SUMMER 2017 PHILOSOPHY DEPARTMENT COURSE OFFERINGS

Please note: No prerequisites are required for any summer courses.

FIRST SUMMER SESSION:

PHIL-UA 4; Life and Death; MTWR 1:30-3:05; Samuel Lee

This course will examine a variety of philosophical issues pertaining to life and death. These might include questions such as: What makes for a good life? Is death intrinsically bad? What is the nature of the self? What obligations do we have towards future persons who are not yet alive? This course probably won’t teach you how you ought to live your life, but it will teach you how to reflect critically on some important and interesting philosophical issues. Readings will be primarily comprised of contemporary texts and articles.

PHIL-UA 60; Aesthetics; MTWR 6:00-7:35; Chris Prodoehl

This course will explore some of the issues central to the philosophical study of the arts. What is art, and why is it important to us? What is special about our experiences of art? Can we be right or wrong about a work’s value, or is it all just opinion? Is “genius” required for creating valuable art? Does a perfect forgery offer the same experience as the original, and is it just as artistically valuable if it does? Is photography an art or just a mechanical recording of reality? Philosophers to be read include: Hume, Kant, Collingwood, Langer, Goodman, Benjamin, Walton, and Scruton.

PHIL-UA 78; Metaphysics; MTWR 11:30-1:05; Mike Zhao

This is a mid-level course in metaphysics. We'll discuss topics like time, personal identity, mind-body interaction, and causation. We'll also look at the works of philosophers, like Hume, Kant, and the Logical Positivists, skeptical of the project of metaphysics.

PHIL-UA 80; Philosophy of Mind; MTWR 11:30-1:05; Michelle Dyke

This course will provide an introduction to some of the major themes and ongoing debates in the Philosophy of Mind. Our readings and class discussions will focus on questions such as the following: What is the relationship between the mind and the body (especially the brain)? Can
mental states, like belief and intention, be explained wholly in physical terms? How does the mind represent information about the external world? What is the self - Am I identical to my mind? What is consciousness? Does it come in degrees, for example with humans possessing higher degrees of consciousness than lower animals like mollusks? What other sorts of things, if any, could be conscious? Previous background in philosophy is not a requirement for enrollment in this course.

SECOND SUMMER SESSION:

PHIL-UA 1; Central Problems in Philosophy; MTWR 3:30-5:05; Ben Holguin

This course is an introduction to some central issues in contemporary philosophy. The goal will be to practice thinking hard and writing clearly about questions like the following: Do you have free will? What, if anything, do you know? What's the relationship between your mind and your brain? Are you morally obligated to help those in need? What sort of changes (physical or otherwise) could you undergo before you'd stop being you?

PHIL-UA 5; Minds and Machines; MTWR 9:30-11:05; Chris Scambler

In this course we will think about the relationship between minds and machines, especially computing machines (AKA computers). Is the brain just a meaty computer? Could any computer be conscious? How could we tell if computers were conscious? We'll address these questions by reading the works of historical and contemporary philosophers, discussing the work of scientists of various kinds, as well as by looking at works of fiction and popular culture.

PHIL-UA 21; History of Modern Philosophy; MTWR 1:30-3:05; Michelle Dyke

This course will provide an introduction to the works of some major figures in philosophy from the 17th and 18th centuries. Authors will include (but are not limited to) Descartes, Spinoza, Locke, Leibniz, Berkeley, Hume, and Kant. We will compare their views on a variety of topics in metaphysics & epistemology including knowledge and skepticism, causation, essence and identity, the relationship between the mental and the physical, and the role of God. Students will be encouraged to engage critically with the arguments of each author.

PHIL-UA 40; Ethics; MTWR 3:30-5:05; Arden Koehler

This course is an introduction to the philosophical study of ethics. In the first half of the course, we will focus on the fundamental ethical question: What ought one do in a given situation, and why? We will discuss and critique a number of influential and systematic ways of answering this
question. In the second half of the course, we will turn to relativism and skepticism about ethics, views that challenge us to think about whether there is an objective answer, or indeed any defensible answer at all, to the question of what we ought to do and why. In both halves of the course, we will take care to keep in mind the applications of our discussion to real life and contemporary situations.

PHIL-UA 52; Philosophy of Law; MTWR 11:30-1:05; Chelsea Rosenthal

When can we morally break the law, and what is the relationship between law and morality? How should judges go about interpreting the Constitution? Can lawyers ethically represent murderers? When is criminal punishment justified, and what role has race played in what we criminalize and who we punish? We’ll discuss these and other questions in this survey of the philosophy of law.

PHIL-UA 70; Logic; MTWR 6-7:35; David Storrs-Fox

Logic is an indispensable tool for philosophers and mathematicians, and studying logic is a great way to sharpen your reasoning skills whatever your field. This introductory course will teach you the basics of symbolic logic - specifically, sentential and predicate logic. You'll learn how some formal logical languages work, how to translate arguments between English and those languages, how to construct derivations of valid arguments, and how to assess whether an argument is valid.

PHIL-UA 76; Epistemology; MTWR 1:30-3:05 Annette Martin

Do you actually do things like eat and do homework, or are you just a brain in a vat hooked up to electrodes that make it seem that way? Could you ever rule this out as a possibility? Starting with skeptical concerns like this one, we will consider various questions about belief and knowledge, such as: when are we justified in our beliefs? How, if ever, do we have knowledge? Can knowledge be relative? And what, if any, are the social dimensions of belief and knowledge? No Prerequisites. Not open to pre-college students.