PHIL 5953 - SEMINAR CONCURRENT WITH PHIL 4953:  
(PREREQUISITE(S): Consent of Dept. Chair)  
Section 101 -- TTH 3:30-4:45, DR. YOON CHOI

[Section Title: The Metaphysics & Ethics of Personal Identity]

Phil 4953 and 5953: The first half of this course will be devoted to exploring the metaphysics of personal identity. What is a self? And what makes a self the same self over time? A persisting soul-substance? Memory? Psychological or narrative or bodily continuity? What can we learn about personal identity from brain bisection or from dissociative identity disorder? We will then turn our attention to related ethical questions. Does personal identity matter? What are the ramifications of our understanding of personal identity for questions of moral and legal responsibility, or for addressing difficult questions surrounding life and death (euthanasia, abortion, the legitimacy of advanced directives, etc.)? Readings will be drawn from both the history of philosophy (Locke, Butler, Hume) and contemporary philosophy (Bernard Williams, Derek Parfit, Thomas Nagel).

PHIL 6480 - RECENT CHRISTIAN METAPHYSICS  
(PREREQUISITE(S): Consent of Dept. Chair)  
Section 101 -- MW 2:30-3:45, DR. NOEL ADAMS

Course Description:
Some theorists hold that that there is a distinctively Catholic approach to education as well as to the role that philosophy plays in higher education. This course examines this claim in the light of several philosophers who have written on the topic, giving focus to the metaphysical perspectives and arguments they offer. In a secular age in which humanistic approaches to education become increasingly separated from a Christian approach, the question arises as to whether or not a traditional Catholic approach to education (along with the metaphysical framework underlying it) is a sustainable model. This latter observation will serve to motivate much of our discourse.

Requirements and Grade Determination:
You will give one in-class presentation and write two papers. The first paper (3000 words) will be due at the time of your in-class presentation. The dates of the in-class presentations will be settled upon during the first lecture of the course. The second paper (5000-8000 words) will be due by the end of the lecture period of the last day of lecture. Your grade will be determined by your participation in class and by the work you hand in. The first paper will account for 35% of your grade; the final paper will account for 50% of your grade. Participation will account for the remaining 15% of your grade.

Texts (all are required):
9780415298704
PHIL 6640 - ST. THOMAS AQUINAS
(PREREQUISITE(S): Consent of Dept. Chair)
Section 101 -- MW 1:00-2:15, DR. DAVID TWETTEN

Course Description: In the advent of the rediscovery of the full corpus of Aristotle’s writings, Aquinas developed a novel philosophical system that purported to be at once grounded in authentic “aristotelian” principles and fully harmonious with scriptural belief. This system is possible only because of Aquinas’ unprecedented metaphysics of existence, which owes as much, ironically, to the platonic tradition transmitted through arabic philosophy as it does to Aristotle. Aquinas’ “system,” which was partly condemned by ecclesial authorities in the thirteenth century and was somewhat suspect for much of the remaining middle ages, was rediscovered and taken in the twentieth century as a model for the harmony of faith and reason, of science and scripture. After placing Aquinas in his historical setting, the course examines how he arrives at the central tenets of his metaphysics, natural theology, epistemology, psychology, and ethics. In addition to his expositions of cognition, free will, and the nature of human action, we focus on the real distinction between existence and essence and how Aquinas uses it in order to establish the existence and nature of God and the immortality of the human soul. The course also provides an introduction to the tools of research and to contemporary scholarship on Aquinas.

TEXTS: BASIC WRITINGS OF ST. THOMAS AQUINAS, vol. 1, ed. A. Pegis; Aquinas, ON BEING AND ESSENCE, tr. A. Maurer; Aquinas, TREATISE ON HAPPINESS (ST I-II.1-21), tr. J. Oesterle.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS: class participation, seminar presentation(s) or a seminar paper, final paper.

PHIL 6958 - TEXT/SEMINAR ON TWENTIETH-CENTURY PHILOSOPHY:
(PREREQUISITE(S): Consent of Dept. Chair)
Section 101 -- TTH 12:00-1:15, DR. POL VANDEVELDE

[Section Title: Figures of Subjectivity: Levinas and Foucault]
PHIL 6959 - SEMINAR IN PHILOSOPHY
(PREREQUISITE(S): Consent of Dept. Chair)
Section 701 -- W 4:00-6:40, DR. MARGARET WALKER

[Section Title: Philosophical Foundations of Human Rights]

Course Description, PHIL 6959 701: Philosophical Foundations of Human Rights, Spring 2016, Professor Walker

This seminar will focus on debate concerning whether there are, and what are, the philosophical foundations of contemporary human rights discourse, with attention to deontological, consequentialist, pragmatic, and other ethical approaches.

Required Texts
Allen Buchanan, The Heart of Human Rights (hardback, but available through Oxford Online through Raynor) (Oxford University Press, 2013) 978-0199325382

Additional readings and human rights documents to be available online.

Course Requirements*

Regular Attendance (Absence >2 can reduce your grade)
1 critical class presentation of assigned reading (20 minutes, 20%)
1 Independently researched class report on a major human rights documents (15 minutes, 10%)
1 Weekly 2-page analytical summary of assigned chapter (total of 10, 20%)
A (2-page) sketch of a plan for the final term paper, due Week 12, + conference
1 Final paper (@15pp.) must present an argument on an approved topic addressing a philosophical issue concerning human rights. (50%)

*These requirements are likely but provisional, and may be revised.