

**DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY
GRADUATE COURSE DESCRIPTIONS**

Fall Semester August 29 – December 9, 2022

[PHI 520 Topics in the Philosophy of Science](#)

Dr. Barry Smith

Monday, 1:00 PM – 3:40 PM

Class #: 23578

What are the essential features of a scientific discipline, and how are the different scientific disciplines related to each other? This course will provide an introduction to questions such as this, beginning with a treatment of the role of models in different types of science, and with an account of the truthmakers for different kinds of scientific proposition. We then attempt to create a synoptic and non-reductionist view of science in its entirety, aiming to do justice to each of the sciences from a realist point of view, and at the same time to throw light (1) on the interplay between the natural sciences and mathematics, and (2) on the interplay between the sciences in general and the world of common-sense experience.

[PHI 578 Kant's Ethics](#)

Dr. James Lawler

Friday, 1:00 PM – 3:40 PM

Class #: 23579

Kant's ethics occupy a central place in his three critiques. The first Critique prepares the metaphysical space for the second. If deterministic science is true of reality, then morality, with its crucial assumption of free will, is an illusion. So it was necessary for Kant "to deny knowledge, in order to make room for faith," as he says in the Preface to the Critique of Pure Reason. Kant argues that knowledge, based on a priori subjective categories of thinking, is limited to appearances for us, while things in themselves are unknowable. While we cannot know that we have free will, it is reasonable to believe that our will is free. Kant's moral philosophy therefore occupies this metaphysical space opened up by the critique of scientific knowledge. It is important to keep in mind this perspective in considering what Kant says about morality. To focus exclusively on the role of reason in Kant's ethics is to miss the significance of this initial framework, with its critique of knowledge and its grounding of a moral faith.

Moreover, it is not enough to understand what is morally right; it is necessary to realize one's moral duties, the culminating ideal for which is the creation of a just society, what Kant calls "the highest good." Kant's third critique, the Critique of Judgment, develops a

teleological conception that complements the mechanism of science but is open to incorporating the perspectives of morality. In this perspective of the realization of the moral ideals, both Kant's aesthetics and his historical and political essays provide essential components for understanding the realization moral ideals.

The second critique therefore makes complete sense only within the frameworks provided by the first and the third critiques. In the light of the system of three critiques, the course focuses primarily on Kant's small but intricate work, the *Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals*. Lectures and supplied reading materials will provide sufficient information regarding Kant's three critiques and relevant essays.

Lecture Materials will be supplied:

James Lawler, *Freedom and Morality: A Kantian Approach to Ethics*
Immanuel Kant, *Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals*

PHI 579 Special Topics: Mereology, Mereotopology, and Theories of Places

Dr. Thomas Bittner

Wednesday, 10:00 AM – 12:40 PM

Class #: 23919

In this course we start with a brief overview of basic categories of entities. We then perform a formal analysis of General Extensional Mereology (GEM). We will discuss the basic axioms and some theorems as well as their philosophical implications. We then extend GEM by adding further primitives. We discuss several strategies of extending mereology to mereotopology, to a theory of location, and places. The course can be regarded as an exercise in the use of logical methods for philosophical purposes.

PHI 634 Time, Tense and Temporal Perspective

Dr. Maureen Donnelly

Thursday, 1:00 PM – 3:40 PM

Class #: 23580

In this class, we will focus on the debate in the philosophy of time between detensers (or, B theorists) and tensors (or, A theorists.) Very roughly, tensors hold that times/events have objective changing 'A properties' (pastness, nowness, futurity) which can be captured only by tensed claims like 'It is (now) October, 2018,' or 'Elizabeth Warren will be elected president of the United States.' Detensers deny this, holding in that all objective facts about temporal position reduce to unchanging ordering relations between events or between events and times.

We will spend part of the semester looking at some influential arguments for and against tensed or tenseless theories of time. In particular, we will look at McTaggart's early argument for the incoherency of changing A properties, along with contemporary assessments or reconstructions of McTaggart's argument. We will also look at Prior's 'Thank goodness that's over' argument for A properties along with more recent developments of and responses to it. But the main focus of the class will be on getting a feel for what different versions of tensed

or tenseless theories might look like-what, in particular, they might say about how the world is structured.

[PHI 637 Special Topics: The Ethics of Killing](#)

Dr. David Hershenov

Wednesday, 1:00 PM – 3:40 PM

Class #: 23942

The seminar will be focused on Jeff McMahan's book: "The Ethics of Killing: Problems at the Margins of Life." The topics to be examined involve personal identity, the badness of death, the nature of harm, the wrongness of killing, the moral status of animals and cognitively impaired human beings, abortion and infanticide, defining and determining death, euthanasia and physician-assisted suicide, the withering away of the self in cases of dementia.

Individual Tutorial Course Sections

See [HUB Registration site](#) for Individual Tutorial Course Sections with Philosophy Department Faculty, to be arranged with permission of instructor:

PHI 599 Graduate Tutorial

PHI 605 Supervised Teaching

PHI 701 MA Thesis Guidance Tutorials (Arranged with Professor)

PHI 703 Dissertation Guidance Tutorials (Arranged with Professor)