## SPRING 2011

### Philosophy » Courses

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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 Spring 2010 semester (where available).

- Columbia University
- Fordham University
- The New School
- New York University
- Princeton University
SPRING 2011 COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

Phil 76100 [14454]
Kant’s Critique of Pure Reason
Prof. Nuzzo
4 credits
Wed. 9:30 - 11:30
Room 7395

This course will give a comprehensive account of Kant’s Critique of Pure Reason (1781, 1787). In this fundamental work Kant proposes the new idea of "transcendental philosophy," offers his critique of traditional metaphysics and a new idea of metaphysics beyond the rationalist and the empiricist tradition, and provides the foundation of his critical epistemology. We will address issues such as Kant’s idea of transcendental philosophy, the meaning of the Copernican Revolution in philosophy, the nature of space and time and the status of the a priori, the function of the transcendental unity of apperception. The basis of the course will be a close reading of the text (selection from all parts, the Transcendental Aesthetic, the Analytic, the Dialectic).

[Counts towards course satisfaction of Group D-modern]

Phil 77800 [14473]
Democracy and Education
Prof. Cahn
4 credits
Mon. 411:45 - 1:45
Room 6417


[Counts towards course satisfaction of Group C]

Phil 76500 [14459]
Propositions
Prof. Ostertag
4 credits
Tues. 411:45 - 1:45
Room 7395

This course will focus on the metaphysics of propositions—their principles of individuation and identity. Topics to be discussed will include (but will not necessarily be limited to) the following:
• *The unity of the proposition*. Are propositions structured? If so, how are their individual components unified into sayable, thinkable wholes? Here we draw on classic discussions by Frege and Russell before turning to contemporary theorists such as Jeffrey King and Scott Soames.

• *The semantics of ‘that’-clauses*. We consider a well-known objection to the thesis that ‘that’-clauses refer to propositions, due to Michael McKinsey and Friederike Moltmann; we also consider a challenge (due to Stephen Schiffer) to the view that the referent of a ‘that’-clause is structured entity.

• *The analysis of fictional propositions*. According to the orthodox Russellian account, the proposition that Don Draper is a womanizer does not exist. We will consider analyses by theorists broadly sympathetic to the Russellian picture according to which there is such a proposition (e.g., Saul Kripke and Nathan Salmon).

• *The existence of propositions generally*. According to Schiffer, the existence of propositions follows rather straightforwardly from a default theory of the semantics of attitude reports—the so-called face-value theory. He has a similarly "deflationary" approach to their individuation, embodied in his theory of pleonastic propositions. We will examine both aspects of his approach in detail.

Texts:
Students may wish to pick up the following (other readings will be made available on the course website):
Stephen Schiffer, *The Things We Mean* (Oxford University Press)
If you see a used copy of Russell’s *The Principles of Mathematics* lying around for a decent price, you might want to pick that up as well.

[Counts towards course satisfaction of Group E]

Phil 777600 [14472]
**Aesthetic Psychology**
**Prof. Prinz**
4 credits
Wed. 11:45 - 1:45
Room 7395

In this course we will explore various topics at the intersection of psychology and aesthetics. Topics will include the role of emotion in aesthetic experience, objectivity and relativism of taste, the nature of aesthetic concepts, the allure of horror, constraints of imagination, and the evolution of art. The focus will be on visual art, but we will also touch on literature, film, and music. Participants will be asked to draw on examples of artworks they know to support philosophical and psychological conclusions.

[Counts towards course satisfaction of Group C]

Phil 76900 [14470]
**Philosophy of Social Science**
**Prof. Greenwood**
4 credits
Thurs. 11:45 - 1:45
Room 7395

The course will focus on a number of philosophical and meta-theoretical questions concerning the nature of social phenomena and social scientific explanation. We will cover topics common to most social sciences, such as the debate between so-called holists and individualists; the nature and problems of structural and functional forms of explanation; the
possibility of explanatory laws in social science; and the place of values in social science. We will also cover topics specific to particular social scientific disciplines, such as problems associated with the anthropological understanding of alien cultures, the role of isolative experimentation in social psychology, the presumed autonomy of historical explanation, and the instrumentalist conception of theory in economics. We will also consider the historical evolution of the social sciences, including their institutional development in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Throughout the course, a continuous attempt will be made to provide a general philosophical account of social phenomena. We will try to explicate what Durkheim called the 'distinct characteristic(s)' of the varied phenomena we characterize as social in nature, such as social actions, social structures and social collectives, and the relations between them (without presuming that there is a single characteristic or set of characteristics common to them all). It is hoped that the working analysis of social phenomena developed will enable us to get a better conceptual grip on the fundamental philosophical questions of social science. It will also hopefully enable us to critically evaluate the pretensions of disciplines such as sociobiology and evolutionary social psychology, and familiar but puzzling contemporary claims to the effect that our identities and emotions are socially constructed, and thus the appropriate object of social scientific research.

Contemporary philosophy of social science is in an exciting state of flux, since many of its traditional guiding assumptions and contrasts, derived from scientific empiricist philosophy of science, have been abandoned or qualified in recent years. By returning to the core philosophical questions about social phenomena and social explanation, it is hoped that the course will be able to shed some fresh light on traditional problems and debates, and to identify some emerging contemporary issues.

Social sciences considered will include sociology, anthropology, social psychology, political science, economics and history. No background in social science is assumed, although any background would be an undoubted asset and positive source of course enrichment.

Readings will be based upon book chapters and papers, which I will make available electronically.

[Counts towards course satisfaction of Group B]

Phil 772000 [14448]
Logic
Prof. Orenstein
4 credits
Tues. 2:00 - 4:00
Room 6421

This is a first course in logic for graduate students in philosophy. Wherever possible we will explore the relevance of logic to philosophy.

Topics to be covered include the following:

1. An introduction to elementary logic, i.e., sentence logic and predicate logic with identity.

2. A survey of topics in metalogic, e.g., basic syntactic and semantic concepts, consistency and completeness.

3. A survey of some philosophically interesting systems, e.g., modal logic, many valued logic, intuitionistic logic, free logic and classic Aristotelian logic.

Textbooks:
N.B. Students are advised to prepare for the course by reviewing sentence logic and truth tables.

N.N.B. Before the semester begins go to Amazon, Barnes and Noble etc. to purchase less expensive used copies of the text books.

[Counts towards course satisfaction of Group E]

Phil 80200 [14476]
The Contingent A Priori: Rigid Designation, the Meter, and Neptune Reconsidered
Prof. Kripke
4 credits
Wed. 2:00 - 4:00
Room 7395

This course is a reconsideration, based on earlier lectures of mine on the subject and related talks given elsewhere. The topics involve not only the contingent a priori (as in Naming and Necessity) but numerous other issues. When is a term or notion properly introduced into the language; the validity of various proposed materialistic analyses of mental concepts, the issue of 'operational' definitions, our concept of the natural numbers. These may seem to be very different and unrelated issues, but they are all relevant (and the list is not exhaustive).

Professor Ostertag has volunteered to grade the course.

[Counts towards course satisfaction of Group A or B]
In the second part of the course we’ll turn to this desideratum to see how various theories fare. We’ll also examine whether there is any reason, apart from these theories and the analogy with biology and an evolutionary model, to think that it’s in any way useful for a creature that its mental states are conscious—as against their simply occurring nonconsciously. And if it turns out that it isn’t all that useful, we’ll ask how we might explain in nonevolutionary terms why some mental states are conscious.

We’ll read articles and book chapters on electronic reserve or available otherwise online, including some psychological and neuropsychological work. We’ll also read much of Rosenthal, *Consciousness and Mind*, OUP.

**[Counts towards course satisfaction of Group B]**

Phil 76000 [14451]
**Plato’s Republic**
Prof. Vasiliou
4 credits
Mon. 2-4
Room 7314

Most scholars continue to consider the Republic Plato’s greatest work. The dialogue, consisting of ten books (i.e., chapters), treats most major areas of philosophy: ethics, political philosophy, metaphysics, epistemology, philosophy of education, and aesthetics. It is without doubt one of the most influential texts in the history of philosophy, and in the last several years there have been new ideas about its unity, purpose, and the overall plausibility of some of its central claims.

We shall read the entire work, supplementing it with substantial readings from elsewhere in Plato; *Apology, Crito, Euthyphro, Gorgias, Meno, Phaedo,* and *Symposium* will be particularly important. Engagement with selective secondary literature will be mandatory. Several aspects of the *Republic* are focuses of my recent and current research, and I shall offer the seminar some new interpretations that run counter to certain well-established traditions. I hope that this critical engagement will demonstrate the value of a close reading of the text and further that Plato continues to contribute substantially to contemporary philosophical debates on several fronts.

Required work will most probably include two short take-home essay exams and a term paper of approximately 5000 words. Auditors are welcome, provided they attend regularly.

For the *Republic* we will use the Hackett translation by Grube (revised by Reeve); this is available as a stand-alone volume or 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). For the first seminar, please read the *Apology, Crito,* and *Euthyphro.*

**[Counts towards course satisfaction of Group D-Ancient]**

Phil 78600 [14475]
**Philosophy of Human Rights**
Prof. Gould
4 credits
Tues. 4:15 - 6:15
Room 7314

Appeal to human rights has become commonplace in both contemporary political philosophy and in international political practice. But the philosophical foundations of human rights remain relatively obscure, and the status of human rights as moral and/or legal rights and the form of the claims and obligations that they entail also remain unclear. The rejection of various forms of foundationalism in philosophy, the problematization of the notion of the human, and the emphasis on social construction of norms within social scientific theories
leave the basis and justification of human rights an open question. The diversity of culture has given rise to the critique that the institution of human rights unavoidably involves the imposition of "Western" norms on global governance. In view of these significant difficulties, can human rights fulfill the ambitious role of serving as new and well-justified transnational norms or should they remain restricted to their traditional significance as claims holding only against particular nation-states?

This seminar will address philosophical questions regarding the justification and scope of human rights—including the critical ontological and epistemological issues. We will go on to consider certain hard questions and concrete problems that are implicated in their interpretation and institutionalization: 1) Do human rights properly extend to the private sphere to address harms to women and if so, how can they be enforced? 2) Are the "positive" economic and social rights (e.g. means of subsistence, education) as important as the traditional ("negative") civil and political rights, or is this even a viable distinction? and 3) Can environmental rights be considered human rights? Finally, we will tackle the difficulties that arise in conceptualizing a human right to democracy, especially in view of the role of democratic deliberation in the process of agreeing on and constitutionally establishing these human rights.

Seminar readings will include a brief review of some traditional theories and conventions of human rights, but will focus primarily on the contemporary approaches offered by such philosophers as Henry Shue, Alan Gewirth, Thomas Pogge, Jurgen Habermas, James Nickel, Martha Nussbaum, and James Griffin. Attention will also be given to more critical perspectives offered from the standpoint of Marxist theory, post-modernist theory, feminist theory, and select Confucian and African communitarian theories. Seminar members will be encouraged to relate the course materials to their ongoing research projects through oral presentations and analytical term papers, and will be expected to be active participants in the seminar discussions. For more information, please contact carolcgould@gmail.com.

[Counts towards course satisfaction of Group C]

[back to course schedule]
Phil 7900 [14474]
Medical Ethics
Prof. Baumrin
4 credits
Mon. 5:45 - 7:45
Room Mt. Sinai
Felt Conference Room
Annenberg Hall, 5th Floor

This is the Mount Sinai School of Medicine/Graduate Center, CUNY doctoral seminar in Biomedical Ethics. This course examines "classic" and emerging issues in biomedical ethics paying particular attention to the history of medicine and the nature of scientific thought as it relates to medical ethics. While many issues in biomedical ethics seem timeless such as our concerns about the withholding of treatment, abortion, truth-telling - others have arisen out of the development of an increasingly scientific medicine beginning in the 1700s. It is the availability of well confirmed effective treatments that forces us to wrestle with such questions as the propriety of medical intervention over the objection of the patient, the treatment of children over the objection of their parents, the right of all citizens to health care, the regulation of the sale of body parts for transplantation, and numerous circumstances arising out of assisted reproduction. In the not too distant past it would have seemed bizarre to consider the adjudication of competing rights when one woman contracts to rent the uterus of a surrogate to bear through in vitro fertilization the embryo formed from the egg of a third individual. The current revolution in biotechnology, microelectronics and nanotechnology continuously produces new issues. What is the meaning of confidentially in a world where an enormous amount of information about each of us can be extracted rapidly from numerous searchable databases? What is the moral status of the embryonic stem cell derived from a discarded embryo, or a non-human animal? How are we to regulate cloning and our ability to shape and alter the human genome? We now implant electrodes into the brains of patients with Parkinson's disease and essential tremor. Soon we may be treating depression, disorders of impulse control, anxiety and phobias electronically. Does such technology present different issues as compared with today's drug and surgical therapies? We will also be challenged by the products of bioengineering. We already have prosthetics that remarkably link the brain directly to external mechanical devices and further alter the meaning of disability.

In medical ethics both the past and the future need to inform our vision of proper behavior and decision making. In our world of rapidly advancing technology, much medical ethics policies misread and mishandle the present and construct rules with an eye towards an idealized past, while failing to consider a fast approaching future.

An aim of this course is to prepare philosophers to enter into medical institutions with the preparation necessary to be helpful additions to the provision of health care in ethically acceptable ways.

Principal text is the latest edition of Contemporary Issues in Bioethics, Beauchamp and Walters, Wadsworth. Plus handouts in history and philosophy of medicine.

Phil 76800 [14467]
Linguistic Pragmatism
Prof. Neale
Words, phrases, and sentences of natural languages appear to be imbued with special properties that speakers and hearers, and writers and readers exploit — meanings. Specifying these properties and the inner workings of the systems to which words, phrases, and sentences belong — languages — constitutes a major intellectual project that has attracted the attention of linguists, philosophers, logicians, and cognitive scientists. But the project is intelligible only as a component of a more encompassing project, which may be characterized in terms of a Master Question: How are we able to accomplish so much, so efficiently — so quickly, systematically and consistently — by making various noises, marks, and gestures, able to express our thoughts and convey to others information about the world, about our beliefs, desires, plans, hopes, fears, and feelings? Things sometimes go horribly, embarrassingly wrong; but the striking fact is how often they don’t, and this is a large part of what needs explaining. One task of the philosophy of language is to provide an architecture within which the Master Question can be answered, an architecture within which we can identify and link the answers to all sorts of “lower-level” questions in order to produce various interlocking theories and sub-theories that taken together, will constitute an answer. This seminar aims to provide such an architecture, to spell out the approach to language and communication I have called linguistic pragmatism — which has its origins in Grice’s work on meaning, intention, and the saying-implicating distinction — and to explain why progress in both semantics and pragmatics requires debunking an entire mythology about meaning and context that has wrought conceptual and terminological havoc in contemporary philosophy of language and theoretical linguistics. On the positive side, specific goals include (1) setting out the philosophical foundations of anything that deserves to be called a theory of meaning, (2) teasing apart questions in metaphysics and questions in epistemology/psychology with a view to providing robust characterizations of (a) the relation between meaning and interpretation, (b) the asymmetry in epistemic situations of speakers and listeners, and (c) the reciprocal nature of their respective goals, (3) the synchronic and diachronic relation between linguistic and communicative abilities, (4) explaining (a) the relation between logic and semantics, (b) the relation between explanatory notions of linguistic meaning and speaker meaning, and (c) the factorization of what a speaker meant into explanatory notions of what the speaker said and what the speaker (“merely”) implicated, (5) understanding what is involved in having genuine communicative intentions when using language and the myriad constraints on intention formation, (6) identifying the notion of compositionality needed to explain the relation between what a sentence X means and what speakers say when uttering X on particular occasions, (7) understanding the rôle of implicit reference in communication and, relatedly, appeals to implicit argument rôles and aphonic expressions in syntactic and semantic theorizing, (8) explaining the mutually constraining nature of theories of meaning, interpretation, intention, cooperation, mental modularity, epistemic vigilance, and tool use, some of which are shaped by work in developmental psychology and cognitive archaeology, and (9) explaining (briefly) the relevance of theses in linguistic pragmatism to debates in legal, literary, and archaeological theory. On the negative side, so to speak, specific goals include (1) debunking versions of a popular myth about the sorts of factors that determine what is said when someone uses a sentence on a given occasion to say or state something, a myth that has engendered confused debates about context, discourse topic, conversational maxims, relevance, salience, and background knowledge, (2) exposing various confusions about what can be accomplished using intensional generalizations of extensional logic, and indexical generalizations of intensional logic, (3) ending futile debates arising from failure to recognize two non-competing ways of drawing an explanatory, theoretically significant distinction between semantics and pragmatics, one central to questions about meaning, and the other to questions about interpretation, (4) deflecting a range of objections to the idea that the communicative intentions speakers have in producing their utterances are (at least) partial determinants of what they say (or otherwise mean) and explaining why objections inspired by reflections on ignorance, error, publicity, accessibility, and community — reflections that originally motivated such doctrines as externalism, anti-individualism, and the causal theory of reference — demonstrate so little. (There will be occasional guest presenters.)
Requirements:
1. One short paper (7-10 pages) midway through the term;
2. One longer paper (15-20 pages) due two weeks after the last seminar.

Recommended Texts:

Course website

Readings (to be made available on Blackboard):
——— 1968. 'Utterer’s Meaning, Sentence Meaning, and Word Meaning. (Reprinted in *Studies*)
——— 1969. Utterer’s Meaning and Intentions
——— 1975. Logic and Converesation. (Reprinted in *Studies*)
——— 1978. Further Notes on Logic and Conversation. (Reprinted in *Studies*)
——— 1981. Presupposition and Conversational Implicature. (Reprinted in *Studies*)
——— 1982. Meaning Revisited. (Reprinted in *Studies*)
Happe, F., Loth, E., 2002.'Theory of Mind’ and Tracking Speakers’ Intentions. *Mind & Language*
——— manuscript. Linguistic Pragmatism.


Wharton, Tim, 2003 Natural Pragmatics and Natural Codes’. Mind & Language 18, 447-477.


[Counts towards course satisfaction of Group A]
Phil 76700 [14464]
Scientific Realism Today
Prof. Cordero
4 credits
Wed. 6:30 - 8:30
Room 7314

Realists and most practicing scientists think that the point of theorizing is to go beyond
ordinary experience to discover causal and structural networks underlying phenomena,
regardless of whether the entities and processes invoked are directly observable by us.
Realists typically claim that natural histories along with tokens of most of the entities and
processes posited by empirically successful theories exist and are approximately as science
says (scientific realism). Some philosophers find this stance intellectually naïve and
misguided. Scientific realists in turn accuse their anti-realist critics of being naïve and
misguided about the aims and achievements of actual science. In this course we will discuss
major realist positions advanced in the last three decades and discuss them against the
backdrop of the debate on realism/anti-realism in philosophy of science. Our focus will be on
such issues as empirical access, underdetermination, past theory failure, empirical success,
descriptive success, and theoretical progress.

[Counts towards course satisfaction of Group B]

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