

# Spring 2016

## Department of Philosophy

### Graduate Course Descriptions

[http://www.buffalo.edu/cas/philosophy/grad-study/grad\\_courses.html](http://www.buffalo.edu/cas/philosophy/grad-study/grad_courses.html)

#### **PHI 519 Advanced Logic (combined with PHI 489 Advanced Logic)**

Professor David Braun  
MWF 12:00-12:50  
Class #23970

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 three exams. The last exam will occur during the final exams period. Pre-requisite, **strictly enforced**: Philosophy 315 (Symbolic Logic) at UB or instructor permission. Students who have not taken Philosophy 315 at UB, but who believe that they have taken an equivalent course, or are otherwise qualified to take the course, must contact the instructor before enrolling.

#### **PHI 531 Analytic Metaphysics**

Professor Barry Smith  
Tuesday 1:00-3:50  
Class #23975

This course consists in an overview of central themes in analytical metaphysics viewed from a broadly realist perspective. We begin with a historical overview of analytical metaphysics and a discussion of general categories such as universals, particulars, processes, dispositions and functions. We then extend these general categories to specific areas such as documents and document acts, social reality, disease, money, and war. The course will be of interest not only to philosophers but also to those interested in ontological applications. Further details are [here](#).

## **PHI 535 Philosophical Analysis**

Professor John Kearns  
Friday 1:30-4:20  
Class #23982

This course will focus on speech acts, or language acts. We will begin by considering J.L. Austin's *How to Do Things with Words*, then move on to some of John Searle's major works, from *Speech Acts* through at least *The Construction of Social Reality*. Austin invented speech-act theory, at least in its more-or-less contemporary form, but without Searle, his invention might have gone largely unnoticed, and simply disappeared from view. Searle was forceful both in defending and developing Austin's account, and Searle remains one of the most important living philosophers, who may well have a major impact on philosophy in the Twenty-First Century.

However, there is more to be said about speech acts than Searle has said, so we will also see what there is about Searle's account that needs fixing, or improving, as well as considering issues and approaches that he has neglected, especially ones which I favor, in particular those dealing with illocutionary logic. It is a prerequisite of this course that students be familiar with (have read) at least the following works concerning reference and proper names: Frege's *On Sense and Reference*, Russell's *On Denoting*, Strawson's *On Referring*, Russell's *Reply to Mr. Strawson*, Donnellan's *Reference and Definite Descriptions*, and Kripke's *Naming and Necessity*.

## **PHI 564 Aristotle**

Professor Jiyuan Yu  
Thursday 1:00-3:50  
Class #23987

An advanced study of Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, and other important texts that are crucial for an understanding of Aristotle's theory of being and substance, including *Categories* 1-5, *Physics* 1-2, and *De Anima* III.

Text: *The Basic Works of Aristotle*, R.McKeon (ed.), Random House. If you can afford, *The Complete Works of Aristotle: The Revised Oxford Translation* (ed. By J.Barnes, Princeton, 2 vols.) is definitely better. If you have Greek, consult Oxford classical texts or Loeb

## **PHI 579 Philosophical Hermeneutics (Special Topics)**

Professor Kah Kyung Cho  
Monday 1:00-3:50  
Class #23989

Gadamer's *Truth and Method* (1960) stood for quite a while in the shadow of Heidegger. It was Habermas who first engaged Gadamer in a series of critical debates, but he also spread in effect the questionable stereotype that Gadamer was an "urbanized Heidegger." On the other hand, Gadamer's reception outside of Germany was much more balanced. In the United States, Richard Rorty distinguished two types of philosophizing: One is "problem solving which he deemed as "normal," and the other, by "introducing new problems" as hermeneutics does, deviates from the norm, hence labeled as "abnormal." (*Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature*, 1979, p. 320 f.)

Italy's best known spokesperson of hermeneutic philosophy, Gianni Vattimo, echoed Rorty's view by further articulating Gadamer's position as "revolutionary" in the sense of Thomas Kuhn's "paradigm shift." The hermeneutic shift away from the prevailing pattern of "epistemology" is revolutionary insofar as it lets experience of truth "itself to us" rather than we force objects of nature to conform to human subjectivity, to its apriori conditions of intuition and understanding. For Locke and even more emphatically for Kant, understanding was an active function of mind to subsume common characteristics of natural objects under a general idea (*repraesentatio per nota communis*.)

Kant was at heart a Newtonian scientist and feign would have extended the criteria of universally valid and necessary truth to metaphysical domains. But he was also prudent enough to draw a line between constitutive and regulative use of reason. The existence of God, the immortality of soul and the beginning and end of history were tempting metaphysical puzzles, but we humans are not equipped to answer those purely speculative questions. These three highest concepts, according to Kant, serve rather the purpose of limiting and rounding off human knowledge, and only within their bounds, our reason ought to attempt to increase knowledge as much as possible.

Gadamer's *Truth and Method* is a response to major questions posed by philosophers before his time. Hegel, Marx and Kierkegaard, Dilthey and Neo-Kantians were among them. But what makes his thought uniquely alive is the way he looks at two things, language and history, not as objects or tools of research, but as something that has the "character of happening" to you, with you, and even "in spite of you. Though Gadamer often professes that Husserl's phenomenology is also his method, it is a uniquely hermeneutically dialogized phenomenology. Thus there is no such thing as "past" history. Even in the guise of a tenaciously forgotten state, certain acquired belief, habit of thinking and doing persist in me and through others. History continues to live, even in its forgottenness.

## **PHI 579 Social and Political Philosophy (Special Topics)**

Professor Ryan Muldoon

Wednesday 4:00-6:50pm  
Class #23988

This course will look at recent challenges to mainstream Rawlsian social contract theory. There will be a focus on exploring how idealization functions in developing political theory, and how to navigate the ideal/non-ideal divide. Graduate student interest will dictate some of the content of the course. This course assumes familiarity with the social contract tradition. The course will be run as a seminar, with the expectation that participants will often be in charge of leading discussion. Requirements: course presentations and a seminar paper of 20-25 pages.

### **PHI 604 Teaching Philosophy**

Professor Neil Williams  
Monday 1:30-2:30  
Class #21119

### **PHI 634 Philosophy of Medicine: Theory and Practice**

Professor David Hershenov  
Wednesday 1:00-3:50  
Class #21121

This course will investigate some very influential contemporary theories of health and disease and then apply those theories to current controversies in medicine. Many of the leading conceptions of health and disease emerged in response to the anti-psychiatry movement of the 1960s, so we will begin with a paper representative of the latter group. Then we will examine contemporary naturalist, normativist, and hybrid accounts of disease. The naturalist offers a value-free analysis of health and disease, relying upon the biological notions of function and dysfunction. Dysfunction in any part of the body will be sufficient for disease. The normativist will argue that diseases must harm individuals and that the society's values will determine what is harmful. Hybrid theorists claim part dysfunction is merely a necessary but not sufficient condition for someone to be unhealthy. What is also required for disease is that there be a part dysfunction that is harmful. After becoming familiar with the nature, strengths and weaknesses of the competing philosophical conceptions of health and disease, we will bring such theoretical insights to bear upon current controversies in medicine. We will consider whether medicine is essentially pathocentric and doctors should therefore refrain from using their medical knowledge to promote other goals like enhancements, euthanasia, judicial executions, and military interrogations etc. We will explore whether mental health practitioners are failing to distinguish diseases from "problems of living" and consequently are medicating healthy people. We will further pursue this question with a study of whether "normal" grief is to be viewed as a pathological condition like a wound or is a properly functioning process of healing. Then we will tackle the controversial issue of whether the disabled should be

cured or rather the focus should be on altering an “ableist” society that makes their mere disability into a harmful condition. A somewhat related issue is whether children born with sexual organs of both sexes should they be surgically altered to remove their ambiguous sexuality or should medicine and the broader society change its attitudes to them? We next will examine whether health is the key condition to our being autonomous. Then we will explore the issue of whether the addicted are diseased and so not responsible for their conduct. We will end with a discussion of whether aging is a healthy normal stage or a pathological loss of abilities.

**PHI 599 Graduate Tutorials (Arranged with Professor)**

**PHI 702 MA Thesis Guidance Tutorials (Arranged with Professor)**

**PHI 704 Dissertation Guidance Tutorials (Arranged with Professor)**

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

*Revised 10/7/15 PH*