

Spring 2011 Course Descriptions

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Philosophy 342: Metaphysics

Tuesdays and Thursdays, 9:30 – 10:45 AM

Professor: Patrick S. Dieveney: pdievene@csulb.edu

This course is an introduction to contemporary metaphysics. The central aim of the course is to provide students with a broad background in many of the central issues in metaphysics. Some of the topics that will be covered include: problems with identity and change over time, different views of necessity and possibility, agent causation and free will. Throughout the course, we will address questions such as: What is the nature of time? How can an object change over time yet remain the same object? What makes a person the same person over time? Is time travel possible? Are our actions free or causally determined? If we lack free will, can we make sense of moral responsibility?

Philosophy 352i: Philosophy of Law

Tuesdays, 7:00 – 9:45 PM

Professor: Amanda Trefethen: atrefeth@csulb.edu

TOPICS: This course will introduce students to the study of philosophical topics related to law and its adjudication. Some of the questions we will address include: What is law? Why, when, and how are we constrained by the law? Is there an essential relationship between law and morality? Can there be a "right answer" in legal disputes? And what does it mean to have "liberty"? Toward this end, we will analyze the more theoretical debates between legal positivism and natural law, as well as engage in a discussion of more specific legal and normative topics such as tort law, the insanity defense, free speech rights, paternalism, and the duty to rescue. Our readings will be drawn primarily from the historical development of the philosophy of law, including pieces by such philosophers as Thomas Aquinas, J.S. Mill, John Austin, H.L.A. Hart, Lon Fuller, John Rawls, and Ronald Dworkin.

REQUIREMENTS: To meet the University requirements for IC courses, students will have a writing assignment no later than the fifth week of the semester, with sustained writing throughout the course. Requirements for the course include: significant class participation, three written case briefs, a short paper (5 pages), a take-home examination, an in-class mid-term examination, and a comprehensive, two-hour, in-class, final examination.

TEXT: Philosophical Problems in the Law, David M. Adams. (4th ed.)

Philosophy 363: Ethical Theory

Tuesdays and Thursdays, 11:00 AM – 12:15 PM

Professor: Jason Raibley: jraibley@csulb.edu

This course introduces students to several of the main approaches to ethical theory through a close reading of classic and contemporary ethical texts.

Ethical theory attempts to provide a general and comprehensive account of how one should live. It investigates the nature of good and bad, moral obligation, virtuous and vicious character, justice, practical rationality, personal well-being, and the correct ordering of the basic institutions of society.

By the end of this course, students who do the assigned work will: improve their ability to read and understand difficult and subtle texts; have a better understanding of Western intellectual history; be able to accurately state and explain the positions of important philosophers (e.g., Aristotle, Hobbes, Bentham, Mill, Kant, Rawls, Gauthier) on perennial ethical questions; understand the main problems facing each of these philosophers' approaches; know how to pin-point the assumption or premise in a philosophical argument with which they disagree; and have more nuanced and reflective views on the problems of moral philosophy for themselves.

Philosophy 382: Theory of Knowledge

Mondays and Wednesdays, 5:30 – 6:45 PM

Professor: Charles Wallis: cwallis@csulb.edu

"Is my girlfriend or boyfriend cheating on me?" "Could Alan Greenspan have failed to know that the self-interest of lending institutions would prove woefully inadequate to protect shareholders' equity?" "Are the people who still believe Obama is a Muslim the same people who still believe that there were weapons of mass destruction in Iraq?" These questions are the ponderings of our everyday lives. However, such practical questions presuppose answers to deeper philosophic questions regarding the nature, sources, and extent of human knowledge; (1) "What is the nature of knowledge?" (2) "What are the sources of knowledge for humans (and others?)" (3) "What are the limitations of knowledge for humans (and others?)" An adequate answer to the first question would tell us what sorts of things can be (or are) knowledge, what properties distinguish knowledge from other states (like opinions), and how (and to what extent) knowledge benefits the knower. An adequate answer to the second question would provide a basis for identifying the sources (and potential sources) for human knowledge, how these sources give us knowledge, if these sources would provide knowledge for other creatures, how we could tell if other sources were potential sources of knowledge for some creatures, etc.. Similarly, an answer to the third question would tell us what, if anything, humans cannot know, what conditions would prevent knowledge, and even what humans might find difficult to learn and know. Thus, the study of epistemology enriches our understanding of ourselves as cognitive creatures and leads, potentially, to improvements in our efficacy as epistemic agents in the real world. This class looks at important answers to the philosophic questions underlying our everyday concerns about knowledge and knowing. We will survey the

works of historical and contemporary thinkers from Philosophy and Psychology. The class also examines the background assumptions and methodology behind the views of these thinkers and of contemporary philosophy in general.

Philosophy 401: Philosophy in Education

Thursdays from 5:00 – 7:45 PM

Professor: Debra Whittaker: teachphilo@yahoo.com

Philosophy 401 is a service-learning, capstone class. You will be required to go into a local classroom once a week to facilitate philosophical discussions with high school or elementary school students. You will create your own lesson plans, and must meet with your partner teacher on a regular basis for planning purposes.

You will read three books, write a term paper, create a project that involves justification for doing philosophy with young people, and present the project to the 401 class. This class is designed for philosophy majors, but is also open to students who wish to experience teaching in the K-12 system and help students become better critical thinkers. You must be available at least one day a week between the hours of 8 a.m. and 2 p.m. in addition to the CSULB class time.

Prerequisites: Completion of the GE Foundation; at least a 3.0 GPA; a minimum of 15 units of philosophy; and consent of the instructor. Please contact Debbie Whittaker at Dwhittaker@lbcc.edu for more information.

Philosophy 416/516: Pragmatism

Tuesdays and Thursdays, 3:30 – 4:45 PM

Professor: Alex Klein: aklein@csulb.edu

Pragmatism is a *philosophical doctrine* associated with a particular group of *historical figures*. As a doctrine, Pragmatism comprises a theory of meaning and a theory of truth. Pragmatists hold that the meaning of a hypothesis amounts to the practical consequences one would expect should the hypothesis turn out to be true. And Pragmatists believe that *true* hypotheses are those that have consequences that are (all things considered) *favorable*.

As a historical matter, we usually think of Pragmatism as America's chief contribution to philosophic thought. Pragmatism's influence is supposed to have waned after about World War II, though, when European Analytic Philosophers—fleeing Hitler—took refuge here. Analytic philosophers are supposed to have dealt devastating blows to the core doctrines mentioned above, and America's homegrown movement is supposed to have gone into intellectual hibernation.

This course seeks to provide students with a more nuanced grasp of Pragmatist philosophy by placing that philosophy in its actual historical context. We will emphasize an important continuity between Pragmatists and early Analytic Philosophers: both groups saw *science* as an antidote to traditional philosophy's (in their view) excessive reliance on speculative, armchair theorizing. But while Analytic Philosophers on the Continent tried to link philosophy with the exact sciences (especially physics and mathematics), Pragmatists more often emphasized the importance of the human sciences—particularly evolutionary biology and empirical psychology.

As such, this course introduces students to classic figures in American Pragmatism. We will set those figures against the background of 19th century revolutions in human sciences through which they lived. Our focus will be on key philosophers in this tradition like C. S. Peirce, William James, Josiah Royce, John Dewey, and G. H. Mead. But we will also read works by 19th century scientists like Darwin, Francis Galton, Ernst Mach, and Herbert Spencer, as well as some critics of Pragmatism like G. E. Moore, Bertrand Russell, and A. O. Lovejoy.

Philosophy 484/584: Philosophy of Language

Tuesdays and Thursdays, 2:00 – 3:15 PM

Professor: Neillie Wieland: nwieland@csulb.edu

This course is an introduction to foundational topics in philosophy of language, including: language and meaning, definite descriptions, names, and demonstratives. An adequate understanding of these topics is helpful -- *nay, necessary!* -- for understanding most 20th c. and contemporary philosophy. We will read canonical figures such as Frege, Russell, Strawson, Donnellan, Searle, Kripke, Evans, Perry, and the incomparable David Kaplan. This course is only offered once every two years -- don't miss out! Be the first of your friends to read *Naming and Necessity*. You won't regret it.

Philosophy 489: Pre-Law Internship

TBA (3-6 units)

Professor: Wayne Wright: wwright2@csulb.edu

Volunteer internship with private organization or governmental agency with law-related focus. 150 hours of volunteer service is required for three academic units (an average of 10 hrs/week for 15 weeks).

PRE-REQUISITES: completion of 15 upper-division units for the Philosophy major. Senior standing strongly recommended.

You must plan to make all final arrangements for the internship with the Pre-Law Advisor before the start of classes. At the most popular sites, it can take several months to process your application. If you are interested in the internship program for Spring 2011, please contact me by e-mail at your earliest opportunity. We have arranged volunteer internships at the Orange County Public Defender's Office and other public service organizations. We will jointly select one that is appropriate for your interests.

You are also welcome to look at the internship opportunities at the CSULB Career Development Center (SS/AD 250). Additional opportunities are listed on the Web sites for both Orange County Government and Los Angeles County Government. If you find an opportunity (either paid or volunteer) which you believe would meet the goals for the Philosophy Pre-law Internship, please contact me ASAP, so we can discuss it. (E-mail is fastest.)

We will jointly identify philosophical issues in the workplace, especially ethical problems, which you will consider during the semester, and which will be the subject of your mid-term and final narrative report on the internship.

GRADING: Credit/No Credit

Philosophy 491/591: Special Topic in the Modern Tradition: Early Modern Theodicy

Mondays and Wednesdays from 3:30 – 4:45 PM

Professor: Marcy Lascano: mlascano@csulb.edu

Leibniz and Conway on Theodicy

The problem of evil can be put rather succinctly: If the world was created by an all good, all powerful and all knowing God, then why does evil exist? Of course, evil presents itself in various ways – natural evil (e.g., famines, floods, and disease), moral evil (e.g., sin, murder), the suffering and pain of sentient creatures, the hiddenness of God, and injustice (i.e., the suffering of the good and the prospering of the evil). This course will examine two works in the early modern period that attempt solutions to the problems of evil in the world. We will read and evaluate G. W. Leibniz's *Theodicy* (1710), which is celebrating its 300 year anniversary, and Anne Conway's *Principles of the Most Ancient and Modern Philosophy* (1692).

Leibniz coined the term “theodicy” (the term is formed from two Greek words: *théos* and *dike*), and the term has come to be known as an attempt to vindicate God's justice. Leibniz's theodicy, as the subtitle tells us, concerns “the goodness of God, the freedom of man, and the origin of evil.”

Conway's *Principles* was written before Leibniz's text, but like Leibniz, Conway wants to show that the world exhibits goodness and justice and is consistent with the existence of an all-good creator. Both Conway and Leibniz have unique metaphysical views concerning the nature of the world and the beings that inhabit it. In this course, we will undertake a close reading of these texts and attempt to understand these philosophers' solutions to the various problems of evil. In doing so, we will discuss metempsychosis, idealism, freedom of the will, the nature of justice, the nature of suffering, original sin, eternal damnation, pre-established harmony and occasionalism, and possible worlds.

Required Texts: G.W. Leibniz's *Theodicy*, Anne Conway's *The Principles of the Most Ancient and Modern Philosophy*. Additional readings on Leibniz and secondary literature on Leibniz and Conway will be supplied by the instructor.

Course requirements: Undergraduates: There will be several response papers required for the course, one take-home examination, and one paper. Graduate Students: Response papers, a midterm paper, and a final paper.

Philosophy 681: Seminar in Philosophy of Science

Wednesdays, 7:00 – 9:45 PM

Professor: Cory D. Wright: cdwright@csulb.edu

This course is an close examination of current debates about scientific realism, with additional focus on metaphysical and alethic realism. Commonly, scientific realists maintain that the success of mature scientific theories is best explained by their (approximate) truth, and that the entities they postulate have some significant status in re. We will take up objections to the contrary, as well as interrelated themes of scientific progress,

approximate truth, the structure of scientific theories, truth-makers and -making, and referential success; readings will include those from Philosophers such as Boyd, Psillos, Putnam, Popper, Kitcher, Ellis, Chakravartty, Ladyman, and Niiniluoto. The course will strive to be inclusive, focusing on a range of subdisciplines rather than any particular one, and students are strongly encouraged to bring to the discussion material from sciences in which they have background.