

PHIL 333: Buddhist philosophy

This class will introduce students to Buddhist philosophy in India by adopting both historical and conceptual approaches. It will emphasize the diversity within the Buddhist tradition to showcase the disagreements existing between individual authors. Some of the questions we will address include: what is suffering and why is it central to Buddhist philosophy? What is nirvana, the goal of Buddhist philosophy? What view of existence (samsara) does Buddhism propound? How do we know, and how do we know that we know, according to Buddhist philosophers? How can we describe reality? How are we supposed to act in the world? The class will map out different areas of Buddhist philosophy: ontology, metaphysics, epistemology, ethics, and soteriology. We will read primary texts from the Pāli canon, Nāgārjuna, Vasubandhu, Candrakīrti, Kamalaśīla, and Śāntideva. The goal will be for students to get an overall and philosophical perspective on the Buddhist tradition in India. No prior knowledge is expected; only charitable and critical thinking is. Hence the class, like any other philosophy class, will emphasize training in critical thinking, close reading of texts, and writing skills.

Philosophy 341: Naturalized Epistemology

Naturalistic approaches to philosophical questions take science to be an essential resource. In this very broad sense, naturalism is pervasive in the history of philosophy. It conflicts, however, with any conception of philosophy as foundational to and autonomous from science. As this divide pertains to the theory of knowledge, on the one side is traditional epistemology, in search of a priori knowable truths (a) about the nature of knowledge itself, (b) about how one ought to conduct a knowledge inquiry and, relatedly, about normative standards to be met in a successful search for truth, and (c) about the conceptual and logical foundations of science. On the other side is naturalized epistemology, which questions to various degrees all of this. In its most dramatic form, naturalized epistemology simply says that whatever knowledge is, it is a matter for science to discover and characterize. There is no distinct philosophical task in this endeavor, though there may be a facilitating role for philosophers.

Naturalized epistemology, as a spectrum of possible liaisons with science in the investigation of knowledge, has been around for millennia. It only became a movement, a self-conscious stance against traditional epistemology, in the work of W.V. Quine. Its foundation was set in Quine's arguments against foundations—against the ideas of a philosophically established logico-linguistic foundation for scientific inquiry and of an experiential base from which scientific theory could be derived by rules articulated in the logico-linguistic foundation. We will read seminal works from the “debate” between Carnap and Quine on the idea of analytic truth as linguistic foundation, some of Quine's reflections on the nature of epistemology without analytic truth, and one or two papers responding critically to Quine's program.

At roughly the same time that Quine articulates his notion of naturalized epistemology, Edmund Gettier publishes a paper showing that epistemically justified true belief is not sufficient for knowledge. This has approximately nothing to do with naturalized epistemology. And yet in the wake of Gettier, new and creative approaches to a “definition” of knowledge emerge, some of them firmly naturalistic, others borrowing freely from both traditional and naturalistic ideas. (And we will talk about why “definition” is in scare quotes.)

Once the course is up and running, there will be a sort of ostinato throbbing in the background: What is philosophy to do with cherished traditional normative notions such as justification, well-founded belief, indeed evidence, once it appeals to science for help? Can they be explained without loss in the putatively purely descriptive idiom of science? If not, ought we to replace them with close-enough surrogates? Or do we find that they

simply do not fit into a scientific worldview and eliminate them? And as the bass gets louder, it brings a foreboding sense that philosophy itself is under threat.

Text: To be furnished via course webpage.

Requirements TBD, but will include at least two papers (5-6pp and 7-8pp).

Phil 343: Continental Philosophy

This course is devoted to a systematic exploration of 20th century European philosophy. This class will follow four major intellectual traditions and their critics: (1) phenomenology; (2) psychoanalysis; (3) Marxism; and (4) structuralism. We will focus on questions like: What is the purpose of philosophy? Can philosophy genuinely yield knowledge, i.e., be scientific? What is the meaning of Being? How do we experience ourselves, and each other? How are these experiences mediated by historical structures such as race? How does capitalism affect our self-relation, and how ought we to understand capitalism as an economic system? What is the structure of the unconscious, and how can we “read” this structure? And what is a structure, anyway? We will explore these questions with thinkers such as Husserl, Heidegger, Sartre, Beauvoir, Fanon, Marx, Lukacs, Althusser, Irigaray, Deleuze, Foucault, Derrida, and others. No textbook is required for this course; all readings will be made available online.

PHIL 350: Philosophy of Science

First-half, Online MAX

Professor Mary Domski

In the physical sciences, there have been two rather well-known occurrences of scientific theory change. In astronomy, an earth-centered model of the universe was replaced by a sun-centered model, and in physics, Newton's absolute account of motion was replaced by Einstein's relativistic account of motion. In this class, we will critically examine what lessons can be drawn about the aims and practice of science from these occurrences of theory change by discussing arguments from various historians and philosophers of science. We'll pay special attention to their accounts of the extent to which occurrences of theory change require us to rethink the notions of truth and rationality that are commonly associated with the practice of science.

PHIL 352.001 Theory of Knowledge

Full term, Online MAX

Enrollment cap: 35 students

This course explores Epistemology, the branch of philosophy concerned with the study and theory of knowledge. Is knowledge simply a justified true belief, or is there more to it than that? When is it reasonable to claim that we know something rather than that we simply believe it to be true? Can we know things that we do not experience directly? When all is said and done, can I ever be certain that I'm not simply a brain in a vat? Or that what I see is really what I see and not a clever illusion?

In this course we will explore a wide variety of topics in epistemology and hopefully come to a better understanding of what we know, what we don't know, and what it means to make knowledge claims at all.

Required Text:

Epistemology: An Anthology, 2nd edition. Ernest Sosa & Jaegwon Kim (eds.). Wiley-Blackwell (2000).

Philosophy/Math 356: Symbolic Logic

One great thing about the human mind is its ability to draw inferences. Better still is to do this well. In this course, you will learn two formal languages developed to clarify the notion of logical entailment, which will help you understand the nature of valid inference. In addition, beginning this semester we will discuss basic set theory (and perhaps a little logic metatheory) as a lead-in to more advanced investigation, including Philosophy of Mathematics. The course is good preparation for further work in logic or mathematics, but you can also take the tools you will acquire into any academic or professional discipline that requires clarity of thought. No prerequisites. Grades based on quizzes, homework, and exams.

Text: Gregory, Formal Logic, Broadview 2017.

PHL 358: Ethical Theory

This philosophy course aims to provide you with a firm philosophical foundation in some of the influential classics in Western moral philosophy. We will read some of the classic historical texts in-depth, with a focus both on engaged interpretation and critical analysis. We will explore topics in theoretical ethics such as the nature of right and wrong; happiness and well-being; and justice and injustice. This course also aims to increase your facility with dense philosophical texts and hone your critical and creative thinking skills, particularly with regard to ethical issues.

Phil 363: Environmental Ethics.

This course explores some of the main topics in environmental ethics, including the Anthropocene, climate change, animals, restoration, rewilding, and resilience. We will explore various human relations with non-human nature and evaluate the underlying values of this relationship. Through cultural, historical, and philosophical lenses, we will explore how categories such as natural/unnatural and wild/domestic shape and sometimes distort an understanding of the world. Most importantly, we consider the shift from despair to hope, especially through the actions of climate activists, policy creators, international negotiators, poets and artists, philosophers, farmers, and journalists.

Phil 365: Philosophy of Religion

Historically, the primary concern of “philosophy of religion” (a term that arose as a quasi-rebranding of what was formerly called “natural theology”) has been what we can know about God through reason alone, without appeal to faith or revelation. The central focus of natural theology has, of course, been on the nature and existence of God. Secondly, philosophy of religion has considered issues adjacent to this central focus, such as the nature of discourse about God (what sort of meaning it has), God’s relation to the world (creation, revelation, miracles, divine providence, the ultimate destination of things), and humanity’s relation to God (religious experience, faith, prayer and devotional practices, moral obligations, the afterlife). We will examine select highlights from the Western tradition of theorizing about such issues, from the anti-theistic challenge in the so-called “Enlightenment” period of the 18th century (where traditional natural theology for the first time came under radical attack) to the most recent, up-to-date defenses of theism. We will open with perhaps the most influential critique of theism in history, David Hume’s *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion*. Hume developed a rhetorically persuasive line of attack against the natural theology of his time, which drew upon the empiricism that was then becoming popular in intellectual circles. This critique would come to have a massive impact on Western culture that persists to this day. By the mid-twentieth century, the latter-day Humean empiricists and positivists who had come to dominate the mainstream of Western philosophy largely considered theism to be a dead issue. However, the last several decades have seen a dramatic revival of the tradition of natural theology. This revival has recently received an excellent expression in Edward Feser’s attempt to revitalize the tradition of “classical theism,” and provide new sophisticated reconstructions of classical theistic arguments. “Classical theism” is the philosophical understanding of God that prevailed in ancient Greek philosophy and classical Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. It emphasizes rational arguments that lead to a conception of God as absolutely transcendent of all beings, absolutely necessary in existence, absolutely simple in essence, eternal, unchanging, and the ultimate ground of all being, truth, and goodness. It can be argued that such a conception of God is radically distinct from the empiricist conception of God that was the target of Hume and the positivistic anti-theist tradition following him. Feser reconstructs, develops, and refines arguments for the existence of God from Aristotle, Plotinus, Augustine, Aquinas, and Leibniz. We will examine each of these in detail, and discuss whether they have the power to overcome the force of Hume’s critique of theism. A major part of that critique was the challenge popularly known as *the problem of evil*. According to this challenge, the supposedly indisputable fact that evil exists in the world shows that either God is malevolent, hence morally culpable, for causing or allowing evil that he could have prevented, or else he is impotent because he lacks the power to prevent evil as he supposedly wishes to do. Either horn of this dilemma negates the concept of God. We will explore the many complex dimensions of this problem through another superb contemporary study in the classical theist tradition, Brian Davies’ *The Reality of God and the Problem of Evil*. Davies comprehensively surveys, in order to reject, the most well-known and influential theistic answers to the problem of evil. Instead, he argues that such defenses fail to appreciate the radical “otherness” of God. God is not a moral agent subject to human moral standards, but rather the transcendent unchanging source of all being and goodness. Evil is explained as a privation of the good, not a positive reality to be “prevented.” The question is not “why doesn’t God prevent evil” but rather “why didn’t God create a world with more goodness?” The answer to this question is ultimately inscrutable, but we (it is argued) lack the

standing to conclude or demand that God should have done so. Finally, we will conclude with the introduction of a contrasting, but equally vibrant, contemporary tradition of philosophizing about religion, the phenomenological approach represented by Jean-Luc Marion.

Phenomenology seeks to describe first-person experience without prejudicing that description by ideological (including allegedly scientific) assumptions. It has been argued that this approach is capable of illuminating humankind's religious experience in a way that has often been suppressed by the atheistic ideological commitments of post-"Enlightenment" modern culture.

From this phenomenological perspective, Marion advances an unabashed defense of his own Catholic outlook on the relationship of faith and reason. Required Texts (Available in UNM Bookstore):

1. David Hume, *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion*, Second Edition (Hackett);
2. Edward Feser, *Five Proofs of the Existence of God* (Ignatius);
3. Brian Davies, *The Reality of God and the Problem of Evil* (Continuum);
4. Jean-Luc Marion, *Believing in Order to See* (Fordham). Assignments: Grades will be based upon attendance and participation, periodic review quizzes, two short analytical-critical essays, and final essay exam.

PHIL 371: Classical Social and Political Philosophy
Second-Half, Online MAX via UNM Canvas
Carolyn Thomas

This 8-week, Second-Half 100% online course begins on October 12, the Monday after Fall Break.

Social and political philosophy isn't about the wranglings of politicians and government. It's about the purpose and meaning of human existence. It's about how we humans live together. What values and priorities do we want for our communities? What is good leadership? What should be the obligation of the community to the individual, and the individual to the community? What are the roles of family and government, contemplation and activism, justice and divinity in political community? What is the full meaning of human dignity and happiness?

These are fundamental questions in classical social and political philosophy--the philosophy of ancient, medieval, and early modern thinkers—and, particularly, thinkers such as Socrates/Plato, Aristotle, Cicero, and Machiavelli. This course takes as a basic premise that although these thinkers are older and pre-modern, they have much to teach us about the ills and crises and puzzles that beset contemporary individual and community life.

Course requirements include thoughtful reading of assigned texts, reading quizzes, 1-3 page response papers, and a take-home final exam/paper.

Coursework is due at the end of each week, at midnight on Sunday nights. You must have reliable Internet access, but no other special equipment is required.

The majority, if not all, of our course texts will be provided as PDFs at no cost on Canvas. (If a book purchase is required, the cost will be less than \$25.)

Prerequisite: PHIL 1115 or PHIL 2220 or PHIL 2225—**or** permission of the instructor. Students in any academic major or area of study are welcome.

PHIL 381: Philosophy of Law
Tues/Thurs 2:00-3:15pm
Carolyn Thomas

The question “what is law?” concerns everyone. We live under rule of law. Law orders and regulates our human conduct. Law shapes and commands our public lives, our private lives, our political lives, our social lives. Law shapes who we are allowed to be, and who we become.

Many of us take this for granted. But how does it all work? What really is the source of law, justice, liberty, and human rights? What is law’s purpose in human society? What obligates us to obey law?—must you obey ‘unjust’ law or law contrary to your beliefs? What is punishment?—is it vengeance, healing, truly deterring? And how are we to understand error and injustice in law?

Guiding our study will be the fundamental question “what is law?” but we will also consider how philosophers think about specific problems in law, including: 1) the sources, authority, and duties of law; 2) the source of rights, such as your right to personal liberty, to individual expression, to privacy; 3) civil disobedience; 4) race and law; and 5) the justice of punishment.

Course requirements include: mandatory class attendance and participation, thoughtful reading of assigned texts, occasional quizzes, short response papers, one or two in-class exams, and a take-home final paper.

All course texts will be provided online--no text purchase required. (Optional hard copy text purchase will be available if online readings aren't your preference.)

Prerequisite: one course in Philosophy—or permission of the instructor. Students in any academic major or area of study are welcome.