

Philosophy Department

Graduate Courses Fall 2010

G83.1000

Proseminar

Paul Boghossian/David Velleman

Tuesday 12:30-3:30

For first year Philosophy PhD students only.

G83.1005/G84.1005

Advanced Introduction to Bioethics

Greg Bognar

Thursday 6:45-8:45

This course explores some of the most important issues of bioethics with a special emphasis on their relation to broader philosophical concepts and problems. Topics include autonomy, consent, and personal identity; research and the ethics of risk; the permissibility of ending life and abortion; reproductive choices, the non-identity problem, and genetic interventions; quality of life and disability; the allocation of life-saving resources, and the social consequences of emerging technologies and population policy.

G83.1100

Advanced Introduction to Metaphysics

Peter Unger

Thursday 1-3

Being an Introduction to Metaphysics, this course presupposes no previous familiarity with the subject, although many students will be familiar with some discussions of some of the topics to be covered, which include the relationship between the mental and the physical, the nature and (at least alleged) occurrence of real choice (or "free will"), the conditions for a person to survive, from earlier times to later times, and questions regarding the nature of time, including ways in which time may be similar to, and yet also perhaps very different from space.

It will be ensured that this course is indeed an Introduction to this huge area of philosophy by that fact that the students will do all the reading required of the undergraduates taking Professor Unger's undergraduate course in Metaphysics, which he will also be offering during this same Fall Semester.

It will be ensured that this course will include Advanced material by the fact that, in addition to reading everything that the undergraduates do, the students in this graduate course will read a lot more as well, which additional material will go beyond what's brought up in the undergraduates' assigned reading. Some of this additional reading will concern, primarily, further discussion of the topics already mentioned, and the rest will concern, primarily, other metaphysical topics.

Students enrolled in the course will complete two writing assignments. The first will be to write a very short paper, 5-9 pages, due shortly after the middle of the semester, on a topic already discussed in the course. The second will be determined by the outcome of the first assignment. In some cases, the student will be encouraged to expand and develop his or her short paper, turning it into a paper in the range of 15-20 pages. In other cases, the students will write a second very short paper, also of 5-9 pages, on a completely different metaphysical topic discussed in the course. In both sorts of cases, students' second papers will be due one week after the last class session of the course.

G83.1175

Life and Death: Reproductive Ethics

William Ruddick

Tuesday 7-9

After general questions about goods and evils of living and dying, the course will focus on early stages of human life and lives from conception to late childhood. Specific topics include: the special value(s) of embryos, fetuses, neonates, and children; motives for conception and genetic screening for sex and disabilities; objections to embryonic stem cell research, cloning, and parthenogenesis; prenatal monitoring, experimentation, and risk; priorities in "maternal-fetal conflicts;" abortion, infant euthanasia, and adoption; anomalous aging, illness, and life expectancy; disparities in child and maternal mortality statistics; environmental obligations to existing and possible children, present and future generations; state and religious control of conception, pregnancy, birth, and children's lives. Short weekly commentaries and two essays with revisions. Open only to Bioethics MA students, as well as to PhD, MA, and Senior Major or Honor students in Philosophy.

G83.2295

Mind and Language Seminar

Ted Sider/David Chalmers

Tuesday 4-7

Monday 6-7

This course will focus on the grounds of intentionality in both mind and language. The core questions are: in virtue of what do mental states have the content that they do, and in virtue of what do linguistic expressions and utterances have the content that they do. Some specific topics in the vicinity include causal, teleological, inferential, interpretive, social, and phenomenal theories of the grounds of mental and linguistic content; mentalistic and use-based theories of the grounds of linguistic content; theories of the grounds of reference; the model-theoretic argument and permutation problems; the kripke/wittgenstein problem; reference magnets and the role of naturalness; the role of normativity in grounding intentionality; the relative priority of mental and linguistic content; and others.

Each week we will focus on a different paper, with the author of that paper responding to questions. The schedule of visitors to the seminar will be announced shortly.

G83.2296
Philosophy of Language
Jim Pryor/Chris Barker
Monday 4-6

Description forthcoming.

G83.2320-001
History of Philosophy: Selected Topics
Matt Evans
Wednesday 5:30-7:30

Description forthcoming.

G83.2320-002
Kant's Critique of Judgment
Beatrice Longuenesse
Monday 11-1

Kant's *Critique of Judgment* is best known for its First Part, the Critique of Aesthetic Judgment, where Kant addresses questions such as: can we settle disagreements about aesthetic judgments? If yes, how? If no, why, and why then do we spend so much time discussing our aesthetic judgments and those of others?

The Second Part, the Critique of Teleological Judgment, is less known. Here Kant discusses the methods and concepts at work in our knowledge of living beings (the then nascent science of biology). He maintains that teleological concepts and judgments are a necessary component of such knowledge, although merely as heuristic tools without any objective import.

The connection between the two parts of the *Critique of Judgment* is far from obvious. Because of this, commentators typically focus exclusively on the Critique of Aesthetic Judgment and ignore the Critique of Teleological Judgment.

In this seminar we will read selections from both parts and try to figure out their connection. Still, our primary focus will be the First Part, the Critique of Aesthetic Judgment. We will address questions such as: how does Kant characterize, in the *Critique of Judgment*, the relation between sensibility and understanding, between feeling and reason? Do we still stand to learn from Kant's view of the connections between aesthetic experience and cognition? Between aesthetic experience and morality?

Previous work on at least some aspects of Kant's philosophy (his epistemology and philosophy of mind or his moral philosophy) is recommended but not required. The seminar will take the form of a close reading of selections from the *Critique of Judgment*, with attention to their historical context as well as to their connection to contemporary discussions.

G83.3004
Topics in Metaphysics
Karen Bennett
Wednesday 12-2

Description forthcoming.

G83.3005-001
Ethics: Selected Topics
Monday/Wednesday 7:30-9:30
Derek Parfit

Meets the first seven weeks of the semester.

Description forthcoming.

G83.3005-002
Ethics: Selected Topics
Wednesday 3:30-5:30
Samuel Scheffler

Temporality, Death, and Value

This seminar will address a variety of questions concerning death, value, temporality, and the desire for post-mortem survival.

Open to NYU Graduate Students. All other students must receive permission of the instructor.

G83.3012
Topics in Philosophy of Psychology: Philosophy of Creativity
Thursday 7:30-9:30
Elliot Paul

G83.3302
Colloquium in Legal, Political, and Social Philosophy
Thomas Nagel/Ronald Dworkin
Thursday 4:00-7:00
Wednesday 2:00-4:00

Enrollment in the Colloquium requires permission of the instructors. Those interested in registering should submit a request to Professor Dworkin, via his assistant Lavinia Barbu: barbul@juris.law.nyu.edu.

Each week on Thursday a legal theorist or moral or political philosopher presents a paper to the group, which consists of students, faculty from the Law School and other departments of NYU, and faculty from other universities in/or close to New York. The choice of subject is left to the paper's author, within the general boundaries of the Colloquium's subjects, and the discussions are therefore not connected by any structured theme for the term as a whole, though in past years certain central topics were canvassed in several weeks' discussion. The Colloquium aims, not to pursue any particular subject, but to explore new work in considerable depth and so allow students to develop their own skill in theoretical analysis. Each week's paper is distributed at least a week in advance, and participants are expected to have read it.

Students enrolled in the Colloquium meet separately with Professor Dworkin for an additional

two-hour seminar on Wednesday. One hour is devoted to a review of the preceding Thursday's Colloquium discussion, and one hour in preparation for the Colloquium of the following day. Students are asked to write short papers weekly, and each student is asked to make two or more oral presentations to the seminar during the term. Each student is asked to expand one of his /her weekly papers, or oral presentations, for a final term paper.

The list of colloquium speakers next year is: Samuel Scheffler, Niko Kolodny, Arthur Ripstein, Japa Pallikkathayil, Dieter Grimm, Ronald Dworkin, Noah Feldman, Seana Shiffrin, Kit Fine, Charles Taylor, Katrina Wyman, Frances Kamm, and Samuel Issacharoff

G83.3400

Thesis Preparation Seminar

Japa Pallikkathayil

Thursday 11-1

Open only to Philosophy PhD students.

G84.1008

Topics in Bioethics: Neuroethics

Matthew Liao

Monday 6:45-8:45

Neuroethics has two branches: the ethics of neuroscience and the neuroscience of ethics. The former is concerned with ethical issues raised by the development and use of neuroscientific technologies. The latter is concerned with how neuroscientific technologies might be able to shed light on how we make moral judgments. In this course we will examine both branches of neuroethics. Topics include pharmacological and genetic technologies for the enhancement of human traits; "mind-reading" technologies; borderline consciousness; free will and addiction; and neuroscientific and evolutionary models of morality and decision-making.