# Spring 2013 Undergraduate Philosophy Department Courses

### PHIL-UA 1; Central Problems in Philosophy; T/TH 3:30-4:45; Helen Yetter-Chappell

In this course we'll look at some of the most gripping problems from across philosophy. Questions we'll ask include:

- Do the ends justify the means? Is it okay to kill one person to save five?
- How do we know we're not living in the Matrix? And what follows if we are?
- What does it take to be conscious? Could a robot be conscious?
- What makes you the same person today as the person in that middle school yearbook?

In exploring these philosophical questions, we'll hone our skills for clear and rigorous philosophical thinking and writing.

You must sign up for one of the following recitation times:

Zee Perry: Mondays 12:30-1:45 and 2:00-3:15
Martin Glazier: Thursdays 4:55 - 6: 10 and 6:20 - 7:35.

### PHIL-UA 4; Life and Death; T/TH 12:30-1:45; Instructor TBA

An introduction to philosophy through the study of issues bearing on life and death. Topics may include the definition and value of life; grounds for creating, preserving, and taking life; personal identity; ideas of death and immortality; abortion and euthanasia.

You must sign up for one of the following recitation times:

Daniel Waxman: Thursdays 3:30-4:45 and 4:55-6:10.
Camil Golub: Fridays 11:00-12:15 and 2:00-3:15.

## PHIL-UA 5; Minds and Machines; M/W 2-3:15; Daniel Greco

In this course, we'll draw on readings from philosophy, computer science, and some science fiction, to explore some of foundational issues in the philosophy of mind and artificial intelligence. Topics we'll cover include the following. Could a suitably programmed computer be intelligent? In particular, is passing the Turing test sufficient to establish that a computer is intelligent? Does it make sense to talk of uploading one's consciousness to a computer as a method for increasing one's life span?  Can consciousness be explained in  physical terms?

You must sign up for one of the following recitation times:

Dan Fogal: Wednesday 3:30-4:45; Thursday 12:30-1:45


## PHIL-UA 21; History of Modern Philosophy; M/W 11-12:15; John Morrison

This course is an introduction to the some of the most influential European philosophers of the 17$^{th}$ and 18$^{th}$ centuries: Descartes, Elizabeth, Spinoza, Leibniz, Locke, Berkeley, Hume, Reid, and Kant. We will consider and critically examine the responses these thinkers gave to various questions in metaphysics and epistemology, including the following: What is the relationship between reality and our perception of reality? What is the nature of the mind and how is it related to the body? What is the nature of physical reality? Do we have free will? Which of our beliefs, if any, do we have good reason to maintain in the face of various skeptical challenges?

You must sign up for one of the following recitation times:

Ian Grubb: Monday 12:30-1:45; Thursday 11-12:15
Jared Warren: Fridays 12:30-1:45 and 2-3:15

*Prerequisite: one Introductory course.*


## PHIL-UA 40; Ethics; T/TH 2-3:15; Thomas Nagel

The course will cover central topics in ethical theory on the basis of readings from the seventeenth century to the present day, including Hobbes, Hume, Kant, Mill, Rawls, Singer, Thompson, and Wolf. Topics will include: the relation between morality and human motivation; the objectivity or subjectivity of moral judgments; the relation between interpersonal obligations and self-interest; the basis of individual rights; the relative importance of reason, emotion, and convention in morality.

You must sign up for one of the following recitation times:

Emilio Mora: Thursday 3:30-4:45 and Friday 11-12:15
Chelsea Rosenthal: Fridays 12:30-1:45 and 2:00-3:15

*Prerequisite: one Introductory course.*


## PHIL-UA 41; Nature of Values; M/W 6:20-7:35; Melis Erdur

This class is an intensive introduction to meta-ethics. Some of the questions we will be discussing are: "Can judgments about what is morally right and wrong be genuinely true or false? If they can, what exactly is it that makes them true or false?" "Are moral truths always objective or relative to individuals or cultures?" "Is the subject matter in morality fundamentally different from, say, the subject matter in science? In what respects?" "Is morality most like science, religion, or art?" The readings will largely be drawn from the works contemporary moral philosophers.

*Prerequisite: one Introductory course.*


## PHIL-UA 50; Medical Ethics; M/W 12:30-1:45; Collin O'Neil

This course will explore ethical issues arising in medicine. We will begin by contrasting two general approaches to ethics, consequentialism and deontology, and then turn to specific issues such as the nature of health and disease, the badness of death, informed consent, euthanasia, deciding for others, abortion, the allocation of life-saving resources, organ sales, physicians' involvement in lethal injection and torture, experimentation on animals, experimentation on human subjects, procreative responsibilities, and rights to health care.


## PHIL-UA 60; Aesthetics; T/TH 12:30-1:45; Robert Hopkins

This course discusses some of the philosophical issues thrown up by the arts, and our appreciation of them. What is art, and why is it important to us? What is representation in art? Does representation vary from one artform to another, so that, for instance, pictures and artworks involving words represent in very different ways? How does this affect the value of painting and literature? And what of photography? Is it an art at all, or just the mechanical recording of reality? What is it for art to express emotion? Experience seems crucial to art, but does it follow that if a perfect forgery is experienced in exactly the same way as the original, then, as works of art, the two are equally good? And what of our judgements about art? Are they all subjective—is beauty in the eye of the beholder? Can there be rational argument about artworks?

You must sign up for one of the following recitation times:

Rohan Prince: Monday 11-12:15 and Tuesday at 11-12:15

*Prerequisite: one Introductory course.*


## PHIL-UA 70-001; Logic; M/W; 12:30-1:45; Grace Helton

This course is an introduction to first-order logic (FOL). Topics include: syntax in FOL, truth-functional operators, quantifiers, logical equivalence and consequence, tautological equivalence and consequence, proof by cases, proof by contradiction, formal rules of proof in FOL, and translation between FOL and English.


## PHIL-UA 70-002; Logic; T/TH 3:30-4:45; Chris Prodoehl

An introduction to the basic techniques of sentential and predicate logic. Students learn how to put arguments from ordinary language into symbols, how to construct derivations within a formal system, and how to ascertain validity using truth tables or models.


## PHIL-UA 74; Modal Logic; T/TH 4:55-6:10; Kit Fine

The emphasis of this course will be on the possible worlds semantics for modal logic. Various systems for both sentential and quantificational languages will be presented and completeness for them will be proved. If there is time, attention will be given to other technical problems, such as decidability, incompleteness and definability; and I also hope to consider some of the applications of modal logic to issues within linguistics (Montague grammar, situation semantics) and computer science (program verification, logic of action).

The only required reading is my own manuscript (coauthored with S. K. Kuhn), although other reading may be recommended from time to time. Students will be expected to do exercises each week, with roughly half graded directly by the instructor. There will be a midterm and final exam. Grades will be determined more or less equally on the basis of the assignments and the exams.

You must sign up for one of the following recitation times:

Michael Schweiger: Mondays 12:30-1:45pm and 2:00-3:15pm

*Prerequisite: Logic, PHIL-UA 70*

## PHIL-UA 80; Philosophy of Mind; T/R 12:30-1:45; Helen Yetter-Chappell

This course explores the nature of consciousness and personal identity. The questions we'll address include:

- What does it take to be conscious (e.g. to feel pain or experience the taste of chocolate)?
- Could a robot be conscious?
- Could man who was blind from birth know what it's like to see?
- Might red things look green to me and visa-versa?
- How can rich technicolour experiences arise from the soggy grey matter of our brains?
- If you swapped my brain with yours, which one would be me?
- Do we have immaterial souls?
- What makes me today the same person I was yesterday?

You must sign up for one of the following recitation times:

Jeremy Dolan: Thursdays 3:30 - 4:45 and 6:20-7:35

*Prerequisite: one Introductory course*


## PHIL-UA 91; Philosophy of Biology; M/W 11-12:15; Laura Franklin-Hall

In this course we will consider questions at the intersection of biology and philosophy. In the first unit we will discuss a group of conceptual issues in evolutionary theory, such as whether natural selection acts on genes, on individuals, or on groups, to what extent biological traits should be considered adaptations, and to what extent societies can be considered organisms possessing complex cultural adaptations. We will conclude the section by analyzing claims by intelligent design advocates that there exist "irreducibly complex" biological structures that could not have resulted from the process of natural selection. In the second unit we will consider the nature of biological explanation. First we will think about what differentiates scientific explanations from mere descriptions. As it is commonly thought that explanations require laws, we will consider what scientific laws are and whether there are any biological laws in particular. Next we will look at a debate about the "reducibility" of genetic theory to molecular biology and chemistry. Are there any truly autonomous biological explanations or do they all reduce to lower level sciences?

*Prerequisite: one Introductory course*

## PHIL-UA 96; Philosophy of Religion; M/W 3:30-4:45; Daniel Greco

In this course, we'll discuss some of the following questions in the philosophy of religion. Is it possible that a wholly good God could allow evil to exist? Must morality be grounded in the commands of an omnipotent deity? Or might there be moral truths even if such a being doesn't exist? Does the presence of intelligent life in the universe, or the apparent "fine-tuning" of the constants in our best physical theories, provide reason to think that the universe was created by an intelligent designer? Can it be rational to maintain one's religious beliefs (or lack thereof) in the presence of equally well informed, intelligent people who disagree with you?

You must sign up for one of the following recitation times:

 Amanda Montgomery: Thursdays 9:30-10:45 and 11:00-12:15

*Prerequisite: one Introductory course*


## PHIL-UA 101; Topics in History of Philosophy; M/W 9:30-10:45; Jonathan Cottrell

**Berkeley's Idealism**

George Berkeley argued that only minds and their ideas exist; there is no such thing as matter, or material substance. Philosophers today often regard this form of "idealism" as a mere historical curiosity. In this class, we will treat Berkeley's idealism as an object of live philosophical interest. We will reconstruct and evaluate Berkeley's arguments; ask how these arguments might be buttressed, where we find them unconvincing; and ask whether we should accept any of Berkeley's surprising conclusions. In order to do so, we will have to investigate several central questions in metaphysics, philosophy of mind and philosophy of language: What is a physical object? What kinds of things can we perceive? How is the phenomenon of linguistic meaning to be explained? What kinds of things can be causes and effects? Is there a coherent distinction between the "primary" and "secondary qualities" of physical objects?

In addition to Berkeley's works, we will read works by some of the philosophers whose views he was reacting against—Descartes, Malebranche, and Locke—and works of twentieth and twenty first century philosophy that address the same issues as these early modern philosophers. If time allows, we will read some of Kant's arguments for "transcendental idealism," and ask whether this form of idealism improves upon Berkeley's.

*Prerequisite: History of Ancient Philosophy (PHIL-UA 20) or History of Modern Philosophy (PHIL-UA 21)*

## PHIL-UA 102; Topics in Ethics and Political Philosophy; T/TH 6:20-7:35; Melis Erdur

In this class we will examine the acts of offering and accepting apologies from a moral, as well as political, perspective.  We will address questions such as: 1) What distinguishes a genuine apology from a pseudo-apology?  2) What exactly does an apology restore between people?  How can it do it?  3) Are we (ever) morally obligated to forgive?  Are some acts "unforgivable"?  4) Can we apologize, or forgive, on behalf of others?  5) What is the moral and political significance of collective or official apologies?

*Prerequisite: Ethics (PHIL-UA 40), The Nature of Values (PHIL-UA 41), or Political Philosophy (PHIL-UA 45).*

## PHIL-UA 104-001; Topics in Mind & Language; M/W 9:30-10:45; Jesse Prinz

**Aesthetic Psychology**

Many core questions in the philosophy of art depend on questions about the mind: Is there such a thing as aesthetic experience?  How does art evoke emotions?  Do we use general principles in deciding whether a work is good?  Is taste universal?  What makes pictures look realistic?   Is art an evolved capacity?  This course takes up such questions, exploring ways in which the study of the mind can inform analytic aesthetics.  Philosophical readings will be complemented by readings from psychology, neuroscience, and anthropology.

*Prerequisite: Logic (PHIL-UA 70) and one of the following: Philosophy of Mind (PHIL-UA 80), Consciousness (PHIL-UA 81), or Philosophy of Language (PHIL-UA 85)*

## PHIL-UA 104-002; Topics in Mind & Language; T/TH 4:55-6:10; Robert Hopkins

**The Imagination**

What is the imagination, and in particular the sensory imagination, the faculty of mind we deploy in visualising a castle, or in imagining the taste of chocolate mixed with port? Sensory imagining provides a distinctive form of contact with the world. Traditionally philosophers have tried to understand it by assimilating it to one of two other forms of contact. One is ordinary perception, as when I see a castle or taste chocolaty port. The other is the contact pictures give us with things, as when I look at a picture of a castle. We will examine these dominant models of the imagination, in the light of criticisms of them offered by, amongst others, Ryle, Wittgenstein and Sartre. We will try to get clearer about the phenomena they take as basic: pictures and perception. We will consider the contemporary forms these

models take, including the influential idea that to imagine something is to imagine experiencing it. And we will do all this in an attempt to understand how the imagination is able to play its distinctive role in our mental lives. What, for instance, is its relation to dreaming, to feeling, and to memory?

*Prerequisite: Logic (PHIL-UA 70) and one of the following: Philosophy of Mind (PHIL-UA 80), Consciousness (PHIL-UA 81), or Philosophy of Language (PHIL-UA 85)*

## PHIL-UA 200; Junior Honors Seminar; TH 11:45-1:45; Peter Unger

A seminar taken in fall of senior year. Students begin developing their thesis projects by presentations in the seminar, which is led by a faculty member. Students also begin to meet individually with a separate faculty adviser. See the description of the honors program in the "Program" section.

*Prerequisite: open to junior majors with approval of the department; see requirements in the description of the departmental honors program.*