DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY
SPRING 2017

PHIL 110000 INTRO TO PHILOSOPHY

The basic problems and types of philosophy, with special emphasis on the problems of knowledge and the nature of reality.

PHIL 110000 INTRO TO PHILOSOPHY HONORS

An introduction to the activity of philosophy through a close reading of classic philosophical texts from the ancient, medieval, and modern periods. Emphasis will be on topics relating to human nature and their implications for such issues as immortality of the soul, the nature and value of philosophy, and the good life for human beings. The course will begin by tracing the development of a specific conception of human beings, which dominated Western philosophy until the end of the Middle Ages, according to which human beings are a certain type of substance, distinguished from all non-human animals by the possession of a rational soul (i.e., an intellect and a will). In the remainder of the course, we will discuss the considerations that eventually led to its decline, beginning in the early modern period. This course does not presuppose any prior acquaintance with philosophical texts or methods, and is designed to help students acquire basic skills in critical thinking and reasoning. Readings will include selections from the writings of Plato, Aristotle, Augustine, Aquinas, Descartes, Hume, and Russell.

PHIL 11400 GLOBAL MORAL ISSUES

A systematic and representative examination of significant contemporary moral problems with a focus on global issues such as international justice, poverty and foreign aid, nationalism and patriotism, just war, population and the environment, human rights, gender equality, and national self-determination.

PHIL 12000 CRITICAL THINKING

This course is designed for people who are interested in applying reasoning skills to everyday issues and debates. The goal is to enable you to reconstruct and evaluate arguments from a wide variety of sources and to invent good arguments of your own. The sources range from newspaper editorials, letters to the editor, and public policy debates to legal cases, reports of experiments, epidemiological studies, and public opinion polls. Though the approach is largely informal, we will study two areas of logic in some depth, namely, propositional logic (“Symbolic Sentential Logic”) and the theory of the categorical syllogism (“Arguments about Classes”). Some parts of the course also involve applications of concepts from statistics and probability theory.
The course will be divided into three parts. The first part of the course will deal with a question that has loomed large in the philosophical history of western monotheism (Judaism, Christianity and Islam): *is belief in God rational?* The focus here will be on arguments for God’s existence (such as the argument from the fact that the universe seems to have been designed), on arguments against God’s existence (e.g., the argument that a perfect God wouldn’t permit terrible things to happen and yet they happen), and on whether belief in God can be rational if it isn’t supported by argument. The second part of the course will focus on the fact that there are many different religions in the world, most of which claim to be the only religion that is right about the most important truths. Our question here will be whether, in the face of this plurality of religions, it can be rational to think that one’s own religion is right and that other religions incompatible with it are mistaken. The third part of the course will focus on some questions in philosophical theology—questions such as: Can we be free if God foreknows what we will do? Does it make sense to make requests of God in prayer given that, whether we pray or not, a perfect being would know what we want and would do what is best? The course requirements will include several short quizzes, some short writing assignments, a midterm exam, and a final exam.
Jainism, Sikhism, Buddhism, Confucianism, Taoism, Shintoism, and Zoroastrianism.

PHIL 23100 RELIGIONS OF THE WEST

| 001 | 10243 | MWF | 11:30 AM-12:20 PM | BRWN 1154 | Ryba, T. |
A comparative study of the origins, institutions, and theologies of the three major Western religions, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam.

PHIL 24000 SOCIAL AND POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY

| 001 | 69621 | TR | 09:00 AM-10:15 AM | BRNG 1230 | McBride, W. |
What have been some of the great social aspirations and values of the past, and how are they related to our own? In this course, a number of the major issues and writers in Western social and political thought will be introduced and discussed. There will be “classical” readings from Plato, Aristotle, Machiavelli, Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau, and Marx, followed by a segment devoted to contemporary writers and issues. During the latter, each student will be asked to select a book to present briefly to the class; this will serve as the basis of a final term paper. (Other requirements, in addition to class participation and meeting with the instructor, will be a shorter paper early in the term and a midterm and final examination). Text: Michael S. Morgan, ed., *Classics of Moral and Political Theory*, 5th edition – Hackett paperback, 978-1-60384-442-0.

PHIL 260 PHILOSOPHY AND LAW

| 001 | 14945 | MWF | 12:30 PM-01:20 PM | BRNG 1230 | Grad Staff |
A discussion of philosophical issues in the law: a critical examination of such basic concepts in law as property, civil liberty, punishment, right, contract, crime and responsibility; and a survey of some main philosophical theories about the nature and justification of legal systems. Reading will be drawn from both law and philosophy.

PHIL 27000 BIO MEDICAL ETHICS

| 001 | 24011 | TR | 01:30 PM-02:20 PM | SMTH 108 | Song, Y. |
An examination of the moral problems raised by developments in medicine and the biomedical sciences. Topics include abortion, reproductive technologies, euthanasia and physician-assisted suicide, experiments involving human subjects, and health care delivery.

PHIL 29000 ENVIRONMENTAL ETHICS

| 001 | 24016 | MWF | 12:30 PM-01:20 PM | BRNG 2280 | Bernstein, M. |
An introduction to philosophical issues surrounding debates about the environment and our treatment of it. Topics may include endangered species, "deep ecology," the scope and limits of cost-benefit analyses, and duties to future generations.

PHIL 29300 PHILOSOPHY OF DISABILITY

| 001 | 18342 | MWF | 09:30 AM-10:20 AM | BRNG 1230 | Song, Y. |
A study of the nature and value of disability, as well as some of the social and political issues that most concern persons with disabilities. Topics include definitions of disability, the epistemic and moral status of persons with disabilities, the relationship between cognitive disability and moral agency, the ethics of creating disability and of preventing it, the aesthetics of the disabled body, and disability in social justice theories.

PHIL 30100 ANCIENT PHILOSOPHY

| 001 | 16146 | TR | 10:30 AM-11:45 AM | BRNG 1230 | Curd, P. |
Thales and his Presocratic counterparts are generally reckoned to be the first western philosophers. This course will trace the development of philosophy in Greece from its beginning in Thales and the Milesian school through to Aristotle. Along the way we shall consider the questions the Greek philosophers asked: What is it to be real? What is the nature of knowledge? Can we explain change? Can I know anything about the ever-changing world of sense-experience? What would such knowledge be like? Is moral knowledge possible? Emphasis will be placed on the works of Heraclitus, Parmenides, Plato, and Aristotle.

PHIL 30200 HISTORY OF MEDIEVAL PHILOSOPHY

| 001 | 15043 | TR | 01:30 PM-02:45 PM | BRNG 1230 | Brower, J. |
A survey of some of the main trends and major figures of medieval philosophy. Emphasis will be on close reading and analysis of representative texts in medieval metaphysics, epistemology, and ethics, but some attention will also be given to broader philosophical traditions that develop during the thousand years separating late antiquity from the Renaissance. Readings (in English translation) may include Augustine,
Boethius, Avicenna, Anselm, Abelard, Maimonides, Aquinas, Scotus, Ockham and Suarez.

PHIL 30300  HISTORY OF MODERN PHILOSOPHY

| 001 | 24019 | TR | 03:00 PM-04:15 PM | BRNG 1230 | Jacovides, M. |

Philosophy flourished in the early modern period (for us, between 1633 and 1787). We shall examine the central doctrines of Descartes, Locke, Spinoza, Berkeley, and Kant. Our central epistemic topics will be the problem of skepticism, whether we have any innate ideas, and how we can know anything about the outside world. Our central metaphysical topics will include the nature of minds, the nature of bodies, and the relation between them. We shall also consider how these philosophers attempted to fit God into their newly scientific worldviews. Three papers will be assigned.

PHIL 30400  19TH CENTURY PHILOSOPHY

| 001 | 17676 | TR | 12:00 PM-01:15 PM | BRNG 1230 | Smith, D. |

This is a course in nineteenth-century philosophy that will focus on the work of five key philosophers of the period: G. W. F. Hegel, Karl Marx, Søren Kierkegaard, Friedrich Nietzsche, and William James. The emphasis throughout the course will be on a close reading of the primary texts. We will trace out the fundamental philosophical problems and themes that were addressed during the century.

PHIL 35000  PHILOSOPHY AND PROBABILITY

| 001 | 14948 | TR | 01:30 PM-02:45 PM | BRNG 1248 | Draper, P. |

The aim of this course is to use mathematical probability to explicate the concept of evidence and then use that explication to address a variety of foundational problems in the philosophy of science. Topics include the rules of mathematical probability and their relevance to philosophy of science; the basic structure of scientific reasoning; the issue of why simpler theories are, not just easier to use, but more likely to be true; the question of whether or why strong or conclusive evidence against a scientific theory is, in principle, easier to come by than strong or conclusive evidence for it; challenges to the method of statistical significance testing; the problem of whether it is possible to justify induction; and the issue of how one theory can be more likely to be true than all competing theories even though that theory fits the data no better or even worse than some of those competing theories. There are no pre-requisites for this course. The main requirements for the course are homework, quizzes, and a comprehensive final exam.

PHIL 41100  MODERN ETHICAL THEORY

| 001 | 17564 | MWF | 11:30 AM-12:20 PM | BRNG 1230 | Kain, P. |

A philosophical examination of the major controversies in the history of modern ethics, including arguments about the place of reason and of sentiment in ethics, the basis of moral obligation, the relation between God and morality, and the relation between morality and science. We will study the work of philosophers such as Thomas Hobbes, G. W. Leibniz, Francis Hutcheson, David Hume, Immanuel Kant, J. S. Mill, Friedrich Nietzsche, and others; paying particular attention to the work of Hume and Kant. Assignments will include frequent short papers (< 500 words), one 6-8 page argumentative essay, a midterm essay exam and a final exam.

PHIL 42100  PHILOSOPHY OF SCIENCE

| 001 | 17567 | MWF | 2:30PM-3:20PM | BRNG 1230 | Curd, M. |

The aim of the course is to explore some of the main issues and problems in contemporary philosophy of science: demarcation, laws of nature, explanation, induction and confirmation, rationality and relativism, realism versus antirealism. The emphasis is on the philosophy in the philosophy of science. Consequently, most of the people we will be reading are philosophers and philosophers of science—people like Kuhn, Duhem, Carnap, Hempel, van Fraassen and Hacking—not scientists. The concern with philosophy also means that we will have little to do with the history, sociology, and psychology of science. The focus is on philosophical issues that arise in the natural sciences (principally physics, chemistry, and biology).

PHIL 42500  METAPHYSICS

| 001 | 17568 | TR | 09:00AM – 10:15AM | BRNG 1248 | Cover, J. |

The French philosopher J. Maritain once said “A philosopher is not a philosopher if he is not a metaphysician.” He meant this to be true of any philosopher – or, as the case might be, non-philosopher: perhaps epistemologists and ethicists are not philosophers; or perhaps instead epistemologists and ethicists are metaphysicians. Consider Bergmann, the epistemologist: if he were a philosopher who failed to be a metaphysician, would we have in him a case of a philosopher
failing to be a philosopher? This question begins approaching issues of (i) Modality and Essentialism, which will make up a third of the issues we shall discuss in this course. The other two are issues of (ii) Ontology and of (iii) Identity, Persistence, and Change. In connection with (i), we’ll work toward a principled approach to such claims as these:

--- Since nine is the number of planets, and the number of planets could have been greater than it is, nine isn’t essentially odd.
--- If a claim is necessarily true, that is owing to the meanings of words (think of ‘All bachelors are unmarried’). But of course no claim to the effect that thus-and-so exists can be true merely owing to the meanings of words. So, nothing exists necessarily, not even God, or the number five, or the principle of non-contradiction.

In connection with (ii), we’ll figure out how to approach and evaluate claims such as these:

--- If Plato showed courage and courage is a virtue, then there exist at least two things: Plato, and courage.
--- “Everything” is the correct (and important) answer to the question “What exists?”
--- My cheese has four holes and your cheese has five; there are numbers; but there are no holes.

And, in connection with (iii), such claims as these:

--- According to Leibniz’s Law, if \( x = y \), then (of course!) \( x \) can’t have properties that \( y \) lacks. The offspring of Jack and Eunice Cover, born on 26 June 1958, weighed seven pounds. Professor Cover weighs 127 pounds. So, Professor Cover can’t be the offspring of Jack and Eunice Cover.
--- Since Lois believes that Superman can fly, Superman has the property of being believed by Lois to be able to fly. Since Lois doesn’t believe that Clarke Kent can fly, Clarke Kent lacks the property of being believed by Lois to be able to fly. So then, Superman has a property that Clarke lacks, and hence by Leibniz’s Law Clarke isn’t Superman. But Clarke is Superman. Thus, Leibniz’s Law is false. [But Leibniz’s Law is true. So...um....]
--- Either there is no such thing as Descartes’ right hand, or else two things can exist in the same place at the same time.
PHIL 53200  STUDIES IN THEORY OF KNOWLEDGE

001  17587  TR  12:00 PM-01:15 PM  BRNG 1248  Bergmann, M.

The focus of the course will be contemporary analytic epistemology. The four main topics we will look at are:
1. the foundationalism-coherentism debate
2. the internalism-externalism debate
3. skepticism and responses to it
4. the epistemology of intuition

Course requirements: keeping up with the reading, a short paper, a longer paper, a class presentation, and several shorter written assignments (no exam).

PHIL 54200  RATIONALITY & RELATIVISM: AFRICAN-AMERICAN PERSPECTIVES

001  17590  TR  03:00 PM-04:15 PM  BRNG 1248  Harris, L.

An examination of relativism, particularly reasons on the side of Protagoras’ claim that man is the measure of all things and thereby reasons contrary to Plato’s transcendental rationalism. The examination will involve pragmatism and its conception of social entities and truth. Selected problems will be drawn from the philosophy of race and authors Richard Rorty and Alain Locke.

PHIL 60100  SPECIAL TOPICS ANCIENT PHILOSOPHY

001  17591  M  11:30AM-02:20 PM  BRNG 1248  Curd, P.

The practice of the earliest Presocratic thinkers challenges traditional early Greek views that human beings are epistemically feeble and can know very little. The Ionians make claims about the fundamental structure of the cosmos and the principles that govern it. These assertions presuppose that they have knowledge of things far beyond their own (or any human) experience. Both Heraclitus and Parmenides certainly suppose that human knowledge is possible, even if quite difficult to attain. So the question arises: what could possibly justify the Presocratic confidence in human capacities to discover and to know? Most Presocratic thinkers share a commitment to two claims. The first is the basic intelligibility of the cosmos. The second is that human beings, having capacities for perception, thought, and understanding can come to know things beyond their direct experience. This seminar is an exploration of the early Greek philosophers’ philosophical justifications for these claims, especially how they involve rejection of traditional (Homeric and Hesiodic) views about the gods, and about the limited nature of human understanding.

Prerequisite: PHIL 50100 (or permission of the instructor).

PHIL 68000  DISSERTATION WORKSHOP SEMINAR

001  17590  TR  4:30PM-5:45PM  BRNG 1248  Kelly, D.

The aim of this course is to provide a constructive forum for the development of graduate students’ dissertation projects, to help sustain progress on research and maintain participation in a supportive intellectual community. The course will also serve as a key component of students’ preparation for the job market. Each student will present work of their own--e.g., an overview of their dissertation project, or a chapter or a part of a chapter from their dissertation, for discussion with the other graduate students in the seminar and the faculty instructor. Students are required to make the written version of the material to be presented available to the class at least one week before their presentation and discussion. All students are expected to read and come prepared to discuss the material presented. Regular attendance is expected of all participants. Prerequisite: 6 credit hours at the graduate level in Philosophy.

PHIL 68500  PHILOSOPHY OF KANT

001  17593  F  12:30 PM-03:20 PM  BRNG 1248  Marina, J.

This course will be concerned with the critical philosophy as a whole. Primary emphasis, however, will be on the theories of knowledge and metaphysics as developed in the Critique of Pure Reason. Lesser attention will be paid to Kant’s ethics and the principles of judgment as time permits.

Please contact Sue Graham (CLA Counseling and Student Services for more information) at 765-49-44976 or sgraham@purdue.edu.

See URL Philosophy Courses for additional information.