Why are Americans often said to be “pragmatic”? What does it mean? What makes Pragmatism a distinctive type of Philosophy? Why is Pragmatism and American Philosophy being studied seriously in countries as diverse as China, Spain, Italy, Germany, Brazil, and many others?

Charles Peirce, William James, Josiah Royce, John Dewey and Jane Addams emerged in the United States and became known world-wide as the result of shaping a new way of thinking often called Pragmatism. Their work continues to influence many philosophers today.

This course will reveal how these world-class thinkers [who were scientists, psychologists, logicians, political thinkers, social reformers] moved philosophy in new directions in the 19th and 20th centuries in response to challenges from Darwin’s theory of evolution, new discoveries about the universe, new insights into the nature of consciousness and the human person, concerns about the nature of individualism, community and how to achieve a meaningful life in a rapidly changing world dominated by science and technology.

Other issues: What is ‘truth’? Is a true belief simply one that ‘works’? How do we figure out the meaning of our beliefs? What is the relation between our beliefs, our actions and what is true? What is “the pragmatic method”? How do we achieve a balance between our love of freedom and individual autonomy, and the need for cooperation and community? Special attention will be given to how the Americans agreed and disagreed among themselves about these and other issues, including the nature of Pragmatism itself, and how these American thinkers saw their work in relation to the inherited views of previous philosophers such as Descartes, Kant, Locke, Hume and Hegel.
PHIL 6310 - HISTORY AND THEORY OF ETHICS
(Prerequisite(s): Consent of Dept. Chair)
Section 101 -- W 4:00-6:40, DR. MARGARET WALKER

Catalogue Description: A Theoretical investigation into the moral dimensions of human life. Covers the principle traditions in Western moral philosophy as well as significant work in contemporary philosophy.

The course will hinge on three classics in the history of Western normative ethical theory that set the principal theoretical agendas for current moral theory and reveal assumptions about what ethics is and how ethics should be one. In counterpoint to each of these canonical texts we will examine a contemporary work that interacts critically with these founding traditions.

While it is an impossible task to introduce the history and theory of ethics in a single course, this seminar will try to sample and reflect on both core assumptions within the tradition and new and emerging directions of work on ethics in contemporary philosophy, including feminist ethics and experimental ethics.

Classic texts:
- Aristotle, Nicomachean Ethics [Virtue Ethics]
- Immanuel Kant, Grounding for the Metaphysics of Morals [Deontology]
- John Stuart Mill, Utilitarianism [Consequentialism]

Contemporary texts*:
- Robert M. Adams, A Theory of Virtue: Excellence in Being for the Good
- Lisa Tessman, Moral Failure: On the Impossible Demands of Morality
- Margaret Urban Walker, Moral Understandings: A Feminist Study in Ethics

*Note: these texts are not finalized, but likely.

*Participants will produce weekly analytical summaries of portions of assigned reading and will present these in class on a rotating basis. There may also be an individualized assignments exploring current literature on a particular historical or contemporary trend. A major final paper assignment, with instructor approval, will examine and argue an issue of relevance to texts studied.

*Note: this structure is not finalized, but likely.

PHIL 6430 - PHILOSOPHY OF KNOWLEDGE
(Prerequisite(s): Consent of Dept. Chair)
Section 701 -- T 5:00-7:40, DR. POL VANDEVELDE
[Section Title: Reserved for Nursing]

PHIL 6440 - PHILOSOPHY OF SCIENCE
(Prerequisite(s): Consent of Dept. Chair)
Section 101 -- T 9:30-12:15, DR. CORINNE BLOCH-MULLINS

This seminar will examine a central question in the philosophy of science: what is an explanation? Science seeks to explain phenomena, but what constitutes an explanation? What is an explanation for? What are the criteria for a good explanation? Is there a uniform account of scientific explanation? Is scientific explanation different from other types of explanation? What are the assumptions that theories of explanation make about foundational issues in philosophy of science (e.g., realism, the nature of laws, the nature of causation, etc.)? This seminar will explore historical and contemporary approaches to these questions.
PHIL 6662 - HEGEL
(PREREQUISITE(S): Consent of Dept. Chair)
Section 101 -- TTH 12:30-1:45, DR. MICHAEL MONAHAN

Hegel remains a towering and influential figure in the history of western philosophy. While his influence is most apparent (though not always explicitly recognized) in the continental tradition, he is beginning to make some inroads into Anglo-American analytic philosophy as well (especially philosophy of mind and language). That being said, the sheer scope of his philosophical system, and the admitted opacity of his prose, tend to foster misinterpretation and misappropriation on all sides. This course will explore Hegel’s system by focusing specifically upon his account of Geist and its relation to human subjectivity through a close reading of the Phenomenology of Spirit. Some time will also be devoted to the more salient sections of the supplemented by volume three of his Encyclopedia (available in English as the Philosophy of Mind), as well as secondary literature, though the Phenomenology remains the primary text.

TEXTS: Hegel, PHENOMENOLOGY OF SPIRIT, Shklar, FREEDOM AND INDEPENDENCE, Forster, HEGEL’S IDEA OF A PHENOMENOLOGY OF SPIRIT, Westphal, HEGEL, FREEDOM, AND MODERNITY

REQUIREMENTS: One paper, one class presentation, and a final exam.

PHIL 6959 - SEMINAR IN PHILOSOPHY
(PREREQUISITE(S): Consent of Dept. Chair)
Section 101 -- TH 9:00-11:40, DR. RICHARD TAYLOR

[Aquinas and the Arabs]

Aquinas and ‘the Arabs’: Five Major Issues
Prof. Richard C. Taylor
Class meeting time: Thursdays 9-11:40 am (with break)
Recent work by members of the Aquinas and ‘the Arabs’ International Working Group has revealed with detailed analyses the profound influences of the Arabic philosophical tradition on the philosophical and theological thought of Thomas Aquinas and many other thinkers of the Latin medieval tradition. This unique seminar on high medieval philosophy considers in detail five (5) topics on issues of major importance in the thought of Aquinas in which he drew deeply on the Arabic philosophical tradition: (1) metaphysics of creation & being, (2) theory of knowledge, (3) human soul, (4) ultimate human happiness in knowing God, and (5) the relation philosophy & religion. Each of these issues of engagement with sources from the Arabic tradition plays a key role in the formation of the thought of Aquinas. We will study the Arabic sources and then their use by Aquinas using selected previously published translations as well as new unpublished translations from Arabic and Latin not otherwise publicly available.

This course is international and global with eight (8) class meetings via live video for one hour of discussion with graduate students enrolled in “Aquinas in Context” in the Institute of Philosophy at the Katholieke Universiteit Leuven in Belgium co-taught by Profs. Andrea Robiglio and Richard Taylor. For these meetings we will be studying the same texts together. As in past years, we expect this will lead to valuable and insightful engagements on many levels.

Course requirements: Participation in class through discussion of assigned video lectures and readings as well as short student presentations (50% of course grade) and a professional course paper of ca. 20 pages prepared in accord with the submission guidelines of the journal, History of Philosophy Quarterly (50%).

PHIL 6970 - SEMINAR ON TEACHING PHILOSOPHY
(PREREQUISITE(S): Graduate Standing)
Section 101 -- TH 5:00-7:00, STAFF