

PHILOSOPHY ELECTIVES

SPRING 2012

STUDENTS MUST COMPLETE PHIL 211 AND PHIL 212 BEFORE ENROLLING IN 300 OR 400 LEVEL PHILOSOPHY COURSES.

PHIL 301 – MORAL PHILOSOPHY

SECTION A: TH 9:30–10:45 MSGR. SWETLAND,

SECTION B: MWF 1–1:50 DR. MILLER

SECTION C: (SERVICE LEARNING) MW 2–3:15 DR. MILLER

The Department of Philosophy's senior-year course in Ethics seeks in general (1) to awaken students to the assumptions embedded in their moral beliefs and practices, thereby stimulating life-long reflection on the nature of moral agency and the principles governing right action, (2) to foster a critical and reflective knowledge of the variety of views concerning human agency and right action, and (3) to develop students' abilities to make well-reasoned judgments regarding the moral principles advanced as possible guides for action in particular situations so that students may act with self-knowledge in the various communities - familial, economic, religious, and political - to which they will contribute upon graduation.



The Service Learning Moral Philosophy option (section C) will fulfill the course's goals stated above through classroom study and direct community service. Central to the course will be student engagement with a community partner. Students will be required to do at least 20 hours of community service (a minimum of 2 hours per week for 10 weeks) at a number of local placements. Students are responsible for all necessary volunteer training and weekly transportation.



PHIL 312/MAPS 512 – MEDIEVAL PHILOSOPHY

SECTION A: TH 2–3:15 DR. JOSH HOCHSCHILD

This course is an introduction to medieval philosophy, focusing on philosophical texts from the 4th to the 14th centuries. We will concentrate on the appropriation of Greek thought by the Latin Christian West, beginning with Augustine, and follow the development of medieval thought through such major thinkers as Boethius, Abelard, Anselm, Bonaventure, Aquinas, Scotus and Ockham. This course will present the Middle Ages as an intellectually vibrant period addressing a wide range of issues, including: the existence and nature of God, the nature of human freedom, the relationship between philosophy and theology, theory of knowledge, and the metaphysics and logic of universals.

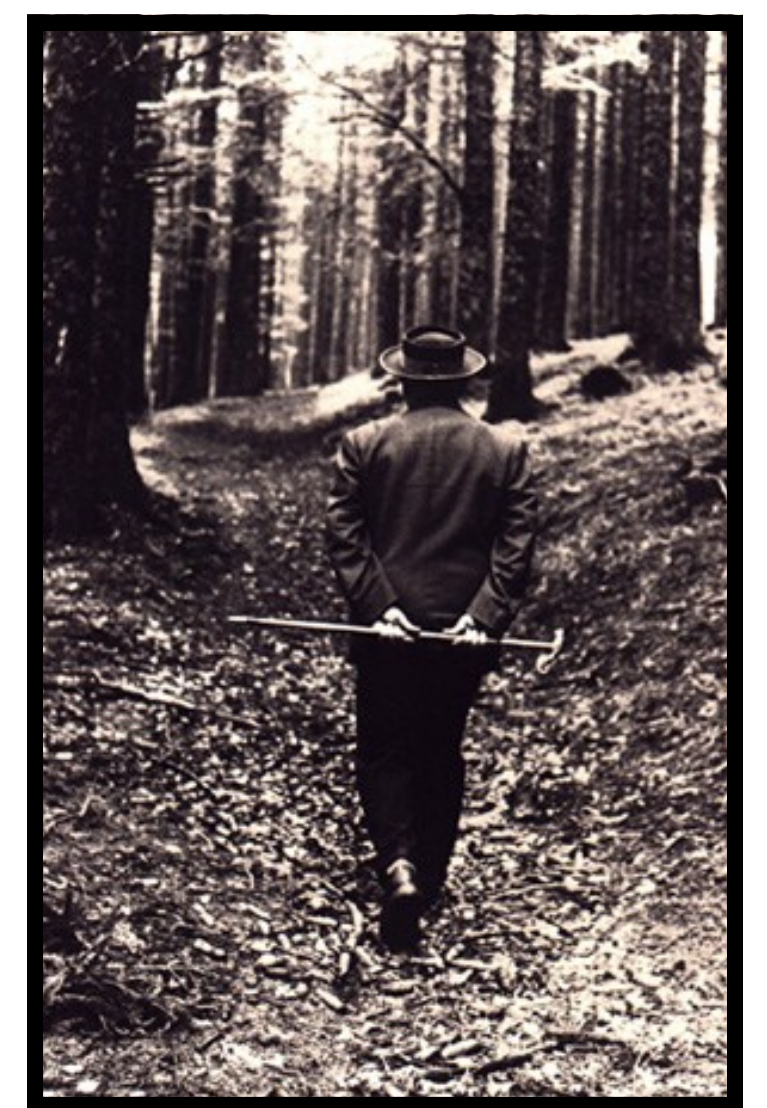
PHIL 314/MAPS 514 – CONTEMPORARY PHILOSOPHY

SECTION A: TH 9:30–10:45 DR. NABERHAUS

This final course in the history of philosophy sequence introduces students to the major philosophical movements of the contemporary period (defined here as running roughly from the latter part of the nineteenth century to the present). Though distinguished by a wide variety of approaches, contemporary philosophy exhibits a consistent preoccupation with certain fundamental questions concerning meaning, subjectivity, truth, foundations, and language. In this course, we will explore these questions through the eyes of a select group of philosophers with the aim of gaining an overview of the period.

Much of contemporary philosophy is predicated on a sense of collapse or failure, on the belief that the philosophical—and indeed larger cultural—paradigms of the modern period were no longer viable. Accordingly, we will begin by examining several attempts to explain what went wrong in the modern period, both within and outside philosophy. We will then examine and evaluate a series of attempts by both religious and secular thinkers in the twentieth century to *re-found* philosophy through a variety of means, including pragmatism, linguistic analysis, phenomenology, existentialism, and neo-Thomism. A central theme in the course will be the proper understanding of the purpose and role of philosophy in the contemporary world.

The course will be conducted in lecture–discussion format, with strong emphasis on student inquiry and participation. Students will be required to complete periodic short writing assignments as well as longer argumentative essays.



PHIL 318 THEORY OF KNOWLEDGE (UNDERGRADUATE COLLEGE STUDENTS ONLY)

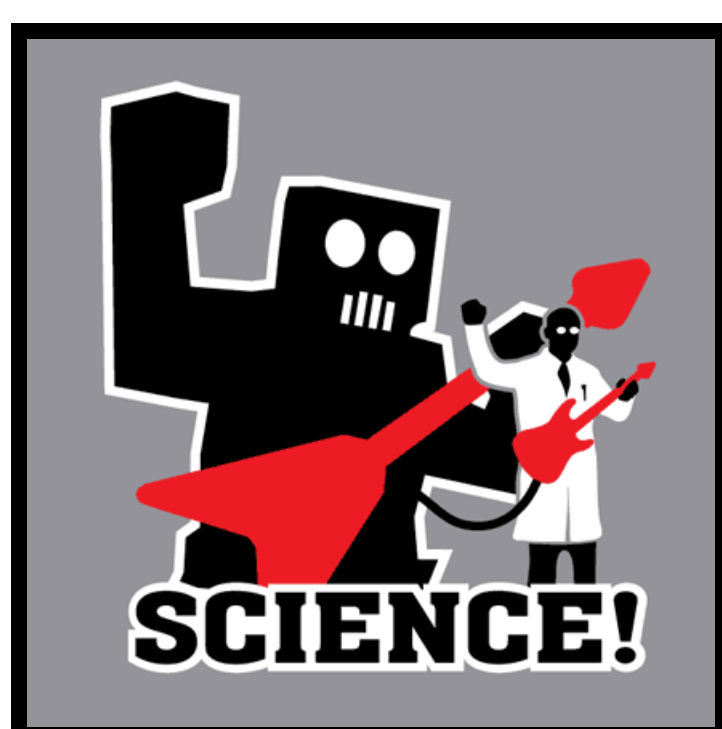
SECTION A: TH 2–3:15 DR. JOHN SCHWENKLER

How is knowledge possible? This course will apply this question to several different types of human knowledge, including knowledge by perception, reason, memory, and testimony, as well as the special case of self-knowledge, drawing on a range of classic and contemporary texts.

PHIL 323/MAPS 523/PSCI 323 POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY

SECTION A: MW 2–3:15 DR. BUCK

This course will focus on careful reading and discussion of classic and contemporary accounts of the nature and justification of political institutions, practices, and forms of authority. We will address a wide range of issues such as: What is the nature and scope of political authority and power? What makes the use political authority and power legitimate? Is there a moral obligation to obey the state, and if so, why does this obligation motivate us? What are the proper aims of politics and political institutions? How is the nature and function of political institutions affected/shaped by cultural and religious pluralism? Is there a right to political participation? Class meetings will include some lecture and a considerable amount of discussion.



PHIL 325/MAPS 525 PHILOSOPHY OF SCIENCE

SECTION A: TH 11–12:15 DR. ANADALE

One of the defining features of our age is the rapid growth of scientific knowledge. Our knowledge of the physical world and our ability to manipulate it to our benefit have grown from the seventeenth century, accelerating in the twentieth century. This course examines the philosophic origins of the scientific revolution, the nature and limits of scientific rationality, and the epistemic grounds of scientific theories and practices. It will also focus on how conversations between scientists and philosophers can enrich our understanding of contemporary ethical issues. Readings will include Popper, Kuhn, Jaki, Haught, and others.

PHIL 400/MAPS 500 METAETHICS

SECTION A: MWF 1–1:50 DR. JORDAN

Are moral standards culturally relative? Is there such a thing as an objective standard of right and wrong? Is morality more a matter of taste than truth? Are there moral facts, or is it the case that only the propositions of the natural sciences are factual? If there are moral facts, how might we come to know them? These are just a handful of the questions raised by the branch of philosophy known as metaethics, which Geoff Sayre-McCord defines as “the attempt to understand the metaphysical, epistemological, semantic, and psychological, presuppositions and commitments of moral thought, talk, and practice.” This course will serve as an advanced introduction to contemporary metaethics, exploring the central themes and positions within the field. Topics covered will include: moral realism and anti-realism, cognitivism and non-cognitivism, naturalism and non-naturalism, error theory, emotivism, prescriptivism, thick ethical concepts, moral relativism, moral facts, supervenience, and moral motivation.

