

Seminar Descriptions 2022-2023

Fall 2022

800-Level Graduate Seminars

Prof. Douglas, PHL 800/880, ProSeminar & Seminar in Philosophy of Science

Topic: History of Philosophy of Science 1900-1960

The period of 1900 to 1960 was one of the most formative and complex periods in the development of the philosophy of science. During this period, the main journals were founded, many canonical texts were written, and the field professionalized, changing from an arena of conversation between scientists and philosophers to something one could do within a disciplinary framework. Yet as recent scholarship has revealed, logical positivism was neither apolitical nor simplistically dominant. Logical positivism was a deeply progressive movement that shifted ground as its adherents fled fascist Europe. Further, the central institutions of philosophy of science were founded by leftists aiming to further progressive pursuits and concerned with the political implications of science. How logical positivism came to be seen both as apolitical in the Cold War and as the dominant strain of philosophy of science will be a central issue. This course will provide a survey of this turbulent period. We will read work by Duhem, Neurath, Popper, Carnap, and Dewey, as well as secondary sources, such as Mary Jo Nye's *Michael Polanyi and His Generation* (2011), that will help contextualize and elucidate the philosophical work of the time.

Prof. Dean, PHL 870 Seminar Philosophy of Health Care

Topic: Feminist Bioethics

This course offers an overview of feminist approaches to bioethics. We will discuss key feminist methodologies and theoretical contributions, including care ethics, narrative theory, relational autonomy theory, as well as feminist Foucauldian work. Specific topics will include reproduction, care work, the management of intersex conditions, disability and chronic illness, and issues

related to food and eating, such as weight-loss dieting, eating disorders, and the so-called obesity crisis.

Prof. Lotz, PHL 820, Seminar in Continental Philosophy

Topic: Materialist Social Epistemology

In this seminar we will read and discuss critical societal epistemology. We will look into the Marxist tradition, the British cultural studies tradition, French Structuralism and Situationists, as well as contemporary authors. Philosophers discussed come from the following list of authors: Marx, Althusser, Butler, Mannheim, Bourdieu, Foucault, Sohn-Rethel, Hall, Williams, Debord, Habermas, Haslanger, and Shelby. We will ask two questions: [1] how and what do we know about society (theory)? and [2], how and what does society know of itself (ideology)? Overall, we will try to figure out whether we can think of societal self-knowledge as something different than (collective) world-views, biases, or (mental) beliefs.

400-Level Level Undergraduate Seminars

Prof. Bluhm, PHL 462 (Philosophy of Mind)

In this course we will examine the way in which the mind has been understood in philosophy and in cognitive psychology. Both disciplines have offered a number of different perspectives on the best way to understand the mind, as well as its relationship to the body. We will critically assess these different perspectives, including the similarities and the differences between philosophical and psychological theories and mutual influences between the disciplines. In the case of psychological approaches to the mind, we will also emphasize the way in which assumptions about the nature of the mind shape the methods that are viewed as appropriate for studying the mind. Topics covered will include introspectionism, behaviorism, functionalism and psychoanalysis.

Prof. Rauscher, PHL 413, Seminar in Early Modern Philosophy

Topic: Hume's Treatise on Human Nature.

We will read most of Hume's first, largest, and most-comprehensive philosophical work that ranges over topics including skepticism, naturalism, causation, perception, the nature of the self, character and the passions, free will, morality, and political philosophy. We will draw in some of Hume's later works to see how his position developed over time.

Prof. Hedrick, PHL 421 (Topics in European and Continental Philosophy)

Topic: Philosophy and Modern Social Theory – Consequences of Modernity

This course is a broad and in-depth exploration of modern European critical social theory, from some of its roots in the philosophies of Karl Marx and Friedrich Nietzsche, and the grand sociological theories of Émile Durkheim and Max Weber, through more recent figures like Jürgen Habermas, Axel Honneth, and Rahel Jaeggi. The main overarching themes are the political, social, and psychological consequences of the decline of traditional sources of authority (patriarchal, aristocratic, religious, etc.) in modern, economically and bureaucratically organized mass societies.

Spring 2023

800-Level Graduate Seminars

Prof. Peters, PHL 850 (Seminar in Social-Political Philosophy)

Topic: Contemporary Readings in Indigenous and Black Political Philosophy

The course explores philosophical responses to Indigenous erasure, chattel slavery, capitalism, racialization, and the coloniality of gender. Throughout the semester, we will read recent interdisciplinary monographs and articles that utilize Indigenous and Black political philosophy to analyze critical approaches to racial capitalism, decolonization, feminism, critical theory, cultural production, and decolonial methodologies. Texts covered will likely include (but will not be limited to) works by Glenn Coulthard, Robert Nichols, Linda Tuhiwai Smith, Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, and Ruth Gilmore.

Prof. Ferkany, PHL 840, Seminar in Value Theory

Topic: Reasons and Persons and What We Owe Each Other

We will read two late Twentieth Century classics of ethical theory that still exert significant influence on ethics today. Derek Parfit's *Reasons and Persons* (1984) develops a rich consequentialism premised on a radical idea of personal identity which he believed constitutes the most ethical response to the complex social problems of modernity. Thomas Scanlon's *What We Owe Each Other* (1998) develops a novel form of contractarian thinking that rejects entirely that consequentialist framework. Along the way we will read secondary literature responding critically to both, especially any connecting their ideas to the resolution of coordinated action problems like climate change or pandemic disease control.

400-Level Level Undergraduate Seminars

Prof. Dean, PHL 440, Central Issues in Ethics

Topic: Food Ethics

This course explores philosophical work on the ethics of food and eating. We will read classic work in food ethics alongside more contemporary work from a variety of philosophical traditions, including feminist, analytic, and Continental/European philosophy. Topics will include the relationship between eating and the construction of the self, including gender, race, and class identities, the ethics of eating non-human animals, food justice and sovereignty, and dieting and eating disorders.

Prof. Schwartzman, PHL 456, Topics in Feminist Philosophy

Topic: Feminist Perspectives on Oppression, Autonomy, and Choice

In this course, we will explore a number of related feminist issues concerning oppression, equality, autonomy, and choice. After an introduction to feminist theorizing and the concept of oppression, we'll critically examine the ways that feminist philosophers have employed, revised, and criticized certain ideas and values central to the liberal tradition, including individualism,

rationality, choice, and autonomy. Our readings will include feminist, anti-racist, and decolonial theorists who have critically examined how these liberal ideals have been employed in contexts of oppression. In the final sections of the course, we will consider specific questions about sexual violence, reproductive autonomy, and feminist perspectives on prostitution and sex work. Although gender is the central focus of most of our readings, we will also explore the ways that gender intersects with race, sexuality, gender identity, and religious and cultural communities.

400-level Courses without Seminar Description

Fall 2022

Prof. Mercurio, PHL Law and Economics

Spring 2023

Prof. Katz, Aristotle Seminar

Prof. McKeon, Logic and its Metatheory

Prof. McClendon, Philosophy and the Black Experience

Prof. Gifford, Ethical Issues in Global Public Health

Prof. Rauscher, Topics in Philosophy of Law