

Course Descriptions

Spring 2021



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 Crowe

Monday, Wednesday, Friday 11:15AM-12:05PM

Philosophy gets started when something or other ceases to be obvious – which is just to say that it starts with questions. Throughout the history of philosophy and up through the present, skeptical philosophers have renewed this basic interrogative attitude in a variety of challenging ways. In this class, we will get to know what philosophy is about by examining classic and contemporary works on skepticism. Beginning in antiquity with Sextus Empiricus, Cicero, and St. Augustine, we'll then dive into the thought of the great Renaissance skeptic Montaigne, and we'll wind up with Bernard Williams's (d. 2003) skeptical inquiry into ethics. This course fulfills the following HUB requirements: Philosophical Inquiry and Life's Meanings, Ethical Reasoning, Critical Thinking.

CAS PH 100 B1**Introduction to Philosophy**

Professor Walter Hopp

Tuesday, Thursday 12:30PM-1:45PM

Introduces the nature of philosophical activity through careful study of major philosophical topics. Topics may include the nature of reality, knowledge, God's existence, and the significance of human life. Carries humanities divisional credit in CAS. Effective Fall 2018, this course fulfills a single unit in each of the following BU Hub areas: Critical Thinking and Philosophical Inquiry and Life's Meaning. Effective Fall 2019, this course fulfills a single unit in each of the following BU Hub areas: Philosophical Inquiry and Life's Meanings, Ethical Reasoning, Critical Thinking.

CAS PH 110 A1**Great Philosophers**

Professor Benjamin Crowe

Monday, Wednesday, Friday 9:05AM-9:55AM

People are social creatures capable of living an individually autonomous life. How can we live well and live together? This course examines the work of four key philosophers who each grappled with this fundamental issue. We'll begin with classic works from both West (Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* and *Politics*) and East (Xunzi), before turning to the modern era, represented by Karl Marx and Simone de Beauvoir. We'll examine topics such as happiness, friendship, freedom, justice, human nature, morality, family, and religion. This course fulfills the following HUB requirements: Historical Consciousness, Philosophical Inquiry and Life's Meanings, Critical Thinking.

CAS PH 150 A1**Introduction to Ethics**

Professor Daniel Star

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

This course engages with several of the main themes of ethics, one of the major subdivisions of philosophy. Why should a person care about morality? Is there an objective fact about what is right or wrong or is morality subjective? What is it for something to be good? How must a person act in order to be moral? Effective Fall 2018, this course fulfills a single unit in each of the following BU Hub areas: Philosophical Inquiry and Life's Meanings, Ethical Reasoning, Critical Thinking.

CAS PH 150 B1**Introduction to Ethics**

Professor TBA

Tuesday, Thursday 2:00PM-3:15PM

This course engages with several of the main themes of ethics, one of the major subdivisions of philosophy. Why should a person care about morality? Is there an objective fact about what is right or wrong or is morality subjective? What is it for something to be good? How must a person act in order to be moral? We will investigate several abstract theoretical approaches to these questions and discuss reasons for and against embracing them. The second half of the course will focus on non-ideal ethical theory, an approach that begins with concrete issues in social justice rather than abstract principles. The non-ideal theories we will focus are aspects of Critical Race Theory. We will then go on to explore ways in which theories of knowledge and ethics are connected from a non-ideal perspective. Effective Fall 2018, this course fulfills a single unit in each of the following BU Hub areas: Philosophical Inquiry and Life's Meanings, Ethical Reasoning, Critical Thinking.

CAS PH 150 C1**Introduction to Ethics**

Professor Samia Hesni

Tuesday, Thursday 9:30AM-10:45AM

This course will primarily address questions like: what is it to be good? What is it to live a good life? What are the right things to do in difficult circumstances? We will read philosophers who give different theories of what is good and right, and then we will discuss how these theories apply to your lives and the world more broadly. Effective Fall 2018, this course fulfills a single unit in each of the following BU Hub areas: Philosophical Inquiry and Life's Meanings, Ethical Reasoning, Critical Thinking.

CAS PH 155 A1**Politics and Philosophy**

Professor Sally Sedgwick

Monday, Wednesday, Friday 11:15AM-12:05PM

What is a just society? When are the laws of a state legitimate? How far should the state be allowed to intrude into our private affairs? How do we determine the proper realm of rights? This a course introduces students to classics in the history of political philosophy, and we will consider treatments of these issues by figures such as Plato, Hobbes and Mill. We will also, however, read works by more contemporary philosophers, including John Rawls and Charles Mills.

There are no prerequisites.

HUB categories: Philosophical Inquiry and Life's Meanings; Critical Thinking

CAS PH 155 B1**Politics and Philosophy**

Professor Sreedhar

Monday, Wednesday 12:20PM – 2:05PM

What is justice? What are the foundations of property rights, liberty, and equality? Are anarchism and utopianism defensible? This course is an introduction to major themes and questions in political philosophy. It includes a study of classical and modern texts, as well as contemporary political issues. Carries humanities divisional credit in CAS. Effective Fall 2018, this course fulfills a single unit in each of the following BU Hub areas: Philosophical Inquiry and Life's Meanings, Ethical Reasoning, Critical Thinking.

CAS PH 159 A1**Philosophy and Film**

Professor Garrett

Tuesday, Thursday 11:00AM-12:15PM

In this class we will investigate philosophical issues connected with film including: Is there anything that is distinctive about film as a medium? What distinguishes film genres? Is there a clear distinction between documentary films and fiction films? Why do we watch horror films and tragedies if they involve feeling unpleasant emotions? What do films express or mean? On what basis do we evaluate films and are some films better than others? Is moral art better art?

Effective Fall 2018, this course fulfills a single unit in each of the following BU Hub areas: Aesthetic Exploration, Philosophical Inquiry and Life's Meanings, Critical Thinking.

CAS PH 160 A1**Reason and Argumentation**

Professor Derek Anderson

Tuesday, Thursday 9:30AM-10:45AM

This course is an introduction to philosophical methods of inquiry and discourse. We will have three major aims. The first is philosophical. We aim to understand the nature of reason and argumentation; the course will serve as an introduction to logic, epistemology, and philosophy of language. The second is practical. We aim to improve our ability to reason, construct arguments, and identify fallacies. The third is social. Reason and argument are central to the process of social change. In order to achieve a more just society, we need to reason together and argue with one another in ways that facilitate change of belief in the direction of knowledge and social justice.

CAS PH 160 B1**Reason and Argumentation**

Professor TBA

Tuesday, Thursday 12:30PM-1:45PM

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. We will emphasize argumentation and criticism in ordinary life and also present formal models of reasoning designed to elicit underlying patterns and structures of reasoning and argumentation that are widely applicable. Simultaneous training in skills of argument analysis, argument pattern recognition, argument construction, and argument interpretation and creation. Effective Fall 2018, this course fulfills a single unit in the following BU Hub areas: Philosophical Inquiry and Life's Meanings, Critical Thinking.

CAS PH 242 A1

Human Nature

Professor Benjamin Crowe

Monday, Wednesday, Friday 1:25PM-2:15PM

Conceptions of human nature are foundational in ethics, politics, theories of knowledge, to name just a few relevant inquiries. In this course, we'll examine four rival conceptions of human nature, beginning with St. Augustine's (354-430 C.E.) triadic model of the human mind. Next, we'll turn to the work of Enlightenment philosopher and pioneer of anthropology, J.G. Herder (1744-1804), whose understanding of the plasticity of humanity influenced numerous artists and thinkers. In his early writings, Karl Marx (1818-1883) adds a crucial social element of Herder's picture, arguing that humanity is a species-being. The final figure we'll examine is Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900), whose *Genealogy of Morals* examines the dark, subconscious forces at the basis of some of our most cherished ideals. This course fulfills the following HUB requirements: Philosophical Inquiry and Life's Meanings, Historical Consciousness, Critical Thinking.

CAS PH 248 A1

Existentialism

Professor Walter Hopp

Tuesday, Thursday 9:30AM-10:45AM

The existentialists grappled with some of the most difficult and problematic aspects of the human condition. Is it possible to lead a meaningful life? Might life be unavoidably absurd? What is it to be an authentic individual? Can you be alienated from yourself? Can the way in which we are seen by others limit our freedom? 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, and Albert Camus responded to these questions. This course fulfills a single unit in each of the following BU Hub areas: Philosophical Inquiry and Life's Meanings, Ethical Reasoning, Critical Thinking.

CAS PH 251 A1

Medical Ethics

Professor Russell Powell

Tuesday, Thursday 12:30PM-1:45PM

This course will survey ethical issues that arise in connection with medicine and emerging biotechnologies. It will examine topics such as the right to healthcare, research on human subjects, euthanasia, abortion, cloning, genetic selection, disabilities, and the biomedical enhancement of human capacities. Students can expect to gain not only training in the concepts and methods of moral philosophy and the logic of argumentation, but also the resources needed for assessing ethically difficult questions that healthcare professionals routinely face. Carries humanities divisional credit in CAS. Effective Fall 2018, this course fulfills a single unit in each of the following BU Hub areas: Philosophical Inquiry and Life's Meanings, Ethical Reasoning, Critical Thinking.

Professor Ian Dunkle

Monday, Wednesday, Friday 1:25PM-2:15PM

This course introduces students to the dominant theory for making ethical decisions in medical ethics, which has come to be called Principlism. We will begin by considering (1) what Principlism is. Then we will take each of the four core ethical principles—namely, Beneficence, Non-Maleficence, Respect for Patient Autonomy, and Justice—and consider both (2) their philosophical support and (3) the conceptual and practical issues that emerge in applying these principles in medicine. Issues we will consider include:

- What is it to be happy? What is it to be healthy? What is the relation of disability to health and wellbeing?
- When does rationing health care bring undue harm to individual patients?
- What is death? Is death bad for the one who dies? Why is it wrong to kill someone? Is there a moral difference between killing and letting die?
- Why is it important to respect personal autonomy even at the expense of personal wellbeing? What is the content of the moral demand to respect personal autonomy? What is informed consent? How do policies of informed consent affect trans teens?
- Are the categories of race and sex in medical practice justified? Do they lead to unjust practices?

CAS PH 256 A1**Philosophy of Gender and Sexuality**

Professor TBA

Tuesday, Thursday 3:30PM-4:45PM

In this course we will be philosophizing about gender and sexuality from an intersectional perspective. We begin with a detailed study of the concept and phenomenon of intersectionality, focusing on foundational texts and recent philosophical commentary including metaphysical and conceptual analyses. The intersectionality unit will set the agenda for the remainder of the semester. In the second half, we will explore issues in the metaphysics, semantics, epistemology, and politics of gender and sexuality, engaging with both classic and contemporary readings. Here we will bring our intersectional framework to bear on such questions as: What is gender? How is gender constructed? What are social constructions, anyway? What is sexual orientation, and how must concepts of sexuality change within a non-binary understanding of gender? How do identities and conceptions of gender and sexuality interact with intersecting systems of oppression? Who determines the meaning of the word “woman,” and how do they do it? How does a person’s gender and sexuality shape their knowledge of reality? How can we communicate and take effective political action across epistemological barriers? Effective Fall 2018, this course fulfills a single unit in each of the following BU Hub areas: Philosophical Inquiry and Life's Meanings, The Individual in Community, Critical Thinking.

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

Professor Derek Anderson

Tuesday, Thursday 12:30PM-1:45PM

This course provides a sustained and in-depth inquiry into philosophical theories of the mind, its relationship with the brain and body, and the metaphysical place of the self among these things. The first two-thirds is dedicated to the mind/body problem, which has two aspects: (i) if the mind and brain are not identical (in some sense or other), then how do mental states cause physical actions? And (ii) how can a physical object have conscious mental states at all? The first aspect is known as the problem of mental causation; the second is known as the hard problem of consciousness. The last third of the course will be dedicated to understanding what the self is, its relationship to the mind and the body, and its existence within the social sphere.

CAS PH 272 A1**Science, Technology, and Values**

Professor Bokulich

Tuesday, Thursday 11:00AM-12:15PM

The goal of this course is to come to a deeper and more reflective understanding of the nature of science and technology, their ethical implications, and their impact on society. As citizens, business people, and policy makers we cannot afford to be ignorant of the developments in science and technology. As scientists, engineers, or healthcare professionals—or even simply as consumers—we cannot afford to be ignorant of the ethical, social and political implications of our practices. In this course we shall examine some of the important ways in which science, technology, society, and values are interconnected. The course will include case studies of particular technologies such as artificial intelligence/machine learning, prescription drugs & CRISPR, and more.

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

Professor Marc Gasser-Wingate

Tuesday, Thursday 11:00AM-12:15PM

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. This course fulfills the following Hub requirements: Global Citizenship and Intercultural Literacy, Ethical Reasoning, and Writing Intensive.

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

Professor Marc Gasser-Wingate

Tuesday, Thursday 2:00PM-3:15PM

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. This course fulfills the following Hub requirements: Global Citizenship and Intercultural Literacy, Ethical Reasoning, and Writing Intensive.

CAS PH 310 A1

History of Modern Philosophy

Professor Charles Griswold

Monday, Wednesday, Friday 12:20PM-1:10PM

This course offers an examination of several topics in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century philosophy, with emphasis on the nature and extent of knowledge (including our knowledge of the existence of the external world and of God), the relation of mind to body, the nature of personal identity, the problem of free will, and the theological problem of evil. The relation between science, religion, and philosophy will also draw our attention. Readings will likely include selections from Astell, Bacon, Descartes, Elisabeth, Hume, Leibniz, Locke, Masham, Pascal, and Shepherd, among others. Time permitting, we will also read some contemporary articles that pick up on themes that we have discussed.

Effective Fall 2020, this course fulfills a single unit in each of the following BU Hub areas: Historical Consciousness, Philosophical Inquiry and Life's Meanings, Research and Information Literacy. There are no prerequisites for this course. You may take it even if you have not taken PH 300 (History of Ancient Philosophy). Feel free to be in touch with the professor if you have any questions. It is anticipated that this course will not be taught asynchronously (and so that it will not be recorded).

CAS PH 310 B1

History of Modern Philosophy

Professor TBA

Tuesday, Thursday 9:30AM-10:45AM

An examination of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century philosophy from Descartes to Kant, with emphasis on the nature and extent of knowledge. Readings from René Descartes, Princess Elizabeth, Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, Benedict Spinoza, David Hume, and Immanuel Kant.

Effective Fall 2020, this course fulfills a single unit in each of the following BU Hub areas: Historical Consciousness, Philosophical Inquiry and Life's Meanings, Research and Information Literacy. There are no prerequisites for this course. You may take it even if you have not taken PH 300 (History of Ancient Philosophy). Feel free to be in touch with the professor if you have any questions. It is anticipated that this course will not be taught asynchronously (and so that it will not be recorded).

CAS PH 340 A1**Metaphysics and Epistemology**

Professor TBA

Tuesday, Thursday 12:30PM-1:45PM

This course is about metaphysics (the study of what there is, and how it all relates) and epistemology (the study of knowledge, and how we can know things about the world) and their intersection. Effective Fall 2018, this course fulfills a single unit in each of the following BU Hub areas: Philosophical Inquiry and Life's Meanings, Critical Thinking.

CAS PH 350 A1**History of Ethics**

Professor Speight

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

Are there fundamental principles for determining the right way to act ethically? How do different eras answer this question? What is the significance of these differences? This course addresses these questions by examining classical ethical texts from different historical traditions. Effective Fall 2018, this course fulfills a single unit in each of the following BU Hub areas: Philosophical Inquiry and Life's Meanings, Ethical Reasoning, Critical Thinking.

CAS PH 360 A1 (Cross PH 633)**Symbolic Logic**

Professor Juliet Floyd

Tuesday, Thursday 2:00PM-3:15PM

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 409 A1 (Cross PH 609)**Maimonides**

Professor Michael Zank

Monday 6:30PM-9:15PM

A study of major aspects of the thought of Maimonides. Primary focus on the Guide of the Perplexed, with attention to its modern reception in works by Baruch Spinoza, Hermann Cohen, Leo Strauss, and others. Also offered as CAS RN 420. Effective Fall 2019, this course fulfills a single unit in each of the following BU Hub areas: Philosophical Inquiry and Life's Meanings, Oral and/or Signed Communication.

CAS PH 419 A1 (Cross PH 619)**Nietzsche**

Professor Paul Katsafanas

Thursday 3:30PM-6:15PM

An intensive study of Nietzsche's philosophical thought. Topics to be addressed may include Nietzsche's claim that modern morality is "the danger of dangers"; that the death of God brings with it the possibility of the "last man"; that modern culture exhibits or fosters nihilism; that we have lost "higher values"; that all organisms manifest a "will to power"; that the will to truth is an expression of the ascetic ideal; that we need a "revaluation of all values"; that we must affirm the eternal recurrence of our lives; and that we have a superficial understanding of the nature of happiness. Readings will include a combination of primary and secondary sources. Discussion is an essential component of this seminar, so synchronous online attendance will be necessary.

Prerequisite: two philosophy courses

CAS PH 422 A1**Analytic Philosophy**

Professor Peter Hylton

Tuesday, Thursday 9:30AM-10:45AM

This course will deal with some aspects of the development of twentieth-century analytic philosophy. Within that broader movement, we will focus on philosophers who were significantly influenced by logic; in particular, we will read works by Frege, Russell, the Logical Empiricists (also known as Logical Positivists), especially Carnap, and by Quine. The balance of the reading and discussion will be in part determined as we go, by the needs and interests of those taking the course.

Successful completion of PH 360, or equivalent knowledge of quantification theory, is a prerequisite for taking this course.

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

Professor Juliet Floyd

Thursday 3:30PM-6:15PM

A centennial intensive study of Wittgenstein's *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* (1921) and his *Philosophical Investigations* (1953) with contemporary philosophical problems in mind and 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, experience, and life. Themes covered will include the nature of concept-possession, normativity, rule-following, occasion sensitivity, literary dimensions of these texts, and their place in modernist 20th century philosophy.

CAS PH 430 A1 (Cross PH 630)**American Philosophy**

Professor C. Allen Speight

Wednesday 2:30PM-5:15PM

Topic: Philosophy in Boston

This course will look at several philosophers—including William James, Josiah Royce, George Santayana and W. E. B. Du Bois—whose lives and work connected in Boston during the so-called "golden age" of American philosophy. Comparative topics to be discussed include the importance of race; the meaning of pragmatism and its relation to idealism; the notions of freedom and free will; and the relation between moral action and aesthetic contemplation.

CAS PH 445 A1 (Cross PH 645)**Philosophy of Love**

Professor Daniel Star

Monday 2:30PM-5:15PM

What is love? What different forms does it take (e.g. parental love, romantic love)? Is love non-rational or are there reasons of love? We aim to answer these and other philosophical questions by focusing on contemporary philosophical writings on love.

CAS PH 450 A1**Types of Ethical Theory**

Professor Diana Lobel

Tuesday, Thursday 2:00PM-3:15PM

A survey of basic ethical theories including those in the Kantian, utilitarian, and virtue-ethics traditions.

CAS PH 454 A1**Community, Liberty, and Morality**

Professor Charles Griswold

Monday, Wednesday 2:30PM-3:45PM

Does a free community require shared values? Must those values, and hence political liberty, in turn be sustained by a communal religious outlook—and if so, which one? If diverse religious views are permitted in a free society, how is a regime of mutual toleration to be established and how is religious liberty to be defined and defended? Is the cause of civic virtue and liberty better served by a sort of free market of religious and moral views or by state-enforced commitments and values? How can rival religious and secular claims about the foundations of political authority be reconciled in a free community? What are some of the arguments for and against freedom of speech and inquiry? This seminar will focus on questions concerning the complex relation between value, civic unity, religion, and liberty. In effect, we will reflect on the meaning of “E pluribus unum” in the context of a free society. Readings will be drawn from a variety of classical and contemporary thinkers, and will also include discussion of some recent Supreme Court cases. This coming semester, the professor anticipates adding readings about utopianism (and about dystopias).

This seminar emphasizes class discussion and participation, and is limited to an enrollment of 15 (undergraduate students only). It is anticipated that this course will not be taught asynchronously (and so that it will not be recorded). The Link may list as a short title for this course “Liberty and Justice.”

Effective Spring 2021, this course fulfills a single unit in each of the following BU Hub areas: Philosophical Inquiry and Life’s Meanings, Ethical Reasoning, and Critical Thinking.

CAS PH 456 A1**Topics in Philosophy and Religion**

Professor Lobel

Tuesday, Thursday 2:00PM-3:15PM

Topics include Buddhist philosophy of mind, religious knowledge, controversies with rival philosophers, and the path to nirvana. Seminar coordinates with the fall lecture series in the Institute for Philosophy and Religion.

CAS PH 459 A1 (Cross PH 659)**Crime and Punishment: Philosophical Perspectives**

Professor Samia Hesni

Tuesday 12:30PM-3:15PM

What happens when legal and political institutions fail to provide for the individuals living under them, and those individuals fill the gaps themselves? This seminar will address the role of kindness in historical and contemporary political and social movements. We will examine contexts of nonviolence, solidarity, and community building. Questions we will ask include: What role does kindness play in social and political movements? What is the difference between in-group and out-group kindness? Why do some social and political movements espouse kindness to those who do not have their political interests at heart? What are the philosophical, political, and legal roots of nonviolent movements? What would political and legal systems look like if they centered kindness?

CAS PH 462 A1 (Cross PH 662)**Political and Legal Philosophy**

Professor Akihiro Kanamori

Tuesday, Thursday 9:30AM-10:45AM

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.

CAS PH 472 (Cross PH 672)**Foundation of Mathematics**

Professor Russell Powell

Wednesday 6:30PM-9:15PM

Conceptual problems in biology; unity or pluralism of science; hierarchy theory; biological explanation; evolutionary theory, teleology and causality, statistical explanation; the species problem; mind and the brain; and language in animals and humans.

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

Professor Lobel

Tuesday, Thursday 2:00PM-3:15PM

Topics vary from year to year. Topic for Spring 2019: Happiness, East and West. What is happiness? How can we achieve a balanced, healthy, fulfilling life? Classical thinkers such as Aristotle, Plato, Chuang Tzu; Stoic, Epicurean, Confucian, Buddhist paths; comparison with contemporary studies of happiness and mindfulness.

**CAS PH 487 (Cross PH
687)**

Topics in the Philosophy of Science

Professor Alisa Bokulich

Tuesday, Thursday 3:30PM-4:45PM

This course is a discussion-based introduction to core issues in the philosophy science, focusing on the topics of data, measurement, theory change, scientific realism, reductionism, models, and natural kinds. What are data and how are they related to models? What does it mean to say a measurement is accurate and how do we

know? 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? How can idealized scientific models that make all sort of false assumptions nonetheless make true predictions? Has our scientific understanding of the world forced us to revise our philosophical conception of natural kinds?

Graduate Courses

GRS PH 609 A1 (Cross PH 409)**Maimonides**

Professor Michael Zank

Monday 6:30PM-9:15PM

A study of major aspects of the thought of Maimonides. Primary focus on the Guide of the Perplexed, with attention to its modern reception in works by Baruch Spinoza, Hermann Cohen, Leo Strauss, and others. Also offered as CAS RN 420. Effective Fall 2019, this course fulfills a single unit in each of the following BU Hub areas: Philosophical Inquiry and Life's Meanings, Oral and/or Signed Communication.

GRS PH 619 A1 (Cross PH 419)**Nietzsche**

Professor Paul Katsafanas

Thursday 3:30PM-6:15PM

An intensive study of Nietzsche's philosophical thought. Topics to be addressed may include Nietzsche's claim that modern morality is "the danger of dangers"; that the death of God brings with it the possibility of the "last man"; that modern culture exhibits or fosters nihilism; that we have lost "higher values"; that all organisms manifest a "will to power"; that the will to truth is an expression of the ascetic ideal; that we need a "revaluation of all values"; that we must affirm the eternal recurrence of our lives; and that we have a superficial understanding of the nature of happiness. Readings will include a combination of primary and secondary sources. Discussion is an essential component of this seminar, so synchronous online attendance will be necessary.

Prerequisite: two philosophy courses

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

Professor Juliet Floyd

Thursday 3:30PM-6:15PM

A centennial intensive study of Wittgenstein's Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus (1921) and his Philosophical Investigations (1953) with contemporary philosophical problems in mind and 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, experience, and life. Themes covered will include the nature of concept-possession, normativity, rule-following, occasion sensitivity, literary dimensions of these texts, and their place in modernist 20th century philosophy.

GRS PH 633 A1 (Cross PH 360)**Symbolic Logic**

Professor Juliet Floyd

Tuesday, Thursday 2:00PM-3:15PM

A 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. 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. Carries humanities divisional credit in CAS. Effective Fall 2018, this course fulfills a single unit in each of the following BU Hub areas: Philosophical Inquiry and Life's Meanings, Quantitative Reasoning I, Critical Thinking.

GRS PH 645 A1 (Cross PH 445)**Philosophy of Love**

Professor Daniel Star

Monday 2:30PM-5:15PM

What is love? What different forms does it take (e.g. parental love, romantic love)? Is love non-rational or are there reasons of love? We aim to answer these and other philosophical questions by focusing on contemporary philosophical writings on love.

GRS PH 659 A1 (Cross PH 459)**Political and Legal Philosophy**

Professor Samia Hesni

Tuesday 12:30PM-3:15PM

What happens when legal and political institutions fail to provide for the individuals living under them, and those individuals fill the gaps themselves? This seminar will address the role of kindness in historical and contemporary political and social movements. We will examine contexts of nonviolence, solidarity, and community building. Questions we will ask include: What role does kindness play in social and political movements? What is the difference between in-group and out-group kindness? Why do some social and political movements espouse kindness to those who do not have their political interests at heart? What are the philosophical, political, and legal roots of nonviolent movements? What would political and legal systems look like if they centered kindness?

GRS PH 662 A1 (Cross PH 462)**Foundation of Mathematics**

Professor Akihiro Kanamori

Tuesday, Thursday 9:30AM-10:45AM

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.

GRS PH 672 (Cross PH 472)

Philosophy of Biology

Professor Russell Powell

Wednesday 6:30PM-9:15PM

Conceptual problems in biology; unity or pluralism of science; hierarchy theory; biological explanation; evolutionary theory, teleology and causality, statistical explanation; the species problem; mind and the brain; and language in animals and humans.

GRS PH 687 (Cross PH 487)

Topics in the Philosophy of Science

Professor Alisa Bokulich

Tuesday, Thursday 3:30PM-4:45PM

This course is a discussion-based introduction to core issues in the philosophy of science, focusing on the topics of data, measurement, theory change, scientific realism, reductionism, models, and natural kinds. What are data and how are they related to models? What does it mean to say a measurement is accurate and how do we

know? 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? How can idealized scientific models that make all sort of false assumptions nonetheless make true predictions? Has our scientific understanding of the world forced us to revise our philosophical conception of natural kinds?

GRS PH 816 A1

Hegel

Professor Sally Sedgwick

Wednesday 2:30PM-5:15PM

This course provides an introduction to Hegel's idealism. Our main text will be Hegel's 1821 *Elements of the Philosophy of Right*. In that work, he offers his account of the origins and development of the modern concept or idea of right. He also defends what he takes to be the most adequate conception of the conditions and nature of human freedom. The *Philosophy of Right* thus offers us (i) insight into Hegel's views on practical agency, and (ii) a unique story about how, in his view, ideas or concepts come to be. We will devote special attention to the question of how his general approach to these matters differs in fundamental ways from that of Kant.

GRS PH 854 A1**Seminar in Political Philosophy: Anarchism**

Professor Aaron Garrett

Tuesday, Thursday 2:00PM-3:15PM

In this seminar we will systematically investigate and critically appraise anarchism, understood as a family of theories about the nature and morality of political association. Topics to be discussed will include criticisms of the state, the problematic nature of political authority, the varieties of anarchism, and anarchist understandings of history. We will also discuss criticisms of anarchism associated and problems such as coordination, the need for taxation, and the goods associated with redistributive taxation and the state. A special focus of the seminar will be the work of David Graeber. Participants are suggested to familiarize themselves with his writing prior to the first meeting of the seminar, particularly *Fragments of an Anarchist Anthropology* and *Debt: The First 5000 Years*.

GRS PH 990 A1**Dissertation Workshop**

Professor Paul Katsafanas

Tuesday 3:30PM-6:15PM

Dissertation Workshop. Required for all Philosophy Ph.D. students in their fourth through sixth years

GRS PH 994 A1**Placement Proseminar I**

Professor Michaela McSweeney

Wednesday 2:30PM-5:15PM

A continuation of GRS PH 993. 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.