

Philosophy Department

Undergraduate Courses Fall 2010

Intensive Introductory Course

V83.0002

Great Works in Philosophy

TR 3:30-4:45

Colin Marshall

An introduction to philosophy through five classic texts, stretching from the ancient world to the early 20th century. We will read Lucretius' *De Rerum Naturae*, Aquinas' *Summa Theologica*, Descartes' *Discourse on Method*, Schopenhauer's *World as Will and Representation*, and Ayer's *Language Truth and Logic*. The course will have three aims:

- (1) to develop students' skills in philosophical analysis and writing,
 - (2) to provide a sense of the evolution of western philosophy over the past two millennia,
- and
- (3) to introduce several central philosophical issues (including the existence of God, the possibility of free will, our knowledge of the external world, and the nature of morality).

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

Olla Solomyak: M 2:00-3:15; T 11:00-12:15

V83.0010

Central Problems in Philosophy

TR 11-12:15

Karen Bennett

A general introduction to some of the main topics, texts, and methods of philosophy. Topics will include the existence of God, whether we have free will, what kind of thing a person is, the nature of morality, and how to think about evaluating our lives. Readings will be drawn both from the history of philosophy and from more contemporary philosophical literature.

Nick Riggle: W 12:30-1:45; W 2-3:15

Jared Warren: M 2-3:15; F 2-3:15

Katrina Przyjemski M 9:30-10:45; M 11-12:15

Group I: History of Philosophy

V83.0020

History of Ancient Philosophy

MW 11-12:15

Matt Evans

Western philosophy owes its birth to Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle. In their care many of the foundational questions in ethics, epistemology, metaphysics, and philosophy of mind were raised for the first time and developed in striking and sophisticated ways. We will try to determine which questions they asked, what their answers were, and whether we should accept their answers as correct even now.

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

Eli Alshanetsky: W 2-3:15; W 3:30-4:45

Shieva Kleinschmidt: M 9:30-10:45; W 12:30-1:45

Group II: Ethics, Value, and Society

V83.0043

Empirical Moral Psychology

MW 9:30-10:45

Regina Rini

This course surveys the rapidly growing literature on empirical investigation into how humans make moral judgments and decisions, and assesses the significance of this work to some of the traditional concerns of moral philosophy. Readings will be drawn from among social psychology, evolutionary biology, cognitive neuroscience, and the western ethical tradition. This course is intended to be interdisciplinary in nature; students will be expected to develop skills in philosophical analysis as well as critical reading of empirical work.

V83.0045

Political Philosophy

MW 9:30-10:45

Ralf Bader

This course will examine some of the key concepts of political philosophy, focusing in particular on the notions of political obligation, liberty, justice and equality. We will assess how these concepts are to be analysed, why they matter and what role they play in political philosophy.

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

Joe Harper: Th 12:30-1:45; Th 2-3:15

Daniela Dover: W 12:30-1:45; W 2-3:15

V83.0050
Medical Ethics
TR 9:30-10:45
Greg Bognar

This course provides an introduction to the central problems of bioethics. Many of these problems are the subject of deep controversies in public life. Our aim is to identify and analyze the main philosophical arguments and positions behind the views advanced in these controversies.

The course is divided into four sections. First, we discuss some topics in clinical ethics, including autonomy and informed consent, surrogate decision making, and research on humans and animals. The second section is on life and death decisions. We discuss the doctrine of the sanctity of life, the treatment of newborns with severe disabilities, abortion, euthanasia, and physician-assisted suicide. The third section focuses on emerging technologies, including prenatal testing for disabilities, genetic enhancement, and sex selection. Finally, we turn to distributive justice and the allocation of health care resources. We discuss inequalities in access to health care, the rationing of scarce health care resources, markets for organs, and ethical issues in public health.

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

Michael Schweiger M 9:30-10:45; 2-3:15
Dean Chapman M 11-12:15; 12:30-1:45

V83.0053
Ethics and the Environment
TR 2-3:15
Benjamin Sachs

When human activity leads to global warming and depletion of natural resources, who, if anyone, is obligated to fix the problem? We will systematically search for an answer to that question. We will investigate whether there are any national, individual, or corporate obligations with respect to the environment. Along the way we will try to figure out who these obligations would be owed to and what their content would be--that is, just how healthy of an environment are we obligated to strive for?

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

Jeff Sebo: F 11-12:15; F 12:30-1:45
Erica Schumener: M 4:55-6:10; F 2-3:15

Group III: Metaphysics, Epistemology, Mind, Language, and Logic

V83.0070-001
Logic
MW 3:30-4:45
Melis Erdur

V83.0070-002
Logic
TR 9:30-10:45
Colin Marshall

V83.0070-004
Logic
MW 9:30-10:45
Jon Simon

This course introduces the techniques, results, and philosophical import of 20th century formal logic. Principal concepts include those of sentence, set, interpretation, validity, consistency, consequence, tautology, derivation, and completeness. This course satisfies the logic requirement for NYU Philosophy majors.

V83.0078
Metaphysics
TR 4:55-6:10
Peter Unger

What is the ultimate nature of the universe, the nature of all concrete reality? Is it physical, or mental, or both, or neither? And, what is our nature: are we physical, or mental, or both, or neither? We'll be concerned to use our inquiry into these questions to help us with traditionally central philosophical problems, including the problem of free will, the problem of personal identity, and the mind-body problem. While much of the course will treat these topics, some will treat some other topics.

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

Martin Glazier: F 11-12:15; F 2-3:15

V83.0081
Consciousness
MW 3:30-4:45
Ned Block

The philosophy and science of consciousness. Topics covered may include: Whether there are different concepts of consciousness and what that would show about different kinds of consciousness; how consciousness could be based in the brain, and how we could find out what that brain basis is; the relation between consciousness and attention, cognitive accessibility, intentionality and agency; the function of consciousness; the unity of consciousness; whether the representational contents of perception include such properties as causation. The course may also cover some theories of consciousness such as mind/body dualism, behaviorism, functionalism, physicalism and theories of consciousness as representation. Among the topics discussed will be some famous thought experiments, such as whether there could be an inverted spectrum and whether Wittgenstein's views of the mind make room for an inverted spectrum; zombie thought experiments; Jackson's example of the scientist raised in a black and white environment who sees

red for the first time and learns something about color vision that she could not find out from textbooks

No prerequisites

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

Philippe Lusson Th 9:30-10:45; Th 11-12:15
Knut Skarsaune: T 9:30-10:45; T 12:30-1:45

V83.0091

Philosophy of Biology

TR 2-3:15

Laura Franklin-Hall

We'll consider a variety of topics at the intersection of biology and philosophy. Questions include: (1) How are living things different from non-living things? (What makes you a whole organism rather than simply a collection of cells? Is the entire planet a living thing? Could a computer program be alive?) (2) How is biology separate from, but connected to, other sciences? (Are there autonomous biological laws? Are there emergent biological properties? Can biology be "reduced to" chemistry or physics?) (3) How contingent is biological evolution? (Is evolution "progressive"? Should we count our lucky stars, or were humans pretty much inevitable?) (4) Can biological evolution explain human behavior? (Are we "programmed" by evolution to do certain things? How important is culture in explaining behavior, and can it too evolve?)

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

Yu Guo: F 11-12:15; F 12:30-1:45

V83.0101

Topics in History of Philosophy

TR 12:30-1:45

Ralf Bader

This course is a comprehensive examination of the moral philosophy of Immanuel Kant, focusing primarily on the *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals* and the *Critique of Practical Reason*. We will be looking at Kant's account of autonomy, free will, moral motivation, the categorical imperative, happiness and the highest good.

V83.0104

Topics in Mind and Language

TR 11-12:15

Will Starr

V83.0201-001

Honors Seminar

Wednesday 2-4
Laura Franklin-Hall

Tentative list of courses for Spring 2011:

- V83.0010. Central Problems in Philosophy (Pryor)
- V83.0021. History of Modern Philosophy (Paul)
- V83.0040. Ethics (Velleman)
- V83.0042. Applied Ethics (Pallikkathayil)
- V83.0050. Medical Ethics (Liao)
- V83.0055 Philosophical Perspectives on Feminism (Rini)
- V83.0070. Logic (TBD)
- V83.0072. Advanced Logic (Briggs)
- V83.0076. Belief, Truth, Knowledge (TBD)
- V83.0080. Philosophy of Mind (Nagel)
- V83.0085. Philosophy of Language (Sider)
- V83.0101. Topics in the History of Philosophy (Pallikkathayil)
- V83.0102. Topics in Ethics and Political Philosophy (Unger)
- V83.0103. Topics in Metaphysics and Epistemology (Fine)

Philosophy Department – New York University

5 Washington Place, New York, NY 10003-6688. (212) 998-8320. FAX: (212) 995-4179.

DIRECTOR OF UNDERGRADUATE STUDIES:

Professor John Richardson
Room 304, 5 Washington Place
Email: jr8@nyu.edu

ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF:

Faith Greulich: faith.greulich@nyu.edu; 998-7864
Debbie Bula: db7@nyu.edu; 998-8325
Anupum Mehrotra: aqm4735@nyu.edu; 998-9056
Keri Sender: ks121@nyu.edu; 998-8320

REQUIREMENTS FOR THE MAJOR:

A major in philosophy requires **ten** 4-point courses in the department, with numbers higher than V83.0009 (so that Introduction to Philosophy and Ethics & Society do not count). These ten courses must include (1) Logic, V83.0070; (2) History of Ancient Philosophy, V83.0020; (3) History of Modern Philosophy, V83.0021; (4) Ethics, V83.0040; or Nature of Values, V83.0041; or Political Philosophy, V83.0045; (5) Belief, Truth, and Knowledge, V83.0076; or Metaphysics, V83.0078; (6) Minds and Machines, V83.0015; or Philosophy of Mind, V83.0080; or Philosophy of Language, V83.0085; and (7) Topics in the History of Philosophy, V83.0101; or Topics in Ethics and Political Philosophy, V83.0102; or Topics in Metaphysics and Epistemology, V83.0103; or Topics in Language and Mind, V83.0104. Of the three honors courses, only the first two—the Junior Honors Proseminar and the Senior Honors Seminar—may be counted towards the ten courses required. No credit toward the major is awarded for a course with a grade lower than C.

Recommendations on course sequence:

Students considering a major in philosophy are encouraged to begin with one of the Intensive Introductory Courses, or with one of the following: History of Ancient Philosophy, V83.0020; History of Modern Philosophy, V83.0021; Ethics, V83.0040; or Belief, Truth, and Knowledge, V83.0076. Logic, V83.0070, should be taken as soon as possible. The Topics courses are the most advanced undergraduate courses, and presuppose coursework in their areas.

REQUIREMENTS FOR THE MINOR:

A minor in philosophy requires four 4-point courses, at least three beyond the Introductory Courses. One course must be History of Ancient Philosophy, V83.0020, or History of Modern Philosophy, V83.0021; one course each must come from Group 2 (Ethics, Value, and Society) and Group 3 (Metaphysics, Epistemology, Mind, Language, and Logic). (Consult the Bulletin or the Department's on-line course-list for the classification of courses in these Groups.) No credit toward the minor is awarded for a course with a grade lower than C.

JOINT MAJOR IN LANGUAGE AND MIND:

This major, intended as an introduction to cognitive science, is administered by the Departments of Linguistics, Philosophy, and Psychology. Eleven courses are required (four in linguistics, one in philosophy, five in psychology, and one additional course) to be constituted as follows. The linguistics component consists of Language, V61.0001; Grammatical Analysis, V61.0013; Introduction to Cognitive Science, V61.0028; and one more course chosen from Computational Models of Sentence Construction, V61.0024; Phonological Analysis, V61.0012; and Introduction to Semantics, V61.0004. The philosophy component consists of one course, chosen from Minds and Machines, V83.0015; Philosophy of Language, V83.0085; and Logic, V83.0070. The psychology component consists of four required courses: Introduction to Psychology, A89.0001; Statistics for the Behavioral Sciences, V89.0010; The Psychology of Language, V89.0056; and Cognition, V89.0029; in addition, one course, chosen from Seminar in Thinking, V89.0026; Language Acquisition and Cognitive Development, V89.0300; and Laboratory in Human Cognition, V89.0028. The eleventh course will be one of the above-listed courses that has not already been chosen to satisfy the departmental components.

INDEPENDENT STUDY:

A student may sign up for an independent study course if he or she obtains the consent of a faculty member who approves the study project and agrees to serve as adviser. The student must also obtain the approval of either the department chair or the director of undergraduate studies. The student may take no more than one such course in any given semester and no more than two such courses in total, unless granted special permission by either the department chair or the director of undergraduate studies.

HONORS PROGRAM:

The Department has also made changes in its Honors Program, in particular by a) changing the credits for the senior honors courses from 2 to 4 points (per course), b) adding a third course, the Junior Honors Proseminar, and c) raising the grade point requirement (both overall and in philosophy courses) from 3.5 to 3.65. (Note: only the first of these changes applies to students who are seniors in 2005-6.) Here is the description of the new program:

Honors in philosophy will be awarded to majors who (1) have an overall grade point average of 3.65 and an average in philosophy courses of 3.65, and (2) successfully complete the honors

program. This program consists in the following 3 courses. (Note: of these courses, only the first two may be counted towards the 10 courses required for the major.)

1. The **Junior Honors Proseminar**, to be taken in spring semester of junior year. This course will play the dual roles of introducing students to core readings in some of the main areas of current philosophy, and of giving them an intensive training in writing philosophy. Admission to this course usually requires a GPA, both overall and in philosophy courses, of at least 3.65, as well as the permission of the Director of Undergraduate Studies. The Department will try to make alternative arrangements for students who wish to participate in the Honors Program but who will be studying abroad in this semester of their junior year.

2. The **Senior Honors Seminar**, to be taken in fall semester of senior year. Here students begin to develop their thesis projects, meeting weekly as a group under the direction of a faculty member, and presenting and discussing their thesis arguments. Students will also select, and begin to meet separately with, their individual thesis advisors—faculty who work in the areas of their thesis projects. Entry to this seminar depends on satisfactory completion of the Junior Honors Proseminar—or on the special approval of the Director of Undergraduate Studies. It also usually requires a GPA of at least 3.65.

3. **Senior Honors Research**, to be taken in spring semester of senior year. The seminar no longer meets, but each student continues to meet separately with his/her individual thesis advisor, producing and discussing a series of rough drafts of the thesis. The final version must be submitted by a deadline to be determined, in April. It must be approved by the thesis advisor, as well as by a second faculty reader, for honors to be awarded. The student must also finish with a GPA of at least 3.65—and here no exceptions will be made. In addition, the thesis advisors will meet after the decisions by readers have been made, and award some students highest or high honors, based on thesis quality and other factors (including GPA in philosophy courses).

