# Spring 2025 Graduate Seminar Descriptions

**PHIL 700: Seminar in Selected Problems: Philosophy of Human Nature, Friendship and Hostility**

**Dr. Alice Sowaal**

**Thursday, 12:30 p.m.- 3:15 p.m., In-Person Meetings**

Examination of writings by various existentialist and continental philosophers about and/or from the colonized margins who address the following (and related) questions:

* What allows humans to unite in community and forge bonds of friendship?
* How does hostility get in the way?
* How is hostility related to patriarchy, colonialism, and capitalism?

Also:

* What enables people to love each other in a world that has been damaged by hierarchies that are variously organized by, for example, immigration status, race, ethnicity, class, ability, national origin, age, sexuality, birth order, gender?
* What role do love, the sacred, and the mystical play in bringing about a healed world?

Our reading list will include Frantz Fanon, Maria Lugones, and Gloria Anzaldúa.

**PHIL 715: Seminar in Philosophical Writing**

**Dr. Jeremy Reid**

**Wednesday 3 p.m.- 5:45 p.m., In-Person Meetings**

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 now.

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 760: Philosophy of Art: Art, Technology, and New Media**

**Dr. Caitlin Dolan**

**Wednesday 9:30 a.m. – 12:15 p.m., In-Person Meetings**

This seminar will investigate the relationship between art and technology, focusing on visual art in the age of photography, as well as recent advances in "generative AI." Art is bound up with doing and making things, and the development of new ways of making things brings changes to the artworld. New technologies, especially ones that automate processes which previously had to be done by hand, raise questions about the relationship of artistry to skill, the nature and role of creativity, and the considerations relevant to interpreting artworks. The seminar will examine these and other questions through the well-established literature on the art of photography, and then turn to recent discussions of generative AI, aiming to identify continuities and contrasts between them.

**PHIL 770: Hegel’s Phenomenology of Spirit**

**Dr. David Landy**

**Thursday 9:30 a.m. – 12:15 p.m., In-Person Meetings**  
This course will take the form of a close reading of Hegel’s Phenomenology of Spirit through the lens of two long-awaited recent(ish) developments in Hegel scholarship: the publication of Terry Pinkard’s translation of the Phenomenology and that of Robert Brandom’s A Spirit of Trust: A Reading of Hegel’s Phenomenology. The interpretive theme that we will explore is that the Phenomenology is a treatise on the philosophy of mind the core thesis of which is that mental representation is an essentially social phenomenon.

**PHIL 770: Heidegger’s Being and Time**

**Dr. Mohammad Azadpur**

**Tuesday 3 p.m. – 5:45 p.m., In-Person Meetings**

Heidegger's *Being and Time* stands as one of the most influential philosophical texts of the twentieth century. However, later European philosophers interpreted its significance in varied ways: some view it as a continuation of the phenomenological project initiated by Edmund Husserl, while others argue that it establishes the theoretical foundation for existentialism. These perspectives are not mutually exclusive and are enriched by scholars who see *Being and Time* as transformative forces in the ancient discipline of hermeneutics. Across the pond, analytic philosophers are smitten by this classic German text, discovering within it a profound pragmatic approach to philosophy, particularly regarding the problem of intentionality. Finally, we should not overlook the readings that take *Being and Time* to reflect Heidegger’s involvement with Nazism. In this course, the principal task is to engage in a close reading of the text (mainly the first division), with special attention paid to its oft-overlooked ethical aspects. In this project, some of the prominent analytic and continental interpretations of *Being and Time* are examined and assessed.

**PHIL 890-01 Current Issues in Philosophy –Science and the Self**

**Thursday, 4:00 - 6:45 PM**

**Dr. Arezoo Islami**

Philosophers have long been skeptical of psychotherapeutic schools like psychoanalysis and psychodynamics, often dismissing them as pseudosciences. This criticism has, over time, permeated public perception, presenting a contrast to today’s growing emphasis on mental health and the widely accepted healing benefits of psychotherapy.

In this course, rather than accepting conventional views, we critically examine what it means for a field to be considered scientific, exploring whether philosophy’s skepticism toward psychotherapy might have been misplaced. We aim to engage deeply with both the philosophical foundations and diverse methodologies that shape the practice of psychotherapy, evaluating its approaches through the lens of the philosophy of science.

**PHIL 890-02: Issues in Political and Social Philosophy (Justice and the Family)**

**Dr. Macy Salzberger**

**Monday 4 p.m. – 6:45 p.m., In-Person Meetings**

The focus of this course will be contemporary discussions of justice and the family. The course will involve lecture, discussion, student presentations, and written assignments. Topics for the course may include the implications of the role of the family for theories of distributive justice, the distribution of rights and responsibilities between the family and society for governing family life, and the meaning of justice within families. More granularly, we may discuss questions such as:

1) How should we evaluate different normative conceptions of “the family”?

2) To what extent should family life be permitted to affect the just distribution of goods within society?

3) What rights should families have to self-governance (such as the right to raise one’s children as one sees fit)?

4) How should the recognition of relations of interdependency (such as those found within families) affect our understanding of what justice requires?

5) How should injustice within the family be addressed?

**PHIL 890-03- Current Issues in Philosophy: Consciousness**

**Dr. James Blackmon**

**Monday, 12:30 p.m. – 3:30 p.m. Online Synchronous**

We will examine foundational and contemporary theories of consciousness, including dualism, physicalism, and panpsychism, alongside emerging issues in neuroscience and artificial intelligence. Key topics include the mind-body problem, the hard problem of consciousness, qualia, neuroscientific theories, neural correlates of consciousness, introspection, split-brain phenomena and the question of independently conscious brain regions, the problem of other minds, and the ethical implications of conscious AI.