Spring 2024 Graduate Course Descriptions

*Please note: this schedule is tentative and all aspects of the course including time, instructor, and modality, are subject to change.*

# PHIL 700: Philosophy of Love

**Macy Salzberger**

Th 12:30-3:15 p.m.

“Philosophers are, perhaps, never quite so ridiculous as when we subject tenderly cherished human values and emotions to the microscope of analytic scrutiny, I now venture to do just that.”

*Marilyn Friedman, “Romantic Love and Personal Autonomy”*

In this seminar, we will read classic and more recent work in Philosophy of Love. Participants will be expected to contribute through active class discussion, written assignments, and in-class presentations.

Questions to be discussed could include:

1) What is love?

2) What makes love valuable?

3) What does it mean to love well? What does it mean to love poorly?

# PHIL 715: Philosophical Writing

**Macy Salzberger**

Monday 12:30-3:15 p.m.

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. We will apply what we learn in these studies to our own philosophical writings, which include argument reconstructions and the development/presentation of our own unique ideas.

# PHIL 770: Kant

**David Landy**

Tuesday 9:30 a.m. to 12:15 p.m.

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, the justification of epistemic first principles, the self, the external world, necessary connection, substance, space, time, quantity, quality, and modality. The nature and role of concepts and non-conceptual representations in our cognitive lives will likely be a central topic.

# Phil 772-01 - Seminar on a Classical School: Stoicism

**Jeremy Reid**

Tuesday 3:30–6:15 p.m.

Stoicism as a philosophical school is currently undergoing a contemporary revival, but the popular resurgence of Stoicism often ignores or downplays the framework that makes it a robust and systematic approach to many philosophical issues, rather than a “life hack” for dealing with hardship, adversity, and negative emotions. The goal of this course is to supplement the more familiar Stoic texts (Epictetus, Marcus Aurelius, Seneca) with more rigorously argued texts from antiquity, especially those by Cicero, and to introduce students to some important recent scholarship on Stoicism by specialists of ancient philosophy. All going to plan, we will come to understand Stoic philosophy as a whole: understanding how their metaphysics, epistemology, natural philosophy, theology, psychology, theory of emotions, and ethics are mutually supportive and mutually illuminating, while simultaneously developing a critical awareness of which Stoic claims depend on deeply controversial positions, and exploring the parts of their view can be adapted in a modern context.

# PHIL 772-02 - Seminar in a Classical School: Avicenna and Persian Philosophy

**Mohammad Azadpur**

Thursday 3:30 – 6:16 p.m.

# The purpose of this seminar is to track the career of philosophy in the Persianate world and to examine its main challenges and transformations. We are also interested in the relevance of Persian philosophy for the traditions of philosophy in the West. According to Western and non-Western scholars alike, the central figure in the Persian tradition is Avicenna. Therefore, we will focus on Avicenna as the figure that synthesizes the prior philosophical movements and generates new schools in his wake. In the process, we survey the central schools of Persian philosophy, before and after Avicenna, and ask — among other philosophical questions — what constitutes a philosophical school and what is the bearing of linguistic and cultural milieus on the development of philosophy.

# PHIL 795 -Mysticism and Early Modern Philosophy (roughly 16th-18th centuries).

**Alice Sowaal**

Tuesdays 12:30 – 3:15 p.m.

Mysticism is integral to all philosophies of the early modern period. So-called “rationalist” philosophers seamlessly incorporated what we today call mysticism into their theories, and empiricist philosophers constructed their theories against the backdrop of mysticism, often thinking of mystics as their foils.

We will discuss scholarly treatments of mysticism in the early modern period, touching briefly on the medieval influences (e.g. Bernard McGinn, Christina Van Dyke, Simone Kotva). In doing so, we will find that mysticism pertains to **practices** of contemplation. Here contemplation is more than just thinking carefully. Rather it involves being in the presence of the creative force of the universe, which is often called “God” or “the Divine.” Practitioners of contemplation find that it brings about **transformative** **effects**, including the spiritual healing and the empowerment needed to face structural oppression.

Our focus will be on the study of both canonical and non-canonical philosophers of the early modern period who articulated the metaphysical bases that underly the possibility of such communion and radical transformations.

In doing so, we will examine their views on related topics, for example, spiritual discipline, purification of the self, the relational self, religious experience, faith, prayer, conversion, union with the Divine, love, generosity, passion, enthusiasm.

We will also discuss how early modern philosophers are often studied today as if they were merely secular thinkers. Toward this end, we will study scholars who write on these issues of secularism (e.g., Charles Taylor) and how secularism often works together with both colonialism and patriarchy (e.g., Silvia Federici, Sylvia Wynter).

All students will write one seven-page mid-semester paper that will exemplify the writing practices that are standard in the discipline of philosophy. For their second paper, they will have the choice of writing another such paper or of composing a teaching module for an undergraduate class.  Teaching modules will be accompanied by 7-page research papers that could be submitted to a journal that focuses on how to teach philosophy (e.g., *Teaching Philosophy*).

# PHIL 820: Seminar in Philosophy of Mind

Carlos Montemayor

Monday 3:30 – 6:15 p.m.

Online

The purpose of this course is to provide you with an advanced understanding of fundamental issues in philosophy of mind. We will study in depth foundational issues and the topic of consciousness, particularly its relation to attention.

# PHIL 890-01: Current Issues in Philosophy

Wednesday 12:30-3:15 p.m.

Arezoo Islami

Each school of psychotherapy represents a vision of the Human and offers a distinct treatment for addressing mental disorders. In PHIL 890, we look at the philosophical foundations of a diverse set of psychotherapies (including psychoanalysis, psychodynamics, cognitive behavioral therapy, medicine-based therapy and so on). We use methods of philosophy of science to frame, to analyze and to critique different approaches to mental health.

# PHIL 890-02- Seminar in Contemporary Animal Ethics

Shelley Wilcox

Thursday 9:30 a.m. – 12:45 p.m.

This seminar will explore the ethics of human-animal relationships. We will begin by gaining a familiarity with contemporary debates on animal ethics and politics. Then, we will discuss recent research on the capacities of various nonhuman animals to communicate, experience pleasure and emotions, and be self-aware, and consider how these findings bear on our understanding of animals’ moral status as well as the conditions they need to flourish. Next, we will turn to the normative dimensions of the human-animal relationship, focusing on the relationship between humans and domesticated animals. First, we will investigate the theoretical foundations of this relationship, considering questions like: What kinds of relationships are morally appropriate and desirable between domestic animals and humans? Does theorizing these relationships require us to rethink fundamental social categories such as friendship, companionship, and citizenship? To what extent and in what ways are humans permitted or required to intervene in the lives of domestic or liminal animals? Second, we will assess how different theoretical approaches to the human-animal relationship address several concrete issues, such as pet ownership, meat and animal product consumption, animal labor, animal welfare in disasters, and reproduction regulation.