

***PHILOSOPHY DEPARTMENT
FALL SEMESTER
2006-2007
COURSE OFFERINGS***

INTRODUCTION TO PHILOSOPHY (Phil. 100W)

Instructors: Christian Lacroix, Jovana Davidovic, & Other Adjunct

LOGIC & CRITICAL THINKING (Phil 110)

Instructor: John Humphrey & Jeff Johnson

LOGIC OF SCIENTIFIC METHOD (Phil 112)

Instructor: Melanie Frappier

INTRODUCTION TO ETHICS (Phil 120W)

**Instructors: Cathryn Bailey, Craig Matarrese, Brandon Cooke, Ron Yezzi,
Matt Brophy, & Britt Johnson**

(These classes fulfill general education requirements in categories six and nine and also count as Writing Intensive courses.)

BUSINESS ETHICS (Phil 224W)

Instructor: Ron Yezzi

This course is being taught entirely online. You may email the instructor at Ronald.yezzi@mnsu.edu for further information.

LAW, JUSTICE, & SOCIETY (Phil 240W)

Instructor: Craig Matarrese

T/H, 2:00-3:15 p.m.

This course focuses on ethical-political theories, how they help us analyze the idea of justice, and how they help us confront serious and complex issues that shape our everyday lives. In this course you will develop a command of the basic political perspectives that tend to shape public debate about justice in our country, learn to apply these theoretical perspectives to concrete issues, and perhaps most importantly, acquire the reflective and critical depth that characterizes a mature engagement with moral complexity. That is to say, this course covers a great variety of issues and problems, but is essentially about *thinking* and finding your bearings in the moral-social-political world.

The course is divided into four units, each of which is concerned with basic political and theoretical perspectives: (1) libertarianism and egalitarianism, (2) liberalism, (3) discourse ethics and communitarianism, and (4) feminism. These theoretical perspectives generate different ways of understanding our rights, freedoms, obligations, and indeed, the general way we see ourselves fitting into the moral-social-political world.

Texts for the course: (1) *Justice: Alternative Political Perspectives*, 4th Edition (JAPP), James P. Sterba (Wadsworth, 2003), (2) *Justice, Equality, & Rights* (JER), by Emmett Barcalow (Wadsworth, 2004)

HISTORY OF PHILOSOPHY: CLASSICAL PHILOSOPHY (Phil 334W)

Instructor: John Humphrey

MWF, 9:00-9:50 a.m.

During the quarter we will explore in depth some of the central ideas, movements and figures of ancient Western philosophy. The setting is the middle and near east, roughly 600 B.C. The major figures include the Pre-Socratics (Thales, Pythagoras, Parmenides, Heraclitus, et. al.), Socrates, Plato and Aristotle. The history of philosophy depends mightily on these philosophers. According to Alfred North Whitehead, the history of Western philosophy can be read as a series of footnotes to Plato. Of course, Plato neither created nor came to philosophy ex nihilo. He too was reacting to the intellectual ideas of his day and the recent past, including those of the "Sophists", Protagoras and Gorgias. Our goal this quarter will be to get clear on the tenets and arguments of the major figures concerning ethics, knowledge, nature, politics, happiness, etc. Our readings will include some of the central dialogues of the Platonic corpus, including *Plato's Republic*, *Meno*, *Euthyphro*, *Phaedo*, and *Theaetetus*, as well as Aristotle's *Nichomachean Ethics* and excerpts from some of his other works. Course requirements will likely include at least a mid-term paper and a final paper.

19TH CENTURY PHILOSOPHY (Phil 337)

Instructor: Craig Matarrese

T/H, 11:00 a.m.-12:15 p.m.

Philosophers in the 19th Century sought to develop a comprehensive understanding of the concrete reality of human existence, to recapture the connection between philosophy and the world that they thought had been lost in the work of their predecessors. They tried to assert this connection through their answers to some rather ambitious questions: *What are the main tasks of philosophy? How are they to be pursued? How should philosophy deal with basic questions of the interpretation and assessment of various forms of human existence, knowledge, and social life? How are we to think about selfhood, freedom, morality, and history? What sort of contrast can we draw between genuinely human life and life as it is typically lived? How should we best approach the senses in which human life is social and yet also individual? How should we think about the idea of God? How should we relate ourselves to history? How can we find some kind of orientation towards ethics and normativity?* In answering these questions, 19th Century philosophers set the agenda for, and anticipated the major insights of, most of the philosophical movements that have characterized the 20th (and now into the 21st) Century, e.g., phenomenology, existentialism, Marxism, hermeneutics, philosophical anthropology, structuralism, poststructuralism, postmodernism, and feminism.

The course starts with some historical background and discussion of those philosophers (e.g., Immanuel Kant) who cleared the way for G.W.F. Hegel, the German philosopher who wrote about the idea of freedom, the nature of intersubjectivity, mind, and knowledge, as well as the project of the modern state. Hegel's view is one of the most ambitious in the history of philosophy (often sounding like a philosophy of *everything*), and takes some time and effort to comprehend. Most philosophers after Hegel are best understood in terms of how they either celebrate or reject Hegelianism (most *rejected* Hegel, or at least *thought* they were rejecting Hegel). Karl Marx, a philosopher who has had an enormous influence on human history, largely celebrated Hegel while

at the same time rejecting parts of his view, while Soren Kierkegaard (who argued that truth is subjectivity), Arthur

Schopenhauer (who argued that life is mostly pointless striving), and Friedrich Nietzsche (who said that God is dead), all develop their philosophical views by first roundly rejecting Hegel's aspirations. The course also considers writings by John Stuart Mill, William James, and Mary Wollstonecraft.

Texts for the course: (1) *Philosophical Classics, Vol. IV: Nineteenth-Century Philosophy* (Third Edition), Eds. Forrest E. Baird & Walter Kaufmann (Prentice Hall, 1999), (2) *The Hegel Reader*, ed. Stephen Houlgate (Blackwell, 1998), (3) *Nietzsche: Selections*, ed. Richard Schacht (Macmillan, 1993).

SPECIAL TOPIC: PHILOSOPHY OF BIOLOGY (Phil 450/550)

Instructor: Christian Lacroix

MWF, 11:00-11:50 a.m.

This course examines some of the conceptual issues stemming from biology and, in particular, from evolutionary theory. Some of these issues are: *What is meant when biologists talk about fitness and adaptation? Do species have real existence, or are they merely classificatory conveniences? Does the Intelligent Design Movement, which is attempting to introduce their theories into the classrooms, have a claim to be regarded as scientific? And how should we be thinking about the implications of genetic engineering?* We will fill in the conceptual background, both philosophical and biological, as we go. No previous background in biology or philosophy is required, and students from all fields are welcome.