

GRADUATE SEMINARS 2016-17

WINTER 2017

Phil275: Proseminar – Reath (Moral Theory)

This seminar will survey some central issues in contemporary moral theory. We will begin with questions about the nature of reasons for action: what is a reason for action? What is the connection between reasons and desires or motives? The balance of the seminar will then survey (all too briefly, I am afraid) some of the main currents in contemporary moral theory—rational (deontological) intuitionism, consequentialism, contractualism, contemporary Kantianism and virtue theory.

Phil280: Seminar – Novakovic (Ideology and Critique)

In this seminar we will read classical and contemporary texts in the tradition of Critical Theory that deal with the problem of ideology for social criticism and with the possibility of what it calls “ideology critique”. The questions we will address are: What is ideology? Is it pervasive in social life? Does it present a particular problem for the possibility of social criticism? What would a critique of ideology look like?

Phil282-001: Seminar – Wrathall – Reason and Unreason

We will look at various attempts to understand the interplay between reason and unreason in human existence. I will be interested in tracking changes in the ways in which reason itself is understood, as well as ways in which the distinction between reason and its other is delimited and enforced. We may study works by Heidegger, Schopenhauer, Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, Foucault, or others.

Phil283-001: Seminar – Ferrero (Diachronic Intentional Agency)

In this seminar we will investigate the distinctive human ability to engage in temporally extended intentional activities. We will discuss the structure of the temporal unity of such activities and how it differs from the simpler continuity of other forms of temporally extended agency. We will then investigate the relation between future-directed intendings and the actions or activities that are their alleged objects. We will also consider issues about the rational authority of future-directed intentions and what it takes to secure the agent's autonomy over time. In the second half of the seminar, we will consider questions about the temporal integration of plans over time and how they affect the complexity of our goals; we will then discuss the norms and grounds of diachronic practical rationality (and whether they differ from the norms and grounds of theoretical diachronic rationality). If time permits, we will also consider questions about the relation between the temporal structure of intentional agency and the distinctive axiology, if any, of temporal agents.

Phil 283-002: Graham - Functions