

COURSE DESCRIPTIONS
GRADUATE COURSES in PHILOSOPHY
Spring 2017

Studies in Ancient Philosophy – Plato on Love, Beauty and Pleasure
PHIL 4211/6211
Tim Roche
TR 1:00-2:25
<History>

Plato's corpus is filled with discussions of love (and friendship), the beautiful (or the fine), and pleasure. These notions are intimately connected with one another in Plato's thinking and they are also firmly connected to Plato's conception of philosophy itself. We examine the dialogues *Lysis*, *Protagoras*, *Hippias Major*, *Symposium*, and *Phaedrus*, along with portions of Plato's *Gorgias*, *Republic*, and *Philebus*, to arrive at some understanding of how these notions are understood by Plato, how they are related to each other, and what sorts of roles they play in Plato's conceptions of human desire, knowledge, objective truth, and the nature of philosophy.

TEXT: J.M. Cooper and D.S. Hutchinson (eds.), *Plato. Complete Works* (Indianapolis/Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company. ISBN: 978-0872203495.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS: Regular attendance and class participation is required of all students. Additionally, **undergraduate students** must submit two short critical discussion papers and a final research paper; **graduate students** must submit either a midterm paper or a class presentation and a final research paper.

Philosophy of Mind
PHIL 4421/6421
Shaun Gallagher
M 2:30-5:30
<Theoretical>

The course will cover major issues and debates in recent philosophy of mind after reviewing some of the basic concepts and discussions. Topics include behaviorism; reductive, non-reductive, and eliminative versions of materialism; functionalism; phenomenal consciousness; computational models; mental causation; action, free will, personal identity, and more recent embodied, enactive and extended models of the mind.

Seminar in Continental Philosophy – Hegel’s Philosophy of Right

PHIL 7030/8030

Tom Nenon

T 5:30-8:30

<History **or** Practical>

In the first half of the nineteenth century, Hegel’s *Basic Outline of a Philosophy of Right* provided a philosophical account of modern political life in Europe. More importantly, however, it also presented a normative framework for evaluating the legitimacy of past and present political orders in terms of the extent to which they have served as concrete realizations of the ideal of freedom.

We will place special emphasis upon the philosophical assumptions that support his concrete analyses. We will try to understand what he means by freedom and how his political philosophy explains and justifies certain features of modern political states as advancements of this kind of freedom. We will ask, more specifically, how Hegel conceives of the relationship between individuals and their property, the role of morality in political and social life, and the relationship between persons and larger social institutions such as families, business professions, and nation-states. Our overall goal will be to identify and critically evaluate the views about personal identity, human happiness, and meaningful human lives that find their expression in this work and still represent important issues for us today.

Seminar in Normative Philosophy -- Slurs

PHIL 7040/8040

Luvell Anderson

R 2:30-5:30

<Theoretical>

Over the past decade or so there has been an explosion of attention paid to slurs in the philosophy of language literature. Theories about the nature of slurs’ offense, their linguistic properties, and implications for other areas of inquiry have emerged. At this point it is important to take stock of what has been accomplished and what remains to be done. In this course we will take inventory of what’s been said about the semantics and pragmatics of slurs as well as issues concerning hate speech legislation. We will conclude with some considerations for what direction future research on the topic should take. Readings for the course will include some foundational and relevant background texts in the philosophy of language by figures such as Frege, Grice, Strawson, Brandom, Austin, and Searle, as well as the extant literature on slurs and hate speech specifically.

Course Requirements

Regular attendance, class participation, class presentations, and a final research paper.

Seminar in Metaphysics -- Animalism
PHIL 7414/8414
Stephan Blatti
R 5:30-8:30
<Theoretical>

What are you, metaphysically speaking? What, in other words, is your fundamental nature? Are you made of matter? Are you made *only* of matter? Are you *made* of anything at all? What parts do you have? Are some of these parts temporal? And what makes something a part of *you*? Are you a concrete particular or an abstract universal? Might there be more than one of you? Rather than a substance, might you be a property? or an event? or a process? Do you persist through time? If so, under what conditions? If not, what would account for the illusion that you do? Are you your brain? Are you the animal currently located where you are? In what ontological relationship do you stand to your body? and to your life? Might this entire line of inquiry be founded on a mistake? Might instead the metaphysical nihilist be right that we don't exist at all—that nothing wrote these words, and nothing is now reading them?

Advocates of the theory of personal identity known as “animalism” purport to be able to shed light on these questions. According to this view, each of us is one and the same as a human organism, and the conditions of our persistence are not psychological but biological.

The topic of this seminar is animalism: arguments for it and objections to it, as well as its history and implications. Our investigation into these issues will be guided largely by selections from the following works:

E. Olson, *What Are We? A Study in Personal Ontology* (Oxford 2007)
S. Blatti and P. Snowdon (eds.), *Animalism: New Essays on Persons, Animals, and Identity* (Oxford 2016)

Supplementary and background readings will also be assigned.

Cognitive Science Seminar
PHIL 7514-8514
Deborah Tollefsen & Shaun Gallagher
W 2:20-5:20
<Theoretical>

Distributed cognition refers to the ways in which human cognition may be distributed rather than localized. It encompasses a number of different positions including the idea that cognition is a function of massive parallel distribution across the brain, that cognition is distributed across brain and bodies, that cognition is distributed across brains, bodies, and environments, and that cognition can be

distributed across groups of individuals. This seminar will explore and critically evaluate these and related positions.

The student portion of the seminar will take place from 2:20-4:00 p.m. The public portion of the talk, which will involve speakers from a variety of different disciplines discussing their work on distributed cognition, will take place from 4:00-5:20 p.m.

Texts: a number of articles will be assigned each week. The articles will be available online.

Requirements:

- Student presentation

- Substantive research paper