
PHI 6455-01

Philosophy of Biology: Basic Topics
(Prof. Michael Ruse)

Course ref. # 07764
Tuesday 6:45-9:45 PM, DOD 181

This course will offer a survey of basic topics in the philosophy of biology: an introduction to the nature of the philosophy of science; a brief history of the philosophy of biology (Aristotle, Bacon, Kant, Whewell, Bergson, and later writers in the twentieth century); the nature of evolutionary theory, including the significance of the contributions of Charles Darwin (with special reference to the status of natural selection); the coming of genetics (Mendelian and molecular); connections of biology to other branches of science; demarcation issues (is evolutionary theory genuinely scientific?); the implications of biology for humankind; the fossil record and related issues; molecular biology and its philosophical implications, including the problem of reduction; the nature of laws; the significance of the Human Genome Project; alternative theories about biology and challenges to accepted paradigms, including the relevance of evolutionary development (“evo-devo”); non-adaptive theories of evolution (including genetic drift and punctuated equilibrium); computer and physics-driven theories challenging or supplementing biology; ethical and social issues, including the status of Creationism; the implications of modern biotechnology; eugenics and modern equivalents; human sociobiology; and ecological questions.

The course will be a combination of lectures and student seminars. Evaluation will be through examination, student performance and participation in seminars, and some written work. The course will be of such a kind that students from both the humanities and the sciences can take it and succeed; no technical competence or knowledge will be presupposed.

PHI 6506-01
(M&E)*

Metaphysics: Free Will, Libertarian-style
(Prof. Al Mele)

Course ref. # 05242
Monday 2:30-5:30 PM, DOD 181

Libertarianism (in the metaphysical sense) is the conjunction of two theses: at least some people have free will, and free will is incompatible with determinism. A convincing libertarian theory will include a convincing account of what free will is and a convincing explanation of how free will is possible. This course examines recent libertarian theories.

PHI 6935-01
(M&E)*

Philosophical Topics: Fictionalism
(Prof. Cei Maslen)

Course ref. # 08415
Thursday 2:00-5:00 PM, DOD 181

What do Oliver Twist, the number two, morality, possible worlds, and electrons have in common? (Different) philosophers have postulated that these are all fictional entities. In this course, we will investigate these claims. We will first look into the general issue of truth in fiction, and then examine fictionalist views about a variety of subject matters. (There is no assigned text or anthology for this course. We will read some recent papers addressing these questions).

Please call the department at (850) 644-1483 if you need further information.
Check www.fsu.edu/~philo/resources/grad/courses for updates.

*Fulfills history (H), value theory (V), or metaphysics and epistemology (M&E) distribution requirement for Philosophy graduate students.