

Fall 2023 Course Descriptions & Distribution Areas

PHIL 433: Phenomenology/Existentialism

Merleau-Ponty

PhD/MA in Philosophy distribution area: Continental

MA in Social Philosophy distribution area: N/A

Dr. Dimitris Apostolopoulos

Tuesdays 10:00am-12:30pm

This seminar is devoted to a close reading of *Phenomenology of Perception* (1945), a major work of phenomenology and one of the most important texts of post-Kantian European philosophy. We will work through the text sequentially, occasionally informed by select secondary literature, and will reconstruct its most significant arguments and conclusions. Merleau-Ponty's accounts of science, embodiment, intentionality, space and time, sociality, and the perceived world will be of particular interest. These arguments will help us evaluate his broader accounts of consciousness, reality, and world, and his formulation of subject-world correlation. The seminar will give students a sense of Merleau-Ponty's distinctive and enduring contributions to phenomenology, post-Kantian philosophy, and the transcendental tradition.

PHIL 438: Topics in Continental Philosophy

Søren Kierkegaard: Faith, Despair, and the Paradox of Existence

PhD/MA in Philosophy distribution area: Continental, Metaphysics/epistemology, Ethics/social-political

MA in Social Philosophy distribution area: Moral

Dr. Michael F. Andrews

Wednesdays 2:45pm-5:15pm

In this course, we will examine the prolific thought of the “subtle genius of Copenhagen,” Søren Kierkegaard. The methodology of our investigation will be one of critical primary text analysis, meaning we shall examine the writings of Kierkegaard in their historic and intellectual settings, as well as grapple with implications and challenges that Kierkegaard's thought poses for contemporary social and political ethics, epistemology, and metaphysics. During the semester, we will focus on a series of tensions by which Kierkegaard characterizes human existence: (1) the individuality of experience and the universality of reason; (2) the objectivity of truth and the subjectivity of meaning; (3) human freedom and personal commitment; (4) self-authenticity and radical uncertainty; (5) irony and ethical existence; (6) anxiety and transcendence; (7) faith and despair. In addition to reading Kierkegaard's primary texts, short essays, and journal entries, we will also investigate important themes of Kierkegaardian literature by reference to film, music, and painting. By exploring the crisis of the meaning of meaning that Kierkegaard forewarned would be the ultimate legacy of the Enlightenment

--- that is, the existential experience of a loss of transcendence amidst a rising tide of cultural and religious nihilism --- we will evaluate Kierkegaard's radical critiques of Socrates, Kant, and Hegel while also anticipating the impactful influence of Kierkegaard on later thinkers like Heidegger, Sartre, and Levinas. Engaging Kierkegaard's "attack upon Christendom" and his understanding of dread as the universal "sickness unto death," we will develop essential critical thinking and writing skills necessary for our own philosophical development with an eye towards self-examination.

PHIL 466: Major Authors in Moral Philosophy

Rousseau

PhD/MA in Philosophy distribution area: Modern, Ethics/social-political

MA in Social Philosophy distribution area: Moral, Social

Dr. Amy Shuffelton

Thursdays 10:00am-12:30pm

This course takes up the thought of one of Europe's most influential modern philosophers: Jean-Jacques Rousseau. Rousseau has been credited as the source of modernity's notions of equality and identity, as an originator of progressive education, as a blockbuster novelist, and as a perceptive critic of modernity's tragic flaws. He has been blamed for inspiring totalitarian ideologues, for romanticizing retrograde gender norms, for generating an obsession with self and the politics of identity. The literary qualities of his writing make it both easy and hard to pin any and all of these attributions to him, as Rousseau is a writer of paradoxes, of allegories, of texts that slide easily between novel and treatise, fact and fiction. In this class, we will explore several of his major texts, including his Discourse on the Arts and Sciences, Discourse on Inequality, Emile, and the Social Contract. Inequality, gender, and identity will be primary concerns, though we will not limit ourselves to these subjects. Along the way, we will also attend to Rousseau's writing as a matter of genre and style, considering questions about what "counts" as philosophical writing.

PHIL 477: Social Health Care Ethics

Race, Science, and Medicine

PhD/MA in Philosophy distribution area: Analytic, Ethics/social-political

MA in Social Philosophy distribution area: Moral, Social

Dr. Takunda Matose

Tuesdays 7:00pm-9:30pm

This course explores a few questions. First, in what ways have scientific and medical practices shaped historical and contemporary race thinking? Second, in what ways does race thinking shape scientific and medical practices? And third, what are the extant and possible sociopolitical implications of this interplay and what are their normative consequences given the nature of technological and scientific innovation? The source material for these explorations will include key figures and works in philosophy,

sociology, history, and the medical sciences. That said, the explorations themselves will be philosophical, engaging approaches and methodologies from a few sub-disciplines including philosophy of science, philosophy of medicine, philosophy of race, and social/political philosophy more broadly.

PHIL 478: Research Methods in Social Justice

Research Methods in Social Justice

PhD/MA in Philosophy distribution area: Ethics/social-political

MA in Social Philosophy distribution area: Social

Dr. Joy Gordon

Mondays 2:45pm-5:15pm

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; domestic 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 480: Social & Political Philosophy

Michel Foucault: The Subject and Power

PhD/MA in Philosophy distribution area: Continental, Ethics/social-political

MA in Social Philosophy distribution area: Social

Dr. Johanna Oksala

Tuesdays 2:30pm-5:00pm

Michel Foucault has become one of the most cited authors in the humanities and social sciences. A stream of posthumous publications, including his lectures at the Collège de France and the fourth volume of the History of Sexuality, Confessions of the Flesh, have ensured a continuously growing body of Foucault scholarship. In this course, we will study Foucault's philosophy by reading his most important genealogical works from the 1970s. We will focus on the influential books Discipline and Punish and The History of Sexuality, vol.1, as well as study a selection of shorter texts including interviews, essays, and recently published lectures. The course is intended for both students who are new to Foucault's thought, as well as for those already familiar with it. It aims to offer a thorough and up-to-date understanding of Foucault's genealogy, as well as the possibility to deepen one's knowledge of his philosophical ideas and influences. The topics covered will include: productive power, biopower, discipline, the subject, subjectivation, sexuality, and governmentality.