

Philosophy Courses

Spring 2022

PH 101: Introduction to Philosophy

3 Cr.

An historical and topical survey, this course will introduce the student to the discipline of philosophy through the close reading of representative texts, both historical and contemporary. Through analysis of the texts, lecture, and discussion the student will gain an understanding of philosophy both as a unique discipline and as a way of asking and attempting to answer the most profound questions about ourselves and our world that we may pose.

*Open to first- and second-year students or by permission of instructor.
Fulfills humanistic inquiry requirement.*

PH 101-001 T/TH 9:40 - 11:00

S. Carli

PH 101-002 T/TH 2:10 - 3:30

P. Murray

PH 101-003 T/TH 11:10 - 12:30

S. Blake

PH 204: Modern Philosophy from Descartes to Kant

4 Cr.

An introduction to major thinkers and themes of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Europe. The dynamics of the Scientific Revolution - the collection of new discoveries and inventions and the evolving experimental methods in the early modern period - led philosophers to a profound reappraisal of fundamental issues such as the sources and limits of knowledge, the relation between mind and body, theories of human freedom and personal identity, and the apparently competing desires to explain the surrounding world in both natural and religious terms. Students will investigate how these philosophical developments led to distinctively modern ways of thinking about nature and the self. Primary documents will be read throughout.

Fulfills humanistic inquiry requirement.

W/F 12:20 - 1:40

M 12:20 - 1:15

L. Jorgensen

PH 207: Introduction to Logic

4 Cr.

An introduction to the basic concepts and methods of modern symbolic logic, with a focus on their application to proper reasoning. Students learn how to represent sentences in logical notation, to reconstruct arguments in that notation, to assess arguments for validity and soundness, and to prove conclusions from premises using a system of natural deduction. Students also learn to recognize common argument forms and common mistakes in reasoning (fallacies), are introduced to philosophical issues related to logic, and learn how symbolic logic is the basis for the digital computer.

Fulfills QR2 requirement (except for class of 2024 and beyond)

W/F 10:10 - 12:00

P. Murray

PH 212: Philosophy of Race**4 Cr.**

Reasoned arguments about the status and meaning of race have been a part of philosophy since biology began separating itself from natural philosophy in the 17th century. For the most part, these arguments have taken two forms. Some philosophers contend that race is an essential category that must be taken account in any comprehensive account of human existence. Other philosophers assert that race is a secondary characteristic, whose discussion is not worthy of philosophical consideration in regard to what is the good for human beings. Recently, these positions have been somewhat complicated by thinkers who point out that, essential or no, the category of race tends to color, influence and maybe even determine the way in which we are able to live in the world and to think about it. Though this class will frequently refer to the history of philosophy, its will focus on relatively recent and contemporary arguments about the ontological, ethical, political status of race as well as on its practical effects. By exploring and critiquing historical and contemporary understandings of race, we will emerge from the class better able to understand the way in which this category functions to shape ourselves, our culture and our world.

Meets Bridge Experience guidelines. Fulfills humanistic inquiry; fulfills Humanities and Social Sciences requirements.

T/TH 11:10 - 12:30

M 11:15 - 12:10

W. Lewis

PHDS 217: Film Truth- metaphysics, epistemology, and aesthetics of documentary film**4 Cr.**

What is the real? Can we faithfully represent nature, the world, a culture, a person, an event? Is reality truth? Is there such a thing as objective knowledge? If so, how do we achieve it?

Using films from the history of documentary as examples, this class will attempt to answer such questions. To do so, it examines the history of documentary practice as well as the history of thinking about documentary film. The course will include units on mimetic theory, narrative realism, scientific truth, juridical truth, institutional truth, film truth, direct cinema, self-reflexive cinema, and constructivism.

Fulfills humanistic inquiry requirement. Counts towards Documentary Studies and Media Studies.

T/TH 2:10 - 3:30

W. Lewis

PH 221: Memory & Retrospective Justice**4 Cr.**

A course focusing on memory, memorialization, and retrospective justice in the United States, focusing particularly on issues of race, taking as its case study the contested memory of the Civil War in the United States and the enduring systemic injustices that resulted from national efforts at reconciliation. *Retrospective justice* focuses on repairing historic wrongs, wrongs that resulted in serious and lasting harms and yet the primary actors are long dead. In this course, students will investigate the promises and limits of methods of responding to historic injustices, focusing in particular on three areas: (a) memorials, monuments, and memorial spaces; (b) truth telling and efforts at reshaping the narratives; and (c) reparations.

Fulfills Bridge Experience guidelines and humanistic inquiry requirement.

W/F 10:10 - 11:30

M 10:10 - 11:05

L. Jorgensen

PH 230C-001: Love and Friendship**3 Cr.**

What are love and friendship? What is the relation between self-love and love for others? How does one distinguish between infatuation and genuine love? In times of oppression and divisions, can political movements grounded in love and friendship be effective? Can we have meaningful relations with robots?

These are some of the questions that we will consider, discuss, and analyze focusing on texts that offer a variety of perspectives and range from ancient Greece to the contemporary world.

Fulfills humanistic inquiry requirement.

T/TH 12:40 – 2:00pm

S. Carli

PH 230D: Revolution & the Good Life in China: Early Chinese Philosophy**4 Cr.**

How should the people be governed, and when should they overthrow a ruler? What is needed to live a good life? These two questions have received intense attention in China, from the start of philosophical thinking there – and their answers are related. In this course, we focus on the Warring States period, roughly 475-221 BC, which saw a flourishing of philosophical thought, including the birth of Confucianism and Daoism, as well as Mohism, 'Legalism', and the School of Names. This course gives a taste of the answers these schools provided to these two questions, as well as presenting some of their thoughts about the nature of the world, of the self, and of language. Students will also choose whether to delve deeper into religious Daoism, Chinese Buddhism, or later Chinese thought.

Fulfills humanistic inquiry requirement. Counts toward Asian Studies.

T/TH 3:40 – 5:30

S. Blake

PH 330D-001: Recognition and Self**4 Cr.**

A self is constituted through others and in concrete social contexts. It exists only if it is recognized. Therefore, selves are not self-sufficient; rather, they attain independence by negotiating relations of dependence with others. These are the fundamental ideas of some of the most important continental theories of self and society. They also inform contemporary discussions in a number of fields, including ethics, moral psychology and politics. Both are the focus of this course, which examines the development of the notions of recognition and self. Authors studied include, among others, Hegel, Simone de Beauvoir, Frantz Fanon and Judith Butler.

Prerequisites: one course in philosophy or permission of instructor.

Fulfills humanistic inquiry requirement.

T/TH 3:40 – 5:30

S. Carli

PH 330D-002: Philosophy of Trauma

4 Cr.

This seminar examines the phenomenon of psychological trauma. We follow the emergence of the modern psychological conception of trauma in the late 19th century its theorization by Freud and post-Freudian analysts such as Lacan and Melanie Klein and especially by object relations and attachment theorists. Contemporary traumatologists, such as van der Kolk, Ogden, and Shapiro as well as types of trauma such as violent trauma, intergenerational trauma, and complex trauma are studied. We will be interested in the philosophical issues that trauma presents. These include the traumatic experience of time, embodiment, and the conception of self and identity. Trauma as a topic and a motive in the arts will also be discussed.

Prerequisites: one course in philosophy or permission of instructor.

Fulfills humanistic inquiry requirement.

M/W 2:30 – 4:20

R. Lilly

PH 330D-003: Artificial Intelligence

4 Cr.

Artificial intelligence (AI) is seemingly everywhere now, and each day brings news of further advances in AI technology and further discussion of its promises and perils. Many of these discussions focus on Terminator-style apocalyptic scenarios in which super-intelligent machines rise up and exterminate humanity. However, the fact that computers will soon be – or already are – piloting our cars, trucks, and planes, helping to make our medical, financial, and legal decisions, tending our children and elderly, and even fighting our wars raises difficult philosophical questions that are closer to hand than such existentially gripping science fiction.

The questions that we will investigate in this seminar include: What ethical principles should we program into AI-piloted vehicles to handle “forced choice” situations in which someone or other will die or be injured and the AI has the ability to influence who that is? Is ethical decision-making even amenable to algorithmic implementation? Who should be morally or legally responsible for AI systems and their actions? More generally, what is “intelligence”, and what makes an AI “artificially” intelligent? What is the relation between intelligence and the other aspects of psychology that intelligent beings typically have, e.g., sensations, emotions, moods, beliefs, desires, etc.? Could something be intelligent without having any of those other characteristics? And if not, do we need to create “artificial sensations,” etc. to create artificial intelligence? And if we are talking about sensations, we are presumably talking about bodies, but now we appear to be talking about needing to create artificial life in order to create artificial intelligence, which raises a further host of ethical and metaphysical questions. For example, could an AI system come to have ethical duties and commensurate rights? Could the decision to turn an AI system on or off become as ethically laden an issue as whether to bring a child into the world or to end a human being’s life? Or will an AI always be just a tool?

Prerequisites: one course in philosophy or permission of instructor.

Fulfills humanistic inquiry requirement.

W/F 12:20 – 2:10

P. Murray

PH 375: Senior Portfolio

4 Cr.

A capstone course in which students develop a portfolio of representative work in philosophy. Open to senior Philosophy majors.

Prerequisites: philosophy major or permission of instructor.

T/TH 9:10 – 11:00

R. Lilly

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