

**PHILOSOPHY DEPARTMENT GRADUATE SEMINARS
SPRING TERM 2009 (2094)**

2020/32242 **Plato** - Physics and Cosmology in Plato
Combined with Classics 2313

Scade, Paul
Wednesday 2:00 – 4:30

The course will examine Plato's physical, cosmological and, to use an anachronistic term, metaphysical thought. We will ask: how does Plato conceive of the cosmos; what role does mathematics play in Plato's cosmology; to what extent can a single world-view be extracted from his various dialogues; how does Plato's physical thought relate to his ethics and politics; how important is the Theory of Forms; what should we do with the Unwritten Doctrines? The core text will be the *Timaeus* and this will be supplemented with selections from the *Republic*, *Phaedrus*, *Laws* and *Philebus*, as well as some material from other dialogues. We will also examine some passages from Aristotle and the commentators on Aristotle concerned with the Unwritten Doctrines. Students will be asked to give short presentations on assigned topics.

Prerequisite(s): Graduate status.

This course is offered at least once a year.

2105/36319 **Thomas Hobbes**
Combined with HPS 2543

Machamer, Peter
Tuesday 5:00 – 7:30
G28 CL

An intensive look at the range of Hobbes' work. Some influential secondary sources will be examined, e.g. *Leviathan* and the *Air Pump*, *Squaring the Circle*, etc.

Prerequisite(s): none

Check with the department on how often this course is offered.

2170/30512 **Kant**

Rescher, Nicholas
Wednesday 9:30 – 12:00

This course aims at a general understanding of the *Critique of Pure Reason* as a whole. It will examine the work's central metaphysical and epistemological doctrines, with attention to their historical context. Emphasis will be placed on the basic objectives of the *Critique* in relation to its doctrines and its strategies of argument. While some attention will be given to varying interpretations of the *Critique*, the principal focus will be on Kant's text.

Prerequisite(s): Graduate standing.

This course is offered at least once a year.

2210/35913 **Wittgenstein**

Ricketts, Thomas
Tuesday & Thursday 12:30 – 1:45

A close reading of portions of Part I of *PI*. We begin with Wittgenstein's view of language with particular emphasis on his treatment of ostensive explanations of words. We will then think about Wittgenstein's treatment of understanding and rule-following. After that, we will consider the idea of a private language and Wittgenstein's critique of the conception of sensations as private objects. At the end of the semester, we will reflect generally on Wittgenstein's method. This class is offered as a Background Seminar.

Prerequisite(s): Graduate student in philosophy or HPS or the permission of instructor.

This course is offered at least once a year.

2385/36714 Rationality

Schafer, Karl
Wednesday 7:00 – 9:30

In this course, we will consider a set of related issues at the intersection of ethics and epistemology. In general our goal will be to explore the areas of continuity and discontinuity between these two basic areas of normative inquiry, focusing on the contemporary philosophical debate. Issues to be discussed may include: theoretical and practical reasoning, the relationship between reasons and rational requirements, the difference between epistemic and practical rationality, the basing relation and the "right reasons" debate, the application of meta-ethical ideas (such as expressivism and relativism) to the epistemological case, the epistemic significance of disagreement, moral and normative epistemology, the value of knowledge and rationality, debates about the relationship between knowledge, action, and assertion, and the strengths and limitations of different formal methods for modeling both theoretical and practical reasoning. Plus select special guest topics to be announced during class. If all goes as planned, I hope to use this course as an excuse to have some current (and future) friends of mine visit Pittsburgh. So there may be some special guest stars as well.

Prerequisite(s): Graduate status or permission from instructor.

This course is offered infrequently.

2400/35912 Metaphysics-Epistemology (Core)

McDowell, John
Tuesday 2:00 – 4:30

This course will be an introduction to some central concepts and problems in contemporary epistemology and metaphysics. This is a core seminar, and thus listed as a "Background Seminar".

Prerequisite(s): Enrollment is limited to first year students in Ph.D. program in Philosophy, except by permission of instructor.

This course is offered at least once a year.

2500/12496 Advanced Logic (Core)

Belnap, Nuel
Monday 9:30 – 12:00

This course is a rigorous philosophical (conceptual) introduction to logic for graduate students. We will begin with a VERY fast review of the natural deduction system used in "Notes on the art of logic." (It is better to have worked through this ahead of time!) We shall learn the arts of elementary set theory, formal arithmetic, and the theory of definitions, as tools. Then we shall emphasize the rigorous conceptual analysis of the grammar, semantics, and proof-theory of truth-functional logic and (to a lesser extent) quantificational logic, with special attention to consistency and completeness. The last weeks of the term will be devoted to various topics in philosophical logic. Prerequisite(s): An undergraduate logic course covering truth-functional logic and quantifier logic. Understanding some method of "natural deduction" is essential, as is some ability to move between symbols and English. If in doubt, see instructor. Some students will benefit from "Notes on the art of logic," which is at pitt.edu/~belnap. Also Connie in the Philosophy Office is likely to have copies for sale.

Prerequisite(s): Graduate status.

This course is offered at least once a year.

2580/36330 Philosophy of Mathematics

Combined with HPS 2679

Manders, Kenneth
Thursday 2:00 – 4:30

The current tradition in Epistemology of Mathematics rests on a fruitful restriction, to questions of (primarily logical and foundational) justification. After reviewing the highlights of this tradition, we motivate broader epistemological inquiry into the power of mathematical thought, and indicate avenues of approach to such questions. These involve rethinking mathematical reasoning in non-foundational, practice conceptions and taking into account the quality of representational contributions to mathematical reasoning. The course can serve as an introduction to the epistemology of mathematics. Requirements may be satisfied

either by short papers or by a term paper, with prior approval of the instructor. This course will be offered as both a "Research Seminar" and a "Background Seminar".

Prerequisite(s): Graduate status.

This course is offered infrequently.

2599/36328 Special Topics in History of Science

Combined with HPS 2599

Schaffner, Kenneth

Tuesday 2:00 – 4:30

G28 CL

The history of behavioral genetics, and related philosophical issues, will be reviewed from its beginnings in 1960 to the present day. Reading materials will include original papers and secondary sources, as well as a number of oral interviews with leaders of the field. The focus will be on human studies including the IQ controversy, normal personality genetics, personality disorders, and schizophrenia and Alzheimer's Disease. They types of studies to be reviewed include heritability analyses and conceptual problems with heritability, as well as molecular methods and problems with replicability and explanatory breadth and depth. The roles of the environment and intermediate phenotypes (endophenotypes) including brain imaging studies will be discussed.

Prerequisite(s): none

Check with the department on how often this course is offered.

2660/36315 Philosophy of Space and Time

Combined with HPS 2675

Earman/Norton

Wednesday 9:30 – 12:00

G28 CL

This seminar will concentrate on problems of time. Topics will be drawn from both the philosophy literature (e.g. tensed vs. tenseless theories of time, presentism vs. eternalism, McTaggart's argument for the unreality of time) and the philosophy of science literature (e.g. the problem of the direction of time, the relations amongst the so-called 'arrows of time'). Attempts will be made to bring the two literatures into fruitful interaction.

Prerequisite(s): none

Check with the department on how often this course is offered.

2681/36317 Realism

Combined with HPS 2669

Stanford, Kyle

Thursday 9:30 – 12:00

G28 CL

Scientific realists think that on balance we have good reason to believe that our best scientific theories are at least probably and/or approximately true descriptions of how things stand in a mind-independent natural world. In this course we will begin by examining the classic statements and defenses of this view from thinkers like Boyd, Smart, and Putnam, including the so-called "Miracle" argument (viz. that the success of science would be a miracle if the theories used to achieve it were not at least approximately true). We will then consider some classic responses to this realist rationale from thinkers (like Van Fraassen, Laudan, and Fine) who articulate challenges to realism from such sources as the underdetermination of theories by evidence and the pessimistic induction over the history of science and who defend various alternatives to the realist position. We will then examine the most recent round of controversies surrounding scientific realism, considering versions of realism that have been revised in sophisticated ways (by thinkers like Worrall, Kitcher, and Psillos) to address the concerns of the objectors, as well as the most recent challenges that have been raised to these views (by Stanford, naturally). I hope to conclude by exploring challenges (from Stein and Blackburn) to the idea that a nonrealist attitude towards science can even be given a coherent formulation, and by revisiting the Miracle argument to ask what if anything nonrealists are ultimately in a position to say about it.

Prerequisite(s): none

Check with the department on how often this course is offered.
