrary, tries to "get hold of a domain that (...) philosophy had kept for itself. There are metaphysical problems, problems of human existence, that philosophy has never known how to grasp in all their concreteness and that only the novel can seize." If Kundera is right, fictional narratives (such as novels) sometimes do the philosophical work that philosophy cannot do for itself. What kind of work is that, and how is it accomplished? Why can't argumentative prose—philosophers' preferred form of expression—clearly say, and moreover prove, what literature, theatre and film illustrate, show and display? One possible answer which we will examine is that, while many philosophers recognize that there are intimate connections between what we believe, feel and do, philosophical argumentation by its very nature appeals to belief alone; narrative art, by contrast, can simultaneously engage our reason, emotions, imagination and will, thus resulting not only in deepening our understanding, but also in transformation of the self.

PHIL 292T Violence: Its Trajectory and Its Causes (Not offered 2013-2014)
This tutorial examines Steven Pinker's The Better Angels of our Nature. Why Violence Has Declined (2011). We focus first on the controversial theses that—despite two world wars and the Holocaust—the twenty-first century was not the most violent so far, and that, over the entire course of history, human beings have become decreasingly violent. We then turn to the book's explanations of the factors it identifies as leading us to be violent—our "inner demons"—and as curbing our violence—our "better angels." Format: tutorials. Requirements: tutorial papers and responses to partner's tutorial papers, in alternating weeks; participation in tutorial discussions.

PHIL 293T Philosophy and the Holocaust (Same as COMP 293T) (W)
Enrollment limit: 10 (expected: 10). Preference will be given to prospective philosophy majors and students committed to taking the tutorial.

[Contemporary Value Theory]
May not be taken on a pass/fail basis.

PHIL 294T Philosophy and Narrative Fiction (Same as COMP 294T) (W)
Enrollment limit: 10 (expected: 10). In the case of overenrollment, preference will be given to students seriously committed to the course; among them, to students who are considering a major in Philosophy, in Comparative Literature or in Literary Studies, and to students especially interested in film. May not be taken on a pass/fail basis.

[Contemporary Value Theory]
PHIL 301 Textual Meaning and Interpretation (Not offered 2013-2014) (W)

Early philosophy of language focused on meaning of assertions, denials and descriptions. However, this approach is too narrow, since people use language to do a myriad of things: to ask, demand, promise, praise, blame, threaten, command, insinuate, evoke, express feelings, and sometimes just to play. The philosophical study of what we do in language, and how we do it, is called pragmatics; within the analytic tradition, the main philosophical contributions to the study of pragmatics in language came from Peirce, Wittgenstein, Austin, Grice and Searle. Other philosophers and literary theorists have used some of their ideas recently to throw light on the nature of textual meaning and the interpretation of literary texts. We shall first explore the salient features of the pragmatic approaches to language, paying special attention to Austin’s notion of illocutionary force and Grice’s notion of non-natural meaning. We will then examine how these notions may be exploited in the consideration of various long-standing issues in the theory of literature. We will discuss the importance of specific genre conventions and broader contextual matters to the interpretation of literary texts (along the lines suggested by Quentin Skinner); the possibility of using intention to rule out mistaken and arrive at acceptable interpretations, if not a single correct interpretation (a possibility denied by such relativists as Stanley Fish); the use and meaning of metaphors; and the host of questions surrounding the “intentional fallacy” (the alleged result of invoking authorial intention to determine textual meaning).

Format: seminar
Requirements: class participation, 10 short weekly response papers, and 2 longer (5-7 page) papers.
Prerequisites: PHIL 102 or 103. Enrollment limit: 19 (expected: 6-10). Open to all students, preference given to philosophy majors.

MLADENOVIC

PHIL 305 Existentialism and Phenomenology (Not offered 2013-2014) (W)

According to Jean-Paul Sartre, the only philosopher to ever refer to himself as an “existentialist,” existence precedes essence. What is essential to human being is not any fixed set of characteristics, but rather that what a human being becomes and how it defines and creates itself under conditions it does not choose. In this course we address key themes and figures from two of the most influential movements in twentieth century European philosophy: namely, existentialism and phenomenology, a philosophical approach to which existentialism is indebted. We will discuss major works (philosophical, literary, visual) by such figures as Edmund Husserl, Martin Heidegger, Jean-Paul Sartre, Simone de Beauvoir, Albert Camus, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, and Richard Wright, Immanual Bergman and Jean-Luc Godard. We will raise questions concerning the task of philosophy, the structure and meaning constituting function of consciousness, the relationship between self and other, the mind-body relationship, freedom, authenticity, and absurdity.

Format: seminar
Requirements: short critical response papers, occasional short class presentations based on outlines of the text, and three 5- to 6-page papers. Students will be required to re-write one of the three papers in lieu of a final exam.

Prerequisites: PHIL 101 or 102 or 240 or 271T or 304T or permission of instructor. Enrollment limit: 19 (expected: 10-15). Preference given to majors and those considering a major in philosophy.

SAWICKI

PHIL 307T(F) Spinoza: Ethics, Politics and Activity (W)

The course will consist in a reading of Spinoza’s Ethics (together with his two political works A Theologico-Political Treatise and A Political Treatise), thus establishing an intersection between ethics, metaphysics and political philosophy and taking its point of departure in the relation between knowledge and passion. Spinoza defines the human essence as “conatus,” a certain degree of power (potentia), characterized by its perseverance in existence. Mankind’s path to freedom and self-understanding is grounded in the analysis of the conditions characterizing the different types of knowledge: the immediate, the rational and reflecting, and the intuitive. However, in all three kinds of knowledge, affectivity is central—here, also, the body. The Spinozan ethics, against the backdrop of a complete metaphysical system, makes possible an understanding of identity as something constituted in continuous relation to the rest of the world—human, natural and material. It is through its capacity of being affected that the individual human power is expressed, and is able to emerge as a form of freedom. The ethics, understood in this way, also makes possible an understanding of the political as the necessary organization of human coexistence, and as the dealing with individual and collective passions. Finally, we will also address contemporary Spinozism as found namely in the philosophical works of Gilles Deleuze, Etienne Balibar and Antonio Negri. The main texts will be combined with shorter articles or book chapters from contemporary Spinoza commentaries.

Format: tutorial
Requirements: active participation in group discussions, oral presentations. 1-5 short papers, and a final 8-10 page paper.

Prerequisites: At least one previous course in philosophy, or permission of instructor. Enrollment limit: 15 (expected: 5-15). Preference given to Philosophy, Political Science, and Religion majors.

May not be taken on a pass/fail basis; not available for the Gaudino option.

Hour: 1:10-3:50 W

SPINDLER

PHIL 308 Wittgenstein’s Philosophical Investigations (Not offered 2013-2014) (W)

Wittgenstein’s Two masterpieces, the Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus and the Philosophical Investigations, stand like opposing poles around which schools of twentieth-century analytic philosophy revolve. The Wittgenstein of the Tractatus is known as the “earlier Wittgenstein,” the Wittgenstein of the Investigations is known as the “later Wittgenstein.” This course is an intensive, line-by-line study of the Investigations—one of the greatest (and thus, one of the most controversial) books in the history of philosophy. Aside from its overwhelming influence on 20th- and 21st-century philosophy and intellectual culture, any book which contains the remark, “If a lion could talk, we could not understand him,” deserves serious attention.

Format: seminar
Requirements: one short midterm paper (5-7 pages) and one longer final paper (12-15 pages).

Prerequisites: PHIL 102. Enrollment limit: 19 (expected: 12).

GERBAR

PHIL 315(F) Kant’s Critique of Pure Reason

Kant’s Critique of Pure Reason is perhaps the most significant text in the history of philosophy. It puts an end to the Early Modern traditions of Rationalism and Empiricism, and it stands at the beginning of both the Analytic and Continental traditions in contemporary philosophy. Love it or hate it, you cannot ignore it. In this course, we will study the most important and influential chapters of the Critique with the help of some secondary literature.

Format: seminar
Requirements: students will be required to participate actively in discussion and write a number of papers.


[History]

Hour: 2:35-3:50 TF

SHADDOCK

PHIL 320 Recent Continental Feminist Theory (Same as WGSS 321) (Not offered 2013-2014) (D)

This course explores developments in recent feminist thought influenced by philosophical currents in France and Germany (poststructuralism and critical theory). Depending upon the year in which the course is offered, we will explore topics such as self and society, sexual difference, embodiment, critiques of reason, the psyche, new materialist theories, queer feminism, and transnational feminism. We will read works from such authors as the following: Sandra Bartky, Iris Young, Judith Butler, Elizabeth Grosz, Luce Irigaray, Jessica Benjamin, Gayle Rubin, Rosi Braidotti, Eve Sedgwick, Lynne Huffer, Sara Ahmed, Jasbir Puar, and Wendy Brown. Fiction and film may also be included.

Format: seminar
Requirements: some of the following: frequent short essays, two or three 4- to 5-page essays, class presentations, or a final project in lieu of one of the papers; students in any discipline will be consulted about how to respond to this course.

Prerequisites: WGSS 101, and a second course in WGSS, or permission of instructor. Enrollment limit: 19 (expected: 8-10). Preference given to Women’s, Gender and Sexuality Studies majors and Philosophy majors.

[Contemporary Value Theory]

SAWICKI

PHIL 321T(F) Critical Theory, The Enlightenment and its Critics (Same as WGSS 322T) (D) (W)

"Dare to know! Have courage to use your own reason—that is the motto of Enlightenment." Thus the 18th century German philosopher Immanuel Kant exhorts his contemporaries to muster the courage to cultivate their capacity for reason. Modern faith in the prospects of universal human dignity, rational autonomy, the rights of man, individual liberty, democracy, open scientific inquiry and social and political progress depend upon it. Yet in 19th and 20th centuries we find the promise of Enlightenment tempered by the rise of nationalism and the persistence of racism, sexism, genocide, terrorism, and religious extremism as well as the emergence of wars of mass destruction, environmental degradation, the potential for manipulation of populations by consumerist mass media. Can the promise of Enlightenment be redeemed?

In this tutorial we begin with short readings by Kant, Hegel and Marx, key sources for critical social theory in the 20th century. Possible other figures read may include: Max Horkheimer, Theodor Adorno, Herbert Marcuse, Walter Benjamin, Juregen Habermas, Nancy Fraser, Amy Allen, Noelle McAfee, Judith Butler, Elizabeth Grosz, Michel Foucault, Jean Baudrillard, Gilles Deleuze, Georgio Agamben, Franz Fanon, Edward Said and Achille Mbembe, as well as current critiques of neoliberal capitalism. Although we will not directly address diversity issues except insofar as cultural, racial, class, sexual and other differences are bound up in power and domination relations, insofar as the course examines social and political power, oppression and domination, and the possibility or viability of the idea of human emancipation it meets the EDI requirement. This tutorial will be adapted for WGSS students seeking to meet a theory requirement.

Format: tutorial
Requirements: each student will write and present a 5- to 6-page paper every other week and a commentary on his or her partner’s essay on alternate weeks. Evaluations are based on written work as well as level of preparation and intellectual engagement in tutorial meetings.

Prerequisites: demonstrated background in modern philosophy, critical theory, political theory, or continental philosophy.

Enrollment limit: 10 (expected: 10). Preference to
PHIL 322T(S) Hume’s “Treatise of Human Nature” (W) Hume’s A Treatise of Human Nature, one of the greatest books in the history of philosophy, still exerts a considerable influence on contemporary epistemology, metaphysics, philosophy of science, ethics, and moral psychology. Unfortunately, the relevance of Hume’s ideas and arguments for particular philosophical disciplines has too often led to a piece-meal reading of his work: the three books of Treatise (‘Of the Understanding,’ ‘Of the Passions’ and ‘Of Morals’) are typically considered in isolation from one another. Historiologists don’t seem to think that Hume’s account of human psychology, morality and taste can in any way illuminate his treatment of skepticism and natural belief, while moral philosophers often neglect Hume’s conclusions about the limits of our knowledge in analyzing his conception of motivation, action, obligation and virtue. In contrast with this interpretative tendency, this tutorial will focus on Hume’s science of human nature—his overall philosophical project in Treatise—and cultivate the discussion of different philosophical issues and arguments in light of this general aim of the work as a whole. We will start by situating Hume’s project within the historical tradition in which he thought and against which he thought. For clarification and discussion of the points made in Treatise, we will read parts of Hume’s later works, especially the two Enquiries. Our reading of Hume will be supplemented by historical and interpretive essays on his work. Throughout the course, our focus will be on three broad issues: Hume’s conception of theoretical rationality, his conception of practical rationality, and his views on the role and relevance of non-rational (on some readings, irrational) elements in a good life of a wise person. Format: tutorial; one- to two-hours long seminar meeting in the first week of classes; in subsequent weeks, tutorial pairs will meet with the instructor for 75 minutes a week. Requirements: each student will write a 5 page paper every second week, and comment on the tutorial partner’s paper on alternate weeks; in the last week of classes, we will meet again for a two hours long seminar, for which all students will write a paper. Prerequisites: PHIL 202 and two other philosophy courses; or permission of the instructor. Enrollment limit: 10 (expected: 10). Preference to Philosophy majors. May not be taken on a pass/fail basis; not available for the Gaudino option.

PHIL 327T Foucault (Same as WGSS 327) (Not offered 2013-2014) (W) D This course begins with a brief introduction to some of Foucault’s early writings but focuses on a close reading of a selection of middle and late texts that have become central to debates about the significance of his work: Discipline and Punish, The History of Sexuality (vols. 1-3), and selected interviews and course lectures. We examine debates in the Foucault literature about freedom, power, ethics, and the nature of critical theory. This course has been designated EDB because it engages questions concerning power, social differences and social and political freedom. Format: tutorial; Requirements: evaluation will be based on written work (six 5- to 6-page papers), oral presentations of that work, and on oral critiques. Prerequisites: at least two courses in PHIL or WGSS, or permission of instructor. Enrollment limit: 10 (expected: 8-10). Preference given to current or prospective Philosophy and Women’s, Gender and Sexuality Studies majors. May not be taken on a pass/fail basis.

PHIL 330 Plato (Same as CLAS 330) (Not offered 2013-2014) (W) APlato is one of the most important and influential thinkers in the history of the western tradition. His depiction of the trial and death of Socrates is one of the classics of Western literature, and his views on ethics and politics continue to occupy a central place in our discussions 2400 years after they were written. It is, in fact, quite difficult to get through any course at all in the liberal arts without encountering the familiar dialogues of Plato. Considering how few people read Plato, it is little wonder that the views we commonly think of as “Platonic” represent only one strand in Plato’s thought. For example, we commonly attribute to Plato a theory of the Forms on the basis of his claims in the so-called “middle dialogues” (mainly Republic, Phaedo, and Symposium). However, in his philosophically more sophisticated and notoriously difficult later dialogues (such as the Parmenides, Philebus, Sophist and Timaeus), Plato engages in radical criticism and revision of his earlier views. In this course, we will spend the first third of the semester attempting to understand the metaphysics and epistemology in Plato’s middle dialogues. We will spend the balance of the semester coming to grips with Plato’s arguments in the later dialogues. We will read several complete dialogues in translation, and we will also read a wide variety of secondary source material. Format: lecture/discussion. This class will be a roughly equal mixture of lectures, student presentations, and seminar discussion. Requirements: students will be expected to prepare a written reflection on several focused short analytic pieces, and write several short papers in response. Prerequisites: PHIL 101, PHIL 102 or permission of instructor. (A prior course in logic will be extremely helpful, but is not necessary.) Enrollment limit: 15 (expected: 15). Preference given to upper-level Philosophy and Classics majors. This course is part of the Critical Reasoning and Analytical Skills initiative.

PHIL 331T Contemporary Epistemology (Not offered 2013-2014) (W) Epistemology is one of the core areas of philosophical reflection. In this course, we will study the literature in contemporary philosophy on the nature of knowledge and rational belief. Epistemologists seek answers to the following kinds of questions: When is it rational to have a particular belief? What is knowledge (as opposed to mere opinion)? In order to be justified in holding a belief, must someone know (or believe that she is justified in holding that belief? What, if anything, justifies our scientific knowledge? These questions are typically asked within a framework where the overarching goal is attaining truth and avoiding falsity. Beyond this common ground, however, epistemologists are much divided. Some worry about the proper bases of knowledge, others about the methods of gaining knowledge, others about the interplay of knowledge and practical rationality, yet others about the relationship between knowledge and other attitudes or dispositions. In this course, we will focus on the nature of justification, the nature of rationality, and their relationship to each other. We will also spend a good deal of time developing the general structure of the arguments used in these debates. Prerequisites: at least one upper-level PHIL course or permission of the instructor. Enrollment limit: 10 (expected: 8-10). Preference given to current and prospective Philosophy majors.

PHIL 332(S) Aristotle’s Metaphysics (Same as CLAS 332) (W) In this course we will study Aristotle’s Metaphysics concentrating of books gamma-theta. Aristotle sets out to study being qua being, or what is insofar as it is. The thoughts that Aristotle expresses in these books were instrumental in setting an intellectual agenda that dominated western thought through the Middle Ages and provided the backdrop against which the modern philosophical tradition arose. Furthermore, many of the issues that Aristotle takes up in these books remain of central importance in contemporary philosophy. Our main goal in this course will be to work our way carefully through Aristotle’s difficult text and to reconstruct his central positions and arguments for these positions. We will also read selections from the vast secondary literature on Aristotle’s Metaphysics. Format: lecture/discussion. Requirements: several short writing assignments, final paper, attendance and active participation in class. Prerequisites: PHIL 101 or 102 or 221. Enrollment limit: 15 (expected: 12).

PHIL 334 Greek and Roman Ethics (Same as CLAS 334) (Not offered 2013-2014) (W) Most thoughtful human beings spend a good deal of time musing about how we ought to live. The philosophers of ancient Greece and Rome were among the first thinkers to develop rigorous arguments in response to such musings. While ancient scientific theories and the philosophical systems constructed in accordance with these theories might be of interest only to scholars of the ancient world, the moral philosophy produced in Greece and Rome remains as relevant today as it was when it was written. In this course, we will closely examine some central texts in ancient moral philosophy. We will begin by reading several of Aristotle’s ethical dialogues and the entirety of his Republic. We will then turn to Aristotle’s Nicomachean Ethics, as well as selections from his Eudemian Ethics, Magna Moralia and Politics. Finally we will examine some central texts in the Stoic and Epicurean traditions, as well as some of Cicero’s contributions to moral philosophy. We will pay special attention to how different thinkers conceive of the nature of happiness, the nature of virtue, and the relation between the two. We will also spend a good deal of time thinking about the moral psychology of the thinkers we read. Format: seminar. Requirements: several short response pieces, two 10-page papers which will involve substantial revision in light of instructor feedback, active participation in seminar meetings. Prerequisites: PHIL 221 or permission of instructor. Enrollment limit: 15 (expected: 10-15). Preference given to majors in Philosophy and Classics.

PHIL 335 Contemporary Metaethics (Not offered 2013-2014) (W) We often speak as if moral judgments can be true or false, well-reasoned or not. But how should objectivity in this domain be understood? Is moral objectivity like scientific objectivity, assuming we have a clear sense of what that involves? If not, should that concern us? Are there other models for understanding moral objectivity besides science? While answers to such questions are implicit in historically important accounts of morality, these issues became the topic of explicit, sustained debate in the twentieth century.
Our focus will be on the most recent and sophisticated work in this area. We will examine several different approaches in depth, including realism, constructivism, expressivism, and skepticism. Readings will include works by Moore, Stevenson, Harman, Mackie, Railton, Boyd, Blackburn, Williams, McDowell, Korsgaard, and Nagel.


Prerequisites: two courses in PHIL (including one of the following: a 100-level course, PHIL 201, or PHIL 202). Enroll limit: 19 (expected: 5-15). Preference given to Philosophy majors and those considering the Philosophy major.

[Contemporary Value Theory]

PHIL 337T Justice in Health Care (Not offered 2013-2014) Justice is a notoriously complex and elusive philosophical concept, the conditions of which are so far elusive to articulate within real world institutions and contexts than in the abstract. In this course we’ll explore justice as a fundamental moral principle and as a desideratum of the US health care system. The first portion of the course will be devoted to considering general theories of justice as well as alternative conceptions of justice within the health care context. This will provide the background for subsequent examination of specific topics, which may include, among others: justice in health care financing and reform, which may itself include an analysis of the Affordable Care Act; justice in health care rationing, with particular attention to the relationship between rationing criteria and gender, “race,” disability, and age; justice in the procurement and allocation of organs for transplantation; and personal responsibility for illness; and justice in medical research, including “double standards” for research conducted in less developed countries.

Format: tutorial. Evaluations will be based on written work, oral presentations of that work, and on oral critiques.

No prerequisites. Enroll limit: 10 (expected: 10). Preference will be given to Philosophy majors, to students in the International Studies Global Health Track, and to students committed to taking the tutorial.

[Contemporary Value Theory]

May not be taken on a pass/fail basis.

PEDRONI

PHIL 360(S) The Political Thought of Frantz Fanon (Same as AFR 360, LEAD 360 and PSCI 370) (W) (See under AFR 360 for full description.)

ROBERTS

PHIL 378 Pragmatist Currents in Contemporary Epistemology and Philosophy of Science (Not offered 2013-2014) (W) American Pragmatism left a deep legacy in contemporary epistemology and the philosophy of science, but it is—more often than not—a legacy difficult to disentangle from other intellectual influences. Consequently, many philosophers deeply influenced by pragmatism do not recognize the fact, while, on the other hand, some self-proclaimed pragmatists of our day can hardly be seen as continuing the tradition to which they pledge allegiance. This seminar will try to establish, with as much accuracy as the subject allows, what are the central tenets of American Pragmatism, how they have shaped contemporary epistemology and the philosophy of science, and, finally, to what extent are pragmatist approaches to human knowledge philosophically sound and fruitful.

The seminar will fall into two unequal parts. The first, shorter part will focus on the writings of the three classics of American pragmatism—Charles S. Peirce, William James and John Dewey—and analyze their reaction against traditional epistemology, as well as the positive philosophical ideas that they had to offer. The second, longer part of the seminar will try to isolate and follow some of the pragmatist currents which run through epistemology and philosophy of science in the 20th and 21st centuries. We will read, among others, writings by Bernar, H. H., Harman, Kuhn, Elgin, Hacking, Misak, Putnam, Rorty, and Haack.

Format: seminar. Requirements: class attendance and participation; 6 short assignments (about 2 pages long); class presentation; and 2 longer papers (about 5 pages each).

Prerequisites: three courses in PHIL, two of which must be from this list: PHIL 102, 103, 109, 131, 202, 207, 209, 210, 280, 331, 379, 380; or the consent of the instructor.


[Contemporary Metaphysics and Epistemology]

MLADENOVIC

PHIL 379(F) American Pragmatism (Same as AMST 379)

Along with jazz, pragmatism stands as the greatest uniquely American contribution to world culture. As the jazz wails in the background, we will study the classic pragmatists: William James, C. S. Peirce, and John Dewey. We will continue with the contemporary inheritors of the tradition: Cornel West, Richard Rorty, and Hilary Putnam. Although it has influenced analytic and continental philosophy, pragmatism is a powerful third philosophical movement. Always asking what practical difference would it make, our authors investigate the central questions and disputes of pragmatism, from epistemology and metaphysics to ethics and politics. Rather than seeing philosophy as an esoteric discipline, the pragmatist philosophers (with the possible exception of Peirce) see philosophy as integral to our culture and see themselves as public intellectuals.

Format: seminar. Requirements: final paper; several short assignments.

Prerequisites: at least two PHIL courses. Enroll limit: 25 (expected: 12-15). Preference given first to Philosophy and American Studies majors, and then to seniors and juniors of any major.

[History]

Hour: 12:00-12:50 MWF

GERRARD

PHIL 380 Relativism (Not offered 2013-2014) (W)

"Relativism" is a term often used in philosophy for a position of very different views. The aim of the course is to survey, analyze and discuss many varieties of relativism—semantic, epistemic, ontological and moral—from Plato's Theaetetus to contemporary social constructivism. We will pay special attention to the structure of arguments for and against relativism, as well as to the moral motivations and perceived consequences of its endorsement or rejection. We will thus be led to discuss some of the concepts common to epistemology, metaphysics and ethics: reason, justification, objectivity, understanding, reality and truth. Some of the questions we will consider are: Are moral standards relative to cultural frameworks? Are there incomparable but equally true ways of describing the world? Is rationality—the notion of a good reason to believe something—relative to cultural norms? Is relativism a form of skepticism? Is it forced on people who endorse cultural pluralism as their political ideal or the only tenable philosophical position? Our readings will include the relevant works of Plato, Sextus Empiricus, Bayle, Locke, Berkeley, Carnap, Quine, Davidson, Goodman, Elgin, Hacking, Krausz, Foot, Williams, Harman and Thomson.

Format: seminar. Requirements: This is a writing intensive course. Each student will write 10 weekly short papers (1000 words each); give a class presentation and lead the ensuing discussion; and write a final paper (7-10 pages). Prerequisites: PHIL 101 and 102, and at least one 200 level PHIL course. Enroll limit: 19 (expected: 7-10).

MLADENOVIC

PHIL 388T Consciousness (Not offered 2013-2014) (W)

The nature of consciousness remains a fundamental mystery of the universe. Our internal, felt experience—what chocolate tastes like to oneself, what it is like to see the color red, or, more broadly, what it is like to have a first person, walking perspective at all—resists explanation in any terms other than the conscious experience itself in spite of centuries of intense effort by philosophers and, more recently, by scientists. As a result, some prominent researchers propose that the existence of consciousness requires a revision of basic physics, while others (seemingly desperately) deny that consciousness exists at all. Those positions remain extreme, but the challenge that consciousness poses is dramatic. It is at the same time the most intimately known fact of our humanity and science’s most elusive puzzle.

In this tutorial we will read contemporary literature on consciousness. We will concentrate both on making precise the philosophical problem(s) of consciousness and on understanding the role of the relevant neuroscientific and cognitive research. Tutorial partners will have an opportunity to spend the end of the semester working on a special topic of their choosing including, for instance, consciousness and freewill, pain and anesthesia, consciousness and artificial intelligence, or disorders of consciousness.

Format: tutorial. Requirements: Participants will present substantial written work in the tutorial every other week, and will be responsible for commenting on their tutorial partner’s work on off weeks. Expect several short lectures by the instructor over the course of the semester where all the tutorial partners convene.

Prerequisites: PHIL 102 and at least one upper-level course in philosophy. Preference will be given to majors in Philosophy, or concentrators in Neuroscience or Cognitive Science. Open to sophomores with permission of the instructor. Every effort will be made to pair students according to similar or complimentary background. This course is writing intensive. Enroll limit: 10 (expected: 10). May not be taken on a pass/fail basis.

CRUZ

PHIL 389(S) The Structural-Systematic Philosophy

The structural–systematic philosophy (SSP) is a theory that, if completed, would qualify as a philosophical theory of everything. Central aspects of this theory are presented in Structure and Being (SB; by Lorenz Punzel, translated and in collaboration with Alan White, 2008), Being and God (BG; by Lorenz Punzel, translated by and in collaboration with Alan White, 2011), and Toward a Philosophical Theory of Everything (TAPTOE; by Alan White, 2014). We begin by reading the book TAPTOE. Thereafter, topics for further study will be determined in significant part by student interests. Some might want to examine specific sections of SB and/or BG, others might want to develop objections to the SSP from other philosophical perspectives, considering what (if anything) is said about those other perspectives in SB, BG, and/or TAPTOE.

One unique opportunity is provided by the fact that the Metaphysical Society of America (MSA) will meet at Williams in April 2014. Several of the essays presented at that meeting will be devoted to questions of being. We will be able to read those essays in advance, comparing them with each other and with the theory of being sketched in TAPTOE. Interested students would then have the option of attending the MSA sessions devoted to those essays.

Format: seminar. Requirements: attendance, participation, regular short papers and/or presentations, 10- to 15-page term paper.
PHIL 391T The Ethics of Hume and Kant (Not offered 2013-2014) (W)

David Hume and Immanuel Kant are indisputably among the most influential figures in the western philosophical tradition. Interestingly, each regarded his work in epistemology and metaphysics as a mere prelude to his work in moral philosophy. In both domains, Kant took himself to be responding directly to Hume, whom he credited with awakening him from his dogmatic slumber. In this tutorial we shall study their core works in moral philosophy, in which they develop conceptions of practical rationality, motivation, freedom, and morality. For Hume, we’ll read Books II and III of *A Treatise of Human Nature*, the Second Enquiry, and several essays, including “Of the Standard of Taste.” For Kant, we’ll read *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals* and *Critique of Practical Reason*, along with related essays. Rich and intriguing in their own right, these texts are particularly rewarding when read together, as they articulate profoundly different views of the nature of human reason, agency, and sociality. It is no exaggeration to say that Hume and Kant have set the stage for much current work on these issues in contemporary ethics. One happy consequence of the enduring quality of their work is an abundance of superb secondary literature, which we’ll draw upon to supplement our study of the primary texts.

Format: tutorial. Requirements: students meet with the instructor in pairs for roughly an hour each week; each students will write a 5- to 6-page paper every other week (6 in all) and comment on their tutorial partner’s paper in alternate weeks. Emphasis will be placed on developing skills in reading, interpretation and oral argument, as well as critical reasoning and writing.

Prerequisites: A 100-level PHIL course, PHIL 202 (History of Modern Philosophy), or permission of the instructor. Enrollment limit: 10 (expected: 10). Preference: current and prospective Philosophy majors. May not be taken on a a pass/fail basis.

PHIL 393T Nietzsche and His Legacy (Not offered 2013-2014) (W)

The late 20th Century philosopher Richard Rorty characterized the present age as “post-Nietzschean.” Indeed Nietzsche’s influence has been pervasive. German philosopher Martin Heidegger thought he represented the culminating point of Western metaphysics; French Nietzscheans such as Foucault, Derrida and Deleuze as well as French feminist Luce Irigaray appropriate Nietzschean themes and concepts in their critical engagements with the Western philosophical tradition; and Anglo-American moral philosophers such as Bernard Williams, Alasdair MacIntyre, and Philippa Foot (as well as Rorty) respond to and engage his critique of traditional morality. In this tutorial we read key writings from early, middle and late periods by this controversial 19th century philosopher in order to address some (certainly only some) of the current debates in critical and ethical theory that have been fueled by Nietzsche’s work. Key ideas and concepts such as the death of god, the use and abuse of history, the eternal recurrence, will to power, and master and slave morality will be addressed. Nietzsche texts will include selections from: *Unintimely Meditations, The Gay Science*, *Beyond Good and Evil*, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, *The Genealogy of Morals*, *Twilight of the Idols*, and *Ecce Homo*.

Format: tutorial, students will work in pairs. Each student will write and present a 5- to 6-page paper every other week and a commentary on his or her partner’s essay on alternate weeks. Evaluations are based on written work as well as level of intellectual engagement in tutorial meetings.

Prerequisites: two courses in PHIL, preferably either Ancient and/or Modern surveys, or background in Critical Theory, or permission of instructor. Enrollment limit: 10 (expected: 10). Preference is given to current and prospective Philosophy majors. May not be taken on a a pass/fail basis.

SAWICKI

PHIL 401(F) Senior Seminar: Emotions (W)

Philosophy is often described as “thinking about thinking”: variously conceived inquiries into the nature, scope and limits of human reasoning have always been at its heart. Without challenging the centrality of such projects for philosophy, the seminar will focus on a less emphasized, but equally essential aspect of our lives: emotions. What are emotions, and how should we think about them? What is the proper “geography”—classification and analysis—of our emotions, and what is their relation to our beliefs, judgments, and evaluations? Which methodological approach—if a single one can be privileged—should we adopt for examining emotions? What is the scope and nature of an adequate theory of emotions, what are the desiderata for such a theory, and what should count as evidence in its favor? We will examine a variety of philosophical and scientific theories of emotion, as well as some issues concerning normative aspects of emotions: the role of emotions in a good life, rationality of emotions, moral importance of emotions, and the concept of emotional maturity.

Format: seminar. Requirements: preparedness for the seminar and participation in seminar discussions; weekly short papers or postings; class presentation; and a final paper, 10-15 pages long.

Prerequisites: this course is required of all senior Philosophy majors. Enrollment limit: 19 (expected: 10). Enrollment is limited to Philosophy majors. May not be taken on a a pass/fail basis; not available for the Gaudino option.

Hour: 7:00-9:40 p.m. M

MLADENOVIC

PHIL 491(F)-W30 Senior Essay

This course involves Independent Study under the supervision of a member of the department. The objective is the presentation and writing of a senior essay (maximum 40 pages).

PHIL 493(F)-W31-494(S) Senior Thesis

This course involves Independent study under the supervision of a member of the department. The objective is the preparation and writing of a senior thesis (maximum 75 pages).

PHIL 497(F), 498(S) Independent Study