## Department of Philosophy

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### Course Descriptions

- **Introduction to Philosophy**: This course will introduce students to Western philosophy. We will explore the following topics: the existence of God, the scope of human knowledge, the nature of the mind, the possibility of free will, the continuity of persons over time, and the objectivity of morality. There will be an emphasis on analyzing and evaluating arguments.

- **Introduction to Philosophy (Honors)**: This section requires permission from the Honor's College.

- **Critical Reasoning**: This is not a typical philosophy class. It has the purely practical goal of developing thinking skills that you will apply outside of this particular class. Accordingly, we won't stress facts or complicated formulas you might quickly forget. The facts we will discuss are fascinating and hard-to-forget discoveries about how people reason badly. We will stress techniques that you can use in other classes and in everyday life (and on tests like the Law School Admission Test and the Graduate Management Admission Test). Coursework: three one-hour examinations, quizzes, and short homework assignments. Texts: Daniel Kahneman, Thinking, Fast and Slow, and Swoyer, The Critical Reasoning Course Manual (the Swoyer text will be available free online).

- **Introduction to Logic**: Deductive Logic is the logic by which the premises of an argument, if they are true, may guarantee that the conclusion of the argument is also true. This kind of logic is a central component of human reasoning. It plays an especially important role in the sciences and in mathematics. This course will introduce you to the central concepts of Deductive Logic: truth, tautology, contradiction, contingent sentence, logically consistent collection of sentences, logically equivalent pair of sentences, valid deductive argument. You will learn techniques for evaluating these logical properties of sentences and collections of sentences. We will first study the logic of compound sentences, called sentential logic. Then we will investigate the logic that attends the internal structure of sentences, called predicate logic. We will also briefly study Inductive Logic, which is the logic through which evidence may support (but not guarantee) the truth of a conclusion – it is the logic by which evidence supports scientific hypotheses and theories.

- **Phil of Human Destiny**: Who and what are we? What is it to be human? How did we get here, and what should we strive for, or try to be like? What can we hope for in this life, or (if there is one) the next?

This course will consider and critically examine a variety of different answers to these questions, both Religious and Secular, from both the East and the West. We will examine thoughtful accounts of human nature and destiny as presented in the writings of philosophers, theologians and authors whose works explore the fundamental meaning of our individual and collective existence as human beings. Theories to be studied are those of Socrates/Plato and Aristotle, Confucius and the Buddha, Jesus and St Paul, Augustine and Aquinas, Kant, Rousseau, Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, and various contemporary thinkers writing within these traditions. Our aim will be to discover who we are and how we should govern our lives, with the help of those sages and prophets who have gone before us. Required Text: An anthology available and King Copy and online resources.

- **Introduction to Ethics**: This course will introduce students to some of the most influential classical and contemporary works in ethics. We’ll discuss theoretical questions, such as: What does it mean to be a morally good person? Are there rules or principles that can address what makes an action morally good? And we’ll discuss practical issues, such as: Do we have special moral duties to family and people we love? What are the connections between big moral decisions and small, everyday moral conduct? Finally, we’ll also consider critics who think the standard ways of thinking about ethical issues are problematic. Readings will include works by Aristotle, Confucius, John Stuart Mill, Immanuel Kant, Rosalind Hursthouse, Nell Noddings, Friedrich Nietzsche, and Zhuangzi.

- **Introduction to Health Care Ethics**: The main goal of this course is to provide an overview of some important issues in the field of health care ethics, including ethical issues faced by:
  - Health care providers, regarding their interactions with patients,
  - Medical researchers, regarding the conduct of their work, and
  - Patients, regarding the decisions they make about seeking medical services,
  - Society, regarding the distribution of health care services.

- **Philosophy of Human Destiny**: This course will introduce students to Western philosophy. We will explore the following topics: the existence of God, the scope of human knowledge, the nature of the mind, the possibility of free will, the continuity of persons over time, and the objectivity of morality. There will be an emphasis on analyzing and evaluating arguments.

- **Philosophy of Human Destiny (Honors)**: This section requires permission from the Honor's College.

- **Critical Reasoning**: This is not a typical philosophy class. It has the purely practical goal of developing thinking skills that you will apply outside of this particular class. Accordingly, we won’t stress facts or complicated formulas you might quickly forget. (The facts we will discuss are fascinating and hard-to-forget discoveries about how people reason badly.) We will stress techniques that you can use in other classes and in everyday life (and on tests like the Law School Admission Test and the Graduate Management Admission Test). Coursework: three one-hour examinations, quizzes, and short homework assignments. Texts: Daniel Kahneman, Thinking, Fast and Slow, and Swoyer, The Critical Reasoning Course Manual (the Swoyer text will be available free online).

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Students will be introduced to relevant facts and concepts drawn from health care practice, and to a variety of philosophical approaches that have been used to help analyze ethical problems. As a result of your study, you should be better able to:

- engage in the public discussion of health care policy in our society, by responding to arguments presented in influential readings, and
- develop and defend your own positions on actual and hypothetical cases.

Course work will include quizzes on readings from the textbook; short writing assignments; group presentations; and a final exam.

[CRN –32350] 1273/010 *Intro to Business Ethics  
MW, 12:30-1:20  
Ellis

Moral considerations pervade our lives, and business situations are no exception. In this course, we will be concerned with the ethical content of commerce, from the morality of market institutions to the normative considerations involved in business-customer, employer-employee, and firm-shareholder relations. We will consider all of these issues from both the standpoint of moral theory and by considering cases.

[CRN – 28805] 3023/001 *Aesthetics
TR, 12:00-1:15  
Irvin

In this course, we’ll consider a variety of questions about art: What is art’s purpose? What makes one artwork better than another? How do we decide which is better, and do some people’s judgments carry more authority than others? How do gender and race figure in the production and evaluation of art? How can theories of art accommodate different cultural perspectives? Do artworks have an overriding value for society? What’s the right way to interpret art? We will look at some particular art forms, including photography, fashion and popular music. To keep the texture of real art in mind, we will look at images, listen to music, etc. We will consider aesthetics (traditionally, the study of beauty) in relation to our understanding of everyday experience and of human appearance. Text: photocopied course pack including a mixture of historical and contemporary works by philosophers and art theorists. Course assignments include essays, short in-class writing assignments, and a final exam consisting of essay questions distributed in advance.

[CRN – 33805] 3253/001 History of Ethics
TR, 9:00-10:15  
MWF, 12:30-1:20  
Ellis

This upper-level philosophy course aims to provide you with a firm philosophical foundation in some of the influential classics in Western and Eastern moral philosophy. We will read some of the classic historical texts in-depth, with a focus both on engaged interpretation and critical analysis. This course also aims to increase your facility with dense philosophical texts and hone your critical and creative thinking skills, particularly with regard to ethical issues.

[CRN – 23846] 3273/001 *Ethics & Business
MWF, 10:30-11:20  
Ellis

This course looks at how more businesses can “play nice.” We will start with the economic & ethical presuppositions of business behavior in a capitalist system. After examining issues involving the justification of markets systems (e.g., the moral importance of economic efficiency, liberty interests in commerce) we will draw some lessons about the general rights & responsibilities of businesses. Time permitting, we will then consider some specific topics in light of those lessons: government intervention in markets, labor relations, environmental concerns, etc.

[CRN – 23618] 3313/001 *History of Ancient Philosophy
TR, 3:00-4:15  
Benson

Prerequisite: 1013 + one of the following (1103, 1113, 1203, 1213, 2023, 2403)

After a brief survey of the philosophical views of the Pre-Socratic philosophers, the bulk of the course will fall into three major sections: (1) the philosophy of Socrates, during which we will study Plato’s Apology, Crito, Euthyphro, and Meno, (2) the philosophy of Plato, during which we will study Plato’s Meno, Phaedo, and Republic, and (3) the philosophy of Aristotle, during which we will study parts of Aristotle’s Categories, Physics, De Anima and Nicomachean Ethics. Time permitting we will conclude the course with a brief survey of the four Post Aristotelian schools: Epicureanism, Stoicism, Skepticism, and Neoplatonism. We will consider issues in ethics, epistemology, and metaphysics. Our primary concern will be to interpret these philosophical texts, but also to some extent to evaluate them. Text: Cohen, Curd, and Reeve (eds.), Readings in Ancient Greek Philosophy: From Thales to Aristotle (4th edn.).

[CRN – 33263] 3363/001 **Comparative Philosophy
TR, 1:30-2:45  
Olberding

This course will focus on philosophy as Pierre Hadot describes as a “spiritual discipline” in which philosophy is used as a strategy for shaping the self, addressing common human struggles, and developing wisdom and character. Our sources will be largely comprised of ancient Chinese, Greek, and Roman philosophy and we will look at a variety of topics related to such questions as: What is good and important to desire in life? What strategies does philosophy offer we cannot get what we want? What role do other people play in achieving a satisfying and good life? What role does luck and good fortune play, and how should we think about matters of fortune? What role do joy and sorrow, anger and delight play in living well? Are there ways to protect oneself from anger and sorrow and is it good to be protected from these? In sum, our focus will be on looking at a variety of philosophical accounts that seek to use philosophy and philosophical reflection as a way of managing and shaping a life.

[CRN – 32806] 3393/001 *History of Analytical Phil
MWF, 12:30-1:20  
Cook

We will survey some of the highlights of 20th Century Anglo-American philosophy by discussing some of its key movements and some of its key essays. We will examine movements that tried to solve or dissolve philosophical problems by examining language and meaning: logical atomism, logical positivism, Oxford ordinary language philosophy, Wittgensteinianism, and the late 20th century appeal to possible worlds. And we will examine such key essays as G. E. Moore’s “A Defence of Common Sense,” Bertrand Russell’s “Knowledge by Acquaintance and Knowledge by Description,” Gilbert Ryle’s “Systematically Misleading Expressions,” J. L. Austin’s “A Plea for Excuses,” Edmund Gettier’s “Is Justified True Belief Knowledge?,” and Hilary Putnam’s “Brains in a Vat.”

[CRN – 23808] 3503/001 *Self & Identity
TR, 3:00-4:15  
Montminy

We will explore the concept of the self and various issues that arise in connection with it, including the question of what a person is, how persons retain their identity through time and change, whether (and how) selves have free will, and how we know and sometimes fail to know things about ourselves and others. We will also examine the question of how identities are shaped by gender, race, culture, etc. Readings: course packet

[CRN – 33807] 3633/001 *The Nature of Science
TR, 3:00-4:15  
Riggs

As the name of the course says, this course will take a philosophical look at the nature of science. When we talk about the “nature” of anything in philosophy, we tend to mean those features of a thing that are unique to it, that serve to distinguish that kind of thing from other things that might be confused with it. In the spirit of this kind of philosophical inquiry, we will be looking at those features of science that make it unique—that make it what it is, so to speak. This will include discussions of scientific methodology, scientific progress, and science as a social institution. People often say that science is a method, so we will take a look at what that method consists in, and how much sense it makes to say that science can be defined in terms of that method. This will require us to talk about observation, experiment, and the practical matter of providing explanations for observable phenomena. We will address the surprisingly difficult problem of explaining the structure of scientific theories, and how science progresses as we develop new theories and abandon old ones. And we will consider the implications of the fact that science does not exist in a vacuum. It is a social institution that is subject to all the kinds of forces—political, social, economic, etc.—that affect all such institutions.

*Denotes a Core Area IV ‘Western Civilization and Culture’ General Education Course
**Denotes a Core Area IV ‘Non-Western Culture’ General Education Course
***Denotes a Core Area I ‘Mathematics Component’ General Education Course
****Denotes a Core Area III ‘Social Science’ General Education Course
Modern empiricism in particular has had an Ethics. Time permitting we will...
In this seminar we will explore the defining characteristics of and the salient differences between two conceptions of divinity, namely ‘classical theism’ and ‘neo-theism’. According to the first conception, the central attribute of divinity is absolute (metaphysical) simplicity; other noteworthy characteristics of the deity according to the classical tradition (divine timelessness, immutability, impassivity and the like) are understood in relation to this central attribute, from which they take their shape and find their motivation. According to the second conception, it is God’s personhood that drives the theologizing; noteworthy characteristics of the deity on this reckoning (God’s participation “in” time, God’s mutability and ability to suffer) take their rise and footing from the fundamental conviction that the deity is a person in a univocal sense of that term. Both conceptions of the divine nature are worth sustained analyses in their own right, and indeed, much of our effort will be aimed at understanding how these divine attributes relate to one another, and what exactly the content of the relevant concepts (e.g. of simplicity, immutability, etc.) are supposed to be. We will also consider “direct” arguments in support of both conceptions of God – arguments, that is, that can be marshaled without reference to the practical theological puzzles they may resolve. But it is also true that many of the hot issues in contemporary analytic philosophy of religion – such as the problems of evil, the nature of divine providence and creaturely freedom, the status of theological discourse, the possibility of religious knowledge, and so forth – may be approached and evaluated quite differently, depending upon which of the two conceptions of divinity the philosopher of religion adopts. Since discussion and debate about these latter topics frequently goes forward without explicit disclosure of the brand of theism being presupposed, stalemate and incomprehension often ensue. A firmer grasp on what these conceptions are and how they establish their philosophical parameters will help us at least to recognize and diagnose the problem in those instances. But in addition, and more importantly, it is common strategy to adjudicate between relatively more fundamental competing theories by examining the costs and benefits of each, and philosophy of religion is no different on that score. Whether, for example, God ought to be understood as temporally everlasting or timelessly eternal is frequently debated with an eye toward the implications for human freedom and divine/human dialogue; the nature and extent of divine providence is likewise contested with reference to the potential payoffs (or liabilities) for theodicy, and so on.

Our aim in this seminar is therefore to examine in detail these competing conceptions of divinity, the direct arguments offered in support of them, and the ways in which adoption of either view impacts and constrains systematic philosophical theology at the “practical” level.

In this course, we will discuss some of the following topics in depth: time, chance, laws of nature, grounding, and causation. The selected topics will depend on professor and student interest in the fall.