Description:

This course satisfies the introductory requirement for students taking the minor in Faith, Peace and Justice Studies. Other students interested in examining the problems of building a just society are welcome. This course introduces the student to the principal understandings of justice that have developed in the Western philosophical and theological traditions. Care is taken to relate the theories to concrete, practical and political problems, and to develop good reasons for choosing one way of justice rather than another. The relationship of justice to the complementary notion of peace will also be examined. Special attention is paid to the contribution of Catholic theology in the contemporary public conversation about justice and peace. Select problems may include human rights, hunger and poverty, and ecological justice.
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Values in Social Services and Health Care

Level 1 – Undergraduate Elective

Description:

"But you know, there are no children here. They've seen too much to be children."

LaJoe Rivers, *There Are No Children Here*

"Homelessness in America begins at home."

Kathleen Hirsch, *Songs From The Alley*

"We can degrade people by caring for them; and we can degrade people by not caring for them."

Steven Marcus, *Doing Good*

Through readings, lectures, discussions, field placements and written work, we will pursue some of the questions raised by the facts, philosophies, and statements listed above. We hope to do more, too. Among the objectives for *Values in Social Services and Health Care* are: (1) communicate an understanding of the social services and health care delivery systems and introduce you to experts who work in these fields; (2) explore ethical problems of allocations of limited resources; (3) discuss topics that include, violence prevention, gangs, homelessness, mental illness, innovative nursing initiatives, economic inequality, community wealth ventures, and the law; (4) consider possibilities for positive changes in the social service and health care system.

Students may take this course with 2 grading options. Option A includes an 8-hour per week field placement with PULSE. Option B includes a 4-hour per week placement with 4Boston or a similar commitment.
PL 259 01 Perspectives on War and Aggression
TH 327/SC 250

Matthew Mullane

Level 1 – Undergraduate Elective

Description:

The Faith, Peace, and Justice Program sponsors this course as an introduction to the field of Peace Studies. The course is organized along multidisciplinary lines with faculty members from various departments responsible for each topic of discussion. This interdisciplinary approach demonstrates the varied and complex perspectives on the causes of war and conflict. The course then develops, out of the resources of these respective disciplines, comprehensive, intelligent insights into the resolution of conflicts and the development of creative alternatives to war. Topics may include: the complex causes of violence and war, use and abuse of political violence, humanitarian intervention, ethics of war and peace, conflict resolution, restorative justice post-bellum, religion and violence, and theories of non-violence.

Requirements:

Book Review, Mid-Term and Final Exam, Research Paper.

Reading:

PL 261 01  Telling Truths: Writing for the Cause of Justice

Kathleen Hirsch  W 3-450

Level 1 – Undergraduate Elective

Description:

This PULSE elective will explore writing as a tool for social change. Students will read and experiment with a variety of written forms – memoir, creative non-fiction, opinion and essay – to tell the "truth" as they experience it in their own encounters with social injustice. This workshop is intended to provide a comprehensive introduction to the range of literary strategies that social prophets and witnesses have used, and are using today, to promote the cause of justice.

Requirements:

A PULSE, 4-Boston or other voluntary involvement strongly recommended.

Readings:

Selected works of contemporary fiction, urban poetry, rap music, oral history, memoir, and non-fiction.
PL 264 01/02

Logic

Mark Thomas

M W F 2 / M W F 3

Level 1 – Undergraduate Elective

Description:

This course is an introduction to logic, the art of evaluating arguments and reasoning correctly. The course has two main parts. (1) In the first part, we will concentrate on informal logic. Here we will discuss the properties of arguments and their components. In particular, we will discuss what distinguishes a good argument from a bad argument. (2) In the second part, we will study formal logic. Here we will learn how to translate arguments into formal language and manipulate that language.

Along the way, we will have some discussion of how we know logic, the relationship of logic to reality, and the limitations of logical reasoning.

Requirements:

Two Exams and a Final
Weekly Quizzes
Homework Exercises

Readings:

PL 264 03 Logic

Matthew Robinson T TH 12*

Level 1 – Undergraduate Elective

Description:

This course provides an introduction to the basic techniques and principles of logical reasoning. The course covers formal logic and informal logic.

Requirements:

Weekly homework assignments, mid-term and final exam.

Readings:

Photocopied handouts to be made available on class website
PL 293 01  Cultural and Social Structure I

David McMenamin  T 4:30-6:20

Level 1 – Undergraduate Elective

Prerequisites: Limited to members of the PULSE Council

Description:

This course is one in the four semester cycle of courses designed for members of the Boston College PULSE Council. In this course we attempt to lay a foundation for understanding contemporary ways in which people choose to structure -- literally and figuratively -- the way they live together. Our study centers on questions about how our cultural and social structures are the concrete expression of what we value, of the things we consider meaningful and important.

The texts we have chosen to guide us in this pursuit will lead us to raise these questions in a way that will direct our focus somewhat to western, particularly North American ways of creating these cultural and social structures.

As the late Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives, that distinguished Boston College alumnus whose name adorns our library, Thomas P. O'Neill was fond of saying: "All politics is local." No doubt he derived that from his reading of Aristotle's Ethics. Understanding that as a sort of underlying theme of all four semesters of this course, we hope to look closely at the origins and development of some of the guiding themes and ideas that ground those local politics: the structuring of the culture in which we find ourselves today.

Accordingly, we have selected texts from what might appear to be a broad range of disciplines. As usual for this seminar, some may initially appear to have little to do with what you think of when you hear the word "philosophy." They all, however, have a great deal to do with what you might need to think about when trying to answer such questions as: "Is there a philosophy behind what it means to be a citizen of a particular country?" or "What does it mean to be a member of a particular society?"

Readings:

PL 403 01  Does God Exist?
Ronald Tacelli, S.J.  M W 3*

Level 1 – Undergraduate Elective

Description:

This course aims to be a serious examination, for capable undergraduates, of arguments for and against the existence of God.

Requirements:

Short Papers
Oral Exams on papers

Readings:

Various
PL 405 01 Greek Philosophy

Gary Gurtler, S.J. T TH 10 30*

Level 1 - Undergraduate Elective

Description:

Ancient philosophers were fascinated by human language as revealing human nature and our ability to know the rest of reality. By focusing on texts that focus on the use and limits of language, we can learn how the ancients came to understand and explain the world around them in several interconnected ways, related to truth, the good, and the beautiful, and the corresponding human activities, knowing, acting, and making.

For Plato, the study of language and art looks toward the beautiful, holding the metaphysical structure of his system in mutual tension with its starting point in human experience and the various levels of knowledge. From this vantage, Platonic dualism presents an account of reality that is never merely theoretical, but necessarily contains a strong dimension of action.

For Aristotle in the *Poetics* the analysis of action in poetry reveals not only the nature of poetry but the philosophic character of human agents as imitators. The conjunction of the theoretical and practical in the *Poetics* comes through the cathartic function of drama. Longinus continues the tradition of examining rhetoric in Plato and Aristotle, but emphasizes the nature of great writing.

Plotinus returns to Plato's discussion of human nature in terms of beauty, which he traces not only to the forms as good, but examines the nature of the self as double. The lower self is centered on reason and the empirical, while the true self is found in the intelligible world and comes to rest in the One.

Requirements:

Midterm and final exams, term paper (10-15 pp.), consultation, participation, class summaries.

Reading:

Plotinus, selections from I 6[1], "On Beauty," and V 8[31] "On the Intelligible Beauty."
PL 406 01  Modern Philosophy

Eileen C. Sweeney  T Th 10:30*

Level 1 – Undergraduate Elective

Description:

In this course, we will work to develop an understanding of the major figures and questions of the Modern period, situating them in relationship to the Medieval world out of which and in reaction to which they were formed and as forming the intellectual foundations of the modern world. We will consider major texts by thinkers such as Descartes, Leibniz, Hobbes, Locke, Hume, and Kant, covering issues of metaphysics, epistemology, ethics and political theory.

Requirements:

Two tests, an 8 page paper, final exam (take-home)

Readings:

Descartes, Meditations, Discourse on Method
Leibniz, Discourse on Metaphysics, Monadology
Locke, An Essay Concerning Human Understanding, Two Treatises of Government, Letter Concerning Religious Toleration
Hume, A Treatise of Human Nature, Dialogues on Natural Religion
Kant, Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics; Perpetual Peace and Other Essays
PL 423 01  Spanish American Philosophy

Gary Gurtler, S.J.  T TH 4:30-6:20

Level 1 – Undergraduate Elective

Satisfies the Cultural Diversity Core Requirement

Description:

The course is designed to give the student an opportunity to look at some fundamental philosophical issues regarding human nature and the origins and development of human thought from a fresh perspective. Unamuno’s Tragic Sense of Life presents a critique of the rationalism of modern European thought by focusing on human life as dream, theater and struggle. His work forms part of the existentialism current in Europe at the turn of the last century, but with the tragic sense that derives from the Spanish character going back to Cervantes’ Don Quixote. Octavio Paz, in The Labyrinth of Solitude, explores the meaning of human existence through the lens, or perhaps the mask, of the Mexican quest for identity at the end of the present century. Here is a dual task in addressing Mexico’s colonial and Indian past as well as the challenge of the Anglo-Saxon culture to its north. Paz works these out through the mask of dissimulation, the day of the dead and solitude of self and others. Xavier Zubiri, finally, will present a Spanish version of Twentieth Century phenomenology. Zubiri traces human knowing as sentient thinking to primordial apprehension, which expands to the field through logos and to the world through thought.

Requirements:

Class summaries, class presentation, 10-15 page paper, midterm and final exam.

Reading:

Freud and Philosophy

Vanessa Rumble

Level 1 - Undergraduate Elective

Description:

The first half of the semester will be dedicated to a chronological reading of Freudian texts. We will examine (1) Freud’s and Breuer’s first formulation of the nature and etiology of hysteria (Studies on Hysteria), (2) Freud’s groundbreaking work in dream interpretation and the nature of unconscious processes (The Interpretation of Dreams and Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis), (3) Freud’s attempt to apply his novel theory of unconscious mechanisms to cultural anthropology as well as individual psychology (Totem and Taboo), and (4) the implications of the ongoing revisions in Freud’s classification of the instincts (The Ego and the Id, Beyond the Pleasure Principle, Civilization and Its Discontents). In the second half of the semester, we will survey the developments which have taken place in psychoanalytic theory and practice since Freud’s day, including some of the more creative and philosophically fruitful readings of Freud. We will work with primary sources selected from the following: Anna Freud, Melanie Klein, David Winnicott, Heinz Kohut, Herbert Marcuse, Paul Ricoeur, Jacques Lacan, Rene Girard, and Julia Kristeva.

Requirements:

Mid-term examination; five reflection papers--two pages, typed; final exam

Reading:

Sigmund Freud, selections from Studies on Hysteria, "Screen Memories" "The Psychical Mechanism of Forgetfulness," selections from Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis; Totem and Taboo; Mourning and Melancholia; Beyond the Pleasure Principle; Civilization and Its Discontents

The course introduces, contextualizes, explains, and critiques representative writings by such Western philosophical thinkers as Plato, Aristotle, Epicurus, Epictetus, Aquinas, T. Hobbes, D. Hume, I. Kant, J. Bentham, J.S. Mill, K. Marx, F. Nietzsche, and F.H. Bradley.
The purpose of this course is to explore the issues of good and evil and how human beings succeed or fail to meet the challenge such issues pose. The Holocaust, the tragic series of events which ruptured modern western morality, will be examined from a variety of perspectives (literary, cinematic, philosophical, theological, and political). We shall study the testimony of both its victims and its perpetrators. The special emphasis of the course will be devoted to a consideration of the intellectual and moral factors which motivated resistance or excused indifference. This consideration will be performed by a cooperative investigation into the ethical life-histories of representative individuals from this period. What part of themselves did they think of as primarily concerned with moral conduct? What form of obligation did they think of as specifically ethical? To what training did they commit themselves in order to develop as ethical beings? Why did they desire to be moral or why did they find it untroubling to be immoral? We shall conclude the course with an interpretation of the Holocaust for contemporary morality and of its theological significance for Christians and Jews.

Requirements:

The first major requirement of the course will be one's work on the analysis of the ethical formation and viewpoint of a selected figure who will serve as a paradigm of a specific group (German or Jew, Nazi or resister, intellectual or laborer, morally outraged or indifferent, etc.). Projects will be determined near the beginning of the semester and the materials for the investigations identified (court cases, memoirs, interviews, etc.) This will be submitted as a paper and amount to 50% of the grade. The second major requirement of the course will be the keeping of a journal in which the student will consider the readings and the classroom discussions as well as the documentaries treated in the course.

Readings:

2. C. Browning, *Ordinary Men*
4. H. Arendt, *The Portable Hannah Arendt*
5. M. Mayer, *They Thought They Were Free*
6. C. Browning, *Ordinary Men*
7. G. Sereny, *Into That Darkness*
PL 470 01  Philosophy of World Religions

Peter Kreeft

Level 1 – Undergraduate Elective

Satisfies Cultural Diversity Core Requirement

Description:

The purposes of this course are (a) to familiarize students with religious data: the teaching of each of the world’s major religions; (b) to understand, empathize with, and appreciate them; (c) to appreciate one’s own religion (or lack of one) better by comparison – like appreciating one’s native language through studying a foreign language; (d) to philosophize critically and rationally about a subject that is not in itself critical and rational; (e) to question and search for a universal nature or core of religion if possible; (f) to raise and explore the question of religious truth: do religions make truth-claims? If so, do they contradict each other? Can all be true?” How does one decide which to believe? (g) to explore differences and similarities among world religions, especially between Eastern and Western religions; to try to find common patterns; (h) to foster dialog especially between Christianity and other world religions; (i) to examine key concepts like “pluralism”, “equality”, and “uniqueness” in trying to compare world religions; (j) to find and evaluate alternative possible answers to the question of comparative religions such as “exclusivism”, “inclusivism”, and mediating positions; (k) to explore the relation between religion and morality, religion and life in different cultures; (l) to focus on religion’s cultural role as offering an overall meaning and purpose to human life and everything in it, rather than being a specialized “area” of life.

Requirements:

mid-semester exam, final exam and original paper

Reading:

Huston Smith, The Religions of Man; Hermann Hesse, Siddhartha; Tucker Calloway, Zen Way, Jesus Way; Lao Tzu, Tao Te Ching; assorted articles and excerpts from scriptures; Peter Kreeft, Between Heaven and Hell; Peter Kreeft, Between Allah and Jesus.
PL 550 01/UN 550 01  
Capstone: Building a Life  
David McMenamin  
M 3-5:20

Level 1 – Undergraduate Elective

Prerequisites: PULSE: Person and Social Responsibility I & II

Description:

This Capstone course is designed for seniors who have taken PULSE. Using an approach based in It invites students to explore the ways that they might integrate their PULSE service and learning experiences into their post graduate choices.

Sample Readings:

Christian Norberg-Schulz, selections from Genius Loci; The Concept of Dwelling.  
Martin Heidegger, Discourse on Thinking  
Lorraine Hansberry, Raisin in the Sun  
Andrew Delbanco, The Real American Dream  
Tracy Kidder, House  
William Shore, Cathedral Within

Requirements:

Seminar leadership: Each week’s seminar will be led by two of the students, working together to prepare, based on the question of how the reading for that week can be understood in relation to the theme of the course.

Four papers, including final exam.

Brief weekly writing assignments on the readings
Buddhist Thought and Practice

John Makransky

TH 4:30-6:50

Level 3 – Undergraduate / Graduate

Description:

A study of philosophy in early Buddhism, Southeast Asian Buddhism, Zen, and Pure Land traditions of East Asia, noting how Buddhist philosophical concepts inform and are informed by practices of meditation, mindfulness, ethical trainings, and ritual. Students will be instructed in mindfulness exercises (observation of states of mind) to inform our studies, with daily mindfulness practice required. Relevance of Buddhist philosophy today, and in relation to Western philosophy and religion, will be considered throughout.

Requirements:

Weekly writing, midterm, final papers.
Description:

A major goal of this course is to explore some of the complex linkages between political philosophy and legal theory. Emphasis will be placed on the different concepts of 'law', 'human nature', 'reason' and 'human rights' present in the modern tradition. In particular we will be looking for insight into the content and limit of human rights, the relationship between law and morality and politics, the juridification of global society and cosmopolitanism.

This course is intended for those interested or enrolled in our Philosophy and Law program, students planning on pursuing a law degree and those interested in the interface between philosophy, politics, law and international relations.

Course requirements:

Undergraduates: Mid-term oral exam and final take-home exam.
Graduates: a research paper, the topic of which is to be determined by mutual agreement between the student and the instructor.

Students are expected to have read the materials required before class in order to participate in the class discussion. Also, bring the appropriate texts to class.

Reading:

Machiavelli, Niccolo. The Prince
Thomas Hobbes, Leviathan.
John Locke, Second Treatise on Civil Government.
J.J. Rousseau, The First and Second Discourses
Hamilton, Madison, Jay. The Federalist Paper
Immanuel Kant. Perpetual Peace and Other Essays and Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals.
G.W.F. Hegel, Philosophy of Right.
Bruce Ackerman. We the People
John Rawls, Law of Peoples.
A prisoner at Auschwitz, Primo Levi unexpectedly recalled to mind *Inferno* 26, when Ulysses exhorts his tired crew: "Consider well your seed: / You were not born to live as a mere brute does, / But for the pursuit of knowledge and the good." It was, writes Levi, "as if I also was hearing it for the first time: like the blast of a trumpet, like the voice of God. For a moment I forget who I am and where I am."

The *Divine Comedy* may be read from many perspectives: it offers an almost encyclopedic presentation of medieval ethics, philosophy and theology, a strong political vision, and some of the most imaginative, stirring and beautiful poetry ever written. The poem redefined literature and language in Italy, and perhaps throughout Europe. But how does the *Divine Comedy* engage us today both intellectually and spiritually?

The course will ponder the power of literature to give meaning to our lives across centuries and cultures, as well as the case that Dante carefully constructs for the exceptional meaning of his own life, which allows him to journey through the eternal realms.

Each class will be divided into two parts: the first part will be devoted to a lecture on a specific canto or group of cantos. The second part is an open discussion of your questions and responses to the fundamental issues at stake in the assigned cantos.

Our reading will be based on the Durling translation.
PL 518 01 Philosophy of Imagination

Richard Kearney

Level 3 – Undergraduate/Graduate Elective

Description:

Beginning with Biblical and Greek accounts of images and image-making, this course will explore three main paradigm shifts in the western history of imagination: (1) the ancient paradigm of the Mirror (Plato to Augustine); (2) the modern paradigm of the Lamp (Kant to Sartre); (3) the postmodern paradigm of the circular Looking Glass (Lacan to Derrida). The course will conclude with a critical evaluation of the political and ethical functions of imagination in our contemporary civilization of cyber fantasy, simulation and spectacle.

Requirements & Readings:

to be explained in class
This class will explore the central ideas of Friedrich Nietzsche, especially his ethical thinking. We will consider his notorious attacks on traditional ethics, but pay special attention to the positive ethical ideal Nietzsche advocates instead: the "free spirit," Übermensch, or "sovereign individual." This will involve a detailed discussion of Nietzsche's alternative conceptions of conscience, freedom, responsibility, and autonomy. We will also consider how philosophy is important here, exploring Nietzsche's critiques of traditional forms of philosophy and his hopes for a new "philosophy of the future," including the character traits of thinkers and their thinking that he believes constitute philosophical excellence.

Readings:

Class readings will include Nietzsche's Untimely Meditation "Schopenhauer as Educator," Beyond Good and Evil, On the Genealogy of Morals, Twilight of the Idols, The Anti-christ, and Ecce Homo.
Introduction to Feminist Philosophies

PL 526 01

Marina B. McCoy

Level 3 – Undergraduate/Graduate Elective

Description:

"Introduction to Feminist Philosophies" will explore several major approaches to feminist thinking. We will begin with humanist feminist thought and then examine some Marxist, dominance, and postmodern theories, as well as conservative critiques of liberal feminism. We will also look at the intersectionality of race and class with gender. Some of the questions that we will examine are: Are women and men fundamentally identical or are there important and specific gender differences? What is the relevance or non-relevance of gender to work and to participation in civic life? Is there a specifically feminist conception of the family? How are justice and care important elements of various feminist philosophies? What role does class have to play in the interactions of women with men and with one another? Do women of color or women from economically disadvantaged countries have different feminist concerns, or can sexism be understood as a unified problem? How has the feminist movement responded to critiques such as that it is an upper-middle class while movement, or a First world movement? There is no single "feminist" answer to these questions; instead, in this course students will study various responses by both women and men to these questions. Throughout the course, the aim will be both to examine specific claims about gender as well as the ways in which these feminist philosophies are either explicitly or implicitly connected to larger claims about human nature (or the absence of such a nature) and the good.

This course is limited to 25 students.

Men and women of all political persuasions are encouraged to take the class.

Requirements:

In-class discussion
Journals
Midterm exam
Final written independent research project (15-20 pages)

Readings (Required):

Theorizing Feminisms, a reader (eds. Hackett and Haslanger), Oxford U Press.
Readings on bb vista
We badly need a way for us to think together God’s action on the world, ourselves included, and our autonomy. When we speak of Providence, we more often than not think it to be a way for God to set straight what we botched, thereby acting in our stead, not to say in our back.

Aquinas presents us with a deeper and more qualified view of Providence. He understands it as being the way in which God provides every being with the means that enable it to look for its own good and to reach it. God endows His creatures with some elbow-room that increases according to the rung they occupy on the ladder of beings. The higher the creature, the more God entrusted it care for itself. Man as an intelligent being receives freedom of choice and action. The good that is pursued varies according to the level of the created beings. It stretches from simple identity with itself to survival of the species and finally to moral perfection and salvation. The strategies required for creatures to reach their good are more and more complicated and involve a larger and larger amount of cooperation between Creator and creatures. In man, providence becomes prudence—the Latin prudentia being taken in the strong meaning of the Greek phronēsis. God’s action becomes the way in which He somehow sets free our very freedom, giving it back the power to choose the good that it could know but not fulfill.

Some knowledge of Latin is highly recommended but not necessary, since passages from Aquinas’ works will be read in an English translation.

**Required readings:**

Description:

Since the dawn of scientific and mathematical speculation in ancient Greece, scientific practices and ideas have posed a variety of challenges to human reflection and the career of philosophy. Scientific knowing has always be viewed as quite different from and even "odd" from the point of view of ordinary, common sense knowing. Among the greatest problems posed is that of defining exactly what it is that deserves to be called "science." This is the task of "philosophy of science."

Historically, there have been a variety of philosophical views of the nature of science; each has been greatly influenced by scientific innovations of its day. We will briefly consider some of these views, and then turn to the topics currently being debated among philosophers of science, especially those stemming from Thomas Kuhn's highly influential book, The Structure of Scientific Revolutions. These debates touch upon such issues as the relation between theories, observations, experimental equipment and motivations for scientific research. They cut to the very heart of the scientific enterprise itself—whether science is the only true form of knowledge or whether there are other kinds; whether there is only one kind of scientific knowing or whether there are several; whether science is knowledge of something real or merely a social construct; whether science is rational or merely ideological.

Requirements:

(1) Each student will be expected to give a short (10-minute) class presentation, relating some event in the history of scientific research to the theme from the readings (20%); (2) a term paper (of 15-20 pages) (45%). (3) Final Exam, (35%).

Reading:

Curd & Cover, The Philosophy of Science; Kuhn, Structure of Scientific Revolutions; Fox Keller, A Feeling for the Organism; and short selections from: Aristotle, Galileo, Hacking, Hanson, Hempel, Lakatos, Lonergan, Popper, Reichenbach, Suppe, Tesh, and Weber
Description:

The brilliance and tragedy of German(+Austrian)-Jewish Culture is decisive for interpreting twentieth century experience. Learning from its thinkers may be crucial for living in the twenty-first. This course will examine writings of some of its major thinkers including Arendt, Buber, Freud, Rosenzweig and several connected to the Frankfurt School. Students will be encouraged to develop their own interest in a particular figure (not limited to the ones named here) or aspect of the culture.

Requirements:

Course journal kept on a weekly basis and term paper are the requirements.

Readings:

I and Thou by Martin Buber
Understanding the Sick and the Healthy by Franz Rosenzweig
Civilization and its Discontents by Sigmund Freud
The Portable Hannah Arendt, edited by Peter Baehr
Heidegger's Jewish Followers, edited by Samuel Fleischacker
Problem of Self-Knowledge

Brian Braman

Level 3 - Undergraduate/Graduate

Description:

This course is inspired by Socrates' imperative and dictum: "Know thy self." Yet what exactly does it mean? A human being is more than a rational animal. In fact we are symbolic beings with a polymorphic consciousness, have language, and a relational existence to others, the cosmos, and transcendence. In order to flesh out more thoroughly what exactly it means to "know thy self" we will focus primarily on the thought of Bernard Lonergan S.J.. Through our encounter with Lonergan's thought we will begin to formulate a partial answer to the question "what does it mean to know thyself." In other words, from Lonergan's perspectives, to know thy self is to personally appropriate yourself as someone who is a knower, chooser, and lover.

Requirements:

Mid-term
Final paper: topic to be determined.

Readings:

The readings will be both primary texts and secondary texts dealing with the thought of Bernard Lonergan
PL 629 01  
Value Theory  
M W 3*  

Jorge Garcia  
Level 3 – Undergraduate/Graduate Elective  

Description:  
The course examines proposals about the nature, types, levels, and sources of value. Readings: Works selected from philosophers including G.E.Moore, M.Scheler, W.D.Ross, N.Hartmann, P.T.Geach, R.Nozick, P.R.Foot, M.J.Zimmeran, T.M.Scanlon, J.J.Thomson.
Postmodern metaphysics as a science of being as being requires both deconstruction and reconstruction in a phenomenology of subjectivity. The question of being, as it was raised in antiquity, was brushed aside in modern philosophy and replaced by questions of epistemology and questions of logic or ontology. It took Heidegger to bring the question of being back to the forefront of philosophy in postmodern times and to keep it as "the task for thinking at the end of philosophy" through his own phenomenology of subjectivity as Dasein. In this course, after our own deconstruction of ancient and modern metaphysics, we shall attempt a reconstruction with a more positive outcome than has been found in Heidegger, stressing anew the analogy of being and its transcendent properties as one, active, true and good.
This interdisciplinary course will first investigate the social, political, psychological, ethical and spiritual aspects of Western cultural development with a special emphasis on scientific and technological metaphors and narratives. We will then focus on the contemporary world, examining the impact of our various technological creations on cultural directions, democratic process, the world of work, quality of life, and especially on the emergent meanings for the terms "citizen" and "ethics" in contemporary society. Students will explore technologies in four broad and interrelated domains: (1) Computer, Media, Communications and Information Technologies, (2) Biotechnology, (3) Globalization, and (4) Environmental Issues.
PL 660 01/LL 660 01  Foundations of Western Law

Thomas Kohler  W TH 10*

Level – Graduate

Description:

A primary goal of this seminar is to place students into a conversation with some of the key thinkers who have shaped our modern Western legal traditions, and to develop a critical framework from which to assess the development of those traditions. In addition to work by Plato and Aristotle, the readings largely will be drawn from 17th, 18th, and 19th Century English, French and German political philosophers representing key figures in the development of the “three waves” of modernity. Themes for discussion include how and in what way common and civil law systems bear the stamp of these philosophers; the relation among religion, law and morality and the problem of human knowing; the concepts of “law”, “reason”, “human nature”; and the foundations of rights theory; the shift from the good to legitimacy; the rise of individualism and the problem of community; culture and its normativity; other topics as they arise in discussion.

Requirements:

Evaluation on the basis of a required oral presentation and short (6-8 page) paper summarizing the structure and key points of the work of one of the authors treated; a weekly, one page (maximum) list of proposed questions and issues raised by that week’s readings; class participation; a final essay (6-8 pages) relating themes in their presentation paper to other authors and themes discussed in the course.
Habermas: Law and Politics

David Rasmussen

Level – Graduate

Description:

Between Facts and Norms, the extraordinary recent work by Jürgen Habermas, is thought by some to be one of the most comprehensive works in political philosophy and law in recent decades. The book with its original thesis about the co-relation between private and public autonomy can be read in the great tradition of the philosophy of law inaugurated by Kant and continued by Fichte, Hegel and Weber. In recent times Habermas has written essays on religion and politics, globalization and human rights, cosmopolitanism and international law. In this seminar we will read key chapters of Between Facts and Norms and explore the significant more recent writings of Habermas on law and politics.

Requirements:

A research paper on a topic relevant to the course and selected with the approval of the professor will be due at the end of the semester. Course attendance is mandatory. Class participation is expected. Presentations will be possible.

Readings:

The Legitimacy of Mankind

Rémi Brague

Level - Graduate

Description:

What historians of ideas call "Western humanism" developed along four steps: (1) Higher cultures drew a firm dividing-line between man and other living beings. (2) Greek philosophy and the Bible, followed by the Church Fathers and Renaissance thinkers, stressed Man's greater dignity. (3) Early modern times, since Francis Bacon and Descartes, put forward the project of man's mastery over nature. (4) Finally, 19th Century philosophy conceived of Man as the "supreme being" (A. Comte) who doesn't tolerate any higher power besides himself (K. Marx).

The 20th Century called into doubt the first three steps: man's lording it over nature endangers the very survival of man; man is not more worth than the other living beings; it is not even radically different from them.

Furthermore, mankind is quite concretely menaced, both from the outside by nuclear war, pollution of the environment, demographic collapse, etc. and from the inside by diverse "transhumanist" projects.

The "humanist" project is menaced, and the basic question of the legitimacy of mankind must come to the fore. Why should we promote, or simply protect, mankind? The question can't be answered unless the fourth assumption, the so-called "exclusive humanism", is itself called into doubt.

Readings of short selected passages from a wide range of sources will be assigned for each hour.
Narrative and Interpretation

Richard Kearney

Level - Graduate

Description:

This course will explore the philosophical implications of narrative imagination and identity. Beginning with Aristotle's analysis of *mythos-mimesis* in the *Poetics*, the seminar will then focus on a detailed discussion of Paul Ricoeur's *Time and Narrative* (vols 1 and 3). Considerable attention will be given to the interpretation of principal genres of narrative – myth, chronicle, fable, history and fiction. The class will discuss the critical implications of a hermeneutics of narrative for a) the interweaving of story and history, including the ‘case histories’ of psychoanalysis, b) testimonial literature of holocaust and genocide, c) personal and political narratives of identity, d) an ethics of oneself as another.

NOTE: For those interested the seminar will offer occasions for interaction with other graduate students engaged in the study of narrativity at Boston College (History and Fine Arts) and Georgetown University (Lannon Narrative seminar). There will also be opportunities for exchanges with international students from three divided cities – Derry, Jerusalem and Mitrovica (Kosovo) - through the interactive website project, ‘Facing Strangers across the Divide’.

Requirements:

active participation, presentation and final research paper.
PL 750 01  Husserl's Experience & Judgment

Andrea Staiti  T 10-12

Level - Graduate

Description:

In this class we will read Husserl's late work *Experience and Judgment*, in which he develops his notion of a transcendental genealogy of logic. Unlike previous works, all strata of constitution are considered in *Experience and Judgment*. He moves bottom up from an analysis of the most rudimentary phenomena of consciousness (affection, temporality, attention), to as subsequent consideration of perception, intentionality and categorical thought. The book shows brilliantly how Husserl's phenomenology overcomes the strictures of Kant's separation of understanding and sensibility and articulates a sort of neo-Leibnizean view that stresses the continuity of all manifestations of the life of consciousness. An effort will be made to link Husserl's analyses with contemporary issues in epistemology and the philosophy of psychology.

Requirements:

Some basic familiarity with Kant's philosophy is recommended.

Readings:

Edmund Husserl, *Experience and Judgment* (Northwestern University Press)
Dan Zahavi, *Husserl's Phenomenology* (Stanford University Press)
A careful reading of Augustine's *Confessions* in the context of other late ancient discussions of motivation, voluntary action, happiness, suffering, and providence. We read the *Confessions* in conjunction with background texts Cicero's *On Ends* and Seneca's *On Providence*. The course will make some reference to recent secondary discussions of "selfhood" in Augustine, and give periodic attention to the material culture of Augustine's lived experience (photos and other information from an N.E.H. research trip to north Africa in 2010).
Hegel's *Phenomenology* takes us from experience in its lowest form as sense certainty to its highest form as absolute knowing, with many stages along the way. This course will be a textual analysis of this very detailed science of the different shapes experience takes in the ascent to Spirit in its purest form. It will insist on method and structure of the argument as well as different key stages in the ascent such as those of mutual recognition in Self-Consciousness, Spirit, and Religion, in order to arrive at a proper conception of the whole of Absolute Knowing in its appearing.
PL 775 01

Plato, *Symposium*

T 4:30-6:20

John Sallis

Level - Graduate

Description:

This will be a lecture course devoted to a close reading of Plato's *Symposium*.

Requirements:

A term paper
PL/TH 779 01

Christian Philosophy

Jeffrey Bloechl

Level - Graduate

Description:

This course will proceed in working seminar format. We will center reflection and discussion on a close reading of Jean-Yves Lacoste's book *Experience and the Absolute*, considered as an exercise in Christian philosophy. After preliminary consideration of early 20th century debate over the possibility and definition of Christian philosophy, Lacoste's book will be read and discussed with reference to positions taken by the authors he engages (Heidegger, Schleiermacher, Hegel) and of the authors who inspire him (Bonhoeffer, John of the Cross). Much of the work will be broadly phenomenological, but with frequent incursions into theology.

Requirements:

Basic understanding of the philosophy of Heidegger is essential; some fundamentals of Christian theology, and familiarity with Hegel and/or Schleiermacher are desirable.

Readings:

selections from works by Bonhoeffer, Hegel, Heidegger, John of the Cross, Schleiermacher

Jean-Yves Lacoste, *Experience and the Absolute*