PHILOSOPHY ELECTIVES, FALL 2016

PHIL 11205: STOICISM AS A PHILOSOPHY OF LIFE TuTh 2:00PM - 3:15PM, Professor Massimo Pigliucci
Stoicism was an ancient Greek and Roman philosophy meant to be of practical use to people in their everyday life. In recent years, there has been a resurgence of interest in updating it for the 21st century. This course will explore both ancient Stoicism, through the writings of some of its major thinkers, as well as its contemporary version, through the contributions of modern philosophers. The class will include both theoretical and practical aspects.

PHIL 20100: Logical Reasoning TuTh 11:00AM - 12:15PM, MoWe 5:00PM - 6:15PM
This course provides students with an introduction to the elements of logical reasoning. Basic rules and methods of assessing validity and proving arguments as they occur in natural language are introduced (such as truth tables and rules of inference). The goal of the course is to enable students to translate and evaluate arguments in natural language using the basic tools of modern logic. The focus of this course enables it to serve as an excellent form of preparation for SATs, LSATs and other standardized tests, as well as an analytic resource for further academic studies.

PHIL 20200: Introduction to Logic MoWe 9:30AM - 10:45AM
This course introduces students to the basics of modern logic. Topics covered include truth-tables, the rules of inference for the propositional calculus, and introduction to quantification theory. It focuses both on rules for producing formal proofs, and for translating natural language arguments into logical notation. Primarily designed as a preparation for advanced logic, the course would also be very useful for anyone expecting to deal extensively with complex reasoning.

PHIL 30500: HIST OF PHIL I: ANCIENT PHILOSOPHY TuTh 3:30PM - 4:45PM, Professor Chad Kidd
A survey of early Greek philosophy, centered on the figures of Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle. Some attention is paid to pre-Socratic philosophers (e.g. Heraclitus, Parmenides) and to at least one current of thought after Aristotle (e.g. Stoicism, Skepticism, neo-Platonism, or early Christian theology).

PHIL 30700: METAPHYSICS AND EPISTEMOLOGY MoWe 11:00AM - 12:15PM, Professor Kate Ritchie
Time. Existence. Being. Knowledge. Belief. Truth. The analysis of such concepts has formed the core of philosophical inquiry since the very inception of the discipline. Today, inquiries regarding the nature of reality and the nature of knowledge are typically the domain of Metaphysics and Epistemology. In this course, we will explore canonical questions in both these branches of analytic philosophy through engagement with a range of historical and contemporary sources.

PHIL 30800: ETHICS MoWe 3:30PM - 4:45PM, Professor David Weissman
Analysis of the concepts employed in moral reasoning, such as good, right, duty, obligation, virtue, freedom and choice. Critical study of various theories of moral justification—such as utilitarianism, deontological ethics, virtue ethics—and of status of moral judgments—such as subjectivism, objectivism, relativism and skepticism. The relation between morality and religion, moral dilemmas, and some problems in practical ethics (abortion, famine, the environment, etc.).

PHIL 30900: SOCIAL/POLITICAL MoWe 2:00PM - 3:15PM, Professor Jeff Blustein
An analysis of the concepts and principles employed in reasoning about the social and political aspects of human life, such as social structure and function, equality and justice, property and rights, social and political obligation. A critical analysis of theories of the state of society, such as liberalism, Marxism, communitarianism, conservatism, and anarchism.

PHIL 31107: PHILOSOPHY OF QUANTUM MECHANICS MoWe 9:30AM - 10:45AM, Professor Elise Crull
This course investigates the historical and philosophical foundations of one of physics’ most profound achievements: quantum theory. Students will explore both primary and secondary literature, from Planck’s paper of 1901 to recent work in quantum gravity. We will consider in-depth the particularly troubling philosophical questions raised by quantum mechanics since its very inception, and how such questions (and their answers) have evolved over the last 100 years. Background in math and/or physics helpful but not required.
PHIL 31177: PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION MoWe 12:30PM - 1:45PM, Professor Jennifer Morton
This course will serve as an introduction to the fundamental philosophical questions surrounding the nature and aims of education. We will familiarize ourselves with classic texts in philosophy pertaining to education--Plato, Aristotle, Locke, Rousseau, Mill, and Dewey—as well as contemporary work in education. We will discuss the nature of learning and teaching, the relationship between education and the values of equality and autonomy, the role of race and class in education, and the ongoing critical debate concerning higher education. Students will be expected to critically reflect on their own educational experiences.

PHIL 32600: PHILOSOPHY OF LAW TuTh 9:30AM - 10:45AM, Professor Ben Vilhauer
A critical analysis of some central concepts employed in legal reasoning and judgment, such as justice, crime, evidence, responsibility, legal and civil rights, punishment, civil disobedience, and constitutional interpretation. Examination of major theories of law such as natural law theory, legal positivism and social realism, and of the relation between the law and morality.

PHIL 34402: CHINESE PHILOSOPHY TuTh 11:00AM - 12:15PM, Professor Lou Marinoff
This course treats the main thinkers and themes of classical Chinese philosophy. We will begin with salient extracts from Confucius's Analects, then move on to a detailed reading of the Tao Te Ching. We will contrast the moral, social and political philosophy of the traditionalist Confucians with that of the rebellious Taoists. We will examine the metaphysical doctrine of yin-yang: duality derived from unity, manifest as complementarity. We will seek to understand how natural laws of change, balance and harmony allow one to discern and follow the Way (Tao). We will briefly compare Lao Tzu's unique version of ideal society with the visions of Plato, Hobbes and Marx. We will briefly survey China's transformation of Buddhism, and its elevation to a comparable status with Confucianism and Taoism (600-900 CE). Ultimately, we will see how Chinese philosophy applies directly to diverse areas such as martial arts, medical sciences, and modern physics.

PHIL 34901: BUSINESS ETHICS TuTh 3:30PM - 4:45PM, Professor Soo-Jin Lee
This course is an examination of ethical issues that arise in business. General topics to be taken up include corporate social responsibility, employer/employee relations, technology and privacy, the ethics of advertising and marketing, and corporate culture. Specific topics may include corporate philanthropy, corporate leadership, and building a values-based corporate culture as well as moral dilemmas involving whistle-blowing, discrimination in the workplace, product safety and liability, and factors that contributed to the financial crisis of 2008. We will focus on ethical decision-making from both personal and policy-level perspectives.

PHIL 34905: BIOMEDICAL ETHICS MoWe 11:00AM - 12:15PM Professor Jeff Blustein
Biomedical Ethics is a philosophical overview of leading theories, principles, and problems in the field of bioethics. Ethical theories and principles are examined to provide a theoretical structure for analysis of concrete ethical problems. The course considers the ethics of the doctor-patient relationship, including paternalism, informed consent, confidentiality, and truth telling, as well as larger systemic issues of social justice and access to health care. Topics in reproductive ethics, end-of-life ethics, and some of the newest developments in the field arising from genetics and neuroscience are also discussed. Extensive use is made of case studies.