

Fall 2013

Department of Philosophy

Course Offerings and Descriptions

PHIL 2110 CRN 4214	Classical Greek Philosophy <i>T/Th 10-11:50 Jere Surber</i> This course offers a close reading and examination of early Greek philosophers' (the Presocratics, Plato, and Aristotle) moral and metaphysical systems. Our goal will be not only to understand how these philosophers influenced each other's thought, but also how their thinking shaped future philosophical inquiry.
PHIL 2120 CRN 3143	Nature and Limits of Human Knowledge <i>M/W 12-1:50 Marco Nathan</i> The aim of this course is to provide an accessible introduction to some major topics in "epistemology," the study of human knowledge. In the first part of the course, we shall focus on the presentation and critical discussion of some of the most influential philosophical accounts of the nature and limits of human knowledge. We will address questions such as: What is knowledge and how is it different from other epistemic states such as belief and desire? Is skepticism warranted? What are the foundations of knowledge? What is the distinction between 'internalist' and 'externalist' conceptions of epistemic justification? Can (and should) we replace traditional epistemology with a psychological approach to human reason? In the second part of the course, we shall apply some of these general considerations to particular fields of human inquiry. We will discuss the nature and limits of the characteristic forms of knowledge that are provided by various disciplines, such as logic and mathematics, the natural sciences, the social sciences, and ethics.
PHIL 2150 CRN 4405	Philosophy of Law <i>T/Th 12-1:50 Staff</i> This course first focuses on the philosophical foundations of law, examining the relationship between law, legal authority and morality. We will examine the nature of law. What is the relationship between law and legal rules? Does a citizen have a duty to obey an unjust law? Second, the course focuses on philosophical issues that arise in the key substantive areas of law, such as contracts, torts, property, criminal law and constitutional law. What justifies legal punishment? What are the limits of law? What best justifies tort theory?
PHIL 2260 CRN 4216	Philosophical Perspectives on Perception and Reality <i>M/W 4-5:50 Naomi Reshotko</i> In this class we will concern ourselves with the theoretical hypothesis that our perceptions match up with, and therefore give us information about, an external and

	<p>independent reality (what we call "the physical world"). In order to engage this issue, we will look at the philosophical explorations of a number of historical figures in the Western Philosophical Tradition. These will include Plato, Descartes, Locke, Berkeley, Hume, Kant and Wittgenstein. There will be regular written assignments, which will require peer feedback and re-writing, and a take home final essay exam. This is an honors analytical inquiry course but others can take it with permission of instructor.</p>
<p>PHIL 2770 CRN 4358</p>	<p>Philosophy of Science</p> <p><i>M/W 4-5:50 Marco Nathan</i></p> <p>The aim of this course is to provide an introduction to some major topics of contemporary philosophy of science. The course focuses on the presentation and critical discussion of general issues concerning scientific methodology, addressing questions such as: what science is and what counts as science; how science works, what constitutes the 'scientific method' and whether it can ensure the objectivity of scientific results; and what the goal of science is. We shall discuss these issues by examining the most influential accounts that have been given of the nature of science. Occasionally, we will delve into pertinent episodes in the history of science or into a non-technical discussions of scientific theories, but the focus shall be on philosophical debates concerning the nature of science as well as conceptual issues raised in particular areas of science. In addition to the goals stated above, this class also fulfills the two learning outcomes associated with the AIS requirements of the University's Common Curriculum: (i) Students will be able to demonstrate the ability to create or interpret the texts, ideas, or artifacts of human culture; (ii) Students will be able to identify and analyze the connections between texts, ideas, or cultural artifacts and the human experience and or perception of the world.</p>
<p>PHIL 3023 CRN 4218</p>	<p>Great Thinkers: Maimonides</p> <p><i>F 10-1:50 Sarah Pessin</i></p> <p>Moses Maimonides (1135-1204) is one of the most influential figures in the history of medieval philosophy, famous for his "negative theology," for his view of religion as a mostly-false-but-necessary political tool, and for his reading of the Hebrew Bible in a Greek philosophical key. In this course, we examine these and others of Maimonides' key ideas through an analysis of his famously difficult magnum opus, <i>The Guide of the Perplexed</i>. We will also set out to situate his thought within the context of a range of important Greek, Jewish, and Islamic philosophical traditions.</p> <p>Along the way, we will explore Maimonides' views on: Human and Divine Intellection, Human Being and Human Perfection, the Aims of a Life Well-Lived, the Aims of the Law, Reason vs. Revelation, Philosophical vs. Religious truths, Pedagogy and Politics (and the art of religious writing and leadership), How to Read the <i>Torah</i> (and the idea of "perplexity"), Reasons for the Commandments, the nature of Divine Will, Knowing God, the limits of human knowledge, and the nature of Divine Providence.</p>

<p>PHIL 3061</p> <p>CRN 4215</p>	<p>Kant's Ethics/Aesthetics/Politics</p> <p><i>T/Th 2-3:50 Jere Surber</i></p> <p>This seminar will involve a critical reading and discussion of Kant's major ethical and aesthetical works. We will, in addition, spend some time on Kant's epistemological views as background for understanding the rest of his Critical Philosophy. Kant himself claimed, at several points, that his philosophy was organized according to an "architectonic" and constituted a complete "system of philosophy." Our considerations will aim at gaining a broad perspective on how Kant's "system" was organized and how it functioned as a total philosophical viewpoint. A leading philosophical question will thus be: What, according to Kant, are the relations among cognition, ethical action, and aesthetic appreciation (which are the themes of his three Critiques).</p>
<p>PHIL 3460</p> <p>CRN 4350</p>	<p>Nietzsche and the Death of God</p> <p><i>W 6-9:50 Carl Raschke</i></p> <p>This course will involve an intensive reading and discussion of Friedrich Nietzsche's 'Thus Spake Zarathustra,' together with relevant associated materials, especially 'The Gay Science.'</p>
<p>Phil 3701</p> <p>CRN 4217</p>	<p>Virtue Ethics</p> <p><i>M/W 2-3:50 Candace Upton</i></p> <p>Virtue ethics purportedly provides a distinct approach to moral deliberation, moral reasoning, moral decision-making, and moral justification. This course is a systematic study of the nature of virtue ethics, the nature of a virtue, and the alleged superiority of virtue ethics over its more familiar consequentialist and deontological alternatives. We will also study various responses to the following questions: Have moral psychologists generated any valuable studies on the nature of virtue? What virtues ought we to endorse?</p>