

Graduate Course Descriptions

Department of Philosophy
Fall 2025

Recent Continental Philosophy: Phenomenology

Shaun Gallagher
PHIL 4441/6441
M 2:30-5:30
<Theoretical>

Phenomenology is a basic starting point for understanding recent continental philosophy. Historically it operated as the anchor for the development of many 20th and 21st-c philosophies, including existentialism, hermeneutics, post-structuralism, and enactivism. It has also motivated the development of a variety of practical applications (applied phenomenology) including in the areas of psychiatry, performance studies, critical social theory, and qualitative research, especially in several medical fields. This course will cover basic topics in phenomenology, drawing from some of the classic authors (Husserl, Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty, Sartre). We will review phenomenological methods and some of their recent updates. We'll then discuss the basic concepts of intentionality, embodiment, temporality, self, agency, and intersubjectivity. Finally, we will investigate recent research in the phenomenology of performance (in sport and art), applications in qualitative research, and developments in the area of critical phenomenology.

Seminar in Classical Philosophy: Aristotle's *Metaphysics*

Sean Driscoll
PHIL 7201/8201
W 2:30-5:30
<History>

Come study the OG “first philosophy”! Our course will read from one of the most important and challenging texts in the history of philosophy, Aristotle's *Metaphysics*. Aristotle calls this the study of “first philosophy,” “being qua being,” “wisdom,” and “theology.” Its topics include the nature of principles, causation, knowledge, substance, universals, being, divine things, and mathematical objects. Its concepts have been—and continue to be—central to the discipline of philosophy, across western philosophical traditions. And its composition has been a source for philosophical inspiration and innovation for the world's best philosophers.

Seminar in Continental Philosophy: Metaphysics, Science, and Technology in Bergson, Ruyer and Simondon

Mary Beth Mader
PHIL 7203/8203
T 2:30-5:30
<Theoretical>

Numerous branches in the history of Continental philosophy treat philosophical questions raised by the practices of science and the activities of technology with invention, erudition and care. Although one can provide many accounts of these branches, and gather them in varying ways, this seminar focuses on three major French thinkers on these topics from 19th and 20th century philosophy: Bergson, Ruyer, and

Simondon. Henri Bergson's work in metaphysics and the philosophy of science and technology are well-known, and there has long been ample translation of his writings. But two original and intriguing French philosophers who take up similar objects of inquiry after Bergson—Raymond Ruyer and Gilbert Simondon—are only recently beginning to see English translation. Each philosopher develops strikingly novel positions on essential questions of metaphysics, science, and technology that deserve examination. Accordingly, this seminar will be devoted to study of selections from their texts listed below. These address profound questions of metaphysics, philosophy of biology, and philosophy of technology, including in the philosophy of information, mind, evolutionary theory, and much else. Philosophical distinctions between life and artifice, virtual and actual, machine and organism, as well as the relation between the human species and its technological environs are among the topics considered. These thinkers significantly influenced philosophers such as Deleuze and Steigler, and Simondon is of growing interest in contemporary philosophy of technology, media studies, AI, and critical philosophy of technology.

Henri Bergson

Matter and Memory (1896)

Creative Evolution (1907)

Raymond Ruyer

Cybernetics and the Origin of Information (1954)

The Genesis of Living Forms (1958)

Gilbert Simondon

On the Mode of Existence of Technical Objects (1958)

Individuation in Light of Notions of Form and Information, Vol. I (1964)

General Requirements:

Regular contribution to seminar discussion, a short text explication (5-7 pp.), a one-page seminar paper proposal, a draft of the seminar paper, and a seminar paper (16 pp.). An ungraded presentation of the final paper, with short Q&A session.

Seminar in Normative Philosophy: The Rise and Fall of Social Contract Theory

Remy Debes

PHIL 7040/8040

R 2:30-5:30

<History>/<Practical>

This seminar will dig into early modern social contract theory, but in a way that goes beyond the standard Hobbes-Locke-Rousseau trinity. We will examine both its (earlier) roots in natural law theory thinkers like Suarez, Grotius, and Pufendorf; as well as the Scottish critiques and developments that followed, especially in the work of Hume and Smith, which considerably slowed the momentum of social contract theory toward the end of the 18th Century. Motivation: Today, students often learn of social contract theory in a way that is divorced from the historical conditions and problems that first motivated it. This can lead to misunderstandings not only of the arguments of Hobbes, Locke, and Rousseau; but also to ignorance of the Scottish critique of this tradition — a critique that influenced the political revolutions in America and France. Part and parcel of this course, we will trace the early modern development of

second-personal theories of obligation, moral respect, and human dignity in thinkers like Hugo Grotius and Samuel Pufendorf - theories that deeply influenced everyone from Hobbes to Smith to Kant.

Seminar in Metaphysics: Analytic Philosophy of Language

David Miguel Gray


PHIL 4422/6422

TR 1:00-2:25

<Theoretical>


This course will explore several central themes in analytic philosophy, primarily through an investigation of the philosophy of language within the analytic tradition. It will start by investigating central themes in the development of analytic philosophy: refutations of Cambridge Idealism and psychologism, the realignment of the a priori knowledge with analytic statements and necessary truths, and the linguistic turn (that any analysis of cognition must come through an analysis of language) is the central feature of what has come to be known as analytic philosophy). We will then examine the development of central topics in the philosophy of language, including reference, meaning, names, descriptions, semantics, pragmatics (speech acts, conversational implicature, demonstratives), and interpretation. Assignments will include four 5-page papers and some homework assignments.

Cognitive Science Seminar



ENROLL IN THE COGNITIVE SCIENCE SEMINAR
THE PSYCHOLOGY OF DIGITAL MEDIA LITERACY

TAUGHT BY



Dr. Shelbi Kuhlmann
UOFM PSYCHOLOGY & IIS CORE FACULTY

Extra Info!
Students register with either:
-COMP751A
-PSYC851A
-RUSP851A
-PHIL751A/851A

use the QR codes below for relevant media from our speakers


COURSE AT A GLANCE

Learn how people process information, what motivates them to choose news sources and believe information, and the role of emotions in understanding this information.


Discuss how people understand particular scientific issues that are frequently a part of public discourse.

Learn about the digital environments where people get their information, and how they deal with ideas from multiple conflicting sources.

WITH VISITING LECTURES BY



Dr. Jeffrey A. Greene
DISTINGUISHED PROFESSOR AT UNC-CHAPEL HILL



Dr. Jason Braasch
ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR AT GEORGIA STATE UNIVERSITY

AND MANY MORE!!!

Course Meets
Students attend on Wednesday's from 2:20-4:00 PM

Public Lecture Meets
All students & faculty welcome to attend the public lecture on Wednesday's from 4:00-5:20 PM

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Institute for Intelligent Systems