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Updated 11-5-12
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, poverty and development in Third World, environmental and ecological justice, just war and just peace issues.
PL 160 02  Challenge of Justice
TH 160 02

Meghan Sweeney  M W 3*

Level – Undergraduate

Description:

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, poverty and development in Third World, environmental and ecological justice, just war and just peace issues.
Description:

"Intuition alone is never enough to explain what you see. One must not only learn to trust intuition but also to pursue its leads: to follow hints from peripheral vision but always to dig beyond first impressions; to see through a scene and its many processes, but also to see through it in time to understand how it came to be, and to guess more skillfully at what I might become."
- Grady Clay, *How to Read the American City*

"In our American cities, we need all kinds of diversity."
- Jane Jacobs, *Death and Life of American Cities*

This course is intended for PULSE students who are willing to investigate, analyze, and understand the history, problems, and prospects of Boston neighborhoods. The above quotes by Grady Clay and Jane Jacobs frame our method of investigation. Assignments will require that you spend time observing, researching, and writing about the neighborhood in which your PULSE placement is located.

With the exception of the third session, class meetings in the first half of the semester will meet on campus. (Class #3 will meet in the Prudential Center).

For the second half of the semester, as snow banks give way to slush and sun and blossoms, we will meet in the South End of Boston for a firsthand study of a most intriguing and changing inner-city neighborhood.
PL 262 01  Telling Truths II: Depth Writing as Service

Kathleen Hirsch  W 3-4:50

Level – Undergraduate

Description:

This PULSE elective will enable students to produce a portfolio of writings engage a serious social concern. Class will be run as a writing workshop. Early on in the semester, students will identify an issue they wish to pursue in depth. Class time will be spent sharing students' first-hand experiences in gathering insights into at-risk populations, and discussing how to focus these in published work. We will offer one another feedback on drafts, and will discuss the special ethical, research, and editing challenges such work entails. In the context of students written work, we will study outstanding published models of essays, magazine length articles, and opinion pieces. (*Students may expand on an issue that has affected them personally, or one which they have observed in their service work while at Boston College. Enrollment in Telling Truths I is not required.*)

Requirements:

This is a PULSE elective. In addition to class attendance, students will be expected to maintain on-going involvement with a specific social service agency or service organization, as a "site" at which to gather the raw material for their writing. This can be done either through the PULSE office, 4-Boston, or, with teacher approval, by independent arrangement. The required minimum hours for this is 4 hours.

Readings:

Works by contemporary nonfiction writers engaged in social justice writing.
PL 264 01/02

Logic

Elisabeta Sarca

M W F 2 / M W F 3

Level – Undergraduate

Description:

This course aims to promote reasoning skills, especially the ability to distinguish valid and invalid reasoning. We will study syllogistic logic, propositional logic, informal fallacies, and basic inductive reasoning. We'll use these to analyze hundreds of arguments, many on philosophical topics like morality, the existence of God, free will, and scientific method. Special emphasis will be placed on practice, both in and outside the classroom.

Requirements:

There will be three tests and one cumulative final exam, homework every week, attendance and participation are expected, plus the use of provided software for practice and homework.

Readings:

Logic

Tony Anderson

Level – Undergraduate

Description:

Logic is an attempt to understand good reasoning scientifically. In this course, which is an introduction to both informal and formal logic, mostly formal, we will be investigating some common ways that people make “arguments,” i.e., statements that supposedly provide support for other statements. In our study of good and bad reasoning, we will use several methods for formalizing arguments, and we will also study some basic techniques for doing logical proofs.

Requirements:

Mid-term and final exam, weekly quizzes, homework.

Readings:

A Concise Introduction to Logic, 11th or 10th Edition: Patrick J. Hurley
Introduction to Black Philosophy

Level 1 – Undergraduate Elective
Satisfies Cultural Diversity Core

Description:

The course introduces students to the philosophical examination of important writings by or about persons of African descent. Topics treated may include the morality of community leadership, racism's nature and psychology, African-American oppression and advancement, the content and ethics of racial identity, the reality and construction of races, and racial pride and shame.

Requirements:

Three in-class examinations

Readings:

Will be drawn from works by W. E. B. DuBois, Henry Louis Gates Jr., Cornel West, Lewis Gordon, and others.
PL 407 01

Medieval Philosophy

Jean-Luc Solère

T TH 12*

Level – Undergraduate

Description:

Far from being monolithic and repetitive, the Middle Ages were a creative period during which multiple solutions were tried to make sense of the world and of human life. The legacy of Antiquity, the philosophic and ‘scientific’ knowledge of the time, and religious views were combined in original syntheses. The aim of the course is to provide a precise picture of this diversity, through a study of the main problems that a wide range of authors (Christian thinkers from St. Augustine to Ockham, but also Islamic and Jewish philosophers) faced.

Medieval philosophy was an important step in the development of human thought. Discovering it will be essential to your philosophical education. This course will especially highlight the essential concepts that were formed in the Middle Ages and that have been transmitted to modern philosophy, in metaphysics, theory of knowledge and consciousness, ethics, etc.

Also, analysis of texts, debates and writing assignments will help you to develop rigorous argumentation and expression skills.

Requirements: Four papers, each counting for 25% of the final grade. Class participation: bonus added to the average resulting from the papers (4 pts maximum).


A syllabus can consulted on https://www2.bc.edu/jeanluc-solere/pl407.html
PL 408 01 19th & 20th Century Philosophy

Andrea Staiti T TH 10:30*

Level – Undergraduate

Description:

Prerequisite: Some background in Kant, although not mandatory, is strongly recommended

This class will be devoted to some of the most important issues in philosophy in the past two centuries. In particular, we will study the development of Kantian transcendental philosophy in German Idealism, Neokantianism and Husserlian Phenomenology.
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

Gandhi, Satyagraha & Society

Pramod Thaker

T TH 9*

Level – Undergraduate

Satisfies Cultural Diversity Core Requirement

Description:

Gandhi is well known as a freedom fighter for India's independence. But his deep concern regarding the impact of 'modern civilization' on the social fabric and fundamental philosophical reasons underlying his use of nonviolent methods are perhaps not as well known. Moreover, his analysis of importance of social justice was not provincial—limited to what is sometimes called "the third world"—but was universal. In this course, we will examine Gandhian thought through his own writings, and explicate their relevance to the contemporary society. We will examine certain selections from the classical as well as contemporary philosophical literature. This will help us to understand fully Gandhi's integrated vision of the citizen not only as a reflective but also as an active individual.

Requirements:

Two papers, and a final written examination.

Readings:

1. An Autobiography: My Experiments with Truth
Gandhi, Mohandas K. [With a Forward by Sissela Bok]
Boston: Beacon Press, 1993
2. Mahatma Gandhi: Selected Political Writings
   Edited by Dennis Dalton
   Hackett Publishing Company, Inc.
   Indianapolis, Indiana, 1996
3. Satyagraha in South Africa
   Gandhi, Mohandas K
   Navajivan Publishers, Ahmedabad, India
Buddhist ethical analyses and practices aim to empower causes of individual and social flourishing while undercutting causes of bondage and suffering. Course topics include: mindfulness,faith, insight, and ethics as means of individual and social awakening in contemporary mainstream Buddhism; emptiness, compassion, insight into the nature of mind and bodhisattva action in the mind-heart training tradition of Tibet; and contemporary Buddhist ethical analyses of war and peace, economics, ecology, and justice. Daily mindfulness practice, based on class instruction, is required.

Requirements:

Weekly attendance with active class participation based on writing assignments, mid-term and final papers, daily mindfulness practice based on class instruction.

Readings:

Buddhism: Introducing the Buddhist Experience, Second Edition by Donald Mitchell; Seeking the Heart of Wisdom by Joseph Goldstein and Jack Kornfield, Open Heart Open Mind by Tsoknyi Rinpoche, Being Benevolence: Social Ethics of Engaged Buddhism by Sallie King, and The Great Awakening: A Buddhist Social Theory by David Loy
The purpose of this course is to introduce students to a variety of “spiritual exercises” (or askeses) that have helped shape the philosophical and theological traditions of the West, and which allow us better to appreciate how philosophical and theological practice is not just a conceptual enterprise but a “way of life.” As important as theory is and remains in these disciplines, the course will explore the ascetical and contemplative roots of theory (theoria) by detailing those practices of perceptual, emotional, and cognitive transformation that contribute to “the good life.” Such exercises include: cultivating attention, concentrating upon the present moment, negative visualization, meditating upon death, becoming indifferent to indifferent things, meditative reading, the art of dialogue, systematizing the passions, curtailing possessive desires, observing states of mind, methods of discernment, examining conscience, and non-discursive meditation. In addition to exploring these (and other) exercises in several classic texts in philosophy and theology, both ancient and contemporary, the course will investigate the historical context of these writings in order to appreciate their shared characteristics and distinctive contributions. Beginning with the Platonic and Stoic traditions of philosophy, the course will trace their influences and transformations in early Christian ascetical movements, or what many early Christian authors simply called “philosophy,” as well as their continuing influence in representative medieval, counter-Reformation, and contemporary texts. The course is therefore designed to deepen students’ understanding of key (and frequently overlapping) motifs within philosophy and theology, as well as to provide students opportunities for engaging ancient and contemporary voices of wisdom in the effort to imagine and fashion “the good life.”

Requirements:

Observational-Experiential Journal: Students will maintain an Observational-Experiential Journal ("OEJ") throughout the semester. The purpose of the OEJ is two-fold: a) to allow students to become more active readers of texts through the creation of a reading log, and b) to give students opportunities for experimenting with several of the spiritual exercises we’ll be studying throughout the semester. The OEJ will include diverse assignments, including an E-media fast (see below), reflections upon specific readings, the composition of a Stoic letter of wisdom, and reflections upon experiences related to the implementation of specific exercises.
**E-Media Fast:** As part of the OEJ project, students will take undertake an “e-media fast” for the period of 48 hours. Guidelines and questions for reflection upon the fast will be provided.

**Essays:** Students will write two major essays based upon the assigned texts (6-7 pages each). Guidelines for the essays will be distributed in class.

**Readings:**

Hadot, Pierre. Selections from *Philosophy as Way of Life: Spiritual Exercises from Socrates to Foucault.*
Plato. *Phaedo.*
Seneca. *On the Shortness of Life.*
Basil the Great. *On the Human Condition.*
Augustine of Hippo. Selections from *The Confessions.*
Ignatius of Loyola. Selections from *Autobiography and Spiritual Exercises.*
Hillesum, Etty. *An Interrupted Life and Letters from Westerbork.*
American Pragmatism

Catharine Wells

Level 3 – Undergraduate/Graduate

Description:

Pragmatism is the most distinctive philosophical movement to arise on American soil. Its origins can be traced to a post Civil War discussion group called the Metaphysical Club whose members included Charles Peirce, William James, Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr., and a number of other distinguished thinkers. Their influence extended to many fields and well into the twentieth century. In this class, we will consider pragmatism as a theory of meaning, a philosophy of science, and a political theory that places an on-going human community at the center of the quest for knowledge. Readings will include excerpts from the work of Emerson, Peirce, James, Holmes, and Dewey.

Requirements:

A short (2-3 pages) reflection paper each week, a short paper (6-8 pages), and a take-home final exam.

Readings:

The required text books are:

Charles S. Peirce, Selected Writings, Charles S. Peirce (Author), Philip P. Wiener (Editor) Dover Publications (1966)

Pragmatism and Other Writings, William James (Author), Giles Gunn (Editor); Penguin Classics (2000)

Other readings are posted on WebCT. A list of required readings is attached to this syllabus and specific assignments will be posted on WebCT.

READING LIST:

EMERSON: The American Scholar
Nature
Self Reliance
PEIRCE: Questions Concerning Certain Faculties Claimed for Man
   The Fixation of Belief
   How to Make our Ideas Clear

JAMES: What Pragmatism Means
   The Will to Believe
   Pragmatism’s Conception of Truth
   “Habit” from Principles of Psychology
   Excerpts from The Variety of Religious Experience
   On A Certain Blindness in Human Beings
   The Will to Believe

HOLMES: Excerpts from The Common Law
   Excerpts from The Path of the Law

DEWEY: Logical Method and the Law
   Morality is Social
   Search for the Great Community
PL 514 01 Philosophy of Love and Friendship

Marina McCoy M W F 1

Level – Undergraduate

Description:

In this course we will explore the ideas of a variety of ancient authors on love and friendship. Readings will include the Epic of Gilgamesh, lyric poets such as Sappho, Homer, Plato, Aristotle, the Canticle of Canticles, Ovid, the Stoics, Augustine, and a few medieval figures. We will explore romantic love, friendship, marital love, love of self, and love of God. The course will be focused around the question, "what is love?" and the nature of human desire. This course is a reading and writing intensive course.

Requirements:

Frequent short papers (2-3 pages);
In class discussion
One longer research paper (10-12 pages) as a final class project.

Readings:

*Gilgamesh: A New Rendering in English Verse* by David Ferry (Translator) Farrar, Straus and Giroux; Reprint edition (1993), 978-0374523831


*Friendship: A Philosophical reader*, ed Badwahr, 978-0801480973
*The Philosophy of Erotic Love*, ed Solomon, 978-0700604807
PL 518 01  Philosophy of Imagination

Richard Kearney  T TH 3*

Level 3 – Undergraduate/Graduate Elective

Description:

Beginning with Greek and Biblical accounts of images and image-making, this course will explore three main paradigm shifts in the western understanding 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
Aristotelian Naturalism

Micah Lott

Level – Undergraduate/Graduate

Description:

The course examines the Aristotelian idea that moral goodness is a kind of natural goodness in human beings, and vice a kind of natural defect. We will focus on the way this idea has been developed recently by writers such as Philippa Foot and Michael Thompson. We will attempt to understand the sort of "naturalism" these writers are proposing. We will also examine the role that the concept of virtue plays for such Aristotelians. Finally, we will consider how Aristotelian naturalism provides an account of obligation and justice. In particular, we will ask how Aristotelian approaches to obligation differ (or don't differ) from rule-consequentialism, on the hand, and Kantian-inspired contractualism, on the other: To what extent is Aristotelianism a "3rd option" from these when comes to accounts of duty and right, and to what extent is it compatible with either or both of them?

Requirements:

Undergraduates: Two shorter papers and in-class presentations.
Graduate students: One longer paper and in-class presentations.

Readings:

Elizabeth Anscombe – *Ethics, Religion, and Politics.*
Michael Thompson – *Life and Action*
Philippa Foot – *Natural Goodness*
*Modern Moral Philosophy* edited by Anthony O'Hear.

Plus additional essays by John McDowell, Alasdair MacIntyre, John Finnis, and others.
Maurice Blondel sought to reinstate a positive philosophy of religion into a French philosophical establishment that, at the end of the 19th century, was repudiating, not only religion itself, but the very idea of a philosophy of religion understood as something supernatural. To do this he introduced into French philosophy an existential turn to human action and to human subjectivity, long before the better known existential turn of some 50 years later with Sartre, Camus, and others, after WW II. He first took this turn in his doctoral dissertation at the Sorbonne in 1893, and in his book on Action published soon thereafter.

In this course we shall study how Blondel went about making this existential turn to human action as a philosopher, and how he uses this turn phenomenologically and systematically to rise to a philosophy of transcendence showing the necessity of some supernatural religion at the heart of human existential subjectivity. We shall examine how the question of religion arises for him in the question of human action, and we shall follow how he proceeds to answer the question in his book on Action (1893) according to a method that is systematic and scientific from beginning to end.

The book begins with the most radical question of human action: “Yes or no, does human life make sense, and does man have a destiny? I act, but without even knowing what action is, without having wished to live, without knowing exactly either who I am or even if I am.... Supposedly, then, I am condemned to life, condemned to death, condemned to eternity! Why and by what right, if I did not know it and did not will it?”

The book argues first that the question of human action must be raised, against the purely dilettante or esthetic attitude, and second that it has to be answered in the affirmative, against the pessimistic or nihilistic attitude toward human action, before going into a long phenomenology on what there is to be found in human action and in human subjectivity that leads finally to the question of the necessary being of action and of religion as it relates to the problem of human destiny as formulated from the beginning.

In this course we shall mainly examine how Blondel turns the question of human action into a question of human subjectivity in his elaboration of the phenomenon of action and how this turn affects the way the question of God or of religion is raised at the end in relation to how human action may attain completion of one sort or another.
Readings will be mostly from *Action (1893)*, tr. by Oliva Blanchette (University of Notre Dame Press, 1984). There will be a mid-term take-home essay exam and a term paper on some aspect of Blondel's philosophy of action as chosen by each student. The final exam will be oral, one on one, on what we will have seen of *Action (1893)*.

Requirements:

Students will be expected to attend classes and to participate actively in class discussion. Those with more than three unexcused absences will incur penalties in their grades for the reflection papers. There will be 4 reflection papers assigned on parts of the book as we finish them and one final reflection paper on the book as a whole at the end. For the graduate students there will also be a research term paper on a subject connected with Blondel's Philosophy of Action chosen by the student in agreement with the professor, also due at the time of the final reflection paper. Essay questions will be furnished for all the reflection papers.
PL 535 01 Models of Political Philosophy

Alessandro Ferrara MW 12-2:20
Jan. 14 – Feb. 27

Level 3 – Undergraduate/Graduate

Description:

The aim of this course is to help participants to orient themselves in the field of political philosophy by way of locating major political philosophers and traditions on a conceptual space characterized by two main oppositions -- normative vs. realistic approaches, holistic vs. individualistic approaches -- and to then assess the novelty of the radically non-perfectionist political philosophy of John Rawls. After a general introduction touching on the nature of politics and basic terms such as justice, freedom, equality and power, excerpts will be considered from Plato, Aristotle, Machiavelli, Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau. Then Rawls' “political liberalism” will be discussed.

Requirements:

Mid-term (30%)
One longer paper (1500 words) as a final class project (70%)

Readings:

Plato, *The Republic*;
Aristotle, *The Politics*;
N. Machiavelli, *The Prince*
Th. Hobbes, *Leviathan*
J. Locke, *Two Treatises of Government*
John Rawls, *Political Liberalism*
As historical beings, our lives constitute a story that unfolds in time. Our lives narrate a journey from sin to salvation, despair to faith, sickness to health, death to life, darkness to light and ignorance to knowledge. This is a journey to selfhood. We are sojourners struggling to understand more deeply who we are as this self and what is my place in the world. This seminar will explore the four fundamental capstone issues of spirituality, citizenship, relationships and work in terms of this notion of our life as narrative, a journey to self-hood.
PL 541 01  Philosophy of Health Science: East and West

Pramod Thaker  T TH 12*

Level – Undergraduate/Graduate

Satisfies Cultural Diversity Core Requirement

Description:

This course will explore the philosophical assumptions of health care practice and show the influence of philosophical perspective on the practice of medicine. We will examine certain key events in the history and philosophy of medicine—from the Hippocratic regimen to the contemporary medical practice—to understand the close-knit relationship between philosophy and medicine. As a counterpoint, ancient Indian medical tradition of Ayurveda will be studied. We will examine how the physicians and philosophers of such diverse schools approach philosophical and ethical problems inherent in medical practice. In the concluding sessions, we will discuss some of the specific ethical problems that are encountered by the clinicians in their practice today. These case studies will be undertaken not with an aim of resolving the difficult ethical dilemma once for all, but to demonstrate the necessity of first recognizing and then explicating the philosophical subtext of any ethical decision-making process.

Requirements:

Two papers and a final written examination.

Reading:

1. A course-pack of selected literature to be purchased from the BC Bookstore.
2. The ‘text-handout’ material given in the class.
3. Selected books on the reserve list in the library.
This course will be co-taught by
Patrick Byrne
Stephen Pope

Level – Undergraduate/Graduate

Description:

The rise of modern science has raised and continues to raise a wide range of questions for religious belief. These include the proper authority regarding statements about the natural world, the nature of humanity, the existence of God, the meaning of sacred writings (especially the Bible), and the ideas of creation, free will, and evil.

This course will be team-taught by a philosopher and a theologian who have been researching the relationships between natural science and religious belief. We will explore the implications of that modern physics and evolutionary biology have for Jewish and Christian understandings of origins, that evolution and genetics have for human freedom, the questions of reductionism and emergence, and the questions about whether or not our understandings of God and what is ethical are completely determined by the differing genetic and neurophysiological structures different people, or whether knowledge and belief in these matters has an emergent autonomy relative to our biological and neural makeup.

Requirements: Term paper

Readings:

• Richard Dawkins, God Delusion
• E O Wilson, Consilience, (selections)
• Dava Sobel, Galileo’s Daughter
• John Paul II: Addresses to Pontifical Academy of Science on Galileo and Evolution
• Thomas Aquinas, Summa Theologiae I, 44-46 (creation)
• Jonathan Sacks, The Great Partnership: Science, Religion, and the Search for Meaning
• Alvin Plantinga, Where the Conflict Really Lies
• Terence L. Nichols, The Sacred Cosmos: Christian Faith and the Challenge of Naturalism
• Simon Conway Morris, Life’s Solution, selections (last 3 chapters?)
• John Polkinghore, selections
• Arthur Peacocke, selections
• Justin L. Barrett, Why Would Anyone Believe in God?
• Neuroscience and Religion: Brain, Mind, Self and Soul, ed. V Gay
• Neuroethics: An Introduction with Readings, ed. M. J. Farah
• Timothy O'Connor, "Conscious Willing and the Emerging Sciences of Brain and Behavior," Theism and Ultimate Explanation
PL/UN 553 01 Capstone: Poets, Philosophers, and Mapmakers

Paul McNellis, S.J. TH 3–5:20

Level – Undergraduate

Prerequisite:

Philosophy and Theology core already fulfilled. Instructor permission required. Capstone classes may not be taken Pass/Fail, and you may take only one Capstone course before graduation.

Description:

We go through life with mental maps of reality, in various degrees implicit or explicit. A Liberal Arts education presumes such a map of the intelligible world. Is it accurate? What does your “map” of reality look like? How has it changed since freshman year?

The goal of the seminar is to help you see what kind of map you implicitly have now and to begin to ask what you want the map to look like ten years after graduation. In other words, how do you develop an “open” rather than “closed” map? How do you plan on continuing your education on your own after graduation?

There must be both poetry and prose in every life. What is the balance between the two in your life? (Poetry here is broadly understood, as Plato would have it; i.e., it includes theology.)

We will reread some classic texts you read as freshmen to see if you read them any differently as seniors. Such texts will include works by Aristotle, Plato, and Pascal.

Requirements:

We will follow a seminar format, with the professor as facilitator and students taking turns leading the discussion. A short reflection paper is due each week and two longer papers will be assigned throughout the semester.

Readings:

1. Benedict XVI, *Deus Caritas Est*
2. E. F. Schumacher, *Guide for the Perplexed*
3. Aristotle, *Nichomachean Ethics*
4. Blaise Pascal, *Pensées*
5. Owen Gingerich, *God's Universe*
6. P.D. James, *The Children of Men*
7. A Workbook with further readings
This course introduces students to contemporary emotion studies in phenomenology both by theory and application. In (roughly a bit more than) the first half of the course, we examine traditional and contemporary phenomenological theories (Husserl, Sartre, Solomon, Zahavi/Gallagher) and representatives of predominant contemporary methodological alternatives, namely, analytic moral psychology (Goldie, Hacker, Solomon, and Taylor) and the neuro-affective theory (the James-Lange theory and Damasio). Topics here include the nature and the experience of emotions; the relation between emotion and cognition; whether viewing emotions as evaluative judgments rather than mere feelings or as ‘affect-programs’ with neurobiological roots best captures the nature and/or experience of them.

During (roughly) the second half of class, we shall perform an exercise in phenomenology. As the phenomenological notion of imaginative variation is consistent with the use of literary resources, we shall examine fictional depictions of envy and some of its sibling emotions (e.g., covetousness, jealousy, indignation, resentment, and ressentiment). The literary works offer us access to these emotions and we then shall apply the resources of the phenomenological theories of emotion to help us individuate envy from its siblings and render more precise the unique structure of envy, jealousy, etc. Readings will include Shakespeare’s Othello and (some of his) sonnets, Yuri Oelsha’s Russian novella, Envy, popular fairy tales (“Snow White,” “Cinderella) and short stories (Edgar Allen Poe’s “The Cask of Amontillado,” Guy de Maupassant’s “The Necklace,” and Raymond Carver’s “Neighbors”).
PL 593 01 Philosophy of Science

Patrick Byrne T 4:30-6:50

Level 3 – Undergraduate/Graduate

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 been 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 challenge 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
PL 599 01  Kant’s Moral Philosophy

Ronald Tacelli, S.J.  M W 3*

Level 3 – Undergraduate/Graduate

Prerequisite:

Some understanding of Kant’s epistemology

Description:

We will do close readings of *The Critique of Practical Reason*, *The Grounding of the Metaphysics of Morals*, and selected essays.
PL 604 01  Social Construction

Jorge Garcia  TTH 4:30*

Level – Undergraduate/Graduate

Description:

We explore, with an eye toward evaluating, claims that important categories of social life — notably including race, ethnicity, and ‘gender’ — are not grounded in nature, but are inventions of human societies. We will examine reasons adduced for such claims, analyze their content, and investigate their implications for individual attitudes, ethics, and social policies.

Requirements:

1 in-class oral presentation and 2 take-home examinations.

Reading:

Writings by contemporary philosophers Finn Collin, Ian Hacking, Sally Haslanger, and John Searle are among those to be treated.
Global Justice and Human Rights

David Rasmussen  T TH 1:30*

Level 3 – Graduate/Undergraduate Elective

Description: Twenty percent of the world’s population live on a dollar a day and forty-five percent live on two dollars a day. How do we think about justice; not from a domestic or even Western perspective, but from the point of view of the world as such? Is it possible to think of global justice in relationship to the explosion of human rights discourse and law from World War II on? As students of philosophy we will consider the arguments for and against global justice. As philosophical interpreters we will examine the emerging narrative on human rights as it takes place in institutional developments and international law. We will examine the modern history of the idea of global justice from its formulation in social contract theory in Hobbes and Locke, through Kant’s idea of cosmopolitan justice; to its contemporary reconstruction in John Rawls, Charles Beitz, David Held, Jürgen Habermas, Thomas Pogge and others. In the context of examining the status of global justice we will consider the problem of world poverty, the rights of minorities, violence and how human rights can be defended in a global context.


Class Requirements:

There will be an oral mid-term and a take home final. Also, students are asked to write a ten-page paper on some aspect of the course topic. You must choose your topic by the time of the midterm. You may choose from any of the issues in human rights global justice. Attendance is mandatory and class participation is required. In accord with the size of the class, class presentations are a possibility.

Description:

A historical survey of metaphysical and epistemological problems of space and time. The main metaphysical question we will examine is: what kind of things are space and time, and how much intrinsic structure do they have? Are they sui generis entities existing alongside material bodies but distinct from them? Are they completely reducible to direct relations between bodies? A third thing? On the epistemological side, we will examine answers to the question, How do we come to know about space, time, and their content? Authors include: Aristotle, Descartes, Newton, Leibniz, Euler, Kant, and Einstein.

Requirements:

An introductory level course to metaphysics and epistemology.

Readings:

N. Huggett (ed.), *Space from Zeno to Einstein: Classic Readings with a Contemporary Commentary* (MIT Press, 1999).

Additional readings to be distributed in class.
PL 632 01        Ethical Classics
Peter Kreeft      TH 4:30 - 6:50

Level – Undergraduate/Graduate

Offered Periodically

Description:

Jonathan Trejo-Mathys

Description:

This course provides a solid introduction to the Frankfurt School tradition of critical social theory, one of whose characteristic features is an insistence on close interaction between philosophy and the human (or social) sciences. In the first two weeks we acquaint ourselves with the seminal formulation of the project of a “critical” social theory by Horkheimer in his essay “Traditional and Critical Theory”, and the most influential attempt to bring it to fruition by the “first generation”: Adorno and Horkheimer’s *Dialectic of Enlightenment*. The bulk of the course is then spent in close reading of two key texts that provided canonical theoretical paradigms for the “second” and “third” generations of critical theory: respectively, Jürgen Habermas’ *The Theory of Communicative Action* and Axel Honneth’s *The Struggle for Recognition*. Understanding and assessing the arguments of these texts will require involvement with some central questions of the philosophy of social science, including questions of causal and functional explanation, the unavoidability of hermeneutic methods (interpretation, evaluation, normative notions), theory confirmation, modernization/modernity, and rationality, among others.

Requirements:

Participation (10%); Class presentation (15%); Research paper (75%).

Readings:

PL 747 01 Philosophy of Life

Richard Kearney TH 6:30 – 8:50
Andrea Staiti

Level – Graduate

Description:

This seminar explores key modern debates on the philosophy of life. It is divided into two parts.

The first, entitled ‘Origins’, will examine the emergence of Lebensphilosophie in the late 19th and 20th centuries, with particular attention to the work of Dilthey, Simmel and Bergson. It will include consideration of the critical interactions between German romanticism and neo-Kantian rationalism.

The second part of the seminar, entitled, ‘Directions’, turns its attention to more contemporary exponents of a philosophy of life in the wake of recent phenomenological and psychoanalytic insights. Crucial figures here include Giorgio Agamben, Gilles Deleuze, Hans Jonas and Evan Thompson.

Requirements:

Class participation and final research paper.

Readings:

PART ONE: ORIGINS
Dilthey-Nietzsche (3 seminars)
Bergson (2 seminars)
Simmel (3 seminars)

PART TWO: DIRECTIONS
Freud (1 seminar)
Agamben (2 seminars)
Deleuze (2 seminars)
Jonas-Barabas (2)
Thompson (1 seminar)
The seminar will consist of a careful reading of certain parts of the *Phenomenology* using the Pinkard translation currently available for download from Prof. Terry Pinkard's website. It is impossible to understand the complexity of Hegel's thinking in the *Phenomenology* through English translation alone. There have been three translations of the *Phenomenology* in English, including that of Prof. Tinkard, and a fourth for the chapter on Spirit, by a Hegel Translation Group working out of Toronto. The later ones improve on the earlier ones, but all of them still leave us with questionable interpretations or representations of what Hegel was driving at in his carefully articulated German. The big advantage of the Pinkard translation is that it is available with German alongside of it, so that we can use the original expression of Hegel to clarify ambiguities that remain in the English translation, as we shall do in the course of our own reading of Hegel's *Phenomenology*. When you download the Pinkard translation, make sure you download the copy with the German alongside, so that you will have it to look at as you are reading the translation.

We shall not try to do the entire work. We shall pick and choose in the first half of the book and then in the second part of the semester we shall focus on the chapters on Spirit and Religion. Each participant will be expected to make two presentations in class leading the seminar along through different parts of the *Phenomenology*. These presentations can then be turned into a final paper for the seminar, prior to the final oral examination.

The most important commentary on the *Phenomenology* is that of H. S. Harris entitled *Hegel's Ladder*, in two volumes. A copy of this work will be placed on reserve at O'Ncel Library. It is very useful for getting into the background of Hegel's argument as well as into the logic of it. There is also a commentary by Prof. Pinkard available on his website. A bibliography of Commentaries will be handed out at the beginning of the semester.
PL 762 01  Soren Kierkegaard

Vanessa P. Rumble  T 2-4:25

Level – Graduate

Description:

This course will deal primarily with the early pseudonymous writings of Soren Kierkegaard. The following topics will be emphasized: (1) the function of irony and indirect communication in the pseudonymous works, (2) Kierkegaard’s conception of freedom and subjectivity, and (3) the nature of the relationship which Kierkegaard posits between reason, autonomy, and faith.

Requirements:

Weekly reflection papers, 2 pages typed
Final paper, roughly 12-15 pages

Readings:

Søren Kierkegaard,  

_Fear and Trembling_ and _Repetition_  
_Concept of Anxiety_  
_Philosophical Fragments_  
_Two Ages_  
_Sickness Unto Death_
Description:

Running through the foundation of all of Aristotle’s thought is a conception of the nature and functions of the soul, a view of the living and knowing being that is both contemporary and stubbornly ancient. Whether it is his analysis of perception, the operations of the mind, or the progressive stages of his definition of the soul itself, Aristotle’s psychology (literally ‘account of the soul’ in Greek) has provoked thinkers as diverse as Plotinus, Aquinas, and Lonergan (among many, many others).

The seminar will consist of a careful reading of Aristotle’s On the Soul (Latin De Anima, Greek Peri Psuchês). Like many of Aristotle’s works, On the Soul displays signs of both internal revision and departure from positions Aristotle maintains elsewhere. This offers seminar members an opportunity to explore the core positions of Aristotle’s psychology, their relations to other central Aristotelian doctrines, and the overall structure of the work in which they are presented.

The seminar will concentrate on Aristotle’s De Anima (On the Soul), along with some of his shorter psychological works, with frequent references to other parts of Aristotle’s surviving writings. An effort will be made to compare Aristotle’s views with those of later thinkers. No knowledge of Greek is assumed. Students will be graded on the basis of seminar participation, frequent short responses to the readings, and a research paper due at the end of the semester.
Philosophy and the Church Fathers

Margaret Schatkin

Level 3 – Undergraduate/Graduate

Description:

Introduction to the major Church Fathers and Christian schools of Antiquity and their varying engagements with philosophy. Elements of opposition between Christianity and classical philosophy which could not be reconciled. Areas of harmony between Greek and Christian ideals. The evolution of Greek philosophy and its fulfillment in Christianity. Special topics include: Lactantius’ teaching on the necessary union of philosophy and religion; Origen’s philosophic understanding of the Lord’s prayer; Chrysostom on true philosophy; Basil on how to access/utilize the secular culture.

Readings:


PL 814 01  Ethics in Levinas and Lacan

Jeffrey Bloechl  W 2 – 4:25

Level – Graduate

Description:

This course explores the connections and disconnections between a tragic approach to ethics (Lacan) and one defined by ethical monotheism (Levinas). Considerable preliminary work is required. On one hand, it will be necessary to explore the Freudian context for Lacan’s position, as stated in his Seminar on ethics. On the other hand, we will also examine the manner in which Levinas’s position is developed in debate with, especially, Heidegger and Sartre.

Requirements:

A capacity for advanced graduate-level work reading and writing in philosophy. Students should come to class fully prepared to interpret difficult texts. Class will be conducted seminar style, with a maximum of fifteen participants. Instructor will present for approximately 60-75 minutes each meeting, to be followed by extensive critical discussion.

Students will be graded on preparation and participation in class, and one 20-25 page paper plus a discussion of that paper that will serve as an examination.

Readings:

Extensive passages from J. Lacan, Seminar VII. The Ethics of Psychoanalysis and Seminar XVII. The Other Side of Psychoanalysis; and E. Levinas, Totality and Infinity and Otherwise than Being, or Beyond Essence.
PL 821 01 Democratic Ethos & Renewal of
Political Liberalism

Alessandro Ferrara MW 4:30-6:50
Jan. 14 – Feb. 27

Level - Graduate

Description:

In more and more numerous regions of the world, democracy has long ceased to
be just one of several forms of government and has become the only legitimate
form of government at the same time when, in the countries where it's been in
place for longer, processes of de-democratization are underway and inhospitable
conditions are operative which induce some to speak of a crisis of democracy. In
the seminar we will address questions such as: In a global world where there is a
premium, for any regime, on being recognized as "democratic", what
distinguishes a real democracy? Given that procedures can always be emulated,
how can a democratic ethos, distinctive of real democracies, be reconstructed?
How can the traditional view of the democratic ethos be updated and expanded
in order to respond to the new challenges of today's world? An ethos is more
culture-sensitive than rules or procedures: How can the reconfigured democratic
ethos be made compatible with the moral cultures of all the major civilizations?
How can the view of the democratic ethos implicit in Rawls's political liberalism,
one enriched and revisited, help us meet these challenges?

Requirements:

In class discussion
One longer research paper (10-12 pages) as a final class project

Readings:

Stephen K. White, The Ethos of a Late-Modern Citizen
John Rawls, Political Liberalism
Agamben, Giorgio et al., Democracy in What State?
Robert Bellah and Hans Joas (eds.), The Axial Age and Its Consequences,
PL 823 01, Heidegger and the Question of Truth

John Sallis

T 4:30 - 6:50

Level – Graduate

Description:

Heidegger's reflections on the essence of truth are central to his thought and contribute fundamentally to his analyses of language, technology, art, and history. This course will trace the development of Heidegger's concept of truth from Being and Time (and the lectures related to it), through the seminal essay "On the Essence of Truth," to such later texts as Contributions to Philosophy and "The End of Philosophy and the Task of Thinking." Attention will also be given to the implications that Heidegger's rethinking of the essence of truth has for other major themes in his work.

Requirements:

TBA

Readings:

D. F. Krell, ed., Martin Heidegger, Basic Writings, revised and expanded edition (Harper).
Martin Heidegger, Being and Time, trans. Joan Stambaugh, revised by Dennis Schmidt (SUNY Press).
Seminar on Law and Justice.
Public Reason: Justification and Legitimation

David Rasmussen       TH 4:30–6:50

Level – Graduate

Description:

This course will consider the current debate on public reason and the problem of justification in three sections.

I. Rawls, Habermas Debate.
Basic texts: Habermas: *Reconciliation through the Public Use of Reason.*
            Rawls: *Reply to Habermas*

II. Public Reason.

III. The Problem of Justification.

This course will be conducted as a seminar in which students will present and discuss the material. The subject matter, public reason, justification and legitimation will be considered first through the 1995 debate between Rawls and Habermas which is the subject of the recently published book on the debate in which the original texts are included. Second, Gerald Gaus, through the publication of the extraordinary book, *The Order of Public Reason,* has brought the debate over public reason and justification to a new level. Third, the problem of justification, taken up by Rainer Forst's *The Right to Justification,* takes the underlying issue, public reason as a form of justification, back to its Kantian origins.

Requirements:

Vigorous discussion, occasional class presentations and a final research paper.

Readings:
During the Renaissance and the 17th c., Neo-Epicurism and Augustinism paradoxically agreed on the fact that human beings, guided by self-love, act only in view of what is pleasurable to them. This view became widespread, and gave rise to heated controversies. Are we capable of disinterested feelings and actions? This issue affects not only ethics, but the religious and political domains as well. On the religious side, whereas traditionally God was supposed to be loved just for himself, the Jansenists (Pascal, Nicole) underlined that grace is a spiritual pleasure of sorts which attracts us. On the political side, vices were generally seen as detrimental to the common good and virtue as a disinterested service to the commonwealth. However, the supporters of the pleasure principle maintained that extreme selfishness is compatible with well-organized societies. After Hobbes proposed his combination of personal interest and shrewd calculation, Mandeville's *Fable of the Bees*, at the beginning of the 18th century, contended that private vices are beneficial to public prosperity.

As a response to that cynical description of humankind's motivations, Hutcheson highlighted a different type of pleasure, which, he thought, proved that we are capable of non-greedy feelings: esthetic pleasure. The enjoyment of beauty became, in the 18th century, the object of a new discipline, esthetics, which culminated in Kant's analysis of this "disinterested pleasure". At the same time, aesthetic pleasure provided the paradigm for exploring the complexity of sentiments where pleasure is reconcilable with altruism, as in Hume's ethics. Also, the right to individual pleasure and happiness made its way in public opinion with the promoters of Enlightenment and modern hedonism (Diderot). We will first study the reassessment, in the Renaissance and early 17th century, of classical ethics (Aristotle, Epicurus, the Stoics), by thinkers such as Descartes, Spinoza, Locke. We will then follow the story outlined above.

**Requirements:**

Class participation and presentations; final paper

**Readings:**

Among books to be bought:


Other sources will be photocopied.

See the syllabus on [http://www2.bc.edu/~solere/teaching.html](http://www2.bc.edu/~solere/teaching.html) for further information.
Nature in Thomas Aquinas

Eileen Sweeney

TH 2 – 4:25

Level – Graduate

Description:

This course will consider the many different contexts in which Thomas Aquinas uses the notion of nature and natural motion to explain the character of human and divine attributes and actions. We will examine how the notion of Aristotelian nature and motion informs his account of not just vice and virtue but freedom and creation. We will also consider the account of natural law in light of his account of nature after the Fall and as in need of grace. We will consider how and whether his use of these notions changes from the Summa theologiae to the Disputed Questions on Truth, as well as on power and evil.

Requirements:

One mid-term paper (10-12 pp.) and one final paper (25-30 pp.)

Readings:

Selections from Summa theologiae, Disputed Questions on Truth, Disputed Questions on Power, and Disputed Questions on Evil