UB Spring Session January 30 - May 12, 2017
Department of Philosophy
Graduate Course Descriptions

PHI 549 SEM Applied Ontology
B. Smith
Online
Class # 24197

Course Structure: This will be a three credit hour **on-line** graduate seminar. It will be taught on Mondays from January 30 to May 8, 2017 through the medium of a series of 2-hour long videos incorporating presentation of PowerPoint slides and question-answer sessions. Links to course videos will be provided each Sunday at 9am. Students will be required to watch the video class some time within 48 hours. In each week (starting on Mondays at 9am) class participants will be able to post questions, discussion comments and responses to the class email forum relating to the video from the relevant week. The final session or sessions (depending on the number of class participants) will consist in youtube videos (ca. 20 minutes in length) created by the students in the class.

Course Description: An ontology is a structured collection of terms used to tag data with the goal of making data deriving from heterogeneous sources more easily searchable, comparable or combinable. Ontologies allow information to be shared across communities of scientists with different sorts of expertise. The Gene Ontology, for example, allows researchers on aging to use data from cell biology, yeast biology, cancer biology, genetics, and gerontology, because all of these disciplines create data that are tagged using Gene Ontology terms. The course will provide an introduction to ontology from an application oriented point of view, focusing on the best practices for ontology development and on the development of plug-and-play ontology modules for re-use in different areas. Examples will be drawn primarily from biology and medicine, but no expertise in this disciplines is presupposed.

Example Ontologies

[Information Artifact Ontology](#)

[Gene Ontology](#)

[OBO (Open Biomedical Ontologies) Foundry](#)

[The Environment Ontology](#)

[Ontology for General Medical Science](#)

Text: Robert Arp, Barry Smith and Andrew Spear, [Building Ontologies with Basic Formal Ontology](#), Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, August 2015

Further readings are provided here: http://ontology.buffalo.edu/smith/

Example videos are provided here: https://www.youtube.com/user/hxo3nql/playlists

Requirements: This course is open to all persons with an undergraduate degree and some relevant experience (for example in data scientists, information engineers, terminology researchers). No prior knowledge of ontology is required. In order to receive a grade and course credit students will be required to have reviewed in a timely manner all provided videos and any accompanying recommended reading. Grading will be on the basis of contributions to the on-line class discussion forum and on the quality and content of a 20 minute youtube video (with accompanying essay and PowerPoint slide deck) on some topic in the field of applied ontology. Each student will be required to create one such video for presentation in the final class session on May 8. Examples of student videos created in comparable classes in the past are available [here](#) and [here](#).

Grading will be based on:

1. Forum participation (25%)

2. 20 minute youtube video (25%)

3. Associated PowerPoint slides (25%)

4. associated essay (25%)

PHI 579 SEM Special Topics- Topics in Ethics
N.P. Bommarito
R, 1:00 PM - 3:50 PM
Class # 22436
In this course we will examine contemporary work in virtue ethics.

PHI 579 SEM Spec Topics - Social Norms and Informal Institutions
R.P. Muldoon
W, 1:00 PM - 3:50 PM
Class #22435
Grad Seminar:
Title: Social Norms and Informal Institutions
This course will be an introduction to social philosophy, which a focus on the theory of social norms. We will examine contemporary accounts of conventions, social norms, and other informal institutions that work to define a set of self-enforcing rules of social behavior. This will involve a mix of philosophical literature and work from the social sciences. The course will be run in a seminar format. Grades will be based on presentations, active participation, and a 20-30 page final paper.

PHI 588 SEM Contemporary European Philosophy
K. Cho
F, 1:30 PM - 4:20 PM
Class # 24198
With Gadamer's Truth and Method, the long tradition of hermeneutics as an auxiliary discipline for text interpretation, including classical literature and Biblical exegesis, underwent a fundamental evolution in the 20th Century. It secured a major niche in the edifice of philosophy with its bold claim that hermeneutic truth and knowledge are communicated "outside the boundary of the method of science:"
Gadamer does not reject the importance of methodological concerns. We can certainly clarify the implied plurality of methods practically employed in Gadamers' own thinking. He evokes Aristotle's authority to show that in phronesis "another kind of knowledge" is at work. At one point he even openly declares that the method he largely identifies with is phenomenological.
Though Gadamer eventually elevates "practical philosophy" to the paradigm of all human sciences, his priority is not one of establishing scientific methodology for humanities. His primary concern is not about knowing what we do and how we do , but rather to understand what is happening to us in spite of our subjective intention of

what we are doing. The opening of ourselves to this event(ful) character of happening is what distinguishes hermeneutic understanding from the subjective consciousness that strives to achieve objectivity. Leaving nothing to chances. Hermeneutic understanding plays itself out in the open space of dialogue, in which fusion of our familiar horizon with the unfamiliar horizon of others occurs.

Thus the hermeneutical experience of understanding necessarily entails the transformation of the inquiring subject on account of our situated acting in the medium of linguisticality and historicity.

Text: Hans-Georg Gadamner, Truth and Method, trans. Weinsheimer and Marshall, Crossroad, New York, 2nd Edition (subject to change)

Other occasional handouts

PHI 596 SEM Grad Dissertation Seminar
L.M. Powell
M, 1:00 PM - 3:50 PM
Class # 24199
The Graduate Dissertation Seminar is a course designed to assist students as they make progress on their dissertations, and approach the job market. The course focuses on presenting one's work, giving and receiving feedback to other students on their work, and professionalization.

PHI 604 Teaching Philosophy
N.E. Williams
M, 4:00 PM - 6:50 PM
Class # 20338
Course Outline:
 The aim of this course is to provide strategies and information that will aid you in becoming a better philosophy instructor. And, where appropriate, prepare you for your first assignments as full instructors of courses, in charge of the: course syllabus, text selection, lectures, assignments, grading, and so on. The course will not only prepare you for your first teaching assignments, it will provide a series of techniques that will help improve you as instructor.
 The course will be graded Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory (S/U). PHI 604 is not considered a seminar or independent study. Credit for PHI 604 cannot be counted towards the MA in Philosophy (but will count towards the PhD if the student enters the PhD program).
 Successful completion of PHI 604 is (typically) a necessary condition for summer teaching, and is a requirement of the PhD program. Neil E. Williams

PHI 605 Supervised Teaching,
B. Smith
TBA
Class # 14262

PHI 619LEC - Modal Logic
T.E. Bittner
T, 1:00 PM - 3:50 PM
Class # 24195
Studies logical systems designed to express concepts of necessity and possibility. Develops semantic accounts employing systems of possible worlds. Examines philosophical topics and problems related to necessity and possibility.

Graduate Tutorial Sections

599 Graduate Tutorials (Arranged with Professor)

702 Master's Thesis Guidance (Arranged with Professor)

704 Dissertation Guidance (Arranged with Professor)