

PHILOSOPHY COURSE OFFERINGS

– SPRING 2027 –

200-level Courses (Tier Two)

PHIL 272 Metaphysics | *Joshua Mendelsohn* (*Mind and Science*)

The goal of metaphysics is to answer fundamental questions about the nature of reality, such as: What, fundamentally, exists? What, for that matter, does it mean for something to exist? Does everything exist in space and time? (If so, where is the number three, and when does the color red exist?) Are some things “more real” than others? If so, what is most real and what makes it that way? What does it take for an object or a person to persist over time? Are there facts that could not be otherwise (for instance, the fact that $2+2=4$)? What causes a fact to be like that?

Philosophers from the ancient world until today have not only pursued the project of answering these questions, they have also persistently challenged the possibility of answering them. Some have worried that when we ask questions like these, we are really just asking questions about our own language or our own thinking, not questions about the fundamental nature of reality like we had hoped. In this course, we will read and discuss both contributions to metaphysics and challenges to it. Readings will be drawn from contemporary and historical authors. The goal of the course is to learn to evaluate the answers offered to some of these questions by philosophers through to the present, and to make up your own mind about whether we can hope to answer them.

PHIL 273W Philosophy of Science | *Katherine Valde* (*Mind and Science; Writing Intensive*)

Have you ever wondered why we trust science? This introduction to the philosophy of science seeks to answer this question by considering what science really is and how it has gone awry in the past. We consider the difficulty in obtaining objectivity, as well as the many ways we might overcome those challenges. The ultimate goal of this course is to provide students with a sophisticated understanding of the nature of science and what makes it worthy of our trust.

PHIL 274 Logic | *Arnold vander Nat*

This course is a detailed study of the methods and principles of correct reasoning, focused on deductive techniques from both traditional logic and modern logic. Central to this study are not only the precise analysis of the logical structure of the sentences that we use in our arguments but also the logical consequences that sentences have. The laws of logic themselves are extensively studied, and they are rigorously applied in the solution of concrete problems of argumentation. This course also studies some common errors in reasoning, known as logical fallacies.

PHIL 277 Aesthetics: Beauty, Suffering & Justice | *Avery Smith* (*Existence, Meaning, and Culture*)

In this course we will examine the relationship between suffering and the beautiful with the aim of mining out a working definition of justice. To do this, we will be reading Alexander Dumas' *The Count of Monte Cristo* in addition to listening to music about oppression, revolution and liberation. We will consider representations of suffering as expressed in other media of art as well.

PHIL 279 Judgment and Decision-Making | *Marcella Linn* (*Ethics & Values; Mind and Science*)

Our everyday conceptions of the way we think, make choices, and act often assume we exercise significant control and awareness. Many philosophical accounts of action and character make similar assumptions. But, current work in social psychology suggests we are prone to many cognitive biases and that our behavior is often influenced by minor situational factors rather than our conscious choices or character. These findings raise important questions pertaining to human agency as well as moral responsibility for action and character. Further, the account of human reasoning that emerges has important differences from AI models.

Throughout this course, we will read both philosophical and psychological literature on decision making, focusing on how philosophical accounts can or cannot accommodate the various ways we are prone to err in our reasoning as well as the way in which unconscious factors often bypass our reasoning and affect our behavior. We will further examine the ethical implications of this picture of human psychology that arises from empirical research. Along the way, we will consider the way human reasoning and AI reasoning differ.

PHIL 284W Health Care Ethics | *Jennifer Parks* (*Ethics and Values; Writing Intensive*)

Philosophy 284W is designed to provide you with an introduction to the philosophical approach to problems in health care ethics. You will be taught to recognize and critically apply Kant's ethics, utilitarianism, and the four principles of biomedical ethics (justice, autonomy, beneficence, and non-maleficence) with a view to solving moral problems in a rationally defensible manner. We will then consider more recent moral approaches offered by feminist, disability, queer, and Black bioethicists. A number of problematic issues in health care will be addressed relating to beginning of life (abortion, prenatal genetic testing, assisted reproductive technology, genetic enhancement), end of life care (medical aid in dying, brain death), and the patient/provider relationship.

PHIL 284 Health Care Ethics | *Gisela Reyes* (*Ethics and Values*)

This course aims to provide students with an introduction to the study of moral problems related to healthcare. The course will explore three main areas: (1) physician- patient relationship, (2) biotechnology, and (3) public health ethics. The first part of the course will consider the values that ought to govern the physician- patient relationship, how those values may conflict, and how those conflicts might resolve. The second part of the course, we will explore the moral problems of biotechnology such as abortion, genetic manipulation, and physician-assisted suicide. The final part of the class will explore the relationship between healthcare and public health.

PHIL 284 Health Care Ethics | Joseph Vukov
(Ethics and Values)

This course will introduce students to health care ethics using two primary frameworks: principlism and Catholic bioethics. We will also cover several contemporary issues in health care ethics, focusing especially on issues in new and emerging technologies.

PHIL 287 Environmental Ethics | Nicholas Sars
(Ethics and Values)

What do we owe to the natural world? What do we owe to each other across generations? This course introduces students to the central theories and debates in environmental ethics, moving from foundational questions of moral standing to pressing controversies such as global climate change. Students will examine competing ethical frameworks, including anthropocentric, biocentric, and ecocentric approaches, before turning to a sustained unit on our obligations to future generations. A guiding theme throughout is whether an environmental virtue ethic can be made coherent, and in particular, whether hope itself can count as an environmental virtue even against the pessimism that the climate crisis so often inspires. The semester closes by placing environmental virtue ethics in conversation with indigenous ethical traditions, asking what each might teach the other. Delivered in a discussion-intensive style, the course asks students not merely to understand these theories but to critique them and to take and defend their own positions.

PHIL 288W Culture and Civilization: Individual and Collective Responsibility | Mario Attie Picker
(Ethics and Values; Existence, Meaning, and Culture; Writing Intensive)

The present course is about the concept of responsibility. The course is organized around two mutually informing questions. We begin by asking whether individuals are truly responsible for their actions. Here we explore the ever-present but always elusive debate about free will. We then move to questions about the nature of responsibility. What is responsibility after all? What does it mean to be responsible for something (a decision, a desire, a whole personality)? And what are the conditions, if any, under which responsibility is realized? Finally, we shift our attention to the question of collective responsibility. How does responsibility work at the group level? To explore this question, we look at three applied cases in which the responsibility of individuals and the responsibility of groups interact in complex and surprising ways.

PHIL 288 Culture and Civilization: Friendship, Romance, and Technology | Peter Bergeron
(Ethics and Values; Law, Society, and Social Justice)

We are deeply social creatures. The link between vibrant interpersonal relationships and a rich, flourishing human life was explored by the Greek philosopher Aristotle centuries ago. He claimed that even if we had all the goods that the world could offer, none of us would choose to have those at the expense of having friends. The importance of relationships continues to dominate the research of scholars in many fields. Our culture is profoundly technological. This has been true for decades and is not merely the result of the development of new forms of social media such as the smartphone. This culture shapes us in many ways, including the way we engage relationships with others. The Jesuit scholar John Culkin writes, "We become what we behold. We shape our tools and then our tools shape us." The effects of these tools on our relationships with others are being widely researched and hotly contested. It is clear that these new tools are shaping us. This course will explore two kinds of relationships, friendship and romantic partnerships, and

the ways in which our technological culture both enhances and diminishes our capacity to connect well with others.

PHIL 288 Culture and Civilization: Philosophy and Film | *Thomas Derdak*
(*Existence, Meaning, and Culture*)

This course is designed to investigate issues in the field of aesthetics through the medium of film. We will analyze and discuss topics such as what makes a good critic; the relationship between the images on screen, symbolic content, and meaning; the director's perspective and the creative process; the appropriateness of adaptation from short story, novel, or play to film; the criteria used to determine a good from a bad film, and others. Each of the films viewed will have a corresponding reading. Some of the films that the course will focus on include: *Rashomon*, *Throne of Blood*, *Platoon*, *Paths of Glory*, *The Man who Shot Liberty Valance*, *Room with a View*, *Barbie*, *Perfect Days*, and more.

PHIL 288 Culture and Civilization: Catholic Social Teaching | *Jeffrey Fisher*
(*Ethics and Values; Law, Society, and Social Justice*)

In this course students will learn the political and philosophical perspective put forward within Catholic Social Teaching. In fulfilling this general purpose, the course will 1) give students a systematic understanding of Catholic Social Teaching, and 2) demonstrate the viability of the political and philosophical perspective provided by Catholic Social Teaching—a perspective which is a plausible, intriguing, and attractive alternative to the political perspectives characteristic of contemporary political culture. Readings will be drawn primarily from Aristotle, Aquinas, papal encyclicals, and church documents.

300-level Courses (Upper-Division Courses for Philosophy Majors and Minors)

PHIL 304W History of Ancient Philosophy | Joshua Mendelsohn

(Ethics and Values; Existence, Meaning, and Culture; Writing Intensive)

In this course, we will trace the development of philosophy in Greece from the earliest thinkers of record until Aristotle. Our guiding thread will be the relationship of Greek philosophy to the two major cultural practices it had to work to distinguish itself from: Sophistry and myth. We will see how the earliest Greek philosophers appropriate the conventions of epic myth but challenge traditional theism and show a new interest in the origin of the universe and the natural world. We will examine how Socrates challenges, and appropriates, the practices of sophistry while Plato engages those of Greek myth, and extends Socrates's ideas into a political philosophy and a theory of reality. In turn, we will see how Aristotle, while rejecting Plato's hostility towards natural science, develops and transforms Plato's ideas about the good life, the ideal city, love and friendship, knowledge, and the soul.

As well as studying the history of Greek philosophy, the course will provide opportunities to reflect on its relevance to our own lives and our political situation.

PHIL 309 Classical Modern Philosophy | Blake Dutton

(Existence, Meaning, and Culture)

This course covers major developments in European philosophy in the 17th and 18th centuries. Our focus will be on topics in metaphysics and epistemology – including knowledge, skepticism, the origin of ideas, substance, matter, mind and body, causation, and God – but we will also examine the larger scientific, religious, and political background of philosophy in this period. In addition, we will give some attention to the ways in which classical modern philosophy builds on and reacts to the philosophical traditions of the ancient and medieval worlds. We will not attempt to cover all major figures of the period but will focus on the following seven: Galileo Galilei (1564- 1642), René Descartes (1596-1650), Elizabeth of Bohemia (1618-1680), Benedict Spinoza (1632- 1677), Anne Viscountess Conway (1631-1679), David Hume (1711-1776), and Immanuel Kant (1724-1804).

PHIL 311 Issues in Metaphysics: Infinity | Andrew Cutrofello

(Mind and Science; Existence, Meaning, and Culture)

What is infinity? Is everything finite, or is something actually (as opposed to merely potentially) infinite? When mathematicians tell us that some infinities are larger than others, what exactly do they mean? When poets express a yearning for the infinite, are they talking about the same thing as the mathematicians? Do philosophers have a distinctive conception of infinity? These are the basic questions we will consider in this course. We will read and discuss A. W. Moore's *The Infinite*, Alain Badiou's *Number and Numbers*, and Charles Taylor's *Cosmic Connections: Poetry in the Age of Disenchantment*.

PHIL 322 Feminist Philosophies | Amy Shuffelton

(Ethics and Values; Law, Society, and Social Justice)

This course provides an overview of feminist philosophy beginning with Enlightenment Liberal Feminism and addressing a variety of topics feminist philosophy has explored up through the present. It will focus on the complicated place of "women" in what we now call "identity politics." What those words in quotes even

mean is unsettled and worth exploring philosophically, and we'll do that. How have sex and gender been created and defined as social, economic, and political constructions? How is that construction complicated by race, social class and other contested constructions? What difference do bodies make? How are women's (contested, plural) identities as women potentially sources of liberation, oppression, solidarity and/or antagonism?

PHIL 342W Topics in the Catholic Philosophical Tradition: Augustine & Ancient Philosophy | *Alberto Bertozzi*

(Mind and Science; Existence, Meaning, and Culture; Writing Intensive)

The course is an introduction to Augustine's engagement with the philosophical traditions of Greek and Roman antiquity. The main goal of the course is to investigate how Augustine's attempt to provide a rational foundation for the Christian faith was significantly shaped by his sustained inquiry into the questions he inherited from the great philosophical movements of antiquity. Special attention will be given to his epistemology and metaphysics, particularly as these developed through his interaction with the thought of Stoicism, Skepticism, and most notably Platonism. *The course is cross-listed as PHIL 342/CATH 303.*

PHIL 369W Philosophy of Medicine | *Elizabeth Hoppe*

(Mind and Science; Writing Intensive)

This writing intensive course, divided into three parts, investigates the meaning and practice of medicine. It begins with the metaphysical question: What is Medicine? and attempts to answer it by examining medical debates that developed in ancient Greece and continued through the Roman era. This part will cover writings by Plato, Hippocrates, and Galen. The second component concerns human health and suffering. Here we will examine a variety of texts including medieval medical accounts by Ibn Sina (Avicenna) and St. Hildegard von Bingen, followed by mindfulness in medicine which traces its origin to Buddhism, and finally a contemporary account of decolonizing medicine. The third and final part will critically examine current medical practices, beginning with Evidence-Based Medicine and ending with the Cuban healthcare system.

PHIL 379 John F. Grant, M.D., Symposium on Health Care Ethics: Reproductive Ethics | *Jennifer Parks*

(Ethics and Values)

This course explores some contemporary philosophical, ethical, and social policy questions concerning human reproduction and the use of assisted reproductive technology. A variety of perspectives will be addressed, and over the semester we will consider questions such as:

- Are there good (or bad) reasons for having children?
- Is adoption a more virtuous way to form a family?
- Is Julian Savulescu right in claiming that human beings have a duty of "procreative beneficence"?
- How is assisted reproduction changing what it means to be a family? What is the future of "motherhood" and "fatherhood" in light of diverse family formations brought about by queer parenting and assisted reproduction?
- What are the racial implications of assisted reproductive technology and other reproductive practices?

The course will be run as a seminar. Hence there will be an emphasis on class discussion, student presentations, and on the development and refinement of philosophical writing skills. Readings will be drawn from contemporary anthologies and philosophy or bioethics journals.

PHIL 399 Capstone Seminar: Marxism and the Law | *Jesús Lujardo*
(*Law, Society, and Social Justice*)

This Capstone seminar will employ a Marxist framework to investigate the nature and function of the Law, as well as its relationship to capitalism, the commodity-form, the state, the police, imperialism, expropriation, and slavery. The class will begin by establishing Marx's broader philosophy of history as well as his and Lenin's systematic accounts of capitalism, the state, and imperialism, before focusing more specifically on the function of the law — both domestic and international — in the constitution and reproduction of the capitalist mode of production and its violence.