

**PHILOSOPHY DEPARTMENT
COURSE DESCRIPTIONS
SPRING 2015**

Phil 3105 Landmarks in the History of Philosophy**Class Number 18171 Section MW2 Mon, Wed 2:15 – 3:30 PM****4109 Boylan****Instructor: Angelica Nuzzo****Email: 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 3121 Modern Philosophy**Class Number 18173 Section MY11 Tues, Thurs 11:00 AM – 12:40 PM 3305 Boylan****Instructor: Daniel Campos****Email: dcampos@brooklyn.cuny.edu**

In 1649 Rene Descartes traveled to Sweden to teach at the court of Queen Kristina. In addition to being a great philosopher, scientist, and mathematician, Descartes liked to sleep late. But he had to rise early and travel to Kristina's court to begin teaching at 5:00 AM. He caught pneumonia and died. What did Descartes have to say that was so exciting Kristina couldn't wait? Why was his work, and that of his philosophical interlocutors, so important?

As Copernicus, Galileo, Kepler, Bernoulli, and Newton revolutionized science, Hobbes, Descartes, Spinoza, Locke, Leibniz, Berkeley, and Hume shaped the modern philosophical worldview. What were their conceptions of the nature of reality? How could we attain knowledge of it? How should natural philosophy or science be practiced?

We will study these questions in order to understand how modern philosophy arose. This will help us understand what it means to be "modern" before deciding whether or not to jump onto the "postmodern" bandwagon.

Phil 3123 20th Century Philosophy**Class Number 18175 Section MW9 Mon, Wed 9:30 – 10:45 AM****Instructor: Samir Chopra****Email: schopra@brooklyn.cuny.edu**

This course will serve as an introduction to central themes—logic, idealism, empiricism, metaphysics, existentialism among others—in the twentieth-century's analytic, post-analytic (or neo-pragmatic), and continental traditions. The philosophers we will read and discuss include: Husserl, Dewey, Du Bois, Russell, Moore, Heidegger, Wittgenstein, Ayer, Gadamer, Sartre, de Beauvoir, Austin, Davidson, Foucault, Derrida, Rorty, Rawls, and MacIntyre.

Phil 3203 Introduction to Formal Logic
Class Number 18176 Section ER6 Thurs 6:30 – 9:00 PM 3305 Boylan
Instructor: Mariya Gluzman
Email: 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 18177 Section ET6 Tues 6:30 – 9:00 PM 4117 Boylan
Instructor: Michael Maumus
Email: 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 3210 Reasoning
Class Number 18179 Section TR2 Tues, Thurs 2:15 – 3:30 PM 4109 Boylan
Instructor: Michael Maumus
Email: 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 18180 Section TR11 Tues, Thurs 11:00 AM – 12:15 PM 4141 Boylan
Instructor: Penny Repetti
Email: 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 3306 Ethics and Society**Class Number 18182 Section TR2 Tues, Thurs 2:15 – 3:30 PM 3305 Boylan****Instructor: Penny Repetti****Email: 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 3306 Ethics and Society**Class Number 18183 Section TR11 Tues, Thurs 9:30 – 10:45 AM****Instructor: Christine Vitrano****Email: cvitrano@brooklyn.cuny.edu**

This course will focus on critically evaluating the morality of important social issues such as abortion, euthanasia, world hunger, terrorism, torture, capital punishment, animal rights, and affirmative action. We begin with a discussion of three classic moral theories: Kantian deontology, Mill's utilitarianism, and Aristotle's virtue theory. We then use these principles and other moral considerations to evaluate the social issues, with each issue featuring at least two readings that present opposing viewpoints. There will be a lot of class discussion, and students will work periodically in small groups to debate these issues.

If you have any questions about this course or you would like to know more about it, feel free to email at cvitrano@brooklyn.cuny.edu or stop by my office (3315 Boylan) during office hours on Tues/Thurs, 12:15 – 2:15.

Phil 3309 Environmental Ethics**Class Number 18185 Section MW12 Mon, Wed 12:50 – 2:05 PM 401 Whitehead****Instructor: Derek Skillings****Email: dskillings@gc.cuny.edu**

This course will expose you to introductory concepts at the intersection of philosophical ethics, environmental science and ecology through an engagement with issues such as population growth and resource use, sustainability, nonhuman animal welfare, biodiversity loss, pollution, environmental justice, and global climate change. In the course of our discussions, we will examine an array of ethical problems: What is our responsibility to future generations? What are the moral standings of human and nonhuman species, ecosystems and the environment? Do we have an obligation to protect and preserve the wilderness? As a consumer YOU necessarily make choices that directly impact the environment. What sorts of moral considerations are relevant to us as consumers? What are our individual and collective moral obligations in responding to the threat of global climate change?

No prior experience with philosophy is required. The primary goals for this course are to provide students with conceptual resources so that they may further develop their ability to make and evaluate ethical arguments, and to engage students' ethical reasoning and reflection on pressing environmental issues.

Phil 3310 Fundamentals of Professional Ethics
Class Number 18186 Section TR2 Tues, Thurs 2:15 – 3:30 PM
Instructor: Christine Vitrano
Email: cvitrano@brooklyn.cuny.edu

We approach the topic of professional ethics by considering the moral issues that arise in three distinct professional settings: business, medicine and academia. We begin with a general discussion of the nature of morality and moral theory. Then we focus on challenges that arise in the workplace, including questions of employee privacy, safe working conditions and achieving a happy work/life balance. Next we turn to bioethics, where we consider the ethical questions that arise with caring for comatose patients, physician-assisted dying and assisted reproduction. Finally, we consider several issues in academia, including sexual harassment, affirmative action, and questions about the role and value of intercollegiate athletics.

If you have any questions about this course or you would like to know more about it, feel free to email at cvitrano@brooklyn.cuny.edu or stop by my office (3315 Boylan) during office hours on Tues/Thurs, 12:15 – 2:15.

Phil 3315 Communication Ethics
Class Number 17268 Section MW3 Mon, Wed 3:40 – 4:55 PM 4113 Boylan
Instructor: Dena Shottenkirk
Email: 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 3316 Medical Ethics
Class Number 18207 Section TR11 Tues, Thurs 11:00 AM – 12:15 PM 3305 Boylan
Instructor: Anna Gotlib
Email: agotlib@brooklyn.cuny.edu

Have you ever wondered whether our system of medical care treats people fairly? Or whether we ought to be able to choose when, and how, to die? Or perhaps about the connection between the law, public policy, and your access to a doctor? Or whether our society is ready to deal with the possibility of global epidemics and pandemics, such as the current Ebola crisis? All of these questions, and more, reflect a rapidly-changing world of emerging biotechnologies, laws, and health care practices, placing significant pressures on our understanding of ourselves and our society. To ask difficult questions about how we are born, how we live, and how we die -- and to begin to offer some responses -- is the work of medical ethics. Specifically, this course provides an introduction to medical ethics by addressing issues arising from the application of various models of ethical decision-making (moral theory) to questions of medical care, biomedical research, and healthcare justice. We will also consider some critiques of the ethical models themselves, and then ask what kinds of social policies (if any) might adequately address the complexities inherent in biomedicine.

Topics to be discussed will include physician-nurse-patient relationships, human and animal research, emerging biotechnologies (such as stem cell research and cloning), neuroethics, health care and justice, public health and pandemics, and others. The format of the course is seminar-style discussion, with an emphasis on active student participation. There are no prerequisites for this course. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to email agotlib@brooklyn.cuny.edu.

Phil 3318W Computers and Ethics**Class Number 17244 Section EM6 Mon****6:30 – 9:10 PM****234 New Ingersoll****Instructor: Anatoly Nichvoloda****Email: nichvoloda@yahoo.com**

Computer Ethics course is intended to give students a chance to reflect on the humanitarian, social, and cultural impact of computer technology by focusing on ethical issues faced by and brought about by computing professionals, including those related to networking and the internet, intellectual property, privacy, security, reliability, and liability. The course will stress the ways in which computers challenge traditional ethical and philosophical concepts, and raise old issues in a new way.

We will also focus on changing attitudes toward work and wealth related to the open source phenomenon, as well as issues raised by the possible emergence in the future of highly intelligent machines. We will consider these matters through reading, writing, discussion, and presentation.

At the completion of the course students are expected to:

1. Explain why ethics is important in information technology and why ethical responsibilities go beyond compliance with laws and regulations.
2. Describe and apply an ethical decision-making model to an information technology scenario/problem.
3. Describe ethical issues and apply current laws regarding free speech and content control in information technology.
4. Describe and apply current laws regarding intellectual property in information technology.
5. Describe and apply current laws regarding privacy in information technology.
6. Evaluate how to resolve ethical issues in information technology by using a framework of five moral theories: utilitarianism, rights, distributive justice, ethics of care, and virtue ethics.

Phil 3318W Computers and Ethics**Class Number 17249 Section TR11 Tues, Thurs 11:00 AM – 12:15 PM 236 New Ingersoll****Instructor: Robert Zwick [Computer & Information Science Dept.]****Email: 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 18208 Section MQ6 Mon****6:05 – 9:25 PM****3305 Boylan****Instructor: Angelica Nuzzo****Email: anuzzo@brooklyn.cuny.edu**

The aim of this course is to offer a general introduction to the discipline of ethics. We will study 'foundational' texts such as Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*, Kant's *Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals*, and J.S. Mill's *Utilitarianism*. We will focus both on the philosophical reflection about 'ethics' - namely on 'ethical theories' and 'ethical concepts' - and on the morality embodied in and defined by ethical concepts. I will give an outline of the major problems of philosophical ethics as well as an

introduction to the history of ethics, pointing out that ethics is a constitutive part of social life, and that its forms vary according with the changes in society.

We will also study the structures of ethical discourse, the language of ethics, and the character of moral reasoning. Selected texts taken from the history of ethics as well as from different ethical traditions (India, China) will represent the basis of our discussions. The course will give the students an opportunity to think about the integration within ethical theory of contemporary moral issues that have a gendered, multicultural focus.

The format of the course includes both lecture and class discussion on major ethical issues. Students will also be required to do class presentation work (individual and group work).

Phil 3335 Workplace Values and Happiness

Class Number 17516 Section MW3 Mon, Wed 3:40 – 4:55 PM 404 Whitehead

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

Email: 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 18210 Section WQ6 Wed 6:05 – 9:25 PM 3305 Boylan

Instructor: Dena Shottenkirk

Email: dshottenkirk@brooklyn.cuny.edu

This course examines the fundamental subdivision of philosophy known as “metaphysics”, which is the study of the ultimate structure of reality. Taken from the title of Aristotle’s book of the same name, the term designates those philosophical endeavors that attempt to answer the question “what exists?”. This distinguishes itself from the subdivision of philosophy known as “epistemology”, which attempts to answer the question “how do we acquire knowledge?”. It is thus that metaphysics has historically been thought of as the most basic subdivision with philosophy.

Metaphysics studies not only the basic structure of independent reality but attempts to construct a picture of the basic units that underlie that reality – a study called “ontology”. It thus includes debates over whether the fundamental nature of reality is constituted by matter or whether it is constituted by ideas, which would include the related problem of whether or not there are universals, and if so, how do they relate to particulars.

We will use a general text (edited by David Cooper), which gives a historical over-view of the topic, including ancient sources as well as modern, western sources as well as eastern.

Phil 3410 Epistemology: Knowledge & Belief
Class Number 18211 Section MY9 Mon, Wed 9:05 – 10:45 AM 402 Whitehead
Instructor: Robert Lurz
Email: 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 3422 Philosophical Issues in Cognitive Science
Class Number 18212 Section TR11 Tues, Thurs 11:00 AM – 12:15 PM 4145 Boylan
Instructor: Anatoly Nichvoloda
Email: nichvoloda@yahoo.com

Cognitive Science is the interdisciplinary science of the human mind and cognition that attempts to provide a unified account of the nature of mind and draws insights from several fields: Philosophy, Psychology, Computer Science, Linguistics, Neuroscience, Behavioral Economics, Ethology, and Evolutionary Biology. The course doesn't require any prior familiarity with these disciplines, just a curiosity about how the mind works. We will investigate questions such as: What is human mind? Are computers the best model for understanding the mind? What is consciousness? How can cognitive science explain culture or religious beliefs? What can we know about mental lives of animals?

The course will focus on the historical development, foundational philosophical presuppositions, methodologies, and experimental results from a selection of core topics in Cognitive Science. The topics span learning, perception, language, decision-making, memory, emotion, morality, humor and happiness. Each time we visit a topic, we will ask: What theoretical issues are at stake? How are they being addressed? What are the key ideas? What are the basic phenomena, how were they discovered, and what counts as an explanation of them? The aim is to arrive at a comprehensive overview of the big ideas of cognitive science—the theoretical principles that constitute our current understanding of how our minds work.

Phil 3511 Philosophy of Literature and Film
Class Number 63919 Section TR11 Tues, Thurs 11:00 AM – 12:15 PM 3305 Boylan
Instructor: Justin Steinberg
Email: jsteinberg@brooklyn.cuny.edu

This course will focus on philosophical issues in the medium of film, while also considering issues raised in related art forms such as literature and photography. Among the questions that we will discuss are: How do films represent and what do they represent? What distinguishes a work of non-fiction from a work of fiction? In what sense is there truth in fiction? Can film challenge or inform our understanding of truth and knowledge? What is the relationship between empathy and the imagination? Why do people watch films that produce unpleasant emotions? What makes a film good? Does the ethical content of a film affect its aesthetic value? What kind of ethical and/or political power does film possess?

We will explore these questions by bringing philosophical texts to bear on particular films that will be viewed outside of class. Among the films that we will be viewing and discussing are: *The Thin Blue Line* (Morris, 1988), *Blow-Up* (Antonioni, 1966), *Close-Up* (Kiarostami, 1990), *Rashomon* (Kurosawa, 1950), *Funny Games* (Haneke, 1997), and *Killer of Sheep* (Burnett, 1979).

Phil 3703 Political Philosophy**Class Number 18041 Section TY3 Tues, Thurs 3:40 – 5:20 PM****3305 Boylan****Instructor: Justin Steinberg****Email: jsteinberg@brooklyn.cuny.edu**

In this course we will investigate many of the central questions in political philosophy. The main themes for this semester's class revolve around the question of power and its legitimate and illegitimate deployment. We will read a range of classical and contemporary texts in order to consider what, if anything justifies political power, what constitutes a coercive or exploitative relationship, and what conditions must be met in order to satisfy the ideal of democratic self-governance.

Phil 3720 Philosophy and Feminism**Class Number 16562 Section TR11 Tues, Thurs 11:00 AM – 12:15 PM****Instructor: Serene Khader****Email: sjkhader@brooklyn.cuny.edu**

Feminist theory has both critical and constructive aims. Its critical aim is to reveal the ways male bias has interfered with our ability to understand ourselves and the world. Its constructive aim is to develop ways of thinking about the world that do not distort the realities of women and other oppressed people.

In this course, we will examine three sets of questions that are central to feminist theory:

- 1) How does oppression affect people's capacities for autonomy and choice? Does the choosing to participate in a seemingly oppressive practice make it less oppressive?
- 2) What practices of knowing impede privileged women's capacities abilities to understand and engage in liberatory struggles with women who are racially, economically, and/or colonially subjugated?
- 3) How do existing practices of scientific knowledge acquisition and justification serve the interests of the powerful? How might we change our conceptions of knowledge so that we might arrive at claims about reality that are not distorted by the interests of the powerful?

If you have questions about this course, please feel free to contact me at sjkhader@cuny.brooklyn.edu.

Phil 3805 Philosophical Issues Concerning Animals**Class Number 18025 Section MW11 Mon, Wed 11:00 AM – 12:15 PM****Instructor: Robert Lurz****Email: rlurz@brooklyn.cuny.edu**

This course examines the philosophical issue on the mental and moral status of nonhuman animals.

Some of the issues that will be covered are:

- What kinds of thought and consciousness are animals capable of?
- Can animals think, have thoughts, beliefs, reasons?
- Can animals reason?
- Are animals capable of having knowledge of their own minds and the minds of other animals?
- Is it even possible for us to ever know what an animal is thinking or feeling? Can science ever tell us these things?
- Do some animals have free will?
- Are animals capable of doing things for moral reasons?
- What kinds of moral obligations do we have to animals, and why?
- Do animals have natural rights?
- Should we give some animals legal rights? Which animals? Which rights?

These issues will be examined through classical and contemporary writings in philosophy. This is an excellent course for philosophy majors and minors, students in psychology and biology, and students generally interested in examining these issues.

Phil 3920 Internship in Philosophy I
Class Number 18027 Section V1 TBA TBA
Instructor: Dena Shottenkirk
Email: 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 3921 Internship in Philosophy II
Class Number 18029 Section V1 TBA TBA
Instructor: Dena Shottenkirk
Email: 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 5110 Seminar: Kant's Critique of Pure Reason

Class Number 64286 Section MW3 Mon, Wed 3:40 – 4:55 PM

3305 Boylan

Instructor: Angelica Nuzzo

Email: anuzzo@brooklyn.cuny.edu

This course will give a comprehensive account of Kant's Critique of Pure Reason (1781, 1787). In this fundamental work Kant proposes the new idea of "transcendental philosophy," offers his critique of traditional metaphysics and a new idea of metaphysics beyond the rationalist and the empiricist tradition, and provides the foundation of his critical epistemology. We will address issues such as Kant's idea of transcendental philosophy, the meaning of the Copernican Revolution in philosophy, the nature of space and time and the status of the a priori, the function of the transcendental unity of apperception. The basis of the course will be a close reading of the text (selection from all parts, the Transcendental Aesthetic, the Analytic, the Dialectic). The format of the course includes lecture, class discussion, and student presentation. Emphasis will be placed on the careful reading of Kant's texts.

Required Texts

- I. Kant, Critique of Pure Reason, tr. N. Kemp Smith, Palgrave McMillan

(<http://www.hkbu.edu.hk/~ppp/cpr/toc.html>) (preferred translation but others are acceptable as well).