

UC Davis Philosophy Department
Expanded Course Descriptions
Winter, 2007

PHILOSOPHY 1 INTRODUCTION TO PHILOSOPHY

Adam Sennet

MWF 12:10-1:00 P.M., 3 Kleiber

CRNs: 35895-35902, 43553-43554

TEXT: *Reason and Responsibility: Readings in Some Basic Problems of Philosophy*, Joel Feinberg (optional)

COURSE CONTENT: A brief but tantalizing look at certain classic problems in philosophy, including skepticism, free will, personal identity and the persistence of objects over time.

REQUIREMENTS: Two exams and a short paper.

PREREQUISITE: None

G.E. CREDIT: Arts & Humanities, Writing Experience.

PHILOSOPHY 5 CRITICAL REASONING

Magdalena Balcerak

TR 9:00-10:20 A.M., 1001 Geidt

CRNs: 35903-35908

TEXT: *Reasons, Explanations and Decisions: Guidelines for Critical Thinking*, Thomas McKay

COURSE CONTENT: This course will focus on the development of various critical skills, such as identifying the structure of arguments,

evaluating arguments, detecting various kinds of fallacies, and applying critical reasoning to cases from both science and everyday life. At the same time, we will be looking at different kinds of explanations as well as their strengths and weaknesses. Another goal of the course is to introduce the basic methodology of philosophy and to learn how to prepare and write argumentative papers.

REQUIREMENTS: Two exams, two short papers, and homework assignments.

PREREQUISITE: None

G.E. CREDIT: Writing Experience

PHILOSOPHY 17 INTRODUCTION TO PHILOSOPHY OF LANGUAGE

Robert May

TR 12:10-1:00 P.M., 107 Cruess

CRNs: 44174 & 44175

TEXT: TBA

COURSE CONTENT: Survey of basic issues in philosophy of language, centering on the relation of meaning, reference and use, as well as on the philosophical significance of contemporary conceptions of language. Students will explore detail seminal works by Frege, Russell, Strawson, Grice, Kripke and Chomsky.

REQUIREMENTS: Two 5-7 page papers.

PREREQUISITE: None

G.E. CREDIT: None

PHILOSOPHY 21 HISTORY OF PHILOSOPHY: ANCIENT

Jan Szaif

MWF 11:00-11:50 A.M., 115 Hutchison

CRNs: 43566 & 43567

TEXT: Course reader, compiled by J. Szaif

COURSE CONTENT: This course introduces students to the main themes and problems of ancient Greek philosophy, as found in the Pre-Socratic philosophers, Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, and the Hellenistic philosophers.

REQUIREMENTS: Participation, two short papers, mid-term, and a final exam.

PREREQUISITE: None

G.E. CREDIT: Art and Humanities, Writing Experience

PHILOSOPHY 31 SCIENTIFIC REASONING

James Griesemer

MWF 9:00-9:50 A.M., 119 Wellman

CRNs: 43578 & 43569

TEXT: *Understanding Scientific Reasoning*, Giere, Bickle, & Mauldin

COURSE CONTENT: The impact of science and technology on our day-to-day lives is great. As citizens, we cannot afford to be ignorant of them. In addition, scholars of many sorts must understand science and technology in order to interpret society, culture, politics, economy, or history as well as science itself. But taking

advantage of the information presented to us (in the mass media and elsewhere) requires understanding how such information is produced. One important activity involved in producing scientific information is reasoning. In this course we will examine reasoning processes and strategies employed in science through examination of general principles and concrete examples. We will explore the nature and evaluation of theoretical hypotheses – including statistical and causal hypotheses – and models of decision-making. Examples will be drawn from historical material described in the text as well as contemporary examples drawn from popular media such as newspapers, magazines, and the Internet.

REQUIREMENTS: Homework: 50%. Project: 10%. Midterm: 20%. Final Exam: 20%

PREREQUISITES: None.

G.E. CREDIT: Arts & Humanities or Science & Engineering

PHILOSOPHY 104 THE EVOLUTION OF MIND

Magdalena Balcerak

TR 1:40-3:00 P.M., 7 Wellman

CRN: 43570

TEXTS: Course reader

COURSE CONTENT: This course introduces you to an important part of the debate about the possibility of naturalizing the mind: the question

whether we can give a naturalistic account of intentionality or mental content.

In contemporary analytic philosophy of mind, one of the major projects is to argue for a plausible naturalistic theory of the mind that would fit the mind into the scientific image of the world. According to a fairly uncontroversial view, there are two main problems with a naturalistic theory of the mind: the problem of consciousness and the problem of intentionality. Can we capture what it is like to have experiences of various kinds by describing the appropriate sort of physical properties? And, can we capture the aboutness of our mental states, their content, by referring to appropriate physical properties? We will be focussing on the second question. In particular, for the main part of the class we will be discussing whether an approach that appeals to evolution and teleological functions as a basis for a naturalistic theory of intentionality - so called teleosemantics - can be successfully defended.

In the first part of the course, we will be looking at paradigmatic naturalistic theories of intentionality suggested by Daniel Dennett, Jerry Fodor, Fred Dretske, Ruth Millikan, and David Papineau. In the second part of the course, we will be evaluating and discussing several arguments that have been presented against teleosemantical theories. Finally, we will look at how the question about the naturalization of intentionality might be related to the question about the naturalization of consciousness.

REQUIREMENTS: Reading Responses (40%), Term Paper (40%), Final Exam (20%)

PREREQUISITE: One previous course in philosophy, or consent of instructor

PHILOSOPHY 105

PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGION

Cody Gilmore

TR 10:30-11:50 A.M., 212 Veihmeyer

CRNs: 43571 & 43572

TEXT:

Philosophy of Religion: An Anthology, 5th Edition, edited by Louis Pojman and Michael Rea

COURSE CONTENT:

We will focus on traditional philosophical arguments for and against the existence of a supreme being (God). Time permitting, we will also consider certain questions about (i) the possibility of an afterlife, (ii) the relation between morality and religion, and/or (iii) the so-called 'divine attributes' – e.g., eternity, simplicity, incorporeality, omniscience, and omnipotence.

REQUIREMENTS:

Three papers and a final exam. Other assignments to be determined.

PREREQUISITE:

One course in philosophy is recommended.

G.E. CREDIT:

Arts & Humanities, Writing Experience

PHILOSOPHY 108

PHILOSOPHY OF BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES

Roberta Millstein

MWF 10:00-10:50 A.M., 226 Wellman

CRNs: 35955, 35956

TEXT:

Readings available online

COURSE CONTENT: This class will consider foundational conceptual and epistemological issues in biology such as: the concept of “fitness,” the units of selection debate, adaptationism as a research program, women in the evolutionary process, evolutionary psychology, the question of whether there are any biological laws, reductionism, the concept of “species,” the debate over whether race is a social construction or biological reality.

REQUIREMENTS: Class participation and in-class group projects, reading reflections, short written assignments, final exam

PREREQUISITES: None

G.E. CREDIT: Arts & Humanities or Science and Engineering, Writing Experience

PHILOSOPHY 112 INTERMEDIATE SYMBOLIC LOGIC

Brendan Jackson

TR 12:10-2:00 P.M., 233 Wellman

CRN: 35960

TEXT: *Language: Proof & Logic*, Jon Barwise & John Etchemendy

COURSE CONTENT: An investigation of the formal logic of predicates and quantifiers. Rules for the formation of sentences of predicate logic will be given, along with techniques for using predicate logic to represent natural language sentences and evaluate arguments. Natural deduction rules will be introduced to allow inferences involving quantifiers. Techniques for dealing with the logic of

identity, and for representing definite descriptions, will be developed.

REQUIREMENTS: Three midterms and a final exam.

PREREQUISITE: Philosophy 12, Mathematics 108, or the equivalent.

PHILOSOPHY 115 PROBLEMS IN NORMATIVE ETHICS

Roberta Millstein

MWF 1:10-2:00 P.M., Wellman 233

CRN: 35961

TEXTS: *Environmental Ethics: Concepts, Policy, Theory*, Joseph Desjardins, ed.
 Case Studies in Environmental Ethics, Patrick G. Derr and Edward M. McNamara
 Other readings available online

COURSE CONTENT: Many people are concerned about a variety of environmental issues, from pollution to global warming to the extinction of species. They say that we “should” do something about those issues. But what ethical assumptions underlie that “should”? Is it a concern for human well-being? For animals? For all life? Or, even more broadly, for ecosystems? In other words, which things count morally? The answers matter not only because we need to justify our actions, but because different answers may imply different courses of action. In this class, we will explore the various answers that can and have been given to this question, and see how well these answers hold up when applied to contemporary environmental case studies.

REQUIREMENTS: Class participation and in-class group projects, reading reflections, short written assignments, final exam.

PREREQUISITE: One previous course in philosophy.

G.E. CREDIT: Arts and Humanities, Writing

PHILOSOPHY 116 ETHICAL THEORIES

Pekka Väyrynen

MWF 11:00-11:50 A.M., Wellman 119

CRN: 43573

TEXT: Course reader, on-line texts.

COURSE CONTENT: This is an advanced course in ethical theory, focusing on an area of moral philosophy called “normative ethics”. At the most basic level, normative ethics concerns the question of what kind of actions are morally right and morally wrong and what makes them so. In this course, we’ll contrast main forms of “consequentialism” – the view that whether an action is right or wrong is determined solely by the goodness of its total consequences – with such rivals as “deontology,” “contractualism” and “virtue ethics.” To critically assess these theories, we’ll address such questions in normative ethics as these: In distributing benefits and burdens, should we value equality, or give priority to the worst-off or the deserving, or just not care about patterns of distribution at all? What kind of personal sacrifices does morality require of us? Are we ever morally permitted or morally required not to act so as to produce the best available outcome, and if so, when and why? Do we have a moral duty to save others from dying

when we can, and if so, ought we always to save the greater number? On what grounds are we to decide between competing ethical theories? And are there any general moral principles concerning what actions are right and wrong in the first place? The aims of the course are two: first, to introduce you to some of the major theories, issues, and debates in contemporary normative ethics; and second, to assist you in developing your philosophical and analytical skills.

REQUIREMENTS: Two medium-length papers and a final exam.

PREREQUISITE: At least one previous course in philosophy; one previous course in some area of moral philosophy recommended.

PHILOSOPHY 137A THEORY OF REFERENCE

Robert May

TR 3:10-4:30 P.M., Wellman 201

CRN: 44299

TEXT: TBA

COURSE CONTENT: This course will explore the issue of whether reference is an aspect of language, or an aspect of speakers' use of language. Among the topics to be discussed are sense and reference, the theory of descriptions, the cluster theory of reference, denoting vs. referring, the referential/attributive distinction, the Millian theory of names, the causal theory of reference, and demonstratives and indexicals. Readings will include works by Frege, Russell, Strawson, Donnellan, Kripke, and others.

REQUIREMENTS: Two 5-7 page papers

PREREQUISITE: One course in philosophy or linguistics

G.E. CREDIT: No

PHILOSOPHY 151 NINETEENTH CENTURY EUROPEAN PHILOSOPHY

G.J. Matthey

MW 12:10-2:00 P.M., Wellman 212

CRN: 43575

TEXTS: *Nineteenth Century Philosophy*, ed. Forrest, Baird & Kaufmann
Notes from the Underground, Fyodor Dostoyevsky

COURSE CONTENT: This course is a survey of most of the main developments in European philosophy in the nineteenth century. It does not cover British or American philosophy of the period.

We begin with the philosophy of Schopenhauer, which is based on that of Kant. Unlike Kant, Schopenhauer was an atheist and a pessimist. Hegel advocated a new kind of dialectical thinking that embraces contradiction. The result is an optimistic pantheism. Marx embraced the dialectic but rejected Hegel's identification of the rational and the real. His materialistic approach to reality treated human beings primarily in economic terms. Kierkegaard rejected the rationalism implicit in Hegel and reduced truth to subjectivity. His emphasis was on the passions and how they lead one to God. Nietzsche condemned nearly all earlier philosophy, especially as it supports religion and conventional morality. His was a bold vision of the overcoming of humanity.

Dostoyevsky, like Kierkegaard and Nietzsche, rejected rationality as the guide to life and explored the resulting alienation that can only be overcome through religion.

These thinkers set the stage for the “continental philosophy” of the twentieth century.

REQUIREMENTS: Two 5-6 page papers and a comprehensive final examination.

G.E. CREDIT: Arts and Humanities Breadth

PHILOSOPHY 156 CONTEMPORARY ANALYTIC PHILOSOPHY

Adam Sennet

MWF 2:10-3:00 P.M., Wellman 233

CRN: 43574

TEXTS: *Vagueness*, Timothy Williamson

COURSE CONTENT: In this course we will examine the problem of vagueness and what contemporary philosophers from Frege, Wittgenstein, Van Frassen have argued regarding the implications of vague language. In particular we will be looking carefully as to what logic is required in order to give a full and careful treatment of vagueness in natural language.

REQUIREMENTS: Two short papers and a final.

PREREQUISITE: One course in philosophy.

PHILOSOPHY 161 PLATO

Jan Szaif

TR 10:30 – 11:50 A.M., 229 WELLMAN

CRN: 35964

TEXTS: *Complete Works of Plato*, ed. J. Cooper;
 An Introduction to Plato's Republic, J. Annis

COURSE CONTENT: The first part of this course addresses the problems and objectives of Socratic and Platonic virtue theory. The second part is devoted to Plato's views on knowledge, education and the structure of reality as set out within the framework of his 'theory of Forms'. The course is based on the early and middle-period writings of Plato, with a particular emphasis on his dialogue *Republic*.

REQUIREMENTS: A term paper, a mid-term and a final examination.

PREREQUISITIE: Philosophy 21 or consent of instructor.

PHILOSOPHY 200B PROSEMINAR II

Pekka Väyrynen

M 3:10-6:00 P.M., 2275 Social Sciences and Humanities

CRN: 43576

TEXT: Articles available in photocopy or on-line.

COURSE CONTENT: This course is designed to do two things: acclimate you to the pace and expectations on graduate-level work and develop certain skills that you will need over the course of your graduate career. We will, in this installment, work to achieve

those ends by looking at selected “greatest hits” of 20th-century meta-ethics.

REQUIREMENTS: Weekly short papers and presentations.

PREREQUISITE: First year graduate student standing

G.E. CREDIT: None

PHILOSOPHY 201 METAPHYSICS

Cody Gilmore

T 3:10-6:00 P.M., 2275 Social Sciences and Humanities

CRN: 43577

TEXT: To be determined

COURSE CONTENT: This is an advanced metaphysics course focusing on issues in the metaphysics of material objects. We will consider the following questions, among others: “Can distinct objects mereologically coincide?” “Can an object be extended in space or time without having any proper parts?”

REQUIREMENTS:

PREREQUISITE: Open to all graduate students in Philosophy and to others by consent of the instructor.

PHILOSOPHY 237 PHILOSOPHY OF LANGUAGE

Brendan Jackson

R 3:10-6:00 P.M., 2275 Social Sciences and Humanities

CRN: 36036

TEXT: TBA

COURSE CONTENT: Topics in philosophy of language. Discussion of recent published and unpublished papers and books, presentations of work in progress by faculty and students.

REQUIREMENTS: TBA

PREREQUISITE: Graduate standing or permission of instructor.

PHILOSOPHY 238 PHILOSOPHY OF LANGUAGE

Robert May

W 3:10-6:00 P.M., 2275 Social Sciences and Humanities

CRN: 44376

TEXT: *Semantic Relationalism*, Kit Fine
Interface Strategies, Tanya Reinhart
The Nature & Structure of Content, Jeffrey King

COURSE CONTENT: Topics in philosophy of language. Discussion of recent published and unpublished papers and books, presentations of work in progress by faculty and students.

REQUIREMENTS: TBA

PREREQUISITE: Graduate standing or permission of instructor.