

Philosophy Course Descriptions - Spring 2016

P100 Introduction to Philosophy: Basic Arguments in Philosophy - Pieter Sjoerd Hasper

In this course basic arguments in philosophy about knowledge, the relation between mind and body, morality, and freewill and determinism are discussed. In order to prepare for these arguments, the course starts with an introduction on arguments and argumentation.

Gen Ed A&H, College A&H Breadth of Inquiry

P105 Thinking and Reasoning - David McCarty

Logic is the study of persuasive reasoning and the principal goal of our P105 is to offer students a working knowledge of informal logic at the introductory level. This we separate into three component areas: recognition, analysis, and evaluation of reasoning. In the first, we learn to distinguish reasoning from other forms of communication, among them narratives and causal explanations. Next, in analyzing reasoning, we apply such techniques from logic as argument diagrams to understand the structures of reasoning. Finally, we learn to evaluate reasoning and to improve our own reasoning by employing the important notions of validity and fallacy.

Gen Ed A&H, College A&H Breadth of Inquiry

P140 Introduction to Ethics - Timothy O'Connor

Topic: "The Good Life"

How does moral action — doing the right thing — connect to being a good person and living a good life? What is the source of moral value and obligation? Is there an objective meaning of life that is deeper than the subjective meanings we see, or try to see, in our individual lives? What is a human person, and what is the place of human persons in the wider scheme of things? And how do different answers to these questions affect how we approach and answer specific moral questions?

In this course, we will study what philosophers past and present have had to say concerning these foundational questions. Deep disagreement persists, both among the philosophers and out in the street. But, somewhat alarmingly, we find as we come of age that we cannot avoid embracing one or another disputed answer to these questions, however tentatively or unreflectively. One aim for this course is to learn to do so thoughtfully and (one hopes) wisely. One does so not by standing aloof and saying, 'Oh, I don't know' — and then proceeding to live by a particular set of half-baked assumptions. Instead, the thoughtful and wise path is to consider carefully the alternatives (including honestly drawing out their consequences), and then take an explicit stand. This involves marshalling considerations in favor of one's particular positions and responding intelligently and carefully to reasoned arguments for opposing positions. It also involve a willingness to re-think matters when opposing arguments come to seem decisive—moral commitment need not be dogmatic.

Finally, we will not restrict ourselves to the general and foundational moral questions above. We will go on to explore the nature of specific moral virtues and vices (e.g., envy, lust, pride and humility) and to address particular moral questions, including the morality of aborting fetuses, killing and eating animals, accruing wealth, waging war—and also plagiarizing essays for ethics classes.

Gen Ed A&H, College A&H Breadth of Inquiry

P140 Introduction to Ethics: Liberty, Justice, and Happiness - Marcia Baron

This section of Introduction to Ethics is a mix of moral philosophy, political philosophy, and philosophy of law. It is designed to stimulate reflection about a number of issues in ethics and political philosophy, particularly issues concerning liberty, justice and happiness. Readings will include both great classics and contemporary philosophical writings, and we will also read some excerpts of legal cases. The centerpiece of the course is J.S. Mill, *On Liberty*. We will link up issues raised in that work about tolerance, respect, diversity, free speech, and human progress with current issues, such as those

surrounding Kim Davis, the clerk in Kentucky who refused to issue marriage licenses to same-sex couples (thereby violating the law).

Among the aims in this course are to learn to think critically about difficult, controversial issues and to discuss these issues with others in a respectful, reasoned way, without either getting into nasty fights or politely changing the subject. At the same time, a considerable focus of the course is on a close reading of philosophical texts, with the aim of helping students to read (in its entirety) a challenging work from a different era, written in an unfamiliar style, and to reflect on it in a way that is both charitable and probing.

Work for the course will include one medium length paper, two exams, and some short assignments and quizzes.

Gen Ed A&H, College A&H Breadth of Inquiry

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 ordinary language, provide rigorous proofs of validity, and develop the relevant metacognitive skills.

Final grade is determined from weekly quizzes, assignments, two midterms and a final exam.

Textbook: Savion: "Brain Power: Symbolic Logic for the Novice" 2015 edition, published by CoursePak.

Gen Ed A&H, College A&H Breadth of Inquiry

P211 Early Modern Philosophy - Allen Wood

A survey of seven great philosophers of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, focusing on issues of metaphysics, epistemology, and philosophy of mind. Topics covered include: Skepticism and the foundations of knowledge; the philosophical basis of modern science; proofs for the existence of God; the nature of the sensible world and its relation to what is truly real; the relation of sense experience to scientific knowledge; the limits of human knowledge. Philosophers surveyed are Descartes, Spinoza, Locke, Leibniz, Berkeley, Hume, Kant.

Gen Ed A&H, College A&H Breadth of Inquiry

P250 Introduction to 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. The relevant declarative and procedural knowledge will be applied to two symbolic logical languages: 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 weekly quizzes, homework assignments, two tests, group work, and a final exam. The textbook for the course is Savion: "Brain Power", IUB ClassPak, 2015

GenEd N&M, College N&M Breadth of Inquiry

P300 Philosophical Methods and Writing - Adam Leite

Clear, precise writing goes hand in hand with clear, precise thinking. This new course offers philosophy students an opportunity to develop their skills in philosophical writing and argumentation. It is a "nuts and bolts" course, aimed at (1) developing skills necessary for *doing* philosophy well and (2) engaging students in philosophical research. We will look carefully at how philosophers go about defending their views, and students will practice incorporating various argumentative strategies into their writing. For the first nine weeks, each student will write a short paper about that week's reading. For the remainder of the semester each student will work intensively with a graduate student tutor and with each other to develop a longer, independent philosophical paper. The course will involve a unique structure combining whole-class sessions and tutorial meetings. Each week the whole class will meet once to discuss a philosophical text. Then, for the second weekly class session, students will meet in pairs with an advanced philosophy graduate student to discuss the writing each student has done for that week.

The topic of the course is *personal identity*. What makes you the same person as the young child you once were? Does sameness of body play a crucial role here? Or do imaginary scenarios of "body-swapping" show that it doesn't? Does continuity of memory or of other psychological traits play a key role? If someone loses his or her memory or undergoes a radical personality change, does this mean that he or she is no longer the same person? The topic of personal identity quickly expands outward from issues in metaphysics to questions in the philosophy of mind and even in ethics. At the same time, it connects with our most fundamental concern about the kind of things that we are (What is it to be a person?) and raises fundamental questions about the role of imagination and "thought experiments" in philosophical methodology.

Prerequisite: One course in philosophy. The course is limited to majors and minors in philosophy.

P300 satisfies the College of Arts and Sciences Intensive Writing requirement.

P310 Metaphysics - Kirk Ludwig

Metaphysics is concerned with the ultimate natures of things, especially with respect to very general categories in which they fall, and their interconnections. This is far too broad a field to more than sample in a single semester. In this course, we will undertake close examination of a small number of readings looking at different sides on the same issue on six topics: personal identity, free will, realism and anti-realism, realism and nominalism, possible worlds, and persistence over time. The goal will be two-fold: first, to gain a deeper understanding of the structure of problems in each of these areas, and, second, to develop skills in the close reading and analysis of philosophical texts. The primary text will be *Reading Metaphysics*, by Helen Beebe and Julian Dodd, Blackwell Publishing (2007).

P312 Topics in the Theory of Knowledge: Skepticism and Virtue Epistemology - Fred Schmitt

This is a course on the theory of knowledge or epistemology. We will cover two topics. One has been central to the theory of knowledge in the Western tradition since ancient times: the topic of skepticism, or whether we know anything. The topic is central because it is thought by many that skeptical doubts arise naturally from reflecting on the nature of knowledge and that the study of skepticism accordingly reveals our deepest convictions about knowledge. Philosophers have offered many arguments designed to call into question human cognitive achievement and establish that we know much less than we think we do. Philosophers have also offered many responses in defense of our claims to knowledge. These too reveal something about the nature of knowledge. We will sample a few important kinds of skepticism and consider major responses in defense of knowledge. These will include both attempts to refute skepticism and attempts to dismiss the skeptic or to change the topic. We will also consider some theories of knowledge deliberately contrived to prevent skeptical challenges from being raised or to defuse skeptical challenges—e.g., coherence theories of knowledge and reliability theories of knowledge. We will read chapters of Barry Stroud's book, *The Significance of Philosophical Scepticism*, and we will examine responses to scepticism by G. E. Moore, J. L. Austin, the logical positivists, and W. V. Quine. After discussing skepticism, we will devote the remainder of the course to virtue epistemology, which tries to understand human cognitive achievement in terms of intellectual character rather than evidence or methods for forming beliefs. Virtue epistemology has

roots in the Aristotelian tradition and was developed by Aquinas, but had been largely forgotten until recent decades. Its recent revival was inspired by the popularity of reliabilist and naturalistic approaches to epistemology. We will read Linda Zagzebski's *Virtues of the Mind*. This course presupposes no prior acquaintance with the theory of knowledge or the history of philosophy.

P332 Themes in Recent Philosophical Feminism - Kate Abramson

In this class we will examine some of the major themes in philosophical feminism from the latter half of the twentieth century to the present date. Topics will include: gender, sexism and/as subjugation, feminism and psychoanalysis, sexuality and feminism, feminism and the institutions of marriage, intersectionality (especially with regard to questions of race and class) and feminist analyses of the reactive attitudes.

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 ?- Rosa Cao

What is the relationship between the mind and the physical world? What is the nature of mental phenomena? Can machines think? Could you be uploaded into a machine? Can we explain consciousness? What can perspectives from the cognitive sciences tell us about these questions? We'll explore different kinds of responses to these questions with a focus on contemporary developments.

P393 Biomedical Ethics - Janelle DeWitt

Medicine and biomedical research have the noble goals of improving the health, well-being, quality of life, and happiness of all human beings through the practices and technology they develop. But can medicine/biotechnology go too far in their attempts to achieve these goals? Are there certain means to these goals that are simply off-limits? And if so, how do we determine where the ethical lines are that cannot be crossed? In this advanced course on bioethics, we will begin with a brief history of the eugenics movement in America—a movement that led science and medicine in the early 20th century to cross ethical lines, not just in the development of public policy in the US, but also in helping to inspire the Nazi holocaust. The course will begin with a brief review of the major moral theories and principles used in analyzing moral issues. We will then collectively select and intensively explore a small selection of current issues, such as end of life care/euthanasia, abortion, the harvesting of fetal parts for research, embryonic stem cell research, treatment of disabled children, gene-therapy, and/or research involving human subjects, especially in relation to infectious diseases such as AIDS and Ebola. We will also discuss concepts central to these issues, such as “what is it to be *human*, or to be a *person*?”, “what is it to value our humanity?”, and “what makes life worth living, or gives *quality* to our lives?” Through these discussions, the students will learn about several major ethical principles/theories and how to use them to critically assess the moral permissibility of past, current, and emerging practices and technologies in medicine and biomedical research.

P401 Special Topics in the History of Philosophy: Hume and Reid - Fred Schmitt

Our focus will be Book 1 of David Hume's great work *A Treatise of Human Nature*, one of the most influential and esteemed works of philosophy in the Western tradition. It contains a sustained attack

on rationalist philosophy and is generally regarded as the culminating expression of classical empiricism and one of the key works in the skeptical tradition. We will rely on Thomas Reid's *Inquiry into the Human Mind* as a critical review of Hume's *Treatise*, to enhance our understanding of that work and its relation to rationalism. Our aim will be to understand the debate between rationalism and empiricism and to make sense of Humean skepticism. We will do this by examining Hume's core positions in metaphysics, epistemology, and philosophy of mind. We will relate Hume to his predecessors, especially Descartes and Locke, and to his successors, especially Reid and Kant. I'm hoping to give a fairly broad sense of the history of modern philosophy on topics metaphysical and epistemological. Under the heading of philosophy of mind, we will treat Hume's theory of perceptions, impressions, ideas, and beliefs, and his theory of mental representation, especially abstract ideas. Much of this material is indebted to Locke and Berkeley and is organized as an alternative to rationalist innatism about ideas. We will pay some attention to Reid's attack on the theory of ideas, and his alternative accounts of sensations and concepts (rejected by Hume as an attempt to revive innatism). Most of the course will concern Hume's epistemology. What is the basis of Hume's skepticism? What basic epistemology underlies his accounts of induction, causal inference, and identity ascriptions and his epistemic evaluations of beliefs about bodies, material substances, matter, mental substances, and personal identity? Does he subscribe fundamentally to empiricism in epistemology, or to some other view? We will occasionally consider the implications of Hume's metaphysics and epistemology for his views in the philosophy of religion. I will assume no knowledge of philosophy, of Hume, or of the history of philosophy more broadly—background will be filled in as we go.

P470 Special Topics in Philosophy: Plato on Knowledge and Reality - Pieter Sjoerd Hasper

In this course we are going to read the key arguments in which Plato sets out his ideas about knowledge and reality. Plato's account of what things are real is to a large extent determined by his views on knowledge. We will read texts from the *Meno*, the *Phaedo*, the *Republic*, and large chunks of Plato's only dialogue exclusively dedicated to knowledge: the *Theaetetus*.