Philosophy

PHILOSOPHY: THE BIG QUESTIONS

PHL 2050-01  Donovan Miyasaki  10:10-11:05  MWF
PHL 2050-02  Donovan Miyasaki  12:20-1:15  MWF
PHL 2050-03  Linda Farmer  9:30-10:50  T,Th

Like philosophers through the ages, students in this class will pursue the “big questions” of life. We will discuss such perennially fascinating topics as: Can you survive the death of your body, and if not, can it be bad for you to die? Is there a God? Is it rational to be moral? Are there “right answers” to ethical questions, or is ethics just subjective? What is the meaning of life? We will examine these questions by reading selections from classic philosophical texts, and put our own beliefs about them under critical scrutiny. Our goal in these discussions will be to appreciate the complexities and difficulties such questions raise for our most fundamental and deeply held beliefs.

INDUCTIVE LOGIC  William Irvine

PHL 2150-01  1:25-2:20  MWF

We reason inductively whenever we “make good bets,” both in casinos and in our daily life. This course examines inductive reasoning and provides students with tools to improve their inductive abilities.

SYMBOLIC LOGIC  Jacob Bauer

PHL 2230-01  10:10-11:05  MWF

If you are a functioning adult, you are logical. In this course, we will delve deeper into logic by developing a symbolic language that captures the logic of English sentences. We will then learn how to logically manipulate those sentences.

SYMBOLIC LOGIC  Scott Wilson

PHL 2230-02  11:00-12:20  T,Th

AESTHETICS & PHILOSOPHY OF ART  Donovan Miyasaki

PHL 3410/5410-01, ENG 3010-03/5010-01  2:30-3:25  MWF

In this course we'll discuss philosophical theories of art and beauty. Are the fine arts different from craft or entertainment? Are there objective or reasonable standards of artistic value? What is the goal of art? Is it to express emotion, to communicate truth, or just to produce pleasure? Can immoral artworks still be good art?

By critical examining our artistic prejudices, reflecting more closely on our artistic experiences, and trying out new approaches to interpretation, we’ll develop a richer sense of what art is and why we value it. Readings will include historical works by Plato, Hume, and Kant, as well as contemporary philosophers such as Arthur Danto.
THEORIES OF HUMAN NATURE  
PHL 3650/5650-01  
Linda Farmer  
12:30-1:50  T,Th  
Is there such as thing as human nature? If so, what is it? In this course, we will explore the idea of human nature and various understandings of it put forward by such diverse thinkers as Aristotle, Descartes, Rousseau, Marx, Freud, E. O. Wilson, Wollstonecraft, and Sartre. What theories do they present? Are they well argued for? What are their theories’ social, personal, and political implications? These are just some of the interesting questions we shall be raising throughout the quarter. This course is Writing Intensive.

APPLIED ETHICS SEMINAR  
PHL 4110/6110-01  
Scott Wilson  
2:00-3:20  T,Th  
This course will familiarize students with contemporary meta-ethics. Unlike normative ethics or applied ethics, meta-ethics is not concerned with determining what actions are right or wrong, or what sorts of things are good or bad. Instead, meta-ethics is concerned with questions such as: Can ethics be objective? What does it mean to say that something is objective or subjective? If ethics is not objective, then how should we understand ethical statements? Are ethical properties secondary qualities? Do ethical judgments necessarily give us reasons to act? Do ethical judgments necessarily motivate us to act? As this is an upper-level seminar, prior classes in philosophy will be useful to do well in the course.

PHILOSOPHY OF PHYSICAL SCIENCE  
PHL 4710-01  
William Irvine  
2:30-3:25  MWF  
In the Philosophy of Physical Science we explore the scientific method and its philosophical implications. Early in the course, we examine the difference between science and religion by taking a look at the debate between evolution, creationism, and intelligent design. Then we consider the “deep ancestry” of modern human beings, exploring not just our family trees but our position in the tree of life. We trace this tree back to its root—the origin of life on earth. We also examine the history of the genes in our DNA as well as the history of the individual atoms that comprise us. In this last examination, we consider scientific theories about the origin of the universe and the reasons scientists have for proposing those theories.

PHILOSOPHY OF SOCIAL SCIENCE  
PHL 4720-01  
3:30-4:50  T,Th  
PHL 4720-02  
2:00-3:20  T,Th  
PHL 4720-03  
5:00-6:20  T,Th  
This course will be a generalized introduction to the philosophical analysis of the assumptions, presuppositions, and conceptual problems that are inherent within the specific disciplines that make up the social sciences, namely, economics, psychology, political science, and sociology.

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