

UB Spring Session January 30 - May 12, 2017
Department of Philosophy
Undergraduate Course Descriptions

PHI 101 Introduction to Philosophy

K. Cho

M, W, F, 9:00 AM-9:50 AM

Class # 24095

This is an introductory philosophy course with a compact and yet global design. Instead of the frequently adopted but seldom fully utilized textbooks averaging 630 pages we have chosen a text with only 130 pages but packed with content that is literally "Global".

Text: John Dewey, Confucius and Global Philosophy, by Joseph Grange, 2004, SUNY Press; Plus Occasional Handouts in class. The choice of the two names Dewey and Confucius is more symbolic. Nobody would think these two embody the Western half and The Eastern half of the world; philosophy it is rather in terms of "working connections" they reveal to each other that we perceive them as representatives of our age and its needs. Dewey was certainly a typical American philosopher, who like no one else. Advanced the cause of Pragmatism. But he was also the American philosopher who was the most open to the world. He lectured in Beijing and promoted talented Chinese scholars who came to seek his guidance. And who remembers today that Dewey was thoroughly at home in Kant's, Kant's Critique and was a skilled Hegelian dialectician? "Breathing is an affair as much as it is an affair of the air". Or "Walking is an affair of legs as much as it is an affair of the earth." In these simple words, Dewey translated the speculative language of German Idealism and made philosophy an affair of living. For Dewey thinking has not only to do with feeling but it must have an "affair with feeling." Every experience is an affair both thought and felt. It is experiencing the "Environ", the "Other" and other cultures.

Major topics we discuss are as follows:

Chapter I. Experience, Dewey's Novel Insight

Chapter 2. Felt Intelligence, Overcoming Dualism

Chapter 3. Values and Situations

Chapter 4. Dao and Experience

(Note)Confucianism will occupy only about one third of the space in the discussion of topics listed above. A small handout will be given on the idea of Dao and related discussion of man's place in nature. A slogan to best remember Dewey's place in

philosophy: “Better it is for philosophy to err in active participation in living struggles and issues of its own age and

Time than to maintain immune, monastic impeccability.” It was also the core of his philosophy of education which has become known, somewhat too simplistically as time The “Trial and Error” approach.

Requirements: Two quizzes (10 points each). One midterm paper (30 points). Attendance (10 points). Final Exam (40 points).

PHI 101 Introduction to Philosophy- A World-Historical Perspective

J.M. Lawler

T, R, 11:00 AM - 12:20 PM

Class # 13867

The course will provide a general description of the basic philosophies of different major civilizations evolving in world history. The background to the development of world philosophies will first be presented to serve by way of contrast and condition to distinctly philosophical development. Philosophies provide general meanings to human life in reflective form with rational justifications, rather than in the form of religion with its appeal to emotion and its dependence on authority and tradition. The first worldviews that evolve into philosophical worldviews are the early religions of the world, beginning with the animistic outlook of hunter-gatherers in which human beings understand themselves in a spiritual/emotional connection with the surrounding natural world. The major philosophies of India and China, the philosophies of the East, provide philosophical reflective meanings that are continuous with this animistic background, while the philosophies of the West, beginning with Greek philosophy, break from such animistic unity with the surrounding world.

After providing this general framework, the course first examines the major philosophical concepts of India, China, and Greece in the context of distinctive characteristics of these three civilizations, so as to show the connection between their philosophical orientations and these historically specific characteristics. The course then examines the development of philosophy in Western Europe in the context of the rise of modern science—as both a development and transformation of ancient Greek philosophy under the impulse of the new sciences. The resulting “Enlightenment” philosophies of the early modern Western period of the 17th and 18th century is then criticized by Kant and 19th century Continental philosophers, resulting in historically relative concepts of reason (Hegel and Marx) as well as anti-rational philosophies appealing to religion (Kierkegaard) or power (Nietzsche). The course concludes with an examination of 20th century Western philosophy as a continuation of the conflict between the empirical/analytical orientation of early modern philosophy prominent in Great Britain and the United States and the critical, synthetic philosophies of Continental Europe.

PHI 105 Contemporary Moral Problems

M. Gifford

M, W, F, 11:00 AM - 11:50 AM

Class # 22371

This course will philosophically examine contentious moral issues of the day. Among the topics that may be discussed are: abortion, capital punishment, affirmative action, obligations of wealthy nations to poor nations, duties to non-human animals, vegetarianism, sex workers, pornography, legalized gambling and lotteries, gun control, drone warfare, human enhancements through drugs and prostheses, homosexual marriage, racial profiling and legalization of currently illegal drugs.

PHI 107 Ethics

M. Donnelly

M, W, F, 10:00 AM - 10:50 AM

Class # 18656

Nearly everyone assumes that some human actions are morally good (or at least morally permissible), while other actions are morally wrong. However, there is often considerable disagreement over the moral worth of particular actions. The primary purpose of this class is to examine different principles which have been advocated for distinguishing between morally acceptable and morally unacceptable actions. Special attention will be paid to principles which are based on substantial philosophical arguments and which purport to be independent of specific cultural practices. We will also consider: i) the extent of a person's responsibility for his or her actions and ii) what reasons can be given for choosing good actions and refraining from bad actions.

Students should expect regular readings from historical and contemporary sources.

Grades are based on written homework, regular class participation, and examinations.

No prior background in philosophy is required for this course.

PHI 107 Ethics

A.R. King

T, R, 11:00 AM - 12:20 PM

Class # 13657

This course introduces students to three major areas of ethical thought: metaethics, normative ethics and applied ethics. Metaethics is concerned with the status or morality: whether or not its objective, what moral language means and so on.

Normative ethics asks about general theories of right and wrong- what is right for us to

do, think and feel. Applied ethics addresses topics of particularly pressing concern, such as capital punishment, affirmative action or donating to charity. Readings will come from a textbook as well as some historical and contemporary thinkers.

PHI 115 Critical Thinking

J.R. Beebe

M, W 3:30 PM - 4:50 PM

Class # 20354

This course will focus upon developing students' critical thinking skills through careful analysis, reasoned inference, and thoughtful evaluation of contemporary culture and ideas. Students will learn how to clarify ideas, analyze arguments, and evaluate inductive, deductive, comparative, ideological, and empirical reasoning. How to clarify ideas, analyze arguments, and evaluate inductive, deductive, comparative, ideological, and empirical reasoning.

PHI 129SEM – Special Topics Friendship and the Internet

M. Moran

T, R, 12:30 PM - 1:50 PM

Class # 23706

Are your Facebook "friends" really your friends? When should you unfriend a social media contact? Are Internet communication technologies enriching your personal relationships or alienating you from them? In this course we will examine questions about the nature and prospects of friendship in Internet culture in light of classic and contemporary philosophical theories of friendship. We will begin by examining a debate from the turn of the twenty-first century as to the merits of technologically mediated communication in general. We will then step back to investigate historical sources in the thought of Aristotle, Montaigne, Kant, Emerson, and others. Later, we will return to apply the arguments we've gathered to recent and emerging trends in social media and mobile computing. Our focus throughout will be on three important questions. First, what is the nature of the intimacy thought to distinguish friendship from other relationships? Second, what responsibilities or obligations arise from commitment to friends? Third, how do social networking sites and applications, immersive virtual worlds of online gaming, and smartphones relate to these other questions?

PHI 215 Symbolic Logic

S. Sicienski

M, W, F, 11:00AM-11:50AM

Introduces the formal techniques of deductive reasoning

Class# 22372

This course will introduce students to symbolic logic, the study of such notions as argument and validity using symbolic languages. Students will learn how to translate English sentences and arguments into sentences and arguments of symbolic languages. They will learn precise methods for determining whether or not these arguments are valid. The symbolic languages learned in this course will be Sentential Logic and Predicate Logic. (These are also known as Propositional Logic and First-Order Logic, respectively.) Symbolic logic is important for philosophy, mathematics, computer science, and cognitive science, and should also be helpful to those studying other disciplines where argument and analytical skills are important (for example, law).

PHI 234 Environmental Ethics

B. Cline

M, W, F, 10:00 AM - 10:50 AM

Class # 18904

Throughout the history of Western philosophy, ethics has focused almost exclusively on what we humans owe to ourselves and one another. Questions such as 'How should I live?' and 'What kinds of actions are immoral?' were addressed largely within the context of human life and paid little attention to nonhuman animals and the natural environment. Since the industrial revolution, this trend has begun to change. Philosophers and non-philosophers alike have increasingly begun asking if we have duties or obligations to other forms of life. Does the ability to suffer imply that an organism should be treated with respect? Can beings without experiences – such as trees – have moral standing? If so, why? What is the moral status of ecosystems? Is it permissible to take individual lives in order to preserve the integrity of an ecosystem? Is the value of the natural environment independent of human goals, or is environmental protection simply a good policy for contributing to the flourishing of human life? Is the relationship between industry and the environment necessarily antagonistic? How can we apply our answers to these questions to concrete problems like overpopulation, resource management, and climate change? These are just some of the questions we will explore as we survey the exciting new field of environmental ethics.

Required Texts: David Schmidtz and Elizabeth Willott, eds. *Environmental Ethics: What Really Matters, What Really Works*, 2nd ed. (Oxford, 2012)

PHI 234 Environmental Ethics

A. Nomikos

T, R, 9:30 AM - 10:50 AM

Class # 24189

Consider the following situation: You are the last human being, and you shall soon die. When you are gone, the only life remaining will be plants, microbes, and invertebrates. For some reason, the following thought runs through your head: Before I die, it sure would be fun to destroy the last redwood. What, if anything, would be *wrong* with destroying that last remaining redwood?

Perhaps the most fundamental question in environmental ethics concerns our attitude towards nature. Thus, in the first part of this course, we ask: *what really matters?* Do beings without experiences, such as redwoods, have moral standing? In other words, are trees the sort of things to which we can have obligations? Are ecosystems? And how about nonhuman animals? Does the ability to suffer imply that an organism should be treated with respect, or is something more required, like the capacity for self-conscious moral agency? In the second part of this course, we will ask: *what really works?* That is, how can we apply our answers to the previous questions to concrete problems like overpopulation and climate change?

PHI 237LEC Medical Ethics: Values In Med

R. Kelly

M, W, F, 10:00 AM - 10:50 AM

Class # 22509

Examines current ethical positions and their application to ethical and social questions in medicine.

PHI 237 Medical Ethics: Values In Med

D. G. Limbaugh

M, W, F, 11:00AM-11:50AM

Class # 22511

Examines current ethical positions and their application to ethical and social questions in medicine.

PHI 237 Medical Ethics: Values In Med

J. Monaghan

T, R, 11:00 AM - 12:20 PM

Class # 11068

This course will deal with contemporary moral controversies in medical ethics. Students will examine the rights of patients and the responsibilities of health care providers in dealing with conflicts that arise in medical settings. Many of these issues will involve decisions about creating, enhancing and ending human lives. Students will become familiar with the nature of moral arguments and the type of reasoning that is required to understand and resolve the moral issues that arise in the practice of medicine.

PHI 237 Medical Ethics: Values In Med

A.J. Pfeuffer

M, W, F, 9:00AM-9:50AM

Class # 22510

This course will be a survey of many of the most controversial issues in bioethics. It will begin by examining many different ethical frameworks and their various value commitments and accounts of morality. These frameworks will then be utilized as a theoretical groundwork from which to conduct an investigation of several hotly contested issues in bioethics. Throughout the course, philosophical theory will be supplemented by legal precedent and political documents to help students gain an appreciation for practical and real world considerations of bioethics as well as how philosophical reasoning can influence policy concerns. Students will be exposed to arguments for and against various issues and practices in the domain of bioethics with an eye to practical and professional implications as well as theoretical concerns. This course is designed to be of particular interest to those in pre-med, nursing, pre-law, and philosophy programs.

PHI 237 Medical Ethics: Values In Med

S. Hemmer

M W F, 11:00 AM - 11:50 AM

14501

This course begins with an introduction to some ethical principles that are considered important in medical ethics. We will then discuss several controversial issues in bioethics through readings on the following topics: (1) patient autonomy and informed

consent, (2) abortion, (3) personal identity and death, (4) euthanasia, advance directives, and physician-assisted suicide, (5) organ transplants and procurement, (6) human cloning, and (7) commercial surrogacy. No prior exposure to philosophy or ethics is needed. There is no required textbook for this course.

PHI 237 Medical Ethics: Values In Med

J. Houston

Online Class # 11067

This course will deal with contemporary moral controversies in medical ethics. Students will examine the rights of patients and the responsibilities of health care providers in dealing with conflicts that arise in medical settings. Many of these issues will involve decisions about creating, enhancing and ending human lives. Students will become familiar with the nature of moral arguments and the type of reasoning that is required to understand and resolve the moral issues that arise in the practice of medicine.

At NO time will this course require students to be on campus.

PHI 237 Medical Ethics: Values In Med

B. Donohue

T, R, 9:30 AM - 10:50 AM

Class # 24190

In this course, we will survey several issues in biomedical ethics, especially: (1) issues pertaining to the relationship between patients and healthcare providers (patient rights to health care, privacy, and truth, patient autonomy, informed consent, advanced directives, the nature and goals of medical practice, and physician conscientious objection), and (2) issues at the margins of life (embryonic stem cell research, human cloning, genetic enhancement, abortion, surrogacy, prenatal diagnosis, cloning, euthanasia, physician-assisted suicide, death, and vital organ donation). Before addressing these issues, we will briefly survey standard philosophical approaches to ethical theory. No prior knowledge of philosophy is required. Coursework will include weekly reading quizzes, one paper (4-5 pages), and two non-cumulative exams.

PHI 252 Eastern Philosophy

N.P Bommarito

T, R, 11:00 AM - 12:20 PM

Class # 24191

This course will introduce students to a range of philosophical texts and concepts from Asia. Students will become familiar with the context, central ideas, and classic works from different traditions throughout Asia. We will cover key figures and texts from Hinduism, Confucianism, Daoism, Jainism, Buddhism, and more.

PHI 270 Early Modern Philosophy

L.M. Powell

T, R, 9:30 AM - 10:50 AM

Class# 21179

We're all familiar with the claim that 'appearances can be deceiving,' or that 'things aren't always what they seem.' And we've all had experiences that exemplify those claims as well; we glance quickly from a distance and wind up mistaking a stranger for a close friend, or we get confused by an optical illusion. Since we make our judgments about the way things are on the basis of the way things seem, it makes sense to ask ourselves how we can tell the cases where appearances are deceiving from the cases where they are not.

What is reality like, and how can we figure that out from the way things seem or appear to be? This question was a major concern for philosophers in the early modern period, and in this course, we will study some of the most important/influential attempts to answer it offered by leading scholars of the day. We will also see how their answers to these questions relate to their views on freedom of the will, ethics, and personal identity.

PHI 280 Nineteenth Century Philosophy- From Kant to Nietzsche

J.M Lawler

T, R, 2:00 PM - 3:20 PM

Class #24292

In his systematic philosophical works, Kant attempts to resolve the contradictions in early modern philosophy between materialist empiricism and idealist rationalism. In his conception of appearance and reality, Kant seeks to reconcile the antinomies of matter and spirit, determinism and free will, self-interest and morality, secular science and a religion indicated by reason itself.

If Kant's positions culminated one stage in the history of Western philosophy, they started a second stage, in which they were put to the test in various ways. With his

conception of dialectical reason, Hegel, followed by Marx, argues that an expanded conception of reason can resolve the oppositions generated by Kant's abstract conceptual analysis. More impressed by Kant's stress on the limits of reason, Kierkegaard and Nietzsche argue that ultimate reality can be accessed by such non-rational means as religious faith or creative imagination.

Such philosophical perspectives were generally linked to the central questions of social life. Kant establishes moral limits to the freedom of the market of Adam Smith's laissez-faire capitalism. Hegel provides grounds for what is now called welfare-state capitalism. Marx argues that human freedom and democracy require the egalitarian economics of socialism. By contrast Kierkegaard sees in socialism the end of freedom and Nietzsche draws from the Darwinian struggle for survival grounds for a mystic social hierarchy that would later entrance Hitler. The American philosopher William James, was one of the first to denounce the newly emerging American imperialism as a betrayal of the freedom and equality of the American founding Constitution. Such social options continue for the most part to pervade our contemporary discourse of social choice. The philosophical theories sketched in this course in this way present the classical arguments for our contemporary social debates.

The 19th century Industrial Revolution (steam engine, railroad, mass production) is not yet the 20th century Communications Revolution (phone, radio, movies, TV, computers, internet, Wi-Fi, cell phones, cable). The last thoughts and outlooks of a three thousand year old spiritual-intellectual heritage in the West reach their fruition and open new prospects, such as the spread of democracy, the rise of liberal religion, the growth of metropolitan culture, and the prospect of general prosperity. Seeking these breakthroughs at their sources, we will explore the old and the new in the prose and poetry of Kant, Mendelsohn, Hegel, Feuerbach, Schopenhauer, Marx, Melville, Dostoyevsky, Whitman, Comte, Darwin, Bergson, Nietzsche and Freud, among others.

PHI 333 Epistemology

J.R. Beebe

M, W, 5:00 PM - 6:20 PM

Class # 24193

This course will look at contemporary debates about the nature of knowledge, evidence, and rationally justified belief.

PHI 335 Contemporary Ethical Theory

A.R. King

T, R, 2:00 PM - 3:20 PM

Class # 21180

This course will familiarize students with contemporary (20th century to the present) ethical theories and debates. We will examine in detail the four major normative ethical theories: utilitarianism/consequentialism, deontology, virtue ethics, and ethics of care. Students will be assumed to have at least a passing familiarity with the basic elements of Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*, Mill's *Utilitarianism*, and Kant's *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*. A previous course in introductory or applied ethics should be sufficient preparation.

PHI 338 Law And Morality

S.P. McAndrew

T, R, 11:00 AM - 12:20 PM

Class# 24018

This course explores the moral status of legality and the legal status of morality, the status of unjust laws, and the role of moral judgments of lawmakers. Is the good law one that does good? Martin Luther King, Jr., wrote in a *Letter from a Birmingham Jail* that "a just law is a man-made code that squares with the moral law or the law of God. An unjust law is a code that is out of harmony with the moral law." However, many have rejected this claim that laws must be based on moral principles, and instead hold that laws are the written rules (e.g., statutes, regulations, and judicial decisions) made by governmental bodies with the authority to such rules. This course will explore this debate and other issues concerning the relation between law and morality.

PHI 342 Political Philosophy

R.P. Muldoon

M W F, 11:00 AM - 11:50 AM

Class # 22428

What is Justice? Is it something we have reason to want? Are rights real things, or did we just make them up? When is the state allowed to coerce us? Why have a state at all? If we have one, how do we justify it? This course will explore modern political philosophy, with a focus on the justification and legitimate purpose of the state, and how the basic structure of society influences how we engage with each other as citizens. To explore these issues, we will look at the development of the Social Contract tradition, and responses to it. This course starts by examining the earliest hint of social contract theory, first raised by Glaucon in Plato's *Republic*. This will begin our

discussion of justice, and what kind of thing it is. After that, we will jump ahead in history to look at what is in many ways the most important book ever written in political philosophy, Hobbes' *Leviathan*. Much of the rest of the course is an attempt to respond to Hobbes. The two main responses to Hobbes in the Modern era were from Locke and Rousseau, each going in quite different directions. We will see that David Hume in many ways ended the social contract tradition with a powerful critique, while Rawls famously brought it back to life in the 20th century. Rawls has since come to dominate the landscape in political philosophy – much of the work in political philosophy for the past 40 years has been a response to him. We will close the course by considering several contemporary critiques of this approach.

PHI 417 Modal Logic

T.E.Bittner

T, 1:00 PM - 3:50 PM

Class # 24330

Studies logical systems designed to express concepts of necessity and possibility. Develops semantic accounts employing systems of possible worlds. Examines philosophical topics and problems related to necessity and possibility.

Undergraduate Tutorial Sections

PHI 402 Philosophy Honors Tutorials

PHI 498 Philosophy Undergraduate Research Activity

PHI 499 Philosophy Undergraduate Tutorials

Meeting days and times as arranged with professors.