Department of Philosophy

**Upper-Division Course Descriptions**

WINTER 2019

PHIL 313: EARLY MODERN PHILOSOPHY – KNOWLEDGE AND REALITY

TR 2:00–3:50 pm

Prof. William Vanderburgh - [wvanderburgh@csusb.edu](mailto:wvanderburgh@csusb.edu) (909) 537-3998

The early modern period in philosophy, normally said to begin around the time French philosopher René Descartes began publishing in 1637, was an exciting time of great intellectual and social turmoil. Old ways were being overturned and replaced with radical new ideas. As reason came to dominate over tradition and scientific thinking began to develop in opposition to assumption and superstition, even the very methods of doing philosophy came into question. Our course, an introduction to this period’s ways of approaching questions about the nature of reality and how we come to know it, will start with a rough distinction between the so-called “Rationalists” (Descartes, Leibniz, and others) and “Empiricists” (most notably Locke, Berkeley and Hume). Although philosophers in this period usually wrote on a multitude of different subjects, we will be focusing on their various approaches to epistemology and metaphysics, including their answers to questions like these: *What is the nature of reality? How do we come to know things, and what does it mean “to know”? What kinds of things exist? What is the relationship between God and the world, and between God and human knowledge? What are the limits of the knowable? How should skeptical doubts figure in our intellectual life, and how should we use evidence to make decisions about what kinds of claims to believe?* The variety of contrasting answers early modern philosophers gave to these and related questions will provide a foundation for beginning to form our own views on these matters. This course forms an important part of any Philosophy degree and is crucial background if you are considering graduate studies.

PHIL 351: TOPICS IN MORAL & POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY – ANIMAL ETHICS

MW 4:00–5:50 pm

Prof. Brandon Johns - [bjohns@csusb.edu](mailto:bjohns@csusb.edu) - (909) 537-5934

This course will focus on the question of our moral obligations to non-human animals. What is it that gives an individual moral status or rights? Do at least some animals possess the requisite characteristics to be included in the community of rights-holders, and if so, what are the implications of this for our treatment of animals? We will examine these questions in light of different moral theories, including Utilitarianism, Kantianism, and Social Contract Theory. This is a seminar and student discussion will be central. The course is open to all students who have taken an introduction to philosophy course, whether or not they are majoring in philosophy.

PHIL 363: JURISPRUDENCE

MWF 1:20–2:30 pm

Prof. Chris Naticchia - [cnaticch@csusb.edu](mailto:cnaticch@csusb.edu) - (909) 537-5489

What is Law?  How does it differ from raw power?  For instance, did Nazi Germany have a legal system?  Or was it just a system of organized terror?  What is it that makes a statement of the law true?  Must it be traceable to some legal rule enacted by a recognized authority, or must it also satisfy certain moral principles in order to qualify?  How should judges interpret the Constitution?  Does the Constitution, properly interpreted, contain rights not specifically mentioned?  For example, does it include a right to privacy that protects a woman’s right to abortion, or a right to marriage equality that opens marriage to homosexual couples?  We’ll examine questions such as these in Jurisprudence.  In the process, students will develop and hone the kinds of reading, reasoning, and writing skills that will serve them well in law and graduate school.  **This course counts towards the Law and Philosophy minor**.

PHIL 383: PHILOSOPHY OF MATHEMATICS

TR 10:00–11:50 am

Prof. Tony Roy - [troy@csusb.edu](mailto:troy@csusb.edu) - (909) 537-5870

At one level, it is obvious that 2 + 2 = 4.  At the same time, there is something fundamentally mysterious about mathematical claims which seem to be about *numbers* located neither in space nor in time.  The mystery is compounded as we broaden our view to higher mathematics, where claims not only seem to concern non-spatial and non-temporal objects, but *infinite* collections of such objects as well.  We shall examine the philosophical accounts developed to remove these mysteries and clarify the grounds for mathematical truth.  The accounts studied will be those given by both historical and contemporary thinkers, and include logicism, formalism, intuitionism, platonism, fictionalism and structuralism.  Ours is not a course *in* logic or mathematics!  Rather we shall think *about* the grounds of this discipline, and so about the very grounds of what may seem itself fundamental to science and thought more generally.

Primary texts are Shapiro, *Thinking About Mathematics,* and Benacerraf & Putnam eds., *Philosophy of Mathematics: Selected Readings* 2nd ed.  In addition to the standard prerequisites for upper division philosophy, this course has Phil 200 and Math 110 (or consent of instructor) as prerequisites.

PHIL 385: THEORY OF KNOWLEDGE

TR 12:00–1:50 pm

Prof. Matthew Davidson - [mld@csusb.edu](mailto:mld@csusb.edu) - (909) 537-7727

This class will focus on central issues in the theory of knowledge (epistemology).  Some of these are:  What is it to know that a claim is true?  Do we, in fact, have knowledge of the world around us?  What is the connection between experience and our knowledge of the world around us?  Is "knows" somehow context-dependent in its meaning?  Is knowledge somehow better than mere true belief?