PHIL 6330 - PROBLEMS IN ETHICS
(PREREQUISITE(S): Consent of Dept. Chair)
Section 101 -- TTH 12:30-1:45, DR. THERESA TOBIN

The Ontology and Ethics of Violence
PHIL 6330: Problems in Ethics
Theresa W. Tobin

This course examines central questions surrounding the nature and moral significance of violence. Violence is a harm, but not all harms are violent. In the first part of the course we will consider questions such as: What distinguishes violence from other kinds of harms? Is ‘violence’ a normative or a neutral concept? Does violence necessarily involve the use of physical force to inflict material harms? Is it always blatant and forceful, or can there be what Newton Garver calls “quite violence”? Should we endorse a narrow or wide definition of violence, and what is at stake philosophically and politically in how we define violence? Can there be structural violence and can institutions be violent? For example, does it make sense to attribute violence to economic or political systems, or to talk of violent social relations among people? We will also examine accounts of psychological and spiritual violence—modes of violence that do not have material targets (or at least are not experienced as physical or material injury), and may or may not be delivered through material means.

In the second part of the course we will explore themes related to the moral significance of violence. Here we will look at links between violence and suffering, including relationships between structural violence and social suffering. Iris Young has named violence one of the “five faces of oppression.” We will consider which modes of violence impact socially marginalized populations and how violence impacts these populations. Does the experience of violence in any of its modes, impede prospects for flourishing? If so, how? Does the experience of violence impede moral agency by, for example, undermining autonomy, or causing such acute suffering as to diminish an agent’s capacities for selfhood? If so, how? Is violence ever morally justified?

Although philosophical perspectives on these questions will be central, we will also consult literatures from a variety of related disciplines.

Assignments: weekly reading responses; facilitate at least one class discussion; 10-12 page midterm paper (to serve as initial draft for final paper); 15-20 page final paper.

Texts:
Vittorio Bufacchi, (2009), Violence: A Philosophical Anthology, Palgrave McMillian.
Additional articles to be posted on d2l.
PHIL 6610 - ARISTOTLE  
**PREREQUISITE(S): Consent of Dept. Chair**  
Section 101 -- TTH 9:30-10:45, DR. OWEN GOLDIN

In this course we will study the major philosophical positions taken by Aristotle. We will try to ascertain the questions Aristotle was attempting to answer, what his answers were, and the extent to which they are valid. We will concentrate on Aristotle's philosophy of science, metaphysics, and philosophy of mind, but will also devote some time to his ethical writings. Another goal of the course is to familiarize the students with important work in contemporary Aristotelian scholarship.

TEXTS:  
Barnes, ed., THE COLLECTED WORKS OF ARISTOTLE, Barnes, ed., CAMBRIDGE COMPANION TO ARISTOTLE, other secondary literature will be made available on reserve.  
REQUIREMENTS: Two major papers.

PHIL 6635 - MEDIEVAL ISLAMIC THOUGHT  
**PREREQUISITE(S): Consent of Dept. Chair**  
Section 101 -- MW 9:00-10:15, DR. DAVID TWETTEN

Phil 6635 Medieval Islamic Philosophy  
Instructor: Dr David Twetten  
Course Description:  
Arabic philosophy provides the best introduction to the central problems of medieval thought: is it possible to reconcile accounts of the human condition found in philosophy and religion? Can Plato and Aristotle be brought into harmony (with each other and) with monotheism? We shall begin with Al-Kindi’s Aristotelianizing use of Plotinus, which sets up the major questions with which we shall be concerned (class interest will determine with further precision): is it possible to give to the One and its processions a rigorously philosophical analysis, using Aristotelian logic? How can the ‘soul’, immersed as it is in our present corporeal condition, attain fulfillment? Is the political enterprise integral to the philosophical project, as for the Islamic philosophers (following Plato), and has this conclusion affected the world situation of Islam? We shall examine the novel philosophical syntheses of al-Farabi and Avicenna, as well as the critical attitudes of al-Ghazali (the medieval Hume?) and Averroes to the harmonizing project. A major goal will be to develop the skills for publishing on Arabic philosophy in a contemporary idiom, whether analytic, continental or historical. To this end, we shall focus on selected recent secondary sources as models for innovative research.

Texts: McGinnis & Reisman, Classical Arabic Philosophy: An Anthology of Sources; al-Ghazali, The Incoherence of the Philosophers; Adamson, Al-Kindi (Great Medieval Thinkers); Fakhry, History of Islamic Philosophy.  
Course Requirements: class participation, seminar presentations, final paper.

PHIL 6650 - DESCARTES  
**PREREQUISITE(S): Consent of Dept. Chair**  
Section 101 -- MW 3:30-4:45, DR. JOSEPH CANNON
PHIL 6660 - KANT
(PREREQUISITE(S): Consent of Dept. Chair)
Section 101 -- MW 1:00-2:15, DR. SEBASTIAN LUFT

PHIL 6660 – KANT – COURSE DESCRIPTION – Sebastian Luft

Kant’s work, the three Critiques in particular, remain some of the most important books in Western philosophy. Kant revolutionized the philosophy of the Enlightenment by determining not only the capacities but also the limits of reason, by working out a robust moral philosophy on the basis of transcendental philosophy, by introducing teleology into our view of nature. Kant thereby placed Enlightenment thought on a new foundation. It was also the most important stimulation for the movements to emerge as developments or critiques of Kant. Accordingly, he has been a constant source of inspiration as well as object of severe critique on the part of philosophers of distinct schools, such as Positivism, neo-Kantianism, Phenomenology, Anglo-American Analytic philosophy and contemporary Philosophy of Mind. Modern philosophy cannot be understood without at least a rudimentary understanding of Kant’s philosophy.

This course will offer a general introduction to Kant’s philosophy by way of a close reading of Kant’s magnum opus, the Critique of Pure Reason. We will then take a brief look at Kant’s moral philosophy. Finally, we will read key passages of the Third Critique, the Critique of the Power of Judgment, in order to glean the full scope of Kant’s system. We will discuss the main topics of Kant’s philosophy by incorporating classical Kant scholarship.

This class requires no previous knowledge of Kant (but willingness to abandon dearly held biases). Knowledge of German will be an asset but is not required.

TEXTS:
Helpful Secondary Sources:
Otfried Höffe, IMMANUEL KANT (SUNY Press); helpful introductory sketch of Kant’s philosophy as a whole.
Sebastian Gardner, KANT AND THE DRITIQUE OF PURE REASON (Routledge); close commentary to the First Critique, highly recommended.
Allan Wood, IMMANUEL KANT (Blackwell); a new and clear presentation of Kant’s entire oeuvre by a renowned Kant scholar.
Henry Allison, KANT’S TRANSCENDENTAL IDEALISM (Yale U Press); the classic—needs no introduction.
Georges Dicker, KANT’S THEORY OF KNOWLEDGE: AN ANALYTICAL INTRODUCTION (Oxford U Press); the subtitle says it all—a very clear analytical reading.
For an account of Kant’s life and works, take a look at the classic work by Ernst Cassirer, KANT’S LIFE AND THOUGHT (Yale U Press) and the newer biography by Manfred Kuehn, IMMANUEL KANT (Cambridge U Press.).
Finally, the CAMBRIDGE COMPANION TO KANT is always a good place to get started.

REQUIREMENTS: Midterm exam, final exam and term paper.
PHIL 6953 - TEXT/SEMINAR ON ANCIENT PHILOSOPHY:
(PREREQUISITE(S): Consent of Dept. Chair)
Section 101 -- TTH 11:00-12:15, DR. FRANCO TRIVIGNO
[Section Title: Plato and Drama]

Plato and Drama
(Phil 6953 – Text/Seminar on Ancient Philosophy)
Dr. Trivigno

COURSE DESCRIPTION:
This course is a study of the role of drama in Plato’s writings, both as he critically discusses the harmful effects of drama and as he borrows from drama in defending his own account of virtue. Through the detailed analysis of different Platonic dialogues as well as discussion of 5th century Greek drama, we will explore Plato’s seeming ambivalence about drama. In the first part of the course, we will focus on the criticisms of drama set forth in Gorgias, Republic, and the Laws. In the second part, we will turn our attention to the ways in which Plato puts drama to positive philosophical and pedagogical use, in particular, examining the ways in which he borrows both from Aristophanic comedy and Attic tragedy in composing his dialogues. In the third part, we will try to see whether these opposing strands in Plato can be reconciled. We will ask, in short, whether the harmful effects can be mitigated—though perhaps not eliminated—by a certain kind of philosophical composition and/or a certain kind of philosophical audience.

TEXT:

REQUIREMENTS:
One page papers, one 7-10 page paper and one 15-20 page paper

PHIL 6957 - TEXT/SEMINAR ON NINETEENTH-CENTURY PHILOSOPHY:
(PREREQUISITE(S): Consent of Dept. Chair)
Section 101 -- TTH 2:00-3:15, DR. JAVIER IBÁÑEZ-NOÉ
[Section Title: Schopenhauer]

PHIL 6957 Text/Seminar on 19th Century Philosophy
JAVIER IBÁÑEZ-NOÉ

SCHOPENHAUER

Schopenhauer's pessimistic philosophy is the link between Kant's transcendental turn and Nietzsche's life-affirmative thought. A careful reading of his main works thus affords an insight into one of the most important stages in the development of modern German philosophy. The main focus of the course will be on obtaining an adequate understanding of Schopenhauer's central ideas; however, we will also be looking back at Kant and forward at Nietzsche in the course of the lectures.

TEXTS: The World as Will and Representation (vol. 1 and 2); On the Fourfold Root of the Principle of Sufficient Reason

REQUIREMENTS: Two papers and a final.
PHIL 6959 - SEMINAR:
(PREREQUISITE(S): Consent of Dept. Chair)
Section 101 -- MW 11:00-12:15, DR. MARGARET WALKER

[Section Title: Contemporary Theories of Justice]

Course Description PHIL 6959: Contemporary Justice Theories - Walker, Spring, 2013

This course will examine contemporary (i.e. twenty-first century) contributions to the theory of justice, with a focus on “non-ideal” theories that attempt to track newly emerging understandings of the dimensions and demands of justice rooted in the facts of injustice and oppression. Topics include: injustice as deprivation, injustice as oppression, minority/group rights, and transitional justice.

Required Texts:
Pablo de Greiff, “Theorizing Transitional Justice,” (2012) and other papers (available in PDF)

Recent article literature on the ideal/nonideal theory debate (available online) includes:

Seminar participants will take responsibility for presenting in class at least 2 critical commentaries on assigned reading. A (7-page) critical response essay on one reading will be due shortly after midterm. A final(12-15 page) paper on an approved topic will be due at the end of the course; final meetings will involve a symposium of participants presenting their work.
Dear Graduate Students,

A syllabus requirement for Philosophy of Human Nature and Theories of Ethics is that they include discussion of (a) a position held by a significant figure from outside the Western tradition (PHIL 1001) or (b) a significant alternative to traditional Western ethics (PHIL 2310). As most of you entered the graduate program with training in the Western philosophical tradition, we recognize that this may be a difficult requirement to meet.

To partially address this, we would like to offer you the opportunity to audit Dr Finnigan’s Eastern Philosophy course in Spring 2013. The course will be an Introduction to Buddhist Philosophy and shall canvas issues ranging from the metaphysics of personal identity, philosophy of language, Buddhist views on the nature of consciousness and Buddhist Ethics.

Auditing this course will count for 1 credit towards your graduate degree. There will be three forms of assessment.

1. A moderate level of participation in classroom discussions.

2. The compilation of a bibliography for a PHIL 1001 and/or PHIL 2310 that includes material discussed in the course.

3. Willingness to participate as a commentator at one-day conference being organized by Dr Finnigan on the theme: “Buddhist views on self-awareness and subjectivity in consciousness”

- Pending funding approval, Dr Finnigan is planning to invite three leading scholars in Buddhist philosophy of mind who also work in Western philosophy and cognitive science. They will each present a paper in a public workshop. They will present for 30 minutes and a graduate student will offer a 10-minute commentary. The papers will be made available in advance and Dr Finnigan will work with you in developing your comments. Participation in this event can then be added to your CV.

If you are interested in taking advantage of this opportunity, please contact Dr Susanne Foster (DGS).