

# Spring 2015

## Department of Philosophy

### Undergraduate Course Descriptions

<http://www.buffalo.edu/cas/philosophy/undergrad-study/ug-courses.html>

#### **PHI 101 Introduction to Philosophy**

Professor Kah-Kyung Cho

MWF 9:00-9:50

Class #14276

This is an introductory philosophy course with a compact and yet global design. Instead of the frequently adopted, but seldom fully utilized textbooks averaging 640 pages, we have chosen a text with only 130 pages but packing 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 most open to the world, 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 *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 1. 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 the "Trial and Error" approach.

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

### **PHI 101 Introduction to Philosophy**

Clint Dowland  
MWF 10:00-10:50  
Class #23929

### **PHI 101 Introduction to Philosophy**

David Hahn  
MWF 11:00-11:50  
Class #23930

### **PHI 101 Introduction to Philosophy**

Ariane Nomikos  
T TH 9:30-10:50  
Class #20001

### **PHI 107 Introduction to Ethics**

Professor Alexandra King  
T TH 9:30-10:50  
Class #14040

This course introduces students to three major areas of ethical thought: metaethics, normative ethics, and applied ethics. Metaethics is concerned with the status of morality: whether or not it's objective, what moral language means, and so on. Normative ethics asks about general theories of right and wrong - what it's 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 107 Introduction to Ethics**

Professor Carolyn Korsmeyer

T TH 11:00-12:20

Class #20002

What does it mean to be a good person? How should we make moral decisions? Are there rules to follow in order to do right? What are our responsibilities to ourselves and others? What is the relation between goodness and happiness? Do we have moral responsibilities to nonhuman animals? These are just a few of the questions addressed by moral philosophers. This course will introduce students to several approaches to ethics, considering influential theories from the history of philosophy as well as contemporary moral questions that arise when we extend ethical consideration beyond the human world to animals and the environment.

## **PHI 115 Critical Thinking**

Professor James Beebe

MW 3:30-4:50

Class #22424

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.

## **PHI 115 Critical Thinking**

Professor Thomas Bittner

T TH 2:00-3:20

Class #20003

## **PHI 175 Introduction to Deductive Logic**

Professor Randall Dipert

T TH 2:00-3:20

Class #23931

Deductive logic is the study of arguments that are most often used in mathematics and philosophy, such that if the premises are indeed all true, and the argument is a good one (technically, we say it is "valid"), then we can be sure that the conclusion is true. The other major type of logic is inductive logic—which deals with arguments in which the conclusion is likely or probably true. (There is a third kind of logic, abductive logic, that is increasingly studied in computer science and artificial intelligence.) There are interesting valid

arguments with conclusions that the external world (outside of the mind) exists, and that God does or doesn't exist.

The course will begin with a comprehensive study of Aristotelian logic, whose arguments are usually called "syllogisms." Aristotelian logic deals with arguments that can be formed from four basic sentence patterns: All X's are Y's, Some X's are Y's, No X's are Y's, and Some X's are not Y's. We will study Venn diagrams for determining validity, other graphical methods, and a method of "natural deduction" devised by UB's own John Corcoran. The largest amount of the course will consist of the study of propositional logic. This is sometimes also called sentence- or statement logic. It deals with arguments formed from sentences containing "and," "or," "if... then" and "not." The course will be extensively supported by UBLearns, excellent computer programs that accompany the textbook (H. Gensler's *Introduction to Logic*), and some other computer programs. Throughout the course we will look at substantive philosophical and ethical arguments, as well as logical puzzles and problems. We will also talk about how reasoning and theorem-proving can be performed by computer programs, an important part of artificial intelligence.

Because of its attention to rigorous, careful reasoning, this course serves as an excellent way to study for the LSAT, GRE, and other professional tests for graduate school.

## **PHI 215 Symbolic Logic**

Professor Randall Dipert  
T TH 11:00-12:20  
Class #20005

This course will assume knowledge of propositional logic, including truth tables and some deductive theory—although the industrious undergraduate philosophy major or graduate student will be given an opportunity to bring themselves up to speed in the first 2 weeks. After a sketch of propositional logic (its semantics in truth tables and its theory of deduction in a natural deduction framework), we will describe (but not prove) its properties (consistency, completeness, decidability). We will also discuss some of its philosophical issues—concrete sentences or abstract propositions?, the problem with the conditional, and the possibility of more than 2 truth values. We will also start to use some computer programs for proof and truth-table construction. In the second and larger portion of the course we will study translations from English into, and the deductive theory and semantics (model theory) for, first order predicate logic. We will use more advanced computer programs to learn logic and learn a fragment of the computer language Prolog (for PROgramming in LOGic). We also look at alternative logical notations, including what is needed to use the theorem-proving computer program Prover9. The last part of the course will deal with "extensions" of first order logic, in particular a fragment of the part-whole calculus (mereology) and a very small fragment of the ontology of the Basic Formal Ontology (BFO 2.0).

## **PHI 234 Environmental Ethics**

Professor Kenneth Shockley

MWF 9:00-9:50

Class #23874

Environmental ethics is an area of study that examines how humans ought to relate to and interact with their environment as individuals, through organizations, and as a species. This course is designed to provide a comprehensive overview of the key philosophical issues and arguments within this growing field. It will be of particular value not only to Philosophy majors and those concentrating in environmentally oriented disciplines, but also to those with a keen interest in humankind's complicated relationship with our natural environment.

In this course we will consider the nature of this relationship, humankind's responsibilities to and regarding that environment, the kinds of actions prescribed by those responsibilities, and possible justifications for those responsibilities. In particular, we will examine the merits of considering our responsibilities to the environment from an entirely human-centered standpoint, possible alternatives to this approach, and various ways these options might be applied to actual environmental problems. To engage in this examination adequately we will need to consider both theoretical issues underlying various approaches to the environment and the various ways those approaches have been put into practice.

## **PHI 234 Environmental Ethics**

Professor Kenneth Shockley

MWF 11:00-11:50

Class #20312

Environmental ethics is an area of study that examines how humans ought to relate to and interact with their environment as individuals, through organizations, and as a species. This course is designed to provide a comprehensive overview of the key philosophical issues and arguments within this growing field. It will be of particular value not only to Philosophy majors and those concentrating in environmentally oriented disciplines, but also to those with a keen interest in humankind's complicated relationship with our natural environment.

In this course we will consider the nature of this relationship, humankind's responsibilities to and regarding that environment, the kinds of actions prescribed by those responsibilities, and possible justifications for those responsibilities. In particular, we will examine the merits of considering our responsibilities to the environment from an entirely human-centered standpoint, possible alternatives to this approach, and various ways these options might be applied to actual environmental problems. To engage in this examination adequately we will need to consider both theoretical issues underlying various approaches to the environment and the various ways those approaches have been put into practice.

### **PHI 237 Bioethics; Social and Ethical Values In Medicine**

Professor David Hershenov

T TH 11:00-12:20

Class #11147

This course is concerned with contemporary controversies in medical ethics. The topics to be covered are abortion, embryonic-stem cell research, physician-assisted suicide and euthanasia, patient autonomy, decision making for incompetent patients, human cloning, biological enhancements, commercial surrogate motherhood, the definition and criterion of death, and organ donation. The authors to be read and discussed are Judith Thomson on abortion, David Shoemaker on embryonic-stem cell research, David Velleman on euthanasia/suicide, Ronald Dworkin on advanced directives, Beauchamp and Childress on patient autonomy, Elizabeth Anderson on commercial surrogacy, Robert Veatch on organ donation, Alan Shewmon on death, Michael Sandel on enhancement, and Leon Kass on cloning. All the articles will be made available for free through the library's electronic course reserve.

### **PHI 237 Bioethics; Social and Ethical Values In Medicine**

Paul Poenicke

T TH 8:00-9:20

Class #14965

### **PHI 237 Bioethics; Social and Ethical Values In Medicine**

Jake Monaghan

MWF 9:00-9:50

Class #11148

### **PHI 252 Eastern Philosophy**

Professor Kah-Kyung Cho

MWF 11:00-11:50

Class #22427

Text: J. Baird Callicot & Roger T. Ames (eds.) Nature in Asian Traditions of Thought

Requirements: No previous acquaintance with Asian philosophy is necessary. Grading: Two Quizzes (10 points each), Midterm paper (5 - 6 pages double space, 30 points) Final Exam (40 points), Attendance & Class participation (10 points)

Syllabus with weekly discussion topics, assignments and suggestions for midterm paper topics will be distributed at the beginning of the class.

What to expect from this course:

Western scholarship in philosophy for a long time neglected to consider Asian thoughts as having viable components deserving a niche in its globally systematic overview. The chief reason was the difficulty and incommensurability of the language. As some degree of linguistic difficulties was removed over time, Asian thoughts were still judged by what it lacked in comparison with what the West had, such as Indo-Germanic grammar, logic, history of concepts and epistemology. Few people attempted to understand Asian thoughts from within, i.e., according to what it had uniquely cultivated in terms of its own "metaphorological" language and grammar, to cope with its ideal of harmony and symbiosis with the larger universe.

Symbiosis, or living together with the rest of the world in reciprocity and harmony, is the central idea which brought a group of eminent Sinologists and Orientalists together in this volume. Understandably, our text bears the sub-title: *Essays in Environmental Philosophy*. In a practical sense, ecological crisis is what originally compelled some philosophers to reexamine the meaning of human being in relation to nature, and turn their eyes to ecological sentiments in Asian culture.

But it is astonishing to see how contemporary Western sinologists have gone much further than to merely seek "conceptual resources" for effectively dealing with the environmental problems. They brought the very question of what is the being of humans with the fundamental questions of how humans ought to dwell more truthfully. The long forgotten, primordial meaning of dwelling on earth has come back to haunt us, as we are reminded that the original Greek word for "dwelling" in its infinitive form, was *ethein*. Our modern concept "ethics" has derived from it.

Of course, the Asian way of thinking is not that abstract, as the above sketch of the core issues might suggest. Rich in imagery and even humor, the text is a treasure trove of everyday wisdom.

## **PHI 260 Ancient Philosophy**

Professor Jiyuan Yu  
T TH 9:30-10:50  
Class #15661

This course will cover the development of Greek philosophy from its first beginnings in Ionia in the sixth century BC down to the emergence of Neo-Platonism in the third century AD, with an emphasis on Plato and Aristotle. The goal of the course is to understand the basic assumptions, methods, and terminology of Greek philosophy which have so deeply shaped the whole Western culture. Course sessions will combine lectures and discussion.

Textbook: *Introductory Readings in Ancient Greek and Roman Philosophy*, eds. By Reeve and Miller (Hackett, 2006)

## **PHI 270 Early Modern Philosophy**

William Doub  
MWF 11:00-11:50  
Class #23932

The early modern period is regarded as one of the most fruitful in philosophy's history. The events that preceded it—namely, the discovery of the New World, the Reformation, and the Scientific Revolution—precipitated a major shift in the way that human beings thought about the world, a shift that deeply affected the philosophy of this era. Due to their ingenuity, many of the epistemological, metaphysical, ethical, and political theories developed during the early modern period are still influential to this day. In this course, students will gain a basic familiarity with various philosophical issues discussed during the early modern period. Figures to be studied include, but are not limited to: Descartes, Princess Elizabeth of Bohemia, Spinoza, Leibniz, Locke, Berkeley, Hume, and Reid.

## **PHI 280 Nineteenth Century Enlightenment from Kant to Freud and the Transformation of Our World Views, Ideas, Politics, Spirituality, Social Life and Religions**

Professor Richard Cohen  
T TH 12:30-1:50  
Class #23604

Hardly a more important century can be imagined in the transformation of humanity's self-understanding. 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 phone, cable). The last thoughts and outlooks of a 3000 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 ends and beginnings at their intellectual sources, we will explore the old and the new in the prose and poetry of Kant, Fichte, Hegel, Feuerbach, Marx, Dostoyevsky, Whitman, Comte, Darwin, Bergson and Nietzsche, among others.

## **PHI 321 Philosophy of Science**

Professor John Kearns  
MWF 1:00-1:50  
Class #22428

The course will explore some different views about the status of science and scientific knowledge. Does science deliver the truth about the world and the things in it, or does it have the more limited goal of making sense of what we encounter, and providing a successful, coherent explanatory account? We will consider the views of David Hume, Karl



Popper, Thomas Kuhn, and some more contemporary writers. There will be numerous short writing assignments, and one longer paper. Each student will give a report to the class about his or her term paper. There will be midterm and final exams

### **PHI 335 Contemporary Ethical Theory**

Professor Alexandra King

T TH 12:30-1:50

Class #23933

This course will familiarize students with contemporary ethical issues and thinkers. We will cover a broad range of topics, with central focus on the major normative ethical theories of virtue ethics, deontology, consequentialism, and ethics of care. In addition, we will ask about the relationship between free will and moral responsibility, about the status of moral rules, and about moral versus non-moral values - and why we should be moral at all.

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 345 Aesthetics and Philosophy of Art**

Professor Carolyn Korsmeyer

T TH 2:00-3:20

Class #23934

The course aims to acquaint students with some of the major issues in aesthetics and philosophy of art in the (largely) western tradition. We shall cover such topics as: the role of art in society and the potential for danger in the arts and entertainment; the nature of artistic creativity and expression; the experience of beauty and of the sublime; the paradoxical enjoyment of tragedy and horror; and the aesthetics of food and drink. Because the concepts of art and aesthetic value develop historically and vary culturally, we shall consider historical material alongside contemporary theories.

What does it mean to value or to "appreciate" an object, whether art, nature, or "ordinary thing"? Our evaluation of particular art forms both traditional (e.g. paintings) and borderline (e.g. food) will be examined alongside popular entertainment, video games, and the environment. Classes will be conducted with a mixture of lecture and discussion. Lectures will sometimes be accompanied with visual materials (slides, videos), and other examples of art. Students are expected to demonstrate familiarity with the theories presented and to analyze and critically assess their advantages and disadvantages.

Likely texts: Neill and Ridley, eds., *Arguing about Art*, Korsmeyer, ed., *Aesthetics: The Big Questions*.

### **PHI 417 Modal Logic (combined with PHI 619)**

Professor John Kearns  
MW 4:00-5:20  
Class #23935

This course will survey standard systems of modal logic, with an emphasis on propositional modal logic. Considerable emphasis will be placed on proving results in and about the various systems. Kripke-style possible-worlds semantics will be explored, and we will also investigate some alternative types of semantics. We will consider and discuss philosophical issues concerning modality. The exact mix of topics covered will be partly determined by the composition of the class. Students will be given frequent homework assignments. There will be a midterm and a final exam, but no paper.

**See HUB Registration site for Individual Course Sections with Philosophy Faculty Meeting Days/Times Arranged with Professors**

**PHI 402 Philosophy Honors Tutorials (Arranged with Professor)**

**PHI 499 Philosophy Undergraduate Tutorials (Arranged with Professor)**

**See Office of the Registrar for policy and registration requirements**  
<http://registrar.buffalo.edu/schedules/index.php>