

# *Spring 2023 Course Descriptions & Distribution Areas*

## **PHIL 401: Plato**

*Socrates' criticism of the life of the rhetorician*

**PhD/MA in Philosophy distribution area:** Ancient

**MA in Social Philosophy distribution area:** N/A

**Dr. Freya Mobus**

**Thursdays 10:00am-12:30pm**

In Plato's *Gorgias*, Socrates heavily criticizes his interlocutors, the famous rhetorician Gorgias and his fans Polus and Callicles, not only for their alleged art but also, and more personally, for who they are and their way of life as a whole. Rhetoricians, Socrates claims, are shameful, corrupt, slavish, unmanly, deceptive, and self-serving individuals. Their lives are "worth nothing." In this class, we will try to understand Socrates' harsh criticism by analyzing his conversations with some of the famous teachers and students of public speaking in Plato's *Gorgias*, *Euthydemus*, *Protagoras*, *Hippias Minor*, and *Republic I*. Studying these, according to Socrates, shady rhetoricians and sophists and their foul speeches will shed light on what it means to do philosophy and live the life of a philosopher.

## **PHIL 407: Medieval Philosophy**

*High Medieval Theories of Free Will*

**PhD/MA in Philosophy distribution area:** Medieval

**MA in Social Philosophy distribution area:** N/A

**Dr. Peter Hartman**

**Tuesdays 4:15pm-6:45pm**

In this course we will look at medieval theories of free will. We will begin by establishing the contemporary landscape on theories of free will (compatibilism and libertarianism). We will then look at medieval theories, starting briefly with the historical backdrop --- from Aristotle to Augustine and Anselm --- and then focus in on debates during the High Middle Ages: Aquinas, Bonaventure, John Duns Scotus, and William Ockham. Particular topics covered will include weakness of will, the conception and 'invention' of the will, the ability to do otherwise, the first sin of angels, the nature of grace and sin, and the role of 'virtues of the will'.

**PHIL 463: Virtue Ethics**

***Virtue Ethics and Moral Development***

**PhD/MA in Philosophy distribution area:** Ethics/social-political, Analytic

**MA in Social Philosophy distribution area:** Moral

**Dr. Richard Kim**

**Tuesdays 10:00am-12:30pm**

This course will examine central questions in contemporary virtue ethics such as: (a) what is virtue? (b) what role does virtue play in a flourishing life? (c) what is the relationship between virtue and culture? (d) how might we cultivate a virtuous character?

We will reflect on these questions by engaging with Alasdair MacIntyre's most important work, *After Virtue*, which offers a historically situated account of the virtue and its connection to modernity and the Enlightenment Project. We will also examine other seminal contributions to contemporary virtue ethics including the works of Elizabeth Anscombe, Philippa Foot, John McDowell, as well as historical figures such as Aristotle, Aquinas, and Mencius. This course will provide students with a solid foundation for attending central questions that continue to animate the virtue ethics literature, and deepen their understanding of the rich history behind virtue ethics, and its resurgence in the 20th Century.

**PHIL 468: Topics in Ethics**

***Legal and Moral Issues of Economic Sanctions***

**PhD/MA in Philosophy distribution area:** Ethics/social-political

**MA in Social Philosophy distribution area:** Moral, Social

**Dr. Joy Gordon**

**Mondays 4:15pm-6:45pm**

This course will provide an introduction to economic sanctions in the contexts of international relations and global governance. We will then look closely at the issues of effectiveness and humanitarian impact. Throughout the course we will draw on materials from a number of sanctions regimes, including South Africa, Cuba, Iraq, and Iran. We will examine a number of ethical topics, looking at the issues of intent, consent, and moral agency in the context of economic sanctions. We will also look at a number of legal issues: whether sanctions come into conflict with international human rights law, such as the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights; the problem of extraterritoriality; and the significant cases coming out of the European Courts on asset freezes, such as the Kadi case.

**PHIL 480: Social & Political Philosophy**

***Recognition Theory as Ethical and Social Critique***

**PhD/MA in Philosophy distribution area:** Continental, Analytic, Ethics/Social-Political

**MA in Social Philosophy distribution area:** Social

**Dr. David Ingram**

**Thursdays 4:15pm-6:45pm**

After familiarizing ourselves with the rudiments of recognition theory in the German Idealist tradition (Fichte, Hegel, and Marx), our seminar will survey some of the main themes of contemporary recognition theory, beginning with Charles Taylor's path-breaking invocation of this concept in his essay, *Multiculturalism and the Politics of Recognition* (1994). We then turn our focus to what is today the most famous living exponent of recognition theory, the German critical theorist: Axel Honneth. We begin with his early interpersonal ethics of recognition, elaborated in *The Struggle for Recognition*, and then turn to his most recent institutional account of the same. Along the way we will examine some similar ethical approaches, such as Habermas's ethics of discourse, Nussbaum's theory of capabilities, and theories of epistemic (in)justice. The course will conclude with an examination of applied recognition theory to issues concerning poverty and migration. The class will also examine criticisms of recognition theory and the famous debate between Nancy Fraser and Axel Honneth over the relative primacy of redistributive justice or recognitive justice in a critical social theory. Course requirements: Two 4-5 page presentation papers (40% of grade), one final paper or take-home written exam (40% of grade); and 10 300-word posts (20% of grade). Required Texts: A. Honneth, *Freedom's Right*; C. Taylor, *Multiculturalism and the Politics of Recognition*.

**PHIL 490: Current Philosophical Issues**

***Critical Phenomenologies***

**PhD/MA in Philosophy distribution area:** Continental, Ethics/social-political, Metaphysics/epistemology

**MA in Social Philosophy distribution area:** Moral, Social

**Dr. Johanna Oksala**

**Wednesdays 4:15pm-6:45pm**

Phenomenology is a philosophical tradition and method that investigates how we experience our being in the world. It is not a sub-discipline of philosophy that is exclusively devoted to issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion, but many philosophers who are interested in these issues today find phenomenology to be a fruitful method for investigating them. There has been a critical turn in phenomenology in recent years: phenomenology is increasingly understood as a form politically and ethically engaged critique capable of analyzing and illuminating contemporary socio-political problems. For example, the way someone from a chronically under-represented and/or oppressed group experiences being in the world may differ considerably from the experience of an individual from a

dominant group. In this course, we will ask what critical phenomenology, understood as a form of social critique, entails.

The course is intended for both students who are new to phenomenology, as well as for those already familiar with the work of some of the thinkers studied in it. It aims to offer students with an up-to-date understanding of recent developments in phenomenology, as well as a renewed perspective on some of its key questions and challenges. The course will also provide students with an important method and philosophical approach, which they can apply to their own critical analyses of socio-political problems.

The readings include current works on critical phenomenology by thinkers such as Lisa Guenther and Alia Al-Saji, as well as texts and figures from the phenomenological canon, such as Franz Fanon and Simone de Beauvoir. The course is organized thematically around topics including intersubjectivity, the body, gender, and race.