

Fall 2001 Undergraduate Courses

Introduction to Philosophy

Instructor: Professor Michael Ruse

MWF 1:25-2:15, 126 BEL

(Liberal Studies/Gordon Rule)

PHI 2010-01

Ref: 05305

This course will combine lectures (Monday and Wednesday) and discussion groups (Friday). Topics to be discussed include: What is philosophy? Is there a god, and if so what can we know about this god? Is this god the Christian god? What is the problem of evil and can it be solved? Can we ever be sure of the evidence of our senses? Is mathematical knowledge better than any other kind of knowledge? Do you have a mind? Does anybody have a mind? Can you know if anyone else has a mind? What should I do? Is it better to be happy, even though you are in the wrong? Can you be happy, if you are wrong? Does it matter how things turn out, so long as you are good intentioned?

In the discussion groups, students will be expected to prepare short papers and to discuss topics assigned by the group leader, on and around issues discussed in the lectures. The reading material for the course will cover both readings from traditional authors (Plato, Saint Augustine, Descartes, Hume, Bertrand Russell, and others) and from more contemporary sources.

Introduction to Philosophy

Instructor: Mr. Adam Sipos

TR 12:30-1:45, 108 SAN

(Liberal Studies/Gordon Rule)

PHI 2010-02

Ref: 01338

Is there a world that is external to our minds? If so, how can we know anything about it? How should we live? Do we have absolute duties to ourselves and to others or are our actions to be appraised solely with respect to their consequences? Does God exist? Are all of our actions completely determined, and if so, does this mean that we never act freely? These are just a few of the questions that have exercised the greatest minds of the Western philosophical tradition. We will engage some of these minds by taking a close look at the answers they have given to these, and related, questions. After developing some basic analytical skills, we will put them to use in assessing the various answers and the arguments offered for them.

Introduction to Philosophy

Instructor: Mr. Sean Millard

TR 5:15-6:30, 180 BEL

(Liberal Studies/Gordon Rule)

PHI 2010-03

Ref: 01339

This course will introduce students to some of the fundamental questions of philosophy. We will begin with a brief introduction to language, to some basic philosophical concepts, and to understanding the nature of arguments. We will then thoroughly examine the following questions: What makes an action morally right or wrong? Is morality relative? What can I know and how do I know it? Are my actions free or determined? What is the relation between particular things and (what seem to be) their general qualities? What is it that makes things the same through time? Does God exist?

Reasoning & Critical ThinkingInstructor: Professor Josh GertMWF 2:30-3:20, 108 SAN
(Liberal Studies/Gordon Rule)PHI 2100-01
Ref: 05308

The ability to distinguish good arguments from bad ones can be surprisingly hard, but it can also be helpful in avoiding mistakes and resulting misery. This course will try to help students recognize the structures within the arguments they encounter in everyday life, and will try to help them evaluate those arguments. We will also study a wide range of common errors that often pass unnoticed in political rhetoric, in advertisements, and in other places where people want to convince other people to share their beliefs.

Reasoning & Critical ThinkingInstructor: Mr. Christopher PynesTR 9:30-10:45, 126 BEL
(Liberal Studies/Gordon Rule)PHI 2100-02
Ref: 01340

What are the criteria for determining if a given argument is a *good* argument? Is everything an author provides relevant? Does the argument rely on some unstated but assumed reason? In this course, we will answer these questions. The course will begin with an investigation of some general features of natural language and how it is used. Then we will develop the essential skills for reconstructing, evaluating, and understanding many kinds of arguments found in natural language (including, for example, arguments about abortion and God's existence). The skills students will learn in this class will prove useful in any field where clear-headed thinking is a virtue. In addition, the skills acquired in this class will be particularly useful for those hoping for successful careers in law or business, or for higher scores on the LSAT or GRE.

Ethical Issues and Life ChoicesInstructor: Mr. G. T. SmithMW 5:15-6:30, 128 DIF
(Liberal Studies/Gordon Rule)PHI 2630-01
Ref: 05310

Our everyday life choices and views on contemporary ethical issues often presuppose more fundamental assumptions about right and wrong, good and evil. Discussion of controversial topics brings these fundamental assumptions to light for critical evaluation. In our readings and class discussions, we will focus on the personal and social aspects of five topics: sexual morality, sexism and racism, abortion, capital punishment, and environmental ethics. Our goal will be not to resolve these difficult issues, but to reason better by critically reflecting on our own as well as others' reasoning.

Ethical Issues and Life ChoicesInstructor: Mr. Peter HanowellTR 2:00-3:15, 303 MCH
(Liberal Studies/Gordon Rule)PHI 2630-02
Ref: 01342

This course is designed as an introduction to applied ethics. We will first survey some of the predominant ethical theories. This will provide us with a foundation for reading and analyzing provocative contemporary articles on topics such as abortion, euthanasia, capital punishment, animal rights, and environmental ethics. We will consider proposed solutions to common ethical questions in these areas by critically examining a variety of arguments. Our goal will be not to resolve these difficult issues, but to better understand the complex moral dilemmas that we all face.

HONS Ethical Issues and Life Choices
Instructor: Prof. Josh Gert

MWF 12:20-1:10, 318 WMS
(Liberal Studies/Gordon Rule)

PHI 2630-03
Ref: 07714

There is widespread agreement that, without some excuse, lying, cheating, stealing, murder, and a range of other actions are morally wrong. But what exactly does this mean? If we all agree on so much, doesn't that show that we all share some idea of what morality is? But then why is there so much disagreement about the morality of capital punishment, abortion, euthanasia, premarital sex, drug use, and so on? This course will examine a number of historically influential answers to the question 'What makes an action morally good or bad?' and we will discuss them in the context of a number of issues of current social and political interest.

Philosophy of Race, Class and Gender
Instructor: Mr. Kermit Harrison

MWF 12:20-1:10
Multicultural 'Y'

PHM 2121-01
Ref: 00651

This new course will introduce students to a variety of treatments in the contemporary philosophical literature of the key concepts of race, class, and gender, as well as of the interrelations between them. We will also discuss examples from the literature to illustrate important and difficult questions of individual identity and of social justice at both the theoretical and practical levels.

HONS Philosophy of Race, Class and Gender
Instructor: Dr. Russell Swanson

MWF 10:10-11:00, 024 BEL
Multicultural 'Y'

PHM 2121-02
Ref: 07545

This new course will introduce students to a variety of treatments in the contemporary philosophical literature of the key concepts of race, class, and gender, as well as of the interrelations between them. We will also discuss examples from the literature to illustrate important and difficult questions of individual identity and of social justice at both the theoretical and practical levels.

Introduction to Political Philosophy
Instructor: Mr. Stephen Morris

MWF 10:10-11:00, 003 BEL
Multicultural 'X'

PHM 2300-01
Ref: 05339

This course will provide an overview of the most influential ideas in the history of political philosophy. We will begin by examining ancient political thought and work our way up to the ideas of some contemporary political thinkers. We will also consider some criticisms of the historical texts. Among the issues we will be focusing on are the justifications for political systems, the connection between human nature and the ideal political arrangement, and the influence economic factors have on political structures. In the course of our investigations we will become familiar with various schools of political thought including communitarianism, social contract theory, utilitarianism, socialism, and libertarianism.

HONORS Seminar: Theories of Human Nature

TR 2:00-3:15, 020 BEL

HUM 2937-01

Instructor: Prof. Eddy Nahmias

Ref: 07522

Philosophers and scientists have developed various theories of human nature. Such theories have implications for what it means to lead a good life, for the way we should treat each other, for the way we should govern our societies, and for how much freedom and responsibility we have. We will examine several such theories, from the ancient (Confucius, Plato) to the modern (existentialism, Freud, Skinner, evolutionary psychology). We will try to determine which, if any, are accurate and what they mean for our conception of ourselves. We will even try to develop our own theory of human nature.

Introduction to Symbolic Logic

MWF 1:25-3:15, 303 MCH

PHI 3130-01

Instructor: Prof. Piers Rawling

Ref: 05312

Why are some arguments good (valid) and others bad (invalid)? How can we tell whether an argument is valid or invalid? In this course, we will answer these questions by learning how to symbolize English arguments and how to use the rules of a natural deduction system, as well as semantic methods, to determine whether these arguments are valid. Those who acquire the knowledge and skills taught in this course will be able to distinguish between good and bad reasoning in the most rigorous way possible.

Plato and his Predecessors

MWF 11:15-12:05, 008 LSB

PHH 3130-01

Instructor: Ms. Myunghee Do

(Liberal Studies/Gordon Rule)

Ref: 05303

Western philosophy at its origin: from the poetry of Homer and Hesiod to the speculations of the 'monists' of Miletus, the criticism of Homeric theology in Xenophanes, Heraclitus' claim that the universe is an everliving fire, the static universe of Parmenides, the atomism of Democritus, and, finally, the ethical inquiries of Socrates and their issue in the metaphysical 'Theory of Forms' of his student, Plato. This is the beginning of Western humanity's grappling with the perennial questions: What is the structure of reality? What can we know about it? How may we best comport ourselves towards it? And towards each other?

Modern Philosophy

MWF 10:10-11:00, 118 DOD

PHH 3400-01

Instructor: Prof. Peter Dalton

(Liberal Studies/Gordon Rule)

Ref: 05304

An introduction to most of the leading European philosophers of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, including Bacon, Hobbes, Descartes, Spinoza, Locke, Leibniz, Berkeley, Hume, and Kant. The emphasis will be on the methodological, metaphysical, and epistemological problems these philosophers faced and on how they tried to solve them. Some attention will also be given to religious and ethical issues.

Philosophy of Religion
Instructor: Prof. David Kangas

TR 3:35-4:50, 204 DIF

PHI 3700-01
Ref: 04764

The purpose of this course is to introduce students to the study of religion from a philosophical point of view, with focus upon the Jewish and Christian traditions. By looking closely at primary texts, we will consider the question of the existence and nature of God, the character of religious language, the problem of 'natural religion', the nature of faith, the problem of evil, and the question of God's "gender." Main figures covered will include Plato, Anselm, Aquinas, Maimonides, Hume, Dostoevsky, Tillich, Primo Levi, and Sally McFague.

Philosophy of Language
Instructor: Mr. Adam Sipos

MW 3:35-4:50, 002 LSB

PHH 3220-01
Ref: 05313

I utter 'It's raining out' and you reach for the umbrella - I have caused you to do something. But more to the point, I have also *communicated* something to you. To the reflective person, this can seem rather mysterious. What is the nature of that which was communicated, and how was it that, just by making a few noises, I was able to communicate it? These questions give rise to a host of others. What is it for words to mean what they do? What is the nature of meaning? Is it private or public? Atomistic or holistic? How does it relate to *truth*? To *use*? To *intention*? To *convention*? Are there such things as meanings at all? These are just a few of the questions that have perplexed philosophers over the last century and which we shall consider in this course.

Philosophy of Mind
Instructor: Prof. Eddy Nahmias

TR 11:00-12:15, 230 DIF

PHI 3320-01
Ref: 06443

What does it mean to have a mind? How do we know when other creatures are conscious? Could computers or robots have minds? Do animals have minds? When and how do children develop mentality? What does it mean to "lose one's mind"? What happens to consciousness when we sleep and dream? These are the sorts of questions we will examine philosophically and scientifically to try to understand the margins of mentality and to develop a better understanding of philosophical and psychological theories about the nature of minds and mental concepts (e.g., consciousness, self-awareness, free will, reason, intentionality, language).

Modern Political Thought
Instructor: Prof. Donald Hodges

TR 2:00-3:15, 002 LSB

PHM 3331-01
Ref: 04796

An examination of the five most consequential political ideologies of the modern world (Liberalism, Democracy, Communism, Socialism, Fascism). The emphasis will be on their political rather than civic content, on their historical succession rather than normative rankings, on their informal as well as formal significance, on their mutations and hybrids, on their changing positions within the Right-Center-Left political spectrum, and on their competitive struggle for world domination.

MetaphysicsInstructor: Prof. Cei Maslen

TR 12:30-1:45, 310 DIF

PHI 4500-01

Ref: 06446

This course will introduce students to metaphysics, that is, the philosophical study of the structure of reality. We will cover a wide variety of traditional topics -- free will, personal identity, objects, properties, causation -- and finally consider some objections to the field as a whole.

Philosophical Problems: The Death of Politics TR 9:30-10:45, 310 DIFInstructor: Prof. Donald Hodges

PHI 4930-01

Ref: 05143

This is a course on the Morgenthau-Schmitt school of Realpolitik for which political moderation is a contradiction in terms. The advantage of its concept of "the political" is that it avoids the confusion of politics (the struggle for power) with the related fields of civics (the rights and duties of citizens) and the art of government (statecraft in the public interest). With the advent of demoliberalism, we shall argue, "political man" passed into history in the advanced nations, surviving mainly in the Third World in discord and in those European nations that experienced defeat in World War I followed by social chaos and revolution.

Fall 2001 Graduate Courses

Greek Philosophy: Plato's *Timaeus*
Instructor: Prof. Russell Dancy

T 2:00-5:00, DOD 181 PHH 5105-01
(H)* Ref. 05170

The *Timaeus* is a dialogue, but most of it consists of an exposition by one of its characters, Timaeus, of a theory of the physical world, its creation, its relation to the realm of Forms, and a lot of other things. Presumably this theory is Plato's own (this has been denied, but not very convincingly). We'll deal with as much of the dialogue as we have time for, and in as much detail as we can manage; we'll also try to situate the *Timaeus* within Plato's total output. Throughout history, this dialogue may well have been Plato's most influential; its importance is, however, more than just historical, and we'll be trying to come to grips with it as philosophy.

Laws of Nature, Causation, and Free Will
Instructor: Prof. Alfred Mele

M 2:30-5:30, DOD 181 PHI 6505-01
(M&E)* Ref. 05171

This course critically explores a variety of competing views on three related topics: laws of nature, causation, and free will. Special attention is paid to the interrelatedness of views on these topics. Assigned readings concentrate on work published in the last twenty years.

Philosophy of Biology
Instructor: Prof. Michael Ruse

T 6:45-9:45, DOD 181 PHI 6406-01
(M&E)* Ref. 06452

Description coming soon!

Ethics: Reasons
Instructors: Profs. David McNaughton and Piers Rawling

W 2:30-5:30, DOD 181 PHI 6607-01
(V)* Ref. 07544

Certain philosophers (e.g., Davidson) think of reasons as belief-desire pairs; others (e.g., Parfit) think of them as facts about matters that may be (and often are) external to the agent. Both these approaches will be discussed, in addition to: various forms of the internalism-externalism debate (McDowell, Hume, Williams); agent-relative and agent-neutral reasons (Nagel, Parfit); the question of what makes a reason a *moral* reason (Foot, Scheffler); the subjective-objective distinction (Prichard, Ross).

Philosophical Methods

R 2:00-5:00, DOD 181 PHI 5956-01

Instructors: Profs. Peter Dalton, Russell Dancy, Alfred Mele, and Michael Ruse

Ref. 05327

The purpose of this course is to learn and practice ways of analyzing and critically evaluating philosophical views. We will approach historical and contemporary works with the aim of identifying and judging philosophical arguments of various kinds. We will also discuss exegetical issues (such as the Principle of Charity and its proper application), and methodological issues (such as the reliability of philosophical intuitions and their relation to philosophical theories). Readings may include selections from Descartes, Locke, Kant, Frege, Moore, Heidegger, Rawls, Searle, and Kripke. Emphasis will be placed on honing one's philosophical writing skills.

Prelim Preparation: Metaphysics

TBA

PHI 6960-01

Instructor: Prof. Cei Maslen

Ref. 05333

Teaching Philosophy

TBA

PHI 5908-01

Instructor: Mr. Justin Barnard

Ref. 07715

*Fulfills history (H), metaphysics and epistemology (M&E), or value theory (V) distribution requirement for Philosophy graduate students. Also available for Philosophy graduate students: PHI 6960-01 (03), Prelim Preparation: Ethics (Prof. Peter Dalton); hours TBA; ref. # 05333