



**Philosophy**  
**Department**  
**Course Descriptions**  
**Fall 2015**



**Phil 3105      Landmarks in the History of Philosophy**  
**Class Number   13457   Section MW12      Mon, Wed      12:50 – 2:05 PM      Room: TBA**

Instructor: Angelica Nuzzo  
Email: [anuzzo@brooklyn.cuny.edu](mailto:anuzzo@brooklyn.cuny.edu)

This course covers 'landmark' philosophical texts and theories from the Western tradition - from the ancients to the modern and contemporary period. We will pursue a close reading and detailed discussion of selections from texts that no philosophy student can ignore - among them Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, Descartes' *Meditations*, Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*.

Students will learn how to read and analyze philosophical texts, how to reconstruct and compare philosophical arguments, how to recognize the historical development of philosophical ideas, and how to relate such ideas and arguments to the discussion of contemporary issues.

**Phil 3111      Ancient Philosophy**  
**Class Number   13079   Section EMQ6      Mon      6:05 – 9:25 PM      3305 Boylan**

Instructor: Angelica Nuzzo  
Email: [anuzzo@brooklyn.cuny.edu](mailto:anuzzo@brooklyn.cuny.edu)

The course is a survey of some of the crucial texts and moments of ancient Greek philosophy.

We will investigate the “beginnings” of philosophia as “love of wisdom,” address the historical question of the distinction between “wisdom” and “love of wisdom,” look at the beginning of what has been since then called “metaphysics.” We will address problems of metaphysics, logic, epistemology, ethics, and aesthetics by looking at texts of the Presocratics, Plato, Aristotle, Plotinus, and Epicurus.

The format of the course includes lecture, class discussion, and student presentation. Particular emphasis will be placed on the careful reading, interpretation, and discussion of texts. Objectives of the course are learning how to read, analyze, and interpret philosophical texts as well as assessing the historical transformation of philosophical ideas.

**Phil 3121      Modern Philosophy**  
**Class Number   13080   Section TQ6      Tues      6:05 – 9:45 PM      3305 Boylan**

Instructor: Andrew Arlig  
Email: [aarlig@brooklyn.cuny.edu](mailto:aarlig@brooklyn.cuny.edu)

This course is a survey of some of the seminal works in early modern European philosophy, including treatises by Descartes, Locke, Berkeley, Spinoza and Hume. In this course we will also examine some lesser known, but interesting figures from this period, such as perhaps, Anne Conway, and we will attempt to trace some of the influences that later medieval scholastic thought and the Renaissance had on works from this period.

**Phil 3142      Existentialism and Phenomenology**  
**Class Number   66106   Section MW3                      Mon, Wed           3:40 – 4:55 PM                      Room: TBA**

Instructor: Angelica Nuzzo  
Email: [anuzzo@brooklyn.cuny.edu](mailto:anuzzo@brooklyn.cuny.edu)

The course offers an overview of the main topics and issues that characterize the philosophical movement known in the 19th and 20th century as “existentialism”.

Our principal objective throughout the course will be to follow the different ways in which philosophers have been addressing issues concerning the meaning of life and death, the significance of human individuality against the power of universal reason, the relationship between reason and faith, the place of the human subject in the world of nature and history, and the meaning of historical and individual contingency.

We will read, among others, selections of work by the following authors: Hegel (Phenomenology of Spirit, master-slave dialectic), Kierkegaard (Fear and Trembling), Nietzsche, Heidegger, Dostoevsky (Notes from Underground), Sartre, and Buber (I and Thou).

Objectives of the course are learning to read, analyze, and critically interpret philosophical texts, as well as assessing historical transformations of philosophical ideas.

**Phil 3203           introduction to Formal Logic**  
**Class Number   13082   Section TR11                      Tues, Thurs           11:00 AM – 12:15 PM           4305 Boylan**

Instructor: Mariya Gluzman  
Email: [mgluzman@brooklyn.cuny.edu](mailto:mgluzman@brooklyn.cuny.edu)

Logic underlies all scholarly pursuits and shapes our thoughts and ideas. It is the very expression of human rationality.

During this introductory course in formal logic we will learn about the rules of proper inference by analyzing logical relationships between propositions and groups of propositions. Using sentential and predicate logic, we will explore such logical properties as validity, soundness, consistency, etc. We will master several different methods of testing for these logical properties, such as truth trees.

**Phil 3210           Reasoning**  
**Class Number   13083   Section MW12                      Mon, Wed           12:50 – 2:05 PM                      4135 Boylan**

Instructor: Michael Maumus  
Email: [fletcher.maumus@gmail.com](mailto:fletcher.maumus@gmail.com)

This course focuses on the examination and development of reasoning skills. Informal logic will also be discussed. Topics such as meaning, definition, the analysis of arguments, and fallacies will be looked at. We will discuss various examples in reasoning and see how the principles we learn can be applied to them. Legal reasoning, support claims about public policy, and scientific and philosophical arguments will also be examined.

**Phil 3305      Ethics and Personal Relations**  
**Class Number   13085   Section TR9                      Tues, Thurs      9:30 – 10:45 AM                      4117 Boylan**

Instructor: Penny Repetti  
Email: [prepetti@brooklyn.cuny.edu](mailto:prepetti@brooklyn.cuny.edu)

This is a philosophy course that focuses on the study and application of ethics in relationships. The course will begin by exploring students' personal ethical principles, in regard to their own existing relationships. We will examine both the positive and negative qualities/characteristics that are present in these relationships and what makes these relationships successful or not. We will then evaluate moral obligations to oneself, family, friends, etc. Some topics that will be discussed are: friendship, marriage, divorce, love and sex, parent-child relationships, lying, cheating, etc.

**Phil 3305      Ethics and Personal Relations**  
**Class Number   13458   Section TR2                      Tues, Thurs      2:15 – 3:30 PM                      4135 Boylan**

Instructor: Mariya Gluzman  
Email: [mgluzman@brooklyn.cuny.edu](mailto:mgluzman@brooklyn.cuny.edu)

This is a philosophy course that focuses on the study and application of ethics in relationships. The course will begin by exploring students' personal ethical principles, in regard to their own existing relationships. We will examine both the positive and negative qualities/characteristics that are present in these relationships and what makes these relationships successful or not. We will then evaluate moral obligations to oneself, family, friends, etc. Some topics that will be discussed are: friendship, parent-child relationships, social living, etc.

**Phil 3306      Ethics and Society**  
**Class Number   13086   Section TR2                      Tues, Thurs      2:15 – 3:30 PM                      3411 Boylan**

Instructor: Moris Stern  
Email: [moris.stern@gmail.com](mailto:moris.stern@gmail.com)

The course will consider issues in social ethics. We will discuss such topics as racism and sexism, genetic engineering and cloning, capital punishment, environmental pollution, war and terrorism, abortion, euthanasia, freedom of speech, nonhuman animal rights. While it is too much to expect definitive answers, students will learn what the basic ethical issues, concerns, implications and a range of solutions are with regard to the toppings. In general, students will learn how to critically identify and assess the strengths and weaknesses of the various solutions with regard to social ethics issues as such.

**Phil 3306      Ethics and Society**  
**Class Number   13087   Section TR11                      Tues, Thurs      11:00 AM – 12:15 PM                      3410 James**

Instructor: Penny Repetti  
Email: [prepetti@brooklyn.cuny.edu](mailto:prepetti@brooklyn.cuny.edu)

This is a philosophy course that focuses on the study and application of ethics. We will first discuss students' personal ethical principles. After this, students will be exposed to various ethical theories that may be utilized in the assessment of ethical issues that arise in the world. Some topics that we will be examining are: abortion, euthanasia, capital punishment, etc. Though we will begin in this fashion, proceeding from theory to practice, we will also do the opposite -- we will look at ethical issues that arise in the world and then will assess the plausibility of various ethical theories by determining how well they stand up in such concrete contexts.

**Phil 3307      Global Ethics**  
**Class Number   13460   Section MW11      Mon, Wed      11:00 AM – 12:15 PM   4223 Boylan**

Instructor: Michael Menser  
Email: [mmenser@brooklyn.cuny.edu](mailto:mmenser@brooklyn.cuny.edu)

Climate Change, Terrorism at Home and Abroad, Economic Turmoil, Rising Inequality: is the Global System Falling Apart? Can the Big Banks Save us? Can the Congress or the President? Can Religion? What is the role of each of us?

Ethics is that area of human inquiry which aims to determine the way(s) in which a person should live: what is moral? What is the good life? What are my obligations to others? And to myself? What does it mean to be a person? There are two global crises which are impacting peoples and countries across every content: economic inequality and climate change. In this class we will focus especially on competing solutions to these crises especially in terms of the roles of human rights, democracy, economics, and violence. We will also look in detail at alternative forms of organizations in business, society and politics, from indigenous nations and worker owned businesses to peasant driven sustainable agriculture and finance dominated global cities to terrorism and war. Readings from a variety of traditions including human rights-based views, globalists, nationalists, bioregionalists, climate justice, environmental justice, just war, religious communitarianism, feminist, and virtue ethics.

Assignments: 2 assignments, (2-3 pages), quiz, midterm, 10 page essay, final exam.

**Phil 3308      Race, Justice, and Equality**  
**Class Number   13088   Section TR2      Tues, Thurs      2:15 – 3:30 PM      Room: TBA**

Instructor: Serene Khader  
Email: [sjkhader@brooklyn.cuny.edu](mailto:sjkhader@brooklyn.cuny.edu)

We live in a social world characterized by racial segregation and inequality. This course will focus on two philosophical questions related to the political philosophy of race: a) What are race and racism, and how do they intersect with other forms of identity and oppression and b) What kinds of moral and political responsibilities do we incur as a result of the existence of racism? We will use these analyses to discuss some contemporary political issues including but not limited to, affirmative action, racial profiling, residential segregation, mass incarceration, and reproductive justice.

**Phil 3309      Environmental Ethics**  
**Class Number   66122   Section MW3      Mon, Wed      3:40 – 4:55 PM      Room: TBA**

Instructor: Michael Menser  
Email: [mmenser@brooklyn.cuny.edu](mailto:mmenser@brooklyn.cuny.edu)

The 21<sup>st</sup> century has brought with it a range of environmental problems that humanity (and the rest of the earth) have never encountered so what's Brooklyn College gonna do about it? Global warming gets much of the press but mass extinction, soil degradation, water scarcity, and atmospheric and oceanic pollution pose problems potentially as catastrophic and NYC is feeling the impacts especially since Superstorm Sandy. Relatedly, a global economy heavily reliant upon oil, coal and gas threaten to further destabilize the global ecology as do further processes of economic development, urbanization, and population growth. And NYC is in the midst of a rebuilding effort which will spend 10s of billions to make us safer, but who is us and what kind of city do we want?

**MISSION of this class:** 1) to become familiar with a range of ethical theories including human-animal rights, participatory democracy, environmental justice, and virtue ethics. 2) to be able to apply these theories to real world environmental cases both global and local and critique them; 3) to understand the historical, cultural, political and economic dimensions of environmental issues; 4) to critically assess the role(s) of the state, market, businesses, technologies and social movements for achieving sustainable development and “resilience”; 5) to understand the meanings of key terms in the debates: ecological footprint, sustainability, resilience environmental racism/justice, food sovereignty, global warming, climate justice; green capitalism, “organic,” commons. 6/ of special focus this term will be the food system and NYC’s future given climate change and so much economic inequality.

So what should be done and who should do it? This is a central question in applied ethics.

We shall be especially focused on the issue of “sustainability” and sustainable development and related issues of agriculture, food, and democracy as they apply to both rural and urban areas. Brooklyn and Brooklyn College itself will be of particular focus as we look at activities and proposals to make the campus and the borough more “sustainable” and resilient and fights over just what that means. Also, students will be required to morally evaluate their own consumption practices and construct a project to make BC more sustainable/resilient.

Requirements: 2 short papers, quiz, midterm, 10 page paper, final.

**Phil 3315      Communication Ethics**

**Class Number   13106   Section TR2                      Tues, Thurs      2:15 – 3:30 PM                      Room: TBA**

Instructor: Dena Shottenkirk

Email: [dshottenkirk@brooklyn.cuny.edu](mailto:dshottenkirk@brooklyn.cuny.edu)

Explore issues concerning journalistic integrity, the ethical dilemmas in advertising, internet issues including privacy and governance, and the complex issues of censorship. This course addresses the concerns inherent in our written, visual, and verbal communications with one another. Pertinent philosophical texts include, among others, Kant, Rawls, Mill, and Aristotle. Learn to identify issues within the media and articulate arguments regarding them in the applied ethics course.

**Phil 3318W      Computers & Ethics**

<b>Class Number   15354   Section EM6</b>	<b>Mon</b>	<b>6:30 – 9:10 PM</b>	<b>234 New Ingersoll</b>
<b>Class Number   15355   Section TR11</b>	<b>Tues, Thurs</b>	<b>11:00 AM – 12:15 PM</b>	<b>236 New Ingersoll</b>
<b>Class Number   66102   Section MW11</b>	<b>Mon, Wed</b>	<b>11:00 AM – 12:15 PM</b>	<b>236 New Ingersoll</b>

Instructor: Robert Zwick [Computer & Information Science Dept.]

Email: [rzwick@brooklyn.cuny.edu](mailto:rzwick@brooklyn.cuny.edu)

*From the college bulletin:*

Analysis of ethical issues pertaining to computers and the workplace, anonymity and privacy, copyright and patent law (as applied to software), computer crime, security, unauthorized use, codes of conduct for computer professionals, access and availability of computing technologies. Application of theoretical frameworks such as virtue ethics, deontological theories and utilitarianism to the ethical problems encountered in computing technologies.

**Phil 3320      Ethics**  
**Class Number   13107   Section TY3**

**Tues, Thurs      3:40 – 5:20 PM**

**4145 Boylan**

Instructor: Christine Vitrano  
Email: [cvitrano@brooklyn.cuny.edu](mailto:cvitrano@brooklyn.cuny.edu)

Theories in normative ethics attempt to explain and systematize our moral judgments. They also provide an account of our moral obligations and duties, suggesting a standard to regulate right and wrong conduct. In this course, we shall examine some of the most influential theories in the history of ethics.

This course begins with a study of the ancient moralists, including the work of Plato, Aristotle, Epicurus and Epictetus. We shall also discuss virtue ethics and what it implies about living the good life, psychological and ethical hedonism, and stoicism. Then we shall discuss the moral theories of Hobbes, Hume, Kant, Bentham, Mill and Sartre. Additional questions we shall consider include whether we are egoists by nature, whether morality is based on reason or emotion, whether a utilitarian or deontological approach to morality is more plausible and how existentialists differ from all the other moralists we have considered.

If you have any questions or would like to talk about this course, feel free to email me at [cvitrano@brooklyn.cuny.edu](mailto:cvitrano@brooklyn.cuny.edu) or stop by my office hours, which are on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 12:15 – 2:15 in room 3315 Boylan.

**Phil 3331      Happiness & The Meaning of Life**

**Class Number   13108   Section TR11**

**Tues, Thurs**

**11:00 AM – 12:15 PM**

**3607 James**

Instructor: Christine Vitrano  
Email: [cvitrano@brooklyn.cuny.edu](mailto:cvitrano@brooklyn.cuny.edu)

This course will center on two philosophical topics: happiness and the meaning of life. The first part of the course will focus on the concept of happiness, where we examine its nature, source and value. We begin with a review of the role played by happiness in the history of ethics, and then explore how it continues to play a role in contemporary moral debates. We shall also incorporate current empirical research on happiness into our discussions. The questions we examine include: What, after all, is happiness? Is it necessary for a worthwhile life? Is it sufficient? Does happiness depend on one's state of mind, one's circumstances, or both? Can a person be immoral, yet happy?

The second part of the course will focus on questions relating to what makes life meaningful or worthwhile. As Albert Camus explains, "Judging whether life is or is not worth living amounts to answering the fundamental question of philosophy." We shall investigate the meaning of life by considering a theistic approach, a non-theistic alternative, and an approach that questions the meaningfulness of the question.

If you have any questions or would like to talk about this course, feel free to email me at [cvitrano@brooklyn.cuny.edu](mailto:cvitrano@brooklyn.cuny.edu) or stop by my office hours, which are on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 12:15 – 2:15 in room 3315 Boylan.

**Phil 3335      Workplace Values and Happiness**  
**Class Number   13109   Section MW3                      Mon, Wed           3:40 – 4:55 PM                      207 Whitehead**

Instructor: James Lynch [Finance & Business Management Dept.]

Email: [jlynch@brooklyn.cuny.edu](mailto:jlynch@brooklyn.cuny.edu)

*From the college bulletin:*

Issues relating to the integration of virtue and spiritual values such as creativity, integrity, social responsibility, economic justice, and environmental stewardship into the workplace and marketplace. Changing the corporate culture, importance of the mission statement, and leadership styles. Research on happiness and the role that meaningful work plays in happiness. Real life examples and cases to illustrate concepts and issues.

**Phil 3401      Metaphysics**  
**Class Number   66116   Section TY9                      Tues, Thurs           9:05 – 10:45 AM                      Room: TBA**

Instructor: Saam Trivedi

Email: [trivedi@brooklyn.cuny.edu](mailto:trivedi@brooklyn.cuny.edu)

Metaphysics, broadly understood as the study of reality, is often said to be at the abstract heart of Philosophy, with important connections to just about every other branch of the discipline. In this class, we will discuss issues such as the following: ontology, identity, properties, and causation. Our readings will consist of important essays written mostly over the last 40 years or so by analytic philosophers who have revived metaphysics from the unfair dismissal it got during a large part of the twentieth century.

**Phil 3410      Epistemology: Knowledge & Belief**  
**Class Number   13110   Section MY11                      Mon, Wed           11:00 AM – 12:40 PM                      3305 Boylan**

Instructor: Robert Lurz

Email: [rlurz@brooklyn.cuny.edu](mailto:rlurz@brooklyn.cuny.edu)

What are the limits to human knowledge and understanding? Can we know and understand anything? Can we distinguish appearance from reality? Are there things that we cannot (or should not) know or understand? What are they and why? This course is intended to introduce students to a number of important philosophical issues and theories on the nature of knowledge and rational belief. Issues such as – skepticism, foundationalism, coherentism, and kinds of knowledge – are examined and discussed from classical and contemporary philosophical perspectives. This is an excellent course for students who are interested in philosophy, philosophy of mind, philosophy of psychology, and philosophy of science.

**Phil 3410      Epistemology: Knowledge & Belief**  
**Class Number   13111   Section RQ6                      Thurs                      6:05 – 9:45 PM                      4145 Boylan**

Instructor: Dena Shottenkirk

Email: [dshottenkirk@brooklyn.cuny.edu](mailto:dshottenkirk@brooklyn.cuny.edu)

Classical and contemporary theories of the nature of knowledge and belief. Discussion of skepticism, rationalism, empiricism, coherentism, and foundationalism. Analysis of such concepts as probability, certainty, perception, evidence, and truth.

**Phil 3420      Philosophy of Mind**  
**Class Number   13112   Section MW9**

**Mon, Wed      9:30 – 10:45 AM      3305 Boylan**

Instructor: Robert Lurz  
Email: [rlurz@brooklyn.cuny.edu](mailto:rlurz@brooklyn.cuny.edu)

What is the true nature of the self, consciousness, and thought? How are they related to each other, to what goes on in our brains and bodies, and to the world in which we live? Can science or philosophy answer such questions? This course is intended to introduce students to a number of important issues in the philosophy of mind. Issues such as the mind-body problem, the problem of other minds, and the possibility of thought and consciousness in computers and animals are discussed and examined. This is an excellent course for students who are interested in philosophy, philosophy of psychology, and cognitive science.

**Phil 3423      Philosophy & Artificial Intelligence**  
**Class Number   13113   Section TR11      Tues, Thurs      11:00 AM – 12:15 PM      2604 James**

Instructor: Anatoly Nichvoloda  
Email: [nichvoloda@yahoo.com](mailto:nichvoloda@yahoo.com)

Can a machine be conscious or possess genuine intelligence? What is intelligence? Can there be a behavioral criterion for intelligence? Is there a unique capacity human minds have that cannot be replicated by technological means? Are neural processes in some fundamental way different from processes in a digital computer? What's the relationship between computational processes and physical processes? Can a software event cause a physical event? Can computational processes support semantics? What does it mean to say that a machine understands something?

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is a research area that combines computer science, philosophy and biology. This course will introduce students to philosophical thinking about AI from historical and technological perspectives and progress through a number of core topics in classical AI. We will discuss landmark essays that form the foundation of AI and engage in a philosophical examination centered around concepts such as intelligence, perception, learning, memory, understanding, language, etc. The overall goal is to enable students to appreciate the philosophical importance and successfully navigate the conceptual complexity of the topics of machine intelligence and human-computer interaction.

**Phil 3512      Philosophy of Music**  
**Class Number   66118   Section TR11      Tues, Thurs      11:00 AM – 12:15 PM      Room: TBA**

Instructor: Saam Trivedi  
Email: [trivedi@brooklyn.cuny.edu](mailto:trivedi@brooklyn.cuny.edu)

What is music? How is it related to noise and sound? Are musical works created or discovered? How are musical performances related to recordings? Is musical improvisation itself a kind of composing? How can music, which is without life and mental states, be heard as sad, happy etc.? Do jazz and rock music have a distinct aesthetics from Western classical music? What is the purpose and value of music? Using contemporary writings by philosophers, musicologists, and others, we will discuss these and other philosophical issues that pertain to music. The class is cross-listed between Philosophy and Music, and draws students from both departments, both undergraduate and graduate.

**Phil 3611      Philosophy of Biology****Class Number   77735   Section TR11****Tues, Thurs****11:00 AM – 12:15 PM   Room: TBA**

Instructor: Derek Skillings

Email: [dskillings@gc.cuny.edu](mailto:dskillings@gc.cuny.edu)

In this course, we will examine a range of philosophical questions that arise within the biological sciences, with a focus on evolutionary biology. Besides those questions that often pop in popular media (what is meant by 'evolution'? what is 'intelligent design'? what is 'Darwinism'?), there are a variety of conceptual issues of interest. What is evolutionary theory? What are the units of selection? What are species? What are organisms? Are all biological phenomena reducible to genes? What are adaptations, and how do we identify them? Is there a progressive trend in the history of life? Is there such a thing as 'human nature'?

This course is an introduction to these and other core philosophical issues in the biological sciences for the advanced undergraduate. It is designed for philosophy majors with an interest in the epistemology and metaphysics of science, biology majors with an interest in philosophical debates pertinent to their subject of study, and others who share one or the other of these vantage points (e.g. anthropology or psychology majors, among others).

**Phil 3703      Political Philosophy****Class Number   13114   Section TY3****Tues, Thurs****3:40 – 5:20 PM****3305 Boylan**

Instructor: Samir Chopra

Email: [schopra@brooklyn.cuny.edu](mailto:schopra@brooklyn.cuny.edu)

In this class, by way of a close reading of several classical texts of political theory, we will examine many central questions of political philosophy. In particular, the nature and foundations of political power, the sovereign state, political resistance and revolution, conservatism, democracy, constitutional government, civil liberties, inequality, justice, the relationship between politics and law etc.

**Phil 3704      Social Philosophy****Class Number   13125   Section MY12****Mon, Wed****12:25 – 2:05 PM****Room: TBA**

Instructor: Michael Menser

Email: [mmenser@brooklyn.cuny.edu](mailto:mmenser@brooklyn.cuny.edu)

Do you care about other people? Why? Wouldn't life be easier and better without them? This class assumes you need others, and that, if related to in a proper way, your life actually is better. But what is the best way to join together with other humans: as friends, lovers, families, cities, nations? Some or all of these? We shall focus on the concept of the social and its relationship to the concepts of nature, democracy and economy with respect to the concepts of the social contract, gender, dignity, capabilities, freedom, and self-determination, especially in cities. Topics include the cosmopolitan global city, climate change, race and education, gender and property, participatory budgeting, economic democracy, sustainability, friendship. Special assignment redesigning your own neighborhood.

Requirements: 4 exercises, a mix of quizzes, presentations, and/or short papers; midterm; 10 page term paper, final exam.

**Phil 3724 Latin American Philosophy****Class Number 66124 Section MW2****Mon, Wed****2:15 – 3:30 PM****Room: TBA**

Instructor: Daniel Campos

Email: [dcampos@brooklyn.cuny.edu](mailto:dcampos@brooklyn.cuny.edu)

What is “Latin America”? What does it mean to be “Latin American”? What is Latin American philosophy? Can philosophy be labeled culturally or ethnically as “Latin American”? What is the function of philosophy in Latin America? These are our questions for study in this course.

To answer them, we will study philosophy as being closely tied to the history of Latin America. Accordingly, we will read philosophy from pre-Columbian cultures, as well as from the colonial, independent, and contemporary periods in Latin American history.

For example, the war of conquest and the colonization of the Americas by Spain and Portugal led to a series of questions that were debated by Iberian philosophers: What is a human being? What are the characters that make human beings rational and moral? Are all human beings rational and moral? Can irrational or immoral people be conquered for their own good? When is war justified?

Prior to the conquest, in turn, various Native American cultures—such as the Mayans and Nahuas—had developed their own philosophical views about human beings, our nature, and our purpose in the universe. And after the conquest, they had to revisit their worldviews to explain the experience of being conquered and colonized.

When Latin American nations won independence from Spain and Portugal, they had to reinterpret, and even reinvent, their own cultural identity. What does it mean to Spanish-, Iberian-, and Latin-American? Are there distinctive characteristics to demarcate which peoples and cultures fall under these labels? Are cultural identities given or constructed?

As we study these debates, we will read texts from a variety of philosophical traditions, including scholasticism, positivism, existentialism, pragmatism, feminism, and philosophy of liberation. All philosophical readings will be placed in historical context.

At the end of the course students will have a general understanding of what have been the central philosophical concerns in Latin American history and about what is distinctive and what is universal about Latin American philosophy.

**Phil 3740 Philosophy of Law****Class Number 13465 Section TR2****Tues, Thurs****2:15 – 3:30 PM****Room: TBA**

Instructor: Samir Chopra

Email: [schopra@brooklyn.cuny.edu](mailto:schopra@brooklyn.cuny.edu)

In this class we will investigate the philosophical foundations of law and the critical interplay between philosophical and legal theorizing. We will inquire—by way of theories such as natural law, legal positivism, legal realism, critical legal studies, critical race theory, and feminist legal theory—into the nature of law. We will examine the nature of legal reasoning and the various techniques offered for the interpretation of legal texts.

We will read both philosophers and legal theorists, and examine case histories as concrete illuminations of the issues discussed in the readings. Two papers will be assigned over the course of the semester.

For more information, contact Professor Samir Chopra at [schopra@brooklyn.cuny.edu](mailto:schopra@brooklyn.cuny.edu).

**Phil 3920/3921 Internship in Philosophy I / II****Class Number 13115/13116    Section V1    TBA    TBA    TBA**

Instructor: Dena Shottenkirk

Email: [dshottenkirk@brooklyn.cuny.edu](mailto:dshottenkirk@brooklyn.cuny.edu)**NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATIONS:**

1. ECPAT (anti-human trafficking org)
2. HOPE (job training organization)
3. Habitat for Humanity
4. NYC Fellowship for Affordable Housing (secures housing for HIV patients)
5. US Participatory Budgeting Project (direct democracy funding project)
6. Room to Grow (support for disadvantaged mothers/children)

**LEGAL:**

Various lawyers' offices

**BUSINESS AND PHILOSOPHY:**

Students can be placed in a particular business, and study in depth how business intersects with ethics.

**ART AND PHILOSOPHY:**

Students interested in art can intern in a gallery or museum while studying issues in contemporary aesthetic theory.

**Phil 4120    Interdepartmental Humanities Seminar: Existentialism****Class Number 88547    Section TR9    Tues, Thurs    9:30 – 10:45 AM    Room: TBA**

Instructor: Samir Chopra

Email: [schopra@brooklyn.cuny.edu](mailto:schopra@brooklyn.cuny.edu)

Rare is the philosophical doctrine that straddles literature and philosophy as effortlessly as existentialism. Sometimes thought to be a purely French twentieth-century phenomenon, existentialism is both a philosophical position with a long pedigree and a literary movement with global impact and presence. In this class, we will examine some classic works—philosophical essays, short stories, plays, and novels—in the existentialist tradition, looking at both literary and philosophical works in an effort to unpack existentialism's central theses, understand their significance, and evaluate the works from a moral, political and metaphysical perspective. Among other things, we will explore why existentialism is held to be an atheist philosophy, why it resonates with Buddhism, and how it avoids charges of quietism and nihilism.