**Fall 2019 Course Descriptions**

**Department of Philosophy**

*All courses are 3- credit unless otherwise stated*

**101:10 Logic, Reasoning & Persuasion** (*Y. Yang*)

Logic is the study of how to reason correctly. This course is designed to introduce you the basic principles of reasoning as well as the practical application of logical analysis to the arguments found in various contexts from debates in our ordinary life to scholarly works.

We will particularly learn and practice below aspects, but not limited to:

1. *Argument analysis*:

Acquiring skills of identifying parts of arguments (premises, conclusions, inferences); identifying mode (induction, deduction, analogy, etc.); reconstructing/diagramming arguments to reveal their logical structure.

2. *Argument evaluation*:

Becoming capable of a systematic evaluation of an argument; assessing the acceptability of premises/reasons; accurately evaluating the relevance of premises/reasons; making judgments about the sufficiency of grounds for a conclusion/contention/thesis.

3. *Terminology/theory*:

Understanding and correctly using with the definitions & conceptual foundations of logical analysis: validity, soundness, rhetoric, syllogisms, fallacies, other formal argument patterns.

4. *Metacognition*:

Developing the skills and habits characteristic of critical and logical thinkers: fairness, ability to shift perspective, awareness of bias/cognitive limitations, commitment to understanding & transparency, valuing logic over rhetoric.

5. *Application*:

Acquiring substantial transference of technical ability to contexts outside the classroom.

**103:02 Introduction to Philosophy** (*G. Salmieri*)

This course introduces students to philosophy by considering three perennial questions: “Is there a God?”, “What are the foundations of knowledge?”, and “What is the relationship between morality and self-interest?” We will consider competing positions on each issue defended by different philosophers, and students will be asked to articulate (and defend) their own views. We will also explore some of the ways in which the issues are interrelated.

**104:01-10 Introduction to Philosophy (4-Credits)** (*K. Bennett*)

A general introduction to some of the main topics and methods of Western philosophy. Topics will likely include the existence of God, free will, the nature of morality, as well as death and the meaning of life. Readings will largely be from contemporary philosophical sources, but some will be historical.

**105:02 & 04 Current Moral & Social Issues** (*J. Piven*)

What are my moral obligations? How do I know what’s right? When do I have the right, or even obligation, to intervene? Other people have moral views that I find offensive, and yet they are sure they are right too. We live in a confusing, maddening world of conflicting ideologies, violence, and injustice. Children crossing borders are separated from their parents, thrown into internment camps, and force-fed tranquilizers. Civilians are secretly arrested, thrown into prisons, and subjected to “enhanced interrogation techniques.” Planes and drones drop bombs on enemy targets and lay waste to foreign civilizations. Companies spew chemical waste into our environment, despoiling the planet, killing animals, and poisoning life. Racism, sexism, and assault flourish in our societies. Holding aloft their sacred or profane moral doctrines, people murder other human beings in the name of goodness, freedom, and truth. Some clash over immigration, others over abortion, still others on what the facts are. Some even cry for the censorship of free speech, in the name of protecting freedom and democracy. It can be dizzying and infuriating. In this class we will survey contemporary moral issues and consider a diversity of perspectives, engaging in serious scholarly investigation as we exchange ideas freely and philosophically.

**107:02 & 04 Introduction to Ethics** (*A. Rabinowitz*)

Exploration of the main normative theories, key metaethical problems, and the application of these ethical considerations to real life issues like abortion, animal rights, and prostitution. Classes will involve a mix of lecture, discussion, and in class debates. Assignments will focus on argumentative writing essays and exams on the major theories discussed.

**107:03 Introduction to Ethics** (*D. Goldman*)

What’s the right thing to do? What makes an action right or wrong? And why think there really is any right or wrong, anyway?

Ethical theories attempt to provide systematic answers to these questions. In this course we will look at some of the most important and interesting philosophical attempts to answer them. The philosophers we read answer these questions in wildly different ways.

You might notice that these three questions are quite different. The first is a question about what moral principles we should in fact follow; the other two are questions about the status or grounding of those moral principles. The first is, in a sense, more immediately and practically relevant: you might walk out the door and, right away, apply one of the moral principles we learn in class. I hope to convince you that the second and third questions are of equal practical importance: it matters whether morality has a good foundation or not, and it matters what that foundation is.

**109:01 & 03 Introduction to Formal Reasoning** (*M. Bialek*)

Resolving differences of opinion isn't always impossible. Figuring out what you should believe isn't just a matter of checking what's true. Deciding what you should do doesn't have to be left up to your whim. Formal tools have been (and continue to be) developed that enable us to talk very precisely about the strength of arguments and of evidence, the rationality of beliefs we have, and the value of choices we make. This course will introduce students to some of those formal tools—specifically: logic, probability, and decision theory—focusing on their application, but also looking at the limits to their application and their potential for expansion and sophistication. Assessment in the course will based on a mixture of exams, homework, and in-class assignments.

**109:02 Introduction to Formal Reasoning** (*D. Dykstra*)

How do you make decisions in a principled way? How do you choose in order to maximize reward in the presence of risk? These problems (and more) can be approached using formal methods. Formal reasoning is used to examine which decisions are the most rational and which choices are expected to bring about the best results. It has applications in a large variety of disciplines including computer science, psychology, and economics. This course will start with a short introduction to symbolic logic. It will then cover the fundamentals of probability theory. The semester will end with an introduction to decision and game theory. No prior knowledge in any of these areas is required. Evaluation will be based on exams, as well as take-home and in-class assignments.

**109:04** **Introduction to Formal Reasoning** (*I. Wilhelm*)

Reasoning is one of the most important activities in which humans engage. We form arguments for the ideas, beliefs, and views which we have. We argue against alternative ideas, beliefs, and views. We make decisions by weighing the pros and cons of various outcomes, and by estimating how likely those outcomes are. But what makes some kinds of reasoning good, and other kinds of reasoning bad? What rules ought to govern reasoning? And how should we make decisions?

In this course, students will learn some theories of reasoning which address these questions. We will begin with propositional logic, which is a theory of a kind of reasoning that takes the form of deductive arguments. Then we will discuss probability and rational choice: these are theories of a kind of reasoning that takes the form of inductive inferences. While covering these topics, we will occasionally discuss the incorrect ways in which humans often reason.

**201:01 Introduction to Logic** (*J. Kalef*)

This section of Philosophy 201 will introduce students to formal logic through a self-­‐paced, collaborative and active learning approach. Strongly recommended for students who wish to train themselves to be highly rigorous thinkers and creative, effective problem solvers.

**201:02 Introduction to Logic** (*E. Kalkus*)

Introduction to deductive logic, including propositional and predicate logic. Emphasis on the basic concepts of logic, the proper interpretation of the logical apparatus of English, and techniques of symbolization and deductive proof**.**

**204:01 Introduction to Classical Greek Philosophy** (*B. Hutchens*)

This course will survey many of the basic schools of thought in the philosophy of ancient Greece. We will start the course off with a thorough examination of important pre-Socratic thinkers, including Anaxagoras, Empedocles, Heraclitus and Parmenides. We will also consider some important aspects of Epicureanism and Stoicism. Of course, much of the semester will be devoted to Plato and Aristotle. We will learn about the method of Socrates, as well as his critique of the Sophists, and the Platonic theories of the soul and of Forms. We will finish the semester with a consideration of key aspects of Aristotle’s theories of nature, the psyche and virtue.

**220:01 Theory of Knowledge** (*D. Sorensen*)

This course will be a comprehensive introduction to epistemology. Epistemology is the branch of philosophy that investigates the nature of knowledge, justification, understanding, and other related concepts. Throughout the course, we will read and discuss a wide range of essays, both historical and contemporary. Here are some of the questions that we will raise and try to answer:

* What are the necessary and sufficient conditions for having knowledge?
* Can we know anything? If knowledge is possible, are there any limitations to what we can know?
* Is moral knowledge possible?
* If so, how are moral beliefs justified? Are they justified on the basis of consensus, authority, scientific evidence, intuition, or by some other means?
* How do we know that the world, as it appears to us, reflects reality rather than some illusion (e.g. the Matrix)?
* Can we know that a world external to our own minds exists, or are we just limited to knowledge of our own mental states?
* What should we believe when well-informed parties reasonably disagree with one another?

**248:01 Introduction to Medical Ethics and Health Policy** (*F. Barchi*)

This course introduces students to the conceptual foundations of medical ethics, emphasizing how particular moral traditions and theories have influenced the development of policies and practices in health care and health research over time and in different setting around the world. The course combines lectures with small-group casework to encourage students to ‘think-through’ the moral and often practical challenges that arise in the practice of medicine, and health research.   
  
Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:   
    1.    Identify the philosophical approaches that provide the foundations for modern clinical, research, and public health ethics.   
    2.    Illustrate how different values and belief systems influence health care and health-related research and how different stakeholders perceive these activities.   
    3.    Trace the development of the ethics regulatory environment that guides modern-day research and the historical cases of research abuse that have shaped it.   
    4.    Identify ethical issues in research protocol design and practical ways in which they may be resolved.   
    5.    Apply ethical principles and regulatory requirements to case examples situated in clinical and research settings.   
    6.    Apply critical reasoning skills to assess stakeholder interests, risks and benefits, and choose and defend a course of action.   
    7.    Recognize ethical dilemmas and address them using enhanced communication skills and a commitment to ethical heath practice and research.

**263:01 Philosophy and the Arts** (*M. Bialek*)

This course surveys four major philosophical questions that we might want to ask about art. There is the definitional question: What is it to be a work of art? Questions of aesthetic value: What determines the value of a work of art? The question of interpretation: What is the meaning of the work of art? And last, but not least, questions of ontology: What is a work of art? What is the critical piece of a sculpture or painting, a symphony or an improvisational jazz performance? Assessment in the course will based on a mixture of exams, papers, and in-class assignments.

**265:01 Introduction to Philosophy of Religion** (*B. Leftow*)

This course will discuss central topics in the philosophy of religion: the nature of God, the existence of God, the relationship between God and morality, and the possibility of an afterlife.

**302:01 Plato and Aristotle** (*B. Hutchens*)

This course will focus on a comparison of the Platonic theory of forms and the Aristotelian theory of substance. Some attention will also be given to their different views of the self. We will read a selection of early, middle and late works by Plato as well as parts of Aristotle’s Physics, De Anima, Nicomachean Ethics, and Politics.

**319:01 Philosophy of Mathematics** (*T. Sider*)

What is mathematics about? Is it about a realm of nonphysical, objectively real entities? Is it just about symbols? Is it about our own minds? Do we know the truth about mathematics, and if so, how? Why is mathematics so useful in science, given that we use proof rather than experiment to learn about mathematics? In this course, we will address these and other philosophical questions about mathematics.

**329:01 Minds, Machines, and Persons** (*T. John***)**

This will be a course at the intersection of ethics and philosophy of mind. We'll start by learning some basics in the philosophy of human minds and cognitive science. From here we'll look at what developments in computation can tell us about the human mind and what cognitive science can tall us about artificial intelligence. We'll look at notions like representation, intentionality, and consciousness in human, nonhuman, and digital minds. Finally, we'll examine the implications of our discussion for the moral standing and political subjectivity of artificially intelligent entities. What rights, if any, are such digital minds owed? In what ways might we be misusing digital minds right now, and how might we do so in the future as technology develops?

**358:01 Philosophy of Law** (*J. Oberdiek*)

This course is a wide-ranging introduction to philosophy of law. Through readings in general jurisprudence, normative legal theory, and the philosophical foundations of specific areas of law, it will equip students with sharpened analytical skills and acquaint them with some of the most fundamental philosophical debates in and about law. Among the specific topics that may be covered are: the relationship between law and morality; the rule of law; the authority of law, the duty to obey the law, and civil disobedience; the nature of rights; as well as philosophical debates in criminal law, tort law, and constitutional law.

Assessment: All students will take two in-class essay mid-terms and complete a short term paper (5-7 pages). Lists of possible paper topics will be distributed, but students are encouraged to identify their own topics.

Readings: Readings will be drawn from a required text, Arguing About Law (Kavanagh and Oberdiek, eds.) and supplemented with assignments posted to the course webpage. Students are expected to read each assignment prior to class.

**360:01 Philosophical Aspects of Cognitive Science** (*C. Flores*)

What are minds and what does it take to have one? This course will be an investigation of this question using tools from philosophy and cognitive science. Potential questions we will explore include: Do animals and computers think? What are the mechanisms underlying thinking and feeling? What can we learn about our own minds from artificial intelligence? Do you need a language to think, or can you also think with pictures and maps?

In addition to this, we will also discuss how cognitive science and philosophy of mind help us understand the social world at large, and injustice in particular. With this in mind, we will address the following questions: What does cognitive science tell us about how well we understand ourselves and others? How irrational are we really? What kinds of biases shape up how we interact with one another? What features of cognition facilitate discrimination and unjust treatment in our world? This class will be discussion-oriented, and we will read texts both in philosophy and in cognitive science. Familiarity with both fields is welcome but not expected.

**370:01 Philosophy of Religion: Analytic Philosophy and Christian Theology** (*B. Leftow*)

Philosophy of religion often discusses claims common to many religions (e.g. that God exists or is omniscient). Over the last 50 years, analytic philosophers of religion have begun discussing claims specific to single religions. This course introduces the work analytic philosophers have done on claims specific to Christianity. After analyzing the concept of sin, we will discuss analytic philosophical work on the Christian doctrines of original sin, Atonement, the Incarnation and the Trinity. There will be readings from Christian theology to give the content of those doctrines: Augustine, Anselm, Aquinas and some Creeds. The rest of the readings will be of recent analytic philosophy.

**371:01 Philosophies of Death & Dying** (J. Piven)

This course is a philosophical exploration of the ways human beings have faced mortality. Socrates reputedly said that philosophy was a preparation for death. Hobbes said that the dread of death inspired religion, while Schopenhauer spoke of the afterlife as a metaphysical consolation. Ancient cultures often saw the end of life as the continuance of the cyclical death and rebirth of nature. Others created elaborate rituals to preserve the existence of the soul into other incarnations. Some have devised means of refusing death, while others have perpetuated themselves symbolically, through identification with their offspring or nature. This course bridges philosophy, psychoanalysis, sociology, and anthropology to discover the ways human beings conceive, contemplate, and deny death.

**407: Intermediate Logic I** (*T. Sider*)

We will study the main meta-mathematical results about first-order predicate logic, including soundness, completeness, and undecidability, as well as some meta-mathematics (e.g., Gödel’s incompleteness theorem).

**442:01 Moral Responsibility** (*D. Husak*)

We will ask what it means, and whether and under what circumstances persons are morally responsible for their conduct---and/or possess or lack free will. If we do not have free will or are not morally responsible, what are the implications for the rest of moral philosophy? Does it make sense, for example, to say that agents without free will act wrongly or permissibly? Are non-moral evaluations jeopardized by free will abolitionists? We will devote special attention to the question of how the phenomenon of addiction bears on moral responsibility or free action.

**459:01 Advanced Seminar in Ethics** (*L. Temkin*)

This seminar is something of a “greatest hits” class. During this seminar, we will explore some of the most fascinating and influential readings in contemporary ethics and political philosophy. Many of these articles are famous groundbreaking works that have dramatically shaped the direction of moral and political philosophy. Others are less well known, but are particularly interesting, original, provocative, and important. Readings will be drawn from works by Peter Singer, Judith Thomson, John Taurek, Robert Nozick, John Rawls, Thomas Scanlon, Bernard Williams, Susan Wolf, Jacob Ross, Derek Parfit, Shelly Kagan, Frances Kamm, Jake Ross, Thomas Scanlon, and, immodestly, Larry Temkin. Like any upper level seminar, this course will emphasize classroom discussions, and students will be expected to do all the readings and prepare carefully for each class. In addition, there will be a substantial writing component.