Fall 2015 - Graduate Seminars

PHIL. 500 - Writing in Philosophy/Hylton, T 4 - 6:30
Preliminary Description

This course aims to help students with their philosophical writing. There will be an emphasis on critiquing one's own work (as well as that of others), and rewriting in the light of criticism.

PHIL. 509 - History of Analytic Philosophy/Hylton, R 1 - 3:30
Preliminary Description

This course will deal with some aspect or aspects of the history of analytic philosophy (roughly from Frege to Quine). A specific topic will be chosen in the summer, in the light of an e-mail survey of graduate student preferences.

PHIL. 526 -   Philosophy of Emotions/Eaton, M 1 - 3:30

This course will survey contemporary philosophy of emotion.   It is likely that we will read the work of Justin D'Arms and Daniel Jacobson, Peter Goldie, Patricia Greenspan, Jonathan Haidt, Ronald de Sousa, Martha Nussbaum, and Jesse Prinz, among others.   We will give special attention to the emotions of envy and disgust, and will read some or all of Carolyn Kormeyer's Savoring Disgust (OUP 2011) and Daniel Kelly's Yuck: The Nature and Moral Significance of Disgust (MIT 2013). We will conclude by considering the special case of emotions pertaining to art and will read, among other things, Jenefer Robinson's monograph, Deeper than Reason: Emotion and its Role in Literature, Music, and Art (OUP 2005).

PHIL 528 - Political Philosophy: Democratic virtues/Laden, F 2 - 4:30

Are there particular virtues that are necessary for or particularly important for citizens of a democracy to manifest?   What are they?   What role do they play in the well-functioning of democratic society?   DO arguments in favor of them require comprehensive moral theories, or can they be articulated and defended as purely political virtues?   And how might a society cultivate them consistent with being free and democratic?   The seminar will try to answer these questions through a variety of readings from contemporary sources in virtue ethics, democratic theory and the philosophy of education.

PHIL. 542 - Philosophy of Special Sciences/Jarrett, T 1 - 3:30

This seminar is devoted to a study of the foundations of quantum mechanics.   You might think of it as "What Every Philosopher Should Know About Quantum Mechanics".   It is intended to be of interest (and accessible) to graduate students and advanced undergraduates in philosophy as well as to those in physics.

As far as technical material is concerned, the course will be largely self-contained.   No extensive special background in the subject will be presupposed, but students who are distressed at the very thought of basic algebra, trigonometry, ordinary (real, 3-dimensional) vector spaces, etc. probably do not belong in this class. Relevant mathematical topics will be developed in class at a modest level of rigor, but we will not, for example, be solving differential equations or doing perturbation theory (as one would, say,   in a standard quantum mechanics course in the physics department).

We will focus instead on questions that arise in the attempt to give an adequate elucidation of the logical and conceptual structure of the theory, questions that appear most dramatically in connection with such topics as Bell's Theorem and the infamous measurement problem.   These questions challenge our most fundamental ideas about the structure of our world and our place in it; and the principal goal of the course is to provide formulations of such questions in a manner that affords the student a genuine understanding of what is at stake in debates over the "interpretation" of quantum mechanics.

Grades for the course will be based on class participation: 35%; a few problem sets: 35%; and a 10 - 15 page term paper 30%.

PHIL. 590 - Research Seminar/Sedgwick, W 2 - 4:30

A work-in-progress seminar for graduate students at the topical, prospectus, or dissertation level. Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory grading only. May be repeated. Prerequisite(s): Completion of 10 of the 14 required courses for the Ph.D. in Philosophy.

PHIL. 591 - Teaching Methods in Philosophy/ M 4-4:50