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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 current semester (where available).

- Columbia University
- Fordham University
- The New School
SPRING 2012 COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

Phil 77700 [17635]
Morality & the Self
Prof. Prinz
4 credits
Tues. 9:30 - 11:30
Room 7395

This seminar explores the relationship between morality and the self, or, more specifically, how who we are relates to our moral values. Questions will include: What roles do values play in personal identity over time? How does morality inform self-presentation, social roles, and social identity? Is moral judgment a form of self-expression rather than an expression of universal rules? How do values lead to divergent constructions of the self cross-culturally? To what extent do situational factors threaten notions such as the true self, self-knowledge, and self-determination, which are crucial to responsibility? Readings will be drawn from philosophy, psychology, and sociology.

[Counts towards course satisfaction of Group A or C]

Phil 76400 [17625]
Kant’s Critique of Judgment
Prof. Nuzzo
4 credits
Wed. 9:30 - 11:30
Room 7395

This course will offer a comprehensive introduction to Kant’s Critique of Judgment (1790) in its two parts, the Critique of Aesthetic and the Critique of Teleological Judgment. In this fundamental work Kant proposes the new idea of “reflective judgment,” offers his critical and transcendental theory of aesthetic experience, and importantly connects this theory with a transcendental account of the epistemology of the life sciences. We will address issues such as Kant’s idea of aesthetic experience in its difference from the Transcendental Aesthetic of the first Critique, the relation between the judgment of the beautiful and the judgment of the sublime, the role that the concept of “life” plays in connecting aesthetic and teleological judgment, the transcendental nature of the concept of “purposiveness,” and Kant’s critique of metaphysical teleology.

The basis of the course will be a close reading of the text (selection from all parts of the book). The format of the course includes lecture, class discussion, and student presentation.

Required Texts:

[Counts towards course satisfaction of Group D-Modern]

Phil 76200 [17636]
Political Philosophy
Prof. Cahn
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.
FINAL PAPER: Due: May 16. Length: 4,500-5,500 words (the length of a QP1 paper). This is required of each student registered for a grade. This You should consult with one or, ideally, both of the instructors by the middle of the semester about your paper topic, bringing with you a one-paragraph description of your topic and an initial bibliography to serve as the basis for discussion with us. You should hand in two hard-copies. If you wish to receive comments, you should attach a stamped, self-addressed envelop so that the instructors can return them to you by means of the US mail system. If you wish the instructors to make comments on drafts of your papers, you must give them copies of the drafts at least two class meetings before the last class.

TEXTS: You should consider purchasing the following, all available in paperback and reasonably priced:


All other readings will be made available on Blackboard.

[Counts towards course satisfaction of Group A or C]

Phil 77100 [17630]
Scientific Representation
Prof. Koslow
4 credits
Thurs. 11:45 - 1:45
Room 6496

The seminar will be devoted to an examination of Bas van Fraassen’s recent book *Scientific Representation*. In this profound and elegant work van Fraassen develops a new view, empirical structuralism (a type of physical structuralism different from either mathematical or logical structuralism) that solves the deep paradoxes that beset all the usual structuralist views of science.

Roughly, a structuralist view of physical theories claims that every scientific account of some fact(s) (whether it’s an explanation, a prediction, or an understanding) provides some representation that is supposed to have the same structure as the fact. It becomes evident that if it is assumed that the representation is abstract, and the fact that is explained isn’t, then there is a problem in the requirement that they have a shared structure.

Thus the central problems to be considered concern the appropriate concepts of representation and of structure. We shall begin with an intriguing argument of Kant that there is no representation of space, because our (mental) representation of space cannot have the same structure as space. And then we will continue with van Fraassen’s discussion of how we represent the world by maps, pictures and instruments (eg. thermometers). Following that, we will consider the representations provided by various structuralist theories: this includes the influential version of H.. Hertz, the early struggles of Russell, his later conversion to structuralism and the remarkable criticism of Newman, Carnap and the paradox of the disappearing data, Putnam’s Paradox, and D. Lewis’ solution to that paradox by using properties that “cut nature at the joints”.

Lastly, there is van Fraassen’s own solution to these paradoxes by invoking a new notion of indexicality.

Texts: Bas van Fraassen, *Scientific Representation*, Oxford University Press (paperback) 2008, and various Xeroxes of articles to be distributed

[Counts towards course satisfaction of Group A or B]
Phil 76200 [17626]
Nietzsche & Contemporary Philosophy
Prof. Acampora
4 credits
Mon. 2:00 - 4:00
Room 7314

This course will focus on how Nietzsche's philosophy is used by some contemporary philosophers to frame and advance current research in a variety of areas, including experimental philosophy, philosophical naturalism, ethics, political philosophy, and philosophy of mind. We'll devote significant time and attention to discussion of Nietzsche's works, although prior experience and familiarity will be presumed. Assignments include one short discussion paper and a longer seminar paper (to be developed in stages).

[Counts towards course satisfaction of Group D-Modern]

Phil 77300 [17632]
The Evolution of Meaning
Prof. Godfrey-Smith
4 credits
Tues. 2:00 - 4:00
Room 7395

The course will look at recent work on the evolution of communication systems, both between and within organisms. How does this work bear on the attempt to give a naturalistic account of semantic properties, and other projects in the philosophy of language and philosophy of mind? Readings will include work by Lewis, Skyrms, Millikan, Gallistel, Shea, Harms and others.

[Counts towards course satisfaction of Group A or B]

Phil 76000 [17624]
Plato & the Arts
Prof. Pappas
4 credits
Mon. 4:15-6:15
Room 7314

This seminar will take two paths in studying Plato's conception of poetry and other arts. One path follows the passages in his dialogues that speak of poetry directly, some describing the inspiration (enthousiasmós) behind good poems and others finding imitation (mimēsis) at work in most poetry. We will read Plato's Ion in its entirety and sizeable parts of the Phaedrus and Republic. Shorter selections from Apology and Laws will enter into the course as well.

But Plato's discussion of poetry is never very far removed from his discussions of myth and religious practice; so we will also explore the path that winds among the mythic passages in Plato's dialogues. Plato's aspirations in re-writing Greek myth, sometimes imposing a new sense on old myths and more often arriving at a compromise with their antecedent meanings, sheds light on what Plato would like to be possible in Greek verse and drama.

It will also emerge that inspiration and imitation themselves draw upon mythic thinking at unexpected points. We will endeavor to let the mythic illuminate the aesthetic as well as the contrary. In all likelihood we will finish the seminar with a reading of Plato's Theaetetus.

Recent scholarship will help us focus our discussions of the Platonic myths and selections from the Republic.
Primary readings will include the Reeve-Grube translation of the *Republic*, Nehamas-and-Woodruff's translation of the *Phaedrus*, and Woodruff's translation of the *Ion* (all published by Hackett and inexpensively available). We will read the mythic passages from Plato as collected in Plato, *Selected Myths*, edited by Catalin Partenie (Oxford, 2004).

Note that *Selected Myths* is not to be confused with Partenie's scholarly anthology *Plato's Myths* (Cambridge, 2009): the seminar will indeed read some selections from that anthology, but the selections will be available electronically. So will the chapters that we read from Mark McPherran's recent *Plato's Republic: A Critical Guide* (Cambridge, 2010).

[Counts towards course satisfaction of Group D-Anicent]

Phil 78500 [17638]
*Philosophical Foundations of Democracy*

*Prof. Gould*

4 credits

Tues. 4:15 - 6:15

Room 7314

While democracy is perhaps the most valorized political norm, it is surprisingly difficult to give a convincing philosophical account of the source of its value. In this seminar, we will critically analyze alternative—and sometimes conflicting—philosophical approaches to the justification of democracy with a view to determining their viability. We will consider approaches that see democracy as required by the equal consideration of interests in collective decisions marked by conflicting opinions (Christiano); epistemic approaches in which democracy is thought to produce the most “correct” results (Estlund); deliberative perspectives emphasizing “the force of the better argument” (e.g., Habermas, Cohen, Bohman); “common activity” approaches (Arendt, Gould); and recent pragmatist (Talisse) and agonistic (Mouffe) theories. We will tackle some of the paradoxes, circularities, and regresses that confront democratic theory, e.g., the paradox of voting (Arrow) and “the constitutional circle” (whether processes of adopting constitutional protections of rights must themselves abide by rights), along with the conundrums posed by nondemocratic judicial review of democratic decisions. The course will go on to focus on the criteria for determining the proper scope of democracy, e.g. whether it extends only to citizens within a nation state or also transnationally or even globally (Archibugi). Is democracy itself a human right that should extend across all cultures, and could forms of transnational democracy be adopted that are sensitive to diverse culture perspectives? Should democracy extend also to institutions “beneath” the political, that is, should it be limited to governments or does it apply to other institutions as well, e.g., to firms in the form of workplace democracy, or other types of economic democracy? What, moreover, is the relation of political democracy to smaller-scale interpersonal and social contexts, even including the family, and to the various dispositions of care and empathy that may be developed there but which potentially have political applications? Gender concerns also arise concerning issues of inclusion and the representation of the perspectives of women in democratic politics (Phillips, Mansbridge).

Finally, we will consider some new proposals for enhancing inclusiveness and participation via online democratic deliberations, which could facilitate increased accountability by global governance institutions and might support the anticipated extensions of democracy in regional and global directions in the coming period.

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]
Phil 7900 [17637]
Medical Ethics
Prof. Baumrin
4 credits
Mon. 5:45 - 7:45
Room Mt. Sinai
Felt Conference Room
Annenberg Hall, 5th Floor

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 health care professionals and philosophers to enter into medical institutions with the preparation necessary to be helpful additions to the provision of health care in ethically acceptable ways.


[Counts towards course satisfaction of Group C]

Phil 77000 [17629]
Descriptions
Prof. Ostertag
4 credits
Tues. 6:30 - 8:30
Room 7314

We'll begin with a careful reading of three classic works: Russell's "On Denoting" (1905); Strawson's "On Referring" (1950); and Donnellan's "Reference and Definite Descriptions" (1966). Following that, we will examine some of the literature these three articles generated. Although the focus will be on definite descriptions, we will use this as a gateway topic to a number of cutting-edge concerns in philosophy of language more generally.
Among the questions we will discuss are the following:

1. Strawson held that when reference failure occurs, the question of truth "does not arise". And, indeed, when someone assertively utters 'The present king of France is bald' we feel that something has gone wrong – not, as Russell would claim, that something false has been asserted. (On Strawson's diagnosis, what has gone wrong is that a presupposition of the sentence – that France is a monarchy – is false.)

But reference failure does not invariably give rise to a misfire. For example, 'last night, the king of France participated in Occupy Wall Street' seems straightforwardly false, not truth-valueless. Can the Strawsonian explain why certain forms of reference failure, but not others, give rise to intuitions of falsity? Here we'll look at papers by Kai von Fintel, Jay David Atlas, Stephen Yablo and others.

2. Donnellan noted that some uses of descriptions do not conform to Russell's analysis. In certain cases, a speaker uttering a sentence of the form 'the F is G' intends to convey an object-dependent proposition of the form a is G, where a is not uniquely F. Can Russell explain this usage by appeal to independently-needed pragmatic principles of the sort described by Grice or does this phenomenon provide evidence that descriptions have a semantically significant referential use, in addition to the use described by Russell? Here we'll look at papers by Kent Bach, Anne Bezuidenhout, Ray Buchanan and me, Michael Devitt, Saul Kripke, Stephen Neale, Nathan Salmon, Stephen Schiffer, Scott Soames and Howard Wettstein.

3. Benson Mates first noted that theories in the Strawsonian mold have difficulty accounting for relativized descriptions: 'the winner of each match won a medal' has a reading on which the description 'the winner of x' is bound by a higher quantifier. But how can a quantifier bind a position in a singular term? What, indeed, could that mean? Here we will look at recent work by Michael Glanzberg, Daniel Rothschild and Nathan Salmon.

Required texts:
Marga Reimer and Anne Bezuidenhout, Descriptions and Beyond (OUP) ISBN 019927052X $55.95

[Counts towards course satisfaction of Group A]

Phil 76700 [17627]
Philosophy of Science
Prof. Cordero
4 credits
Wed. 6:30 - 8:30
Room 7314

This course focuses on basic topics in contemporary philosophy of science, particularly scientific explanation, inter and intra theoretical relationships, validation of scientific knowledge, conceptual change, scientific realism, and the ontological import of scientific knowledge. No special scientific knowledge is presupposed, only elementary (undergraduate) logic and philosophy. We will discuss essays representing the central contemporary positions and approaches in the noted areas.

There will be two examinations (one hour each). Class participation is strongly encouraged and will be correspondingly rewarded.

We will concentrate on the following selection of readings, which is meant to be varied enough both to embody relevant dialogue among key authors and to encourage critical discussion.

[Counts towards course satisfaction of Group B]

[back to course schedule]
Phil 77500 [17633]  
Ethics  
Prof. Ross  
4 credits  
Thurs. 6:30 - 8:30  
Room 7314  

A comprehensive survey of the dominant moral theories, and to some extent, meta-ethical views, in moral philosophy. Humean projectivism, classic twentieth century non-cognitivism, as embodied in R.M. Hare and Sartre, Moore-ian intuitionism, Kant’s Kantianism, Rawls' Kantian constructivism, utilitarianism, and Aristotle’s virtue theory are the central topics of this course. To some extent, we will also take up some appropriate related issues - how best to understand moral motivation, how best to understand the utilitarian’s appeal to rules, what "objectivity" in moral justification can amount to. The idea is to get a good sense of the various strengths and weaknesses of these theories, and, ideally, which if any may claim to be more or less satisfactory.

Please have read, before the first class, "Of the Influencing Motives of the Will" and "Moral Distinctions Not Derived From Reason...But From Sense" in David Hume's "A Treatise of Human Nature."

[Counts towards course satisfaction of Group C]