

PHILOSOPHY

Fall 2008 (09/1) GRADUATE COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

PHI 543 EY: INDUCTION, PROBABILITY & SCIENTIFIC METHOD WEDNESDAYS

LEWIS

1:00 PM — 3:30 PM

The notion of probability enters into science in at least two ways. First, scientific arguments are inductive; the evidence is usually (though by no means universally) regarded as conferring a certain probability on the hypothesis under test. Second, the hypothesis under test may itself be probabilistic; e.g. "Smoking increases the *chance* of developing lung cancer". But what does it mean to attach a probability to a scientific hypothesis, or to developing lung cancer? The notion of probability is notoriously difficult to analyze, and we will canvas the advantages and drawbacks of various interpretations. What's more, the analysis of probability is closely connected with issues in the methodology of science. Typically (but not always), working scientists regard probabilities as long-run frequencies, and use classical (Neyman-Pearson) methods for reasoning about hypotheses, whereas philosophers of science regard probability as a measure of subjective degree of belief, and prefer Bayesian methods. We will examine the arguments in favor of each methodology, and look at the difference this choice makes in the actual practice of scientific research.

PHI 560 RX: HISTORY OF LOGIC TUESDAYS

HILPINEN

2:00 PM — 4:30 PM

A survey of the developments in logic from antiquity until the early 20th century. Aristotle's logic. Theory of meaning and truth, theory of syllogistic reasoning. Megarian-Stoic logic. Meaning and truth, paradoxes, propositional logic. Scholastic logic. Theory of supposition, theory of consequences, modal arguments and epistemic logic, theory of obligations. Port-Royal logic. Leibniz and the idea of the "alphabet of human thought". Bolzano. Theory of derivability. The development of quantification theory. Frege and Peirce. The logic of modalities and conditionals. On logical diagrams. Euler's diagrams, Venn's diagrams, and Peirce's existential graphs. Logic and scientific method. Forms of reasoning.

PHI 573 CX: EARLY MODERN PHILOSOPHY MONDAYS

CHUDNOFF

10:10AM — 12:40 PM

The aim of this course is to pursue some themes in epistemology and the philosophy of mind through the rationalist tradition. We will focus on the work of Descartes, Leibniz, Frege, and Husserl. Our themes will include but not be limited to: the structure of knowledge, innate ideas, analytic truth, rational intuition, conscious experience, and the nature of justified belief.

PHI 581 JX: PRAGMATISM MONDAYS

HAACK

5:00 PM — 7:30 PM

The only school in philosophy founded in the United States, pragmatism had its beginnings in the early 1870s, in discussions between Charles Sanders Peirce and William James at the Metaphysical Club in Cambridge, Mass. It is a rich philosophical tradition, and still influential – though often misunderstood. We will study writings of the classical pragmatists – Peirce, James, John Dewey, and George Herbert Mead -- on topics from logic, epistemology, and metaphysics, through ethics and aesthetics, to philosophy of education and social and political philosophy. We will also look at how this older tradition has informed the work of some more recent philosophers, and how it has gradually been transmuted into the presently fashionable radical neo-pragmatism proposed in the writings of Richard Rorty.

PHI 591 P: PHILOSOPHY & LITERARY FORM TUESDAYS & THURSDAYS

EVNINE

11:00 AM — 12:15 PM

This course will consider philosophical thought as it has appeared in a number of literary forms in order to examine how philosophical arguments are related to their mode of expression. To what extent, if any, does the form affect or help constitute the argument? Among the literary forms, philosophers, and works we will read are: dialogues (Plato's Meno and Hume's Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion); essays (Montaigne and Bacon); meditations (Descartes's Meditations and Pascal's Pensées); aphorisms (La Rochefoucauld's Maxims and Nietzsche's Beyond Good and Evil, pt. 4); footnotes (Bayle's Historical and Critical Dictionary and Rousseau's Discourse on the Origin of Inequality); geometric exposition (Spinoza, Ethics); fragments (the pre-Socratic philosophers); and possibly others. We will also read some theorists of form such as Fredric Jameson on the ideology of form and Theodor Adorno on the essay.

PHI 644 TX: PHILOSOPHY OF MIND TUESDAYS

MCGINN & ROWLANDS

5:00 PM — 7:30 PM

This course will cover a variety of topics in the philosophy of mind, including consciousness, intentionality, imagination, emotion, and will.

PHI 645 RY: METAPHYSICS
THURSDAYS

THOMASSON
2:00 PM —4:30 PM

Traditional metaphysics focuses largely on two sorts of question: questions about *what exists*, and questions about the *nature* of what exists. Under the first heading come particular *existence* questions such as, do properties, propositions, persons, animals, fictional characters, or artifacts exist? Under the second heading come *modal* questions about the nature or essence of these things, and their identity and persistence conditions. This is a course in metaphysics, asking whether these questions are well-formed, legitimate questions, and if so how we should go about trying to answer them and acquire knowledge in metaphysics. The course will be divided into two parts. The first part will focus on modality: how can we understand claims about possibility and necessity? Should we think of these as describing genuine modal properties in the (actual) world, or as describing other possible worlds, or perhaps not as descriptive discourse at all? In each case, (how) is knowledge of these modal facts possible? The second part will focus on existence: how can we understand claims about the existence and non-existence of entities of different types? What are their truth-conditions? How can we evaluate competing ontological views of what exists and resolve debates among them? Is there a fact of the matter at all, and if so, how can we come to know it?

PHI 651 HY: PHILOSOPHY OF ART
WEDNESDAYS

BUENO
4:00 PM —6:30 PM

This course will focus on two central issues in contemporary philosophy of art: (a) the issue of the nature of pictorial representation, and (b) the ontology of art. With regard to the first issue, we will discuss the structure and content of images (Kulvicki); the ways in which pictures represent (Hopkins), and different ways of understanding pictures (Lopes). With regard to the second issue, we will examine the ontology of music, critically assessing a recent platonist proposal (Dodd). Throughout the seminar, connections will be explored between philosophy of art, philosophy of mind, and metaphysics, as well as between science and art more generally.

PHI 691 EX: METAETHICS
MONDAYS

SLOTE
1:00 PM —3:30 PM

Many of the most prominent current theories of the meaning of moral terms derive from Hume's *Treatise*. We are going to investigate some of those theories--subjectivism, emotivism, projectivism, and ideal observer theory--in the light of Hume's original statement of them. (Hume doesn't clearly decide among them.) The seminar will then proceed to some more recent forms of sentimental meta-ethics that rely heavily on Kripke's ideas about reference-fixing. We will ultimately investigate how much promise there is in sentimentalism as an approach not only to semantics but to understanding how adherence to moral standards can be encouraged and insured. The fundamental disagreements that exist between sentimental and Kantian/rationalist approaches will kept in the picture throughout the seminar.



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