SUMMER 2015 PHILOSOPHY DEPARTMENT COURSE OFFERINGS

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

FIRST SUMMER SESSION:

PHIL-UA 1; Central Problems in Philosophy; MTWR 3:30-5:05; Ian Grubb

This course is an introduction to four philosophical questions: Is the world completely determinate and, if so, does this mean we don't have free will? What is it that makes you the same person now that you were as a child? Are there objective facts about what is right and wrong, or are these facts relative or subjective in some way? And to whom, if anyone, do we have obligations? In addition to achieving a better understanding of these issues, we will focus on developing our skills at analyzing and constructing arguments, both in writing and in discussion.

PHIL-UA 4; Life and Death; MTWR 1:30-3:05; Mike Zhao

Life is everything that there is, and death is everything else. In this course, we'll explore both of these topics. We'll ask questions like: Is death a bad thing? How does the fact that I'll die affect how I should live my life? If human beings could live forever, would that be a good thing? Do I need to think that humanity will outlive me in order to think that my projects have meaning? If I'm glad to be alive, how should I feel toward the long chain of historical events (many of them horrible) that led to my existence?

PHIL-UA 20; History of Ancient Philosophy; MTWR 6:30-8:35; Eli Alshanetsky

Examination of the major figures and movements in Greek philosophy, especially Plato and Aristotle. The focus of the course will be on ancient epistemology (theory of knowledge), metaphysics, and philosophy of mind.

PHIL-UA 45; Political Philosophy; MTWR 11:30-1:05; Daniel Waxman

This course provides an introduction to some of the central problems of political philosophy, many of which are the subject of deep controversies in public life. The two issues on which we will primarily focus are political authority and distributive justice.

Questions of political authority ask why, and to what extent, governments have (or could have) legitimate power over their citizens. States are unique among social institutions in that they claim a special authority to impose coercion on their citizens. Do they have such authority in the first place? If so, does it arise from the consent of the governed? And if not, where does it come from? Are there limits on what a democratically elected government can permissibly do, and if so, why?
Questions of distributive justice ask how, morally speaking, resources should be distributed. Is capitalism a just economic system, even if it leads to the unequal distribution of wealth? Can people ever be said to deserve their income? Should the government seek economic equality, and if so, what kind of equality should it seek?

**PHIL-UA 70; Logic; MTWR 1:30-3:05; Dan Hoek**

This course is a first introduction to logic. Logic is the study of how to reason well, or – putting it differently – how to make good arguments. It is an absolutely essential tool in philosophy and in mathematics, and a basic schooling in logic will benefit anyone who needs proficiency in the art of reasoning and argumentation.

In this course, you will learn what a valid argument is, and you will learn methods for checking whether or not a given argument is valid. You will also learn how to use and understand formal logical languages, and how to translate English arguments into the language of logic. This will enable you to better assess other people’s arguments, and also to produce better arguments yourself.

Topics include propositional logic, predicate logic, formalisation, validity and proof.

**PHIL-UA 78; Metaphysics; MTWR 3:30-5:05; Daniel Fogal**

This course will be a topical introduction to metaphysics. We will address questions such as: What is it to be a person? Do people have free will? What kind of changes can a person undergo and still remain the same person? What is the relationship between mind and brain? Is the physical universe all there is? What is the nature of time and space? What does it mean to say one event causes another? What is it for certain state of affairs to be necessary? Or for it to be possible? What is a law of nature?

**PHIL-UA 80; Philosophy of Mind; MTWR 6-7:35; Andrew Lee**

This course will examine central issues in the philosophy of mind, with a particular focus on the mind-body problem. Some of the questions examined will include: What is the relationship between the mind and the brain? Is there an explanatory gap between the experiential and the physical? Could a robot be conscious, and how would we know? What are the theoretical commitments of various theories of consciousness? Readings will be primarily comprised of contemporary texts and articles.

**SECOND SUMMER SESSION:**

**PHIL-UA 1; Central Problems in Philosophy; MTWR 1:30-3:05; Martin Abreu**

This course is an introduction to the methods of philosophy by way of some of its most interesting problems. The topics will include but are not limited to:
Personal identity: What makes you the particular person that you are? If your body was destroyed and all your thoughts and memories were transferred into a different body, would that person still be you?

The nature of goodness: What is it for an action to be morally good? Is it for that action to make everyone happy? Is it for that action to fulfill your duties?

Thoughts: It's widely accepted that people can think, but what makes us capable of thinking? Could robots think? What would they have to be like in order to think?

**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 Descartes, Spinoza, Leibniz, Locke, Hume, and Kant. We will study a variety of topics in metaphysics & epistemology including knowledge and skepticism, causation, the relationship between mind and body, essence and identity, 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; Ang Tong**

This course will examine fundamental questions of moral philosophy: What are our most basic values, and which of them are specifically moral values? What are the ethical principles, if any, by which we should judge our actions, ourselves, and our lives? The course will begin by covering three major approaches to these questions: Deontologism, Utilitarianism, and Virtue Ethics. We will then turn out attention to more specific questions about the nature of moral norms, how we can know them, and what we really mean when we use them to criticize or praise others. The course will end with a detailed treatment of some contemporary, hot-button ethical controversies selected by the class.

**PHIL-UA 52; Philosophy of Law; MTWR 11:30-1:05; Emilio Mora**

This class will be a seminar-style course on the philosophy of law. We will examine some fundamental issues in the philosophy of law with a particular emphasis on issues relating to political theory. Topics will include the nature of law and its relation to morality; the obligation to obey the law; debates over constitutional interpretation; the relation of judicial review to democracy; taxation; punishment; and property.

**PHIL-UA 70; Logic; MTWR 6-7:35; Mihailis Diamantis**

This course is an introduction to first-order logic (FOL) and to methods of proving results within FOL. Topics include: syntax in FOL, truth-functional operators, quantifiers, logical equivalence and consequence, tautological equivalence and consequence, proof by cases, proof by contradiction, formal rules of proof in FOL, and translation between FOL and English.