

UNDERGRADUATE
SPRING 2019 COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

PHI 100 (B, HUM) 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

MWF 12:00-12:53

A. Bernstein

In this class, we will ask the question, “What does it mean to be a person?” We will explore the question by making our way through challenging and fascinating texts, whether they are classically considered “philosophy” or not. The question of personhood is always broadly philosophical, but we will investigate whether that which is institutionally called “philosophy” is up to the task of answering the question. We will explore these things through the lenses of media, technology, culture, psychology, literature, and more. Through these interventions, we will try to get a handle on to what extent the concept of personal identity is even still sustainable in our postmodern, “post-truth” society. This class interrogates concepts of the person.

PHI 100.02

MWF 10:00-10:53

J. Sares

What is Thinking?: The Human Between Animal and Machine

The course examines what it means to be a human being in terms of the capacity for conceptual thought and subjectivity. In part one, we will compare the human being to nonhuman animals, questioning whether there is a continuity or radical break between human and nature. Topics in this section may include: Aristotle’s definition of the human being as a ‘rational animal,’ Descartes’ substance dualism, Hobbes’ materialism, the philosophies of nature of Schelling and Hegel, and psychoanalytic accounts of the human being. We will question whether and in what sense other animals can think, and if so, how human thinking is unique. We will then examine the question of artificial intelligence and transhumanism, questioning whether the human body is not a condition for thinking itself. We will examine philosophical debates about the Turing Test, Searle’s ‘Chinese room’ thought experiment, and other texts that challenge the idea that the human being is unique in its capacity for thought. What are the limits between human and machine, and can something that approximates or supplants human subjectivity emerge from mechanical movements and computer programs? Is the organic body of the human being a necessary condition for thought itself, or can thought emerge from machines as well? As part of these investigations, we will question what kind of ethical and political obligations emerge from thinking. What are specifically human domains of experience—if any? What obligations emerge from being able to form truth statements, judgments, and arguments? Can the human being have access to truths that are eternal (e.g. in logic or mathematics), and does this matter in how we treat the question of animal and machine?

PHI 100.03

MF 1:00-2:20

M. Brown

PHI 100.04

MWF 11:00-11:53

D. Kamins

This course will introduce students to philosophical considerations concerning concepts of the person. We will pursue the many-sided question of what it means to be a person through writings ranging from the Ancient Greek, Arabic and African Enlightenment to Western Modern, Feminist and Contemporary traditions. Students will be introduced to philosophical themes such as materialism; the “human function,”; personal identity; ethics; mind-body the “hard problem,” and free will. Additionally, we will discuss whether – and if so, how – contemporary and emerging scientific understandings of the brain detracts from or affirms these philosophical concepts of the person.

All readings will be posted Blackboard.

PHI 101 (G, HUM) Historical Introduction to Western Philosophy

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

PHI 101.01

TUTH 8:30-9:50

J. Carter

This is a course covering pivotal philosophical works within the Western tradition. The readings for the course are drawn from ancient Greek, medieval, as well as modern classics of philosophy. We will consider topics such as wisdom, the soul, the function of the body, the goals of philosophy, the existence and influence of God, empiricism and rationalism, pragmatism, as well as other influential philosophical movements. We will be particularly concerned with putting the philosophy of the past in the context of the intellectual culture of today.

PHI 101.02

MW 8:30-9:50

E. Bormanis

In this course, we will read various philosophical attempts to come to terms with historical moments of change in the West. Such historical moments will include the Peloponnesian War and the decline of Athens, the French and American Revolutions, Colonialism, the Industrial Revolution, World Wars I and II, and Decolonization. In this course, we will attempt to understand not only the specific theories or arguments put forward by philosophers, but also how they relate and contribute to their historical context.

Major philosophical authors will include Plato, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Immanuel Kant, Karl Marx, Simone de Beauvoir, and Frantz Fanon.

PHI 101.03

TUTH 4:00-5:20

C. Fremaux

This course will serve as a historical introduction to the western philosophical tradition. While western philosophy spans over 2,500 years, many of the fundamental questions that have occupied philosophers throughout the centuries can be traced back to western philosophy's foundations in the ancient Greek world. Therefore, this course will focus upon these fundamental questions and some of the earliest proposed answers to them. More precisely, this course will focus upon the philosophical thought of the Pre-Socratics, Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle, covering a variety of philosophical subfields, such as: metaphysics, epistemology, ethics, and political theory; and addressing questions such as: Is there a single principle that explains the universe? What does it mean to exist? What is a substance? What is change? What is a soul? Can a soul survive death? What is truth? How is knowledge of the truth possible? What is a good human life? What is happiness? What is justice? How can society be organized in a just way? What is the ideal political order for promoting human happiness?

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

PHI 104.01

TUTH 11:30-12:50

C. Miller

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 104.02**TUTH 1:00-2:20****D. Dilworth**

Close readings of five major philosophic and literary classics of moral philosophy (focusing on the theme of character ethics).

Degree of difficulty: intensive reading, and the five exams, in limited time frames, will require consistent, assiduous concentration throughout the semester and a gradually expanding capacity for comparative evaluation.

Assigned readings:

1. Aristotle's NICOMACHEAN ETHICS, Books I-V and X. 4 or 5 classes, exam.
2. Dante, INFERNO. 5 classes, exam.
3. Shakespeare, KING LEAR. 4 classes, exam.
4. Hume, ENQUIRY CONCERNING THE PRINCIPLES OF MORALS. 5 classes, exam.
5. Schopenhauer, ON THE BASIS OF MORALITY. 5 classes, exam in finals week.

Bookstore: each of these readings is available in inexpensive paperback editions, available through Amazon (student link) and a variety of other sources.**

Grades: from the five exams. Optional papers in consultation with the professor.

Logistics: daily attendance will be taken; more than four absences without official excuse constitute automatic failure without further discussion; unforeseeable excusable absences require immediate contact via email dd9419@aol.com (do not use the campus email); no makeups or incompletes except for unforeseeable excusable reasons, also requiring immediate email contact.

PHI 104.03**TUTH 8:30-9:50****A. Blair**

What does it mean to "do good" or to "be a good person"? In our conversations together, we will look to traditional theories of morality as well as contemporary examples to understand what it takes to lead an ethical life. This course will give you a broad view of how ethics has been taken up and thought about in Western thought since Plato, as well as challenge you to read and write critically. We will see that there are no easy answers — we cannot escape into the relativism of "everyone has their own ethics" — but that ethical questions must be lived with. You will deeply engage texts while also providing your own insights and examples. No prior philosophical work is necessary for this class.

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

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 12:00-12:53****A. O'Byrne**

This course is an introduction to social and political philosophy. Philosophy is the discipline in which we study the concepts that allow us to make sense of the world, the principles that allow us to judge the world and the history of thinking about these things. We are all already thinkers; the aim of every philosophy class is to learn how to think *better*. This one is about learning to think better about how we live together and how we shape our societies. After all, our human way of being is being *with* others.

PHI 105.02**MWF 12:00-12:53****G. Mangiameli**

Space and the Political Realm: Boundedness, Segregation, Confinement

In this class, we will attempt to understand how our capacity to inhabit space and to share it with others is influenced by politics. Questions about the way in which human beings are confined in specific spaces according to their role in society, to their socio-economic conditions, to their ethnic group, and their immigration status will be at the center of our reflection. In addition, we will consider some spatial structures in order to understand their underlying political implications.

Classical and contemporary philosophical texts will inform our reflections. Articles and documents belonging to other disciplines, such as art history, architecture, urbanism, photography, history, and geography will also contribute to our class discussions.

The aim of this course is, on the one hand, to familiarize the students with different philosophical writings and to understand their evolution in the history of the discipline. On the other hand, it will be important for each student to understand the complexity of the political discourse and its unspoken presuppositions; thoughts, coming from other areas of knowledge, will help us clarifying the complexity of such discourse and the organization of the world around us.

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. The student develops a sensitivity to language and argumentation that is applicable to a wide range of situations and subject matters.

PHI 108.01

TTH 1:00-2:20

A. de Laurentiis

A study of the basic principles of rational argumentation. This includes learning to distinguish valid from invalid arguments; detecting pseudo-arguments; evaluating arguments in context; analyzing non-formal (natural language: here, English) passages; and analyzing formal inferences (symbolic language).

The class meets 2 times a week: Tue. is for theory, Thu. is for practice.

No prerequisites, except willingness to keep up with the readings assigned, do regular homework, fulfill all requirements (graded quizzes and two exams), attend every class (no more than 3 absences), and keep an open mind at all times (strictly enforced).

PHI 108.03

MW 4:00-5:20

A. Pharaa

The principal aim of this course is to help students sharpen their critical skills for thinking, reading, and writing. Each week starts off by engaging basic logical concepts, then extending these concepts to major philosophical works. Each class begins with a short quiz and ends with group-work/debate. Each Saturday students will submit an online quiz that reviews the topics of that week, except for those Saturdays that are scheduled for one of the four Exams of the semester. Gensler's *Introduction to Logic* provides the basic logical framework and Plato's *Republic* offers critical thinking about justice, the individual, community, the scientific method, economic class relations, gender, etc. Shorter philosophic engagement from Aristotle, Kant, Nietzsche, Social Contract Theory, Critical Theory, and Postmodern works will be introduced in conversation with the two main books.

PHI 111 Introduction to Eastern Philosophy

TUTH 8:30-9:50

A. Kim

An introduction to the classic texts of Hinduism, Buddhism, Taoism, and Confucianism, with some comparison to ancient Greek philosophy. We will explore basic questions of metaphysics; ethics; politics; and the relationship between philosophy and religion.

Intermediate Courses

PHI 200 Intro to Ancient Phil (I, GLO, HUM)

PHI 200.01

TUTH 4:00-5:20

E. Hallerman

Topic: Plato's Republic

This class will consist of a sustained reading of the entirety of Plato's Republic, with the possibility of some supplemental texts. This will be a discussion-oriented class. Grading will be based on written responses throughout the semester, two longer writing assignments, and in-class participation.

PHI 220 Intro to Modern Philosophy -I GLO HUM

MWF 11:00-11:53

A. Platt

This course introduces students to symbolic logic, including sentential and predicate logic. We will translate statements in English into symbolic notation, and construct formal derivations – developing skills that will help you evaluate the validity of reasoning in any discipline. The course does not presuppose prior experience with philosophy, or any advanced knowledge of mathematics.

PHI 247 Existentialism (I) (G, CER HUM

TUTH 10:00-11:20

A. Kim

Readings in classic existentialist philosophy and literature by such authors as Nietzsche, Dostoevsky, De Beauvoir, Sartre and Camus. We will explore such themes such as alienation, ambiguity, authenticity, *Angst*, absurdity—and the affirmation of life.

PHI 264

TUTH 2:30–3:50

R. Harvey

Here is how I've adapted *the generic, catalogue descriptor* for this semester's course: in PHI 264 we study “the arts, focusing on the nature of the creative process, methods of interpretation, essential differences among the various arts, and the relation of performance to text.”

The readings that I propose for this semester's edition of the course will orient our critical thinking *particularly* to two of these goals. First and foremost, we will explore *the nature of the creative process* to the extent that we will encounter some of the many philosophers (or, more generally, *thinkers*) who have thought about the relationship between artistic production – primarily in its plastic manifestations – and the social, moral, and political dimensions of life. Some of the readings will also expose us to a few of the many *methods of interpretation* and discussions about what those methods, if any, should be.

Since fifteen weeks is too short a time frame to hope for exhaustive exposure to the range of philosophical thinking about the arts, I'm aiming to work with you through a representative selection.

Upper Division Courses

PHI 300 Ancient Philosophy (I) (I, HFA+)**TUTH 1:00-2:20****P. Nelson**

Through close readings of selected texts by Plato and Aristotle, we will examine numerous philosophical ideas that are still relevant and have something to teach us about our contemporary age. Topics of discussion will include nature, law, justice, knowledge, virtue, happiness, and death. We will pay special attention to certain aspects such as responsibility, the political, and the person. This is not a lecture course, so students should expect to come to class having done the assigned reading and prepared to discuss the material.

PHI 306 Modern Philosophy (I) (I HFA+)**TUTH 10:00-11:20****J. Edwards**

This course provides an overview of key developments in Western philosophy during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. We will begin by examining modern thinkers' concern to reshape the problem of knowledge and reassess the moral foundations of political life. We will seek to understand this in connection with the religious and social conflicts of early modern Europe and in view of the rise of natural science. Against this background we will go on to survey important developmental aspects of modern philosophy between Descartes and Kant. We will pay special attention to Descartes, Hobbes, Spinoza, and Hume.

PHI 308 19th-Century Philosophy**TUTH 10:00-11:20****D. Dilworth**

The course will survey the range of major 19th-century philosophers who followed in the aftermath of Kant (1724-1804). Exegetical focus will be upon Kant (1734-1804), Schelling (1775-1854) and Schopenhauer (1788-1860), while in passing figuring the place of other authors such as Kierkegaard, Hegel, Marx, Nietzsche, Emerson, Peirce in relation to them.

Prerequisites; recommended background courses in ancient (PHI 300), medieval, and early modern (PHI 306).

Books to be ordered through the university's Amazon link:

Kant, *Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics* (1783).

Kant, *Critique of the Power of Judgment* (1790).

Schelling, *Philosophical Investigation into the Essence of Human Freedom* (1809), and *The Berlin Lectures on the Negative and Positive Philosophy* (1841).

Schopenhauer, *World as Will and Representation* (vol. one) (1818).

Tentative Schedule:

4 classes on the *Prolegomena*, 4 on the *Critique of Judgment*.

6 classes on Schelling's *Freedom* essay.

6 classes on Schopenhauer's *WWR* vol. 1.

4 classes on Schelling's *The Berlin Lectures*. Grades: from the four exams; papers optional, in consultation.

Attendance:

will be recorded daily; 4 absences without official medical or equivalent excuse constitute automatic failure, without discussion; in case of excusable absence, be in immediate touch by dd9414@aol.com. No Makeups or INCs. Campus disability protocols are in effect and will be observed.

PHI 320 Metaphysics (II) (G, HFA+)**MW 2:30-3:50****A. Platt**

This course will survey topics in metaphysics, including historical and contemporary theories about ontology, human nature and causation. We will address philosophical questions such as: What are the most fundamental kinds of things that exist? Is anything necessary, and what is the status of things that are merely possible? What does it mean for an object to persist over time? What kind of being is a human person, and under what conditions can a person be said to persist over time? We will study works by historical figures, including Aristotle, William of Ockham, Descartes, and Berkeley; classic articles by 20th century “analytic” philosophers, such as Carnap, Russell, Quine, Chisholm and Lewis; and more recent work by authors such as Baker, Kim, Parfit, and Schaffer.

PHI 335 Philosophy of Time**MW 2:30-3:50****G. Mar****Harriman 243 Logic Lab**

“What then is time? If no one asks of me, I know what it is.

If I wish to explain it to him who asks, I know not.”

—Saint Augustine, *Confessions* [397-400] Book XI

This often-quoted confession of Augustine’s captures the mystery of time: it permeates our lives, yet our attempts to explain time confront us with paradoxes. Time has become a “hot topic” across the disciplines. Why now? No other dimension of the universe has been measured more accurately, and yet no other phenomenon of nature poses so many puzzles. This course—a brief history of the logic of time—highlights its dialectical interplay with philosophical paradoxes and with empirical sciences such as physics, linguistics, and neuroscience. Paradoxes involving include Aristotle’s Sea Battle, Diodorus Cronos’s Master Argument, Einstein’s Twin Paradox, McTaggart’s Argument for the Unreality of Time, and Gödel’s discovery of the possibility of Time Travel in the General Theory of Relativity.

PHI 363 Philosophy of Social Science**TUTH 2:30-3:50****J. Carter****PHI 364 Philosophy of Technology (III)****MW 2:30-3:50****R. Crease**

Never before has it been so urgent to incorporate so much science and technology into social and political decisions about energy, the environment, diseases, and other issues. Why does this seem so difficult? The course explores that question in examining a range of contemporary issues involving science and technology. Authors discussed include Heidegger, Ihde, Borgmann, Feenberg, Latour, Arendt, and Haraway. Several classes will be devoted to issues involving Facebook and social media.

PHI 368 Philosophy of Science**TUTH 4:00-5:20****L. Simpson**

Examination and comparison of philosophical/normative and socio-historical/descriptive approaches to science. One of the primary functions of science is to provide an understanding of natural phenomena—to explain “how the world works.” We shall attempt to understand the nature of scientific understanding. We shall ask, specifically, what is a *scientific* explanation? This will require an exploration of some related issues, such as how are *explanation* and *prediction* related? What is a *law of nature*? What are scientific theories and how are they related to *experience*? Can we distinguish science from “pseudo-science”, and if so, how? How does science make progress? We shall also consider important objections to the claim that science makes progress. Here we shall consider topics such as: rationalism vs. relativism; internalism vs. externalism; constructivism vs. realism; and what it would mean for there to be a

“feminist” science. We shall also briefly compare the kind of “scientific understanding” achieved in the natural sciences with that of the social sciences, and within the natural sciences, we shall take up issues within both the physical and the biological sciences.

PHI 370 Philosophical Psychology (III)

MW 2:30-3:50

A. Chakrabarti

(G, HFA+)

Touch and the Other Senses

Both Aristotle and the Indian Logico-Epistemological Nyāya School take the function and enumeration of sense-organs extremely seriously. Unlike other senses, the haptic tactile sense seems to feel itself while grasping an external object (its texture, temperature, shape etc.), which leads Aristotle to ask:

“Is the sense organ internal, or, if this is not the case, does the flesh feel directly? That sensation occurs at the moment of contact is not a clear indication. For even if, as it is, one were to wrap a membrane around the flesh, as soon as it is touched, the sensation would still occur instantly; yet it is clear that the sense organ is not in the membrane (*De Anima* 423a1-5)

Nyāya Sūtras report and refute an ancient view according to which all sense-organs can be reduced to a single one: the skin. In this course, we shall study the very concept of a sense-organ in Aristotle, Nyāya, Thomas Reid and the psychologist J.J. Gibson (whose classic work *The senses considered as perceptual systems* spawned the now popular enactive theory of perception). We shall then zoom in on touch, developing the concepts of contact, feeling and caress step by step. This inter-cultural and inter-disciplinary inquiry into touch and the other senses will segue into contemporary neuroscience and phenomenology of the haptic and other senses and raise the ancient question of the need for postulating a sixth common or inner sense (which in Indian philosophy is called “*manas*” often mistranslated as “mind”).

Texts: Aristotle: *De Anima*, Michel Serres: *The Five Senses: A Philosophy of Mingled Bodies*, Selections from Classical Indian Epistemological Texts, and Haptics by Lynette Jones (MIT Press 2018)

PHI 380 Literature and Philosophy (III)

TUTH 11:30-12:50

J. Carter

(G, HFA+)

The course will examine how the very self-consciousness invoked by the emergence of genres of literary criticism is paralleled by and shares influences with literature. We will trace some of the developments of literary theory and criticism within the twentieth century, and will examine some literary texts for their specific qualities both as texts to which literary analysis can be applied, as well as philosophical meditations in their own right. Some authors considered include Ralph Ellison, Joan Didion, Jacques Derrida, Thomas Pynchon, Toni Morrison and others.

PHI 390

TUTH 2:30-3:50

L. Miller

This course will involve a careful and intense study of the central books of the *Republic*, followed by a careful and intense study of Plato's *Sophist*.

Students will be expected to attend every class and do the reading to be ready for the quizzes and group discussions that happen each class. There will also be midterm and final take-home exams.

Seminars

PHI 395 Junior Seminar (ESI)**W 2:30-5:20****A. O’Byrne**

This semester the junior seminar will consider the topic of democracy from a philosophical point of view. Beginning with the emergence of democratic forms of government in Ancient Greece and the writings of Plato and Aristotle on democracy, we will continue with an excavation of the history of the democratic principle of freedom, on the one hand, and equality, on the other. What do these terms mean in political life? Are they contradictory? We will consult about the final reading list for the course, but it is likely to include 20th century political thinkers such as Hannah Arendt, Carl Schmitt, Chantal Mouffe and William Connolly.

PHI 401 Individual Systems of the Great Philosophers:**M 4:00-7:00****G. Mar****Kurt Gödel, Alonzo Church, Alan Turing**

Harriman 243 Logic Lab

In the 1930s a series of seminal articles were published by Kurt Gödel, Alonzo Church, and Alan Turing that revolutionized mathematical logic and gave birth to computer science. We will examine their philosophical ideas by reading Gödel’s revolutionary articles on Completeness [1930], Incompleteness [1931], Modal Provability Logic [1933], Set Theory [1943], and Time in the General Theory of Relative [1947]. In addition, we’ll read Church’s writing on Fregean Semantics (Chapter 0 of his masterful *Introduction to Mathematical Logic*, vol. I, his uncompleted work on the “Logic of Sense and Denotation” [LSD] and Alan Turing’s papers “On Computable Numbers, with an Application to the *Entscheidungsproblem* [1936-7] and “Computing Machinery and Intelligence” [1950]. The mathematical results of these logicians were motivated by their *philosophical* ideas—Gödel’s by his Platonism, Church by Fregean semantics, and Turing’s philosophical ideas about mechanism that gave birth to the field of Artificial Intelligence. To what extent are these philosophical ideas still relevant today?

PHI 420 Advanced Topics in Philosophy (either I, II, or III)

An advanced course treating a specialized issue or topic in philosophy or in philosophy and another discipline. The content of the course is announced before the start of the term. May be repeated as the topic changes. Prerequisite: U4 standing or five courses in philosophy.

*3 credits***PHI 420 Topic: Being at Home****W 4:00-7:00****M. Craig**

The seminar examines what it means to be at home. What makes a home? Where is home? How does one feel at home or not at home in a given environment? We will explore the concept of home via related concepts of dwelling and thinking in Heidegger; imagination, poetry, and childhood in Bachelard; resistance and identity in hooks, and displacement, borderlands, and homelessness in Adzaldúa. Throughout the semester we will consider artistic works relating to the concept of home, and we will engage in critical self-reflection and analysis of the what “home” means. This is an advanced and writing-intensive seminar.

Required Texts:

Heidegger: Poetry, Language, Thought

Bachelard: The Poetics of Space

Anzaldúa: Borderlands/La Frontera