Spring Quarter, 2013 Course Descriptions

PHIL 303 Modern Philosophy 10:55-12:20 MWF Carl

This course studies some of the major figures in 17th and 18th century European philosophy: Rene Descartes (1596-1650), John Locke (1632-1704), David Hume (1711-1776), and Immanuel Kant (1724-1804). We will begin by looking at the scientific background to modern philosophy and reflecting on the profound philosophical implications of the transition from Aristotelian to modern science. The course emphasizes epistemology and metaphysics, and includes also significant treatment of the enduring legacy of modern political philosophy, i.e., social contract theory. Course requirements include two in class essay exams, two 6-8 page papers, formal and informal seminar presentations.

PHIL 333 Philosophy of Science 9:20-10:45 MWF Deltete

This course is an introduction (and a fairly conventional one) to the philosophy of science. Generally speaking, the philosophy of science is philosophical reflection on the nature, methods, and goals of science. Accordingly, the course will focus on various answers that have been given to three related questions: (1) What is science? (2) How does it work? and (3) Why does it work so well in helping us to understand the world? All of the questions are problematic, and the answers to them controversial; indeed, some authors have even denied that science does give us any special understanding of the world. The answers we will explore are confined to the *natural* sciences (astronomy, physics, chemistry, biology, etc.), and mostly ignore the social or human sciences (psychology, political science, sociology, etc), so a more accurate title for the course would be "Introduction to the Philosophy of the Natural Sciences". We will examine different theories of science, e.g., inductivism, Karl Popper's falsificationism, and Imre Lakatos's research programs. Each of our authors also has a proposal for how best to understand the nature of science and the way it works at its best, so we will want to look at these proposals to see whether any of them constitutes an advance over other alternatives the authors present and then modify or reject. Along the way, we will discuss a variety of standard topics and issues in the philosophy of science: laws and theories, including the virtues of good theories; observation, evidence, and confirmation; explanation and causality; underdetermination; coherence and truth; realism, anti-realism, and instrumentalism; subjectivity and objectivity; relativism and progress. Our overall objective will be to try to formulate defensible, reasonably coherent answers to the three focal questions. This is not an easy task, as I think you will see.

TEXTS:

Alan Chalmers, What is this thing called science, 3rd ed. (Hackett: Indianapolis, ID, 1999).

Peter Godfrey-Smith, *Theory and Reality:an introduction to the philosophy of science* (U. of Chicago Press: Chicago, IL, 2003).

Peter Kosso, Reading the Book of Nature: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Science (Cambridge U. Press: New York, NY, 1992).

PHIL 374 Feminist Moral Theory 3:40-5:45 MW Paulette Kidder

What difference would it make if ethical theories were written by and about women? This question will guide our reading in the course. We will begin with excerpts from Nancy Tuana's *The Less Moral Sex*, a book that catalogues and analyzes the history of predominant Western views of women and the moral life. We will then explore the history of feminist critiques of traditional moral theories, including Christine de Pizan's 15th-century critique of the exclusion of women as political and moral subjects in *The Book of the City of Ladies*, as well as excerpts from more modern and contemporary ethical critiques such as those of Mary Wollstonecraft, J.S. Mill, Simone de Beauvoir, Mary Daly, Susan Okin, and Carol Gilligan.

Beyond considering these critiques of traditional ethics, we will examine works by three contemporary feminist moral theorists working in a variety of traditions: Martha Nussbaum (Liberal Feminism), Eva Kittay(Ethics of Care), and Judith Butler (Postmodern Feminism). Finally, we will draw on the essays in a collection of works on global feminist bioethics, in order to see how feminist moral theories are deepened by global perspectives on reproductive ethics.

PHIL 463 Problems in Contemporary Phenomenology: Problems of Consciousness in Phenomenology 10:15-12:20 T, Th Hung

This course will be focused on two problems about consciousness where the contribution of phenomenology is especially prominent— (1) The relation between self-consciousness and intentionality: it seems that intentionality and self-consciousness are both essential features of consciousness, but what is their relation? Is self-consciousness just an intentionality that is directed "inwards"? Is one of them more fundamental than the other? (2) The role of body in self-consciousness: what role, if any, does the body play in self-consciousness? And what does this tell us about the nature of self-consciousness? The main readings are from Jean-Paul Sartre and Maurice Merleau-Ponty, with supplementary readings from Edmund Husserl and Michel Henry, among others.

PHIL 485 Major Figures: John Rawls 3:45-5:50 T, Th
Dan Dombrowski

Course Description: John Rawls, who died at the end of 2002, was clearly the most influential political philosopher of the twentieth century. In this course we will examine extensive selections from his three most important books: <u>A Theory of Justice</u> (1971), <u>Political Liberalism</u>

(1993), and <u>The Law of Peoples</u> (1999). No prior background in Rawls is required of students, only a desire to consider the philosophical problems associated with the following questions: How can free individuals who differ (sometimes uncompromisingly) in the comprehensive doctrines that they affirm live together in a just society? What decision-making procedure, if any, can get us closest to understanding what a just society would be like, both nationally and internationally? Can human beings shed themselves of their biases in order to deal with the concept of justice in an objective way? What are the grounds for hope, if any, that twenty-first century societies can gradually approximate justice? The goal is to have the technical vocabulary of Rawls' political philosophy illuminate responses to these questions.

PHIL 490 Senior Synthesis 3:45-5:50 T, Th

This is a course devoted to the problem of the imagination. We begin with an analysis of recent works by Jean-Luc Nancy (The Muses) and John Sallis (sections from both Force of Imagination and Logic of Imagination). The second part of the course situates the problem of the imagination is an American context, focusing on Melville's Moby Dick and the poet Charles Olson's critical engagement with this work. This course should be of interest to those interested in the intersections of philosophy and literature.