

Fall 2013
Department of Philosophy
Graduate Course Descriptions

<http://www.philosophy.buffalo.edu/courses/fall/gaduate>

PHI 519 (w/420) BRN
M W F, 12:00- 12:50am

Advanced Logic
Frczck 454

Braun, D
#24040

This course will discuss a variety of logical systems beyond elementary logic that are commonly used in philosophy. We will, however, begin with propositional (sentential) logic, so as to develop its syntax, semantics, and proof theory in a more rigorous way than is common in beginning logic courses. We will show that these “match” in a certain sense. More precisely, we will prove the soundness of a certain deductive system for propositional logic, and sketch a proof of its completeness. We will then turn to modal logic, which is the logic of necessity and possibility. We will consider the proof theory and semantics of several systems of modal logic, and the soundness and completeness of those systems. Depending on time, we will discuss some of the following: tense logic, deontic logic, counterfactual conditionals, first-order predicate logic, modal first-order predicate logic, and definite descriptions. Required work: Approximately fourteen homework assignments, and approximately four exams, including an exam during the finals period. Pre-requisite, **strictly enforced**: Philosophy 315 (Symbolic Logic) at UB or its equivalent. Students who have not taken Philosophy 315 at UB, but who believe that they have taken an equivalent course, must contact the instructor before enrolling.

PHI 520 BIT (w/420) BIT
Wed, 1:00- 3:50pm

Philosophy of Relativity
Park 141

Bittner, T
#20880

PHI 544 KOR
Tues, 4:00- 6:50pm

Aesthetics
Park 141

Korsmeyer, C
#24112

Because few graduate students have done extensive previous work in aesthetics, this seminar aims both to introduce this large and diverse field and to delve fairly deeply into a few of its issues. This semester we shall study several recent books that thoroughly present the

philosophical contexts within which questions about culture and art arise, and also offer distinctive theories that address those questions.

These will likely include: (1) Peter *Lamarque's Work and Object: Explorations in the Metaphysics of Art* (2010), which explores the ontology of art and the identity of artworks, the nature of aesthetic properties, and the scope of interpretation. Also (2) Stephen Davies' *The Artful Species: Aesthetics, Art, and Evolution* (2012), which examines the possible evolutionary origins of aesthetic sensibility and creativity and investigates whether art is a global concept or one that is historically and culturally specific (he argues for the former). (If you would like to take a foretaste of this book, see <http://artfulspecies.wordpress.com/>) There will be at least one more book as well, possibly Dominic McIver Lopes, *A Philosophy of Computer Art* or Jenefer Robinson, *Deeper than Reason: Emotion in Music, Literature, and Art*. (If you write me during the summer I'll let you know the complete syllabus: ckors@buffalo.edu.)

Seminar meetings will include a bit of lecture, a lot of discussion, and student presentations. The final assignment will be a research paper.

PHI 579 CHO
Mon, 1:00- 3:50pm

Philosophical Hermeneutics
Park 141

Cho, K
#24113

Our main text is Gadamer's *Truth and Method* (Crossroad, NY, 1992).

Habermas once described Gadamer as "urbanized Heidegger." But it is not just Heidegger's rustic or brawny style that Gadamer has improved and rendered mellower. In a fundamental sense, Gadamer re-thought both the question of method and the question of truth away from and beyond Heidegger's own path as the Thought of Being.

While Heidegger dismissed methodological deliberations as merely "calculative" at the expense of "contemplative" reasoning, Gadamer openly states that his hermeneutics would be never at odds with methods and truths of science, with the caveat that the hermeneutic understanding does not stay within the bounds of science.

For, history, language and dialogue among persons are the horizons that transcend the totality of given objects. Historicity and linguisticity are the enabling factors of a dialogue, and a dialogue having essentially an open ending implies that we take Otherness of Others seriously to learn from. Thus not only the temporal finitude, but the admission of one's own finiteness in understanding and the seeking of the directionality to transcend the conventional subjectivity is what Gadamer has shown in his magnum opus.

PHI 579 (w/COL 646A) GRA
Wed, 4:00- 6:50pm

Texts and Their Interpretation
Park 141

Gracia, J
#24114

Although everyone has at some point in his or her life read works of literature, philosophy, religion, and science, very few of us have stopped to think what characterizes them or considered the problems that come up when one tries to do it. This course is intended to explore some of the many problems that arise when one does. Here are a few pertinent questions: What is the nature of literature and how does it differ, if at all, from philosophy, art, religion, and science. Why is *Madame Bovary* considered a literary work, but Descartes's *Meditations*, Deuteronomy, and the texts students are using to learn chemistry at UB, are not? What is the difference between a work and a text? Is there a difference between *Hamlet* and the English text of that work? Indeed, when *Hamlet* is translated into Spanish is the result the same as Shakespeare's work? Who is the author of a work of literature or of philosophy, and what is its role? Does a work exist in the mind, on paper, or elsewhere? And what about the text of the work? Is the copy of *Hamlet* I own the same as *Hamlet*? Are texts and works universal or individual? How is meaning related to a work and a text? And where is the meaning of a work to be found: in the mind of the author, in the mind of the audience, in the text, or somewhere else? What is the relation of an audience to a work or a text? A good section of the course will deal with interpretation. We will discuss questions such as: What is an interpretation? When is an interpretation legitimate and when is it not? Are there definitive interpretations? What is the role of an interpreter? Where do interpretations exist: in texts, in thoughts, or elsewhere? Apart from discussions by various philosophers who have dealt with these issues, I propose to read 12 stories by Jorge Luis Borges and their interpretations, both philosophical and artistic. During the Fall semester, 24 artistic interpretations of those twelve stories will be available in an exhibition at UB Anderson Gallery, and I plan to have the class meet there on at least three occasions. This should keep the discussion related to concrete literary examples.

The course will meet once a week and attendance will be required. If the number of students permits it, each student will make a class presentation. The grade for the course will be based on the presentation and the resulting paper. A full syllabus and the readings will be posted in UB Learns at the beginning of August.

PHI 596 WIL
Tues, 1:30- 3:20pm

Graduate Dissertation Seminar
Park 142

Williams, N
#24453

This course is a required course for all philosophy graduate students who have completed their coursework and are now either preparing a thesis topical or writing thesis chapters. Students may enroll more than once, and are encouraged to do so, but if space is limited (14 max.) priority will be given to students who have recently defended or are working on Topicals, typically in their 4th year of grad studies. The aim is to help students complete their dissertations in a more timely manner, achieve greater success with career placement, and gain field-specific professional training.

Offered in the Fall of each year, this course is a writing intensive course with a central presentation component. Course content is entirely dictated by the dissertation topics students are engaged in—students will be presenting original work in preparation for thesis prospectus or dissertation chapters. All students will get exposure to the issues covered by their peers, and gain useful presentation skills and practice. Students will be instructed in how to improve their presentation skills, and will receive oral feedback from their peers, and oral and written feedback from the instructor. Attendance is mandatory (within reason); all students will present at least once, more times if enrolment permits. The course will be graded Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory (S/U).

PHI 598 (w/IE 500) SMI Mon, 4:00- 6:50pm	Ontological Engineering Park 200-G	Smith, B #24350
PHI 599 All Faculty ARR	Graduate Tutorial ARR	All Faculty Per HUB site
PHI 605 BAU ARR	Supervised Teaching ARR	Baumer, WH Per HUB site
PHI 634 WIL Thurs, 1:00-3:50pm	Powers and Persistence Park 141	Williams, N #24352

This course will be centered on a manuscript draft that re-approaches the problem of persistence from within a distinctly non-neo-Humean metaphysic. Readings will be taken from the manuscript and associated literature. Weekly meetings will involve discussion of the readings and student presentations. Students will be expected to submit either: one seminar length paper of roughly 5500 words; or two 3000 word papers. Other lesser requirements may be added.

Contemporary metaphysics is dominated by thinkers operating from within broadly Humean framework, comprised of four main components: (i) properties are inherently non-modal and passive; (ii) what is possible is restricted only by imagination and coherence; (iii) the laws into which objects enter do not govern; and (iv) causation is a similarly weak and extrinsic relation. At their heart is the doctrine of ‘Humean Supervenience’: the view that the most fundamental or ‘sparse’ properties are categorical, thus lacking modal or causal characteristics, and whatever causal or modal facts obtain do so because they supervene on the “vast mosaic of local matters of particular fact.”

An alternative ontology will be offered that takes as its foundation a sparse set of irreducibly dispositional properties known as ‘powers’. With the change in properties comes a required

change in approaches to laws, causation, and possibility. The last 10 years has seen a small but growing literature on this powers ontology and how the notions of lawhood and causation may be affected. The manuscript we will be considering adds to that body of literature by articulating a specific interpretation of the powers ontology, but significantly furthers the debate by expanding the wider metaphysic within which the powers ontology will operate. More specifically, it reconsiders the problem of persistence and offers a novel solution borne of this new ontological foundation.

PHI 637 HER	Proseminar: Intensive Writing Seminar for First Year Student	Hershenov, D
Tues, 1:00- 3:50pm	Park 141	#24351

This is an introductory writing course required for all first year students accepted into the Ph.D. program but not open to anyone else to take for a grade. There will be a number of required short writing assignments and a long paper. Students may also have to present their work in class and comment on the presentations of others. The course readings will be taken from Jeff McMahan's *Ethics of Killing: Problems at the Margins of Life*. That book explores theoretical issues concerning personal identity, our origins and endings, the nature of harm, the badness of death, the basis of prudential concern, the source of our value, and the moral status of non-rational beings. The results of these theoretical inquiries are then brought to bear upon moral controversies involving abortion, infanticide, euthanasia, assisted suicide, advanced directives and the killing of non-human animals.

PHI 701 All Faculty ARR	MA Thesis Guidance Tutorial ARR	All Faculty Per HUB site
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PHI 703 All Faculty ARR	Dissertation Guidance Tutorial ARR	All Faculty Per HUB site
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Individual Course Sections with Philosophy Department Faculty Permission of Instructor Required:

PHI 599	Graduate Tutorial	(Arranged with Professor)
PHI 701	MA Thesis Guidance	(Arranged with Professor)
PHI 703	Dissertation Guidance Tutorial	(Arranged with Professor)