Fall 2024 Graduate Seminars

**Phil 715: Philosophical Writing**

**Dr. Jeremy Reid**

Note: Phil 715 is a required course for all MA students in Philosophy, and should be taken as early as possible in your degree. If you are an incoming student, you should enroll in this course. If you are a graduate student and you have not yet taken this course, you should do so in the Fall.

This seminar is designed to teach you the skills in reading and writing that will help you to succeed in your graduate degree in philosophy. The course will also highlight resources you should know about that will help you in your professional development. Course topics will include: the impact of technology on reading and writing; basic grammar and style tips for keeping your writing clear, concise, and accessible; philosophical signposting; structure; how to edit; how to plan papers; how you go from an idea to a term paper to a thesis; how to cite, paraphrase, and quote effectively; how to help your reader understand technical discussions; how to make your style enjoyable to read; how to prepare a research bibliography; how to find conferences; and how to prepare presentations.

**PHIL 770 Marx**

**Drs. David Landy and Mohammad Azadpur**

This course will comprise a close reading of selections from Marx’s Capital Volume 1. The course will be taught by both Prof. Azadpur and Prof. Landy. Students can register for either section of the course.

**Feminist Moral Psychology**

**Dr. Macy Salzberger**

This course will survey important topics and debates in feminist moral psychology. As a branch of moral philosophy, moral psychology is concerned with the psychological concepts that are relevant to moral life. For example, moral psychology is concerned with what kinds of motivation and character deserve praise or criticism and what sorts of psychological capacities are necessary for moral judgment or action. Feminist approaches to moral psychology are concerned both with how oppression affects what kinds of motivations and character we think deserve praise and criticism and how oppression affects the moral psychology of any given agent. Topics we may discuss include the moral significance of emotions, how our desires and autonomy are affected by oppressive circumstances, and who has a responsibility for, or a responsibility to resist, a group’s oppression.

**Phil 850: Philosophy of Science**

**Dr. Arezoo Islami**

Since (at least) Galileo's time, humanity has preferred disciplines that are called "scientific". But what is science? Can we define it? Can we really distinguish science from pseudoscience? Do sciences make progress? Are there revolutions in sciences where we realize we have been mistaken all along? Are scientific theories true? Do they describe the actual world? These questions are at the heart of our seminar in philosophy of science. We read some classic works of the 20th century in both analytic and continental traditions.

**Phil 890: Virtue Ethics**

**Dr. Jeremy Reid**

The purpose of this course is to give students a philosophical understanding of contemporary virtue ethics, a sense of how the dominant Aristotelian strain emerged in the mid-20th century, and who these authors were as people. As some students may already have some grounding in historical virtue-centered authors, particular emphasis will be placed on how the virtue ethical framework has been updated and how it can contribute to debates in contemporary normative ethics. Important questions to focus on include: Why was a virtue-based approach taken to be an alternative to subjectivist accounts of ethics? In what sense was virtue ethics taken to be objective or desire-independent? How are particular strains of virtue ethics grounded in an account of human nature? How do we work out what the relevant virtues are and how should we understand them? How does virtue ethics get applied to particular issues (e.g. abortion, environmental preservation)? What role does eudaimonism play in varieties of virtue ethics and is it essential? How do some contemporary virtue ethical approaches, such as Exemplarism, differ from Aristotelian varieties of virtue ethics? In what sense (if any) is virtue ethics feminist? Do virtue ethical approaches integrate considerations about children, the emotions, community, and moral change better or worse than alternative normative approaches? The philosophers we will cover in this seminar are Elizabeth Anscombe, Mary Midgley, Iris Murdoch, Philippa Foot, Rosalind Hursthouse, Martha Nussbaum, Julia Annas, and Linda Zagzebski.

**PHIL 890: Seminar in Environmental Ethics**

**Dr. Shelley Wilcox**

Most people agree that we ought to be concerned with environmental issues. However, there is

considerable disagreement about why we ought to care about the environment. If it is wrong to

pollute a river, is this because of the effect this pollution has on people? On other animals? On

plants? Or perhaps on the ecosystem of which the river is a part? Mainstream environmental

philosophers attempt to provide plausible answers to these questions by developing theories that

describe the moral value of the non-human world. This course will critically examine these

theories, as well some of the most important alternative approaches to understanding our relationship with the environment, such as ecofeminism, environmental justice, and ecosocialism. Finally, we will use these normative frameworks to explore at least three pressing environmental issues: food justice, climate change, and environmental activism.