

Philosophy Fall 2020 Courses

PHIL 109-6-20: Freshman Seminar: Love and Goodness from the Party-hard Bishop to Master Meng

Professor: Sean Ebels-Duggan
Time: MWF 11:30-12:20

Our lives are filled with questions about what is better and worse: Would I be a better person if I were a vegetarian? Would it be better to give money to this person, or a charitable organization? This course isn't about these particular questions, but rather the conception of goodness implicit in them. In particular, the topic is: how is goodness related to what I should do? What draws me to (want to) do good things? Is it love? And how is goodness related to what I am as a person?

PHIL 109-6-21: Freshman Seminar: The Market and Its Limits

Professor: Chad Horne
Time: TTh 9:40-11:00

The market pervades every aspect of our lives, and yet its workings are in some sense hidden from view. This perhaps helps to explain the persistence of Adam Smith's metaphor of the "invisible hand" to describe how the market works. Our aim in this course is to make the invisible hand a bit more visible. What does the market do well? What does it do badly? Are there any goods, like sex or human organs, that should not be exchanged on the market? What alternatives are there to the market system? In trying to answer these questions, we will explore texts from economists, historians, and journalists as well as from philosophers.

PHIL 109-6-22: Freshman Seminar: What is Democracy?

Professor: Axel Mueller
Time: TTh 4:20-5:40

In this seminar we will examine some of the fundamental ideas and questions behind democracy and provide a reading of their "inventors". Some of the questions are: What is democracy? Is it a form of government, a value, an ideal, a political system, a form of life, a bit of all this? Is democracy always the best political solution (in wartime? general starvation?)? Why should the whole of the people decide and not the specialists in the respective questions? Are all democratically taken decisions automatically legitimate (what about minorities' rights?)? How should all citizens in a democracy participate in politics? By direct self-government of the people or by voting representatives? Is everything democratically decidable or does the individual have unalterable rights? Is tolerance and/or free speech necessary for democracy and how far can it go?

PHIL 109-6-2: Freshman Seminar: Truth, Lies and Deception

Professor: Stephen White
Time: TTh 4:20-5:40

This course will explore a variety of philosophical and ethical questions about lies and other forms of deception. For instance: When is it acceptable to lie? And when it is wrong, how should we understand the nature of that wrong? Is there such a thing as a right to the truth—even when the truth might be harmful? Is it possible to forfeit one's right to the truth? Is there an ethical difference between lying to someone and merely telling misleading truths? How should a democratic society that is committed to free speech handle lies and other sorts of dishonesty? Can fiction be honest or dishonest? Is it possible to lie to oneself?

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PHIL 150-0-20 Elementary Logic I

**Professor: Sean
Ebels-Duggan**
Time
MWF 9:10-10:00

Subtle mistakes in reasoning can get us into trouble, especially in philosophy where reasoning can be very intricate. Logic symbolizes arguments to make subtle mistakes easier to spot, and intricate arguments easier to follow. In this class we will first learn how to use symbols to represent certain natural language sentences. The symbolization allows us to give step-by-step reconstructions of arguments. When these step-by-step symbolized arguments have a certain profile, they represent good arguments. When they don't have that profile, the corresponding arguments can go wrong---and we can devise examples of when they go wrong! Throughout we'll address some concepts (such as truth and existence) that are deployed in philosophy, and how logical techniques can help us sort the good uses from the bad.

PHIL 210-0-20: History of Philosophy - Ancient

Professor:
Patricia Marechal
TTH 11:20-12:40

This course will introduce you to some of the greatest thinkers and movements of the ancient Greek world. We will focus on these thinkers' conceptions of the human soul, the capacity for knowledge, the good life, their views on women, and their conceptions of social justice. We will discuss the views of Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle, and examine their answers to enduring questions such as: What are the fundamental constituents of reality? What is knowledge, and how do we come to have it? How can we be happy? What makes for a just society? We will then move to the Hellenistic period and examine Epicurean and Stoic conceptions of how we should live our lives and why philosophy can help us flourish. Our emphasis will be on analyzing these philosophers' views, and their reasons and arguments for holding these positions.

PHIL 216-0-20: Introduction to Pragmatism

**Professor: Axel
Mueller**
Time:
TTH 11:20-12:40

Classics of Pragmatist Thought Pragmatism is probably the first, but certainly the most important genuinely North American philosophical tradition. The classical writings of Peirce, James, Dewey set the stage for a completely new orientation in epistemology, moral and political theory, psychology and many other fields. Basic to all Pragmatist writers is the belief that the active and interactive human being in its natural and social environment has to stand at the center of reflection. They thus emphasize volitional, procedural, social, and evolutionary aspects of knowledge of any kind. Given this focus on practically involved intelligent agents, political pragmatists like Dewey, Addams, Locke explore the natural origins, revisability and legitimacy of moral and political norms. They develop the idea of a critical use of knowledge and its connection to non-violent democratic conduct. Neopragmatists (Rorty and Putnam) explore the philosophical and political implications of critical thinking.

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PHIL 219-0-20 Introduction to Existentialism

Professor: Rachel Zuckert
Time
TTH 11:20-12:40

This class is an introduction to existentialism through discussing texts by some of its central theorists: Dostoyevsky, Kierkegaard, Sartre and de Beauvoir. We will focus on existentialist theories of value and claims concerning human freedom and their implications. We will explore existentialist conceptions of absurdity, alienation, anxiety, authenticity, and affliction.

PHIL 253-0-20: Introduction to the Philosophy of Language

Professor: Megan Hyska
Time:
TTH 9:40-11:00

In this introduction to the philosophical study of language, we will ask questions like: What is language anyway? What is meaning? And how does the meaning carried by language vary (if it does) from the sort of meaning we attribute to natural phenomena when we say, for instance, "smoke means fire" or "those rings mean that this tree is 106 years old"? We will also touch on the role that the study of language has sometimes been thought to play in philosophical inquiry broadly, and on the connection between the philosophy of language and the empirical investigation of language in other disciplines.

PHIL 262-0-20: Ethical Problems Public Issues

Professor: Chad Horne
TTH 4:20-5:40

A study of ethical problems arising in public policy, as well as philosophical approaches to addressing these problems. Topics to be discussed include punishment, immigration, climate change, and global distributive justice.

PHIL 273-1-20: The Brady Scholars Program: The Good Life

Professor:
Richard Kraut
Time:
TTH 2:40-4:00

This is the first in a sequence of three courses required of sophomores in the Brady Scholars Program in Ethics and Civic Life. Our topic, the good life, will be explored by reading and discussing several recent books, as well as authors of antiquity (Plato, Epictetus, Marcus Aurelius). We will ask: Are there objective truths about what is valuable - or about anything? Does life have a point or meaning? What should one try to get out of life? How should we think about death? Is each person the final judge of what is good for that individual, or is it possible to be mistaken about where one's good lies? What is the relationship between living well and being moral? How important is pleasure? Since more good is better than less, should we aim at all times to promote "the greatest happiness of the greatest number"?

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PHIL 312-0-20: Studies in Modern Philosophy: Conservative Political

Professors: Mark Alznauer and Andrew Koppelman
Time:
TTH 4:20-5:40

In this course, we will study some of the classics of conservative political philosophy from critics of the French Revolution, like Edmund Burke and Joseph de Maistre to more recent figures like Friedrich Hayek and Roger Scruton. We will spend particular attention to the relationship between conservatism and liberalism.

PHIL 328-0-20: Classics of Analytic

Professor: Megan Hyska
MW 2:40-4:00

This course will trace the major preoccupations of analytic philosophy from its beginnings in the late 19th century up until the present moment, with readings by central figures such as Frege, Russell, Moore, Wittgenstein, Strawson, Quine, Grice, Evans, Lewis and Kripke, as well as by prominent historians of the tradition. We will also consider some challenges to contemporary analytic philosophy's inherited sets of priorities and methodologies.

PHIL 373-1-20: The Brady Scholars Program: The Civically Engaged Life

Professor:
Richard Kraut
M 4:10-5:20

Brady Scholars in their senior year will meet frequently throughout the quarter to move ahead with the collaborative project they have chosen as their service to the Evanston community.

PHIL 380-0-20: Philosophy of Art

Professor: Rachel Zuckert
TTh 2:40-4:00

In this course, we will investigate negative aesthetics of various kinds. We will focus first on the one that has been historically most discussed: the sublime, the experience of large, powerful objects that transcend human beings – beyond our power, beyond our comprehension – and therefore inspire a response of fear or pain, together with some sort of thrill. Because experiences of these threatening objects are in some sense unpleasant, philosophers aim to understand the attraction to having them. We will read the two most important philosophical accounts of the sublime – those of Edmund Burke and Immanuel Kant – as well as some contemporary reflections on the sublime in art and nature. We will also investigate the character and (possible) appeal of ugliness, disgust, and horror, to reflect on their ever-increasing importance in modern and postmodern art. We will consider questions such as: what is the ugly, does it have a stable, identifiable character? Are the effects or underlying motivations of an attraction to horror (frightful, gory, awful works) ethical? Can the disgusting ever be pleasurable?

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PHIL 415: Seminar in French Philosophy

Professors:
Penelope
Deutscher
Time:
T 6:30-9:20

This course offers an introduction to biopolitics, "necropolitics" and "thanatopolitics" as intersectional terms in contemporary critical theory. In this context, intersectional takes on two meanings. On the one hand, it refers to the interrelations of race, gender, sexuality, class, poverty, health, immigration status, ability, and national "exceptionalism". On the other, it refers to the intersections of forms of power: including sovereign, disciplinary, governmental, securitizing, negative, and productive, bio-, necro- and thanato-political. A prerequisite of the course is a basic foundation in Foucauldian theory, in particular *Discipline and Punish* and the first volume of *History of Sexuality*. Through one third of the course, students will consolidate this foundation through study of a group of Foucault's College de France lecture relevant to this period; reading excerpts from *Society Must Be Defended*, *Security, Territory, Population*, *Psychiatric Power*, and *Abnormal*. The remainder of the course is devoted to the critical engagement with, and transformation of the biopolitical problematic in a range of contemporary critical theorists working in race, gender and sexuality studies, including Mbembe, Hartman, Wright, and Puar.

PHIL 420: Studies in Ancient Philosophy

Professor:
Patricia Marechal
W 2:40-4:00

This seminar will explore the ways in which epistemology and politics are inseparable for Ancient Greek thinkers. We will put in conversation Ancient texts concerning the relationship between knowledge, experience, persuasion, and power with contemporary texts on critical and social epistemology.

Our main ancient authors will be Plato and Aristotle. We will read substantial sections from Plato's *Apology*, *Meno*, *Gorgias*, and *Republic*, as well as Aristotle's *Rhetoric* and *Politics*. We will pair the ancient sources with texts by Elizabeth Anderson, Kwame Anthony Appiah, Audre Lorde, José Medina, Amia Srinivasan, and others.

PHIL 460: Seminar in Ethical Theory

Professor:
Stephen White
M 3:00-5:50

This seminar will cover recent work on moral responsibility, with particular emphasis on the question of whether a certain degree of moral competence is a condition of responsibility.