

UNDERGRADUATE
SPRING 2022 COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

PHI 100 (DEC: B, SBC: CER, HUM) Concepts of the Person (II), 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 8:00-9:20

A. Steinbock

This course will examine what it means to be a person. We will do this by inquiring into the structure of interpersonal relations in Martin Buber's I and Thou. We will then turn to the experiences of religion and morality, reading Henri Bergson's Two Sources of Morality and Religion. This discussion will allow us to explore issues concerning existential thought, liberation theology, and the philosophy of accompaniment, working with In the Company of the Poor: Conversations with Dr. Paul Farmer and Fr. Gustavo Gutiérrez.

PHI 100.02

TUTH 8:0-9:20

D. Coutts

On Significance in Human Life

Why do we care about things, and what is significant about the things that we care about? In this course, we will think about the role that meaning or significance plays in human life. Drawing from historical and contemporary sources, we will try to understand how we make sense of our lives and the lives of others, and what underlies our sense of what is 'important' or 'meaningful.'

We will discuss the concept of value and consider how we come to form value judgments about what is important to us, what makes life meaningful, and how we ought to behave towards others. Conversely, we will think about how certain things, actions, and others can lose value and become meaningless or insignificant. You will be expected to read and analyze relevant philosophical texts, and to describe their main ideas in detail in class discussions and writing assignments.

PHI 100.03

MW 8:30-9:50

W. Mindich

What are the key categories of personhood, and through what processes and mechanisms do we demonstrate that we appreciate, or do not appreciate, the value of another human life? Humans share several key features or attributes, including but not limited to: having finitude, having mobility, having emotions, having knowledge and opinions, having political agency, as well as a desire to be treated respectfully, and as a human being. But, what does this latter claim mean? What does it mean to be treated as a human being, and what are the manifold ways in which we neglect to treat "others" as human beings? In this course, we will examine the concept of ontological value, that is, which beings are treated as valuable, and examine this phenomenon as one that is differentially distributed. In other words, not all humans appear to be valued equally; and in this course, we will examine the forms in which value is attributed and demonstrated, but also withheld. Finally, we will consider what an ethical and equitable distribution of ontological value might look like, and how we might be able to pursue it.

PHI 101 (DEC: G, SBC: HUM) Historical Introduction to Western Philosophy (I) Main focus

An introduction to pivotal theories of the Western philosophic tradition. Readings are drawn from ancient Greek, medieval, and modern classics of Philosophy. Topics may include philosophic theories of politics, morality, logic, metaphysics, knowledge, anthropology, art, and religion.

PHI 101.02**MWF 10:30-11:25****C. Driker-Ohren**

Living and Dying Philosophically

Our class will investigate what it means to live and die philosophically. Drawing on texts from the Western tradition, we will explore philosophy as a human practice concerned with the meaning of truth, self-reflection, reason, skepticism, critique, and the experience of wonder. These values imply a radical commitment to self-transformation and courage in the face of the unknown. We will take seriously Socrates' claim in *Phaedo* that "those who practice philosophy in the right way are in training for dying" as well as his assertion in *Apology* that "the unexamined life is not worth living." Through reading, discussion, and philosophical and creative writing we will seek to clarify the importance of philosophy to a meaningful life. We will also examine how thinkers from different times and places have sought meaning in relation to the enigma of death.

PHI 101.03**TUTH 3:00-4:20****A. DeLaurentiis**

An introduction to a few of the most influential works on political philosophy. Main readings are from Plato's *Republic*, Rousseau's *Social Contract*, and Kant's *Perpetual Peace*. Short-answer quizzes, one Mid-term (short essay answers) and one Final exam (an essay).

PHI 104 (DEC: D; SBC: CER, HUM) Introduction to Moral Reasoning (II), Main Focus

An introduction to philosophy through inquiry into the formation, justification, and evaluation of moral judgments. Students are 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.

PHI 104.01**MF 1:00-2:20****H. Cormier**

In this course we will read historical and contemporary writings on morality in the Western philosophical tradition. We will oppose the two main traditional moral theories to each other, and we will consider some current moral problems in the light of those two theories.

PHI 104.02**MW 4:25-5:45****A. Forsberg**

"Insofar as "Ethics" raises the fundamental question of what it is to "live well," then it potentially encompasses every aspect of nearly everything we do, from the organization of whole societies to the most intimate moments of our daily lives. In this course, we will take this question up by exploring some of the most influential ways different philosophers across history and the globe have sought to answer it, gauging what moral prescriptions these answers might offer us here in the living present. We will do so with a particular emphasis on how questions of ethics and morality have been related to questions of *the self*. For example, is living an ethical life somehow the highest actualization of ourselves? Or might ethical action require us to defy certain essential parts of ourselves? Perhaps ethical obligations are simply delusions that prevent us from becoming deeper, more fulfilled versions of ourselves?"

While we will primarily examine how canonical figures in Western philosophical traditions have taken this up (including Plato, Kant and Nietzsche), we will also look to how the *denial of the self* central to Buddhist thought has also formed the basis of a rich moral outlook."

PHI 104.03**MF 1:00-2:20****J. Wheeler**

"This class will be a survey of the major ethical theories of Western philosophy. Which ethical theory, if any, is the correct one? Can ethics ultimately be justified? What is the scope of ethics? How is ethics different from politics? These are just some of the questions we will consider in this course."

PHI 104.04**MW 4:25-5:45****D. Dilworth**

Close readings of four famous philosophic and literary classics, time-honored resources for reflection and discussion on the fundamental topics of moral reasoning. Degree of difficulty: intensive reading, and the four exams, in limited time frames, will require consistent, assiduous concentration throughout the semester and a gradually expanding capacity for comparative evaluation. Instructor: Professor David Dilworth (please use dd9414@aol.com .) Office hours directly after class; office directly across from the Solzberg Library, 2nd floor, Harriman.

Assigned readings and calendar:

1. Aristotle's NICOMACHEAN ETHICS, Books I-IV and XIII, IX, X. 6 classes and exam.
2. Dante, INFERNO. 6 classes and exam.
3. Shakespeare, KING LEAR. 6 classes and exam.
4. Hume, ENQUIRY CONCERNING THE PRINCIPLES OF MORALS. 6 classes, exam in finals week.

PHI 105 (G, CER, HUM) Politics and Society (II), Main Focus

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.

PHI 105.01**MWF 11:45-12:40****A. O'Byrne**

This course is an introduction to the history of political theory from Plato to the 21st century. Since politics concerns the question of how we are to live together well, during the semester we will focus on questions such as: How do we know if our society is a just society? Who should rule? How can we live according to laws and still be free? Do we need to address historical wrongs? What does democracy look like?

PHI 105.02**MW 2:40-4:00****J. Carter**

This course will explore the foundations of Western political philosophy through reading historical and contemporary texts, beginning with the ancient foundations of politics, and an exploration of the rise and development of modern social contract theory. We will discuss philosophical approaches and methods regarding political economic theory, modern social movements, international relations, and law. Among the themes considered throughout the course will be the relation of the individual to the state, the scope of social responsibility, and the nature of human freedom.

PHI 108 (B, ESI, HUM) 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.

PHI 108.02**MWF 11:45-12:40****S. Struble**

Philosophy, Critical Thinking, and True Crime

The history of Western Philosophy begins with a trial in 399 BCE. This moment was not only the beginning of an entire tradition of thought—one which still influences us today—but also dramatized an ongoing tension between philosophy and society: the conflicting values of the love of wisdom and truth versus “doxa” or popular and cultural opinions. In this course,

through the application of critical reasoning to the field of true crime we will attempt, in part, to bridge the gap between philosophy and society by considering the way in which “doxa” functions in our contemporary society, and above all, in the court of law. Through looking at true crime we will analyze the ways that fallacious reasoning is deployed by lawyers and news media to sway opinions and influence decisions in a legal setting. Through the interrogation of the major forms of fallacious argumentation and their application to real cases, we will bring critical thinking to bear on our role as citizens and our obligations to others.

Another name for this course could be: “How to be a Good Juror”, as the way by which we will address the content of critical thinking—via the examination of true crime—will help us to better see ways in which the court of law, the media, and society, use coercive reasoning to guide us toward certain beliefs. By the end of this course, you should be equipped to more fully interrogate the uses and abuses of fallacious thinking by individuals, the law, society, and perhaps even, by yourself.

Content Warning for this Course: This course will rely heavily on watching and listening to true crime content, which potentially includes but is not limited to themes and stories of murder, stalking/surveillance, home invasion, (talk of) suicide or self-harm, bodily harm and bodily desecration, blood and other bodily fluids, discrimination on the basis of race, gender, sexuality, and occupation, and mental, emotional, physical, and sexual assault and abuse. We will be approaching these cases with the respect and courtesy they deserve, and while you will not be required to engage with every single case, if this is something that would cause you consistent psychological discomfort or distress, then I discourage you from taking this course.

PHI 108.03

MF 1:00-2:20

D. Oner

Logic investigates the rules and structures behind arguments that we encounter not only in philosophy and other academic disciplines, but also in everyday life. This course is an introduction to basic forms of logic and reasoning. We will study formal and informal logic and discuss some of the fundamental principles behind causality and science. We will learn how to recognize valid and invalid, weak and strong arguments; methods of determining the validity of main forms of arguments; detecting informal fallacies we encounter in everyday life; distinguishing between sufficient and necessary conditions; finding ways of identifying causality; and understanding some of the presuppositions of scientific reasoning.

PHI 108.04

TUTH 11:30-12:50

E. Russo

This course will serve as an introduction to philosophical logic, and we will survey the basic concepts of logic, common fallacies encountered in informal logic, categorical logic, propositional logic, predicate logic, and inductive logic. The goal of the class is to develop critical reasoning and writing skills through the study of formal logic, and to prepare students for engaging with higher-order logical courses in philosophy, mathematics, or the sciences. This course will be working through the newest edition of Patrick J. Hurley’s *A Concise Introduction to Logic*, and will be covering roughly one chapter each week. Half of the course will be a review of the weeks readings, and the other half of the course will be working through problem sets together as a class.

PHI 108.30

Online

J. Carter

Thinking is natural, but that does not mean it is easy! Nor does it mean that we cannot get better at it. This class will explore cognitive errors, including fallacies, bias, and illusions in order to understand why types of errors we commonly make. We will look at reasoning, argumentation, and logic, both formal and informal. And we will explore some questions in information theory, probabilities, as well as thinking about their relevance to computing, consciousness, artificial intelligence and evolution. The work consists of reading, writing, online discussion, and individual and group projects.

PHI 111 (B, GLO, HUM) Introduction to Eastern Philosophy (I)

An introduction to different systems of Eastern philosophy and the main classical texts drawn from Hinduism, Buddhism, Taoism, Confucianism, and Neo-Confucianism. Efforts are made to recover the different modes of knowledge, language, identification, and liberation dealt with in these texts.

PHI 111.01

TUTH 9:45-11:05

A. Kim

Philosophy has sprung from at least three different sources: Greek, Chinese, and Indian. Our course will examine the earliest metaphysical and ethical reaches of these three currents.

PHI 112 (H, STAS) Technology and Modern Life, Main Focus

Investigates the history as well as the present and potential future impact of technology and artifacts not only on material human life but also on the human experience of the world. It addresses ethical questions concerning the uses and abuses of technology as well as asking such questions as whether technology is neutral and merely instrumental or should be seen as having a more profound impact on human life.

PHI 112.01

MF 1:00-2:20

S. Wrenn

This course will address how technology has transformed our modes of perceiving the world. We will trace the philosophic implications from the advent of photography and film to the rise of police body cameras. This course will combine readings from philosophy, science fiction, and film. In doing so, we will pose questions concerning technology's potential to both constrain and liberate us. We will address themes touching on consciousness, perception, surveillance, security, freedom, policing, etc.

PHI 112.02

TUTH 3:00-4:20

A. Fishman

We humans form a system with the technology we use. This means that, while we make technology, technology also makes us who we are. And when, through some technological revolution, the human-made environment changes, its human inhabitants change with it. Writing in the wake of the second Industrial Revolution, the philosopher Theodor Adorno observed, "The new human type cannot be properly understood without awareness of what he is continuously exposed to from the world of things around him, even in his most secret innervations." The characteristic "things" of Adorno's world were machines, and Adorno was suggesting that the humans living in this world were becoming increasingly machinelike themselves.

The "things" that characterize our contemporary world are not mechanical but digital and virtual, and following Adorno's observation, we might wonder whether we have in some way become virtualized along with this world of things. If you are reading this, then you are probably someone who has grown up with(in) the Internet. Do you and your fellow creatures of the Internet constitute a "new human type"? And if so, what can the world of artefacts and technologies within which you were formed tell you about how you were formed? The central question of this course will be: How does the technology that humans are surrounded by both reflect and elicit certain ways of being human? We will consider this question both in general and in its specific application to our contemporary technological environment.

PHI 112.03

MWF 12:00-12:53

J. Hook

As science reveals more about the nature of our world and what new powers we can derive from understanding it - from genetic engineering to atomic energy - science fiction has helped us to imagine the consequences, whether they be ethical, metaphysical, or epistemological. Science Fiction is a fertile ground for philosophical experimentation, as sci-fi dares to ask "why?" when science only asks "how"? This course will examine the intersection of philosophy, art, and technology as they appear in works of Science Fiction, in literature, film, and other media. As a class we will also venture to ask, what can philosophy as a discipline learn from the example of science-fiction?

PHI 116: (G, HUM, USA) Philosophy of America’s Founding

Study of philosophical ideas and authors that influenced and composed the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution and the Bill of Rights. Understanding how the concepts in these documents connect to such thinkers and philosophers as Locke, Montesquieu, Hume and appear again in the writings of Jefferson, Paine, Madison and the Federalist Papers.

PHI 116.01

MW 8:30-9:50

M. Castor

This course will critically consider philosophical ideas vital to America’s founding including the doctrine of discovery, terra nullius, and manifest destiny. In doing so, we will also interrogate notions of property, territory, and progress. We will approach America’s founding as an ongoing process.

Intermediate Courses

PHI 264 Philosophy and the Arts (III) (D, ART, HUM) TUTH 4:45-6:05

L. Simpson

The aim of this course is to encourage you to think critically about works of art and artistic practice. Though we shall address many of the general philosophical issues that apply to all of the arts, *this is not a survey course. We shall place primary emphasis upon music and, in particular, on jazz as an artistic practice.* We shall address questions such as, What is a work of art? Among the various products of human activity what distinguishes works of art from other artefacts? Do those distinctions apply to what is intrinsic to the works themselves or do they rather apply to the social reception or perception of those works? What is the nature of the “aesthetic experience,” of aesthetic evaluation? What is the relationship of art to the human emotions, and, in particular, what is the connection between music and the emotions? In what ways can we say that music has meaning? What kind of a *thing* is an art work? In particular, what exactly is a musical work? Where, when and how do “Summertime,” “Stairway to Heaven,” “To Pimp a Butterfly,” or Stravinsky’s “Rite of Spring” exist? What about improvisations based upon those works? What are the nature and ethical dimensions, if any, of musical improvisation?

PHI 300 Ancient Philosophy (I) (I, HFA+)

TUTH 1:15-2:35

A. Kim

Bulletin Description: “Advanced studies in selected Greek thinkers from the pre-Socratics to the classical Athenian philosophers and the Hellenistic schools.” Prerequisite: Two philosophy courses or permission of the instructor. We will explore the nature of human excellence and happiness through a close reading of his *Nicomachean Ethics*.

PHI 306 Modern Philosophy (I) (I HFA+)

TUTH 9:45-11:05

J. Edwards

Your most fundamental objective in taking this course is to gain a historically well-grounded understanding of major philosophical concepts, principles, methods, and problems that have shaped our conceptions of material nature and the conditions of human agency in nature since 1600. This course is thus concerned with key developments in Western philosophy during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. We will pay special attention to pivotal metaphysical, epistemological, and moral arguments presented by the following thinkers: Descartes, Hobbes, Spinoza, Hume, and Kant.

PHI 310 American Philosophy (I) (K, HFA+, USA) TUTH 1:15-2:35

D. Dilworth

Use dd9414@aol.com. Office hours: T, TH 11:30-1:00

Primary source readings in the originals of American Pragmatism in its two founders and most representative figures, Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803-82), and Charles S. Peirce (1839-1914). Emphasis on the “continental American” historical backgrounds of free market free citizenry, i.e., “the American dream” democratic experience, at basis of their literary and theoretical articulations concerning the evolutionary affinity of the human mind and nature, and heuristic (discovering) intelligence at the basis of the sciences and arts.

Degree of difficulty: textual exegesis and class discussion of first-rate philosophic and poetic source materials at a fast clip. Course segments:

PHI 320 Metaphysics (II) (G, HFA+) TUTH 11:30-12:50

A. Delaurentiis

This is not an introductory course but it is introductory to the field of metaphysics. This is the study of the hidden assumptions we all make when engaging in the physical and human sciences, for example, assumptions about what is real or about what counts as valid knowledge of what is real. Ever wondered how one thing can become another while still remaining the same thing? Or whether black matter, strings and bosons actually exist? Or what it is that psychologists study, since they do not perform brain surgery? Or, if math is all in our heads, why does it work? And if time passes, what is left? If space is out there, where is it? The classical texts studied in this course will give us plenty of food for thought on these questions: Aristotle, Descartes, Kant. Contemporary literature on related subjects will be provided. One Mid-term, one Final, a couple of short answer quizzes.

PHI 325 Contemporary Philosophies of Language (II) (G, HFA+) MWF 11:45-12:40 G. Mar

This course covers the analytic tradition in the philosophy of language, beginning with Frege and ending with Kripke and Wittgenstein.

PHI 330 Topics in Advanced Symbolic Logic (II) (STEM+) MWF

MWF

G. Mar

Advanced Logic, is a course about meta-logic, modal logic, and other logical systems. The course presupposes you have experience with a system of natural deduction. Proficiency with the system is preferable but not a prerequisite, since our aim will not be constructing derivations within the system but proving meta-mathematical results about the system, e.g., proving such theorems a completeness, consistency, adequacy, compactness. We will also investigate alternative systems of logic, e.g., intuitionistic logic, modal logic, temporal logic, Fregean Foundational Systems for Arithmetic, and axiomatic set theory. We also discuss logical paradoxes and their use in proving such theorems as Gödel’s Incompleteness Theorems, Tarski’s Undefinability of Truth Theorem, and Turing’s Unsolvability of the Halting Problem.

PHI 366 Philosophy of the Environment (III) (CER, HFA+) MW 4:00-5:20

J. Taylor

Seminars

PHI 395 Junior Seminar (ESI)

W 2:30-5:20

A. Steinbock

Topic: Maurice Merleau-Ponty This course will focus on the influential set of writings by the French philosopher, Maurice Merleau-Ponty. We will study this important thinker’s central works concerning phenomenological method, aesthetics, and politics. The course will be divided accordingly into three parts: 1) epistemology and a phenomenology of perception, 2) creative expression and aesthetics, and 3) politics and the dialectics of truth.

PHI 401 Individual Systems of the Great Philosophers (I) (G, HFA+) TUTH 2:30-3:50 L. Miller

This course will involve careful reading and study of Plato's brilliant *Protagoras* and *Meno*. Students should expect to work in small groups to go over and discuss their homework and reading of the two dialogues. There will be weekly quizzes and several short papers assigned in place of exams.