
FALL 2018 COURSE DESCRIPTIONS:

Undergraduate Courses:

P100

Introduction to Philosophy: Appearance & Reality

Adam Leite

This course is an introduction to philosophy, focusing upon questions about the possibility and limits of human knowledge. Can we ever know the true nature of reality? If so, how? What is the relation between how things seem to us and how they really are? The class considers these and related questions by studying the writings of several important thinkers in the European philosophical tradition, including Plato, Descartes, Berkeley, and Kant. We will focus upon identifying, analyzing, and evaluating the reasons these philosophers offer for their views. We will also pay attention to how their views are embedded in historical contexts. We will strive to develop an understanding and appreciation of the nature of philosophical questions and the tools philosophers have used to answer them. You will learn to “think like a philosopher,” identifying and trying to answer philosophical questions yourself through careful rational argumentation. The course is specifically designed to develop students’ abilities to reason carefully, write clearly, work with deeply challenging texts, and think about difficult issues from a variety of viewpoints.

P100

Introduction to Philosophy: Divine & Human Nature

Fred Schmitt

This is a course on divine and human nature. We will devote much of the course to our first topic, God. Does God exist and what is God’s nature? Are there rational grounds for believing in God? Would it be permissible to believe in God even if there were no rational grounds? We will discuss the relation between God and morality, and between God and the meaning of life. We will discuss the role of reason and faith in religious life. Each student is encouraged to seek his or her own answers to these questions. Our second topic for the course will be human nature. We will focus on the mind-body problem—whether human beings should be understood as material beings, as immaterial souls, or as some combination of the two. The immortality of the soul is a central issue here. We will discuss whether machines can think and whether animals have souls. If there is any time left after all this, we may discuss the question of free will and determinism. This is an introductory course. It assumes no prior knowledge of philosophy or anything else. There will be a lot of attention to developing reasons for your beliefs and arguments for philosophical positions. It is hoped that the skills you acquire in doing this will help you to think more clearly and rigorously in other areas of thought and life. In some ways, philosophy is more like life than many other things you study in college. It is a no-holds-barred free-for-all, in which everything is relevant and any conclusion is possible. There will be three in-class exams and a final paper, about five pages in length.

P100

Introduction to Philosophy: Philosophy on Film

David McCarty

This is not a course on either art or film history. Nor will it discuss explicitly film theory or philosophy of film. Rather, the course will examine and explore the many ways in which certain films teach us about the time-honored discipline of philosophy by introducing and developing philosophical themes and arguments cinematically. We will watch and analyze four different, full-length films of marked philosophical importance: Hitchcock's "Vertigo" (1959), Bergman's "Through a Glass Darkly" (1961), Reed's "The Third Man" (1950), and Proyas's "Dark City" (1998). In association with each film, we will be reading and studying more traditional works of philosophy including sections of Descartes's "Meditations," and James's "Varieties of Religious Experience." In addition to a sit-down final examination, there will be three sit-down in-class examinations, weekly writing assignments, and frequent quizzes on course content. The importance of clear and appropriate written and oral communication will be emphasized throughout.

P105

Critical Thinking
Leah Savion

Why do smart people have weird beliefs, behave irrationally, and fail systematically in their reasoning? To be better equipped to deal with this question we will study some basic rules of correct reasoning in propositional logic and in syllogism, and the classification and the impact of formal and informal pervasive fallacies. Other topics include the roles of cognitive operations and principles in thinking, metacognitive skills: magical beliefs and their sources, and practical applications of deviations from the logical norms of belief formation, inference, and behavior. Textbook: Savion "Rational Irrationality" [Gen Ed Arts and Humanities](#).

P107

Critical Thinking
Levi Tenen

This course introduces students to philosophical questions about the natural environment and our relation to it. We begin with a survey of United States environmental laws with an eye towards identifying philosophically-significant concepts underpinning them. We ask, "What is nature?", "Where, if at all, is nature to be found today?", and "What, if anything, is valuable about nature?" On this last question, we analyze the concepts of biodiversity and ecosystem stability, investigating whether either is valuable. We then focus on whether there are specific actions and attitudes we should take towards nature, with a focus on issues of environmental racism, responsibilities to future generations, the intersection of animal rights and environmental ethics, bioengineering, the aesthetic appreciation of nature, and the viability of environmental restoration. In addition to the foregoing, this course aims to improve students' ability to engage critically with complex ideas, interpret others charitably, and express one's own thoughts clearly.

P135

Introduction to Existentialism
Allen Wood

A survey of five nineteenth and twentieth century philosophers who question the meaning of existence, confront the absurdity of the human condition and challenge the authority of reason over our lives. Many readings will present philosophical ideas through literary forms (novels, aphorisms, prose-poetry, pseudonymous writings). Philosophers surveyed: Nietzsche, Dostoevsky, Kierkegaard, Sartre, Beauvoir.

P140

Introduction to Ethics
Moral Theory & Contemporary Issues

In this course, we'll examine a set of ethical questions essential for reflecting on what it means to lead a good life. First, we will address the question of what makes actions right or wrong. In this context, we will study the major ethical theories that provide an answer to this question and consider their application to the problem of the ethical treatment of non-human animals. Next, we will address the question of what makes one's life overall good. Are there certain things in life that are absolutely good or good to have in life no matter what one's personal circumstances are? If there are, how can we know what they are? Once we have examined these issues we will discuss the nature of moral wisdom. How is right action and knowledge of the good and valuable manifested in the life of a wise person? What makes some people moral exemplars or moral ideals? Time permitting, we will discuss the problem that evil and suffering pose for ethical thought and meaning in life with a special emphasis on the question of how the recognition of evil ought to shape our ethical orientation to life and our character. Finally, we will conclude with a discussion of how we should strive to make ourselves better persons. Are there right and wrong ways to seek moral improvement? Here, we will examine some arguments in the emerging field of moral neuroenhancement for the rightness and wrongness of using brain manipulation to enhance human empathy and moral capacities. The aim of the course is to develop the skills of critical reflection and evaluation of moral arguments with a view to improving your reasoning about issues especially relevant to the conduct of our life.

P150

Elementary Logic

Leah Savion

This elementary logic course is concerned with:

- (i) Basic notions of the theory of reasoning, such as correctness of inference, Deductive and inductive evaluations of arguments, soundness, conditionals, incompatibility, contradiction, and truth-functionality;
- (ii) Symbolization of English sentences and arguments into logical languages, and methods for discerning correct from incorrect inferences (truth-tables and natural deduction). The primary subject of the course is the formal language of Propositional Calculus and a short introduction of Predicate Logic.

Course objectives include installing critical and analytical reasoning, enhancing the abilities to detect logical structures in natural ordinary language and provide rigorous proofs of validity, and developing the application metacognitive skills to cognitive operations.

Final grade for the course is determined by weekly quizzes, assignments, two midterms and a final exam.

The textbook for the course is Savion: "Brain Power: Symbolic Logic for the Novice" 2016 edition, published by CoursePak.

P201

Ancient Greek Philosophy

The course is intended to provide a student with a detailed, critical survey of the major figures, doctrines, and arguments characteristic of ancient philosophy in the western tradition. Special emphasis will be placed on the writings of the classical Greek philosophers Plato and Aristotle, but our study will extend to include the views of some pre-Socratic philosophers and such Roman philosophers as Cicero and Seneca. Grades will be based on class participation plus student performance on quizzes, writing assignments, and examinations. A quiz will be administered during almost every meeting of the course. There will be frequent writing assignments with emphasis on helping students write effective philosophical essays. There will be three sit-down, in-class examinations during the semester, in addition to the final examination.

Prerequisite: Satisfactory completion of at least three credit hours in a course or courses on philosophy.

P211

Early Modern Philosophy: Descartes through Kant
Kate Abramson

If there's one phrase that could capture the early modern period in philosophy, it would be: "and then, everything changed." From conceptions of the mind, to moral and political philosophy, to theories of knowledge-- all that had been taken for granted was called into question. You might have heard of some of the philosophers involved in these debates: e.g. Rene Descartes, Thomas Hobbes, David Hume. Others you probably haven't heard of: e.g. Margaret Cavendish, Elizabeth of Bohemia, Mary Astell, Francis Bacon. Still others you may have heard of, but not realized that they wrote important philosophical works—e.g. Galileo. Equally various were the ways in which these philosophers argued for their views. They wrote brief arguments, systematic Treatises, meditations, utopias, miscellany, and even what may well be the very first work of science fiction. This is a survey class. We will read many philosophers, on many topics, with the goals of understanding not only the details of their arguments, but also the ways in which those arguments changed forever the framework for debates in philosophy.

H233

Friendship, Religion, & Justice
Rega Wood

Why do we need friends? What do we or should we love? What do the gods love? What should we believe about God/s? Why should we live justly? How is human happiness related to virtue? Is there a natural law, a system of justice common to all people and all nations, to which we must conform? If so, can its precepts invalidate human laws? Is an unjust law no law at all? In this course we will look at the answers to these questions proposed by five great figures from the history of philosophy: Plato (Euthyphro, Lysis, Gorgias), Aristotle (Nicomachean Ethics), Cicero (On Duties, On the Nature of the Gods), Abelard (Dialogues), and Hume (Dialogues). This course will focus on topics in ethics, natural religion, and the natural law tradition.

P250

Symbolic Logic
Leah Savion

The aim of this course is to enhance students' inferential abilities by understanding basic concepts of reasoning, developing sensitivity to the logical structure of sentences and translating them into formal languages, and evaluating arguments rigorously as valid or invalid. These activities will be applied to two symbolic languages of logic: Proposition Calculus and Predicate Logic. This course has no pre-requisites, but having taken P-150 often proves useful. The course covers twice the material covered in P150, and has a fast pace. Final grade is based on homework assignments, two tests, group work, and a final exam. The textbook for the course is Savion: "Brain Power", IUB ClassPak ISBN 1-4211-5767-5

P301

Medieval Philosophy (IW)
Rega Wood

P301 covers significant themes in Medieval Philosophy with a focus on philosophical ethics. The period covered, 350-1350, ranges from the early period of the Christian Roman Empire to the High Middle Ages, which saw the definitive development of theories of human and divine will. Topics covered include theories of the will and human motivation, theories of ethics based on reason and agent intention, and divine omniscience as it impacts human freedom. We examine the development of the

concept of will as a locus of personal identity, freedom, and responsibility. Specifically, thinkers from Augustine to Ockham emphasize the intentions of the agent in assessing culpability. By contrast, Aquinas holds that conformity with right reason determines whether an act is praise- or blameworthy. These philosophers are committed Christians and must be understood within the context of Medieval Christianity and the cultural history of this 1000-year period. Hence we keep in mind that their assumptions and starting points are not our own, as we seek to understand their views and to analyze and critically evaluate their arguments.

P312

Topics in the Theory of Knowledge
Jim Hutchinson

Cultural commentators worry that we have moved into a "post-truth" era: "a time in which [truth] has become unimportant or irrelevant." Traditional philosophy, on the other hand, has maintained that truth is of central importance for us: Plato, for example, claimed that "truth heads the list of all things good, for gods and men alike." Our concern in this course will be with whether it is good to believe the truth, and if so, why it is good and how good it is. We will also ask whether and why knowing the truth is better than merely believing it or having faith in it, and whether there is any relation to the truth that is better than knowledge. We will be especially interested in whether anything we learn about the value of truth can be used to respond philosophically to a certain kind of skeptic: not one who wants the truth but worries that it is impossible to get, but one who worries that the truth is unimportant or irrelevant, and who therefore does not even want it. Readings will include both classic and contemporary work on these aspects of epistemic value.

P343

Modern Political Philosophy
Allen Wood

This course will study four social and political philosophers of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries who profoundly influenced our conceptions of freedom, justice and oppression, as they relate to social structure, politics and economics. We examine the foundations and criticisms of social contract theory, the function of the state, and the relation of the modern state and modern economy to human history. Our principal texts will be: Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *On the Social Contract*; Johann Gottlieb Fichte, *The Closed Commercial State*; Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Elements of the Philosophy of Right*; and Karl Marx: *Communist Manifesto*, *Capital* and other writings.

P360

Introduction to Philosophy of Mind
Fred Schmitt

The philosophy of mind concerns the nature of mind and its relation to the natural and social world. We will begin with the question what it is to have a mind and the related question of what it is for a state to be a mental state. We will then turn to some questions in the metaphysics of mind. Chief among these is the mind-body problem. We will address first whether the mind may be understood as material or must be understood as involving something over and above the material. There are several aspects of the mind that have been thought to pose a challenge to a purely material conception of the mind—intentionality, intelligence, consciousness, experience, free will. We will consider some of these challenges to materialism. This will involve delving into the nature of intentionality, consciousness, and the like. We will also consider a variety of ways to understand the mind as material—supervenience, functionalism, and the mind-brain identity thesis. There will be some attention to mental representation. The course reading will consist mostly

of important articles from recent philosophy of mind. The course does not presuppose any knowledge of philosophy of mind, metaphysics, or epistemology.

P375

Philosophy of Law
Marcia Baron

This course focuses on philosophical issues primarily in criminal law, with some attention to other areas of law and legal theory, as well. The readings include cases, discussions thereof, and articles by philosophers and legal scholars. Although we will learn something about the law, the real goals are to examine various philosophical issues in law, and to become familiar with key underlying principles in criminal law and subject some of them to scrutiny. Among the underlying principles we'll examine are (a) one should not be convicted of a crime without fair warning; (b) only voluntary acts are punishable; (c) in addition to the requirement that the accused have committed a voluntary act, prohibited by law, the accused must have a "guilty mind"; to be punishable (the *mens rea* or culpability requirement). We'll also be asking what (if anything) justifies the institution of punishment. Later in the term we'll look at the law of self-defense and its underlying doctrines.

P470

Emotions & Moral Responsibility
Kate Abramson

This class will address fundamental questions about the relationship between emotions and moral responsibility. Can we appropriately be held morally responsible for our emotions? It sure looks like it. Consider the commonplace phrase "you shouldn't feel guilty for that." This suggests that there's some contrast case in which one should feel guilty. Or imagine what you would think of someone who took great joy in witnessing another (morally blameless) person destroyed. In what ways and under what circumstances is it then appropriate to hold someone morally responsible for their emotions? We can also ask: what role do our emotions play in holding one another responsible? Notice, for instance, that being angry with someone seems all by itself to be a way of holding someone responsible. Philosophers call such emotions reactive attitudes, a category which includes not only anger, resentment, indignation, guilt, contempt and shame, but also gratitude, love and forgiveness. We will examine what role each and all of these emotional attitudes play in our practices of holding one another and ourselves responsible.

Graduate Courses:

P500

Proseminar
Kirk Ludwig

Description: The Proseminar is required of all incoming graduate students. The role of the seminar in the program is to provide new students with a great deal of feedback on their philosophical writing their first term in the program and to provide early opportunities for practice in making seminar presentations and participating in seminar discussions. Topic: The readings will be a selection of classics of analytic philosophy from Frege to Davidson. Assignments: There will be one five-page paper due for each reading assignment. The papers should be no more than five pages. They are due in at the end of the meeting for which the reading is assigned. At each meeting, a member of the seminar is selected to read or present his or her paper to begin discussion. Papers will be returned with comments by the following week's meeting. Grading: The

Proseminar is graded on a satisfactory/unsatisfactory basis. Attendance is mandatory and all paper assignments must be turned in on time.

P505

Logical Theory I

David McCarty

The goal of the course is to provide each student with a knowledge of the elements of mathematical logic at the introductory graduate level, with special emphasis on Soundness and Completeness metatheorems for propositional and predicate logics. Other important results in mathematical logic, such as the Compactness Theorem, as well as an appreciation of the philosophical significance of those results will afford concerns. Our textbook will be Alfred Tarski's "Introduction to Logic and to the Methodology of the Deductive Sciences," augmented by frequent handouts. Course grades are determined on the basis of student performance on two nonfinal take home exams, one take home final exam, and a number of exercise assignments.

P545

Legal Philosophy

Marcia Baron

Although offered under the heading of "Legal Philosophy," this seminar will address topics that arise in both moral philosophy and the philosophy of criminal law. Students will be welcome to focus on either moral philosophy or philosophy of criminal law in their papers.

The topics we will focus on in class include culpability, the distinction between justifications and excuses, and specific defenses in the law (self-defense in particular). We will discuss culpability both as it is discussed in our field and as the notion is developed in criminal law: the *mens rea* requirement. In connection with the latter, a key question is whether negligence should ever suffice for criminal liability. But an analogous question (keyed to moral blameworthiness, and ignorance as an excusing condition) is addressed by (among others) Gideon Rosen.

An undercurrent in these debates (both in philosophy and in law) are questions of responsibility for one's character. To what extent is it morally incumbent on me (barring serious disabilities that constitute obvious excusing conditions) to address my tendency to react to others with mistrust; my tendency to hold grudges; my tendency to divide the world into the good guys and the bad guys; my lack of compassion; my overconfidence in my own judgments; my hot temper? In the context of criminal law, a further question is whether, if it is morally incumbent on me to so shape my character, this has a bearing on what can be legally demanded.

Closely related to the question of responsibility for shaping my character is the requirement in the criminal law of reasonableness, sometimes specifically in the form of a reasonable person standard, sometimes not. In connection with this, we will be discussing the question of whether a "subjective" or an "objective" standard (technical terms in law) of reasonableness is more suitable for self-defense; we will probe the distinction itself, and underlying assumptions about objectivity.

Readings for this course will include a number of criminal law cases and work by (among others) Angela Smith, Peter Strawson, J.L. Austin, Gideon Rosen, Gary Watson, Antony Duff, and me.

Probable course requirements:

1. (Definite): one paper, to be turned in as if it were the final draft, but then revised in light of my comments. The paper will be due late in November; the truly final version will be due by the end of the term, with Incompletes granted only under exceptional circumstances.
2. (Definite): a presentation of your paper the last week (or if there are too many students for that, last two weeks) of the term. The last class session(s) will be a mini-conference.
3. (Maybe): a presentation earlier in the term on one of the assigned readings.

No prior familiarity with law or philosophy of law is expected.

P770

Adam Leite
