Fall 2019 Course Descriptions & Distribution Areas

PHIL 400: Philosophical Research Tools
Research and analysis of social justice issues
Distribution Requirement: Ethics/Social-Political
Dr. Joy Gordon

Is it ethical to use drones in warfare? What are the causes of homelessness? What are the specific ways that migration impacts women? Who is morally responsible for the acts of a government? This course looks at several different methodological approaches to social justice issues: broad ethical frameworks; specific ethical issues, such as volition and duress; quantitative analysis; various conceptions of violence; US law; and international human rights law. Students are asked to pick a subject area that they will follow throughout the semester. Focusing on various aspects of their topic area, students will do targeted literature reviews and write several short analytic papers, utilizing each of the methodologies that are covered in the course.

PHIL 402: Aristotle
Aristotle on logic and science
Distribution Requirement: Ancient
Dr. Joshua Mendelsohn

Aristotle's *Prior Analytics* is the founding text of logic, and his *Posterior Analytics* is arguably the first systematic work in the philosophy of science. In this course, we will conduct a close reading of key passages from Aristotle's *Prior* and *Posterior Analytics* and work to understand Aristotle's project across these two joined works. We will begin by studying Aristotle's logic in the first book of the *Prior Analytics* before tackling the theory of scientific knowledge and proof Aristotle develops on its basis in the *Posterior Analytics*. Since we will approach the study of logic through its founder's own exposition, no background in logic will be presupposed. Topics will include Aristotle's idea of the syllogism, scientific proof or "demonstration", essentialism, the aims of science, definition and our knowledge of first principles. If time permits, we will read parts of Aristotle's scientific works and consider to what extent Aristotle's scientific practice reflects his philosophy of science. Students who take the course will be in a good position to do further work on Aristotle, the history of logic and the history of science. Knowledge of Greek is desirable but not required.

PHIL 420: Hegel
Phenomenology of Spirit
Distribution Requirement: Continental, Epistemology/Metaphysics
Dr. Andrew Cutrofello

In this seminar we will work through as much of Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit as we can in a semester. We will try to answer several basic questions about the nature of Hegel's project, and about whether it succeeds on its own terms. For example, what is

phenomenology as Hegel conceives it, and what is spirit? What is the dialectical method that Hegel professes to follow throughout the book? Does he consistently follow it? How does the method relate to earlier conceptions of dialectical reasoning, notably those of Plato and Kant? To what extent is Hegel presenting a theory of knowledge? To what extent is he doing metaphysics? Is his conception of history teleological? What happens in the culminating moment of absolute knowing, and how does it anticipate the dialectical projects that Hegel undertakes in his Science of Logic and Encyclopedia? We will focus primarily on Hegel's 1807 text, but we will also consider its reception history from the Young Hegelians and Marx to Robert Brandom and Slavoj Žižek.

PHIL 301/444 - Symbolic Logic
Distribution Requirement: Analytic
Dr. Harry Gensler

We'll study various systems of logic (propositional, quantificational, modal, deontic, and epistemic) and use these to analyze hundreds of arguments, many on philosophical topics like morality, free will, and the existence of God. We'll also work out a logical formalization of an ethical theory. Our text is Introduction to Logic (by Harry J. Gensler, Routledge, 2017 third edition - the Kindle version works fine too).

PHIL 468/324 Topics in Ethics
Lying and Deception in Politics and Ethical Theory
Distribution Requirement: Ethics/Social-Political
Dr. Tom Carson

Political lying and deception are grave problems because public policies tend to turn out very badly when they are based on false beliefs or ignorance of relevant information. In addition, political lying is contrary to democratic ideals - it thwarts the will of the people. Issues to be discussed include theories about the morality lying and deception, attempts to undermine trust in reliable sources of information such as science, misinformation about climate change, vaccinations, and the dangers of tobacco use, disinformation on the internet, historical cases of lying to justify wars, intellectual honesty and ethics of belief and non-belief, and the case of Donald Trump.

PHIL 480: Social and Political Philosophy
Critical Theories of Development
Distribution Requirement: Ethics/Social Political
Dr. David Ingram

The class examines ethical, legal, and socio-political dimensions of global development from the standpoint of recent literature in the Frankfurt School of social critical theory. Important theorists we will discuss include Juergen Habermas, Axel Honneth, and Nancy Frazer, but writers from the first generation of the school (Benjamin, Adorno, Horkheimer, and Marcuse), as well as some post-structuralism (chiefly Foucault) will be discussed as well. Contemporary commentaries will include Amy Allen's After Progress and selections

from David Ingram's World Crisis and Development. We will also read some literature representing the post-development perspective (Escobar and Shiva). Some Anglo-American social philosophy will be discussed as well. The course also has an applied dimension that will touch on the following areas: women and human development (focusing on whether microcredit empowers women in the developing world); globalization (global capitalism) and the politics of trade and aid; migration theory and its impact on families; human rights; global governance; and technology transfer. Requirements include weekly reaction papers, several longer class presentations, and a final term paper or final exam paper.