

Fall 2016 Graduate Philosophy Department Courses

PHIL-GA 1000; Pro-seminar; Wednesday 4-7:30; Cian Dorr/Jim Pryor

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

PHIL-GA 1101; Advanced Intro to Epistemology; Monday 11-1; Richard Foley

The seminar will focus on a set of interrelated questions, including: *What are the best ways to understand knowledge, epistemically rational beliefs, and the relationship between them? *What's the relationship, if any, between epistemic rationality and various ethical concepts (blame, regret, etc.), and more generally, between epistemic rationality and practical rationality? *In forming and regulating opinions, what's the relevance of what other people believe? *In forming and regulating opinions, what's the relevance of empirical evidence about characteristic intellectual failings and limitations? Some historical figures will be discussed, but the bulk of the course will focus on works by contemporary philosophers, including: Laurence Bonjour, David Christensen, Miranda Fricker, Jane Friedman, Richard Fumerton, Edmund Gettier, Alvin Goldman, Gilbert Harman, Peter Klein, Tom Kelly, Hilary Kornblith, Jennifer Nagel, Jim Pryor, W.V.O Quine, Susanna Rinard, Ernest Sosa, Sharon Street, and Timothy Williamson. Students will write two medium-length papers (7--15 pages) during the term. Since the seminar will emphasize group discussion, it's important for everyone to have read and thought about the readings before seminar meetings. I will usually initiate discussion of a reading by asking some members of the seminar to give a brief summary of it and raise some questions about it.

PHIL-GA 1104; Advanced Introduction to The Philosophy of Science; Tuesday 12-2; Michael Strevens

Confirmation Theory and the Scientific Method What makes science different from, and more successful at producing knowledge than, other forms of inquiry—such as philosophy? The traditional answer: science has a special “method”. We will look at some theories about the nature of this method, theories that turn on variously logical, semantic, and sociological aspects of the epistemological institution that is modern science (reading some of the positivists, Popper, Kuhn, some sociology of science). We then pick up the logical strand and go deeper, examining several theories of the way that evidence bears on scientific hypotheses—several “theories of confirmation”—culminating in several classes on the Bayesian theory of

confirmation (reading Hempel, Glymour, and my own notes on Bayesianism). Throughout we continue to emphasize the question of science's unprecedented success. At the end of the semester we will spend a class or two on my own answer to that question.

PHIL-GA 1211; 20th Century Contemporary Philosophy; Tuesday 6-8pm; David Chalmers and Matthew Liao

Philosophy of Technology

We will examine a number of issues in the philosophy of information technology. These include issues in many areas of philosophy (metaphysics, epistemology, ethics, the philosophy of mind, and more) arising from many different technologies (artificial intelligence, cognitive extension and enhancement, the Internet, virtual reality, and more) as well as from computation and information in general.

PHIL-GA 2280; Political Philosophy; Friday 11-1; Daniel Viehoff

Authority and Legitimacy

This seminar focuses on the means by which political ends are pursued, rather than these ends themselves. Questions we will consider include: What is political (and, more generally, practical) authority? How is political authority related to coercion, and how important is each for our understanding and assessment of political institutions? Why is authority morally problematic, and how is it to be justified? We will also consider some more applied issues, such as civil disobedience, the duties of officials (soldiers, prison wardens) ordered to inflict harm on others, and the ethics of privatizing state power. Materials to be discussed include pieces by Kimberley Brownlee, Thomas Christiano, David Enoch, David Estlund, Philip Pettit, Joseph Raz, Arthur Ripstein, John Simmons, Anna Stilz, and others.

PHIL-GA 2285; Ethics: Selected Topics; Tuesday 2-4; Samuel Scheffler

The distinction between utilitarian and non-utilitarian approaches has marked a central dividing line in modern moral philosophy. This seminar will be devoted to reading and discussion of recent work in each of these two philosophical traditions. In the first half of the seminar, we will investigate what might be called "the axiological turn" in contemporary utilitarian thinking, especially as manifested in work in population ethics. We will consider how this development should affect our understanding of utilitarianism and of the distinction between utilitarian and non-utilitarian theories. In the second half of the seminar we will examine some recent attempts by non-utilitarian philosophers to develop and defend a "relational" conception of morality as an

alternative to utilitarianism and other forms of consequentialism. In this part of the seminar we will read work by Darwall, Nagel, Scanlon, Wallace, and perhaps others.

PHIL-GA 2320-001; History of Philosophy; Monday 4-6; Anja Jauernig and Beatrice Longuenesse

Kant's Critique of Judgment

Immanuel Kant wrote three Critiques. In this course, we will be reading the Critique of Judgment, which is the final installment in the series. The 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 do we nevertheless keep 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 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. Previous work on at least some aspects of Kant's philosophy (his epistemology and philosophy of mind or his moral philosophy) is welcome 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.

Primary Readings: Immanuel Kant, Critique of the Power of Judgment, translated by Paul Guyer and Eric Matthews, The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Immanuel Kant, Cambridge University Press, 2001 (revised ed.).

Secondary Readings: TBA.

PHIL-GA 2320-002; History of Philosophy; Tuesday 4-6; Marko Malink

Aristotle's Metaphysics Zeta

Book Zeta of Aristotle's Metaphysics, sometimes characterized as "the Mount Everest of ancient philosophy", is devoted to the question, What is substance (ousia)? Aristotle explores several potential answers to this question, specifying substance as subject, essence, universal, or genus. In addition, he provides a detailed exposition of hylomorphism, the view that a large

number of objects are compounds of matter and form. Further questions discussed in Zeta include: Do non-substantial beings have an essence or definition? Should the parts of a thing be mentioned in the definition of that thing? What role do essences play in scientific explanations? The seminar will be a close reading of Zeta. Knowledge of Greek not required.

PHIL-GA 3001; Topics in Philosophical Logic; Thursday 1-3; Hartry Field

The course will be on different approaches to formalizing the notion of truth, within classical logic, in a way that avoids paradox with as little sacrifice as possible in expressive and deductive strength and in intuitiveness. As we'll see, there are many significantly different alternative ways one might do this, with no choice obviously the best (indeed with none obviously satisfactory). The course will also consider applications, in particular to attempts to use the Gödel incompleteness theorems to show that we have a notion of informal proof more extensive than any formal notion (a claim which has in turn occasionally inspired radically anti-mechanistic claims about the mind). While I don't intend to focus on issues about truth theories that have arisen within the philosophy of language, they will get some mention.

(I intend to do a course in the spring on approaches to the paradoxes in non-classical logic, but the courses will be independent and have little overlap except in goals.)

PHIL-GA 3005; Topics in Ethics; Wednesday 11:30-1:30; Sharon Street

Description forthcoming.

PHIL-GA 3010; Topics in the Philosophy of Mind; Thursday 7-9; Ned Block

The Border between Cognition and Perception

This course will consider whether there is a joint in nature between cognition and perception. Issues discussed will include what perception is, what cognition is and what a joint in nature is. The relation between this question and issues of "modularity" and "cognitive penetration" will be considered. The question will be discussed of whether amodal non-perceptual capacities (like mental maps) challenge the joint. Problems for a joint stemming from feature-based attention, mental imagery and cognitive development (including "core cognition") will be discussed. Readings from philosophy, psychology and neuroscience.

PHIL-GA 3400; Thesis Preparation Seminar; Wednesday 4-6; Stephen Schiffer

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

Cross-listed Courses:

PHIL-GA 3302 Colloquium in Legal, Political and Social Philosophy and Seminar

The Colloquium in Legal, Political, and Social Philosophy was founded by Ronald Dworkin and Thomas Nagel in 1987. It is the original model for all of NYU Law's colloquia. The Colloquium is now convened by Liam Murphy, Samuel Scheffler, and Jeremy Waldron, two of whom will host in any given year.

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. 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 posted at least a week in advance, and participants are expected to have read it.

The public sessions of the colloquium take place on Thursdays, from 4 to 7 pm, in the Lester Pollack Colloquium Room on the 9th Floor of Furman Hall, 245 Sullivan St (view campus map). Visitors' papers will be posted in advance of each meeting on this page.

Students applying for credit:

Admission to the seminar is only by professor's permission. Students wishing to take the colloquium for credit should send their applications (an e-mail letter with their background and interest in the colloquium) to Professor Waldron's assistant, Lavinia Barbu, barbul@exchange.law.nyu.edu, between June 1 and July 31. Before you send your application, please check with Academic Services to see if you are eligible to apply.

Students enrolled in the Colloquium meet separately with Professor Waldron 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.

Fall 2016

Professors Jeremy Waldron and Liam Murphy

Schedule of Speakers

September 8

Liam Murphy, NYU

September 15

Erin Kelly, Tufts University

September 22

Daryl Levinson, NYU

September 29

Michael Moore, University of Illinois

October 6

Kevin Davis, NYU

October 13

Derrick Darby, University of Michigan

October 20

Frederick Neuhausser, Columbia University

October 27

Jeremy Waldron, NYU

November 3

Anna Stiliz, Princeton University

November 10

Larissa Katz, University of Toronto

November 17

Victor Tadros, University of Warwick

December 1

Patricia Williams, Columbia University

December 8

Marcia Baron, Indiana University