Graduate Course Descriptions

Department of Philosophy
Spring 2025

Philosophy of Mind
Shaun Gallagher
PHIL 4421/6421
R 2:30-5:30
<Theoretical>

Course Description: The course will cover some of the major issues and debates in recent philosophy of mind. We'll begin with some historical background and examine basic concepts and standard cognitivist views. Topics include reductive, non-reductive, and eliminative versions of materialism; functionalism; notions of representation; computational models; mental causation; action, free will, notions of self, and more recent 4E (embodied, ecological, enactive and extended) models of the mind.

Radical Evil
Daniel J. Smith
PHIL 4801/6801
M 6:00-9:00
<History>

Course Description: The German Idealists are rightly famous for their revolutionary new theories of human freedom, which aimed to provide a new foundation for morality. Less well known are their no less profound reflections on evil, freedom's dark underside, which threatens to topple that very foundation. This discussion begins with Kant's notorious essay on radical evil, extends through Fichte and Hegel, and culminates in Schelling's *Freedom Essay*, a text described by Heidegger as the "acme of German Idealism" which "shatters Hegel's *Logic* before it was even published." Though our focus will be on evil, we will be especially interested in how it forced these philosophers to rethink other central philosophical concepts from the notion of freedom to the idea of the good, and ultimately to raise the question of whether systematic philosophy is possible at all without denying the existence of evil. An alternative title for the course would be "Radical Evil: The Self-Destruction of German Idealism".

Hegel (Logic)
Michael Monahan
PHIL 7301/8301
M 2:30-5:30
<History>

Course Description: As Hegel understood the term, "logic" referred to the systematic understanding of thinking as such. It is the bedrock of his overall philosophical *system*, where thought begins to grasp its own inner workings explicitly. Consequently, it entailed far more than what contemporary philosophers mean by the term, and many of the most fundamental aspects of Hegel's systematic thought, from his understanding of the dialectical nature of reason to his metaphysics, are described most directly and thoroughly in his works on Logic. Despite this fact, those are the texts least often studied by contemporary students of Hegel's thought, a fact which can lead to a great deal of misunderstanding and

misinterpretation not only of Hegel, but of many of the subsequent thinkers to make use of Hegel (as a springboard and/or a foil). This course will offer an in-depth study of one of his principal texts on logic, *The Encyclopaedia Logic*, as well as to some of the more recent work on or about Hegel's logic. The aim is thus not only to provide students with a solid grasp of Hegel's logic, but to demonstrate the continued significance and relevance of this aspect of Hegel's thought to ongoing issues and debates in philosophy.

Toni Morrison
Lindsey Stewart
PHIL 7541/8541
T 2:30-5:30
<Practical>

Course Description: In her essay, "The Site of Memory," Toni Morrison introduces the concept of "literary archeology" to define her approach to analyzing and writing about black life. She contrasts "literary archeology" with other normative methods that have been used to convey the lives of the oppressed, such abolitionism (via Frederick Douglass) and feminist memoir (via Simone de Beauvoir). In this course, we will analyze the social and political effects of "literary archeology" and its relationship to other approaches in black feminist writing, such as ethnography by Zora Neale Hurston and "critical fabulation" by Saidiya Hartman. Readings for this course will focus primarily on Toni Morrison and will include her essays as well as several of her novels.

Heidegger's *Being and Time*
James Bahoh
PHIL 7414/8414
T 6:00-9:00
<Theoretical>

Course Description: This seminar will be a careful reading of the central text of Martin Heidegger's early work, *Being and Time* (1927). *Being and Time* proposes a major overhaul of philosophy and a revisionist account of being, human existence, and the worlds we inhabit. The text is a core reference point for subsequent 20th- and 21st-century phenomenology and ontology. Our seminar will emphasize the way Heidegger formulates the project of ontology, the methodology he implements, and the way that methodology operates in terms of the phenomenological, existential analytic of Dasein or the human being. Among other topics, we will discuss Heidegger's critique of representation, his arguments regarding the necessary ground of ontology, and his accounts of tool use, language, truth, anxiety, death, history, space, time, and the existential structure of the human being. Throughout the semester I will highlight some of the main competing interpretations of the text among Heidegger scholars and draw connections to work by a variety of recent philosophers.

Cognitive Science Seminar: The many faces of assessment: From accountability to social justice
John Sabatini
PHIL 7514/8514
W 2:30-5:30
<Theoretical>

Course Description: In educational environments, most researchers, practitioners, and students see the value and appeal of curriculum and instruction. Assessments, on the other hand, are often viewed at best as a necessary evil. The terms 'test/exam/assessment' conjure images of multiple-choice tests, written

exams, or essays. For instructors, tests often represent effort – in scoring and evaluating student performance. The results of high stakes assessments (state reading/math outcome tests, SAT, ACT, TOEFL) are used to determine a student's future opportunities – whether they will be promoted to the next grade; get into a college program of their choice; be able to study abroad; or be granted a professional certification. Tests can determine what is taught (and valued) in a course and are consequently the source of the perennial student question – is this going to be on the test? Since assessments cannot be separated from values, assessment bias can unfairly impact students as a result of race, gender, ability, socioeconomic status, and so forth.

But assessments are and can be more. They come in many shapes and sizes, and are deployed in various settings, with different functions and purposes that serve and shape learning and instruction. The data stemming from them often also serves as the engines that drive educational programs and policy. They need not be anxiety provoking endurance tests. They can be engines of positive change. The nature of assessment development, delivery, and uses/practices are undergoing rapid change in response to technological advances such as genAI (and LLMs). In the midst of these rapid advances, there are new opportunities for designers and researchers to consider how these new technologies might produce assessments that are fairer, more just, and perhaps even interesting and engaging.

In this seminar series, speakers will probe the many faces of assessment – from design and measurement innovations such as scenario-based, project-based, simulation, portfolio, stealth, or dynamic assessments to large-scale national and worldwide testing programs. And, of course, the impact of large language models (LLMs) and other forms of AI on design, reliability, validity, and fairness. The series will place extra emphasis on critical views of current assessment practices and reforms underway to reconceptualized assessments to make them fairer, more equitable, and justice-oriented, in order to better serve diverse audiences.