

Philosophy Department Doctoral Level Courses Fall 2008

PHI 601: Medieval a/o Renaissance Philosophy - Dr. Lee Miller

Thursday 6:15 – 9:15 p.m.

Topic: **Latin/European Neoplatonic Mystical Tradition**

Description: This course will deal with texts from several medieval thinkers in the Latin/European Neoplatonic mystical tradition: Augustine, Anselm, Bonaventura, Aquinas, Eckhart and Nicholas of Cusa. Students will be expected to write a couple of short (5pp) papers and one longer one (10-12 pp). They will also take turns doing reports on the previous class and reports on secondary materials.

(counts as History of Philosophy Seminar requirement)

PHI 610: Philosophy and the Arts - Dr. Mary Rawlinson

Wednesday 2:30 – 5:30 p.m.

Topic: **Aesthetics: Art and Truth**

Plato argued that the experience of sensuous beauty initiates an intellectual approach to concepts of justice and philosophical truth. Recent authors such as Nussbaum and Scarry identify art with this heuristic role, claiming that its invocation of emotion and feeling is useful in thinking through issues of justice and agency.

In this course we will consider the more radical thesis, suggested by Proust and Merleau-Ponty, that the strategies, methods, and concepts of art challenge classical philosophical approaches to issues of justice, agency, and truth. We will consider Proust's argument that 'you must choose between the Truth of Art and your belief in the Immortality of the Soul,' his identification of the domains of love, friendship, society, politics, and fashion with "time wasted," and his claim that the experience of works of art requires a rethinking of philosophical truth as literary style. Thus, our central questions will be (1) the relation of aesthetics and ethics in the history of philosophy and (2) the role of aesthetic beauty in philosophical method.

Texts will include Plato's *Symposium*, *Phaedrus*, and *Republic*, selections from Kant's *Critique of Judgment*, selections from Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit* and *Lectures on Aesthetics*, selections from Derrida's *Truth in Painting*, selections from Merleau-Ponty's *The Visible and The Invisible*, selections from Proust's *A la recherche du temps perdu*, and several recent texts such as Nussbaum's *Poetic Justice* or Scarry's *On Beauty and Being Just*, as well as at least one literary text, probably Henry James' *The Ambassadors*. The syllabus will include at least one field trip to the museums and galleries of New York City. Writing requirements will be established by individual contract to reflect the contribution of the course to your own philosophical itinerary.

(counts as Interface Seminar requirement)

PHI 616: Philosophy and Technology – Dr. Don Ihde

Monday 1:00 – 4:00 p.m.

Topic: **Animals**

Description: The technoscience research seminar is contemporary in nature, reading in the areas of philosophy of science, philosophy of technology and 'science studies.'

Normally, only living authors are read on themes which differ from semester to semester.

Participants are expected to have their own or collaborative research projects on which they will make end of semester reports. Technoscience encourages ‘empirical turn’ or concrete cases which can also be developed as conference papers and possibly journal articles. For example, since 2006, through fall 2008, 41 presentations have been or will be given at professional societies such as the Society for the Social Study of Science and the Society for Phenomenology and the Human Sciences. Of these a first group has just been published in a special issue of Human Studies.

In terms of a theme for fall, we are making a new departure and will focus upon “**Animals**”. The primary text will be Donna Haraway’s newly published *When Species Meet*. Haraway, known best for her figure of the cyborg [a human-technology-animal hybrid], began in the nineties to a focal interest in ‘companion species’ and *When Species Meet* is the first extended work on this new figure. We will make some short asides to Buber, Heidegger and Derrida on animals before looking at a range of important issues regarding humans and animals ranging from biotechnology to ‘uses’ of animals to animal intelligence and animal-human relations.

(counts as Interface Seminar requirement)

PHI 623: Teaching Practicum – Dr. Lee Miller

Monday 2:00 – 5:00 p.m.

Will be taken in the Fall of 3rd Year

PHI 630: Continental Philosophy – Dr. Ed Casey

Wed 6:30 – 9:30 p.m.

Topic: **Derrida**

Description: In the wake of his death in 2004, it is becoming increasingly clear that the work of Jacques Derrida is here to stay. In recognition of its immense value for contemporary philosophy and other fields (art theory, comparative literature, cultural studies, English and other literatures), this course will consider representative works from major periods of Derrida’s oeuvre, focusing intensely on these rather than attempting anything like a complete survey (more than fifty-five books published). Candidate texts to be read include (though not necessarily in this order and often reading parts only):

Speech and Phenomena, Of Grammatology, Writing and Difference, Margins of Philosophy, Dissemination, Truth in Art, Specters of Marx, Given Time: I. Counterfeit Money, Politics of Friendship, On Hospitality, and Rogues. The final reading list, far more focused than this list suggests, will be announced this coming summer.

(counts as Contemporary Philosophy requirement)

PHI 631: Analytical Philosophy – Dr. Patrick Grim

Tuesday 3:00 – 6:00 p.m.

Topic: **Paradox**

Description: This course will use a handful of paradoxes as introductions to live questions in philosophy of language, theories of truth, philosophy of science, epistemology, logic and metaphysics. We will use contemporary forms of the Sorites paradox to explore issues in epistemology and philosophy of language, forms of the Liar and the Strengthened Liar to explore theories of truth and alternative logics, the paradox of the Ravens and the New Riddle of Induction to explore issues in confirmation theory

and philosophy of science, and relatives of Zeno's and Russell's paradoxes to explore issues in contemporary metaphysics.

(counts as Contemporary Philosophy requirement)

PHI 639: Social and Political Philosophy - Dr. Anne O'Byrne

Monday 6:00 – 9:00p.m.

Topic: **Arendt in Dialogue**

Description: At least since Socrates, philosophy has known that thinking is thinking-with. When we think, we enter into dialogue and few thinkers have been more energetically committed to thinking-with than Hannah Arendt. Reading her work gives us occasion to consider major themes in philosophy and politics including publicity, judgment, plurality, identity, action, authority, revolution, totalitarianism, and evil. The central texts in this course will be key works from Arendt's opus, including *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, *The Human Condition*, *On Revolution*, *Eichmann in Jerusalem*, *The Life of the Mind* and *Lectures on Kant's Political Philosophy* as well as several essays from *Men in Dark Times* and *Between Past and Future*, but students will prepare class presentations and term papers on the dialogue between Arendt and one of the many interlocutors with whom she sustained personal and philosophical friendships, in some cases over many years: Martin Heidegger, Günther Stern (aka Günther Anders), Karl Jaspers, Hans Jonas, Gerschom Scholem, Hans Morgenthau, Walter Benjamin, Rainer Schurmann, Mary McCarthy and W.H. Auden, among others.

(counts as Contemporary Philosophy requirement)