Course Descriptions

Spring 2016
Undergraduate Courses
**INTRODUCTION TO PHILOSOPHY**

**CAS PH 100 A1**

Professor Benjamin Crowe

*Monday, Wednesday, Friday 12:00PM-1:00PM*

Philosophy is the activity of disciplined reflection about the most fundamental concerns of human existence. What is the fundamental nature of the world we inhabit, and how do we fit into it? To what extent can we achieve true knowledge of ourselves and of our world? What is the scope of human agency and responsibility? What makes for an excellent human life? How can we understand the ways in which matters of ultimate value to us fit together? What kind of social order should we strive to attain? How can we make sense of the realities of evil and suffering in our lives? How can we best think about the possibility of a transcendent, divine reality and of our relationship with it? In this course, we will examine some of the most important ways that people have pursued the activity of philosophy in conversation with ancient (Plato), medieval (Boethius, Abelard), modern (Descartes, Kierkegaard, William James) and more recent (Gadamer, Rorty, Bernard Williams) philosophers. The texts we will read also provide us with the occasion to ask about the ways in which a philosophical approach to these concerns might be distinctive, as well as about how philosophy might relate to and differ from other significant forms of human discourse (such as literature and theology). Carries humanities divisional credit in CAS.

**CAS PH 100 B1**

Professor Monica Link

*Tuesday, Thursday 12:30PM-2:00PM*

In this course we will take up three broad philosophical topics. The first topic is the nature and structure of morality. How should we treat other human beings? What principles ought we to use in deciding when an action is right or wrong? Next we will turn to questions about knowledge and reality. Can we be certain that we exist? That the external world exists? That God exists? Are the mind and the brain identical? If they are two separate entities, how are they related? Lastly, we will discuss free will. What is it, and do we have it? Is it compatible with the idea that everything in the universe is determined? Is free will a necessary condition for holding people responsible for their actions?

Readings will be drawn from both classic and contemporary philosophers.
Many of us want to have meaningful lives. But what is it for a life to be meaningful? What makes some lives better or more meaningful than others? Can life as a whole have some significance or meaning? In exploring these questions, we’ll ask whether the happy life is different than the meaningful life; we’ll study the nature of happiness and satisfaction; and we’ll look at the way in which questions about meaning relate to questions about value. Readings will be drawn from both ancient and contemporary sources, and will include works by Aristotle, Epictetus, Mill, Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, Sartre, Camus, Thomas Nagel, Samuel Scheffler, and Susan Wolf.

This course focuses on a set of interrelated questions about morality: What is morality? How should I live? What does morality require of us in our daily lives, if it requires anything at all? Is morality universal? Or, is it relative or subjective? What is the relationship between morality and religion? Answering such questions will help us to understand what the most important features of morality are. We will look both at traditional moral theories that attempt to specify what morality requires of us (Utilitarianism, Kantianism, Contractarianism and Virtue Ethics), and at the application of these theories to many specific moral issues. Apart from introducing you to a central branch of philosophy, this course should help you improve your reading, writing, and critical thinking skills. Carries humanities divisional credit in CAS.
This course will provide an introduction to moral questions, different theoretical approaches, and important practical issues in ethics. We will first examine our own intuitions about morality and consider the questions, why be moral, are there objective moral values and principles, and what are some of the challenges to morality? We will then address other basic questions such as, what criteria qualify us as members of a moral community (i.e., moral status), what principles should govern our analysis of moral questions (i.e., moral principles), and how do we resolve ethical questions under conditions of deep disagreement and pluralism (i.e., moral conflicts)? We will then consider several theoretical approaches to ethical questions, including Aristotle’s virtue ethics, Natural Law theory, Kant’s ethics, Hume’s ethics, and Mill’s utilitarianism, paying particular attention to how these theories would respond to the above questions of who counts, what principles apply, and how do we resolve conflicts. We will draw on examples from applied ethics throughout the course, but we will also specifically address certain contemporary issues in applied ethics, including abortion, the moral status of nonhuman animals, race and gender, economic justice and poverty, and war and humanitarian intervention.

An introduction to philosophy via reflecting on philosophical issues connected with film as a medium. Topics include general aesthetics, representation, emotion and narrative, genre, fictionalism, and whether film can be immoral. Carries humanities divisional credit in CAS.

A systematic study of the principles of both deductive and informal reasoning, calculated to enhance students’ actual reasoning skills, with an emphasis on reasoning and argumentation in ordinary discourse. Carries humanities divisional credit in CAS.
**CAS PH 160 B1**  
*Reason and Argumentation*  
Professor Derek Anderson  

_Tuesday, Thursday 3:30PM-5:00PM_  

A systematic study of the principles of both deductive and informal reasoning, calculated to enhance students’ actual reasoning skills, with an emphasis on reasoning and argumentation in ordinary discourse. Carries humanities divisional credit in CAS.

**CAS PH 247 A1**  
*Introduction to Chinese Philosophy*  
Professor Benjamin Crowe  

_Monday, Wednesday, Friday 2:00PM-3:00PM_  

The classical period in China’s ancient philosophical tradition is sometimes known as the _baijia_, or “Hundred Schools” era, a name that vividly conveys the richness, vitality, and plurality of the philosophical scene. In this course, we will explore some of the principal texts and figures of the time, including Kongzi (Confucius) (c. 551-479 BCE), Mozi (c. 480-390 BCE), Mengzi (Mencius) (4th century BCE), Zhuangzi (late 4th century BCE), and Xunzi (late 4th-early 3rd century BCE). Ancient Chinese thinkers engaged in profound investigations and lively debates centered on the “Way” (_dao_), i.e., the pattern of a life well lived. Topics discussed will range across the nature of moral virtues, political and social order, music, religious ritual, moral education, the ethics of war, and the fundamental character of human nature itself. Carries humanities divisional credit in CAS.

**CAS PH 248 A1**  
*Existentialism*  
Professor Paul Katsafanas  

_Monday, Wednesday, Friday 3:00PM-4:00PM_  

The existentialists grappled with some of the most difficult and problematic aspects of the human condition. What is it to be an authentic individual? Can one be alienated from oneself? Can the way in which we are seen by others limit our freedom? How, if at all, can one live a meaningful life? Might life be unavoidably absurd? Does modernity foster nihilism? Do certain emotional experiences reveal otherwise hidden features of life? In this course, we will explore the ways in which Fyodor Dostoevsky, Søren Kierkegaard, Friedrich Nietzsche, Jean-Paul Sartre, Simone de Beauvoir, Frantz Fanon, and Albert Camus responded to these questions.
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<tr>
<th>Course Code</th>
<th>Course Title</th>
<th>Professor</th>
<th>Days, Time</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CAS PH 251 A1</td>
<td>Medical Ethics</td>
<td>Professor Russell Powell</td>
<td>Tuesday, Thursday 2:00PM-3:30PM</td>
<td>Explores moral philosophical issues that arise in connection with medicine and emerging biotechnologies. Examines topics such as the right to healthcare, research ethics, euthanasia, abortion, concepts of death and disease, and assisted reproductive technologies. Carries humanities divisional credit in CAS.</td>
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<tr>
<td>CAS PH 255 A1</td>
<td>Philosophy of Law</td>
<td>Professor Hugh Baxter</td>
<td>Tuesday, Thursday 2:00PM-3:30PM</td>
<td>Examination of issues concerning law and its place in society, such as law's relation to democracy, the nature of constitutional rights, and legal (especially constitutional) interpretation. Readings include social theory and judicial opinions as well as more narrowly philosophical sources.</td>
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<tr>
<td>CAS PH 256 A1 (Cross PO 396)</td>
<td>Philosophy of Gender and Sexuality</td>
<td>Professor Susanne Sreedhar</td>
<td>Tuesday, Thursday 12:30PM-2:00PM</td>
<td>This course explores philosophical questions that arise about gender and sexuality. What is sexism? What is oppression? What is the correct response to sexism and oppression? How many sexes are there? How many genders? What is sexual orientation? What is sexual perversion? What are sexual ethics, including questions about the value and status of monogamy, polyamory, promiscuity, and adultery? Should same-sex marriage be legalized, and if so, on what grounds? Should the state be involved in the institution of marriage in the first place? What are the moral status of practices such as sex work and pornography? Assignments include answering study questions for each class and four essay exams. Carries humanities divisional credit in CAS.</td>
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Philosophy of the Arts

Professor Daniel Dahlstrom

Tuesday, Thursday 9:30AM-11:00AM

What, if anything, is art? Can it be defined? Is it significantly different from a craft or skill? Is an artwork different from other things and, if so, how? Are there particular sorts of experiences that we have only with artworks? Does art have anything to do with beauty, with truth, with ethics, with politics? Does it have a special relationship to inspiration, creativity, reproduction (technical and otherwise), or emotions and their expression? Do artists “make” artworks or is it the other way around (or is there no way out of a circle here)? Must an artist (or a critic) know what she’s doing and, if so, in what sense? What about the artworld? What constitutes the world of art and does it “make” artists and artworks or vice versa? The purpose of this course is to engage students in these and other philosophical reflections on the arts. After a series of lectures that introduce the topic of aesthetics both historically and systematically, the course combines lecture with discussion, based on readings from philosophers and critics such Immanuel Kant, Friedrich Schiller, Arthur Schopenhauer, Clive Bell, R. G. Collingwood, George Dickie, Martin Heidegger, and Arthur Danto.

Mind, Brain, and Self

Professor Walter Hopp

Tuesday, Thursday 12:30PM-2:00PM

This course is devoted to considering some of the philosophical problems that arise when we consider the nature of the human mind. How are mind and body, or mind and brain, related to one another? Is there something special about consciousness that cannot be explained in physical terms? Even if it could be explained in physical terms, is it best explained in those terms? What are some of the available methodologies for studying consciousness? In this class, we will carefully examine what some of philosophy’s most notable historical and contemporary figures have to say about these issues.

History of Ancient Philosophy

Professor Marc Gasser-Wingate

Tuesday, Thursday 11:00AM-12:30PM

A survey of ancient Greek philosophy, with an emphasis on Plato and Aristotle. Topics will include: the fundamental nature of reality, how we know anything about it, wisdom, virtue, and human happiness.
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<tr>
<td>CAS PH 300 B1</td>
<td>History of Ancient Philosophy</td>
<td>Marc Gasser-Wingate</td>
<td>Tuesday, Thursday 2:00PM-3:30PM</td>
<td>A survey of ancient Greek philosophy, with an emphasis on Plato and Aristotle. Topics will include: the fundamental nature of reality, how we know anything about it, wisdom, virtue, and human happiness.</td>
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<tr>
<td>CAS PH 310 A1</td>
<td>History of Modern Philosophy</td>
<td>Max Weiss</td>
<td>Monday, Wednesday, Friday 1:00PM-2:00PM</td>
<td>An examination of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century philosophy from Descartes to Kant, with emphasis on the nature and extent of knowledge. Readings include Descartes, Locke, Spinoza, Berkley, Hume, and Kant.</td>
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<tr>
<td>CAS PH 310 B1</td>
<td>History of Modern Philosophy</td>
<td>Judson Webb</td>
<td>Tuesday, Thursday 9:30AM-11:00AM</td>
<td>An examination of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century philosophy from Descartes to Kant, with emphasis on the nature and extent of knowledge. Readings include Descartes, Locke, Spinoza, Berkley, Hume, and Kant.</td>
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<td>CAS PH 350 A1</td>
<td>History of Ethics</td>
<td>Aaron Garrett</td>
<td>Monday, Wednesday, Friday 1:00PM-2:00PM</td>
<td>This course will provide a general overview of the history of ethics. Figures discussed will include Plato, Aristotle, Augustine, Butler, Hume, Smith, Kant, Bentham, Mill, Moore, Ross, Stevenson, Murdoch, Mackie, and Anscombe. A wide range of issues in normative ethics and meta-ethics will be considered including virtue, the problem of self-deceit, moral realism, and sentimentalism.</td>
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CAS PH 360 A1 (Cross PH 633)  Symbolic Logic

Professor Juliet Floyd

*Tuesday, Thursday 11:00AM-12:30PM*

An introductory survey of the concepts and principles of symbolic logic: valid and invalid arguments, logical relations of statements and their basis in structural features of statements, analysis of the logical structure of complex statements of ordinary discourse, and the use of a symbolic language to display logical structure and to facilitate methods for assessing the logical structure of arguments. We will cover the analysis of reasoning with truth-functions ("and", "or", "not", "if...then") and with quantifiers ("all", "some"), attending to formal languages and axiomatic systems for logical deduction. Throughout, we aim to clearly and systematically display both the theory underlying the norms of valid reasoning and their applications to particular problems of argumentation. The course is an introduction to first-order quantificational logic, a key tool underlying work in foundations of mathematics, philosophy of language and mind, philosophy of science and parts of syntax and semantics. It is largely mathematical and formal in character, but lectures will situate these structures within the context of questions raised in contemporary philosophy of language and mind.

CAS PH 406 A1 (Cross PH 606)  Aristotle II

Professor David Roochnik

*Monday 6:00PM-9:00PM*

A close reading of Aristotle’s METAPHYSICS.

CAS PH 416 A1 (Cross PH 616)  Hegel

Professor Allen Speight

*Tuesday 2:00PM-5:00PM*

This course will focus on Hegel’s notion of mind/spirit, particularly the two philosophical moves most associated with Hegel’s appeal to that category—his turns to the social and the historical. Primary readings will include parts of the *Phenomenology of Spirit* and Hegel’s mature *Philosophy of Spirit*, as well as the *Philosophy of Right* and the Berlin lecture series on art, religion and the philosophy of history. Discussion of contemporary secondary literature on topics including the relation between spirit and naturalism, the recognitive potentials of modern social life, and the relation between history and philosophy, including Hegel’s relations to key philosophical predecessors and successors. Previous coursework on Hegel is not required.
Wittgenstein

Professor Juliet Floyd

Thursday 2:00PM-5:00PM

An intensive study of Wittgenstein’s Philosophical Investigations, with contemporary philosophical problems in mind and some attention to Wittgenstein’s overall development. Our focus will be Wittgenstein’s talk of “forms of life” in relation to problems about the notions of truth, meaning, philosophical method, necessity, representation, and the notions of perception and experience. Themes covered include the nature of concept-possession, normativity, rule-following, occasion sensitivity, the structure of as-phrases, relativism, conventionalism, and the scope and character of logic. A recent issue of The Nordic Wittgenstein Review devoted to “forms of life” will be a focus, and faculty visitors to the Boston Early Analytic Philosophy Workshop will present works in progress.

Metaphysics

Professor Daniel Dahlstrom

Monday 3:00PM-6:00PM

The aim of this course is to introduce students to basic issues in metaphysics, understood broadly as the study of the most elementary principles governing whatever is. Topics include causation and powers (what are causes? are there different kinds of causes? do we need to invoke powers and dispositions to account for causes? if so, what sorts of things are powers and dispositions? if not, how should we understand talk of ‘powers’ and ‘dispositions’?), properties and particulars (how should we understand the relation between properties and particulars that exemplify them? for example, are the properties of particular things more fundamental than the particulars or vice versa, as in some versions of nominalism)? Are particulars merely bundles of properties or substances underlying properties?), composition and emergence (how are we to understand the relations of parts and wholes? the relation of biological properties to physical properties?), modality (how should we think of possibilities and necessities in relation to what actually is?), time and persistence (if the past and the future are not present, can they be said to be? in what sense, if at all, is it reasonable to claim that something persists?), beings and nothingness (what does it mean to say that something exists? or to say that something is not the case?), traditional controversies over metaphysics’ subject matter and viability (e.g., do the particular sciences of what there is render metaphysics at best superfluous and redundant, at worst confused and nonsensical?). The main text for the course is Metaphysics: The Fundamentals (2015) by Robert C. Koons and Timothy H. Pickavance, along with several relevant excerpts from Aristotle’s Metaphysics.
**CAS PH 443 A1 (Cross PH 643)  Philosophy of Mind**

Professor Walter Hopp

*Tuesday, Thursday 9:30AM-11:00AM*

In this course we will examine some of the central topics in the philosophy of mind. We will be especially concerned with the nature of consciousness and its defining features. How is the *intentionality* or object-directedness of consciousness best understood? Is *phenomenality* a defining feature of all conscious states? How are a mental state’s intentionality and its phenomenality related? Are all conscious states self-conscious, and what is the structure of self-consciousness? Do some conscious states constitutively (not just causally) depend on their subjects being embodied and embedded within an environment? Finally, what are the prospects for providing a naturalistic account of consciousness? We will read and discuss works by historical and contemporary philosophers, including philosophers from the analytic and phenomenological traditions.

**CAS PH 452 A1 (Cross PH 652)  Ethics of Health Care**

Professor Russell Powell

*Tuesday, Thursday 9:30AM-11:00AM*

Medicine and health care offer a unique opportunity to explore the nature of humanity and the world and to ask fundamental questions concerning the nature of birth, life, and death, and what it is to be a person. Readings from both classical and contemporary writings in ethics, medicine, law, and public health policy.

**CAS PH 454 A1 (Cross PO 392)  Community, Liberty, and Morality**

Professor Swanson

*Tuesday, Thursday 3:30PM-5:00PM*

Traces the contemporary movement known as Virtue Ethics, which has revived a characteristic approach to ethics of ancient Greek philosophers such as Plato and Aristotle. Focus on understanding VE's critique of modern approaches and on evaluating its advocates' positive claims.
**CAS PH 458 A1 (Cross PO 497)  Crime and Punishment: Philosophical Perspectives**

Professor Susanne Sreedhar

*Tuesday 5:00PM-8:00PM*

This course will explore philosophical questions about the criminal justice system, both in its ideal form and as it exists today. We will examine historical and contemporary writings on punishment, focusing on concepts of punishment, justifications for punishment, preventative detention, the death penalty, and alternatives to punishment. We will also ask how deep historical and contemporary injustices, including institutionalized racism, affect how we should theorize about institutions of punishment, their possible reform, or perhaps even their abolition.

**REQUIRED TEXTS:**


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**CAS PH 462 A1 (Cross PH 662)  Foundations of Mathematics**

Professor Kanamori

*Tuesday, Thursday 11:00AM-12:30PM*

Axiomatic set theory as a foundation for, and field of, mathematics: Axiom of Choice, the Continuum Hypothesis, and consistency results. Also offered as CAS MA 532.
Graduate Courses
**GRS PH 606 A1 (Cross PH 406)  Aristotle II**

Professor David Roochnik

*Monday 6:00PM-9:00PM*

A close reading of Aristotle’s METAPHYSICS.

**GRS PH 616 A1 (Cross PH 416)  Hegel**

Professor Allen Speight

*Tuesday 2:00PM-5:00PM*

This course will focus on Hegel’s notion of mind/spirit, particularly the two philosophical moves most associated with Hegel’s appeal to that category—his turns to the social and the historical. Primary readings will include parts of the *Phenomenology of Spirit* and Hegel’s mature *Philosophy of Spirit*, as well as the *Philosophy of Right* and the Berlin lecture series on art, religion and the philosophy of history. Discussion of contemporary secondary literature on topics including the relation between spirit and naturalism, the recognizable potentials of modern social life, and the relation between history and philosophy, including Hegel’s relations to key philosophical predecessors and successors. Previous coursework on Hegel is not required.

**GRS PH 624 A1 (Cross PH 424)  Wittgenstein**

Professor Juliet Floyd

*Thursday 2:00PM-5:00PM*

An intensive study of Wittgenstein’s *Philosophical Investigations*, with contemporary philosophical problems in mind and some attention to Wittgenstein’s overall development. Our focus will be Wittgenstein’s talk of “forms of life” in relation to problems about the notions of truth, meaning, philosophical method, necessity, representation, and the notions of perception and experience. Themes covered include the nature of concept-possession, normativity, rule-following, occasion sensitivity, the structure of as-phrases, relativism, conventionalism, and the scope and character of logic. A recent issue of The Nordic Wittgenstein Review devoted to “forms of life” will be a focus, and faculty visitors to the Boston Early Analytic Philosophy Workshop will present works in progress.
GRS PH 633 A1 (Cross PH 360)

Symbolic Logic

Professor Juliet Floyd

Tuesday, Thursday 11:00AM-12:30PM

An introductory survey of the concepts and principles of symbolic logic: valid and invalid arguments, logical relations of statements and their basis in structural features of statements, analysis of the logical structure of complex statements of ordinary discourse, and the use of a symbolic language to display logical structure and to facilitate methods for assessing the logical structure of arguments. We will cover the analysis of reasoning with truth-functions (‘and’, ‘or’, ‘not’, “if...then”) and with quantifiers (“all”, “some”), attending to formal languages and axiomatic systems for logical deduction. Throughout, we aim to clearly and systematically display both the theory underlying the norms of valid reasoning and their applications to particular problems of argumentation. The course is an introduction to first-order quantificational logic, a key tool underlying work in foundations of mathematics, philosophy of language and mind, philosophy of science and parts of syntax and semantics. It is largely mathematical and formal in character, but lectures will situate these structures within the context of questions raised in contemporary philosophy of language and mind.

GRS PH 640 A1 (Cross PH 440)

Metaphysics

Professor Daniel Dahlstrom

Monday 3:00PM-6:00PM

The aim of this course is to introduce students to basic issues in metaphysics, understood broadly as the study of the most elementary principles governing whatever is. Topics include causation and powers (what are causes? are there different kinds of causes? do we need to invoke powers and dispositions to account for causes? If so, what sorts of things are powers and dispositions? If not, how should we understand talk of ‘powers’ and ‘dispositions’?), properties and particulars (how should we understand the relation between properties and particulars that exemplify them? For example, are the properties of particular things more fundamental than the particulars or vice versa, as in some versions of nominalism)? Are particulars merely bundles of properties or substances underlying properties?), composition and emergence (how are we to understand the relations of parts and wholes? the relation of biological properties to physical properties?), modality (how should we think of possibilities and necessities in relation to what actually is?), time and persistence (if the past and the future are not present, can they be said to be? in what sense, if at all, is it reasonable to claim that something persists?), beings and nothingness (what does it mean to say that something exists? or to say that something is not the case?), traditional controversies over metaphysics’ subject matter and viability (e.g., do the particular sciences of what there is render metaphysics at best superfluous and redundant, at worst confused and nonsensical?). The main text for the course is Metaphysics: The Fundamentals (2015) by Robert C. Koons and Timothy H. Pickavance, along with several relevant excerpts from Aristotle’s Metaphysics.
**GRS PH 643 A1 (Cross PH 443)  Philosophy of Mind**

Professor Walter Hopp

*Tuesday, Thursday 9:30AM-11:00AM*

In this course we will examine some of the central topics in the philosophy of mind. We will be especially concerned with the nature of consciousness and its defining features. How is the *intentionality* or object-directedness of consciousness best understood? Is *phenomenality* a defining feature of all conscious states? How are a mental state’s intentionality and its phenomenality related? Are all conscious states self-conscious, and what is the structure of self-consciousness? Do some conscious states constitutively (not just causally) depend on their subjects being embodied and embedded within an environment? Finally, what are the prospects for providing a naturalistic account of consciousness? We will read and discuss works by historical and contemporary philosophers, including philosophers from the analytic and phenomenological traditions.

**GRS PH 651 A1 (Cross JD 878)  The Color Line and the Problem of Reparations**

Professor David Lyons

*Wednesday 2:00PM-4:30PM*

This seminar examines the role of race and ethnicity in American law and social practice from the early colonial period to the present and in the light of that history it considers the possibility of reparations for those affected by slavery and discrimination. It will focus on the experiences of Native Americans, African Americans, Asian Americans, Latino Americans, and some immigrant groups, and will address such issues as the history of reparations, their aims and forms, who might have a valid claim to reparations, and how reparations might reasonably be funded. Readings will include *A Different Mirror* by Ronald Takaki, *Reparations: Pro and Con* by Alfred Brophy, *Redress for Historical Injustices in the United States*, edited by Martin and Yaquinto, and other historical and legal materials.

Seminar members will take turns initiating discussion by addressing the issues set for a given seminar meeting. A term paper will be required on an approved topic: a complete and polished draft will be revised in light of comments received. Grades will primarily be based on the final version of the term paper, with consideration given to contributions to seminar discussions.

This seminar is open to law students and philosophy graduate students. Enrollment is limited. As it originates in the Law School, it will follow the Law School’s calendar and time schedule.
GRS PH 652 A1 (Cross PH 452)  Ethics of Health Care
Professor Russell Powell

*Tuesday, Thursday 9:30AM-11:00AM*

Medicine and health care offer a unique opportunity to explore the nature of humanity and the world and to ask fundamental questions concerning the nature of birth, life, and death, and what it is to be a person. Readings from both classical and contemporary writings in ethics, medicine, law, and public health policy.

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GRS PH 659 A1 (Cross JD 835)  Political and Legal Philosophy
Professor Fleming

*Thursday 2:00PM-4:30PM*

Examination of the individual's responsibilities under law, specifically of the idea that there is a general moral obligation to obey the law, including unjust law, and the contrasting idea of civil disobedience-- the possibility of morally justified resistance to law.

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GRS PH 662 A1 (Cross PH 462)  Foundations of Mathematics
Professor Kanamori

*Tuesday, Thursday 11:00AM-12:30PM*

Axiomatic set theory as a foundation for, and field of, mathematics: Axiom of Choice, the Continuum Hypothesis, and consistency results. Also offered as CAS MA 532.

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GRS PH 803 A1  Medieval Philosophy: Thomas Aquinas
Professor DeCosimo

*Monday 2:00PM-5:00PM*

Thomas Aquinas is one of the most important figures in the history and development of Western philosophy. On nearly everything he writes about – from virtue to the sacraments, metaphysics of identity to the incarnation, war to soteriology – he has something interesting, important, and illuminating to say. And whether one agrees with his particular conclusions or not, it is difficult to engage his work without growing as a thinker and reader. This doctoral seminar constitutes an extended engagement with Thomas’s thought, primarily through attention to his Summa theologiae. We will be reading with an eye to understanding Thomas both on his own terms and as a resource for contemporary work in philosophy, theology, and religious studies. The course’s focus this year is on Thomas's ethics (especially his conceptions of virtue, habit, and human action); the relations between his ethics and his overarching theological and intellectual project; and the ongoing philosophical and theological interest of these dimensions of his thought. The course is suitable both for advanced Aquinas students as well as those new to his thought.
We all have various reasons to do certain things and various reasons to believe certain things (as well as reasons to care about certain things, reasons to feel certain emotions, reasons to appreciate particular aspects of works of art, etc.). Such "normative" reasons do not seem to be things that a rational person may ignore; in fact, they appear to be the best guides we have available to us for determining what we should do and what we should believe (care about, feel, etc.). Despite these common observations, there is much philosophical disagreement as to what exactly reasons are, to what extent they are determined or constrained by contingent facts about individual agents, and how much unity or fragmentation we find across different types of reasons. We will focus on these disagreements in the contemporary literature on reasons in ethics and epistemology.