

**DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY
GRADUATE COURSE DESCRIPTIONS**

Fall Semester August 30 – December 10, 2021

[PHI 556 Topics in the History of Philosophy: Nietzsche](#)

Dr. Richard Cohen

Wednesday, 4:10 PM – 6:50 PM

Class #: 23730

Nietzsche did not wish to be understood. “I am no man,” he wrote of himself, “I am dynamite.” Not one of a kind, but one without kind, a “solar solitude,” the “loneliest of all men.” To be sure, there is a better-known Nietzsche, whom we will examine, the critic, polemicist and iconoclast. The Nietzsche who shatters the fundamental pillars of the West, the tripod or trinity of Christianity, science and morality, which he exposes for the sickness, weakness, slavishness, herd mentality, in a word, the nihilism they would mask. These foes counterattacked, to be sure, dismissing Nietzsche as mad or mendaciously falsifying him as Christian, Moralist or Scientist. We shall waste no time on such supercilious nonsense. But we shall study and explicate his incendiary “doctrines,” Will to Power, Eternal Return, Genealogy, Nihilism, Übermensch, Revaluation, without mistaking them for Nietzsche. In this course, covering all of Nietzsche, we will pursue two traces without hope of catching him, or catching our own breath: Nihilism, devastated battlefield he left behind; Greatness, the future beyond all understanding.

[PHI 556 Parfit’s Metaphysics & Ethics](#)

Dr. David Hershenov

Tuesday, 2:00 PM – 4:40 PM

Class #: 24219

Derek Parfit’s *Reasons and Persons* was one of the most influential books of 20th century metaphysics and ethics. He challenged the so-called non-reductionist conception of the person that underlay much of our ethical thinking. He provided radically new and startling answers to questions about what we are, how we persist, whether our identity should matter to us, the rationality of prudence, the nature of harm, the justification for paternalism, the separateness of persons and the significance of distributing goods equally across lives.

PHI 556 American Philosophy and Contemporary Relevance

Dr. Barry Smith

Monday, 1:00 PM – 3:40 PM and Saturday-Sunday, September 25-26, 2021

Class #: 24218

This course will provide an introduction to the pragmatist tradition of American philosophy. It will focus on the philosophical ideas of the leading figures of this movement, including Pierce, James, Mead and Dewey. At the same time it will explore the influence and contemporary relevance of pragmatist philosophy, particularly as concerns developments in psychology and in the social sciences. The course will include a two-day intense weekend seminar focusing on the influence of American pragmatism on 20th-century German philosophy. A detailed course schedule and list of suggested readings are provided at [http://ncorwiki.buffalo.edu/index.php?title=American Philosophy and Its Contemporary Relevance](http://ncorwiki.buffalo.edu/index.php?title=American_Philosophy_and_Its_Contemporary_Relevance).

PHI 598 Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit

Dr. James Lawler

Wednesday, 1:00 PM – 3:40 PM

Class #: 24225

Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit is a massive work of nearly 500 pages in the English translation. What makes it more difficult for teaching purposes is that each of these pages is a highly compact condensation of thought that requires considerable elaboration for adequate appreciation. Hegel himself found it unteachable, and attempted to present courses on particular aspects of the Phenomenology, such as his lectures on Philosophy, Art, and Religion, or on the State-topics that take up relatively limited spaces in the Phenomenology. In doing so he abandoned the essence of the Phenomenology, in which such topics should be considered as integrated in a totality of forms of an evolving consciousness.

This course will provide a general understanding of the structure of this totality, while giving detailed attention to certain parts, with special attention to the Introduction, in which Hegel criticizes Kant's Critique of Pure Reason, the first chapter on Sense Certainty, and then the continuous dynamic that goes from the Life and Death Struggle to the Master-Slave Relation to the development of Stoicism, Skepticism, and the Unhappy Consciousness. We conclude with Hegel's examination of modern natural science in the chapter on "Observing Reason" that follows the Unhappy Consciousness of the Middle Ages.

All course materials will be supplied.

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)