PHI 100-B Concepts of the Person  Main Focus

An historical introduction to philosophy through readings and discussions on topics such as human identity, human understanding, and human values.

PHI 100.01  TUTH 11:30-12:50  A. deLaurentiis

For philosophers, being a 'human person' is an enigma. How can an animal species have values? How can it claim to know truth from falsehood? Why does it believe in supernatural entities? Why does it compose symphonies? Or commit genocide? Or work for justice? This course offers a survey of some major classical works addressing the enigma that we are. Much of this course is dedicated to honing your skills for subtle conceptual distinctions, a skill equally useful to future lawyers, chemists, mothers, teachers, doctors, jail wardens or politicians. Some of the classical works treated will be by Plato, Aristotle, La Mettrie, Rousseau, Kant and Marx.

PHI 100.02  MW 4:00-5:20  H. Cormier

Who are we? What, if anything, makes us human beings special parts of the world? Is it our capacity to feel? To think? To live in society? In this course we will read and think about philosophical texts that try to help us see what people are and they are so valuable.

PHI 100.03  TUTH 4:00-5:20  A. Mohsen

This is a course on personhood as it pertains to the philosophy of mind. We will survey the treatment of personhood through the history of Western philosophy, finishing off the course with a unit on artificial intelligence. We will first approach the problem of personhood through the ancient conceptions of community life and soul. As we move into the modern and contemporary thinkers, we will shift our focus to the debate between dualism on the one hand, and physicalism or materialism on the other. More specifically, we will investigate the role of consciousness in the constitution of the person. This involves determining whether or not consciousness is distinct from physical or material "bodily" processes or is reducible to these very processes. Once we establish these philosophical positions of personhood and the nature of the mind, we will explore the possibility of artificial persons.

PHI 100.04  MF 1:00-2:20  J. Sims

This course introduces the different ways that the concept of the person has been understood throughout the course of intellectual history. In particular, we will focus on three pivotal moments in each epoch within this history: ancient, modern, and post-modern personhood. In looking to each of these we will discern how the sense of self—which we often take for granted—has in fact changed over time. This critical engagement with the transformation of personhood may afford us the opportunity to reshape our own character with more self-awareness.
An historical introduction to philosophy through inquiry into the formation justification, and evaluation of moral judgments. Students introduced to the major theories and problems of ethics, such as utilitarianism, Kant's categorical imperative, ethical relativism, egoism and classical conceptions of the good and virtue. Against this background students engage in discussions of contemporary moral issues.

This course will examine what makes an action morally right, what makes a human life (or for that matter any life) a good life, and what it means for a person to be virtuous. We will survey ethical theories, including those of Aristotle, Thomas Aquinas, Francis Hutcheson, Immanuel Kant, J.S. Mill and W.D. Ross. We will also discuss how these ethical theories apply to contemporary moral issues regarding topics such as genetic engineering, cloning, abortion or environmentalism.

How might we live? What kinds of relations should we cultivate toward ourselves and others? These are the central questions of ethics as we will approach it in this course. As Socrates says in Plato’s Republic, “the argument is not about just any question, but about the way one should live.” Taking up this inquiry, we will explore ethics as the practice of crafting livable lives where self and others can flourish. To this end, we will examine different accounts of goodness and virtue in the history of philosophy, and consider whether and to what extent happiness is the aim of ethical living.

The theme of this course on moral reasoning is recovery, repair, and healing over time. We will begin by reading Aristotle’s Nicomachean Ethics, in which he writes that although bad luck is not the cause of unhappiness, a lot of misfortune can take a long time to recover from. Throughout our discussion of the Nicomachean Ethics, we will consider positive and negative ways of being lost, on an individual and political level, and how to increase both our personal and collective ability to be enraptured, while decreasing the tendency to go astray. When we read Levinas’ Existence and Existents, we will consider the ways that Levinas suggests subjects may position themselves to be ethical given their resistance to being at all, or to assuming their own existence. The images of the indolent, bored, and fatigued person at the beginning of the book cede to the emergence of a subject who is turned toward the good of others and the good of him or herself. The course will partly seek to explain how this transition may be made, from being lost in a negative way, on the verge of annihilation for no good cause, to being lost in a positive way, in the constant exceeding of oneself in pursuing truth, justice, beauty and love. In Eva Kittay’s Love’s Labour: Essays on Women, Equality and Dependency, she describes the centrality of dependency care to the functioning of society and to the personal lives of everyone who exists. Some of the things we will discuss when we are reading her text is how she argues we as a society can help those who have had strained, broken or insufficient ties of dependency to live fulfilling lives. Our dependency on political, economic, social, and family structures all call myths of the ethical subject as strictly solitary and autonomous into question. Overall, we will consider what it means according to these three thinkers to recover, what we are recovering from and who we are recovering for.
One can read the major ethical theories as different answers to the question, “How to know what is moral or immoral?” Underneath this question, however, several philosophers have sensed a more troubling one: “Even if I know what is right, what if I cannot do it?” Have you ever found yourself in the midst of doing something that you sensed was wrong? If you could be certain of “getting away with it,” could you resist acting immorally? Are some moral problems so pervasive that it seems everyone is hopelessly guilty? Aristotle identified this inability to act morally as “akrasia,” or “powerlessness,” and his attempt to solve the problem in the Nicomachean Ethics ultimately led him to connect ethics with the “power” of politics. For Aristotle, we must build a world in which we can live ethically. Following this lead, our course will proceed in two phases: first, “powerlessness”—both individual and social—and then “power.” We will trace our theme by reading five major ethical philosophers—Aristotle, Kant, Nietzsche, Fanon, and Butler—as well as some short fiction and journalism for examples. Success will involve extensive reading and participation in class discussion. Assessment will involve reading responses, exams, and a final paper.

PHI 104.60 TUTH 10:00-11:20 J. Epstein
SB Manhattan

Every day we make moral evaluations, choices, and judgments, but this does not mean that we are cognizant of why we make the moral decisions that we do. Moral philosophy can help by providing us with a set of theoretical tools for thinking through these decisions, the relationship between what we know and how we live, and how we ought to organize ourselves socially and politically. This course will highlight major moral theories from the Western and non-Western philosophical traditions such as virtue ethics, deontology, utilitarianism, care ethics, Buddhist ethics, and Islamic ethics as a theoretical backdrop for examining contemporary moral issues such as cloning, health (and healthcare), immigration, global poverty, the death penalty, and euthanasia.
An historical introduction to philosophy through an analysis of political theories, theories of action, and styles of political life. Main themes will include the relation of the individual to the state, the scope of social responsibility, and the nature of human freedom.

This course considers some key questions in political philosophy, including, "Is government justified at all?", "Who should rule?", "What is liberty and why is it valuable?", "What is oppression and why is it wrong?" and "How should property be distributed?" We will use both primary and secondary sources.

This semester we will be exploring different political systems through an examination of the foundational principles of these systems as well as the ideals that govern their development. We will find that often political discourse arises out of an attempt to reconcile principles we take to be necessary for a healthy political order, but which on closer inspection reveal problems of an almost paradoxical nature. For instance, we might think of sovereignty of the state as operating primarily as a guarantor of our rights. Yet, if the state is truly sovereign, we should expect that whenever what we take to be our rights threaten that sovereignty, those rights will be restricted. Moreover, what we often think of as our right to choose what is best for us remains vulnerable without recognition of an accompanying obligation to the thoughtful examination and pursuit of legitimate alternatives to the way things are done. In the absence of such examination and pursuit, our right to choose is reduced to the default selection of the status quo, which can sometime amount to surrendering our rights. At the heart of these difficulties lay two problems. First, we can often agree that we do have obligations of some sort within a political order, but we often disagree about what those obligations are. We can see ourselves as primarily obligated to ourselves, family, friends, our community, our state, or some combination of these. Secondly, whatever we think our obligations are, obligations of this sort can often only be enforced by oneself; we cannot force someone to desire a good will. Indeed, political disagreements are often framed in terms of the obligations some segment of the population is failing to meet as a result of holding to ruinous ideals. So the questions we will be asking this semester are: what are our rights? Should we or can we ever give them up? Is their curtailment ever justified? What are our obligations in a political order? What determines these obligations? From what does the sovereignty of the state derive? What is the best political system?

What do "freedom" and "equality" mean, and what role should they play in the way we organize society and understand ourselves as political actors? This class will trace the history of these ideas through Kant, Mill, Plato, Aristotle and others, finding tensions, problems and affinities. We will then look at the ways that communitarians, feminists and critical race theorists have criticized and reworked these ideas of freedom and equality, relating our discussion of texts to current political events and debates.
This course will provide a broad overview of the history of Western political philosophy, from ancient Greece to the present, but will concentrate primarily on Enlightenment and Modern era political and social thought. The question of social freedom – what it is and how it has been or might be achieved – will provide a guiding thread over the course of the semester, as we address issues such as equality, democracy, revolution, capitalism, communism, and liberalism. In considering these and related issues it is hoped that we will become better able to evaluate our own political assumptions and views. Requirements for the course will include mandatory attendance of every course session, intensive weekly reading, regular written reading responses, and two papers.
PHI 108-B Logical & Critical Reasoning  Main Focus

The principle aim of this course is to help a student acquire the skills of thinking, reading, and writing critically. The student develops a sensitivity to language and argumentation that is applicable to a wide range of situations and subject matters.

PHI 108.01  TUTH 10:00-11:20  P. Grim

This course is designed to develop your talent for clear and careful thinking, and to improve mastery of content and logical argument in all your intellectual work, whatever your major and for whatever work you choose to do later on. Particular topics will include general problem-solving strategies, the care and feeding of good arguments, bogus reasoning and how to demolish it, the power and pitfalls of elementary statistics, science vs. pseudoscience, basic probability and decision theory, useful conceptual heuristics and dangerous conceptual biases. We'll be talking both about how people do think and how we can think better.

PHI 108.02  TUTH 11:30-12:50  J. Strandberg

"This course will introduce you to critical reasoning through reading and discussing shorter fictional texts and articles together with others. The principal aim of the course is to understand what it means to engage in an open rational dialogue. You actually have to work to become more open by talking with others and understanding how their web of belief shape their acceptance and rejection of new ideas. The ultimate goal of any rational dialogue is to find a way to overcome differences and come to an agreement. During the semester you will discuss the importance of being a critical thinker, the priority of language, the difference between belief and knowledge, the basic form of an argument as well as the nature of fallacies. A lot of time will be devoted to reasoning about values."

PHI 108.03  MWF 11:30-12:23  E. Headstream

Logic is often regarded as the most foundational of all intellectual disciplines. Logic expresses the "rules" by which we think, thus setting the standard of coherence or incoherence that all particular areas or types of thought must measure up to. In this course, we will explore the structure and status of formal logic. The course will comprise three sections: 1) critical thinking, including the nature of premises, conclusions, and arguments; 2) deductive logic, both categorical and propositional; and 3) inductive logic, including probability, causal reasoning, and the nature of scientific explanation. Students will gain familiarity and facility with first-order logic as well as an appreciation for both the power and the limits of logical argumentation. Thus, while this course will be of benefit to students of all disciplines and majors, it will be of particular relevance to students in the natural sciences, computer science, and mathematics.

PHI 108.04  TUTH 1:00-2:20  B. Irwin

This course is an introduction to logic. We will learn to use the tools of propositional logic in order to evaluate arguments, including those drawn from the realms of philosophy, politics, and everyday life.
PHI 109-B: Philosophy and Literature in Social Context  Main Focus

The role of literature and philosophy in understanding and critically assessing personal experience and social life. The links among literary texts, philosophical issues, and political and social commitments are explored. Topics include the relations between language and experience, the role of philosophical thinking through literary texts, and the significance of literary expression in different cultural and historical situations.

PHI 109.01  TUTH 11:30-12:50  G. Clinton

How do disease outbreaks change our view of other people, of our society, and of ourselves? When total disaster strikes, how should we rethink our ethics? This course will focus on the politics and ethics of contagion and "the viral". We will critically evaluate novels, short stories and films to better understand the social and ethical foundations of topics such as AIDS, zombie outbreaks and some of the large, world-changing plagues in history. Students will also come out of the course as stronger readers, writers and critical thinkers.

PHI 109.02  TUTH 2:30-3:50  A. Jaima

In this course we will examine the provocative premise that the literary form itself makes a philosophical contribution to the questions of ethics, politics, epistemology, and metaphysics. We will read literary texts alongside traditional philosophical ones, and compare their analyses, insights, and arguments. In this manner, we will evaluate whether their respective contributions clarify or confuse the lines between these distinct fields. Authors that we will read include Aristotle, Ernest Hemingway, Martha Nussbaum, and Toni Morrison.
Intermediate Courses

PHI 200-I Intro to Ancient Philosophy  
TUTH 2:30-3:50  
T. Hyde

This course is a survey course designed to provide the background in ancient philosophy requisite for more advanced work in philosophy. It will begin with an historical introduction starting with the Bronze Age and ending with the fall of Rome. Then it will touch on all of the major and minor figures from Thales at the start of the 6th century B.C. to Plotinus of the 3rd century A.D. and cover in detail: (i) the Presocratics, (ii) Socrates, the Sophists, Plato and Aristotle, (iii) The Hellenic movements of Skepticism, Stoicism, and Epicureanism. Four exams will test a very large body of factual and historical knowledge as well as philosophical understanding.

PHI 206-I Intro to Modern Philosophy  
MW 2:30-3:50  
A. O’Byrne

Descartes’ Meditations on First Philosophy, one of the founding documents of the modern age, will be the first stop on our journey through 17th and 18th century philosophy. Over the course of the semester we will study questions of subjectivity, truth, sovereignty, reason and morality in the work of Descartes, Spinoza, Hobbes, Locke, Hume, Rousseau and Kant, all in an attempt to understand the modern—or is it post-modern?—age in which we live.

PHI 247-G Existentialism  
TUTH 2:30-3:50  
A. Kim

This course is a historical introduction to Existentialist thought, from its roots in Kierkegaard, Dostoevsky and Nietzsche, to its flowering in such figures as Sartre, Camus, and Beckett. We will explore such concepts as anxiety, the death of God, alienation, despair, and the absurd—but also authenticity, responsibility, and resoluteness. Although these themes can be found in ancient philosophical and religious texts, we will concentrate on their appearance in the critique of modernity, and ask why this critique so often expresses itself in artistic and literary form. Four films outside of class. Evaluation based on two or three brief reading responses and Midterm and comprehensive Final Exams.
Upper Division Courses

PHI 300-I Ancient Philosophy  
TUTH 11:30-12:50  
A. Kim

The topic for S14 is "Thinking the World". We will pursue in greater depth themes introduced in PHI 200, concentrating on the argument between Plato and Aristotle on the nature of knowledge and reality. First we will ask: What is Platonic "dialectic", and how does it work? What are the mysterious "Platonic Forms", and what is their function? Turning to Aristotle in the second half of the semester, we will first study his related criticisms of the Forms, and of dialectic as the means to knowing. The term ends with an exploration of Aristotle's theory of substance. Evaluation based on a short presentation; a 4-6 pp. Midterm; and a 8-10 pp. Final Paper.

PHI 304-I Medieval Philosophy  
TUTH 2:30-3:50  
L. Miller

Everyone says that the medieval thinkers were focused on philosophy about God, but it is seldom that a course in their thought goes directly to the medieval mystics to understand both the attraction and the complexity of thinking and talking about God. In this course we will survey five different writers who consider seriously how to think of God without betraying God’s divinity. Students should expect to read for and attend every class, to participate in a small discussion group and in whole class discussion, to write a quiz each class, and to write two take-home exams about the materials.

PHI 306-I Modern Philosophy  
TUTH 10:00-11:20  
A. Platt

This course is about the philosophical outcasts, troublemakers and rebels of the early modern period. One focus of the course will be on women philosophers of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, including Margaret Cavendish, Anne Conway, Mary Astell and Mary Wollstonecraft, who have been until recently excluded from the historical cannon of Western philosophy. We will examine how these thinkers challenged, and sometimes contributed to, the work of male philosophers such as Francis Bacon, René Descartes, Baruch Spinoza, G.W. Leibniz and John Locke. We will also see how these now-canonical thinkers were themselves seen as intellectual rebels or outcasts in their own time.

PHI 308-I 19th Century Philosophy  
TUTH 11:30-12:50  
T. Hyde

This course will engage in a close reading of Hegel’s early masterpiece *The Phenomenology of Spirit*. Hegel is without doubt one of the towering figures of the history of philosophy. Very little that comes after him in French or German philosophy can be truly understood without a knowledge of him, and not least via Marx and then the Frankfurt School, he completely revolutionized the political landscape. As a prelude to understanding *The Phenomenology of Spirit*, we will contextualize it in terms of the crisis the enlightenment had found itself in. We will begin by looking at the problems Hume’s critical philosophy raised for any hope of a rational foundation of any knowledge of the absolute—or even causality per se. We will then look at Kant’s critical philosophy and its attempt to ground objective knowledge in both the physical and moral spheres in the face of these difficulties. We will then go over the whole *Phenomenology* in outline. In final preparation, we will examine Plato’s schema of the Divided Line in order to compare Hegel’s project of absolute knowing to a not entirely dissimilar previous attempt to think the absolute. After that, working in groups, in turns, you will present paragraph by paragraph readings of the argument in the first five or so chapters.
PHI 310-K American philosophy  TUTH 8:30-9:50  D. Dilworth

The course will study the origins of American Pragmatism in representative writings of Emerson, Peirce, and William James. Beginning with Emerson’s small classic Nature (1836), and such essays as “The Method of Nature,” “The Over-soul,” and “Circles” (1841); “The Poet” and “Nature” (1844); “Fate, “Beauty,” and “Illusions” (1860), and such poems as “The Sphinx,” “The World-Soul,” “Bacchus,” and “Wood-notes,” Emerson’s Transcendentalist writings portrayed the perceptual signs of nature as symbolically sacramental. They formed the literary-philosophical precedent to Peirce’s doctrine of the mind’s instinct-based capacity for transparent sign-functions in the sciences and arts. Overlapping Emerson’s career, the young Peirce published post-Cartesian and post-Kantian epistemological essays such as “Some Consequences of Four Incapacities” (1867), “The Fixation of Belief” and “How to Make Our Ideas Clear” (1878); he developed three phenomenological and metaphysical categories in “A Guess at the Riddle” (1887-88) and five Monist series papers (1891-93); he expanded his system by way of articulation of three normative categories (Esthetics, Ethics, Logic) in an overall classification of the sciences (1903). In later-career writings such as Essays in Radical Empiricism and Some Problems of Philosophy James complemented Emerson and Peirce in essential ways, expressing the metamorphoses of experience as creative relations in continuous, including cosmically co-conscious, transitions. Readings: Emerson, Essays and Lectures, The Library of America; Peirce, Essential Writings, Indiana U. Press, vol. 1 & 2; Wm. James, 1902-1910 Writings, The Library of America.

PHI 320-G Metaphysics  TUTH 4:00-5:20  A. deLaurentiis

Regrettably, little in this course is about ghostly visitations and the paranormal in our midst. Nor will we disregard these entirely. To study metaphysics is to study the hidden assumptions made in the physical and human sciences about reality (its 'ontology') and about thinking (its 'logic'). Metaphysics asks and answers questions like: are the meanings of 'being' and 'nothing' really contradictory? Could something be both being and nothing? Is virtual reality real or virtual? Are space and time all in our head, or out there? Where? Can an artwork or a person be 'all appearance but no substance'? Can the universe be just a field of forces? Can twins be identical? And so on. This course offers you the opportunity to familiarize yourself with the metaphysical work of the following Western philosophers: Parmenides, Heraclitus, Plato, Aristotle, Descartes and Kant.

PHI 353-G Philosophy of Mind  TUTH 1:00-2:20  P. Grim

This course offers a wide-ranging treatment of philosophical questions about brains, minds, perception, emotion, conceptual processing, thinking machines, and the mysteries of consciousness. The course is rooted in classic sources from Plato and Descartes to contemporary work in analytic philosophy, but incorporates perspectives from psychology, complex systems, computer science and robotics as well. This semester we will be concentrating on evolutionary and functionalist approaches to the hard problem of consciousness: Is it possible to give a scientific account of subjective experience? Is a science of consciousness possible?

PHI 366-G Philosophy and the Environment  TUTH 1:00-2:20  J. Carter

This course covers philosophical questions raised by human relations with the natural world, ranging from basic concepts such as nature, ecology, the earth, and wilderness, to the ethical, economic, political, and religious dimensions of current environmental problems, including the question of whether there are values inherent in nature itself beyond those determined by human interests alone.
The Problem of Evil

What is the nature of evil? Is evil better described as the presence of a satanic, monstrous entity or as the absence of goodness altogether? Is evil something which is part of or at least necessary to know the good? Or is evil, alternatively, an arbitrary designation, a perspective from which we can wrest ourselves given the right sort of self-reinvention? Finally, how shall we account for evil, or the “shadow,” that lurks within ourselves, and which causes us to despair? In this class, we shall address the problem of evil from several---fictional and non-fictional---angles. The course will divide into four sections examined under the following headings: (1) “evil as the presence of goodness” (i.e. evil as tantamount to the good; theodicy); (3) “evil as the absence of badness” (i.e. evil as subjective perspective; thoroughgoing relativism); (4) “evil as the absence of goodness” (i.e. evil as privation; Augustinianism). We will approach these “four models of evil” through consultation with literary and cinematic sources.

PHI/POL 377 Contemporary Political Philosophy

This course will place particular emphasis on the question of political change. What do theories about the founding of political systems tell us about the purpose of politics? How do states change? How do revolutions happen? What’s worth rebelling for? Justice? Freedom? Equality? Cheaper gasoline? The early part of the course will be devoted to getting familiar with the political theory of Jean-Jacques Rousseau who formulates many of the problems political thinkers continue to grapple with today. Subsequently, we will read 20th and 21st century authors such as Hannah Arendt, Jean-Paul Sartre, Jurgen Habermas and Enrique Dussel on questions of power, community and liberation.

PHI/AFH 379-K Philosophy of Race

What is "race"? Is it a valid biological category? Is it a valid census category? How many races are there? Is there any "objective" answer to these questions, or is race relative to different ways of looking at things and people? How should questions of racial identity be decided, and by whom? This course will explore the philosophical assumptions behind concepts of race, and the political effects of racial identities. Cross-listed with AFH 379.

PHI 380 Philosophy of Aesthetics

The course will focus upon the meaning and normative status of the aesthetic imagination in theoretical and performative modes. It will proceed by taking prose and poetic works of Wallace Stevens (1879-1955) as paradigmatic subject matters for our philosophical reflection. Stevens, who is generally regarded as the foremost American poet of the 20th c., turned out to be quite a philosopher in his own right. He styled himself a “New Romantic,” and in the course of a distinguished career, after first aligning himself with the philosophy of Santayana, gradually matured in the line of an Emersonian-Précean-Jamesian poetic cosmology, also reflecting influences from Nietzsche, Bergson, and Whitehead, and with deeper roots in the post-Kantian aesthetic ontologies of Goethe and Schiller.
Feminist theory has both critical and constructive aims. Its critical aim is to reveal androcentric biases in our existing ways of thinking about the world. Its constructive aim is to develop ways of thinking about the world that do not distort the realities of women and other oppressed people.

In this course, we will examine three sets of questions that are central to feminist theory:

1) How does oppression affect people’s capacities for autonomy and choice? Does the fact that participation in an oppressive practice is chosen make it less oppressive?

2) What practices of knowing impede privileged women’s capacities to understand and engage in liberatory struggles with women who are racially, economically, and/or colonially subjugated?

3) How do existing practices of scientific knowledge acquisition and justification serve the interests of the powerful? How might we change our conceptions of knowledge so that we might arrive at claims about reality that are not distorted by the interests of the powerful?

If you are more than halfway through college, you should have reflected about how you learn and what helps you do so. This course is focused on the learning exhibited in two of Plato’s Socratic dialogues, the *Protagoras* and the *Meno*. Students will examine what Socrates and Protagoras and Meno learn in their conversations in order to compare their own experiences as learners. Students should expect to read for and attend every class, to participate in a small discussion group and in whole class discussion, to take a quiz each class, and to write take-home exams about the dialogues and the learning they display.

This course is devoted entirely to one of the most important works of modern philosophy: Spinoza’s *Ethics*. We will therefore be concerned with Spinoza’s metaphysics of nature and mind as well as with Spinoza’s metaphysical theory of the conditions of human freedom. It is assumed that you have satisfied all prerequisites for taking this advanced course in philosophy. In particular, it is expected that you have already acquired the skills needed to begin dealing with a classic work by a major philosopher. This includes the analytic and expository skills that are necessary for taking substantial essay exams and writing a well-developed term paper on various aspects of such a work.
Seminars

PHI 395.01 Junior Seminar

TH 2:30-5:30

L. Simpson

A survey of strategic modalities for philosophical analysis, including but not limited to: hermeneutics, Critical Theory, speech act theory, deconstruction, ordinary language analysis, Wittgensteinian linguistic analysis, and neo-pragmatism. Readings drawn from representative practitioners of the various modalities.

PHI 395.02 Junior Seminar

W 2:30-5:20

E. Kittay

This course will be an exploration of the concept of Care. We will ask how a practice so critical to human existence could have received such scant attention in the philosophical literature until contemporary times. We will examine the idea of an ethics of care and if and how it is a contribution to ethical theory. We will end the course with a look at some practical concerns of care ethics and ask if a concern for care can reach beyond the intimate sphere where it is generally thought to operate. Of special interest will be the contributions of work in feminist care ethics to bioethics and to global justice. The course will involve writing throughout the semester, opportunities for class presentation, and a final paper. The emphasis will be on scholarly examination of texts, the ability to produce and defend arguments, and creative and innovative reflection on matters of significant personal, political and social relevance.

Readings:
Readings will include works by Jane Adams; Carol Gilligan; Nel Noddings; Joan Tronto; Michael Slote; Steven Darwall; Alisdair McIntyre; Harry Frankfurt; David Shoemaker; Eva Kittay; Sara Ruddick; Emanuel Levinas; Iris Young; Virginia Held; Fiona Robinson among others

PHI/AAS 472-J Bhagavad Gita: Ancient and Modern

MW 7:00-8:20

A. J. Nicholson

The Bhagavad Gita, a Sanskrit philosophical dialogue between the warrior Arjuna and the god Krishna, has been described by some as “the Bible of the Hindus.” Why has this text inspired so many philosophers and religious thinkers across the ages, from ancient India to contemporary North America? We will first read the text itself in English translation carefully, our interpretations informed by the latest historical discoveries about the time and place in which the Bhagavad Gita was composed. This will be followed by readings from the many thinkers who were inspired by the text in India and the West. We will read interpretations of the Gita by the pre-modern thinkers Sankara, Ramanuja, and Madhusudana Sararsvati, and by the modern thinkers Thoreau, Gandhi, Tilak,