

# Fall 2018 Course Descriptions & Distribution Areas

## **PHIL 401: Plato**

### **Plato's Republic**

**Distribution Requirement:** Ancient, Metaphysics/Epistemology

**Dr. Julie Ward**

This seminar will focus on Plato's Republic, with attention to other mid-period dialogues such as Phaedo and Symposium, with regard both to their philosophical and structural similarities.

## **PHIL 436: Contemporary French Philosophy**

### **Badiou's Logics of Worlds**

**Distribution Requirement:** Continental, Metaphysics/Epistemology

**Dr. Andrew Cutrofello**

In this seminar we will study Alain Badiou's monumental Logics of Worlds: Being and Event II. Some familiarity with Badiou's earlier book, Being and Event, is highly desirable though not required. In the first book, Badiou develops an ontological account of the nature of events -- not ordinary happenings, but extraordinary occurrences that "change everything." In Logics of Worlds he extends and corrects this picture by presenting a transcendental account of the way events appear. Our aim will be to understand and assess this model. We will occasionally refer to historical and contemporary touchstones such as Plato's Parmenides, Kant's Critique of Pure Reason, Hegel's Science of Logic, Nelson Goodman's Ways of Worldmaking, David Lewis's On the Plurality of Worlds, and Timothy Williamson's Modal Logic as Metaphysics. We will also discuss examples pertaining to Badiou's four "generic procedures": politics, science, art, and love.

## **PHIL 445: Philosophy of Mind**

**Distribution Requirement:** Analytic

**Dr. Joseph Vukov**

The philosophy of mind studies several issues falling under one wide-ranging question: what is the relationship between your conscious experiences and the neural and bodily processes that underlie those experiences? This course explores contemporary issues in philosophy of mind from a distinctively philosophical perspective, and also brings in resources from psychology, neuroscience, and the history of philosophy when relevant. The course will be organized around two main units: Mind-Body Theories and Philosophy of Cognitive Science and Consciousness.

- Mind-Body Theories: Are your brain and mind the same thing? Or are they different? If so, how are they different? Mind-body theories attempt to answer these kinds of questions. In this course, we will explore influential historical and

contemporary mind-body theories, the arguments in favor of them, and the objections against them.

- **Philosophy of Cognitive Science and Consciousness:** Cognitive science uses empirical methods to study our mental lives. The philosophy of cognitive science and consciousness reflects on the philosophical issues raised by this study. This semester, we will focus on several questions in the philosophy of cognitive science and consciousness, which may include the following: are minds like computers? In what ways do our minds depend on our environments and cultures? To what extent are we aware of our own mental lives? How best to understand consciousness?

### **PHIL 454/380: Philosophy of Religion**

#### **Christian Thinkers**

**Distribution Requirement:** Metaphysics/Epistemology

**Dr. Harry Gensler**

This course is built around the Anthology of Catholic Philosophy, edited by James C. Swindal and Harry J. Gensler (Sheed & Ward 2005). This book gives the first ever comprehensive collection of readings from Catholic philosophers, from Biblical times to the present. Our authors and readings will be arranged historically, from five main groups: (1) Preliminaries: readings from the Bible, Plato, and Aristotle. (2) The Patristic Era: readings from Aristides, Justin, Irenaeus, Tertullian, Felix, Origin, Augustine (emphasized), and Boethius. (3) The Middle Ages: readings from Anselm, Aquinas (emphasized), and Ockham. (4) The Renaissance through the Nineteenth Century: readings from Loyola, Galileo, Descartes, and Pope Leo XIII. (5) The Twentieth Century and Beyond: readings from Stein, Callahan, Copleston, Teilhard, Gensler, Plantinga, Rescher, and Pope John Paul II.

The authors and readings give a sample of the richness of the Catholic intellectual tradition. They emphasize central themes, such as the harmony of faith and reason, the existence and nature of God, the nature of the human person, and the objectivity of the moral law. We will cover a good part of the book, from the beginning to the end. <http://www.harryhiker.com/courses.htm#C> has further information.

### **PHIL 463: Virtue Ethics**

#### **Conceptions of Virtue**

**Distribution Requirement:** Ethics/Social-Political

**Dr. Richard Kim**

Philosophical investigation into the virtues have a long and distinguished history. In both ancient Greek and early China we find profound reflections on the character traits necessary to live well and how such traits can be cultivated. This course focuses on the concept of virtue and its role in ethical theory. We will begin by reflecting on the very concept of virtue and its relationship to morality and human flourishing. Then we will examine the different accounts of virtue we find in both

Western and Eastern philosophical traditions with a particular focus on ancient Greek and classical Chinese conceptions of virtue. Finally, we will examine some contemporary empirical literature on virtue and character, and how contemporary science might help advance our understanding of virtue. Among the questions we will focus on include: (1) What is the relationship between virtue and well-being? (2) To what extent are the virtues universal or culturally specific? (3) What does contemporary science say about the cultivation of virtue?

**PHIL 468: Topics in Ethics**

**Advanced Topics in Human Rights**

**Distribution Requirement:** Ethics/Social Political

**Dr. Joy Gordon**

This course addresses a variety of topics within human rights. We'll start with some texts that point to different approaches in conceptualizing human rights, as well as an overview of the major human rights instruments in international law and global governance. We'll look at concepts of rights, and their empirical and Marxist critics; the shift in how torture has been viewed since 9/11; the different ways that gender comes into play within human rights; the thorny problem of how to determine intent in cases of genocide; and what happens when countries claim the right to prosecute human rights violations that took place in other parts of the world.