

PHILOSOPHY DEPARTMENT

FALL 2014

COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

Phil 3105 Landmarks in the History of Philosophy

Class Number 53922 Section MW3 Mon, Wed 3:40 – 4:55pm

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 3105 Landmarks in the History of Philosophy

Class Number 46531 Section TR11 Tues, Thurs 11:00am – 12:15pm

Instructor: Justin Steinberg

Email: jsteinberg@brooklyn.cuny.edu

This course will cover central 'landmark' philosophical texts from the history of Western philosophy. We will engage in a close reading and detailed discussion of key selections from texts that every student of philosophy should be familiar with.

Students will develop important skills in reading and analyzing philosophical texts and learn how to reconstruct and compare philosophical arguments.

An effort will also be made to situate these texts historically and to further demonstrate the ongoing relevance of these discussions for contemporary philosophical issues. The first part of the course will focus on ancient theories of the good and their revival in the modern period. Readings for this part of the course will include Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* and representative works from the Hellenistic schools (Stoics, Epicureans, and Skeptics). Near the end of the course we will read some canonical texts in political economy, including selections from Adam Smith's *The Wealth of Nations* and Karl Marx's *Das Kapital*.

Phil 3111 Ancient Philosophy

Class Number 46532 Section EMQ6 Mon 6:05 – 9:25pm

Instructor: Angelica Nuzzo

Email: 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 46533 Section MY11 Mon, Wed 11:00am – 12:40pm

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 3130 American Philosophy

Class Number 46534 Section MW2 Mon, Wed 2:15 – 3:30pm

Instructor: Daniel Campos

Email: dcampos@brooklyn.cuny.edu

"American philosophy" refers to the various philosophical traditions that have emerged in the United States as a result of distinctively American history, culture, and experiences.

Classical American philosophers such as Ralph Waldo Emerson, Charles Sanders Peirce, William James, Josiah Royce, John Dewey, and George Herbert Mead, and subsequent generations of their followers and critics, have engaged the major historical issues of philosophy from distinctive vantage points, and have developed original views such as transcendentalism, pragmatism, and naturalism.

In this course, we will study the historical development of American philosophy, centering our attention in the aforementioned figures and traditions. We will pay special attention to the ways in which American philosophers have responded to problems that emerged in Modern European philosophy regarding the dualisms or oppositions reason/will, intellect/sense, mind/matter, reality/appearance, transcendence/immanence, theory/practice, belief/action, fact/value, and individual/community. We will see how they have developed philosophical concepts, and in one notorious case, a philosophical system, to completely reconfigure our understanding of philosophy, its tasks and problems.

By the end of the semester, the student should understand American philosophy as a distinctive response to Modernity that is not, however, riding the “postmodern” bandwagon.

Phil 3142 Existentialism

Class Number 46535 Section TR3 Tues, Thurs 3:40 – 4:55pm

Instructor: Moris Stern

Email: moris.stern@gmail.com

We will take the 20th Century philosophy of Phenomenology and Existentialism to do all of the following: to analyze, systematically reconstruct, diagnose, critically question and empower the late modern person, in view of that person’s individualistic self-conception. The late modern self understands itself to be subjectivity first, and, objectivity, if at all, second. In the more popular terms - the self is an individual first and everything else second. Existence is divided into the subjective and the objective, and the self identifies with the subjective first. To loosely paraphrase Sartre, modern human being chooses and makes himself to be what he is and empowers himself by in-depth understanding of this and owning up to it.

Here are some of the questions the philosophy of Phenomenology and Existentialism raises and that will be of interest to us in our class.

What does existence thus divided (subjective and objective) and systematized (subjective is superior to objective) look like? Is this division and hierarchization of existence inevitable? Are we, late moderns, always already engaged in it – even when we prioritize objectivity (by subjectively endowing objectivity with importance, as it were)? What are the unique challenges that this position raises for our relationship to ourselves, others, nature, God, death, love, sex, our daily activities, etc.? How does one emerge strengthened and empowered as a result of facing these challenges? Is there an attempt by such a one-sided subjectivity to balance itself out by objectivity – and what form do such attempts take? Can they be excessive?

We will start with short selections from Descartes and Kant to establish the 16th-18th Century roots of the view that subjectivity, or consciousness, in its purity and independence of objectivity of the world, takes precedence in knowledge and ethics. We will then proceed to the 19th Century existentialists, Kierkegaard and Nietzsche. Kierkegaard works out the possibilities and the hierarchy of the aesthetic, ethical and religious life, in the mode of the primacy of subjectivity. Nietzsche thinks about subjectivity by means of the idea of the greatness of the individual as the creator of values. Finally, we will deal with two 20th Century Existentialists, who are also phenomenologists – Heidegger and Sartre. Heidegger finds subjectivity to be deeply problematic and uses phenomenology (philosophy that aims to describe experience on its own terms, before theoretical reflection) to give an account of a dimension of experience and life that is more fundamental than the theoretically laden subject/object divided aspect of experience. Sartre, on the other hand, returns to and radicalizes the Cartesian and Kantian subjectivity and freedom even further by paradoxically arguing that any identity one chooses for oneself is both necessary and is a burdensome objectivity on the freedom of subjectivity.

Phil 3203 Introduction to Formal Logic**Class Number 46536 Section TR11 Tues, Thurs 11:00am – 12:15pm****Instructor: Staff****Email:**

We are often presented with arguments designed to convince us to believe certain things, or to act in certain ways. Most of the time we do pretty well at sorting out the bad arguments from the good ones, but we may not have a very clear idea of what this involves. One thing we often demand is that a good argument should be deductively valid, that its conclusion should be entailed by (should “follow from”) its premises. But what is it for an assertion to be entailed by others? In this course we will develop a formal framework within which entailment and validity, along with other central concepts of deductive logic, can be rigorously defined and studied.

Phil 3210 Reasoning**Class Number 46537 Section EM6 Mon 6:30 – 9:00pm****Class Number 46538 Section MW12 Mon, Wed 12:50 – 2:05pm****Instructor: Fletcher 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 46539 Section TR3 Tues, Thurs 3:40 – 4:55pm****Instructor: Staff****Email:**

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 53987 Section TR2 Tues, Thurs 2:15 – 3:30pm****Instructor: Staff****Email:**

Many of the moral issues we grapple with in our everyday lives have to do with our personal relationships: with our obligations to friends, lovers, parents, spouses and children, among others. Our ethical exploration of these relationships will bring us up against fundamental questions about partiality and impartiality, autonomy, altruism and self-respect. We will complement these more theoretical discussions with attention to some of the more important forms of human relationship—between

friends, between spouses, and between parents and children—and the difficult moral questions connected with them, including: what is the moral value of marriage? what is forgiveness? why should one do more for a friend than one would for a stranger? what do grown children owe their parents? Readings will be drawn from both classical and contemporary sources. The format of the course will combine lecture and discussion, with an emphasis on discussion. No previous study of ethics is required.

Phil 3305 Ethics and Personal Relations

Class Number 46540 Section TR9 Tues, Thurs 9:30 – 10:45am

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 which will be discussed are: friendship, marriage, divorce, love and sex, parent-child relationships, lying, cheating, etc.

Phil 3306 Ethics and Society

Class Number 46542 Section TR11 Tues, Thurs 11:00am – 12:15pm

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 46541 Section TR2 Tues, Thurs 2:15 – 3:30pm

Instructor: Christine Vitrano

Email: cvitrano@brooklyn.cuny.edu

In this course, we focus on developing the analytical skills needed for philosophical thought about important social issues. We begin with a discussion of several challenges to morality including cultural relativism, egoism and moral skepticism. Next we discuss the moral theories of Kant, Mill and Aristotle. Finally, we apply the principles we have learned from these moral theories to various social issues including abortion, euthanasia, world hunger, terrorism, pornography, affirmative action, and animal rights.

If you have any questions or would like to talk about this course, feel free to email me at cvitrano@brooklyn.cuny.edu or stop by my office hours, which are on Mondays and Wednesdays from 12:30 – 2:30 in room 3315 Boylan hall.

Phil 3307 Global Ethics

Class Number 54016 Section MW11 Mon, Wed 11:00am – 12:15pm

Instructor: Staff

Email:

INEQUALITY AND HYPERWEALTH. SUPERSTORMS AND CLIMATE CHANGE. MASS EXTINCTION. REFUGEES. OBESITY AND STARVATION. TERRORISM AND TOTAL SURVEILLANCE. These are just some of the issues that the peoples and states of the world are grappling with in the 21st century. In this class we shall examine these issues and responses to them: ECONOMIC DEMOCRACY; HUMAN RIGHTS, PARTICIPATORY GOVERNANCE, BIOREGIONALISM, COSMOPOLITANISM.

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? “Globalization” is that multidimensional phenomena—which kicked into high gear in the 1990s—that has dramatically changed the ways in which human beings across the globe interact with one another.

Key questions include: should there be a global governmental system? Who should carry out this role? Are there universal human rights? Who decides? A special focus will be on participatory democracy with respect to international urban sustainability.

Readings from a variety of traditions including rights-based views, globalists, feminists, democratic theory and virtue ethics.

Assignments: two short assignments, (2 pages), quiz, midterm, 10 page paper, final exam.

Prerequisite: one course in philosophy.

Phil 3308 Race, Justice, and Equality

Class Number 46543 Section ER6 Thurs 6:30 – 9:00pm

Instructor: Anatoly Nichvoloda

Email: nichvoloda@yahoo.com

What is race? Is race a legitimate biological category? Is it a valid census category? What is the relationship between the category of race and racism? What is the relationship between race and personal identity? How do multiracial identities raise questions about the meaning of race and its relationship to identity?

This course will address these and other related questions from political, socioeconomic and historical perspectives. But above all, we will aim to reflect philosophically upon the notion of race and its relationship to the formation of a more pluralistic and democratic society.

In this course we will engage in a philosophical examination of race and racism centered around the moral values of justice and equality. Topics addressed include race as a social category, racial identity,

the nature of racism, race neutrality and race consciousness, multiculturalism, and the relationships among values such as fairness, equality, and well-being.

We will examine and discuss contrasting points of view on measures designed to counter racism, including civil disobedience, affirmative action, racial reparations, and race-based restrictions on speech.

Phil 3309 Environmental Ethics

Class Number 54019 Section MW2 Mon, Wed 2:15 – 3:30pm

Instructor: Staff

Email:

The 21st century has brought with it a range of environmental problems that humanity (and the rest of the earth) has never encountered. Global warming gets much of the press but mass extinction, soil degradation, water scarcity, and atmospheric and oceanic pollution pose problems potentially as catastrophic. 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.

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

An array of ethical problems arise: 1) is there a right to a clean and health environment? If so, who defines “clean”? Many talk about “sustainability” but what would an economy that did not destroy the environment look like? Is capitalism inherent ecologically destructive? Is another economy possible? If so, how do we get there? 2) If the world recognizes that certain wild parts of the globe should be preserved (e.g. the Amazon rainforest), who should pay to preserve it? 3) Do nonhumans have rights in these kinds of debates or do only humans possess them? Ecuador and Bolivia now recognize the rights of “mother nature” in their constitutions, should the US adopt such an amendment? 4) As a consumer YOU make choices that directly impact on the environment every day. What sorts of moral guidelines should we follow as consumers? We shall examine a range of ethical perspectives to deal with these issues, but virtue ethics, democratic and rights perspectives will be of special focus.

Furthermore, 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 fights over just what that means. Also, students will be required to morally evaluate some of their own consumption practices.

Phil 3315 Communication Ethics

Class Number 46562 Section MW9 Mon, Wed 9:30 – 10:45am

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 3320 Ethics**Class Number 46563 Section TY3 Tues, Thurs 3:40 – 5:20pm****Instructor: Christine Vitrano****Email: 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, who include 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 or stop by my office hours, which are on Mondays and Wednesdays from 12:30 – 2:30 in room 3315 Boylan hall.

Phil 3331 Happiness and the Meaning of Life**Class Number 46564 Section TR11 Tues, Thurs 11:00am – 12:15pm****Instructor: Christine Vitrano****Email: cvitrano@brooklyn.cuny.edu**

This course will center on two of the oldest philosophical topics, happiness and the meaning of life. The first part of the course will focus on the concept of happiness, where we will examine its nature, source and value. We will 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 will also incorporate current empirical research on happiness into our discussions. The questions we will 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..." (*The Myth of Sisyphus*, New York: Vintage International, 1991, pgs. 3-4). 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 or stop by my office hours, which are on Mondays and Wednesdays from 12:30 – 2:30 in room 3315 Boylan hall.

Phil 3401 Metaphysics**Class Number 46566 Section TQ6 Tues 6:05 – 9:25pm****Instructor: Andrew Arlig****Email: aarlig@brooklyn.cuny.edu**

In this class, we will study some historical and contemporary treatments of ontology (the theory of being). We will inquire into what must be the case in order to exist and then see whether the criteria we uncover imply that there are round-squares, unicorns, numbers, or holes and other absences. We'll also turn these criteria loose on other putative entities, such as chairs, rocks, cacti, dogs, and persons. Surprisingly, it might turn out that some or all of these things do not exist. Often philosophers make decisions about what there is based upon their notions of individuality, identity, change, and persistence. We will examine many of these concepts as well.

Phil 3410 Epistemology: Theory of Knowledge**Class Number 46567 Section MY11 Mon, Wed 11:00am – 12:40pm****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 3410 Epistemology: Theory of Knowledge**Class Number 46568 Section WQ6 Wed 6:05 – 9:25pm****Instructor: Dena Shottenkirk****Email: 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 46569 Section MW9 Mon, Wed 9:30 – 10:45am****Instructor: Robert Lurz****Email: 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 and Artificial Intelligence

Class Number 46570 Section TR11 Tues, Thurs 11:00am – 12:15pm

Instructor: Anatoly Nichvoloda

Email: 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 3502 Philosophy of Beauty

Class Number 54072 Section MW2 Mon, Wed 2:15 – 3:30pm

Instructor: Angelica Nuzzo

Email: anuzzo@brooklyn.cuny.edu

What is beauty and what is the sublime in nature and art? On what are our judgments regarding beauty based? What do we express when we judge something beautiful? Is beauty only a matter of individual, subjective "taste" or does beauty claim a more universal validity? Is there a relation between aesthetic and moral values? In this course we will discuss these questions guided by texts by Plato, Plotinus, Hume, Burke, Kant, Hegel, and Benjamin among others. The study of Kant's "Critique of Aesthetic Judgment" will occupy a central part of the course. 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: The course will teach (i) how to read, explain, analyze, and critically interpret philosophical texts; (ii) how to extend the discussion to touch upon contemporary philosophical issues and problems; (iii) how to follow historical development of ideas.

Phil 3703 Political Philosophy

Class Number 46573 **Section TY2** **Tues** **2:15 – 3:30pm**
Thurs **1:25 – 3:30pm**

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—authority, coercion, and autonomy—all 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 are necessary for liberty and self-governance.

Phil 3704 Social Philosophy

Class Number 46587 **Section MW3** **Mon, Wed** **3:40 – 5:20pm**

Instructor: Samir Chopra

Email: schopra@brooklyn.cuny.edu

In this class we will examine social theory and social thought beginning with the Enlightenment and continuing on to twentieth-century postmodernism. The issues we will tackle will include equality, social justice, gender relations, political structures, family life, ethnic relations, and political economy. We will read philosophers, political scientists, psychologists, economists, novelists – all of whom contribute to our grappling with the complex questions facing societies and those who interact within them.

Phil 3711 Philosophy of Education

Class Number 54088 **Section ER6** **Thurs** **6:30 – 9:00pm**

Instructor: Moris Stern

Email: moris.stern@gmail.com

The class is primarily structured around the following question: “what are the proper aims of education?” From the very beginning of philosophy, philosophers have thought about education in light of their inquiry into what the good life is for human beings. Studying these thinkers gives us valuable food for thought about education, philosophy of education, and philosophy as such, for two reasons: 1) these philosophers offer their insights into the issues and 2) they bring to our attention issues that are unfashionable and undiscussed in contemporary settings. We still have much to learn by responding to such topics as education for preservation of harmonious community life, individual salvation, artistic creativity, scientific learning, labor, etc.

We will read expositions by contemporary philosophers of education of the classical philosophers and their relevance to the contemporary debates. We will study many of the following figures, but probably not all: Plato, Aristotle, St. Augustine, Aquinas, Maimonides, Descartes, Machiavelli, Hobbes, Locke, Leibnitz, Condorcet, Smith, Luther, Rousseau, Kant, Jefferson, Hegel, Mill, Marx, Nietzsche, Dewey.

Here are few examples of the kind of inquiry – as assisted by the history of philosophy of education – that we will do in this class.

Traditional philosophy of education focused on the education of leaders for harmonious civic life. Our thinking about the ordering of our community life no longer focuses on the strong leader (or does it?). But we still think of ourselves as leaders who organize our own lives and relate as such leaders to others. Thus, the questions of traditional philosophy of education are still of interest to us. Should leader's education focus on the theoretical knowledge, or should it focus on practical knowledge skills that are more about developing the proper habits of thinking, emotion, perception, action? Or, should leaders be educated simply to grasp and hold power by fear, control, manipulation, and seizing of opportunities? Or, should all members of society be educated for democratic participation, rather than leadership? What kind of education is best for democratic participation – classical, occupational, or something in-between? Or, is it better to educate for the right sentiments?

Traditional philosophy of education focused on education for individual salvation. What do we think about the place and shape of education for individual salvation, if any? What is the function of prayer? Or is education for individual salvation simply teaching people how to read?

Modern philosophy of education focused on artistic creativity. What do we think about the place and shape of education for artistic creativity? Is education in artistic creativity essential for understanding of freedom, as the moderns have taught?

Modern philosophy of education also focused on the success of the natural sciences. Should education emphasize reflection on sense experience, in the way that is done in the natural sciences?

Phil 3730 Philosophy of Religion

Class Number 54100 Section MW11 Mon, Wed 11:00am – 12:15pm

Instructor: Samir Chopra

Email: schopra@brooklyn.cuny.edu

The philosophy of religion attempts to query the foundations of religion and religious thought. Its central questions are amongst the most enduring in the world of philosophy; they may be engaged by both theists and atheists, and invariably involve the major branches of philosophical inquiry such as epistemology, logic, metaphysics, and ethics.

Amongst the most important of the questions raised in the philosophy of religion are: What is the nature of religious belief? What is the relationship between faith and reason? Does God exist? If so, what is (its/his/her) nature? What are the arguments against the existence of God? Does morality require religious belief? What is evil, and what problems does it create for arguments for the existence of God? What is the nature of religious experience? Is there a difference between religious belief and religious feeling? What distinguishes religious language from other kinds of pronouncements? What is the relationship between religion and science?

In this class, we will examine these in the context of several philosophical and religious traditions.

Phil 3731 Philosophy of Sport**Class Number 54102 Section MW12 Mon, Wed 12:50 – 2:05pm****Instructor: Samir Chopra****Email: schopra@brooklyn.cuny.edu**

Sport is a popular human pastime; most people, at some point or the other in their lives, will play or “follow” a sport. It is also big business, and for the sports “fanatic” it can be an all-consuming passion. Sports can also be the target of withering critique, as when social critics find something amiss in the idea of athletes making millions of dollars while social workers live in semi-poverty.

In this class we will engage in a serious philosophical scrutiny of sport. We will ask foundational questions such as: What is a game? What is play? What is sport? We will also subject questions that invariably come up in discussions of sports to a philosophical examination. These questions can be ethical (sportsmanship, fair play, the use of performance enhancing drugs, violence), aesthetic (the appreciation of movement, human bodies, and sporting practices) or political (racial divides, gender discrimination, nationalism).

For more information, contact Professor Samir Chopra at schopra@brooklyn.cuny.edu.

Phil 3740 Philosophy of Law**Class Number 54103 Section TR3 Tues, Thurs 3:40 – 4:55pm****Instructor: Anna Gotlib****Email: agotlib@brooklyn.cuny.edu**

This course explores the relationship between law and philosophy, including the moral foundations of legal principles, and the conflicts between those principles and concerns about individual and social justice. We will ask what it means to engage in legal reasoning, as well as consider theories and methodologies such as natural law, legal positivism and realism, feminist jurisprudence, and critical legal theory. We will then critique and analyze these theories and practices from the perspectives of moral and political philosophy. Specifically, we will focus on topics such as equality and discrimination; the nature and sources of rights, including those of privacy, property, and speech; the relationship between personal liberty and social (and governmental) control; the justifications for punishment (including the death penalty); the relationship between theories of justice and the legal process; and international law. Finally, we will examine some emerging issues at the intersection of law, technology, and justice, including questions of moral and legal culpability, intent, and free will that arise out of recent findings of neuroscience. The students will be expected to engage with texts in legal, moral, and political philosophy, as well as to read and interpret judicial decisions and other legal commentary. The class is conducted as a seminar-style discussion with a strong emphasis on student participation. Assignments will consist of presentations, argumentative papers, and a final exam. If you have any questions or concerns about this course, please email me at: agotlib@brooklyn.cuny.edu.

Phil 3920 Internship in Philosophy 1
Class Number 46574 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 2
Class Number 46575 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:

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ART AND PHILOSOPHY:

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

Phil 4105 Seminar in the Problems of Philosophy
Class Number 54107 Section TR2 Tues, Thurs 2:15 – 3:30pm
Instructor: Anna Gotlib
Email: agotlib@brooklyn.cuny.edu

Neuroethics is an area of inquiry, located broadly within medical ethics, that addresses ethical dilemmas at the intersection of personal identity, free will and moral responsibility, public policy and law, and the rapidly developing field of neuroscience. Over the last few decades, neuroscientific research into the nature and functions of the brain and the nervous system has resulted in revolutionary, and sometimes troubling, challenges to some traditional conceptions of who we are, how we reason, how we make decisions and value judgments, how and why we remember (and forget), and so on. This seminar provides an opportunity for students to both become acquainted with neuroethics as an emerging interdisciplinary field, as well as to explore in detail some of the most serious and consequential questions raised within neuroethics, such as the nature of personal identity, the implications of cognitive enhancement strategies (e.g., improving or altering memory and personality), the moral status of "brain reading" (to detect lying or to identify individual "deviant" or "bad" personalities), and the impact of neuroscience on questions of social justice. The class is conducted as a seminar-style discussion with a strong emphasis on student participation. Assignments will consist of presentations, short argumentative papers, and a longer seminar paper. If you have any questions or concerns about this course, please email me at: agotlib@brooklyn.cuny.edu.