### Philosophy Courses

Select from the drop down box to view courses from past semesters:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Monday</th>
<th>Tuesday</th>
<th>Wednesday</th>
<th>Thursday</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9:30–11:30</td>
<td>PHIL 77800 [28805] Contemporary Problems in the Philosophy of Art Prof. Carroll Room 7314</td>
<td>PHIL 76700 [28810] Reference and Experimental Philosophy Prof. Devitt Room 7395</td>
<td>PHIL 77100 [28814] Personal Identity Prof. Greenwood Room 7314</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:00–4:00</td>
<td>PHIL 76000 [28803] Plato’s Republic Prof. Vasiliiou Room 7395</td>
<td>PHIL 77900 [28170] Kant’s Ethics and Politics Prof. Schwarzenbach Room 8203</td>
<td>PHIL 77000 [28816] Mental Qualities and Perception Prof. Rosenthal Room 8203</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Cross Listed Courses:
Phil 77900 [28809]: Ethical Issues in Clinical Research (C), Prof. Rhodes, T 05:30 – 07:00, (Sep. 8, 2015 – Nov. 17, 2015, 11 Weeks), Room: Annenberg 24-206B Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai, 4 credits
Phil 77700 [28818]: The Morality of Inequality (C), Prof. Baumrin, R 06:30 – 08:30, Room 3309, 4 credits.

Students may also take courses at other schools in the Interuniversity Doctoral Consortium. Choose a school from the list below to see the course schedule for the current semester (where available).

- Columbia University
- Fordham University
- The New School
- New York University
- Princeton University
- Rutgers University
- SUNY Stony Brook

The Graduate Center’s Current Student Handbook has information about and instructions for registering for classes at other consortium schools.

FALL 2015 COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

Phil 77500 [28802]
Academic Ethics
Prof. Cahn
4 credits
Mon 11:45 - 1:45
Room 3207

Just as medical ethics examines moral problems that arise in the world of medicine, and business ethics examines moral problems that arise in the conduct of business, so academic ethics examines moral problems that arise in the process of education. In this course we shall concentrate on higher education and consider a variety of ethical issues raised by professorial practices and university life. The works to be studied include: Steven
Phil 77800 [28805]

Contemporary Problems in the Philosophy of Art

Prof. Carroll

4 credits

Tues. 9:30-11:30

Room 7314

This course will examine several recent discussions in the philosophy of art including the definition of art, the nature of aesthetic experience, the concept of art criticism, the relation of art to the emotions, especially the negative emotions, and humor. Readings will include work by Gary Iseminger, Dominic Lopes, James Grant, Jenefer Robinson, Dan Dennett and others. Students will be required to make a class presentation and to write a term paper.

[Counts towards course satisfaction of Group C]

Phil 76700 [28810]

Reference and Experimental Philosophy

Prof. Devitt

4 credits

Weds. 9:30-11:30

Room 7395

It is usual to think that referential relations hold between language and thoughts on the one hand, and the world on the other. The most striking example of such a relation is the naming relation, the sort that holds between 'Socrates' and the famous philosopher Socrates. Other sorts of words are best seen as having other sorts of referential relations to the world for which various terms are used; for example, 'denotation' and 'application'. Usually, philosophers are interested in reference because they take it to be the core of meaning. Thus, the fact that 'Socrates' refers to that philosopher is the core of the name's meaning and hence of its contribution to the meaning of any sentence - for example, 'Socrates is wise' - that contains the name.

The central question about reference is: In virtue of what does a term have its reference? Answering this requires a theory that explains the term's relation to its referent.
Until the 70s, answers were nearly always along descriptivist lines: the reference of a term was determined by descriptions competent speakers associated with it. Then came the revolution, led by Kripke, which rejected description theories for names and some other terms in favor of some sort of causal theory.

How should we get to the truth of the matter about language in general? The received methodology, in both philosophy and linguistics, appears to be that we should consult our metalinguistic intuitions (which in philosophy are often thought to be a priori). In particular, theories of reference seem to have been supported in this way. And the intuitions consulted have been those of philosophers.

This methodology has been challenged by Stephen Stich and several other "experimental philosophers". They have proceeded to test the intuitions of the folk, showing that in certain cases these are at odds with those of the philosophers. They take this to discredit the whole enterprise of theorizing about reference. It will be argued in the course that the experimental philosophers are right to be critical of the received methodology but wrong to respond by testing metalinguistic intuitions of the folk. Rather, theories of language, including theories of reference, should be tested against linguistic usage. Examples of such tests will be discussed. (This argument has implications for the methodology of philosophy in general, of course.)

The course will be concerned primarily with theories of reference for singular terms: for proper names like 'Socrates', demonstratives like 'this cat', pronouns like 'she', definite descriptions like 'the last great philosopher of antiquity', and indefinite descriptions like 'a lion'. Anaphoric reference will not be considered. However, there will be some discussion of "natural kind" terms like 'gold' and 'tiger' and "artifactual" kind terms like 'pencil'. Figures to be discussed include Frege, Russell, Kripke, Donnellan, Searle, Evans, Putnam, Grice, Kaplan, Wilson, Neale, Bach, Reimer.

This is not an introduction to the philosophy of language. Anyone wishing to take it who has not already taken a course in the philosophy of language should consult with me before enrolling.

Requirements
(i) A brief weekly email raising questions about, making criticisms of, or developing points concerning, matters discussed in the class and reading for that week. 50% of grade.
(ii) A class presentation based on a draft for a paper (topic chosen in consultation with me). The draft to be submitted before Tuesday of the week of presentation. 20% of grade.
(iii) A 2,500 word paper probably arising from the draft in (ii). 30% of grade.

READINGS
Martinich, A. P., ed. The Philosophy of Language (Oxford)
Phil 76900 [28804]

History of the Mind

Prof. Godfrey-Smith

4 credits

Mon. 4:15-6:15

Room 7395

An interdisciplinary course about the evolution of perception, behavior, and nervous systems, from Precambrian times until the present, but with an emphasis on the early stages. The aim will be to integrate scientific work on these topics with philosophical questions about subjective experience, consciousness, perception, and intentionality. Background in philosophy of mind, philosophy of biology, and/or evolutionary theory is recommended but not essential.

[Counts towards course satisfaction of Group B]

Phil 77100 [28814]

Personal Identity

Prof. Greenwood

4 credits

Thurs. 9:30-11:30

Room 7314

The course will focus on philosophical theories of diachronic personal identity (what makes a person at a later date identical to a person at an earlier date?) and synchronic personal identity (what makes an individual a singular person at any point in time?). After exploring some general issues about identity and personhood, and surveying some classical theories of personal identity, we will consider contemporary ‘psychological’ and ‘physical’ theories of personal identity. We will discuss the role played by memory, spatiotemporal continuity of body and brain, core psychology, distinctive psychology, and unity of consciousness in the
determination of personal identity. We will consider the purported implications of thought
experiments involving reincarnation, brain division and transplantation, fission and fusion,
teletransportation, molecular decomposition and recomposition, and the relevance of
psychological studies of split-brain patients and multiple personalities. We will also consider
the implications of different theories of personal identity for questions about personal
responsibility and desert, and the role (if any) our own concept of our identity–our 'sense
of identity'–plays in determining our personal identity. If time permits, we will also look at
the bearing of current psychological, social and psychiatric theories of identity on
philosophical criteria of personal identity. Regular attendance is required. Duplicates will
not be accepted, and fission products will be independently assessed. Multiples will be
assessed once only.

Assessment will be based upon a class presentation, written up as a short paper, and a
longer paper due at the end of the semester, plus contribution to class discussion.

Other required readings will be provided electronically.

[Counts towards course satisfaction of Group A or B]

Phil 80000 [28813]
Topics in the Epistemology of Logic II
Profs. Kripke & Padro
4 credits
Weds. 2:00-4:00
Room 8203

This seminar is a continuation of the seminar that we gave in the Fall of 2014. Enough will
be initially repeated so that attendance at the previous seminar will not be presupposed.
We will begin with a review of the problem set up with Lewis Carroll in the paper “What the
Tortoise Said to Achilles” and similar arguments that can be given for other connectives.
The point will be that logic cannot be taken as a set of postulates. However, this time we
intend to discuss various strategies for justifying our usual logical rules and a number of
distinguished philosophers have accepted our invitation to come and present their views on
this and related matters to the seminar. Our initial list of guest speakers includes Paul
Boghossian, Hartry Field, Christopher Peacocke, and our own Graham Priest.

Evaluation will consist in a term paper. Prof. Padro will grade in consultation with Prof.
Kripke any paper submitted for credit. For the first class, students should read Carroll’s
article "What the Tortoise Said to Achilles" (Mind 4 (14), 1895: 278-280).

[Counts towards course satisfaction of Group A]

[back to course schedule]

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**Phil 76800 [28806]**

**Modal Logic**

**Profs.** Mendelsohn & Fitting

4 credits

Tues. 11:45-1:45

Room 7395

Description: Modal logic is usually thought of as the logic of qualified truth: necessarily true, true at all times, and so on. From at least Montague on, quantified modal logic has also been thought of as the natural setting for a logic of intensions. This course will cover the whole range.

We begin with propositional modal logic, presented semantically via Kripke models, and proof theoretically using both tableaus and axiom systems. First-order modal logic will be studied in considerable detail, using possible-world semantics and tableau systems, but not axiom systems. Various philosophical issues will be discussed, amongst which are: the nature of possible worlds, possibilist and actualist quantification, rigid and non-rigid designators, intensional and extensional objects, existence and being, equality, synonymy, designation and non-designation, and definite descriptions in a modal context.

The prerequisites for the course: a familiarity with classical logic, both propositional and first-order.

[Counts towards course satisfaction of Group E]

[back to course schedule]

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**Phil 80300 [28812]**

**Dissertation Seminar**

**Prof.** Neale

4 credits

Weds. 11:45-1:45

Room 7395
Level Three students who are working on their dissertations and prospectuses will be able to register for this course as auditors.

The Proseminar is restricted to and required of students entering the Ph.D. program. Its purpose is to get students accustomed to graduate-level writing, seminar discussion, and presentation skills.

The idea that aspects of our world are social constructed has defended within a number of domains. It is a mainstay of Science and Technology Studies, and a widespread presupposition within recent Continental Philosophy. Defenses of social construction can be found within analytic philosophy of science, feminist philosophy, critical race theory, philosophy of psychiatry, and other subfields. It also has defenders in fields outside of philosophy, including sociology, social psychology. Anthropology, gender studies, disability studies, and literary theory. The goal of this seminar is to better understand and assess social constructionist claims. For example, how does the idea of social construction relate to relativism, nominalism, and anti-realism? Is social constructionism a thesis about norms,
The nature of mental qualities not only raises some of the most contentious issues in philosophy of mind today, but has a significant effect on discussions of the nature of perceiving.

It’s widely assumed that qualitative states cannot occur without being conscious; indeed, the term ‘qualia’ is normally used so as to build consciousness into qualitative mental properties. More important but seldom noted, the assumption that mental qualities are essentially conscious makes it hard to give any informative account of what mental qualities are, since first-person access would then trump anything else we might say about them. So it seems to many that all we know about mental qualities is from the way they’re conscious, and there’s nothing to say about them except that we know them when we have them.

That in turn seems to suggest that we can’t understand how mental qualities could have a physical nature or even arise from anything physical. How could anything physical be known only from the first person? This also encourages the idea that it’s possible (or at least conceivable) that conscious mental qualities are invertible in a way that’s empirically undetectable, and that there could be creatures behaviorally and physically exactly like us that undetectably lack conscious mental qualities.

We’ll examine these and related issues, in particular whether the views that qualitative mental states are essentially conscious and knowable only from the inside are anything more than received theoretical bias.
These issues have had a pronounced effect on recent theorizing about perception, leading some to explore the possibility that we can avoid appeal to mental qualities altogether in giving an account of perceiving. According to some, we directly perceive objects without benefit of intervening mental qualities. Others have urged that we can account for whatever qualitative character is relevant to perceiving solely in terms of conceptual content, or in terms of content that isn’t conceptual but is nonetheless representational in the ways relevant to perceiving.

These approaches seek to explain perceiving in ways that avoid having to countenance mental qualities. But there is another perception-based approach that seeks to account for mental qualities in terms of perceptual role, in particular, perceptual discriminative ability. Since discrimination occurs without being conscious, such an account allows us to countenance mental qualities without tying them essentially to consciousness. We’ll examine whether this type of account is theoretically and empirically defensible, evaluate its implications for the nature of perception, and assess it relative to the alternative perception-based theories that eliminate or circumvent the appeal to mental qualities.

[Counts towards course satisfaction of Group B]

What are human beings like by nature? Are we competitive or cooperative? What roles do innate and cultural factors play in the production of human excellence and well-being? And what can we say about these topics that is not, in itself, culturally bound? The aim of this course is to bring some of the insights of classical Chinese texts to these enduring philosophical questions concerning the nature of virtue, selfhood, and agency. We will also look at recent discussions of these questions in the cognitive sciences with an eye toward seeing how they might further illuminate or problematize the insights in these texts. Topics will include: the debate between the classical Confucians and Mohists on the proper role of partiality in ethical commitments; the debate among the Confucians Mengzi (Mencius) and Xunzi concerning human nature and the path of moral development; the interplay of native endowment and cultural norms as part of moral habituation; the role of language in shaping cognition and behavior; and the metaethical insights of Daoists such as Zhuangzi.
Readings will include primary texts in translation, relevant secondary literature, as well as contemporary philosophical, psychological, and behavioral research.

One of the aims of this course is to provide students with a broad base of knowledge in the classical Chinese philosophical tradition in order to prepare them to teach introductory courses at the undergraduate level. No previous familiarity with Chinese philosophy is required.

[Counts towards course satisfaction of Group D-Ancient or C]

Phil 77600 [28807]
Kant's Ethics & Politics
Prof. Schwarzenbach
4 credits
Tues. 2:00-4:00
Room 8203

The seminar will focus on Kant's moral philosophy as set forth primarily in his Groundwork (1785), Critique of Practical Reason (1788), and the Metaphysics of Morals (1797) but we will also move on to his later political (and even anthropological) writings. Topics will include the standard ones: the notion of the good will, duty, autonomy, the distinction between empirical and pure practical reason, the categorical imperative and the "fact of reason," but also Kant's doctrine of virtue and of moral feeling, of political right, republican government and international cosmopolitan law.

Throughout the seminar we will evaluate a Kantian ethics in the face of criticism from utilitarian, Hegelian and communitarian, feminist and critical race theorists, as well as in the context of contemporary discussions of globalization and cosmopolitan community.

[Counts towards course satisfaction of Group C or D-Modern]

Phil 76000 [28803]
Plato's Republic
Prof. Vasiliou
4 credits
Mon. 2:00-4:00
Room 7395

Plato's Republic is one of the most influential texts in the history of philosophy. The dialogue treats most major areas of philosophy, including ethics, political philosophy,
metaphysics, epistemology, philosophy of education, and aesthetics. Avid discussion continues about its unity, purpose, and the overall plausibility of some of its central claims. We shall read the entire work, supplementing it with readings from elsewhere in Plato; Apology, Crito, Euthyphro, Gorgias, Meno, Phaedo, and Symposium will be particularly important. Engagement with secondary literature will be mandatory. One theme that will continue through the seminar is the extent to which the dominant eudaimonist readings of the Republic are accurate.

We will use the translation by G.M.A. Grube (2nd edition, revised by C.D.C. Reeve) from Hackett Press, which is easily and inexpensively available as a stand-alone volume. (Note: this is not Reeve's own 2004 translation of the Republic from Hackett, which converts the dialogue into direct discourse.) The same translation is included in Cooper, J. (ed.), Plato Complete Works, Hackett. For other dialogues, we will also use the Hackett editions (available in the Cooper volume or in stand alone editions). Everyone taking the course for credit should purchase a physical copy of the Grube/Reeve Republic (at least) and be sure to bring it with them to the seminar. For the first seminar, please read the Apology, Crito, and Euthyphro. It would also be useful to have read the Republic at least once cover to cover.

Required work will most probably include two short take-home essay exams and a term paper of approximately 6000 words. Auditors are welcome, provided they attend regularly.

[Counts towards course satisfaction of Group D-Ancient]

Phil 72000 [28817]
Logic
Prof. Warenski
4 credits
Thurs. 4:15-6:15
Room 7314

This course is a philosophical introduction to classical symbolic logic. No prior background in logic is assumed. We will study sentence logic and first-order predicate logic with identity. Topics to be covered include semantics, syntax, and proof procedures. We will also cover the metalogical concepts of soundness and completeness. Along the way, we will take a look at some central problems in the philosophy of logic, motivations for non-classical logics, and the relevance of logic to other areas of philosophy. The goal is to achieve both a practical mastery and philosophical understanding of elementary logic.

[Counts towards course satisfaction of E]