Course Offerings
for
Spring Semester 2016
(1161)
PHILOSOPHY 101-101  
Introduction to Philosophy  
Instructor: Andrew SPAID

Historical-cultural introduction to philosophy. Considers a broad range of philosophical problems in relation to the major historical and cultural conditions which have influenced their formulations and proposed solutions. Topics: the principles of rational inquiry; the nature of knowledge; the metaphysics of mind, world, and God; and the sources and authority of morality.

This course is certified for both ACE 5 (Humanities) and ACE 8 (Ethics). You will be able to choose which one of these two requirements you want this course to count for.

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PHILOSOPHY 101-150  
Introduction to Philosophy  
Instructor: Reina HAYAKI

We will examine a range of important topics that have been discussed by philosophers through the ages: the existence or non-existence of God and the rationality of religious belief; the concept of knowledge, and whether we have any knowledge of the world around us; the nature of the mind and its relationship to the body, and how the two are related to the self; determinism, free will, and moral responsibility; the relationship between morality and rationality, and conflicting accounts of what makes an action right or wrong. These topics cover a lot of ground, but they are united by a couple of broad themes: Who are we, and how do we fit into the world?


Major assignments: two papers and a final exam. Additional smaller assignments, to be determined.

This course is certified for both ACE 5 (Humanities) and ACE 8 (Ethics). You will be able to choose which one of these two requirements you want this course to count for.

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PHILOSOPHY 101-250  
Introduction to Philosophy  
Instructor: Shane GEORGE

Historical-cultural introduction to philosophy. Considers a broad range of philosophical problems in relation to the major historical and cultural conditions which have influenced their formulations and proposed solutions. Topics: the principles of rational inquiry; the nature of knowledge; the metaphysics of mind, world, and God; and the sources and authority of morality.

This course is certified for both ACE 5 (Humanities) and ACE 8 (Ethics). You will be able to choose which one of these two requirements you want this course to count for.
Critical survey of current issues and the role of philosophy in attempts to resolve them. Recent topics: sexual morality, pornography and the law, capital punishment, sexism and racism, extraordinary treatment for the terminally ill, abortion, church and state, and nuclear war and disarmament.

This course is certified for both ACE 8 (Ethics) and ACE 9 (Global Awareness/Knowledge of Human Diversity). You will be able to choose which one of these two requirements you want this course to count for.

*Open to W. H. Thompson Scholars only

Critical survey of current issues and the role of philosophy in attempts to resolve them. Recent topics: sexual morality, pornography and the law, capital punishment, sexism and racism, extraordinary treatment for the terminally ill, abortion, church and state, and nuclear war and disarmament.

This course is certified for both ACE 8 (Ethics) and ACE 9 (Global Awareness/Knowledge of Human Diversity). You will be able to choose which one of these two requirements you want this course to count for.

This course deals in a philosophical manner with political and ethical issues that are of current interest. Among the topics to be discussed will be drug legalization, abortion, pornography, same-sex marriage, and distributive justice.

Readings will be from both contemporary and classical sources.

Requirements include an hour exam, a term paper, and a final exam.


This course is certified for both ACE 8 (Ethics) and ACE 9 (Global Awareness/Knowledge of Human Diversity). You will be able to choose which one of these two requirements you want this course to count for.
The class will focus on a number of ethical topics of current interest, in particular world hunger, war, economic inequality, rights to sexual privacy, capital punishment, and incarceration. Each of these issues presents various choices between different and even conflicting individual and social policies. The class will focus on reasons for and against adopting various courses of action, and will explore the cogency of the reasons offered.

Students will work out their own positions and, hopefully, come to better understand opposing views. In the course of examining these reasons, we will become more familiar with a very general distinction between various forms of ethical justification - the distinction between consequentialist justifications and nonconsequentialist justifications. We will explore how various positions about the specific issues are amenable to either form of justification.

Readings for the class will encompass both classic texts and current articles from philosophy journals, but most of these will be available on line and on reserve so there will be very little if any reading to buy.

Major Assignments: Two tests; two papers; clicker participation.

This course is certified for both ACE 8 (Ethics) and ACE 9 (Global Awareness/Knowledge of Human Diversity). You will be able to choose which one of these two requirements you want this course to count for.
This course covers a wide variety of moral issues in the ethics of medicine and the allocation of healthcare. These issues include the moral status of the embryo and fetus (abortion, stem cell research), the current or future ways in which parents seek to change their children’s physical attributes or genetic makeup (cochlear implants, genetic enhancement, cloning), the limits in a medical context of what can be bought and sold (commercial surrogacy, organ sales), the role of rights and fairness in a healthcare system (rights to healthcare, allocation of scarce resources), and the proper extent of control over one’s own body (amputation by choice, assisted suicide, euthanasia, advance directives). The focus of the course is on assessing arguments for and against different positions on these moral issues, with background information provided as needed.

The course requires a reading response for most weeks, two 4-page papers, and class participation.

This course is certified for both ACE 5 (Humanities) and ACE 8 (Ethics). You will be able to choose which one of these two requirements you want this course to count for.
This course begins with a reflective overview of general approaches in philosophical ethics. This is background. The bulk of the class then is a survey of approaches specific to environmental ethics. We will consider the central matter of what persons, groups, things, and systems are properly taken to have fundamental “moral considerability.” What things are properly the focus of one’s the fundamental—or nonderivative—moral valuing or obligations, and what things are derivatively valuable or matters of obligation? Various positions treat persons, perhaps just humans or sentient beings, as the objects of fundamental concern. Some suggest that the environment can have such status. After this tour of some philosophical positions we focus on applications of these positions in connection with two matters: food and global climate change.

This course is certified for both ACE 8 (Ethics) and ACE 9 (Global Awareness/Knowledge of Human Diversity). You will be able to choose which one of these two requirements you want this course to count for.

This course offers an introductory survey of some of the key figures in early modern (17th—18th century) European philosophy. These include: Descartes, Locke, Leibniz, Newton, Hume, and Kant. Our main focus will be on the enormously influential theories of René Descartes, specifically his theories of mind and nature, as well as subsequent reactions, criticisms, and (partial) defenses of his views in the writings of other prominent philosophers. Major themes include the nature of mind and matter, the structure of scientific explanation, causation and necessity, free will, and the existence of God.

This course treats some of the main traditional issues in the philosophy of religion, such as the existence of God, the immortality of the soul, and the relation between faith and reason. We also discuss the nature of religion itself, in the context of a comparative philosophical study of the world’s great religions. Readings are from both classical and contemporary sources.

Requirements include an hour exam, a term paper, and a final exam.

This course is certified for both ACE 5 (Humanities) and ACE 9 (Global Awareness/Knowledge of Human Diversity). You will be able to choose which one of these two requirements you want this course to count for.
This course provides an Introduction to some major problems of epistemology, with emphasis on the understanding and evaluation of the problems, rather than what various philosophers have said about them.

Course topics (tentative) include Scepticism, the concept of knowledge, the concept of justification, the sources of human knowledge, knowledge of the external world, a priori knowledge.

Course goals: To provide an understanding of some central issues in contemporary epistemology and their historical backgrounds. To develop the following skills: read analytically primary philosophical texts, evaluate critically philosophical positions and arguments, write sustained, coherent philosophical essays and papers, and conduct philosophical research.

Course Requirements (tentative): Two essay exams, each worth 30% of your grade; Library Research Project and Research Paper, worth 40% of your grade.

This course is certified for ACE 5 (Humanities).

PHILOSOPHY 320-001 Ethical Theory Instructor: Mark VAN ROOJEN

The class will concern itself with two broad areas within ethics, normative ethics and metaethics. Normative ethics concerns what things are in fact right and wrong, and what makes them so. It turns out that the most obvious general answers to these questions seem to conflict with settled convictions about particular cases. And that puts pressure on us to revise what we think to resolve the conflict. But there are multiple ways you might revise your views, and people disagree about the right way to do that. So we wind up with multiple different theories in this domain, each with something going for it but also with some difficulties. We will examine various theoretical responses to the issues raised.

Metaethics is the study of the nature and status of moral judgements and their subject matter. It tries to answer questions like: What does it mean to say that something is right or good? Is morality about some domain of facts, and if so which facts? Are there "objective" answers to questions regarding moral values? Are such answers true? Might the truth or correctness of such claims be relative, and if so to what? How can our accounts of such judgements make sense of our claims to moral knowledge?

Readings for the class will encompass both classic texts and current articles from philosophy journals, but most of these will be available on line and on reserve so there will be very little if any reading to buy.

Major Assignments: three or four papers.

This course is certified for both ACE 5 (Humanities) and ACE 8 (Ethics). You will be able to choose which one of these two requirements you want this course to count for.
In this course we study both the principal philosophical text, the *Ethics*, and the renowned work of political theory, the *Theological-Political Treatise*. The former lays out Spinoza’s distinctive conception of the mind/body relation, freedom and determinism in human affairs, and the nature of God. The second work, the *Treatise*, contains his innovative thinking on the bases of government and the conditions of a liberal society. Spinoza was one of the founders of modern liberal political theory, and we consider how his idea emerged in the context of the civil unrest and wars of the 17th Century in Europe and Britain.

This course is certified for ACE 5 (Humanities).

**PHILOSOPHY 337-001  Knowledge: Ancient & Medieval**  
Instructor: Harry IDE  
T TH 9:30-10:45 AM

What the course is about: Questions about the source of human knowledge—in particular, whether perception or some other source is at the root of knowledge—and about the appropriate response to skepticism are among the historically central questions of epistemology. We'll consider some central Hellenistic, neoplatonic, and medieval answers to those questions.

Course goals: After preparing for, attending and participating in, and reviewing classes, and doing the assignments, students will:

- students will understand major post-Aristotelian ancient and medieval theories of perception, thought, and skepticism
- students will improve their skill at reading difficult texts
- students will improve their skill at analyzing arguments

This course is certified for ACE 5 (Humanities).

**PHILOSOPHY 411/811-001  Formal Logic**  
Instructor: Reina HAYAKI  
M W 1:30-2:45 PM

Prerequisite: PHIL 211 (Intro to Modern Logic) or the equivalent, or permission of the instructor.

PHIL 411/811 is a second course in symbolic logic. It presupposes familiarity with propositional (sentential) and first-order predicate logic. You will learn how to construct metatheoretic proofs about various formal systems (rather than derivations using the rules of a formal system, as in PHIL 211 and other first courses in symbolic logic). The main topics covered will be: the soundness and completeness of classical propositional logic, non-classical propositional logics, and propositional modal logics; and extensions of and alternatives to classical first-order predicate logic.


Major assignments: midterm exam, final exam, and several problem sets (number to be determined).
What the course is about: An introduction to classical Greek philosophy, focusing on selected topics in ethics, epistemology, and metaphysics.

Course goals: After preparing for, attending and participating in, and reviewing classes, and doing the assignments, students will:

- improve their ability to interpret complex philosophical texts
- be able to argue for interpretations of complex philosophical texts
- be able to evaluate interpretations (and arguments for interpretations) of complex philosophical texts
- understand some of the major interpretive issues about Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle

We will focus on the intersection of several issues. First, how do epistemic standards (norms) change? Or, alternatively, in what sense do the processes making for objective epistemic justification change, perhaps as we come (individually or as a community) to know more about what are the strengths or weaknesses of human cognitive processes? Second, are there social as well as individual aspects of the fitting dynamic of change in cognitive standards? More broadly, are our epistemic standards as much a reflection of our cognitive lives together as they are of our individual cognitive lives? Third, can epistemic normativity be helpfully approached as a matter of social norms?

There has been an explosion of recent work on perception, especially on non-visual perception and especially by relatively young philosophers. This seminar will consider a representative selection, focusing especially on the sensory qualities present in conscious perceptual experience (aka ‘qualia’) and why they are so present.


The course requirements are a class presentation and a seminar paper in two drafts.
PHILOSOPHY 920-001
Ethical Theory
Instructor: Aaron BRONFMAN
TH 4:30-6:35 PM

A seminar in ethics, with topic(s) to be determined.

One seminar paper will be required.

PHILOSOPHY 971-001
Kant
Instructor: Colin MCLEAR
T 1:30-3:30 PM

The course will examine views concerning introspection and self-knowledge as they appear in the work of three central early modern figures: Descartes, Locke, and Kant. We will also look at how these views have been developed and modified in contemporary philosophy. Questions of interest include:

- What is self-knowledge?
- Is self-knowledge special? (e.g. is it especially epistemically secure?)
- Is self-knowledge gained via sensory means?
- Does self-knowledge require consciousness?