

PHI 611 1J: FORMAL LOGIC

HILPINEN

MON • 5:00 PM—7:30 PM

A study of the semantics and proof theory of first-order logic (quantification theory) and modal logic and a discussion of some philosophical applications of logic. The course requires familiarity with the standard formalism of propositional logic and predicate logic. The purpose of the course is to study the basic logical concepts and techniques used in many areas of contemporary philosophy and discuss some philosophical applications of logic. The topics to be covered include: 1. Content and form; terms, propositions, and arguments. 2. The concepts of interpretation, truth, validity, and soundness in logic. 3. The semantics of propositional connectives and quantifiers; the concept of identity. 4. Proof procedures: analytic tableaux, natural deduction methods, and sequent calculi. 5. Interpretations of modal logic and the logic of conditionals. 5. Logic as a tool in explication and puzzle solving; solutions to some modal paradoxes in epistemic logic and deontic logic.

PHI 642 4J: EPISTEMOLOGY

HILPINEN

WED • 5:00 PM—7:30 PM

A study of some main issues in epistemology (theory of knowledge): 1. How does knowledge differ from belief? Knowledge as good belief. On the objectives of belief formation; epistemic interests and the “good-making” properties of beliefs. Internal and external conditions. Backwards-looking and forwards-looking conditions. 2. On the justified true belief analysis of knowledge; epistemic justification. The structure of justification; foundationalism and coherence theory. 3. The Gettier problem. Epistemic defeasibility and the dependence of beliefs on facts. 4. Why is it important to have true beliefs? Are true beliefs always more useful than false beliefs or ignorance? On useful false beliefs; verisimilitude. 5. Direct and inferential knowledge. Acquiring knowledge by reasoning; deduction, abduction and induction. 6. The old problem of induction and Goodman’s grue-bleen puzzle. 6. Perceptual beliefs and knowledge. How do perceptual beliefs support other beliefs? 7. On the problem of skepticism. Local and global skepticism. 8. Solutions to some epistemic-doxastic paradoxes: Moore’s paradox of saying and disbelieving, the paradox of knowability, and the paradox of the unexpected examination.

PHI 655 5S: PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION

SIEGEL

THURS • 3:30 PM—6:00 PM

This course will examine the nature and aims of education. Of particular concern will be the evaluation of five possible epistemic aims of education: knowledge, truth, rationality, understanding, and intellectual virtue. Are all of these legitimate aims? How do they relate to one another? Are any more fundamental than the others? We will also consider a range of moral/political/social aims of education. Since all such proposed aims are culturally embedded, we will consider whether/how diversity, multiculturalism, and their role in civic education in democratic societies contribute to the determination of legitimate educational aims and ideals.

PHI 683 R: PHENOMENOLOGICAL TRADITION

M. BALCERAK JACKSON

TUES & THURS • 2:00 PM—3:15 PM

This course will introduce you to the phenomenological tradition both as a historical movement and as a methodological approach to answer certain philosophical questions that is still useful today. Phenomenology is the study of our human experience as it presents itself from there first person perspective. You will learn about specific philosophical positions and arguments, but you will also acquire some skills that will be useful to you beyond this course. We will look at the ideas of important historical figures such as Brentano, Husserl, Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty and while doing so we will learn how to carefully read and charitably interpret sometimes difficult texts. We will discuss contemporary uses of phenomenology to elucidate the structure the structure of perception or cognition and at the same time we will learn how to create rich phenomenological descriptions of interesting features of our own experience (for instance by carefully looking at new experiences induced by engagement with virtual reality).

PHI 742 01: SEMINAR IN EPISTEMOLOGY

CHUDNOFF/BROGAARD

WED • 12:30 PM—3:00 PM

In this seminar we will focus on questions about how justification might be generated, preserved, transmitted, and transformed via the mechanisms of memory, testimony, and reasoning. We will also consider the extent to which perceptual processes might mimic memory and reasoning. Readings will be drawn from contemporary philosophical and psychological literature with an emphasis on work of an interdisciplinary nature.

PHI 796 01: MENTAL CONTENT

ROWLANDS

TUES • 3:30 PM-6:00 PM

What is it we think? Or believe, desire, remember, hope, fear, expect, and so on? Not in particular cases, of course. Rather, what *sort* of thing do we think, believe, desire, remember, hope, fear and expect? What sort of thing, in other words, is *mental content*? Conceptions of mental content can be decisively shaped by one’s chosen starting point. A traditional view understands content to be identical with a proposition. If Jones believes that snow is white, the content of her belief is taken to be identical with the meaning of – or the proposition expressed by – the sentence falling within the scope of the that-clause: ‘Snow is white’. Such a view, typically, emphasizes the abstract and objective – i.e. non-psychological – nature of propositions. Propositions can be shared – entertained – by different people at different times. If this were not so, it is thought, the possibility of communication would become problematic. This conception of content arises most naturally when we take beliefs or thoughts as our exemplars of mental states. But other starting points lead to very different conceptions of content. If we begin with, for example, (episodic) memory, we will arrive at a very different conception of content – far more individual, idiosyncratic and psychological. It may be that there simply is no such thing as mental content in general – that the sort of thing we take mental content to be varies from one type of state to another. This course, however, explores another possibility: the traditional idea of content as abstract and objective should be rejected – for all mental states. Mental content is not really like this at all. Mental content is ephemeral, continually constructed and reconstructed as needed, and shaped to the specifics of situations. Mental content, in other words, is not *entertained* but *enacted*. Such a view, of course, had better have a workable account of communication – and this is something we shall also address. Material covered will be both philosophical and empirical – from the history of philosophy, to philosophical analysis, to recent groundbreaking work in the neurosciences.