Philosophy Courses for Fall 2012

FYS 100 – Living Longer, Living Better: Ethics, Biotechnology, and Human Enhancement – Ana Iltis
TR – 9:30-10:45 am – Tribble Hall A307

Attempts to make humans stronger, smarter, faster, better looking, and less prone to disease, to restore health and function, and to ward off death are found throughout history. Biotechnological advances have introduced a new level of enhancement regenerative possibilities, many of which raise important questions about who we are and what we may and may not do in the pursuit of health, excellence or perfection. This course will examine uses of technology from pharmaceuticals to surgery to genetic interventions aimed at making humans live longer, better lives. We will discuss ethical and policy issues related to biotechnology and human enhancement.

FYS 100 - G.K. Chesterton and Ayn Rand - Patrick Toner
MWF – 9:00-9:50 am - Tribble Hall A307

This seminar covers the work of GK Chesterton and Ayn Rand. We will study fiction and non-fiction in an attempt to understand the philosophical and political views of the authors. Major works to be read include Rand’s Atlas Shrugged and Chesterton’s The Man Who Was Thursday.

PHI 111 – Basic Problems of Philosophy – Christian Miller
MWF – 9:00-9:50 am - Tribble Hall A306 – INCOMING FRESHMEN ONLY
MWF – 11:00-11:50 am – Tribble A305 – INCOMING FRESHMEN ONLY

This course will be concerned with some of the most challenging and interesting questions in all of human experience. For example, we will consider some of the arguments for the existence of God, whether God would allow evil to exist, whether faith is compatible with reason, whether there is an objective morality, whether we should be moral at the expense of self-interest, whether the death penalty is morally permissible, and what we should do about famine. In each case, we will examine particular questions not only with an aim at arriving at the truth, but also with an aim at determining what relevance these questions have to our ordinary lives. The text will be Joel Feinberg and Russ Shafer-Landau, Reason and Responsibility (Wadsworth Press, most recent edition) and our readings will be drawn from both classic and contemporary sources.

PHI 164 – Contemporarey Moral Problems – Earl Crow
TR – 11:00 -12:15 - WING 209
TR – 2:00 – 3:15 - WING 209

A study of pressing ethical issues in contemporary life, such as abortion, euthanasia, animal rights, affirmative action, marriage, cloning, pornography, and capital punishment.
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PHI 111 – Basic Problems of Philosophy – Adam Pelser
MW – 4:00-5:15 p.m. – Tribble A305

This course offers a survey of the central problems and questions in philosophy. After motivating the subject (What is philosophy? Why study philosophy?) and setting it within the context of becoming intellectually virtuous, we will consider perennial philosophical questions like: Can we know anything? What does it mean to say we know something? Why do some believe that God exists and others do not? Are the presence, widespread distribution, and horrendous kinds of pain and suffering evidence against God’s existence? What are faith and reason, and are they compatible? How are the mind and brain/body related? Do we have free will and, if so, what is its nature? What, if anything, makes actions moral or immoral? How should we understand the question, “What is the meaning of life”? Is it coherent? Does it have an answer(s)? The goal of our studies will be at least threefold: (1) to promote a fuller understanding of the central issues in western philosophical history, (2) to deepen your appreciation of how your current beliefs about the world are set within the larger context of this history, and (3) to further develop your capacity to think and write critically, which will profit you regardless of your field of study and vocational goals.

PHI 112 – Introduction to Philosophical Ideas - Charles Lewis
MWF – 11:00 – 11:50 p.m. – Tribble Hall A306

This course, after examining the common sense and religious background of the first scientific thinkers or philosophers, turns to the study of Plato and Aristotle, the major shapers of pre-modern scientific, theological, and philosophical thought. Then the course turns to Descartes, the first great architect of the modern scientific and philosophical ways of thinking. An examination of the new Cartesian science of nature and its momentous departure from pre-modern belief in the teleology of all natural processes is followed by the study of Hume, one of Descartes’ major critics, who takes modern skepticism to a new level. Twentieth-century existential nihilism is introduced along the way in order to consider its place in modern thought and its radical rejection of conventional assumptions about the meaning or purpose of human existence. Attention is given throughout to how an examination of modern and pre-modern ways of thinking can help us to understand contemporary conceptions of self and world.

PHI 116 – Meaning and Happiness – Julian Young - INCOMING FRESHMEN ONLY
TR – 2:00-3:15 p.m. – Tribble Hall A307

Beginning with Plato (c. 400 BCE) and ending with Foucault (died 1984) the course will look at the views of Western philosophers who have discussed the question of how to live a happy, meaningful life. Particular attention will be paid to 'post-death-of-God' philosophers (e.g. Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, Marx, Sartre, Camus, Heidegger) who reject the traditional Christian answer to the question of meaning and seek to provide an
alternative. Since these philosophers all (a) argue for their positions and (b) disagree with each other, we shall improve our skills in critical thinking in seeing with whom we agree (if anyone) and with whom we disagree. At the end of the course we should have an outline grasp of the history of Western philosophy.

**PHI 160 – Introduction to Political Philosophy – Adrian Bardon**  
**MWF – 5:00 – 5:50 p.m. – Tribble Hall A306**

From what does government derive its authority? Is the proper purpose of organized society to protect individual rights, or to promote the general welfare? Is there a basic right to property? Should community moral values override individual choice? This course examines the role of views about justice in determining attitudes about liberty, equality, and authority, and, in so doing, provides an overview of major issues in social and political thought.

**PHI 164 – Contemporary Moral Problems – Adam Kadlac**  
**TR – 9:30-10:45 a.m. – Tribble Hall A306**  
**TR – 12:30-1:45 p.m. – Tribble Hall A306**  
**TR – 3:30-4:45 p.m. - Tribble Hall A306**

Study of pressing ethical issues in contemporary life, such as abortion, euthanasia, animal rights, affirmative action, marriage, cloning, pornography, and capital punishment.  
*This course contributes towards satisfying the Division I requirement.*

**PHI 164 – Contemporary Moral Problems – Emily Austin**  
**MWF – 9:00-9:50 am – Tribble Hall A305**  
**MWF – 10:00-10:50 a.m. – Tribble Hall A306**

**PHI 165 – Intro to Philosophy of Law - Clark Thompson**  
**TR – 2:00 – 3:15 p.m. – Tribble Hall A306**  
**TR – 3:30 – 4:45 p.m. – Tribble Hall C115**

An examination of prominent legal principles and cases. Topics include the rule of law, judicial review, constitutional interpretation, the use of criminal law to enforce morality, the requirements for criminal liability, punishment, the right to privacy, and obscenity.

**PHI 232 – Ancient Greek Philosophy – Emily Austin**  
**MW – 12:30-1:45 p.m. – Tribble A306**

This course examines some of the high-water marks of philosophy in ancient Greece. We will discuss a wide-range of philosophical problems: the justification of knowledge, the content of the good life, the nature of matter and change, the parts of animals, and the source of political obligation. Attention will be paid to the way these
questions unfolded in their historical context, as well as how ancient treatments compare to contemporary efforts.

PHI 241 – Modern Philosophy – Clark Thompson  
TR – 11:00 – 12:15 - Tribble Hall A307

Modern Philosophy. Our main focus will be on five works: *Meditations on First Philosophy* (1641), by René Descartes; *Discourse on Metaphysics* (1686), by G.W. Leibniz; *An Essay concerning Human Understanding* (1690), by John Locke; *An Enquiry concerning Human Understanding* (1748), by David Hume; and *Dialogues concerning Natural Religion* (1779), by Hume. In addition, we shall discuss selected topics from Nicolas Malebranche (causation, evil) and George Berkeley (causation, evil).

PHI 280 – Topics: Character and Virtue - Adam Pelser  
TR – 9:30 – 10:45 a.m. – Tribble Hall B116

This is a course in the branch of ethics known as moral psychology. In light of challenges from social psychology to the existence of character traits we will explore the nature of character traits and ask whether anyone actually has them. We will also consider how we might come to know whether someone has a particular trait, whether there is any practical or theoretical value in reflecting on virtues (and vices) of character, and what factors influence which traits, if any, we count as virtues. To help us answer these questions we will examine one recent in-depth treatment of individual virtues – that of Robert C. Roberts – and focus throughout the course on various important relationships between emotions and character.

PHI 363 – Philosophy of Law – Win-chiat Lee  
TR – 12:30 – 1:45 p.m. – Tribble Hall A307

What is law? Does law have to be just or reasonable in order to be binding? Can we interpret the law without exercising moral judgment? These are some of the more general questions regarding the nature of law and legal reasoning that will be discussed in the first part of the course. In the second part of the course, we will explore the moral limits of criminal law and discuss some of the philosophical issues regarding individual liberty in American Constitutional Law--issues such as the legislation of morals, freedom of expression, and legal paternalism. In the third and final part of the course, we will deal with the extent of responsibility and liability in tort and criminal law, including the problem of the insanity defense. The overall topic is the relation of law to morality.
PHI 372/672 – Philosophy of Religion - Charles Lewis
TR – 3:30-4:45 p.m. – Tribble Hall A307

An examination of such questions as the following: What is religion? Are the gods (of polytheism) dead or dying? What about God? How is religious belief to be explained? Is it a symptom of some underlying human weakness, need, or biological process? Or is it a response to the sacred? How could anyone know? Must believers rely on something less than knowledge? Are philosophical proofs the way to knowledge of God? Is the “problem of evil” a metaphysical problem? A theological problem? A critical problem? How are religious beliefs like and unlike metaphysical, moral, and modern scientific beliefs?

*Note: Officially, this class meets from 3:30 to 4:45, but in fact the class generally lets out considerably later than 4:45. If you cannot stay for the entire class, Professor Lewis will work with you outside of class time so that you do not miss any of the material.

PHI 374 – Philosophy of Mind – Owen Flanagan
W – 3:30- 6:00 p.m. – Tribble Hall A307

Humans, and possibly certain other creatures, are conscious. Life would have no personal meaning, it wouldn't matter one bit (to each of us individually, at any rate), if it were not for consciousness. But what is consciousness? Can consciousness be understood in physical terms? How is being conscious related, if it is, to being free? The course will examine the main problems in the philosophy of mind: the nature of consciousness, the mind-body relation, free-will vs. determinism, the nature of personal identity, the possibility of artificial intelligence. Nothing less than the meaning of life and the nature of morality rest on our understanding of our minds. **

PHI 375 – Philosophy of Language – Stavroula Gleazkos
WF – 11:00 – 12:15 a.m.– Tribble Hall A307

We use language to talk about the world – for example, by uttering the sentence “The cat is on the mat,” I tell you how things are with the cat and the mat. But how does this work? Why are the sounds that I have produced words, and why do they have the meanings that they do? If Superman is Clark Kent, do the names “Superman” and “Clark Kent” have the same meaning? Can the sentence “Anne let the cat out of the bag” be true, even if Anne has never actually allowed any cats to escape from bags? In this class, we will examine answers to these (and other) questions that have been offered by contemporary analytic philosophers.

PHI 377 – Metaphysics – Patrick Toner
MWF – 10:00 – 10:50 a.m.– Tribble Hall A307

This course will focus on some important debates in contemporary analytic metaphysics. Among other things, we will talk about idealism, naturalism, properties, substance, persons and personal identity.
PHI 378 – Philosophy of Space and Time – Adrian Bardon  
WF – 2:00 – 3:15 p.m. - Tribble Hall A307  
An examination of philosophical approaches to space and time from the Presocratic period to the present. Issues discussed include the reality of the passage of time, paradoxes of change and motion, puzzles about time-awareness, the status of space and time as entities in their own right, spacetime and relativity, time and freedom of the will, and the possibility of time-travel.

PHI 385/685 – Seminar: Tragic Effect: Philosophy and Drama – Julian Young  
TR – 11:00 – 12:15 – Tribble C216  
What is tragedy? Why do we derive pleasure from fictional portrayals of events which, in real life, would horrify us? Does tragedy have to be about kings and queens? Does it have to observe 'the unities'? Does the tragic hero have to have a 'tragic flaw'? What is 'catharsis'? Is Shakespeare inferior to Sophocles? We shall try to answer these and other questions with the help of, among others, Plato, Aristotle, Hegel, Nietzsche, Heidegger, Benjamin, Camus, Arthur Miller and Slavoj Žižek. On three evenings we shall watch Sophocles' Antigone, Shakespeare's Hamlet and Miller's Death of a Salesman.