

PHI 533/634 U: POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY

SLOTE

TUES & THURS · 6:25PM—7:40 PM

This course will deal with issues of social justice from a contemporary perspective. Rawls's work has had more influence than any other recent work on justice, and the course will revolve around his work and around responses to it that have been made by recent feminists, libertarians, care ethicists, and communitarians. Readings will include different works by Rawls and also work by Susan Moller Okin, Michael Sandel, Robert Nozick, and others critical of Rawls's approach.

PHI 540/642 Q: EPISTEMOLOGY

BROGAARD/CHUDNOFF

TUES & THURS · 12:30 PM—1:45 PM

Sensory perception is our most basic way of learning about the world. The traditional view is that it reveals "low level" features of our immediate environment such as shapes, colors, textures, locations, and motions. Recent work in philosophy and psychology challenge this view and suggests that sensory perception can give us "high level" information about natural kinds, artifacts, opportunities, causal relations, animacy, emotions, meanings, values, and moral obligations. In this seminar we will begin by reviewing background literature on perception in psychology, theory of knowledge, and philosophy of mind, and then we will explore the prospects of different sorts of high level perception and what bearing they might have on the structure of knowledge.

PHI 545/649 S: METAPHYSICS

DE

TUES & THURS · 3:30 PM—4:45 PM

Modality concerns what might or must be the case. We directly perceive the non-modal natures of things, e.g., that a rose is a certain shade of red, but we do not seem to perceive their modal natures, e.g., that it could have been a different shade. In virtue of what, then, do things have their modal natures and how do we come to know them? Is modality a primitive and unanalyzable feature of reality, or is it reducible to more fundamental and potentially less mysterious notions? Modality is a central topic in metaphysics and its analysis has inspired analyses of conditionals, dispositionality, causation, and > truth in fiction, to name a few. In this course we will look at competing theories of modality and compare them along a variety of dimensions including (i) ontology, (ii) explanatory power, and (iii) epistemology. A partial list of such theories includes modal realism (David Lewis), combinatorialism (David Armstrong), modal normativism (Amie Thomasson), and rationalism (Christopher Peacocke).

PHI 553/653 5Q: PHILOSOPHY & FILM

ROTHMAN

TUES & THURS · 12:30 PM—3:00 PM

Combining readings in philosophy and film theory and criticism with close analysis of selected films, this course is premised on a conviction in the potential fruitfulness, both for film studies and philosophy, of thinking philosophically about the ontology of the medium, the history and the art of film, the ways we experience movies, and their impact on our lives. A main focus will be on the writings of Stanley Cavell—the most important author in the Anglo/American philosophical tradition to make writing about film a substantial part of his philosophical project—and philosophical responses by to his work.

PHI 582/684 4J: HISTORY OF ANALYTIC

HILPINEN

WED · 5:00 PM—7:30 PM

A study of the origins of the so-called analytic philosophy in the late 19th century and some developments in analytic philosophy from the 1880's until the end of the 20th century. A discussion of selected topics and problems in philosophical logic, the philosophy of language and the theory of signs (semiotics), epistemology, metaphysics, and moral philosophy. Philosophy as conceptual investigation. Conceptions of philosophical analysis. Signs, meaning and reference. Knowledge and belief. On moral concepts and discourse; interests, values and norms. Analytic philosophy before the 19th and 20th century analytic philosophy.

PHI 747 01: PHILOSOPHY OF LANGUAGE

B. BALCERAK JACKSON

WED · 5:00 PM—7:30 PM

In recent years, a growing number of philosophers of language and linguists have argued that various linguistic phenomena outstrip the resources of standard truth-conditional approaches to semantics. The phenomena concern a diverse array of natural language expressions: racial and ethnic slurs, predicates of personal taste, epistemic modals, conditionals, imperatives, questions, and many others. The proposals for capturing the phenomena are also diverse: some argue for an expressivist or prescriptivist semantics, others for one or another version of relativism, some argue that we need to posit additional non-truth-conditional layers of meaning, and some argue that we need to move to a dynamic semantic framework. In this seminar we will take up some of the phenomena at issue (chosen partly on the basis of the interests of seminar participants). We will critically examine the problems they are taken to pose for orthodox truth-conditional semantics, as well as the novel non-truth-conditional approaches they are taken to motivate. The larger goal of the seminar is to explore how attention to particular linguistic phenomena interacts with broad philosophical questions about linguistic meaning and communication. No prior experience with the philosophy of language will be assumed; the necessary background will be provided as we go along.

PHI 748 1G: PHILOSOPHY OF SCIENCE

BUENO

MON · 5:00 PM—7:30 PM

In this course, we will examine non-causal explanations in science, mathematics, and metaphysics. In light of Marc Lange's work, we will first identify and assess a variety of non-causal scientific explanations (by constraints as well as statistical and dimensional explanations). We will then examine different kinds of non-causal explanation in mathematics (by symmetry, salience, and unification), and their connections with non-causal scientific explanations. Finally, in light of Boris Kment's work, we will examine non-causal explanations in metaphysics, focusing on the role of modality in explanatory reasoning, and the connections between such counterfactual reasoning and controlled experiments in science.