

# Course Descriptions

Fall 2014



**Boston University** College and Graduate School of Arts & Sciences  
Department of Philosophy

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# Undergraduate Courses

## CAS PH 100 A1

## Introduction to Philosophy

Professor Benjamin Sherman

*Monday, Wednesday, Friday 1:00PM-2:00PM*

In this course, our goal will be to learn how to do philosophy through examination of some of the central problems of the philosophical tradition, what are sometimes referred to as the “Big Questions” of human existence. We will be particularly interested in the methods of argumentation that people have used in attempting to grapple with these questions. While we will not consider all of the “Big Questions,” we will look at those falling under the following five topics:

*Truth and Paradox:*

What is it rational to believe? What counts as good evidence?

*Justice and Injustice:*

What makes an action morally right? What would a just society look like?

*Freedom and Slavery:*

Do we have free will? What would such freedom, or its absence, involve?

*Past and Future:*

What connects us to our past and future selves? What changes can be survived?

*Life and Death:*

Should we fear death? Should we desire immortality?

## CAS PH 100 B1

## Introduction to Philosophy

Professor Max Weiss

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

A general introduction to Western Philosophy that will address questions such as the following: What is the relationship between our ideas and the material world? Might the world be a computer-generated illusion (like in *The Matrix*)? Can we prove or disprove the existence of God? What is the foundation of morality? Do facts about right and wrong depend on our particular culture? Do they depend on God? How is the mind related to the brain? Could a computer think? What is consciousness? Do we have free will?

## CAS PH 110 A1

## Great Philosophers

Professor Benjamin Roth

*Monday, Wednesday, Friday 11:00AM-12:00PM*

An approach to philosophical questions through great figures of western thought. Is there a God? What is philosophy? Should we bother asking philosophical questions? What is the meaning of life? Includes Aristotle, Hobbes, Descartes. Carries humanities divisional credit in CAS

**CAS PH 150 A1****Introduction to Ethics**

Professor Charles Griswold

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

This course is an introduction to major questions and themes in moral thought, including these: is moral value “relative”? What does it mean to offer a “moral reason” for an action? What are the central moral theories? What are virtue, duty, and utility, and what role might they play in ethics? We will discuss differences between secular and religious moral outlooks, and such questions as: if God exists, how to explain evil? If God does not exist, what foundation is there for goodness? In the last section of the course, we will also examine issues in “applied ethics” (these may include such topics as vegetarianism, the environment, terrorism and war, and the ethics of revenge). Throughout, we will work to sharpen reasoning and argumentation skills, and more generally to develop an understanding of what it means to inquire philosophically.

Prerequisites: none.

**CAS PH 150 B1****Introduction to Ethics**

Professor Daniel Star

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

What is morality? 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? What will make my own life go well? Answering such questions will help us to understand what the most important features of morality are. We will look both at moral theories that attempt to specify what morality requires of us, and at some specific moral issues to which these theories apply.

**CAS PH 150 C1****Introduction to Ethics**

Professor Daniel Star

*Monday, Wednesday, Friday 10:00AM-11:00AM*

What is morality? 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? What will make my own life go well? Answering such questions will help us to understand what the most important features of morality are. We will look both at moral theories that attempt to specify what morality requires of us, and at some specific moral issues to which these theories apply.

## CAS PH 159 A1

## Philosophy and Film

Professor Aaron Garrett

*Monday, Wednesday, Friday 3:00PM-4:00PM*

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.

## CAS PH 160 A1

## Reason and Argumentation

Professor Webb

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

A systematic study of both deductive and informal reasoning, with an emphasis on reasoning and argumentation in ordinary discourse and their strategies.

## CAS PH 160 B1

## Reason and Argumentation

Professor Cao

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

The course is designed to introduce students to the *principles* of reasoning and argumentation, and to formal *models* for eliciting underlying patterns and structures of reasoning and argumentation, which can be used to develop *skills* in actual reasoning and argumentation in different fields of inquiry and in different walks of life. These skills, including argument analysis, argument pattern recognition, argument construction, argument evaluation and the writing of argumentative essays, are crucial for success in everyday life and in all academic disciplines. Particular attention will be paid to how to avoid mistakes ("fallacies") and how to make good arguments, that is how to reason more reflectively and effectively, with careful analysis of examples taken from everyday life and from various academic disciplines.

## CAS PH 170 A1

## Philosophy of Science and Pseudoscience

Professor Peter Bokulich

*Monday, Wednesday, Friday 11:00AM-12:00PM*

How do legitimate science and quackery differ? We distinguish legitimate scientific debates from arguments by dubious sources. We explore how science progresses, and how non-experts can evaluate surprising arguments that claim to be "scientific." Carries humanities divisional credit in CAS.

**CAS PH 245 A1****Philosophy and Religion**

Professor Manfred Kuehn

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

This is a course in the philosophy of religion. We will investigate not just what philosophers have thought about God, but also about the place that religion can and should have in our lives. We will critically discuss such questions as: "Who or what is God?" "Can we know whether God exists?" "How do we talk about God?" "What is the nature of the belief?" and "How does Western religion differ from Eastern religion?" Some of the philosophers we will discuss will be Augustine, Maimonides, St. Anselm, Thomas Aquinas, Blaise Pascal, David Hume, Immanuel Kant, and William James will be among the authors we will read. But we will also take a closer look at Buddhism and Confucianism.

**CAS PH 247 A1****Introduction to Chinese Philosophy**

Professor Berthrong

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

An introduction to the Chinese philosophical tradition, including a study of classical Confucianism, Buddhism, Taoism, Mohism, Legalism, and modern developments. Carries humanities divisional credit in CAS.

**CAS PH 251 A1****Medical Ethics**

Professor Benjamin Sherman

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

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.

**CAS PH 251 B1****Medical Ethics**

Professor Benjamin Sherman

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

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.

**CAS PH 261 A1****Puzzles and Paradoxes**

Professor Max Weiss

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

Our basic beliefs, when scrutinized, can yield absurd conclusions. For example, using seemingly uncontroversial beliefs, we can conclude that motion is impossible and that everyone is bald. This course examines many puzzles and paradoxes. Carries humanities divisional credit in CAS.

**CAS PH 266 A1****Mind, Brain, and Self**

Professor Walter Hopp

*Monday, Wednesday, Friday 2:00PM-3:00PM*

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? What are some of the available methodologies for studying consciousness? In this class, we will carefully examine what some of philosophy's best and brightest historical and contemporary figures have to say about these issues.

**CAS PH 270 A1****Philosophy of Science**

Professor Alisa Bokulich

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

What is science and how does it work? Could all of the scientific theories we are taught today turn out to be false? How does a scientific theory come to be rejected and a new theory take its place? Why, for example, did astronomers decide that Pluto is not a planet? Could all of human behavior be ultimately explained by the laws of physics? What distinguishes a good scientific explanation from a bad one? This course is an introduction to core issues in the philosophy science, focusing on the topics of scientific realism, theory change, reductionism, explanation, and natural kinds.

**CAS PH 300 A1****History of Ancient Philosophy**

Professor Benjamin Roth

*Monday, Wednesday, Friday 3:00PM-4:00PM*

Classical Greek philosophy, with a concentration on the philosophies of Plato and Aristotle.

**CAS PH 300 B1****History of Ancient Philosophy**

Professor Benjamin Roth

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

Classical Greek philosophy, with a concentration on the philosophies of Plato and Aristotle.

**CAS PH 310 A1****History of Modern Philosophy**

Professor Manfred Kuehn

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

An examination of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century philosophy from Descartes to Kant, with emphasis on metaphysics and epistemology. Readings will include Descartes, Spinoza, Leibniz, Locke, Berkley, Hume, and Kant. We will not just consider their metaphysical views on “what holds the world together in its innermost being,” but also discuss the question of what and how much we can know in the first place. Since an acquaintance with the theories of early modern philosophers is essential to understanding contemporary philosophy, this course will give you a good background for the further study of philosophy.

Professor Daniel Dahlstrom

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

What, if anything, makes it appropriate to designate a certain kind of thinking “modern”? With this question in mind, this course begins by tracing the rise of modernity in Europe in terms of five rubrics: art (e.g., Flemish primitives, the Italian Renaissance), religion (e.g., the Reformation), science and technology (e.g., Galileo’s telescope), economics (e.g., Marco Polo, trading companies, the banking system, the concentration of capital, and the development of colonialism), and politics (e.g., the distinction of public and private in the work of Machiavelli, Montaigne, and Hobbes).

Against this historical backdrop, we examine the following representative studies in modern philosophy:

Descartes’ meditations on first philosophy, with its accounts of radical doubt, the proofs for the existence of God, the difference between imagining and thinking, and the real distinction of body and soul;

Hume’s enquiry concerning human understanding, with its account of impressions and ideas, belief and causation, the verbal dispute over liberty and necessity, and the advantages of a mitigated skepticism;

Kant’s prolegomena to any future metaphysics, with its account of pure intuitions and concepts, analytic and synthetic as well as a priori and a posteriori judgments, and what makes mathematics and physics possible; and

Nietzsche’s genealogy of morals, with its account of the origins of “good,” “bad,” and “evil,” the role of resentment in traditional morality, and the link between conscience, guilt, and cruelty.

**CAS PH 405 A1 (Cross PH 605)****Aristotle (Aristotle's Bio-psychology for Today)**

Professor Alfred Miller

*Wednesday 4:00PM-7:00PM*

Aristotle developed the first systematic “paradigm” (basic conceptual and causal-explanatory framework) of bio-psychology. The key concepts and relations that he established still provide the core framework of today's sciences. His original paradigm integrated and reconciled the competing approaches of Plato's dualism and presocratic materialism. This successful synthesis was misinterpreted and handed down as a problematic mixture of the two primary sources. Today comparable dilemmas emerge in reconciling competing approaches in the biological and neurosciences. A reconstruction of Aristotle's original synthesis can be helpful in understanding -- and perhaps even in suggesting ways of resolving these modern difficulties. Since the paradigm encompasses socio-cultural as well as animal levels of interdependence with the environment, it also has profound implications for understanding the nature of human existence and contemporary human problems.

The course examines development of the original paradigm in *De Anima*, together with parts of *Motion of Animals*, *On the Senses* and *On Memory*. Some limited sections of the *Physics* and the *Metaphysics* are surveyed as the basis of the underlying ontology. Aristotle's analysis will be compared with corresponding modern problems throughout. Greek is not required (but any familiarity would be helpful).

Students of biology or neuroscience are welcomed and have the option of concentrating on using Aristotle's approach to elucidate current problems.

**CAS PH 408 A1****History of Medieval Philosophy**

Professor Lobel

*Monday, Wednesday, Friday 2:00PM-3:00PM*

Mysticism and Philosophy: Jewish and Islamic Perspectives

Thematic introduction to mysticism and philosophy, with a focus on the dynamics of religious experience. Readings from Jewish and Islamic philosophy and mysticism, Sufi mysticism and philosophy, Kabbalah, Biblical interpretation, Sufi poetry, Hebrew poetry from the Golden Age of Muslim Spain.

## CAS PH 410 A1 (Cross PH 610)

## Continental Rationalism

Professor Aaron Garrett

*Monday, Wednesday, Friday 10:00AM-11:00AM*

In this course we will explore the major writings of three of the most important philosophers of the early modern period: Descartes, Spinoza, and Leibniz. All of these philosophers were linked by the shared methodological premise that we have a priori access to fundamental metaphysical truths about the world and about minds. We will discuss their philosophical methodologies, metaphysics and theories of mind, through their accounts of substance, cause, explanation (particularly the principle of sufficient reason), and mental representation. We will spend the bulk of the course on Spinoza's *Ethics*, which was viewed by many contemporaries as the most controversial and philosophically rigorous book of the early modern period. Spinoza argues among other things that there is only one substance (i.e., monism), that everything is determined in relation to this substance, and that everything – whether space dust slug or human -- has a mind. Other texts we will focus on will include Descartes' *Meditations* and "Correspondence with Princess Elizabeth" and Leibniz's "Monadology" and "Primary Truths".

Although the works we will read are demanding there are no prerequisites and the course is suitable for anyone who has taken an introductory philosophy course.

## CAS PH 422 A1 (Cross PH 622)

## Analytic Philosophy

Professor Juliet Floyd

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

Can truth be perceived? An investigation of the concepts of truth, scepticism and perception, with an emphasis on the early twentieth century analytic tradition as a basis for understanding contemporary work in the theory of knowledge and truth. We shall read works by Plato, Frege, Moore, Russell, Wittgenstein, Austin and Quine, along with contemporary philosophers who have thought deeply about what the analytic tradition has to teach us about truth and perception: Anscombe, Cavell, Putnam, McDowell, and Travis.

## CAS PH 426 A1 (Cross PH 626)

## Phenomenology

Professor Walter Hopp

*Monday, Wednesday, Friday 11:00AM-12:00PM*

Corresponding to any type of object of which we can be conscious—individuals, properties, events, relations, values, states of affairs, universals, meanings, and so forth—there are conscious acts in virtue of which we can be conscious of them in the precise ways (perceptually, conceptually, imaginatively) that we are. The task of phenomenology is to *describe* those acts and their features as they present themselves in “phenomenological reflection.” In this course we will examine concrete phenomenological analyses of various sorts of conscious phenomena, and critically assess the merits of phenomenology itself as a discipline and a methodology. We will be especially concerned with the relations among *knowledge, consciousness, and intentionality*.

**CAS PH 427 A1 (Cross PH 627)****Heidegger and Existential Philosophy**

Professor Daniel Dahlstrom

*Monday 3:00PM-6:00PM*

The aim of this seminar is to understand and examine critically Heidegger's rationale for and manner of posing and addressing the question of what, in the case of human beings, it means to be. Heidegger pursues this question in his early, but unfinished work, *Being and Time*, and, hence, the seminar is thematically organized around this work. After an opening lecture, based in part on the introduction to *Being and Time*, the seminar is devoted to close scrutiny and discussion of the "existential analysis" in the text itself. An effort will be made to understand the interpretation of human existence given in *Being and Time* as a whole, despite its unfinished character. To this end, the seminar will take pains to cover the sweep of the entire text, including such themes as the analysis of the concept of world and the ontological significance of the use of tools in the workplace; the interpretation of the emotionally disposed understanding and discursiveness fundamental to being-here (*Dasein*); the challenges to being genuine, rooted in our need to conform; the care that defines our being-here, especially as disclosed in moments of *Angst*; our being "about to die" and conscience's call as a testimony to our genuine mortal potential; and the timeliness and historicity that provide the constitutive horizon or sense of an existence defined as care.

**CAS PH 443 A1 (Cross PH 643)****Philosophy of Mind**

Professor Peter Bokulich

*Monday, Wednesday, Friday 1:00PM-2:00PM*

The topic is sentience, embodiment, and the brain. The aim is to develop a "neurophenomenological" approach to consciousness and embodied experience in cognitive science and the philosophy of mind.

**CAS PH 450 A1 (Cross PH 650)****Types of Ethical Theory**

Professor Daniel Star

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

This course will focus on well-known papers in contemporary ethics, most of which were published during the past 40 years. We will be concerned with critically exploring different types of ethical theory, both in metaethics and in normative ethics. We will consider various accounts of wellbeing, various accounts of what makes for right action, and arguments for and against giving virtue a central role to play in answering substantive moral questions. Although this is not an applied ethics course, topics of practical interest, such as abortion, infanticide, organ transplantation, and famine also feature in some of the papers we will read.

**CAS PH 456 A1 (Cross PH 656)****Topics in Philosophy and Religion**

Professor David Eckel

*Wednesday 5:00PM-8:00PM*

This course will explore a number of philosophical and conceptual issues that are central to thinking about the contemporary place and practice of religion. Drawing on figures in both analytic and continental philosophical traditions, as well as scholars in the fields of psychology, theology, religious studies and literary theory, the course will explore such questions as the possibility of religion without God, the contemporary grounds for debate about naturalism and belief, and the prospects for interfaith exploration and religious tolerance. The “future of religion” has, of course, also been the frame of a number of notable attempts in the past—the turn of the previous century gave us both Freud’s *Future of an Illusion* and William James’ *Varieties of Religious Experience*, for example—that themselves are worth re-examination in the contemporary context. The seminar parallels the IPR lecture series on this topic and incorporates visiting lectures in the course design. For more information, contact [ipr@bu.edu](mailto:ipr@bu.edu).

**CAS PH 461 A1 (Cross PH 661)****Mathematical Logic**

Professor Kanamori

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

The syntax and semantics of sentential and quantificational logic, culminating in the Gödel Completeness Theorem. The Gödel Incompleteness Theorem and its ramifications for computability and philosophy. Also offered as CAS MA 531.

Prereq: (CASMA293) or consent of instructor.

**CAS PH 468 A1 (Cross PH 668)****Philo. Problems of Math and Logic**

Professor Judson Webb

*Tuesday, Thursday 2:00PM-3:30PM*

Selected traditional metaphysical and epistemological problems in the light of modern logic and various studies in the foundations of mathematics, including the nature of the axiomatic method, completeness in logic and mathematics, and the nature of mathematical truth.

**CAS PH 477 A1 (Cross PH 677)****Philosophy of The Social Sciences**

Professor Tian Yu Cao

*Monday 5:00PM-8:00PM*

After the introduction of some basic concepts in social sciences (sociology, anthropology, economics, and political science), such as structure, agency and action, explanation and understanding, we will move to an illuminating examination of two of the most popular approaches in social sciences in recent decades: the rational choice approach (based on game theory) and the functionalist approach in economics, sociology and political science. The enduring philosophical questions, such as prediction and progress, reductionism and holism, rationality and relativism, facts and norms, will also be examined in the context of social sciences.

**CAS PH 485 A1****Topics in the Philosophy of Value**

Professor Lobel

*Tuesday, Thursday 2:00PM-3:00PM*

Topic for Fall 2014: Happiness, East and West.

What is happiness? How can we achieve a balanced, healthy, fulfilling life? Classical thinkers such as Aristotle, Plato, Chuang Tzu; Buddhist, Confucian, Epicurean, and Stoic paths; comparison with contemporary studies of happiness.

# Graduate Courses

**GRS PH 605 A1 (Cross PH 405)****Aristotle (Aristotle's Bio-psychology for Today)**

Professor Alfred Miller

*Wednesday 4:00PM-7:00PM*

Aristotle developed the first systematic "paradigm" (basic conceptual and causal-explanatory framework) of bio-psychology. The key concepts and relations that he established still provide the core framework of today's sciences. His original paradigm integrated and reconciled the competing approaches of Plato's dualism and presocratic materialism. This successful synthesis was misinterpreted and handed down as a problematic mixture of the two primary sources. Today comparable dilemmas emerge in reconciling competing approaches in the biological and neurosciences. A reconstruction of Aristotle's original synthesis can be helpful in understanding -- and perhaps even in suggesting ways of resolving these modern difficulties. Since the paradigm encompasses socio-cultural as well as animal levels of interdependence with the environment, it also has profound implications for understanding the nature of human existence and contemporary human problems.

The course examines development of the original paradigm in *De Anima*, together with parts of *Motion of Animals*, *On the Senses* and *On Memory*. Some limited sections of the *Physics* and the *Metaphysics* are surveyed as the basis of the underlying ontology. Aristotle's analysis will be compared with corresponding modern problems throughout. Greek is not required (but any familiarity would be helpful).

Students of biology or neuroscience are welcomed and have the option of concentrating on using Aristotle's approach to elucidate current problems.

**GRS PH 610 A1 (Cross PH 410)****Continental Rationalism**

Professor Aaron Garrett

*Monday, Wednesday, Friday 10:00AM-11:00AM*

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Although the works we will read are demanding there are no prerequisites and the course is suitable for anyone who has taken an introductory philosophy course.

**GRS PH 622 A1 (Cross PH 422)****Analytic Philosophy**

Professor Juliet Floyd

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

Can truth be perceived? An investigation of the concepts of truth, scepticism and perception, with an emphasis on the early twentieth century analytic tradition as a basis for understanding contemporary work in the theory of knowledge and truth. We shall read works by Plato, Frege, Moore, Russell, Wittgenstein, Austin and Quine, along with contemporary philosophers who have thought deeply about what the analytic tradition has to teach us about truth and perception: Anscombe, Cavell, Putnam, McDowell, and Travis.

**GRS PH 626 A1 (Cross PH 426)****Phenomenology**

Professor Walter Hopp

*Monday, Wednesday, Friday 11:00AM-12:00PM*

Corresponding to any type of object of which we can be conscious—individuals, properties, events, relations, values, states of affairs, universals, meanings, and so forth—there are conscious acts in virtue of which we can be conscious of them in the precise ways (perceptually, conceptually, imaginatively) that we are. The task of phenomenology is to *describe* those acts and their features as they present themselves in “phenomenological reflection.” In this course we will examine concrete phenomenological analyses of various sorts of conscious phenomena, and critically assess the merits of phenomenology itself as a discipline and a methodology. We will be especially concerned with the relations among *knowledge, consciousness, and intentionality*.

**GRS PH 627 A1 (Cross PH 427)****Heidegger and Existential Philosophy**

Professor Daniel Dahlstrom

*Monday 3:00PM-6:00PM*

The aim of this seminar is to understand and examine critically Heidegger's rationale for and manner of posing and addressing the question of what, in the case of human beings, it means to be. Heidegger pursues this question in his early, but unfinished work, *Being and Time*, and, hence, the seminar is thematically organized around this work. After an opening lecture, based in part on the introduction to *Being and Time*, the seminar is devoted to close scrutiny and discussion of the "existential analysis" in the text itself. An effort will be made to understand the interpretation of human existence given in *Being and Time* as a whole, despite its unfinished character. To this end, the seminar will take pains to cover the sweep of the entire text, including such themes as the analysis of the concept of world and the ontological significance of the use of tools in the workplace; the interpretation of the emotionally disposed understanding and discursiveness fundamental to being-here (*Dasein*); the challenges to being genuine, rooted in our need to conform; the care that defines our being-here, especially as disclosed in moments of *Angst*; our being "about to die" and conscience's call as a testimony to our genuine mortal potential; and the timeliness and historicity that provide the constitutive horizon or sense of an existence defined as care.

**GRS PH 643 A1 (Cross PH 443)****Philosophy of Mind**

Professor Peter Bokulich

*Monday, Wednesday, Friday 1:00PM-2:00PM*

The topic is sentience, embodiment, and the brain. The aim is to develop a "neurophenomenological" approach to consciousness and embodied experience in cognitive science and the philosophy of mind.

**GRS PH 650 A1 (Cross PH 450)****Types of Ethical Theory**

Professor Daniel Star

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

This course will focus on well-known papers in contemporary ethics, most of which were published during the past 40 years. We will be concerned with critically exploring different types of ethical theory, both in metaethics and in normative ethics. We will consider various accounts of wellbeing, various accounts of what makes for right action, and arguments for and against giving virtue a central role to play in answering substantive moral questions. Although this is not an applied ethics course, topics of practical interest, such as abortion, infanticide, organ transplantation, and famine also feature in some of the papers we will read.

**GRS PH 656 A1 (Cross PH 456)****Topics in Philosophy and Religion**

Professor David Eckel

*Wednesday 5:00PM-8:00PM*

This course will explore a number of philosophical and conceptual issues that are central to thinking about the contemporary place and practice of religion. Drawing on figures in both analytic and continental philosophical traditions, as well as scholars in the fields of psychology, theology, religious studies and literary theory, the course will explore such questions as the possibility of religion without God, the contemporary grounds for debate about naturalism and belief, and the prospects for interfaith exploration and religious tolerance. The “future of religion” has, of course, also been the frame of a number of notable attempts in the past—the turn of the previous century gave us both Freud’s *Future of an Illusion* and William James’ *Varieties of Religious Experience*, for example—that themselves are worth re-examination in the contemporary context. The seminar parallels the IPR lecture series on this topic and incorporates visiting lectures in the course design. For more information, contact [ipr@bu.edu](mailto:ipr@bu.edu).

**GRS PH 661 A1 (Cross PH 461)****Mathematical Logic**

Professor Kanamori

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

The syntax and semantics of sentential and quantificational logic, culminating in the Gödel Completeness Theorem. The Gödel Incompleteness Theorem and its ramifications for computability and philosophy. Also offered as CAS MA 531.

Prereq: (CASMA293) or consent of instructor.

**GRS PH 668 A1 (Cross PH 468)****Philo. Problems of Math and Logic**

Professor Judson Webb

*Tuesday, Thursday 2:00PM-3:30PM*

Selected traditional metaphysical and epistemological problems in the light of modern logic and various studies in the foundations of mathematics, including the nature of the axiomatic method, completeness in logic and mathematics, and the nature of mathematical truth.

**GRS PH 677 A1 (Cross PH 477)****Philosophy of The Social Sciences**

Professor Tian Yu Cao

*Monday 5:00PM-8:00PM*

After the introduction of some basic concepts in social sciences (sociology, anthropology, economics, and political science), such as structure, agency and action, explanation and understanding, we will move to an illuminating examination of two of the most popular approaches in social sciences in recent decades: the rational choice approach (based on game theory) and the functionalist approach in economics, sociology and political science. The enduring philosophical questions, such as prediction and progress, reductionism and holism, rationality and relativism, facts and norms, will also be examined in the context of social sciences.

**GRS PH 828 A1****Philosophical and Theological Approaches to Religion**

Professor Michael Zank

*Monday 5:00PM-8:00PM*

An introduction to the philosophical and theological approaches to the study of religion(s) as distinct from other humanities-based and social-scientific approaches. Provides a common vocabulary for students pursuing historical, constructive, or interdisciplinary projects related to religions thought.

**GRS PH 871 A1****Philosophy of Science**

Professor Tian Yu Cao

*Wednesday 5:00PM-8:00PM*

This seminar will examine, from four perspectives (scientific realism, positivism, pragmatism and epistemic relativism), the contemporary philosophical debate on the nature and limits of scientific knowledge, centered around such issues as (i) the underdetermination and incommensurability versus representation and cumulativeness of scientific theories; (ii) social interests and perspectives versus objective facts and evidence as well as scientific rationality in theory acceptance. The aim of the course is to clarify the credentials and implications of each position, (thus provide students a solid ground for participating in wider cultural debates on rationality and relativism), and to have a better understanding of the recent history and current status of philosophy of science, (which is part of necessary training for a professional philosopher), through a careful examination of the structure of the arguments adopted by each position in dealing with various issues.

**GRS PH 881 A1****Philosophy Proseminar**

Professor Juliet Floyd

*Tuesday 9:30AM-12:30PM*

An investigation of truth and perception, based upon contemporary and historical works. The nature of the interplay between truth and knowledge will be our focus. We build the course around the recent issue of the Aristotelian Society online virtual issue on truth (April 2013, <http://www.aristoteliansociety.org.uk/category/online-conference/>), where a variety of recent theories are canvassed with reference to figures such as Frege, Ramsey, Austin, Quine and Wittgenstein, McDowell, Sher and Heal. We will also discuss specific theories of truth from the point of view of logic and reference (Tarski and Davidson), essence (Putnam, Kripke), being (Heidegger), and value (aesthetics, ethics, and emotion). Discussion and weekly papers will ensure development of analytic, philosophical, and writing skills.

**GRS PH 993 A1****Placement Proseminar**

Professor Alisa Bokulich

*Tuesday 3:00PM-6:00PM*

A workshop seminar offering advanced graduate students the opportunity to present and discuss work-in-progress (dissertation chapters, papers for job applications, journal submissions). A serious commitment to regular and continuing attendance is expected.