Department of Philosophy’s Course Descriptions for Fall 2015 Undergraduate Level Courses

(If marked with **, this is the instructor’s revised description of the course content; all others are the general descriptions provided from the UG catalog.)

NOTE: Courses, rooms, times and instructors are subject to change; please see Timetable of Classes on HokieSpa for current information

PHIL 1204: Knowledge and Reality
MW 2:30p-3:20p (Lecture)  Instructor: James Klagge
(Recitations: )
CRN: 85469 – F 10:10a-11:00a
CRN: 85471 – F 1:25p – 2:15p
CRN: 85472 – F 1:25p-2:15p
CRN: 85473 – F 12:20p-1:10p
CRN: 85475 – F 8:00a-8:50a
CRN: 85476 – F 9:05a-9:55a
CRN: 85477 – F 12:20p-1:10p
CRN: 85478 – F 10:10a-11:00a
CRN: 85479 – F 11:15a-12:05p
CRN: 85480 – F 12:20p-1:10p
CRN: 85482 – F 9:05a-9:55a
CRN: 85483 – F 11:15a-12:05a

** We will read and discuss the work of some important historical and contemporary philosophers. We will focus on questions such as: What is the nature of reality and the self? What is the relationship between mind and body? How do I know what is real, and what is misleading appearance, error, or illusion? What is knowledge? Should we fear death? What is the meaning of life?

PHIL 1204: Knowledge and Reality
CRN: 85470 – MWF 10:10a-11:00a  Instructor: Ted Parent
CRN: 85474 – MWF 9:05p-9:55a  Instructor: Kelly Trogdon
CRN: 89218 – MWF 1:25p-2:15p  Instructor: Caitlin Parker
CRN: 89262 – MWF 9:05a-9:55a  Instructor: Caitlin Parker

Examines the questions: What is the nature of reality? How do I know what is real and what is misleading appearance, error, or illusion? What is knowledge? How do I find out who I am and how I relate to the world around me?
PHIL 1304: Morality and Justice
MW 12:20p-1:10p (Lecture)  Instructor: Nathan Rockwood
(Recitations: )
CRN 85485 – F 11:15a- 12:05p
CRN 85486 – F 10:10a-11:00a
CRN 85487 – F 9:05a-9:55a
CRN 85489 – F 2:30p-3:20p
CRN 85491 – F 1:25p-2:15p
CRN 85492 – F 10:10a-11:00a
CRN 85493 – F 10:10a-11:00a
CRN 85494 – F 12:20p-1:10p
CRN 85495 – R 3:30p-4:20p
CRN 85496 – F 8:00a-8:50a
CRN 85497 – F 12:20p-1:10p
CRN 85498 – F 12:20p-1:10p
(large lecture, with recitation sections Thurs. or Fri., as noted on the timetable)
A critical survey of theories concerning human nature, the meaningful life, and the moral evaluation of actions, persons, and institutions. Theories will be applied to such issues as abortion, justice, and moral problems faced by professionals.

PHIL 1304: Morality and Justice
CRN: 85488 – MWF 11:15a-12:05a  Instructor: Gregory Novack
CRN: 85490 – TR 2:00p-3:15p  Instructor: Ted Parent
A critical survey of theories concerning human nature, the meaningful life, and the moral evaluation of actions, persons, and institutions. Theories will be applied to such issues as abortion, justice, and moral problems faced by professionals.

PHIL 1504: Language and Logic
MW 11:15a-12:05p (Lecture)  Instructor: Jean Miller
(Recitations: )
CRN 85501 – F 11:15a – 12:05p
CRN 85502 – F 10:10a – 11:00a
CRN 85503 – F 1:25p-2:05p
CRN 85505 – F 12:20p-1:10p
Basic concepts in logic and critical thinking: argument, validity, deduction and induction, logical form, formal and informal fallacies. Introduction to the logic of truth functions and of categorical statements. Critical analysis of arguments in ordinary language.

PHIL 2115: Ancient through Medieval Philosophy
CRN: 85506 – TR 12:30p-1:45p  Instructor: James Klagge
**Socrates (470–399BCE), Plato (427–347BCE), and Aristotle (384–322BCE) were philosophers in ancient Greece, in the city of Athens. They are founding thinkers in the Western philosophical tradition. We will study their ideas on ethics, knowledge, reality, the soul, and the meaning of life. We will look at how their ideas grew out of their cultural setting, and also how
their ideas provoke us to think about these topics now. Among the questions to be explored: What is the basis for morality? How do we define terms like “virtue” or “knowledge”? How do we know that, say, 2+2=4? What is the soul? Is it immortal? What are the best roles for reason and for emotion in our lives? How can we lead a good life? (Medieval Philosophy is covered in PHIL 2116.)

**PHIL 2126: History of Modern Philosophy**  
**CRN:** 85507 – **MW 4:00p-5:15p**  
**Instructor:** Lydia Patton

We will approach the complexity of the history of nineteenth century philosophy by focusing on a number of representative, but certainly not exhaustive, intellectual movements and themes. The first is the influence of the tradition of natural philosophy, as it had developed in eighteenth century Europe; figures we study here may include John Locke, David Hume, Immanuel Kant, and Émilie du Châtelet. We move on from this to the history of philosophy in America, at Harvard, where William James led one strain of responses to Lockean empiricism. James’s work influenced the distinct approaches of his students Jorge Santayana and Alain Locke. Darwinism in biology influenced a number of intellectual positions, including positivism in philosophy and sociology. Charles Darwin’s interpreters included August Comte (who was also an influence), Herbert Spencer, Justo Sierra, and José Lastarria; through these and other figures, Darwinism and positivism had a lasting influence on politics, on sociology, and on political thought. Positivist, idealist, and transcendentalist philosophy also influenced the reception and evaluation of religious texts, which, in turn, had a surprising influence on the development of some philosophical theories of causality. We will examine the role of critical readings of the Upanishads to the philosophy of Arthur Schopenhauer, to the American novelist Somerset Maugham, and to the Hindu reform movement in India associated with Ram Mohan Roy (the Brahma Samaj). Finally, we will examine an idealist approach to history by Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, and will evaluate critical responses to Hegelian history, and to idealist history in general, by Friedrich Nietzsche and Karl Marx.

**PHIL 2304: Global Ethics**  
**CRN:** 85508 – **TR 11:00a – 12:15p**  
**Instructor:** Darren Jackson

Ethical issues in international context. Application of the principles of moral theory to such issues as the obligations of richer nations toward poorer ones, cultural and other forms of relativism, emigration and immigration, nationalism, war, deterrence, intervention, environmental degradation, preservation of natural diversity, and responsibilities toward future generations.
PHIL 2304: Global Ethics
CRN: 85509 – MWF 12:20p-1:10p Instructor: Hannah Wildman Short
CRN: 85510 – MW 4:00p-5:15p Instructor: Melissa Schwartz
CRN: 85512 – MW 5:30p-6:45p Instructor: Michael Zarella
CRN: 85513 – MW 4:00p-5:15p Instructor: Claudio D’Amato
CRN: 87033 (ONLINE COURSE) Instructor: Grace McGee
CRN: 87034 (ONLINE COURSE) Instructor: Hannah Wildman Short

Ethical issues in international context. Application of the principles of moral theory to such issues as the obligations of richer nations toward poorer ones, cultural and other forms of relativism, emigration and immigration, nationalism, war, deterrence, intervention, environmental degradation, preservation of natural diversity, and responsibilities toward future generations

**This course explores ethical issues in a global context. Students will receive an introduction to ethical theory, examining prominent theories concerning right action and the just society. Ethics is a normative enterprise – it isn’t primarily concerned with describing how things are or considering how people actually behave. Rather it aims to offer a vision of how things ought to be. It asks us to consider how we ought to live our lives, and whether we can articulate norms or principles to guide our decision making. These ethical principles guide both our individual ethical decisions, and those we make collectively. One aim of this course is to provide students with a grounding in ethical theories through which they can develop their own skills in critical thinking, and which will encourage thoughtful choices concerning complex issues. Additionally, students will be introduced to key debates within global ethics concerning inequality and poverty; immigration; war and foreign intervention; and the use and treatment of animals and the environment. A high level of student participation and reading is expected. Classes will consist of lectures and class discussion. (CRN 85509)

PHIL 2894: Philosophy, Politics, and Economics
CRNs: 88466 (PHIL); 88467 (PSCI), and 88468 (ECON) Instructor: Michael Moehler
MW 4:00p-5:15p

**This course encourages students to look beyond the borders of individual academic disciplines by offering an integrated study of philosophy, politics, and economics. The course allows students to develop a unique set of skills that arises from actively engaging in social science combined with philosophical reflection. In addition, the course trains students to make decisions that are not only economically sound, but also socially, ethically, and politically informed. No prerequisites are required for this course, apart from intellectual curiosity and a sound grounding in at least one of the three core disciplines of this course.

PHIL 2974: Independent Study
CRN: 85515

Work with instructor overseeing the course to complete paperwork first.
PHIL 3015/PSCI 3015: Political Theory
CRN: 85516   (PSCI CRN: 85987)   Instructor: Bettina Koch
MW 4:00p-5:15p
The analysis of the fundamental ideas in the history of political theory from Plato to the 17th century

PHIL 3016/PSCI 3016: Political Theory
CRN: 85518   (PSCI CRN: 85990) – MW 2:30p- 3:45p   Instructor: Bettina Koch
The analysis of fundamental ideas in the history of political theory from the late 17th century to the present

PHIL 3024: Philosophical Movements
TS: Philosophy of Technology
CRN: 85520 – TR 3:30p-4:45p   Instructor: Joe Pitt
This course focuses on the assumptions and methods of one or more contemporary or historically important philosophical movements such as Pragmatism, Phenomenology, Logical Positivism, Naturalism, Idealism, or Feminism. 3 Philosophy credits required.

PHIL 3314: Ethical Theory
CRN: 85521 – MW 2:30p-3:45p   Instructor: Gregory Novack
Careful examination of some important historical or contemporary ethical theories. Includes coverage of such topics as the assessment of character and action, the foundations of ethical theories, their justification, their relationship to scientific theories, and their objective or subjective status. 3 Philosophy credits required.

PHIL 3454: Philosophy of Religion
CRN: 85522 – MWF 9:05a-9:55a   Instructor: Hannah Wildman Short
**We shall consider religious belief and its justification with attention to such philosophical issues as the nature and existence of God, the problem of evil, the way in which religious faith can or ought to affect how one lives, the relation between reason and faith, and the respective capacities of reason and faith to provide ethical orientation and help us find meaning.

This is a course in the philosophy of religion. It is a philosophy course, not a religion course. It is characteristic of philosophy to ask what reasons we might have for holding the beliefs we do, and to ask us to consider the possibility that we might be wrong in some of our most fundamental beliefs. In this course we will focus on some fundamental questions about religion, for example: what reasons do we have to believe that there is a God? What reasons do we have to reject belief in God? What does it mean to say that God exists? Is a disposition toward religion a part of our psychological hardwiring? Is God’s existence compatible with the existence of evil? We will also consider whether it is necessary to have evidence for theistic belief, and upon what sorts of evidence such beliefs might be based. We will be looking at the responses to these questions, proposed by philosophers living and dead.

The goal of this course is to get you to think philosophically about religious belief. To do this well will require you to think critically about some of the beliefs you hold most dear. Whether you are a theist or an
atheist, you will be expected to subject your belief about religious matters to philosophical scrutiny. Although it is a difficult process, it can also be an enlightening and ultimately rewarding one. It is not part of my goal as the instructor of this course to defend any specific religious (or non-religious) point of view nor to change your religious beliefs. Rather, my objective is to teach you something of the philosophical issues that surround religious belief and to get you to reflect on them. The readings and discussions accordingly will represent a wide spectrum of affirmative and sceptical philosophical views about religious themes. This should make for some lively discussions. In evaluating your written work, I will be less interested in what your beliefs are than in how you argue for those beliefs. Although there may be mention of other religions, most of our discussions will be based on Judaeo-Christian concepts.

PHIL 3505: Modern Logic and Development  
CRN: 85523 – TR 11:00a-12:15p  
Instructor: Deborah Mayo  
Logic and logical theory and the history of its development. Validity of arguments. Syllogistic logic from Aristotle to modern times. Deductive methods in truth functional and quantificational logic through the theory of identity. Translation from English into symbolic form.

PHIL 4015: Special Topics in Philosophy (History of the Philosophy of Science)  
CRN:88434 – T 7:00p-9:45p  
Instructor: Lydia Patton  
This course will focus on the study of History of Philosophy of Science (HOPOS) and the related study of History and Philosophy of Science (HPS). The study of HOPOS began with a critical, historical analysis of the work of the Logical Empiricists, including Rudolf Carnap, Carl Hempel, Hans Reichenbach, Moritz Schlick, and others. The logical empiricists were central to the development of philosophy of science as an independent, contemporary area of study. The first part of this course will focus on the development of Kuhn's and Feyerabend's approaches to history and philosophy of science and to the study of scientific methodology, including rival accounts from Lakatos, Hempel, and others. We will move on to address a number of topics that will be chosen according to students' specific interests. These may include natural philosophy, the life sciences, the role of history in HOPOS, rival accounts of theory change, taxonomic incommensurability and philosophy of language, or the history and philosophy of experiment.

PHIL 4015: Special Topics in Philosophy
TS: Analytic Existentialism
CRN: 89104 – MWF 11:15a-12:05p  
Instructor: Ted Parent  
Critical examination of special issues of current philosophical interest. 3 Philosophy credits required. (3H,3C)

PHIL 4204: Philosophy of Mind  
CRN: 85525 – MWF 12:20p-1:10p  
Instructor: Kelly Trogdon  
Current issues in the philosophy of mind such as relation of mind and body, status of the mental, knowledge of one's own and other minds, personal identity, consciousness, mentality of animals and machines, topics in the philosophy of psychology. 3 Philosophy credits required.
PHIL 4224: Epistemology
   CRN: 85526 – TR 2:00p-3:15p   Instructor: Nathan Rockwood
   The Theory of knowledge. Is all knowledge based on experience? Does knowledge have a
   foundation? Can knowledge of the present and the nearby give us reasons for beliefs about the
   future, the past, or about events far away? 3 Philosophy credits required.

PHIL 4604: Philosophy of Biology
   CRN: 88413 – TR 11:00a-12:15p   Instructor: Ben Jantzen
   This course is designed primarily for students of biology or philosophy students with a strong
   interest in biology. Topics vary from year to year, but include the changing character of biology
   as a science, the special character of biological explanations and methods, and the place and
   value of reduction (e.g., of Mendelian to molecular genetics) in biology.

PHIL 4614: Philosophy of Science
   CRN: 89237 – MWF 10:10a-11:00a   Instructor: Gregory Novack
   An examination of the structure and methodology of science as well as key concepts such as
   explanation, confirmation, realism, and instrumentalism. One year of science and 3 philosophy
   credits required. (3H,3C)

PHIL 4974: Independent Study
   CRN: 85529
   Work with instructor overseeing the course to complete paperwork.

PHIL 4994H: Undergraduate Research
   CRN: 85530
   Work with instructor overseeing the course to complete paperwork.