

SFSU Philosophy Graduate Seminars

Fall 2021

PHIL 715 [01]: Seminar in Philosophical Writing

Thursdays from 4:00 PM – 6:45 PM with *Dr. Macy Salzberger*

The primary goal of this course is to improve our abilities to read, interpret, and write philosophical essays. To this end, we will study some of the advanced analytic, interpretive, and expressive skills essential to the writing of philosophy. Throughout the course, we will read assigned texts and practice different skills. Written assignments will include argument reconstructions and presentations of our own arguments.

Phil 770 [01]: Seminar on Aristotle's Ethics

Mondays from 4:00 PM – 6:45 PM in person with *Dr. Jeremy Reid*

The plan for this course is to work through Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* slowly, with reference to other texts in the Aristotelian corpus and recent secondary literature. We will explore how Aristotle's ethical discussion is informed by arguments he makes elsewhere (including the *Eudemian Ethics*, *Rhetoric*, *De Anima*, and *Metaphysics*), and try to map out systematically how these parts of Aristotle's philosophy fits together. We will also read recent scholarly articles and book chapters on Aristotle in order to get a sense of what contemporary Aristotle scholars are working on. Following the topics of the *Nicomachean Ethics* itself, we will discuss happiness; ethical naturalism; character virtue; the central place of pleasure, pain, desire, and the emotions in character virtue; voluntariness and deliberation; theoretical virtue; weakness of will; what pleasure is; friendship; and the value of contemplation in the good life.

Phil 770 [02]: Seminar on Wittgenstein

Tuesdays from 4:00 PM – 6:45 PM in person with *Dr. Mohammad Azadpur*

This course examines the various prominent interpretations of Wittgenstein's philosophy against the backdrop of Wittgenstein's own writings. The first part of the course tackles *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*. We discuss Wittgenstein's ontological atomism, picture theory of language, views on sense and nonsense (especially philosophical nonsense), as well as his account of the ethical purpose of philosophy. We will work on the relevant writings of Bertrand Russell, Elizabeth Anscombe, P.M.S. Hacker, Cora Diamond, James Conant, and Meredith Williams. The second part explores the following themes in the *Philosophical Investigations*: the critique of the *Tractatus*, the paradox of rule-following and its competing solutions, meta-ethics, the method of Investigations, and the private-language argument. We will read from Saul Kripke, Stanley Cavell, Hilary Putnam, John McDowell, and Robert Brandom.

Phil 770 [03]: Seminar on Kant

Wednesdays from 9:30 AM – 12:15 PM with *Dr. David Landy*

This course will take the form of a close reading of selections from Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*. Topics may include among others: mental representation, first principles, the self, the external world, necessary connection, substance, space, time, quantity, quality, and modality.

Phil 805 [01]: Social Ontology

Mondays from 9:30 AM – 12:15 PM with *Dr. Ásta*

This is a seminar in the metaphysics of the social world. The theme this semester will be sex, gender, and sexuality.

Phil 828 [01]: Philosophical Issues in Artificial Intelligence

Thursdays from 4:00PM – 6:45 PM with *Dr. Carlos Montemayor*

We will examine various forms of AI risk in the context of different cognitive capacities associated with intelligent behavior. A specific focus of the course will be the relation between consciousness and attention, and the consequences of this relation for the epistemology and ethics of AI.

Phil 890 [01]: Seminar on Well-Being

Tuesdays from 9:30 AM – 12:15 PM in person with *Dr. Justin Tiwald*

This course addresses some of the fundamental issues raised in thinking about well-being and its significance for ethics. The seminar is organized around two basic questions.

First, what do we mean when we say that something is “good for you” or “contributes to your well-being”? In pondering this, we entertain some of the most popular theories about the nature and content of well-being, including hedonism, the informed desire theory, and more sophisticated variants and alternatives. A major concern is whether well-being consists solely in subjective states such as feeling pleased or happy about something, and whether it is possible to derive intrinsic benefit from objective states of which we have no direct awareness or experience (including events that occur after death).

Second, how does well-being factor into the good life overall? Is it the only good worth promoting or are there other goods as well? We will review theories that treat human well-being as the only good or ultimate good (sometimes called “welfarist” theories), and we will consider influential views that compete with it. We will also explore theories that suggest an intrinsic relationship between well-being and being good in the ethical sense.

Phil 896: Directed Reading in Fundamental Philosophical Texts

This is the MA exam course. We recommend that students take it in the second or third semester of graduate work, after completing at least one graduate seminar. The course is administered by the graduate coordinators, but students will choose a study group supervised by other faculty (tentatively for the Fall: Prof. Tiwald, Prof. Montemayor, or Prof. Ásta). The sections will be effectively combined, so please register for whichever one has fewer students.

N.b., a mandatory course orientation will take place on Friday, August 27th at 3:00 PM. A Zoom link will be emailed to all registered students beforehand. Additionally, there are four required study group meetings that take place over the course of the semester. These group meetings are held on Fridays at 3:00 PM (exact dates TBD). Please email Professor David Landy with any questions at landy@sfsu.edu

Summary of Offerings

Dept.	Num.	Sec.	Title	Author/Topic	Format	Day	Start	End	Instructor
PHIL	715	1	SEM IN PHILOSOPHICAL WRITING		SYNCHRONOUS	R	4:00 PM	6:45 PM	Salzberger
PHIL	770	1	SEMINAR IN A CLASSICAL AUTHOR	ARISTOTLE	IN PERSON	M	4:00 PM	6:45 PM	Reid
PHIL	770	2	SEMINAR IN A CLASSICAL AUTHOR	WITTGENSTEIN	IN PERSON	T	4:00 PM	6:45 PM	Azadpur
PHIL	770	3	SEMINAR IN A CLASSICAL AUTHOR	KANT	SYNCHRONOUS	W	9:30 AM	12:15 PM	Landy
PHIL	805	1	SEMINAR IN METAPHYSICS	SOCIAL ONTOLOGY	SYNCHRONOUS	M	9:30 AM	12:15 PM	Sveinsdottir
PHIL	828	1	PHILOSOPHICAL ISSUES IN A.I.		SYNCHRONOUS	R	4:00 PM	6:45 PM	Montemayor
PHIL	890	1	SEMINAR: CURRENT ISSUE IN PHIL	WELL-BEING	IN PERSON	T	9:30 AM	12:15 PM	Tiwald
PHIL	896	1	DIR READING IN FUND PHIL TEXTS		SYNCHRONOUS	See description		Landy	
PHIL	896	2	DIR READING IN FUND PHIL TEXTS		SYNCHRONOUS	See description		Reid	