

**GRADUATE COURSE DESCRIPTIONS
DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY
FALL 2023**

Modern Philosophy: Nietzsche's Ethical Thought

Michael Monahan

PHIL 4311/6311

T/R 1:00-2:25

<Practical>

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Though all but ignored during his lifetime, the latter half of the 20th century saw a booming interest in Nietzsche's work (especially his ethical thought) that continues today. For better or for worse, the style and content of his writings have proven notoriously difficult to interpret, and so we find quite a variety of disparate uses (and abuses) of his work. Hailed as a proto-postmodern in one corner, and as a "naturalistic" theorist on the other, one can find a great variety of philosophical positions that claim, rightly or wrongly, some debt to Nietzsche. This course will look closely and Nietzsche's writings on ethics, focusing in particular on his mature works (starting with books IV and V of *The Gay Science*). We will be examining his critique of traditional moral philosophy, his understanding of the challenge posed by nihilism, and his project of the "revaluation of all values". There are two principle aims of the course. The first is to meet Nietzsche on his own terms in order to best evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of his later interpreters. The second is to raise the question of whether, in the interstices of his various critiques of ethical thought, it is possible to construct a viable *positive* account of a distinctly Nietzschean ethics. In other words, can one find, amidst all the articulations of what ethics *is not*, a coherent account of what Nietzsche thinks ethics *is*?

TEXTS: Nietzsche – *The Gay Science*, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, *Beyond Good and Evil*, *On the Genealogy of Morals*, *Twilight of the Idols*, and *Antichrist*. Some secondary literature will also be assigned (Robert Gooding Williams, Richard Schacht, Brian Leiter, Maudemarie Clarke, Ofelia Schutte, Bernard Reginster).

REQUIREMENTS: Class participation (including weekly online participation), one class presentation, final research paper (6,000 words).

Special Topics: Data Ethics

Kevin Taylor

PHIL 7801

MW 12:40-2:05

<Practical>

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course will provide an introduction to the emerging, fast-paced field of Data Ethics which includes select readings by leading scholars on the topics of privacy/surveillance (*dataveillance*), robot ethics (especially autonomous vehicles, carebots and killbots), AI ethics (including algorithmic nudging, machine learning, weak AI versus strong AI), and social media ethics. This course will center around a close reading of the texts against the background of the relevant moral theories discussed. Novel problems and new issues will be addressed as relevant (ex. AI art, ChatGPT, the moral status of data, the possibility of robot enlightenment, etc.).

Special attention will be paid to theoretical approaches to data ethics and less commonly taught philosophies (ex. Virtue ethics and social media, Confucian ethics and Carebots, Buddhism and Intelligent technology, American pragmatism and AI ethics, etc.)

TEXTS:

The Ethics of Information by Luciano Floridi
Additional readings available as PDFs.

REQUIREMENTS:

- Philosophy students will be assessed on class participation (including two in-class presentations) and a final research paper (15-20 pages).
- Non-Philosophy students will be assessed on assessed on class participation (including in-class presentations prepared in consultation with the instructor) and two case study assignments (prepared in consultation with the instructor).

Seminar in Contemporary Philosophy: Aesthetics and skilled performance

Shaun Gallagher

PHIL 7203/8203

Tuesday 2:30-5:30

<Theoretical>

COURSE DESCRIPTION

The focus of this seminar is the intersection between aesthetics and skilled performance. Recent philosophical work on skilled performance in the performing arts and athletics, building on work in both phenomenology and science, has provided a nuanced view that describes an integration of multiple factors (motor control, perception, emotion, physical/social/cultural environments). In contrast to some traditional views of aesthetic experience that focus on the observer stance, a different perspective is introduced when we ask about the performer's experience. We'll consider Kantian, phenomenological, pragmatic and enactive views on aesthetic experience and their implications for understanding the work of art. Mark Johnson, and several other philosophers, will be guests during the seminar.

TEXTS

Selections from Kant, Lipps, Merleau-Ponty, Wollheim, Gadamer

Contemporary papers by Maria Brincker, Mark Johnson, Hubert Dreyfus, Evelyn Tribble, John Sutton, Simon Höffding, John Carvalho, and others

REQUIREMENTS

Students will be assessed on class participation, one class presentation, and a final research paper (15-20 pages).

Cognitive Science Seminar: Embodied Cognition

Shaun Gallagher

PHIL 7514/8514

Wednesday 2:20-5:20

<Theoretical>

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Embodied cognition presents an alternative to standard cognitivist views in cognitive science. The seminar will review various approaches to embodied cognition, usually termed the 4Es: embodied, embedded (or ecological), extended and enactive cognition. These approaches motivate a number of contemporary debates and critical responses to questions about the role of brain, body and environment in cognition; notions of representation, affordance, affectivity, dynamical attunement; relations between perception and action, predictive processing and active inference. We'll also

explore the implications for topics pertaining to education, social cognition and psychiatry. Guest lectures by Karl Friston, Mark Johnson, David Kirsh, and others (TBA) in the areas of philosophy, neurobiology, psychology, psychiatry, computer science and AI.

Texts

Gallagher, S. 2023. *Elements: Embodied and Enactive Approaches to Cognition*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

A selection of articles by visiting lecturers.

REQUIREMENTS

Students will be assessed on class participation and a final research paper (15-20 pages).

Seminar in Classical Philosophy

Tim Roche

PHIL 7201/8201

Thursday 2:30-5:30

<History of Philosophy>

Course Description

We begin with a discussion of some books of Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* that surround his books on *philia* (friendship, affection) to establish the philosophical context of his account of *philia* in that treatise. A second preliminary task will be to examine Plato's *Lysis*, a dialogue which clearly influences Aristotle's own treatment of *philia*. After these preparatory readings and discussions, we use Michael Pakaluk's translation and commentary to engage in an intensive analysis of Aristotle's discussion of *philia* in books 8 and 9 of the *Ethics*. The aim of the course will be to understand and evaluate what Aristotle says about *philia* (including his remarks on personal friendship, civic friendship, and familial love) and some of what he tells us about *eros* (passionate/sexual love). We explore the natures of these forms of affection in Aristotle's moral and political thought while paying special attention to his view of the differences and similarities between *philia* and *eros* on the one hand, and the relations between *philia* and human *eudaimonia* (living well or happiness) on the other.

Required Course Materials:

1. Aristotle. *Nicomachean Ethics*. (Use translations by Irwin, Crisp, Ross, or Rowe; Crisp and Ross translations available online as library e-books.)
2. Michael Pakaluk (trans.), *Nicomachean Ethics, Books VIII and IX*. (OUP).

ISBN: 0-19875-104-4.

3. Plato. *Lysis* (uploaded to Canvas).
4. Selected passages from various writings of Aristotle (including, for example, fragments of Aristotle's lost dialogues, the *Topics*, the *Prior Analytics*, *De Anima*, *Rhetoric*, *Eudemian Ethics*, *Magna Moralia*, *Politics*, *Historia Animalium*, and *Generation of Animals*). The material will be made available to students in various ways, e.g., through library e-books, Canvas, handouts, etc.
5. Modern philosophical papers and commentaries on Aristotle's accounts of *philia* and/or *eros* (uploaded to Canvas).

Course Requirements: A midterm paper and a final paper. Students may substitute a class presentation for the midterm paper. Also, students enrolled in the class will also be required to discuss both primary texts and secondary literature in their final papers or presentations.

Seminar: Social/Political Philosophy: Black Feminist Philosophy

Jameliah Shorter-Bourhanou

PHIL 7541/8541

Thursdays 5:30 pm-8:30 pm

<Practical>

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course will focus on the history of black feminist philosophy. We will take an historical intellectual approach to intersectionality, black feminist epistemology, and black women's activism. We will read black feminist philosophers such as Anna Julia Cooper, Patricia Hill-Collins, and bell hooks. Later in the course, we will explore new directions of black feminist philosophy such as transnational black feminism, misogynoir, conjure, and the philosophy of rest.

Texts: TBD

Requirements: TBD

