

Fall 2014 Graduate Philosophy Department Courses

PHIL-GA 1000; Pro-seminar; Thursday 12-3; Hartry Field and Cian Dorr

This course is for first year PhD students in the Philosophy Department only.

PHIL-GA 1104; Advanced Introduction to Philosophy of Science; Friday 11-1; Brad Weslake

This course is a Small Discussion Seminar. Attendance is limited to NYU Philosophy Ph.D. and M.A. students only, except by permission of the instructor.

The course will cover three central topics in general philosophy of science: explanation, laws and causation. Topics may include: causal and non-causal theories of explanation; whether there are non-causal explanations of particular facts; the relationship between fundamental and non-fundamental explanations; theories of explanatory depth; whether fundamental laws have universal scope; Humean and non-Humean theories of laws; regularity and counterfactual theories of causation; causal models and their limitations; and causal exclusion principles.

PHIL-GA 1210; 20th Century Continental Philosophy; Wednesday 12-2; John Richardson

The course will examine Husserl's and Heidegger's phenomenological methods with particular focus on their treatments of time. We will work particularly on Husserl's *On the Phenomenology of the Consciousness of Internal Time* (1893-1917), and on the second Division of Heidegger's *Being and Time*. We'll supplement these with some related writings by Husserl and Heidegger, and will also take briefer looks at the treatments of time-awareness by Brentano, Bergson, Proust, and Sartre.

PHIL-UA 2285; Ethics: Selected Topics; Tuesday 5-7; Matthew Silverstein

ETHICS AND PRACTICAL REASONING

A seminar at the intersection of metaethics and the philosophy of action. How are ethical thinking and practical reasoning related? Is practical reasoning always carried out under the

guise of the good (or the guise of the normative, more broadly)? What makes practical reasoning practical? What is the output or conclusion of practical reasoning? What is the relation between practical reasoning and reasons for action (or between reasons and reasoning more generally)? Can we come to understand the nature of practical reasoning through the philosophy of action and then use the resulting understanding to ground an account of normative reasons for action?

PHIL-UA 2320-001; History of Philosophy; Thursday 7-9; Kristin Primus

This course is a Small Discussion Seminar. Attendance is limited to NYU Philosophy Ph.D. and M.A. students only, except by permission of the instructor.

Spinoza and Leibniz

This course will focus on some major issues and debates in 17th and early-18th century metaphysics, philosophical theology, and natural philosophy. Works by Spinoza and Leibniz will be studied most carefully, but in order to properly understand the arguments presented in those texts, we will also read selections from works by Hobbes, Descartes, Malebranche, Locke, and Newton.

PHIL-UA 2320-002; History of Philosophy; Monday 11-1; Jessica Moss

Advanced Introduction to Aristotle's Ethics

We will explore major topics in Aristotle's Ethics, sometimes with an eye to connections with contemporary virtue ethics and philosophy of action. Topics to be covered may include: character, virtue, practical wisdom, free will, parallels between practical and theoretical reason, weakness of will, egoism, friendship, pleasure, the relation between contemplation and action in the good life, and the metaphysical and psychological foundations of Aristotle's ethical theory. No previous study of Aristotle, or ethics, is required.

PHIL-UA 3001; Topics in Philosophical Logic; Tuesday 3-5; Hartry Field and Graham Priest

"Conditionals"

We'll be considering various accounts of how conditional constructions ('if ... then ...') are to be understood, and to what extent a single account can accommodate all uses of 'if ... then ...' (and if not, how many distinct conditionals are needed). Among the topics: the distinction between

indicative and subjunctive conditionals; conditionals as operators vs. as restrictors; probabilistic treatments of conditionals; various logics of conditionals; and perhaps, special problems for conditionals in non-classical logics of truth and vagueness.

PHIL-GA 3004; Topics in Metaphysics; Tuesday 11-1; Peter Unger

Though there will be many shorter selections read and discussed, as well, this course will be primarily concerned with what's presented in Professor Unger's brand new (2014) book, *Empty Ideas: A Critique of Analytic Philosophy*. This book is an expose of how terribly little has been accomplished in, or, really, even attempted in, the core of academic philosophy – in metaphysics, and in the most metaphysical parts of, or aspects of, epistemology, philosophy of language and philosophy of mind. For philosophical sophisticates, this will seem shocking: Most academic philosophers are under the impression that, with the work of such brilliant thinkers as David Lewis, Saul Kripke, Hilary Putnam, Kit Fine and Timothy Williamson, mainstream philosophy has made some real contributions to our understanding of how things are, in certain quite deep and general respects, with concrete reality - with the likes of water and gold, and tables and chairs, and sentient beings, too. But, as *Empty Ideas* explains, that's all just an illusion, pretty easily recognized as such, when, as the book tries to make happen, philosophical sophisticates are awakened from their dogmatic slumbers. As Professor Unger greatly hopes, you will greatly enjoy being awakened from any and all of your own dogmatic slumbers, whatever yours may be.

PHIL-GA 3009; Explanation in History, Art, and Science; Tuesday 1-3; Michael Strevens/Robert Hopkins

How does explanation or understanding in the social sciences, humanities (our central example will be history), and the arts differ from explanation in the natural sciences? The view that there is a deep divide between the two has been neologised in a series of famous terminological oppositions: the *Naturwissenschaften* versus *Geisteswissenschaften*, *erklären* versus *verstehen*, the nomothetic versus the idiographic, STEM versus the humanities. In this seminar we investigate the divide, using theories of explanation in natural science as a foil to think in particular about explanation in history and aesthetics.

Topics may include: the idea of understanding something in all its individuality, rather than by subsuming it under generalizations; narrative explanation; the availability and theoretical utility (or otherwise) of general principles of taste, or laws of history; the role of reason in critical discussion; the relative importance of experience, imagination and feeling in devising and assessing historical and artistic explanations; and the role (or otherwise) of concepts in aesthetic engagement.

PHIL-GA 3010; Topics in Philosophy of Mind; Wednesday 7-9; Ned Block/ Eric Mandelbaum

Philosophy of Perception

<http://www.nyu.edu/gsas/dept/philo/courses/perception2014/>

This course will focus on the question of whether there is a joint in nature between perception and cognition. Topics covered will include modularity of mind; top-down vs bottom up effects; seeing-as; whether perception comprises just colors, shapes and textures or also includes "high" level properties such as causation, agency and emotion; face perception as a test case; the perception of "gist"; whether the "core cognition" described by cognitive-developmental psychologists is intermediate between perception and cognition; massive modularity and the modularity of cognition; whether thinking is believing; the web of belief and additional topics in the philosophy of perception.

PHIL-GA 3010-002; Topics in Philosophy of Mind; Wednesday 4-6; Beatrice Longuenesse

Freud on the Mind.

We will read selections from some of Freud's fundamental texts in metapsychology, in connection with recent developments in philosophy of mind and moral psychology. Questions discussed might include:

- Freud's distinction between conscious, preconscious and unconscious representations, compared with contemporary concepts of consciousness and with discussions of the "transparency" of the mind.
- Freud's structural view of the mind (ego, id, superego) in light of contemporary discussions of the unity of consciousness, of the distinction between "system 1" and "system 2," and of the relation between emotions and reason in our mental life.
- Freud's concept of the respective roles of biological and social determinations of our mental life.
- Freud's "superego" and its relation to contemporary discussions of the origins of normativity and the foundations of morality.

In addition to Freud's fundamental texts, readings will include selections from recent and contemporary authors on the relevant topics, such as (non-exclusively) Block, Nagel, Kahneman, Kandel, Scheffler, Moran, or Velleman.

**PHIL-GA 3302; Colloquium in Law, Philosophy, and Social Philosophy;
Wednesday 2-4; Thursday 4-7; Samuel Scheffler and Liam Murphy**

Enrollment in the Colloquium requires permission of the instructors. Those interested in registering should submit a request to Professor Murphy, via his assistant Lavinia Barbu (barbul@exchange.law.nyu.edu) by August 1st.

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, the Philosophy Department, and other departments of NYU, as well as 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 Murphy 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: Jeremy Waldron, Kristi Olson, Joseph Raz, Moshe Halbertal, Anthony Appiah, Mattias Kumm, Seana Shiffrin, Scott Hershovitz, Barbara Herman, Lea Ypi, Christine Korsgaard, Thomas Scanlon, Julia Nefsky.

PHIL-GA 3400; Thesis Preparation Seminar; Thursday 1-3; David Chalmers

This course is only open to PhD students in the Philosophy Department.

CROSS-LISTED COURSES

**BIOE-GA 1008/PHIL-GA 1008; Topics in Bioethics: Neuroethics; Monday
6:45-8:45; S. Matthew Liao**

Neuroethics has two branches: the neuroscience of ethics and the ethics of neuroscience. The former is concerned with how neuroscientific technologies might be able to shed light on how we make moral decisions, as well as on other philosophical issues. The latter is concerned with ethical issues raised by the development and use of neuroscientific technologies. Topics include whether neuroscience undermines deontological theories; whether our moral reasoning is inherently biased; whether there is a universal moral grammar; the extended mind hypothesis; the ethics of erasing memories; the ethics of mood and cognitive enhancements; “mind-reading” technologies; borderline consciousness; and free will and addiction.

PHIL-GA 1002; Topics in Ethics and Political Philosophy: Sincerity and Authenticity in European Thought; Thursday 2-4; Tamsin Shaw

The course will examine the emergence, in European thought, of the related ideals of sincerity and authenticity. We will investigate the ways in which they have shaped moral and political thought in Europe, particular through their roles in debates about identity, nationalism and multiculturalism. We will do so mainly through an examination of primary texts, ranging from philosophical and political texts to novels and poetry. Alongside these we will also read some of the contemporary literature on the significance of authenticity as an ideal.