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
FALL 2019 COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

Phil 77600
Contemporary Problems in the Philosophy of Art
Prof. Carroll
4 credits
Tues. 11:45-1:45
Room TBA
Contemporary Problems in the Philosophy of Art begins with the discussion of recent answers to the question "What is art?" Some authors, among others, to be studied include Gary Iseminger, Dominic McIver Lopes, and Nick Zangwill. Relatedly, we will examine the nature of aesthetic experience and questions about the evaluation of art, including formalism and functionalism. Time permitting, we will explore the relations of the emotions and morality to art.

There are no course pre-requisites. Students are expected to participate in seminar discussions and to write a final paper. The aim of the course is to prepare students to publish in the area of contemporary aesthetics and to teach in it.

[Counts towards course satisfaction of Group C]

Phil 77500
Environment Philosophy
Prof. Dahbour
4 credits
Mon. 2:00-4:00
Room TBA
This course is designed to introduce students to the variety of ways in which philosophers are attempting to deal with the environmental crisis of the 21st century. Because “environmental philosophy” is a research agenda touching on many areas of philosophy, including reinterpretations of canonical thinkers in various historical periods, as well as both old and new problems in moral and political philosophy, aesthetics, and philosophy of science, the course will try to survey several of these areas, in order to give students maximum exposure to the range of possible topics that they might consider for future study.

We will begin with brief consideration of the two most noticeable aspects of the environmental crisis—the accumulation of extinction events, and the acceleration of climate catastrophes. We will then spend some time considering definitional questions about some key terms in environmental science—e.g., nature, sustainability, ecosystems, resilience. Consideration of how the environment has affected thinking in aesthetics, and in moral philosophy, will follow—especially with regard to aesthetic and moral sensibilities concerning natural environments and nonhuman life forms.

Finally, we will spend significant time considering one of the most active areas of environmental philosophy today—attempts to formulate a theory of environmental justice. We will consider both the extent to which existing theories of justice can be
extended to environmental problems, and the possibility that a new conception could arise from environmental concerns that would also address longstanding problems of social injustice.

Throughout the course, but especially in the last part, we will consider not only what philosophers might contribute to understanding and ameliorating environmental crises, but also what philosophers might learn from other disciplines that have already produced important studies of environmental problems. Some authors we may read: M Serres, J Gray, S Gardiner, K Soper, WB Callicott, B Norton, A Carlson, H Rolston, D Jamieson, J Martinez-Alier, E Ostrom, M Mies, K Whyte, D Schlosberg, W Sachs, E Shrader-Frechette.

Students will be responsible for orally presenting, as well as writing an analysis of, some of the required readings for this class. In addition, they will also be required to write a significant research paper.

[Counts towards course satisfaction of Group C]

[back to course schedule]
This methodology has been challenged by a group of “experimental philosophers”, starting with the now-classic paper, “Semantics Cross-Cultural Style”, by Machery et al (2004). They tested the intuitions of the folk, showing that they differ from those of the philosophers and vary across cultures. Stephen Stich and Edouard Machery, 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. I have recently conducted such experiments, with collaborators from the GC. I am looking for more collaborators.

Substance. 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, Burge, Grice, Kaplan, Martí, Neale, Bach, Reimer.

Methodology. Our discussion of definite descriptions will raise a lively issue of general significance for the philosophy of language: How should settle whether a linguistic phenomenon is to be handled “semantically” or "pragmatically"?

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
1. 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.
2. (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.
3. (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)
- Haukioja, ed. 2015. Advances in Experimental Philosophy of Language, Bloomsbury. 978-1-4725-7075-4

[Counts towards course satisfaction of Group A]
Phil 80200
PhD Proseminar
Profs. Fricker and Pappas
4 credits
Weds. 11:45-1:45
Room TBA
Open to PhD students in their first semester.
[back to course schedule]

Phil 80100
MA Proseminar
Prof. Gilmore
4 credits
Weds. 11:45-1:45
Room TBA
Open to MA students in their first semester.
[back to course schedule]

Phil 80000
Truth and the Liar Paradox
Profs. Field, Kripke, and Priest
4 credits
Weds. 2:00-4:00
Room TBA
Between the 1930s and the 1970s there was a general consensus amongst logicians that the best solution to the Liar and related paradoxes was Tarskian: no language can be allowed to contain its own truth predicate. In the 1970s this consensus disappeared, and it is now more generally held that an appropriate solution should accommodate a language with its own truth predicate. How that should be done is, of course, another matter.

In this course, we will be reading and discussing a number of papers that deal with that issue from a variety of different perspectives. Topics to be discussed include (hopefully): classical vs non-classical logic, definitions of truth vs axiomatic theories, fixed point constructions, dialetheism, conditionals and restricted quantification, revenge paradoxes, sub-structural solutions.

[Counts towards course satisfaction of Group A]
[back to course schedule]
Widely judged to be dead in the heyday of neo-liberalism and the seeming global post-Cold War triumph of market ideology, left theory has made an impressive comeback in recent years. Witness the concern about the growing chasm between rich and poor in Western nations, and the spectacle of a self-proclaimed socialist drawing huge crowds on the U.S. campaign trail. Karl Marx's ideas about macro historical patterns, globalization, economic tendencies within capitalist society, commodification and alienation, the power of the privileged classes, the role of dominant ideologies, and the possibility of a radically new social order are thus arguably as relevant as ever.

In this course, we will focus on trying to get clear on some of the key concepts within Marx's thought, how they have been interpreted and developed by others and how well they stand up today, and the complex relationship (sometimes involving both critique and appropriation) between Marxism and other bodies of radical "oppositional" political theory (feminism, critical race theory, postcolonial theory).

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

Natural language appears to be full of context-sensitive words and constructions that pose serious questions for compositional theories of meaning. Some of these intersect with questions about vagueness and polysemy. One aim of the seminar is to establish precisely what problems context-sensitivity creates; another is to establish the roles of speakers' intentions and notions of context, context sets, salience, expertise, accommodation, and modulation in determining content.

[Counts towards course satisfaction of Group A]
Moral psychology is the study of psychological processes involved in moral judgment and moral behavior. The psychology of morals also has implications for normative ethics (e.g., are leading normative theories psychologically viable?) and meta-ethics (e.g., what are we talking about when we make moral claims?). In this seminar, topics include: What is the nature of moral emotions and what roles do they play in moral judgment? Are any values universal? Are there innate foundations? What is the nature of moral disagreement? Are there such things as virtuous character traits? What is the relationship between morality and personal identity? What is the relationship between freedom and responsibility? What counts as a good life? We will look at both interdisciplinary and traditional philosophical approaches, including both Western and non-Western perspectives.

[Counts towards course satisfaction of Group B or C]

[back to course schedule]
Phil 77000
Consciousness: Neuroscience and Philosophy
Profs. Rosenthal and Ro
4 credits
Thurs. 2:00-4:00
Room TBA
The course will combine a focus on dominant theories of consciousness in the current literature in philosophy with an examination of a number of especially revealing neuroscientific and related experimental findings. A major goal will be to evaluate theories of consciousness by appeal to empirical findings. We will also keep in mind possible directions for fruitful research suggested by the interaction of current findings and theoretical explanations.

The discussion of theoretical approaches will rely on the contrast between what have come to be called higher-order theories and first-order theories. According to higher-order theories, the consciousness of a mental state, such as a perception, thought, or feeling, consists in one’s being aware of that state. First-order theories, by contrast, deny that any awareness of a state figures in that state’s being conscious. We will consider the variety of theories in each group, and their advantages and disadvantages.

Much of the evaluation of such theories will engage with a detailed consideration of empirical work on psychological phenomena such as unconscious priming, binocular rivalry, blindsight, neglect and extinction, anosognosia, Balint’s syndrome, split brain, and other conditions and dissociations that shed light on consciousness or its absence. We will want to understand in some detail the nature of these conditions in psychological terms, their neural underpinnings, and their significance for the understanding and explanation of consciousness.

There are no prerequisites, since this is a course offered jointly in philosophy, psychology, and cognitive neuroscience.

[Counts towards course satisfaction of Group B]

NOTE: This course is also listed as Psychology 87203 and Cognitive Neuroscience 70602.
Stoics to sharpen and refine their positions on many fundamental issues, which in turn helped to lead to the formulation of nuanced, sophisticated, and often strikingly contemporary views.

Previous exposure to Greek philosophy would be beneficial, although it is not necessary. Students not enrolled in the Philosophy Program may register only with permission of the instructor.

[Counts towards course satisfaction of Group D-Ancient]

Phil 76100
Philosophy in the Eighteenth Century: Kant and his Predecessors
Prof. Wilson
4 credits
Mon. 6:30-8:30
Room TBA
This seminar will study the formation of Kant's Transcendental Idealism as a reaction to the problems posed by his predecessors, including not only Descartes, Leibniz, and Locke, but also Buffon, Rousseau and Hume. Among the issues to be considered are: Atoms or monads? God as pathological idea, or as Nature itself, or as a person? An incorporeal soul or an organized material brain? Free will and responsibility or mechanism? Moral feeling or objective duties? Political hope or fatalistic resignation? Readings to be drawn from the above and from the secondary literature. The aim is to acquaint students with these important controversies and to understand and appreciate, but also to evaluate Kant's 'critical philosophy' as an attempted solution to them.

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