

DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, RIVERSIDE

Graduate seminars for 2010-11

Fall Quarter

PHIL 275 [Proseminar] – Professor Howard Wettstein

Basic topics in the philosophy of language. We will work through my book, *The Magic Prism*, and related central literature in the philosophy of language.

PHIL 282 – Professor Andrews Reath

The seminar will be on Kant's moral theory. The particular focus will be on the argument of *the Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*, with additional readings from the *Critique of Practical Reason* and *the Doctrine of Virtue*, plus relevant secondary reading. We will try to cover Kant's basic foundational arguments, as well as the outlines of his normative theory. A bibliography of secondary reading will be available in late August. Basic text: *Kant: Practical Philosophy*, tr. and ed Mary J. Gregor (Cambridge University Press, 1996).

PHIL 283 – Professor John Perry

This seminar will be on problems related to freedom and causation. The main text will be Gary Watson's Oxford anthology, *Free Will*. I'll be trying to finish a book called *Wretched Subterfuge*, which will be a defense of compatibilism on the issue of freedom. That is, I will defend the idea that even if my action of doing A is caused by past events – even if the whole world is deterministic – still, at least in some cases, I could have refrained from doing A. So I'll be focusing on arguments against that, in particular the various versions of the consequence argument, and so on such issues as time, ability, laws, causes, and the like. Issues about moral responsibility will come up, but not as centrally.

PHIL 283 – Professor Michael Nelson

Truth Relativism: Are propositions true and false absolutely and *simpliciter*, or only relative to some set of parameters, such that the same proposition is true relative to one set of parameters and false relative to another? And, if the latter, what are the parameters of truth? A related question: Is the notion of how things are – of the constitution of reality – an absolute or a relative notion? Is there a "God's eye" point of view on reality such that that is simply how it is, or are there only different perspectives from which reality is one way relative to one perspective and another way relative to another? Those are the questions we shall ask. The seminar is a research seminar in which I shall be presenting some of my work where I argue that truth and reality are perspectival, but only with respect to a possible world and a time. I will contrast this, in particular, with spatial locations, person, and standards of taste and evaluation, all of which I will argue are not parameters relative to which a proposition is true or false. We will read papers (no books) in: 1) the metaphysics of tense and time; 2) the metaphysics of

contingency and modality; 3) the nature of propositional truth and arguments for relativism and for absolutism; and 4) the nature of I-thoughts.

PHIL 283 – Professor Agnieszka Jaworska

Margins of Agency: What can we learn about foundational issues and concepts in moral theory and moral psychology (autonomy, valuing, reasons for action, moral responsibility, etc.) by studying cases of "agency at the margins:" addiction, Alzheimer's disease, lesions in the prefrontal cortex, psychopathy, autism? Readings from contemporary literature.

Winter Quarter

PHIL 275 [Proseminar] – Professor Michael Nelson

A seminar on the nature of intention, freedom, and autonomy. We will read seminal papers (no books) by Davidson, Bratman, Frankfurt, Watson, Velleman, and Korsgaard, among others. The seminar will focus primarily on the metaphysics of agency, although we shall also touch on some normative issues as well.

PHIL 281 – Professor Pierre Keller

The seminar will be on Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*. I am going to present a comprehensive pragmatist interpretation of the procedures of Critique that constitute Kant's Copernican Revolution in philosophy. I intend to discuss the whole of the *Critique* and how each part contributes to this overall argument. First we shall consider a contextual interpretation of experience and of the role of sensibility in our lives. This involves an interpretation of Kant's forms of sensibility as forms according to which we are able to situate ourselves as percipients in a spatio-temporal context. Then we will consider if and how the conceptual conditions of judgment and agency tied up with the possibility of self-consciousness allow for a context independent way of representing our spatio-temporal context. We will then consider whether such conceptual conditions of judgment both inform and systematically mislead us about the inherently contextual conditions of experience. It will be suggested that there is a structural illusion in the nature of propositional judgment that gives rise to the idea that we are capable of exhaustively articulating things. This will raise the question of whether or not for Kant the procedures that give sense to our perceptions, actions, judgments and inferences also mislead us about the nature of their objects. It will be suggested that there is an unavoidable illusion that things have a completely context independent existence and significance for us. The illusion of a completely context independent object will then be looked at as the possible basis of some of the most pervasive problems of metaphysics and of much of what Kant calls the scholastic (academic) conception of philosophy. Among such necessary illusions that we will address are the ones that space and time are objects, that reality is either mind independent or mind-dependent (realism versus idealism), that the self is a kind of object, that there is a solution to the mind-body problem, that there is a theoretically satisfactory answer to the problem of free will or the

problem of whether God exists or not. We shall endeavor to determine whether Kant's philosophy successfully sidesteps traditional answers to these questions. This will raise the question of whether Kant endeavors to provide a kind of contextual response to each of these questions. It will be suggested that such an answer is also ultimately firmly entrenched in common sense and the kind of differences that make a difference in our lives. Finally we shall consider the claim that Kant's conception of philosophy gives ultimate standing to what he calls the pragmatic standpoint. This pragmatic standpoint sees all philosophical inquiry in terms of the difference that it can make to how we are able to address the fundamental questions that our lives pose for us as human beings. This is what Kant also calls the world or cosmic conception of philosophy. It is this conception of philosophy that arguably comes to the fore in the last major part of the Critique.

PHIL 283 – Professor Coleen Macnamara

Deontic Pluralism: Many moral theorists have tended to focus on the thinnest possible assessments of action —on what is permissible or impermissible, required or forbidden. While such categories are important, exclusive focus on them tends to obscure some of the most important categories we use to navigate the moral life: What is it morally decent to do? Is there a difference between having an obligation and a responsibility to do something, or again, between being entitled to some help and deserving it? In this seminar, we will be building an approach to ethics that endorses the need for a pluralism of deontic categories, some animated primarily from the first-personal perspective, others animated from considerations about how we can hold one another responsible.

PHIL 283 – Professor John Perry

The Self. I'm not too sure exactly what we will do, but issues of self-knowledge will be important. You can look at my papers on the self on my website, <http://www-csli.stanford.edu/~jperry//phil.html> to get some idea of what I'll be concerned about.

PHIL 283 – Professor Eric Schwitzgebel

Moral psychology: The seminar will consider empirical research on moral motivation, on the relationship between moral reflection and moral behavior, and on the bases of moral judgment. We will also consider metaphilosophical issues about the value of philosophers' (and others') moral intuitions as a ground for moral theories.

Spring Quarter

PHIL 275 [Proseminar] – Professor John Fischer

PHIL 280 – Professor Erich Reck

Frege's notion of sense: In current philosophy, Frege's essay "On Sense and Reference" is typically seen as a contribution to analytic philosophy of language (in the tradition of Russell, Dummett, Kripke, Kaplan, Perry, and others). This is how it is presented, as a matter of course, in virtually any class that introduces the philosophy of language to students, but also in countless journal articles and books. In this seminar, we will explore what happens if we put Frege's famous essay, and his remarks on sense more generally, in a different and potentially more appropriate context instead: that constituted by Frege's writings as a whole, by their relationship to late nineteenth-century German philosophy, and by their roots in nineteenth-century mathematics. A central question then becomes: How and why was Frege led from considerations of logic and mathematics to ones concerning language and meaning? Besides thus investigating the origins, the purpose, and the significance of Frege's notion of sense, and of his corresponding arguments, the whole seminar can be seen as an illustration of what might be gained by "doing analytic philosophy historically", i.e., by letting philosophical analysis be informed by historically and contextually based understanding. Readings: The main text for the seminar will be *The Frege Reader*, M. Beaney, ed. (Blackwell, 1997). It will be supplemented by some excerpts from the secondary literature, to be made available as xerox copies.

PHIL 282 – Professor Maudemarie Clark

My seminar will be on Nietzsche's account of the importance of culture and his critique of modern culture. We will read Nietzsche's early works, *The Birth of Tragedy* and *Unfashionable Observations* (aka *Untimely Meditations*), both for their own sake and as a basis for understanding Nietzsche's "critique of modernity" in *Beyond Good and Evil*. Books to have: *The Birth of Tragedy* (Cambridge), *Unfashionable Observations* (Stanford), *Human, All-Too-Human* (Cambridge), *Beyond Good and Evil* (Penquin), and *On the Genealogy of Morality* (Hackett). Also helpful will be: *The Gay Science* (Cambridge), *Daybreak* (Cambridge), and *The Portable Nietzsche* (Viking).

PHIL 283 – Professor Larry Wright

Explanation and Purpose.

PHIL 283 – Professor Mark Wrathall

My seminar will focus on Heidegger's later philosophy. We will survey Heidegger's most important essays in the decades following the publication of *Being and Time* in 1927. Topics will include Heidegger's understanding of the history of being; his interpretation of Nietzsche as the thinker of our current technological age; "dwelling" as a response to the dangers of the technological age; his accounts of art, poetry and language; "Ereignis"; his effort to inaugurate a post-metaphysical style of thinking; and his methods of "reflection" and "releasement."