Fall 2015
Department of Philosophy
Undergraduate Course Descriptions

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

PHI 101 Introduction to Philosophy

Professor David Braun
MWF   11:00-11:50
Class #21051

This course will provide an introduction to philosophy by discussing three of its central topics: the problem of free will and determinism, the mind-body problem, and the existence and nature of God. Among the questions we will ask are the following: Do human beings have free will? Is free will compatible with scientific law? Are human beings purely physical things? Do human beings have souls? Is it possible for a human being to survive death? Does God exist? Are there good arguments for the existence of God? Is the existence of evil compatible with the existence of God? We will formulate several views on each of our three topics, and consider arguments for and against each view we formulate. Our goals will be to understand these views and evaluate the arguments for and against them.

PHI 101 Introduction to Philosophy

Professor Kah Kyung Cho
MWF   9:00-9:50
Class #18507

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 dialectitian? "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 the "Trial and Error" approach.

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

PHI 105 Contemporary Moral Problems

Professor Ryan Muldoon
T TH   9:30-10:50
Class #24124

Are sweatshops exploitative, or the best means we have of lifting people out of poverty? Do we even owe moral consideration to people who are far away from us? What do we owe future generations? In a world of increasing diversity, what obligation do we have to overcome our own biases about others? Is accommodating the moral and religious beliefs of others an infringement of the free exercise of our own beliefs?

In this course, we will investigate these and other questions, with the goal of understanding how we fit in to an increasingly complex moral environment. We will explore these contemporary challenges using not just our life experience, but drawing on the tools that moral philosophy provides. This course will expose you to methods of reasoning that can help you decide how to respond to a wide array of contemporary moral challenges

PHI 107 Introduction to Ethics

Professor Kah Kyung Cho
MWF   11:00-11:50
Class #20361

Required Textbook: Max Scheler, The Nature of Sympathy Several Handouts;

Max Scheler is the most famous Scholar in the area of phenomenological ethics, and his "Nature of Sympathy" is by far the best known book that explored the essence of sympathy phenomenologically.

While this rich text will keep us busy for about the half of the semester, we will include in our study Ecology, Eco-ethical topics which was received at the World Congress of Philosophy at Athens in 2013 enthusiastically by audiences, for having opened the door to the living natural world from a "nature-internal" moral perspective.

PHI 107 Introduction to Ethics

Sean McNamara
T TH   10:00-11:20
Class #23783

Introduces value theory, good and bad, justification of obligations to others, relationship of free choice and determinism, and contemporary moral problems analyzed by ethical principles.

PHI 107 Introduction to Ethics

Jake Monaghan
M W   7:00-8:20pm
Class #24134

Introduces value theory, good and bad, justification of obligations to others, relationship of free choice and determinism, and contemporary moral problems analyzed by ethical principles.

PHI 107 Introduction to Ethics

Robert Kelly
MWF   9:00-9:50
Class #24135

Introduces value theory, good and bad, justification of obligations to others, relationship of free choice and determinism, and contemporary moral problems analyzed by ethical principles.

PHI 115 Critical Thinking

Professor James Beebe
T TH   2:00-3:20
Class #20599

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 162 Law Morality Authority

Professor Ryan Muldoon
T TH   2:00-3:20
Class #24125

What is the law? Why does it have authority over us? What relationship does the law have with morality? These are timeless questions, and we will look at them through a contemporary lens. This course will be divided into three parts. In the first part of the course, we will survey the philosophical literature on the authority of the law, and its sources of political and moral justification. We will learn about why we have the law, and how it is meant to structure the relations between citizens and state. In the second section, we will explore what happens when the law is out of step with prevailing social norms. For instance, if nobody else follows the law, should you? What really commands our loyalty? Are laws legitimate if no one pays attention to them? In the final part of the course, we will explore what happens when the law is used for illegitimate ends. We will focus on cases of racially discriminatory laws and discriminatory enforcement of otherwise neutral laws. We will look at such issues as laws governing housing, civil asset forfeiture, and stop and frisk. We will also pay particular attention to the recent events in Ferguson, Missouri to see what philosophical lessons we can draw.

PHI 175 Introduction to Deductive Logic

Professor Randall Dipert
MWF   9:00-9:50
Class #21013

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 212 Introduction to Religion

Brian Donohue
MWF 10:00-10:50
Class #24556

In this course, we will survey several issues in philosophy of religion: arguments for the existence of God, concepts of God/the divine, divine attributes, language about God/the divine, the problem of evil, the nature of religious belief, evidence for religion, miracles, the relationship between science and religion, and the status of religious experience. Primarily we will focus on the religious beliefs and traditions of the five major world religions (Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, and Buddhism), but we will occasionally make

forays into other religious traditions as well. No prior knowledge of philosophy is required. One textbook is required.

Coursework will include: readings from classic and contemporary articles on philosophy of religion, open-book/take-home reading quizzes, an essay (approx. 1,400 words), a midterm exam, and a final exam.

PHI 215 Symbolic Logic

Professor Randall Dipert
MWF 11:00-11:50
Class #20043

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 215 Symbolic Logic

Professor John Kearns
T TH   9:30-10:50
Class #23785

In this course, we develop logical theories for the two fundamental languages of modern logic, the propositional language whose logical expressions are symbolic connectives, and the quantificational language of first-order logic with identity. In developing each theory, we will consider the truth conditions of sentences in the language, we will learn how to understand and to make statements employing the logical expressions in the language, and will devise techniques for determining when statements are logically true, when statements imply other statements, and when statements are incompatible. For the propositional

language, these techniques involve truth-tables. For each theory, we will set up a deductive system for constructing arguments and proofs which employ sentences of the logical language, and will gain proficiency in constructing such arguments.

PHI 237 Bioethics; Social and Ethical Values In Medicine

Professor David Hershenov
T TH   11:00-12:20
Class #20363

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, codes of conduct for medical practitioners, 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, Chris Boorse on the Goals of Medicine, Beauchamp and Childress on patient autonomy, Elizabeth Anderson on commercial surrogacy, Robert Veatch and Gerald Dworkin on organ donation, 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

Clint Dowland
T TH   8:00-9:20
Class #19921

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

PHI 237 Bioethics; Social and Ethical Values In Medicine
Brendan Cline
MWF   9:00-9:50
Class #20285

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

PHI 260 Ancient Philosophy

Mike Moran
MWF   1:00-1:50
Class #23865

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 328 Philosophy of Language

Professor John Kearns
T TH   2:00-3:20
Class #21014

There will be two foci of this course, and the two are linked to one another. One focus is competing theories of reference, competing theories that philosophers have developed to explain the use of singular terms such as names (like 'George Washington' or 'London, England') and descriptions (like 'Whistler's mother or the 'capital of Arizona') to pick out or "fasten on" objects in order to characterize them in some way. Although it might initially seem that referring is such a simple and familiar practice that no special theory is required to understand and explain it, this is not the case. Different theories of reference are linked to larger accounts of experience, thought and language.

The second focus is on competing theories, or understandings, of language. One theory thinks of a language as composed of, or constituted by, a set of meaningful expressions which are "governed" by syntactic and semantic principles for constructing and interpreting expressions in the language. A second theory thinks of a language as a kind of activity in which people engage, much as baseball is a kind of activity in which people engage. From this perspective, the basic "units" of language are speech acts, or language acts, that language users perform. The two ways of understanding a language lead to different ways of approaching the topic of reference.

We will begin by considering the opposing theories of reference developed by Gottlob Frege (the inventor of modern logic) and Bertrand Russell, and consider other early accounts of reference. Then we will look at the speech act theory developed by J. L. Austin, and consider the relevance of his theory to an understanding of reference. After that we will consider more recent accounts of reference, and finally see if we can make sense of the various controversies, and can appreciate the strengths and weaknesses of the various accounts.

Students will be encouraged, even expected, to develop their own accounts of language and reference. There will be frequent short writing assignments, midterm and final exams, and a longer term paper.

PHI 329 Metaphysics

Professor Neil Williams
T TH   11:00-12:20
Class #23866

Metaphysics is concerned with the most fundamental categories of existence. These include events, particulars, properties, persons, facts, and so on. The best way to approach metaphysics is through the consideration of certain problems; as one begins to think about how best to solve these problems, the connections between the many metaphysical problems become clear. Our aim in the course is to consider answers to, and methodologies employed in answering, the question: what is there? With that in mind, this course will pay close attention to five major metaphysical issues (universals; particulars; time; causation; persistence) but in so doing we are likely to touch on most of the topics that fall within the range of metaphysics.

Students are required to have taken at least one previous philosophy course to register. Given the content of the course, more than one previous course is highly recommended.

The main readings for the course will be placed (free!) on UB Learns, but you are required to purchase the following guide to help you through the course:
Beebee, Effingham, and Goff (2010) Metaphysics – The Key Concepts. New York: Routledge.

PHI 333 Epistemology

Professor James Beebe
T TH   12:30-1:50
Class #21016

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

PHI 489 Topics in Ethics: Value and the Environment (combined with PHI 598)

Professor Kenneth Shockley
Tues   12:30-3:20
Class #22524

Aldo Leopold famously said it is wrong to undermine the "integrity, stability and beauty of the biotic community." But are there sufficient philosophical grounds for this claim? If not, what are the relevant alternatives?

The attribution of value to the environment is fraught with conceptual difficulties. Aside from concerns about the moral realism presupposed by Leopold's famous claim, there are related concerns about coherently ascribing intrinsic value to objects of environmental concern, concerns over the right way to frame the relation between the human and the nonhuman world, and concerns over the relation between environmental values and other value schemes (e.g., economic value). There are also worries over how to express those values normatively. Are environmental values to be responded to consequentially, such that those values are to be promoted? Are they, rather, to be respected? Are they best thought of as reflections of human character? And, however they are to be understood, how do we explain differences between the way we treat values in "environmental" contexts and the way we treat values in more interpersonal, traditional contexts where the exclusive concern is with human values? In this advanced course in environmental ethics we will explore these difficulties and their relevance to a range of practical problems.

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

PHI 401 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

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