

### **PHL 336: Chinese Philosophy**

This course surveys Chinese philosophy, with emphasis on the early (pre-Qin) period. We will examine early Chinese philosophical schools, including Confucianism, Daoism, Mohism, Legalism. Themes will include early Chinese understandings of human nature, virtue and goodness, sagehood, attitudes toward death and dying, political philosophy, and theories of knowledge. We will focus especially on ancient Chinese concepts of spontaneity and civility and how they relate to contemporary life.

## **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: Theory of Knowledge, Online MAX**

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).

## **PHIL 352: Theory of Knowledge**

What can we know—and how can we know that we know it? This course explores the interplay between theories of knowledge and the persistent threat of skepticism. We begin with selections from Greek philosophy, including pre-Socratic reflections on the limits of human understanding and Hellenistic approaches to knowledge. The second part of the course turns to modern epistemology, which introduces new skeptical challenges and corresponding attempts to address them. In the final weeks, we examine the contemporary project of analyzing the concept of knowledge itself—from the classical “justified true belief” model to its revisions in analytic philosophy. Readings will include texts by Heraclitus, Aristotle, Epicurus, Descartes, Hume, Kant, Putnam, and Cavell.

## PHIL 354 Metaphysics

Metaphysics is the branch of philosophy that studies the nature of being or reality in the most general sense. It has traditionally been regarded as central to the discipline of philosophy, or even as philosophy itself. The subject got its name from a collection of texts written by Aristotle in the 4th century B.C. These texts, collected under the title "*Metaphysics*" (originally meaning "the things after the *Physics*," referring to their editorial placement after that earlier work) established a "science of being *qua* being." The Aristotelian approach to the science of being arguably reached its height of clarity, precision, and systematicity in medieval scholasticism. This was a style of rigorous analytical philosophy that arose in the 12th century universities with philosopher-theologians such as St. Thomas Aquinas, who synthesized Aristotle with Christianity. In the first part of the course, we will look at the overall structure of this classical metaphysical discourse through a contemporary introduction to it by W. Norris Clarke. In the second part of the course, we will look at the recasting of the question of being *qua* being in the mid-20th century existentialist thought of Martin Heidegger. We will see how Heidegger challenges the very foundations of Western metaphysics, seeking to transcend its classical mode of thinking in favor of a (supposedly) more profound inquiry into being, thus ushering in a new "post-modern" era.

### **PHIL 356: Symbolic Logic (4 credit hour)**

An introduction to the formal study of reasoning. The course develops two symbolic systems—those of sentential and predicate logic—to clarify what makes an inference valid. These systems allow us to represent patterns of reasoning with precision and to distinguish sound argument from fallacy. Though highly formal and abstract, the methods have broad application: they provide tools not only for philosophy, but for any inquiry that values rigor and clarity of thought. Students should expect a level of difficulty comparable to that of an introductory mathematics course.

## **PHL 358: Ethical Theory**

This course has two main objectives. First, this course aims to familiarize you with some of the influential classics in Western moral philosophy. We will prioritize reading historical, primary sources. (If you are interested in non-Western ethical theories, please see my Chinese Philosophy and Buddhist Philosophy courses!) Second, this course aims to develop your philosophical thinking, speaking, and writing skills by requiring you to reflect on and evaluate philosophical texts and refine your philosophical reasoning. Questions include, what is good? What is right? What is a life well-lived? What is freedom?

## **PHIL 372.001: Modern Social and Political Philosophy**

There is a ubiquitous feeling across the political spectrum today that our political institutions are failing. Modern political philosophy asks questions like: What distinguishes a 'good' political institution from a 'bad' one? What is the relationship between politics and morality? Why are social relations so often violent? Why are crises endemic to our political and economic system? How has the power changed over time? What is the meaning of human history? This class will explore these questions by close readings of figures such as Kant, Fichte, Hegel, Marx, Freud, Schmitt, Benjamin, Beauvoir, Fanon, Foucault, Dworkin, the Combahee River Collective, Feinberg, Deleuze and Agamben. In doing so, our aim is to better understand the crises that we face today.

### **Phil 390: Latin American Thought**

This course is an introduction to philosophical thought in Latin American Thought from the Independence to the 21<sup>st</sup> century. We will examine some of the most significant texts produced by key representative thinkers. In this course special attention will be given to philosophical problems in social and political thinking, philosophical anthropology, value theory, identity, and the philosophy of liberation.