

**DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY
GRADUATE COURSE DESCRIPTIONS**

Fall Semester August 26 – December 6, 2019

PHI 579 Moral Psychology

Dr. Nicolas Bommarito

Wednesday, 1:00 PM – 3:40 PM

Class #: 24025

This seminar introduces a set of philosophical problems surrounding human motivation and character in relation to morality and rationality. It is not about: trolley cases or people hooked up to fMRI machines while answering questions about trolley cases.

PHI 579 Continental Political Philosophy

Dr. Richard Cohen

Wednesday, 4:00 PM – 6:40 PM

Class #: 24059

The political – in theory and practice – has always had two contending valences: justice and power. *Ethical politics*, reflected upon by Plato and Aristotle and exhorted by the Hebrew Bible, demands that power serve justice. *Realpolitik*, reflected by Machiavelli, Hobbes and Schmitt, would empower power for power's sake. Reflecting the profound transformations produced by the Industrial Revolution and mathematical science, modern ethical politics began in revolutions overthrowing regimes of feudal authoritarianism for the sake of the "rights of man and citizen," i.e., for liberal democracy. Today, however, when liberal democracy has succumbed to plutocracy, two new challenges have arisen against it. From the side of ethical politics, social democracy would correct liberal democracy and preserve human rights by providing for their cooperative and collective material collections. From the side of realpolitik, in contrast, a dictatorial and nationalist authoritarianism – fascism, populism – would eliminate liberalism and democracy, and thereby also thwart the possible rise of social democracy.

This course will trace these several developments, in part their historical unfolding, but paying primary attention to intellectual representations of capitalism, modern science, Enlightenment, liberal democracy, social democracy and fascism, to their complex inter-dynamics and most particularly focused upon the opposition of the latter two. We will discuss a variety of political thinkers, with especial attention paid to Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Immanuel Kant and Karl Marx.

[PHI 579 Contemporary Controversies in Bioethics](#)

Dr. David Hershenov

Tuesday, 4:00 PM – 6:40 PM

Class #: 24026

This seminar will deal with some contemporary controversies in bioethics. We'll examine whether: (1) health care workers should have the right to conscientiously refuse to provide legal, established, and expected medical services; (2) doctors should provide transgender adolescents with the puberty-blocking treatment without parental approval; (3) organ sales ought to be permitted out of respect for the autonomy of the person who is the organ source and to increase the supply of life saving organs; (4) the dead donor rule should be abandoned and multiple vital organs taken from those who are dying or comatose – assuming they have given their earlier consent; (5) infanticide should be an option for neonates born with severe pathologies; (6) disabilities should be treated as “mere differences” and environments changed to accommodate them or they should be viewed as “bad differences” and cured; (7) the anti-natalists are correct that it is a harm to bring someone into existence.

The readings will most likely consist of papers by the following authors: David Benatar, Elizabeth Barnes, Christopher Boorse, Jeff McMahan, Peter Singer, Alberto Giubilini, Francesca Minerva, Michael Tooley, David Hershenov, Alan Shewmon, Robert Truog, John Lizza, James Bernat, Gerald Dworkin, Janet Radcliffe-Richards, Paul Hughes, Samuel Kerstein, James S. Taylor, Maura Priest, Alex Bird, Julian Savulescu, Udo Schuklenk, and Ezekiel Emanuel.

[PHI 579 Social & Political Philosophy](#)

Dr. Ryan Muldoon

Thursday, 1:00 PM – 3:40 PM

Class #: 24027

This seminar will focus on local social dynamics and how they can shape civic values. We will take a look at a combination of empirical social science, theoretical models, and normative political philosophy to examine how and when liberal arrangements give rise to distinct normative values. Of particular interest will be questions surrounding residential density and residential segregation.

[PHI 579 Intelligence Analysis: A Philosophical Introduction](#)

Dr. Barry Smith

Monday, 1:00 PM – 3:40 PM

Class #: 22995

Course Description: This course will provide an introduction to intelligence analysis, covering both the practical and the theoretical aspects of the intelligence process. We will cover a range of topics including: the nature and goals of intelligence analysis; the cognitive processes involved; the different types of evidence used; analytical reasoning; the role of AI and other forms of computer support to intelligence analysis.

Course Structure: This is a three credit hour graduate seminar, with a practical exercise forming part of each class. The final session will be structured around YouTube videos created by the students in the class. Students will be trained in the basic tools and methods of intelligence analysis, and will also receive an insight into the overall context into which intelligence analysis fits.

Target Audience: The course is open to all interested students, and will presuppose no knowledge of philosophy or intelligence analysis.

Intelligence Analysis in Buffalo: UB scientists are involved in a variety of projects in which intelligence analysis plays a role, and some of the intelligence community collaborators in which these projects will be involved in the teaching.

PHI 634 Powers & Dispositions

Dr. Neil Williams

Tuesday, 1:00 PM – 3:40 PM

Class #: 24037

In this course we'll be looking at the most cutting-edge work in what is the largest growth field in contemporary metaphysics: powers and dispositions. Our focus will be on two very recent monographs, McKittrick's (2018) *Dispositional Pluralism* and Williams' (2019) *The Powers Metaphysic*.

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 701 MA Thesis Guidance Tutorials (Arranged with Professor)

PHI 703 Dissertation Guidance Tutorials (Arranged with Professor)