**Department of Philosophy**

**Graduate Course Descriptions**

**Fall Semester 2014**

**Studies in Modern Philosophy: Spinoza**

PHIL 4311/6311

Hoke Robinson

M 2:30-5:30

<History/Major Figure>

Spinoza was born in Amsterdam and educated in the Sephardic tradition, but soon fell under the influence of Descartes, and at age 25 was expelled from the Jewish community for unorthodoxy. He attempted to explain Descartes' *Principia* in the "geometrical manner," but quickly came to see that his disagreements with Descartes were too profound; in his magnum opus, *Ethics*, he uses the geometrical manner of exposition, but makes no pretext of following Descartes. It was published after his death.

The course will first review Descartes' works culminating in the *Principia*, and consider Spinoza's early use of the geometrical manner. A close reading of *Ethics*, Parts I and II reveals Spinoza's appropriation of Scholastic and Cartesian themes, and allows a contrast of his approach with that of Descartes and other figures in the Rationalist tradition. After a summary of his other writings, we consider the extent of his influence on later thinkers of the Enlightenment.

**Seminar in Major Figures: Husserl**

PHIL 7020/8020

Tom Nenon

R 5:30-830

<Major Figure/Continental>

This course is intended to serve as an introduction to the basic themes and concepts of Husserl’s phenomenological philosophy. We will look at excerpts from the published works that defined each of the major stages in the development of his thinking in an attempt to understand the nature of the phenomenological project and its method and to examine specific examples of this method to themes such as personhood, temporality, and intersubjectivity that remained important for subsequent thinkers who took Husserl as the starting point for their own projects.

Text: Edmund Husserl, *Essential Writings* (ed. by Donn Welton), Indiana U. Press 1999.

Course Requirements: take-home mid-term exam (40%), in-class presentation (10%), and term paper (50%). Regular attendance and active class participation are expected.

**Seminar in Normative Philosophy: Continental Feminism & Narration**

PHIL 7040/8040

Pleshette DeArmitt

R 2:30-5:30

<Practical/Continental>

In 1949 Simone de Beauvoir published her seminal work, *The Second Sex*, which would be equally influential on Anglo-American and Continental feminism. This course, while not offering a survey of the Continental feminist tradition, will examine the thought of several Continental thinkers through the prism of a specific problematic—narration and the gendered self. This problematic is on display in the writings of Beauvoir in terms of the tension between normative conditions that govern the “becoming” woman, or man, and subjective freedom, which involves the capacity to speak for and of oneself, to speak as a self. Beauvoir’s writings expose an impasse for “woman,” who cannot narrate her experience in the first person, as she has been rigidified in the third person, as other, as that which is narrated. Using Beauvoir as a starting point, this course will examine the ways in which Hannah Arendt, Sarah Kofman, Julia Kristeva, Adriana Cavarero, and Judith Butler take up and transform the question of self-narration through a thinking of a gendered self.

Required Texts:

• Simone de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex*, trans. Constance Borde and Sheila Malovany-

Chevallier, Vintage, 2011.

• Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition*, University of Chicago Press, 1998.

• Sarah Kofman, *Smothered Words*, trans. Madeline Dobie, Northwestern UP, 1998.

• Julia Kristeva, *Hannah Arendt*, trans. Columbia UP, Ross Guberman, 2003.

• Adriana Cavarero, *Relating Narratives: Storytelling and Selfhood*, trans. Paul Kottman,

Routledge University Press, 2000.

• Judith Butler, *Giving an Account of Oneself*, Fordham University Press, 2005.

**Seminar in Classical Philosophy: Plato’s Political Philosophy**

PHIL 7201/8201

Tim Roche

W 5:30-8:30

<History/Major Figure>

The seminar involves the study of Plato’s middle and late period political philosophy. It presupposes knowledge of Plato’s early and transitional period inquiries in ethics, political philosophy, epistemology, and metaphysics. In particular, it assumes that students are thoroughly familiar with the *Apology, Crito, Protagoras, Gorgias, Meno, and Phaedo*. Students who have not read or do not recall the main points of these dialogues are advised to study them again prior to enrolling in the class. One of the fundamental aims of the course is to develop an interpretation of the main similarities and differences between the political theories defended in the *Republic* on the one hand, and the *Statesman*, and *Laws* on the other*.* We will read only certain books and sections of *Republic* and *Statesman*, but we will study all of the twelve books of *Laws*. Some of the topics to be considered include (1) the ultimate ends of the city’s laws and constitution, (2) the different forms of constitution and their ranking, (3) the proper extent of citizenship, (4) the character and scope of the citizens’ obligation to obey the laws, (5) answers given to the question of who should rule, (6) the elements of the citizens’ education (6) the nature of the citizen’s psychological and material well-being, (7) the purposes of punishment, (8) the social and political status of women, (9) slavery, and (10) religion.

**Seminar in Contemporary Philosophy: Action and interaction**

PHIL 7203/8203

Shaun Gallagher

M 5:30-8:30

<Theoretical/Analytic/Continental>  
  
In the first part of the seminar we will focus on recent theories of action and sense of agency, with special attention to the temporal structure of agency.  We then look at ongoing debates about intersubjective understanding and the development of a phenomenologically-inspired interaction theory of social cognition.  This leads to questions about how social and cultural institutions shape our actions and interactions.  Pursuing this theme we ask what implications the recent research on action and interaction has for current discussions in critical social theory concerning recognition, centered in the thought of Axel Honneth and his appropriation of Hegel.

**Proseminar**

PHIL 8001

Deb Tollefsen

T 2:30-5:30

<Proseminar>

The aim of this seminar is to help advanced doctoral students prepare and submit an article for publication. Various aspects of the publication process will be covered: including research methods, article revision, journal selection, and abstract writing.