**SPRING 2021 UNDERGRADUATE COURSE DESCRIPTIONS**

*All courses are remote & 3-credit, unless otherwise stated*

*\*DESCRIPTIONS WERE PULLED FROM OUR COURSE CATALOG*

**101:01 LRP (J. KALEF)**

Description: The purpose of this course is to teach students to understand and avoid a number of common errors in reasoning. Serious students will complete the course with a significantly stronger ability to avoid being fooled by bad arguments they encounter at the dinner table, in mass and social media, in courses taught by people who have not themselves learned to avoid fallacious reasoning, and elsewhere. They will also learn the habits of careful suspension of judgment, and to carefully question ideologies and even their own apparent memories and beliefs.

**101:03 LRP (C. FRUGE)**

 In this course, we will learn about both good and bad reasoning. By learning what good reasoning is like, we can try to use it. By learning what bad reasoning is like, we can try to avoid it. Our route into bad reasoning will be through Daniel Kahneman’s Thinking, Fast and Slow, where he discusses a range of biases in our thinking. Our route into good reasoning will be through learning the basics of propositional logic, which allows us to model good argumentation.

**101:04 LRP (T. MCCROSSIN)**

Critical thinking, in the sense that John Dewey developed it in his formative, early-twentieth-century text, How We Think, is the two-fold skill of analyzing and evaluating this or that effort, sincere or otherwise, to persuade us to adopt this or that conviction.

Imagine you wanted to learn, and ultimately succeed at a more familiar activity — chess or dance, baseball or basketball, and so on. You might make some initial progress by simply observing others, but this would surely take you only so far. You might decide, then, to “mix it up” with others, but again, such relatively undisciplined practice would likely be limited in its effect. Soon you’d want to break down the activity into discrete skills, that is, in order to observe and ultimately reflect best practices, on your own and in interacting with others. In basketball, for example, you’d want to become the best dribbler, passer, and shooter you can be, so as to be able to help execute as successfully as possible, with others, a shared set of strategies. Such strategies — Phil Jackson’s famous “Triangle Offense,” for example — are essentially arguments for the sport being played more successfully one way as opposed to another. Similarly, in critical thinking we develop and refine our skill at, on the one hand, analyzing an argument’s overall structure — breaking it down into its component parts, that is, and identifying how they’re structured in support of the proposed conviction — and, on the other hand, evaluating how worthy it is, so structured, of persuading us — is it to oral and written arguments, that is, what the Triangle Offense is to basketball, or is it more akin to the less successful Hexagon Offense, devised by Bill Jackson, your less successful high school coach.

With a sceptical eye, as Dewey would say, we keep in mind that we are ever in competition with those who would attempt to persuade us, and, with the above two-stage process in mind, we practice becoming the best competitors we can be, remembering, as Dewey would certainly have us remember, that there’s serious urgency to becoming as proficient as possible, as what’s at stake is nothing short of “genuine freedom.” In addition to anticipating being actively involved in a semester-long conversation and hands-on practice of the process, participants should anticipate roughly a dozen in-class quizzes, the highest roughly three-quarters of which counting in the end, and a final exam.

**\*101:90 LRP (Y. KANG)**

Logic is the study of how to reason correctly. This course is designed to introduce a variety of logical concepts and tools of critical thinking. Based on the principles of reasoning from formal and informal logic, you will learn how to examine critically philosophical and other theoretical issues concerning the nature of reality, human experience, knowledge, value and/or cultural production.

1. Argument analysis: Acquiring skills of identifying parts of arguments (premises, conclusions, inferences); identifying mode (induction, deduction, analogy, etc.); reconstructing/diagramming arguments to reveal the logical structure

2. Argument evaluation: Becoming capable of a systematic evaluation of an argument; assessing the acceptability of premises/reasons; accurately evaluating the relevance of premises/reasons; making judgments about the sufficiency of grounds for a conclusion/contention/thesis.

3. Terminology/theory: Understanding and correctly using the definitions & conceptual foundations of logical analysis: validity, soundness, rhetoric, syllogisms, fallacies, other formal argument patterns.

4. Metacognition: Developing the skills of critical and logical thinkers such as ability to shift perspective, awareness of bias/cognitive limitations, commitment to understanding & transparency, and valuing logic over rhetoric

5. Application: Acquiring substantial transference of technical ability to contexts outside the classroom

**\*103:01 INTRO TO PHILOSOPHY (C. FLORES)**

Examination of fundamental philosophical issues such as the meaning and basis of moral judgments, free will and determinism, theism and atheism, knowledge and skepticism, and consciousness and the brain.

**103:02 INTRO TO PHILOSOPHY (B. HUTCHENS)**

This textbook-based course will introduce students to some of the main subjects of philosophy, including metaphysics, epistemology, the philosophy of mind, and ethics. Among the assignments will be a paper about the role of different forms of knowledge in the determination of future goals. Another paper will examine the role of ethical theory, especially theories of virtues and vices, in the pursuit of career and personal goals.

**\*103:03 INTRO TO PHILOSOPHY (L. LYONS)**

Examination of fundamental philosophical issues such as the meaning and basis of moral judgments, free will and determinism, theism and atheism, knowledge and skepticism, and consciousness and the brain.

**103:04 INTRO TO PHILOSOPHY (J. PIVEN)**

Philosophy is the love of wisdom. Over the eons great minds have contemplated the nature of the soul, the genesis of good and evil, the existence of God, the workings of the universe, and the way we perceive, reality. How does one know good from evil? Are we really social animals? Can one prove or disprove the existence of God? Is there a soul distinct from the body? Does one truly have free will? This course introduces students to some of the great ideas in world philosophy, exploring the metaphysics and ethics of the Greeks, the skepticism of Descartes, the transcendental philosophy of Kant, the atheism of Nietzsche, and the existentialism of Sartre.

**103:90 INTRO TO PHILOSOPHY (W. SKOLITS)**

This course provides a broad introduction to academic philosophy.  This discipline is notoriously hard to define; however, we can say that philosophy—which etymologically derives from two greek words meaning “love of wisdom”—concerns thinking hard about life’s most important questions. Particularly, in this course we will examine the following questions: Do we know there is an external world? Does God exist? How one ought to live? Moreover, we will learn the tools by which philosophers answer these questions.

**105:01 CMSI (D. PAYTON)**

This asynchronous online course will begin with an introduction to prominent theories in normative ethics. Then, bearing these views in mind, we will move on to consider some of the most pressing current moral and social issues in the US. Possible topics in this second part of the course include: abortion, equality, sex/gender, race and racism, treatment of animals, drug use, punishment and prisons, voting, and gun rights.

In this course we will spend a good amount of time studying what other people have said about ethical questions and problems, but the primary goal of this course is not to learn who said what. Rather, the primary goal is to use the course readings as the basis for reflection and discussion on questions that matter to many of us in a very concrete way. Students will be expected to read critically, think carefully, listen charitably, respectfully share their views, and demonstrate their understanding through analytical writing. These are skills that can be honed by practice, and a central goal of this course is to give students lots of this sort of practice.

**105:02 CMSI (A. GIBBONS)**

In this class we will grapple with several important contemporary moral, social, and political issues. We will engage with the philosophical literature on subjects like political ignorance, electoral democracy and some of its alternatives, fake news, civil disobedience and defensive action against the state, gun rights, immigration, the ethics of eating meat, and effective altruism.

**105:03 CMSI (J. DERSTINE)**

What makes an action morally right or wrong? When do persons deserve to be punished for wrongdoing? For example, what is the aim of imprisonment? Is this how we ought to punish nonviolent offenders? What about institutional wrongdoing? Should we be concerned about the lead found in the water of Flint, MI, even if it doesn't affect \*us\*? What about natural gas pipelines and drilling, like DAPL? Is this fair to the First Nations? What about campus sexual assault? Is it reasonable to make sure the alleged perpetrator has due process in a fair system? In this course, we critically examine a host of hotbed issues in the US today: gun rights, sexual assault, free speech, voting rights, over-incarceration, through the lens of moral philosophy and normative ethical theories. We will investigate and discuss, among other topics, whether there are mitigating factors (e.g., economically disadvantaged citizens, childhood trauma, members of historically marginalized group) we ought to take into account when assessing the normative claims we typically ma

**105:90 CMSI (S. KANG)**

The course will be concerned with some of the moral issues of our contemporary society.  
The complexity and controversial nature of these issues challenge us in a uniquely  
comprehensive way that force to integrate philosophy (especially theoretical ethics) into  
our daily lives that we conduct along with our fellow members of the society. The  
contentious issues of our time (e.g., Affirmative Action, Distributive Justice, Abortion,  
etc.) demand us to engage with one another in intellectual and civilized dialogue to its  
utmost serious degree. (There are no prerequisites to the course, except intellectual  
curiosity and rigorous mindset.) The main emphases of the course will be placed not  
only on examining (1) intricate moral nature of the issues substantively, but also on  
nurturing abilities for (2) critical thinking and (3) rational discussion with others.

**107:01 INTRO TO ETHICS (J. PIVEN)**

Ethics is the attempt to understand moral concepts and justify moral principles. What should I do? How do I determine what’s right and wrong? Is moral good in the intention or the consequence of my actions? Everyone disagrees on what people should do. Is it all personal opinion? Cultural values? Is it all relative? Should I question what I’ve been told? In this course we’ll survey readings in ethics and moral philosophy to understand different perspectives on how moral decisions can be made. We’ll investigate such topics as virtue ethics, deontology, constructivism, objectivism, relativism, consequentialism, free will, and determinism.

**107:02 INTRO TO ETHICS (R. FRY)**

The field of ethics asks us to consider what we ought to do and how we know. In this course, we will use a number of different applied ethical problems to jump-start our thinking about what ethical principles and positions matter in the world around us. We’ll then go on to examine systems of ethics that purport to tell us what’s right and wrong, good and bad, and why. You will be assessed primarily through written papers. No antecedent familiarity with philosophy is required or expected.

**107:03 INTRO TO ETHICS (B. HUTCHENS)**

This textbook-based course will introduce students to the basic schools of ethical theory, including virtue ethics, social contract theory, and ethical egoism, as well as Kantian, utilitarian and Rawlsian thought. Students will write short papers about ethical theory, moral issues, and the role of ethics in their own personal development.

**107:91 INTRO TO ETHICS (S. KANG)**

This course aims at helping students to think about the moral dimensions of human  
existence by exposing them to (1) theoretical and (2) practical issues in ethics. Some of  
the questions we will ask are: how should we conduct our lives?; how can we be morally  
righteous and virtuous?; what kinds of ethical theories are there to help us make right  
decisions?; what if there are conflicting moral recommendations from different theories?;  
how are we to resolve differences of moral opinions?; what is the distinctive nature of  
moral judgment?; why should I be moral in the first place?; to what degree does religion  
play a role in ethical decisions?; how is ethics related to the diverse areas such as law,  
health care, or politics as practiced in today's society?, and so forth. (There is no  
prerequisite to this course, except a curious and rigorous mind.)

**\*109:01 & 02 INTRO TO FR&DM (S. FELDER)**

Fundamentals of logical, probabilistic, and statistical thinking, as well as the basic principles of rational decision-making. Reasoning through data (and rhetoric) encountered on a daily basis using elementary principles of deductive logic and inference.

**109:03 INTRO TO FR&DM (Z. KOFI)**

This course is an introduction to the formal study of correct reasoning and rational decision-making. The course is divided into two parts. The first part is exclusively concerned with deductive reasoning. We will study deductive reasoning through a formal language and system of truth-functional logic. The second part of the course is concerned with probability and decision-making. We will study probability through a formal theory of probability. We will then use probability theory as a foundation for studying some basic ideas of decision

**109:90 INTRO TO FR&DM (M. BIALEK)**

Resolving differences of opinion isn't always impossible. Figuring out what you should believe isn't just a matter of checking what's true. Deciding what you should do doesn't have to be left up to your whim. Formal tools have been (and continue to be) developed that enable us to talk very precisely about the strength of arguments and of evidence, the rationality of beliefs we have, and the value of choices we make. This course will introduce students to some of those formal tools—specifically: logic, probability, and decision theory—focusing on their application, but also looking at the limits to their application and their potential for expansion and sophistication. Assessment in the course will based on a mixture of exams, discussion posts, and quizzes.

**201:01 INTRO TO LOGIC (J. KALEF)**

Description: This course teaches, and trains students in, the fundamentals of logical reasoning. Most of the course will involve the solving of logical puzzles of various types, building power, speed and technique along the way. The final section of the course will use what will by then be a firm foundation in applied logic and build upon it an understanding of formal logical systems.

**201:02 & 90 INTRO TO LOGIC (E. KALKUS)**

This course is an introduction to symbolic logic. Logic is the study of correct reasoning and symbolic logic studies reasoning using formal languages. We will begin with propositional logic. Propositional logic will enable us to represent various connective terms that will allow us to evaluate various inferences. We will focus on determining the validity of arguments and the processes involved in derivations. Then, we will turn to predicate logic. Predicate logic subsumes propositional logic, but affords us additional tools to both represent terms such as “something” and “everything” and evaluate inferences.

**201:03 INTRO TO LOGIC (L. RICHARDSON)**

 An introduction to the concepts and principles of symbolic logic. We learn the syntax and semantics of truth-functional and first-order quantificational logic, and apply the resultant conceptual framework to the analysis of valid and invalid arguments, the structure of formal

languages, and logical relations among sentences of ordinary discourse.

**\*201:91 INTRO TO LOGIC (Y. KANG)**

This course is an introduction to traditional categorical logic and modern symbolic logic. Logic is the study of correct reasoning and symbolic logic studies reasoning using formal languages. We will learn how to clarify the structure of an argument, translate the argument written in natural language (e.g. English) into symbols, and evaluate the symbolic arguments. Three deductive systems will be discussed: Categorical logic, Propositional logic, and Predicate logic.

We will begin with categorical logic. The validity of a categorical argument depends on the relationships among classes, sets, or categories. We will practice how to analyze categorical claims with quantifiers (some, no, all).

Then, we will discuss propositional logic. Propositional logic offers analytic tools for logical operators such as “and,” “or,” and “not.” We will practice validity tests using truth tables and various types of proofs by applying inference rules.

Lastly, we will turn to predicate logic. Predicate logic subsumes propositional logic but affords us additional tools to represent the ideas of “some” and “all” and evaluate inferences.

**205 INTRO TO MODERN PHILOSOPHY (R. FRY)**

The 17th and 18th centuries represent a sea-change in the history of Western philosophy. In this course we will look at key philosophical texts from the period, examining the problems they raise and the solutions they offer on issues like the existence of God, the nature of the material world, and animal minds. We will examine these texts both in dialogue with each other and with our contemporary ways of thinking. For this course we will be reading sizable selections from these authors’ original texts and coming to grips with their ideas on their own terms. Grades will be primarily assigned on the basis of written work, including general reflections and argument analyses.

**210 INTRO TO PHILOSOPHY OF LANGUAGE (P. PIETROSKI)**

What is a language? Is English a language, or is there a family of English languages? Why are human children so good at acquiring languages like English (Japanese, Urdu, Navajo, ASL, French, Walpiri, Mandarin, Edo, …)? Is there something special about these languages and/or human children? Do other animals—perhaps even bees—have languages of their own? Are there languages of thought? Could you think in Morse code? Do languages have to be used, at least sometimes, for communication? What are words? Does ‘dog’ have the same meaning as ‘chien’ in French? What are meanings? Why does ‘ready to eat’ have more than one meaning, while ‘eager to eat’ and ‘easy to eat’ are less ambiguous? How do we know what sentences mean, and what they don’t mean, even if we haven’t previously heard or read them? How is written English related to spoken English? How can we use words and sentences to convey information, ask questions, make requests, tell jokes, and so on? What’s a metaphor? How is it possible to communicate “indirectly”, as when we speak sarcastically, or criticize by using “faint praise”?

How are sentence meanings related to episodes of people using sentences to make claims that are true or false? How are word meanings related to episodes of people using words to refer to things? How are we able to talk about things that don’t exist? How do we understand phrases like ‘the largest prime number’, words like ‘unicorn’, and names like ‘Vulcan’? What are names? Do they have meanings of a special kind? Do words like ‘this’, ‘I’, ‘here’, and ‘now’ have meanings of a special kind? What does a child acquire when she acquires a language like English? In what respects is the process of human language acquisition like paradigm examples of learning a new skill—e.g., learning to play a musical instrument—or learning facts about one’s environment? In what respects is the process more like paradigm examples of innately driven development, like going through puberty, or a caterpillar transitioning into a butterfly? Why have philosophers been interested in these issues?

Unsurprisingly, the course will not provide definitive answers. But one goal is to provide an introduction to the topic and some relevant literature, in a way that will help you understand the questions well enough to appreciate some potential answers that have been offered—and then pursue the issues further if you are so inclined. Another goal is to focus on what some philosophers have said about language as a case study of how the intellectual tools of philosophy can be useful in the study of human nature, while recognizing that an interdisciplinary toolkit is required to answer the interesting questions about language that philosophers have highlighted. A related goal is to help you develop some of the intellectual skills that are sharpened by doing philosophy—in particular, the capacity to write clearly about complex issues that are initially far from clear, after reading and understanding some abstract prose that was produced by smart but very fallible people who were wrestling with hard questions.

**\*218 INTRO TO PHIL OF MIND (J. DERSTINE)**

Investigation of the nature of mind, including such questions as whether minds are or require brains, whether computers can think, and what distinguishes human mentality from that of other creatures.

**\*220 THEORY OF KNOWLEDGE (D. FORMAN)**

The nature of belief, perception, certainty, justification, and knowledge are investigated.

**225 INTRO TO PHIL OF SCIENCE (M. DEIGAN)**

This course is an introduction to various philosophical issues that arise in trying to understand how science works and what it tells us about the world.

The first part of the course will be about the metaphysics of science, including questions about what it is for something to be a law of nature, whether scientific taxonomies correspond to real divisions in nature or are just useful tools for organizing our thoughts, and whether all of the sciences reduce to physics.

The second part of the course will be about scientific methodology, including questions about how scientific theories are confirmed or disconfirmed, how scientific revolutions work, what role values play in science, and how the social structures and incentive schemes of scientific research help and hinder scientific progress.

**253:ALL HUMAN NATURE & HUMAN DIVERSITY (S. STICH) 4CR**

The goal of this course is to introduce students to some of the leading theories aimed at explaining human nature and human diversity, and to explore some of the philosophical implications of those theories. The course is organized around four areas where questions about human nature and human diversity are of great importance in contemporary society:

i) Mating (which includes sex, love and parenting)

ii) Morality

iii) Religion

(iv) Race

Format:

The course will have two components. The asynchronous “lecture” component will include lectures by Prof. Stich and by a number of guest speakers from Rutgers and other leading universities. Videos on aspects of human nature and human diversity will also be included in the asynchronous component of the course. Screen time for the asynchronous component of the course will average about 150 minutes per week. Screen time will be divided into segments most of which will be no longer than 30 minutes. The discussion sections, each with a maximum of 25 students, will be synchronous.

Grading: There will be frequent quizzes on the lecture material and on the assigned reading. Taken together, these quizzes will be 40% of the course grade. There will be a midterm exam and a final exam; each will be 15% of the course grade. Students will also be required to write a paper (a long list of topics will be distributed) and to do presentation in the discussion section. Each of these will be worth 15% of the course grade. Please note: The plans for screen time and for grading are tentative and may be changed as we discover what works, and what doesn’t, in our online environment.

**261 PHILOSOPHICAL IDEAS IN SCIENCE FICTION (A. SKILES)**

In this course, science fiction film will serve as our launching pad into some of the most longstanding, intriquing, and difficult questions of philosophy. We will view classics of the genre such as 2001: A Space Odyssey, Gattaca, Her, Interstellar, and The Matrix while reading contemporary philosophical work on personal identity, skepticism, artificial intelligence, space and time, free will and determinism, social inequality, and the future of humanity.

**\*296 ARETE II (T. MCCROSSIN/S. PATEL)**

Supervised process of editing of the undergraduate philosophy journal, with review of weekly submissions.

**\*302 PLATO & ARISTOTLE (R. BOLTON)**

Major work of Plato, such as the *Republic*; Aristotle's critical reaction and alternative theories in metaphysics, psychology, logic, ethics, and politics.

**304 ORIGINS OF MEDIEVAL PHILOSOPHY (B. LEFTOW)**

 This course introduces the most important philosophers and some main ideas from the first part of the Middle Ages (roughly 500 - 1100 AD). The focus will be on issues and arguments in metaphysics and the philosophy of religion. The thinkers covered will include at least Augustine, Boethius, Avicenna, al-Ghazali and Anselm.

**330 ETHICS OF WAR & CONFLICT (D. UNDERWOOD)**

This is a course on moral questions that arise when thinking about wars and other forms of large-scale violence. We’ll start with a doctrine called ‘Just War Theory’. Just War Theory is an influential set of moral principles that serves as the foundations for much of international law. However, it’s not immediately obvious why the principles of Just War Theory are good moral principles. This course will therefore examine various criticisms, defenses, and reformulation of the traditional Just War Doctrine. Our aim in doing so will be to think clearly about the moral issues which arise in war and to equip ourselves with the conceptual resources necessary to responsibly think about various future armed conflicts which may arise in our own lifetimes.

**\*315 APPLIED SYMBOLIC LOGIC (T. GILLIES)**

Use of deduction techniques (see 01:730:201) to formalize various subject matters such as modal logic, set theory, formal arithmetic, and relevance logic.

**329:01 MINDS, MACHINES, & PERSONS (M. DEIGAN)**

Could we ever create computers that think? If so, what rights would they have? Should we worry that they would become more intelligent than humans and take over the world? Could we upload our own minds to computers?

Usually questions like these are left to the realm of science fiction, but in this course we will attempt to explore them in a rigorous way, using philosophical tools and ideas from philosophy of mind, ethics, and metaphysics.

**\*329:02:03 MINDS, MACHINES, & PERSONS (V. GOMEZ, C. HOWLAND)**

Comparison of the nature of the human mind and that of complex machines. Consequences for questions about the personhood of robots.

**345 PHILOSOPHY & THE LAW (B. HUTCHENS)**

This textbook-based course will lead students through an understanding of major points of engagement between law and philosophy. We will examine the role of Aristotelianism and Thomism in the formation of natural law theory, as well as legal positivism and legal realism, problems of liberty and responsibility, and the nature of international law.

**348 TOPICS IN MEDICAL ETHICS (D. SORENSEN)**

It is a truism that contemporary society is undergoing transformation driven by what can seem to be vertiginous changes not only in technology and in the dominant economic models, but in the culture that responds to both. What is less discussed, but no less clear is that these developments present profound challenges for our ability to think critically about fundamental issues involving our changing human enterprises and the ethical choices they lead us to confront. Specifically, the changes in the scientific enterprise can appear to be so rapid that they are bound to outrun our ability to think critically about what is right and what is wrong, and more generally, what outcomes we should value as individuals and as members of a society.

This course provides an opportunity for students with a basic understanding of biomedical and biobehavioral ethics and their role in shaping health policy to explore key emerging issues –

‘hot topics’, with topics changing each year as new issues arise and new challenges confront us. In 2020, the topics will include:

•  Vaccines and Immunization Policy

•  Gene Editing and Reproductive Technologies

•  Moral Dimensions of Climate Change

•  Drug Pricing, Access, and Inequality

•  Gene Drives

•  Organ Sales and Donations, Transplant Tourism, and Organ Trafficking

**367 AMERICAN PHILOSOPHY (T. MCCROSSIN)**

In understanding our era in the various ways we do — as postindustrial or postmodern, as an information age or the Anthropocene, and so on — we’re struggling to understand the human condition, generally speaking, as it’s organized naturally, and as we organize it socially in turn. It’s a struggle with a fascinating history of twists and turns beginning midway through the seventeenth century, during and in the wake of the Enlightenment. To understand them better, philosophically and otherwise, is to understand better our current version of the struggle. In philosophical terms, the task is made problematic by a conventional way in which the history of philosophy is written, by focusing on the “Western tradition” as opposed to its “Eastern” counterpart, as above, and within the former, as it developed in Britain and Continental Europe as opposed to North America. We will work to rectify the latter oversight.

With periodic reference to the perspectives developed in “Descartes, Locke, and the Seventeenth Century,” “Hume, Kant, and the Eighteenth Century,” and “Nineteenth-Century Philosophy,” our proceedings will be devoted to developing together a systematic sense of the unique “American” philosophical tradition that emerged during these periods and early in the twentieth century, in terms of the most prominent movements that make it up, including most idiosyncratically the Enlightenment in America, Transcendentalism, and Pragmatism. We will do so together, our proceedings as participatory as possible, based on the idea that philosophy is best done as conversationally as possible. In order to facilitate this, our syllabus will be organized, in large measure, around overt and covert debates between a variety of figures, some of them conventionally “major,” then and now, others less so now, but nonetheless important then. In addition to anticipating being actively involved in a semester-long conversation, participants should anticipate completing substantial mid-term and end-of-term writing projects.

**\*369 BUDDHIST PHILOSOPHY (J. TAO)**

CROSS-LISTED W/01:840:369

Interdependence, impermanence, relativity; suffering; path to liberation; meditation; karma as cosmic justice; death and rebirth. Compassion as central ethical value. Theravada, Mahayana, and Tibetan Buddhism.

**\*374 ISLAMIC PHILOSOPHY (A. SAEMI)**

Exploration of the main themes of Islamic philosophy, focusing on topics such as wisdom, the good life, and relations between metaphysical, moral, doctrinal, and practical knowledge.

**397 JR. ADV. SEMINAR (M. GLANZBERG)**

*BY PERM OF PROF.*

The concept of truth is a central one in philosophy.  The property of truth itself has been the subject of intense study.  What sort of property is it?  One that creates an objective relation between our thoughts and the world? Or a more epistemic notion, relating to what we can verify or observe?  At various times in the history of philosophy, these questions were considered central (the ancient, medieval, and early 20th century periods are good examples).   But truth also plays important roles in other areas of philosophy.  In many areas, we face difficult questions about whether certain claims are genuinely true or false.  In metaethics, for instance, philosophers have often asked whether ethical claims are really truth-evaluable claims about what is in fact right or wrong, or if they rather express emotions directed at various circumstances.  In philosophy of mathematics, philosophers have wondered if there is an intelligible notion of truth for mathematical claims that is distinct from proof.  In philosophy of science, philosophers observing that confirmation rather than truth is often the key notion of scientific success have asked whether truth is important in science at all.  In metaphysics, philosophers have wondered if certain disputes really lead to one side’s claims being true, and have also wondered if different sorts of kinds, like natural and social kinds, support claims of truth differently.  Truth is often central to wide-ranging philosophical views about objectivity.  Finding claims in an area to be genuinely truth-evaluable suggests a strong notion of objectivity.

In this course, we will investigate many of these issues. We will begin with a brief look at the property of truth, from both contemporary and historical perspectives. We will then explore the role and use of truth in various philosophical areas, such as the ones above. We will choose those areas based on the interests of students in the course.

**\*402 ARISTOTLE (R. BOLTON)**

Topics in Aristotle's logic, physics, metaphysics, and philosophy of language.

**404 SPINOZA (M. LIN)**

This course is an introduction to the major figures and ideas of early modern philosophy. The early modern period is shaped in large part by two major changes to European society. One is the scientific revolution. The other is the century of war and conflict between various Christian churches that proliferated in the wake of the Protestant Reformation. With respect to the metaphysical and epistemological questions that arose in connection with the scientific revolution, some of our questions will be: (1) What is the nature of the physical world? (2) What is the place of the mind the physical world? (3) What are the respective roles of reason and sense experience in our ability to know about the world? (4) How can we have knowledge by induction? With respect to issues of politics, society, and religion as they were shaped by the religious and political developments and conflicts of the period, our questions will be: (1) What are the limits of religious toleration? (2) What is the basis of the legitimacy of the state? (3) What is the best form of government? (4) what is justice?

**405 KANT (T. MCCROSSIN)**

*Two things fill the mind with ever new and increasing admiration and awe, the more often and steadily we reflect on them: the starry heavens above and the moral law within. — Kant*

Toward the end of his landmark Critique of Pure Reason, Kant famously insisted that, “all the interests of reason combine” in three questions — What can we know? What ought we to do? What may we hope? Kant’s perspective is a watershed moment in the history of philosophy not only for the innovative ways in which he answers these questions individually, but, more importantly, for the innovative way he combines them in the process, in the spirit of his insistence, in his Lectures on Logic, that our answers to these three questions combine in turn in answering a fourth, the “most useful, but also the most difficult” — What does it means to be human?

He offers us a systematic answer to this cluster of questions in a long series of challenging technical works, beginning in 1781 with the Critique of Pure Reason, the first of the three critiques, the second being the Critique of Practical Reason, the third the Critique of Judgment, and culminating in 1797 with the Metaphysics of Morals. We also have interspersed shorter, less technical articulations of the perspective, most notably, in between the first and second Critiques, Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics and Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals. We have as well a long series of shorter works, written for more popular consumption, from “Idea for a Universal History from a Cosmopolitan Point of View,” in 1784, through “An Old Question Raised Again: Is the Human Race Constantly Progressing?,” in 1798.

With periodic reference to the perspectives developed in “Descartes, Locke, and the Seventeenth Century” and “Hume, Kant, and the Eighteenth Century,” and anticipating the one developed in “Nineteenth-Century Philosophy,” our proceedings will be devoted to developing together, out of the above and other works, a systematic sense of Kant’s overall perspective, and selective sense of his legacy. We will do so together, our proceedings as participatory as possible, based on the idea that philosophy is best done as conversationally as possible. In addition to anticipating being actively involved in a semester-long conversation, participants should anticipate completing substantial mid-term and end-of-term writing projects.

**\*410 HISTORY OF ANALYTIC PHILOSOPHY (S. FELDER)**

Major figures or movements in the development of analytic philosophy. Topics may include: early analytic philosophy, with an emphasis on Frege, Russell, and Moore; development and assessment of logical positivism; and roots of contemporary metaphysics in Quine and Strawson.

**415 METAPHYSICS (T. SIDER)**

This course will cover various topics in metaphysics at an intermediate to advanced level. Possible topics include ontology (the study of what exists - e.g., in addition to entities studied by physics such as subatomic particles or points of spacetime, do there exist macroscopic objects composed of them, such as tables, turtles, and trees?); metaontology (what is at stake in debates over ontology?  do opposing views differ genuinely, or only verbally?); laws of nature

(what is the difference between a statement that is guaranteed to be true, given how the physical world works, such as that like-charged particles repel each other, and a statement that "just happens to be true", such as that I have a quarter in my pocket?).

**417 HUME (R. FRY)**

David Hume is a key figure in the Western philosophical tradition. He represents the culmination and ultimate expression of several important movements in Early Modern philosophy, and he made distinct and still-relevant contributions to epistemology, cognitive psychology/philosophy of mind, metaphysics, morals, aesthetics, and political philosophy. This course will treat a selection of those contributions in their context, centering Hume’s own works but drawing on relevant interlocutors and secondary sources where helpful. This course is reading-intensive and centers philosophical writing, so you will be expected to write regularly and well.

**425 PHILOSOPHY OF SCIENCE (T. SAAD/H. LIN)**

This course will explore selected topics in philosophy of science, including: What implications does evolution by natural selection have for our commonsense beliefs? Why does the universe appear to be designed for intelligent observers? Are we alone in the universe? If not, why haven’t we observed other civilizations? Can science explain conscious experience? Should the psychology of implicit bias lead us to doubt our judgment? Are most scientific studies mistaken? Will artificial intelligence exceed human intelligence? Could your mind be uploaded to a computer? How will science shape the future of humanity? How should it?

**426 PHILOSOPHY OF PHYSICS (J. NORTH)**

Subtitle: Quantum Mechanics

There is no question that the theory of quantum mechanics is empirically successful.  What the theory says about the nature of the world, however, remains controversial.  In this class, we will look at different theories of quantum mechanics and examine a range of philosophical issues that arise for them.  Topics include the measurement problem; non-locality; the

ontological status of the wavefunction; the fundamental ontology of the theory; the nature of probability; the compatibility of quantum mechanics with relativity; the direction of time.  Throughout, special attention will be paid to the ontology of the different theories, realistically construed.

**428 TOPICS IN PHIL OF PSYCHOLOGY (P. PIETROSKI)**

CROSS-LISTED W/01:185:415

The broad goal is to illustrate central issues in cognitive science via detailed investigation of some questions that arise in the study of language—with special attention to the spoken or signed languages that human children naturally acquire—and to show how these questions can be profitably addressed by viewing them as empirical questions concerning the cognitive capacities of the relevant language-users.

More specifically, we’ll begin with the first part of Noam Chomsky’s classic 1957 text, Syntactic Structures. This little book was drawn from his lecture notes for an undergraduate class; and the now famous presentation of three kinds of recursive systems (the "Chomsky Hierarchy") was designed to introduce students, with no prior experience in the study of languages, to the idea that human children naturally generate sentences from words in interesting ways that differ from some obvious ways in which a computer might generate complex expressions from a list of atomic expressions. We’ll supplement excerpts from Chomsky’s text with excerpts from Howard Lasnik’s companion guide, Syntactic Structures Revisited.

With this background in place, we’ll address the question of what the languages that children acquire are. In later work, Chomsky described them as biologically instantiated procedures that generate expressions, in something like the way a calculator displays numerals on a screen given certain inputs. David Lewis, a justly famous philosopher who wrote a seminal paper on this topic, described languages as sets of expressions that might be generated in many different ways by the members of a community who can communicate. This set the stage for debates about whether “English” is a language shared by many speakers who may be unacquainted with particular words of their common language, or whether there are many English languages that are similar enough to let speakers of these languages talk with one another.

We’ll then turn a few of the essays in a recently published volume celebrating the 60th anniversary of Syntactic Structures. Each essay in the volume focuses on a particular chapter of Chomsky’s text, explaining its relevance to current issues. In class, we’ll discuss the essays on language acquisition and meaning. But the other essays will be potential springboards for final paper topics. As time permits—with the details depending on the interests of those enrolled—we’ll end the term with some discussion of (non-human) animal communication and possible natural histories of how distinctively human linguistic capacities emerged.

**441 ETHICAL THEORY (A. SKILES)**

This course provides an introduction to contemporary metaethics, which investigates the metaphysics, epistemology, psychology, and semantics of moral discourse and practice. The questions we will take up include: is there a fact of the matter about whether you should donate substantial portions of your income to charity, about whether happiness is good in itself, or about what morality dictates more generally? If so, then what is the nature of these moral facts, what is their ultimate source, and how can we know what they are? If not, then what is the function of our thought and talk about morality, if not to describe what moral reality is like?

**459 ADV. SEMINAR IN ETHICS (F. KAMM/D. HAUSMAN )**

*Rationing in the Face of Covid-19*

This is a seminar devoted to the moral questions concerning the distribution of health care. Because health care has the potential to transform individual lives and the deprivation of health care can disable and kill, who gets what health care is a pressing problem, obvious in the case of Covid-19, in which vaccines and treatments will be in short supply, at least for a while. When there is not enough to go around, some people will not receive health care that is expected to be beneficial to them. Deciding who is and who isn’t to be treated – that is, rationing – is unavoidable. How should it be done? Which distribution of health care saves the most lives or avoids the most illnesses? Which distribution is most respectful of individual values and choices? Which distributions are fair? Are some deaths worse than others? If individuals are careless of their health, should that affect their priority? These are some of the questions the seminar will tackle.

In tackling these questions, the seminar will examine work in applied ethics and in background ethical theory by philosophers and health economists. It will make use of the draft of a book by Dan Hausman, a number of essays by Frances Kamm, as well as articles and book chapters by such thinkers as Peter Singer, Peter Ubel, Hilary Greaves, and John Broome. Students will make a class presentation accompanied by a short paper and write a final 10 page paper on a topic approved by the instructors.

**465 PHENEOMENOLOGY & EXISTENTIALISM (J. PIVEN)**

Phenomenology is the study of conscious experience, intention, and meaning. It’s the study of the way we experience things, the way we make sense of them, the way we perceive, comprehend, imagine, feel, respond, and desire. Phenomenology studies structures of conscious and lived experience, how we interpret those experiences, the hermeneutic elucidation of how we endow experience and perception with meaning. Existentialism is concerned with the human condition, the purpose of life, authenticity in one’s purpose and being, the attempt to find meaning amidst the absurdity and finitude of existence. Philosophers have asked how life can be meaningful in the face of death, and whether life matters. This course presumes a basic knowledge of phenomenology and existentialism, and explores innovations in the phenomenology of evil, religion and racism, along with existential dread as it pervades belief, identity, politics, and pathology.

**475 ADV. TOPICS: THE PHILOSOPHY OF DAVID LEWIS (B. LOEWER)**

David Lewis was one of the most important philosophers and the greatest analytic metaphysician of the 20th century. Aside from metaphysics he made important contributions to philosophy of language, epistemology, philosophy of science, philosophical logic, decision theory and philosophy of mind. It is not possible to understand current debates among philosophers in these (and other) areas without knowing his work. My aims in this seminar is to acquaint you with some of that work with an idea to understanding Lewis’ views about reality and to the nature of philosophy.

We will begin with Lewis famous paper on functionalism and the identity theory of mind. After that we will dive into his work in metaphysics of modality and the metaphysical foundations of science. If there is time, we will discuss his work in philosophy of language and epistemology.