

**Graduate Course Descriptions  
Fall Semester 2013**

**Studies in Modern Philosophy: "Kant's Critique of Pure Reason"**

PHIL 4311/6311

Hoke Robinson

MW 12:40-2:05

<History/Major Figure>

Course Description:

A close study of Kant's Critique of Pure Reason, focused on his "transcendental turn" in philosophy, and considering such key issues as the possibility of synthetic a priori knowledge, the ideality of space and time, the transcendental deduction and schematism of the categories, and the principles of pure understanding.

**Recent Continental Philosophy**

PHIL 4441/6441

Mary Beth Mader

R 2:30-5:30

<Continental>

In lecture and discussion format, this course will introduce students to several major thinkers in recent European philosophy through readings of primary sources. The course readings are demanding, but in my view worth the effort required. We will spend most of our time on these philosophers and texts:

Michel Foucault, *History of Sexuality, Volume I*

Jean-Francois Lyotard, *The Differend*

Gilles Deleuze, Selections from *Logic of Sense, The Deleuze Reader*

Emmanuel Levinas, *Time and the Other*; "Being Jewish"

Luce Irigaray, Selections from *Speculum: Of the Other Woman* and *An Ethics of Sexual Difference*

In very general terms, chief topics of the course include contemporary French philosophies of difference and otherness, and their relations to the subjects of ethics, temporality, and the history of Western philosophy.

**Requirements for written work:** A one-page final paper proposal and a 16-page final paper on approved topic of student choice, or alternative assignment(s) by student petition. A draft of the paper may be submitted for comments prior to its submission for a grade. Individual consultation on the final paper is recommended.

**Requirements for spoken work:** Participation in the discussion portion of the class

sessions.

### **Seminar in Metaphysics: “Understanding”**

PHIL 7414/8414

John Tienson

R 5:30-8:30

<Analytic/Theoretical>

#### **Description**

One can be said to understand many different kinds of things, such as, a game or sport, a coach’s strategy in a particular game, artistic styles and genre, an artistic medium, a person, the dynamics of a group or organization, the traffic patterns of a particular city, economics from a conservative point of view (even if one is a liberal or progressive), and on and on.

In the sense of the word “understanding” in which one can be said to understand such things, only a conscious being can literally understand something. However, understanding is not itself a conscious state, nor is it a collection of beliefs about a more or less unified topic. I take the hallmark of understanding in the sense in question to be the capacity to have *new*, appropriate thoughts about what one understands.

Understanding in this sense is somewhat related to knowing how (as opposed to propositional knowledge that), and it is related both to what analytic philosopher John Searle has called the Background and to what has been called the background by some Anglophone interpreters of Heidegger (such as Hubert Dreyfus and Charles Taylor). Understanding and related notions much vexed Wittgenstein. Some epistemologists have recently been arguing that understanding should replace knowledge as the focus of their field, but there is not yet an entry for understanding in the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy.

The aim of this seminar will be to better understand understanding. Readings from the analytic and phenomenological traditions in philosophy and from cognitive science. The main aim will be to understand *human* understanding; we will read some of the best recent literature on animal cognition to better appreciate the unique nature of human understanding.

#### **Writing requirements**

Brief, one page, responses to selected readings. Approximately 16 page term paper (or appropriate substitute).

### **Social and Political Philosophy: “Capitalism, Critique and Morality”**

PHIL 7541/8541

Somogy Varga

T 2:30-5:30

<Continental/Practical>

#### **Course Description:**

The recent economic crisis has reinvigorated the interest in studying capitalism. In this course, we explore the work of important thinkers in the history of capitalism, including Smith, Marx, Weber, Horkheimer, Habermas and Boltanski & Chiapello. We investigate critiques of capitalism launched from both sides of the political spectrum, and focus particularly on specific moral issues like exploitation and alienation.

### Course Requirements

Students will be required to make a presentation and to submit a 15-page paper.

### **Seminar in Ethical Theory: “Core Course I”**

PHIL 7551/8551

Remy Debes

M 2:30-5:30

<Practical>

### Course Description:

The primary aim of this intensive course is to ensure a basic competency in the canonical moral theories of modern western philosophy. Second, and partly as a means to honing a better understanding of those major theories, this course will aim to develop a basic familiarity with the motivations and ambitions of contemporary metaethics. In accomplishing the first goal, the course will be historically focused. Major primary texts include works by Hobbes, Hume, Mill, and Kant; secondary texts will include works by Luther, Shaftesbury, Mandeville, Diderot & his *Encyclopédie*, Rousseau, and Smith. Metaethical texts include works by Moore, Harman, Ayer, Gibbard, Railton, Darwall, and D’Arms and Jacobson.

### **Colloquium: “The Imaginary”**

PHIL 8051

Kas Saghafi

W 5:30-8:30

<Continental/Theoretical>

### **Course Description:**

The term *l’imaginaire* in French possesses two meanings: as an adjective (dating back to 1496) it refers to something unreal or fictive that exists in the imagination, while as a noun (a modern usage traced back to the writings of the writer André Gide) it refers to the product or the domain of the imagination. Sartre’s second book on the imagination (1940), which makes use of the second sense of the term, is devoted to a phenomenological exploration of the notion of the imaginary. After beginning with Sartre’s notion and discussing the themes of intentionality, negation, and fascination, we turn to Lacan’s

psychoanalytic usage of the Imaginary (alongside the orders of The Symbolic and The Real) in *Ecrits* and his Seminars (1953-55). The second part of the course will be devoted to a counter-current of the thinking of the imaginary in contemporary French thought. After examining Levinas's discussions of the imaginary in the 1940s, we will turn our attention to Blanchot's rethinking of this notion with Levinas's *il y a*. In the background of all these discussions is Kant's thinking of the faculty of the imagination in the First and Third Critiques and Heidegger's thinking in the 1920s of the imagination in relation to temporality.

**Required Texts:**

Jean-Paul Sartre, *The Imaginary*, trans. Jonathan Webber (Routledge, 2010)

Jacques Lacan, *Ecrits*, trans. Bruce Fink (Norton, 2006)

Jacques Lacan, *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book I. Freud's Papers on Technique (1953-54)*, trans. John Forrester & Book 2. *The Ego in Freud's Theory and in the Technique of Psychoanalysis (1954-55)*, trans. Sylvana Tomaselli (Norton, 1988-)

Emmanuel Levinas, "Reality and its Shadow," trans. Alphonso Lingis in *The Levinas Reader*, ed. Sean Hand (Basil Blackwell, 1989)

Emmanuel Levinas, *Existence and Existents*, trans. Alphonso Lingis (Duquesne University Press, 2001)

Maurice Blanchot, *The Work of Fire*, trans. Charlotte Mandell (Stanford University Press, 1995)

Maurice Blanchot, *The Space of Literature*, trans. Ann Smock (University of Nebraska Press, 1982)

Maurice Blanchot, *The Book to Come*, trans. Charlotte Mandell (Stanford University Press, 2003)

**Written Requirements:** Two short papers and a final paper will be required.