

# **COURSE DESCRIPTIONS**

## **FALL 2020**

### **Phil 0002:**

#### **Introduction to Philosophy**

The major types of philosophical thought and the central problems of philosophy are presented through study of some classic texts of the great philosophers. Offered each term. (May be used to satisfy the second half of the college writing requirement by students with credit for ENG 1.)

### **Phil 0015/Ling 0015/Psy 0064:**

#### **Introduction to Linguistics**

**Ariel Goldberg**

How humans encode language in their brains, so that they can produce and understand an unlimited variety of utterances in context. Language and other forms of communication; how children acquire language; biological basis of language; the structure of language—phonology (sound structure), syntax (grammatical structure), and semantics (meaning).

### **Phil 0020:**

#### **Introduction to Civic Studies**

**Peter Levine & Brian Schaffner**

Civic Studies is an interdisciplinary field of study that focuses on critical reflection, ethical thinking, and action for social change. People who think and act together to improve society must address problems of collective action (how to get members to work together) and deliberation (how to reason together about contested values). They must understand how power is organized and how it operates within and between societies. They must grapple with social conflict, violence, and other obstacles to peaceful cooperation. When tensions arise within a group, people face questions of justice and fairness, and they must confront questions about appropriate relationships to outsiders of all types. This introductory course explores ethical, political, and theological frameworks for understanding how people can and should organize themselves to improve societies. Readings are drawn from philosophy and political theory, economics, the history of social movements, and other disciplines. This course provides theoretical grounding for Civic Studies majors and for other students interested in social change.

### **Phil 0024-01:**

#### **Introduction to Ethics**

**David Denby**

At this moment, like every other, you're faced with a question: What should I do?

People often say that, in general, what you should do is help others. But then they would, wouldn't they? Perhaps what you really should do is always act in your own self-interest. Perhaps that is what everyone else is already doing anyway (despite what they say).

Some people say that you should promote the values of your community or society. But some societies have vile values. Indeed, don't the values of our society need at least a little adjustment? Anyway, why should the fact that a society is yours mean that you should promote its values, especially if doing so is contrary to your self-interest?

Some people say that you should act according to God's will. But what does God will, exactly? And surely we should obey Him only if He is good and commands us to do what is right. Yet that seems to mean that morality is independent of Him.

Some philosophers have argued that whether you should do an action depends entirely on its consequences (compared to those of its alternatives). But should you really ignore the past? Doesn't just punishment, for instance, depend on whether the person is actually guilty -- a fact about the past?

Other philosophers have focused instead on the motives behind an action, in particular on whether you're acting out of respect for others (and yourself). Still others have argued that whether you should do an action depends on a combination of these and perhaps other factors. But each of these suggestions faces problems: What on earth is "respecting others"? What is it to "combine" the various factors? Self-interest then? Maybe, but even self-interest is a tricky notion. Something is not in your self-interest simply because you want it, as every smoker knows. And maybe our interests, or at least the best means for achieving them, are mutually interdependent: perhaps the best way for you to get what you want depends on what I do and vice versa.

We will discuss all this in this course. After a brief introductory discussion of logic and the nature of ethical theory we will spend most of the semester critically evaluating a number of normative ethical theories. These will include various forms of Relativism, religiously-based theories, Utilitarianism, Kantianism, Egoism and Social Contract theories. We will also discuss self-interest, values, and other matters. Finally, we will discuss how to apply what we've learned to an issue of contemporary moral concern – probably abortion.

### **Phil 0033:**

#### **Logic**

**Susan Russinoff**

How can one tell whether a deductive argument succeeds in establishing its conclusion? What distinguishes good deductive arguments from bad ones? Questions such as these will be addressed in this course. We will discuss what a formal language is, how arguments in English are to be expressed in various formal languages, and what is gained from so expressing them. We will cover sentential logic, first-order predicate logic, identity theory, definite descriptions, and metatheory. Satisfies MATH requirement.

### **Phil 0035:**

#### **Reality and Subjectivity**

**Sigrún Svavarsdóttir**

Is the scientific method as objective as it is claimed to be? Is there an objective reality? Are colors objective features of the world? Are there any objective moral facts? Is there any objectivity in ethics? Is it possible for a judge to be perfectly objective? Can a journalist ever be objective? Are all our views completely subjective?

What are we even asking when we raise such questions? What is it for a method to be objective rather than subjective? What is it for a fact to be objective rather than subjective? What are we looking for when we are looking for objectivity in ethics? What is it for judges or journalists to lose their objectivity? What is it for a view to be objective or subjective?

This term, *Reality and Subjectivity* will be taught as a seminar on objectivity, intended for freshmen. There are no class prerequisites. Course requirements include reading and writing assignments as well as attendance and participation in seminar discussions.

### **Phil 039:**

#### **Knowing and Being**

**Avner Baz**

The course focuses on forms of philosophical skepticism—claims to the effect that we can never know, or can never really know, something that we tend to think we do know, or at least may know. We will examine three forms of skepticism and the relations among them: skepticism about the external world, skepticism about other minds, and skepticism about God.

Our primary concern, in each case, will be to ask not so much whether what the skeptic says is true, but rather whether it is clear what exactly the skeptic is seeking to assert, or deny, and hence whether the skeptic's "discovery" and its significance are what he takes them to be. The skeptic typically presents himself as interested in knowledge; but a consideration of the various skeptical arguments gives us an opportunity to think deeply and systematically not merely about what we can and cannot know, but equally about issues such as the following: What does 'world' mean? What is our relation to the world and, in particular, can we truly conceive of ourselves apart from that relation? What is our relation to our body and, in particular, can we make sense of the idea that we might not have a body, or have a different body? What is our relation to other people and to their 'inner lives'? In particular, can we conceive of ourselves apart from a relation to others? In what sense might feelings, thoughts, experiences, etc, be said to be 'inner' or 'private'? What does it mean to believe, or not to believe, in God? Thus, throughout our discussion, questions that originally present themselves as epistemological questions (questions about knowledge) will turn out to be just as much metaphysical questions (questions about being). And all of those questions will involve us in reflections on language.

The primary texts in this course will be Descartes' Meditations on First Philosophy, Shakespeare's Othello, and Hume's Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion. In addition to the primary texts we will also use texts by Hilary Putnam, Barry Stroud, Max Scheler, Stanley Cavell, Franz Rosenzweig, and Kierkegaard.

### **Phil 0040:**

#### **Paradoxes & Dilemmas**

**Riccardo Strobino**

Paradoxes and dilemmas are problematic cases, conundrums or puzzles that force us to accept counterintuitive conclusions from apparently acceptable premises or to choose among equally undesirable outcomes without an apparent justification.

They are often associated with moments of crisis and revolutionary developments in the history of philosophy and beyond.

The course will introduce students to an array of famous cases in the history of Western thought from Antiquity to the present. Themes under discussion will include - but not be limited to - Zeno's paradoxes (the infinite), the liar paradox (truth), the heap (vagueness), the ship of Theseus (identity), Russell's paradox (sets), the Gettier problem (knowledge), moral luck, nuclear deterrence, the lottery paradox, the voting paradox and the prisoner's dilemma. The course indirectly provides an introduction to various fundamental themes in metaphysics, logic, epistemology and moral philosophy and offers analytical tools that can be useful for students in any area of the humanities, social sciences and international relations.

### **Phil 0045:**

#### **War & Terrorism**

**Lionel McPherson**

The so-called "War on Terror" prompted renewed thinking about the ethics of war. Global terrorism is supposed to be radically different from conventional forms of warfare and even from domestic terrorism. From this perspective, new or revised justifications for why, where, and how states fight global terrorism may be warranted. Preventive war, drone strikes, extralegal assassination, torture, and indefinite detention are among the controversial issues that have emerged.

This course will explore the following topics. What might justify the use of political violence? Are there moral limits on the conduct of war? Can soldiers bear moral responsibility for fighting? Can conscientious objection be justified or even required? Is terrorism always wrong? Are civilians necessarily innocent? Can pacifism be a credible alternative to violence?

We will be mainly concerned with philosophical analysis—which may call into question certain deeply held assumptions about war and terrorism. Readings will include Frantz Fanon, Gandhi, Martin Luther King, Jr., Jeff McMahan, and Michael Walzer.

### **Phil 091-01:**

**Ethics Bowl**  
**Susan Russinoff**

The Intercollegiate Ethics Bowl is a debate-style competition in which teams of undergraduates argue against each other to resolve cases of actual ethical dilemmas. The Ethics Bowl gives students a chance to enter an academic competition that combines excitement and fun with an educationally valuable experience in the areas of practical and professional ethics. Participating students can earn 1/2 credit (pass/fail) and will attend coaching sessions on Mondays and Wednesdays during the noon free blocks during the weeks leading up to the Tufts competition. These sessions will help students think through ethical questions and issues and prepare them to construct arguments to support their positions on the cases written for the Ethics Bowl.

**Phil 0091-02:**  
**History and Philosophy of Emotions**  
**Riccardo Strobino**

Anger and pride, fear and anxiety, joy and sadness: emotions are an essential dimension of human experience. The course explores different ways in which emotions have been discussed, conceptualized, and represented in literature and philosophy from antiquity to the 17th century, with occasional forays into the territory of visual arts. Readings in English translation include major authors in the Western canon (Homer, Euripides, Plato, Aristotle, Lucretius, Seneca, Galen, Augustine, Spinoza) and beyond, including materials from the Arabic-Islamic philosophical and medical tradition. The course satisfies the requirements for the Philosophy and the Classics major and the Humanities distribution requirement.

**Phil 0091-03:**  
**Chinese Philosophy**  
**Monica Link Kim**

This course is designed to introduce students to some of the major figureheads of the classical period of Chinese philosophy: Kongzi (Confucius), Mozi (Mo Tzu), Mengzi (Mencius), Laozi (Lao Tzu), Zhuangzi (Chuang Tzu), and Xunzi (Hsun Tzu). Although the approach to philosophy these thinkers take is different from the Western style of argumentation, their writing is no less rich, and many of the questions that these ancient thinkers tackled are still being pursued today. Are human beings good by nature? How should we understand and respect authority? How should we approach adversity and death? What duties does one have to the self, to the family and to the state, and what is the best way to balance these obligations?

**Phil 0091-04:**  
**Media Ethics**  
**Benedetta Giovanola**

The course aims at analyzing the ethical dimensions of communication and the media. It will address questions like: what is a good communication? Can communication and the media contribute to a better and more just society? What role do they have in shaping personal identity and interpersonal relations?

In order to answer these and other questions, the course will integrate theoretical reflection and analysis of concrete cases. Different relevant media will be taken into account, with a specific focus on the new media and the ethical issues raised by information and communications technology (ICT). Topics include: objectivity and neutrality in journalism, the significance of "fake news," reality and fiction in television, the impact of social networks, and ethical issues in cyberspace.

**Phil 0091-05:**  
**Philosophy and Revolution**  
**Susan Hahn**

Can we apply philosophy to real political problems of our time? This course explores how philosophical and intellectual ideologies have impacted real world events and institutional practices. Political revolutions have both conceptual and institutional dimensions. We will combine pure theory with practical engagements, beginning with Enlightenment concepts at the intersection of theory and practice. We'll explore how revolutions have started with radical changes in concepts, such as, personhood, property, liberty, equality, labor, and human rights. We'll explore the legacies of philosophical and intellectual history, by bringing conceptual upheavals to bear on pressing challenges facing citizens of democratic societies in our time. Through case studies, we'll explore the use (and abuse) of philosophical ideas to bring about revolutionary, society-wide changes in moral-political attitudes. In our efforts to apply political philosophy to the real world, we will ask: Have philosophical ideas influenced the conceptual and institutional dimensions of revolutions? Or have institutional practices preceded ideational reforms, bringing philosophers into compliance with them?

### **Phil 103:**

#### **Logic**

**George Smith**

How can one tell whether a deductive argument succeeds in establishing its conclusion? What distinguishes good deductive arguments from bad ones? Questions like these will be addressed in this course. The principal text will be Richard Jeffrey's *Formal Logic*, though it will be supplemented by other texts and by notes from the instructor. The accent will be as much on coming to understand what the word 'formal' means in the title of Jeffrey's book as on what 'logic' means. We will discuss what a formal language is, how arguments in English are to be expressed in various formal languages, and what is gained from so expressing them. In the jargon of the field, we will cover sentential logic, first order predicate logic, identity theory, and definite descriptions. We will also look briefly at the history of logic. The course requires no specific background and no special ability in mathematics. Understanding why formal methods work will be as important as manipulating them. The course will require six written homework assignments and an open-book final exam. The homework assignments, which students are expected to work on in groups, form the core of the course. Students should anticipate spending an average of eight hours per week outside of class in this course.

### **Phil 0112-01:**

#### **Syntactic Theory**

**Jeff McConnell**

Syntactic theory, the study of grammatical structure, is the core subcomponent of contemporary linguistics. Topics of the course include: Syntactic categories, phase structure, long-distance dependencies, logical form, the interaction between syntax and the lexicon, the division of labor between syntax and semantics, syntactic universals, and the innate predispositions required for children to learn the syntactic structure of their native languages. Multiple theoretical approaches will be compared.

### **Phil 0117:**

#### **Philosophy of Mind**

**Stephen White**

This course will focus on the nature of conscious experience, its relation to the subjective point of view, and the implications of both for the mind-body problem. We will also consider carefully the nature of the subjective point of view as it is involved in seeing a world that contains opportunities for genuine action, states of affairs worth striving for, and agents like ourselves.

We will begin by examining the Cartesian conception of consciousness, which holds that the intrinsic features of conscious experience are fully manifested and completely given at the time the experience takes place. The intuition behind this conception is that conscious experience has no hidden sides and no unnoticed features. This intuition supports the sense-data theories of consciousness and experience held by the major figures from Descartes to Kant and implicit in many

contemporary arguments that there cannot be a materialistic account of “qualia.”

We will go on to consider a wide range of problems for this conception of consciousness, such as our ability to perceive depth and to perceive aspects. We will then look at some of the contemporary alternatives to the Cartesian conception, including behaviorism, physicalism, and functionalism. Despite the success of some of these theories in handling a number of the problems, the objections remains that such theories fail to explain the depth and significance of the distinction between those entities that do and those entities that do not enjoy consciousness.

An important distinction in the philosophy of mind is the distinction between intentional states such as beliefs and perceptual states, which represent the world as being a certain way, and sensational states, such as pains, which allegedly do not. Much of the work in philosophy of mind on consciousness has focused on such sensational or qualitative states, but more recently the emphasis has shifted toward perceptual experience. Work on perceptual experience raises important questions about the nature of the concepts that figure in our intentional states in general, the relation of those concepts to experience, and the assumption of the normative nature of intentional states.

This leads to Kripke’s work on Wittgenstein’s rule-following paradox, important in its own right as as an objection to functionalism. (Objections such as Jackson’s objection based on the knowledge argument focus on the alleged inadequacies of functionalism as a theory of qualia. The rule-following argument focuses on functionalism’s alleged inadequacies as a theory of content—usually thought to be its strong suit). We will then consider whether Kripke’s own so-called “skeptical solution” to the rule-following paradox is tenable. The threat of meaning skepticism leads to a number of transcendental arguments, which have implications both for the concept of agency and for causal theories across a range of philosophical subdisciplines. And the requirement that we do justice to agency leads to an alternative to the usual conception of science—one in which the priority of the theory to practice is reversed.

With these points in place, we will examine the relation between consciousness and the justification of our perceptual beliefs about the external world. Recent work on the “phenomenology” of perception has centered on the thesis of disjunctivism—that as between veridical perception and a matching hallucination there is no “highest common mental factor” in virtue of which we are given the world only indirectly. Disjunctivism provides an attractive (anti-skeptical) position in epistemology, but in its apparent denial of the reality of full-blown subjective experience in cases of hallucination, it raises seemingly intractable problems in the philosophy of mind. Our discussion, in this context, of the varieties of the “internal/external distinction” will not only cut across the boundary between epistemology and philosophy of mind, it will have important implications for every major branch of philosophy.

Finally, we will draw on our earlier discussion of concepts when we examine the notion of nonconceptual content. Here, the fundamental question is whether we can make sense of a kind of content that is radically different from the kind we normally suppose our mental states have in virtue of our having a natural language.

**Phil 0118:**  
**Philosophy of Biology**  
**Patrick Forber**

We will examine the conceptual foundations of evolution, ecology, and genetics, with special attention to outstanding philosophical problems. The course begins with Darwin, and his original presentation of natural selection in the Origin of Species. We will then look at two very different “big picture” views on evolutionary biology and the importance of natural selection, the first defended by Richard Dawkins and the second by Richard Lewontin. The course continues by discussing specific philosophical and theoretical controversies, such as those over the units of selection, the nature of fitness, altruism and spite, biological function, causation, individuals, and what natural selection explains. Students require some exposure to philosophy or biological science, preferably both. Course requirements include regular attendance and participation in discussion, short essay exams, and a final term paper.

**Phil 0121:**  
**Ethical Theory**  
**Sigrún Svavarsdóttir**

This is a course on general issues within normative ethics with special attention to what utilitarians, Kantians, and pluralistic deontologists have to say about these issues. What makes an action right or wrong? What is the primary object of moral evaluation: actions, motives, character traits, practices, or institutions? What value(s) ought to inform our actions? How exactly ought that value (those values) to inform our actions? Are there moral requirements that have nothing to do with value(s)? What is the relation between moral and rational action? Does morality require impartiality of us? Do moral duties arise out of relationships that we have with some but not all people? What role should or could moral principles play in our lives? Prerequisite: one course in philosophy.

**Phil 0123:**

**Philosophy of Law**

Erin Kelly

In this course we will read influential cases in criminal law and consider the principles used by American courts to settle those cases. Our discussion will encompass elements of crimes, including attempts, conspiracy, accomplice liability, self-defense, and homicide, and various rationales for criminalizing and punishing such acts. We will scrutinize legal principles from an ethical point of view in order to shed light on the relationship, or lack thereof, between law and justice. We will also take up questions about the nature of a legal system, the conditions and limits of law's legitimacy, and the nature of the moral obligations, if any, we have to obey the law. This will take us into a discussion of the relationship between law and democratic citizenship, as well as philosophies of civil disobedience and resistance to unjust law. Readings from legal cases as well as philosophers and legal theorists, including Austin, Hart, Lacey, Dworkin, Rawls, Shelby, King, and Raz.

**Phil 0125:**

**Racism & Social Inequality**

Lionel McPherson

This course will divide its focus between conceptual and practical issues concerning race and racial identity. We will begin by exploring whether races are real and what difference this might make. After exploring what has been meant by "race" and what "race" might mean today, we will turn our attention to the intersection of issues concerning race and racial identity. Police, prisons, gender, and reparations: these are some of the specific sites where we will explore whether and how race does or should matter.

Readings will include Michelle Alexander, Anthony Appiah, Angela Davis, W.E.B. Du Bois, Tommie Shelby, and Cornel West. Prerequisite: one philosophy course or sophomore standing

**Phil 0131:**

**Epistemology**

Jody Azzouni

Sometimes we know something, and sometimes we have just made a good guess. Can we tell the difference? Is there a method for recognizing that we know something? We usually can supply evidence for what we know. Must we always be able to do so for us to rightly claim that we know something? Evidence for a belief is usually something we know. Do we need evidence for our evidence? If so, how do we ever manage to know anything? Some philosophers, called skeptics, don't think we do know anything. In this course, we'll try to answer these questions, or at least explore them further. Readings will be from articles, both contemporary and classic.

**Phil 0133:**

**Philosophy of Language**

## **Jody Azzouni**

In a sense contemporary analytic philosophy began with "the linguistic turn": a turn, that is, towards attempts to understand the properties of languages, both artificial and natural ones. Accompanying this is a developing concern with how, when the properties of languages are properly taken account of, philosophical issues in metaphysics and epistemology are affected. In this course we will read papers, and excerpts from books, that both illustrate the impact of issues about language on traditional philosophical topics, and that illustrate how new philosophical concerns arise when language and its properties are focused on. The readings will be from central and classical philosophers of language such as Frege, Quine, Kripke, Putnam, Searle, Grice, Strawson, Davidson, Donnellan, and others. Requirements: Two 5-7 page papers, and weekly write-ups on the readings. Prerequisite: Prior completion of two courses in philosophy or permission of the instructor.

## **Phil 0151: Ancient Philosophy Christiana Olfert**

The philosophers of Ancient Greece and Rome asked some of philosophy's most enduring questions: What does it mean to be happy? What are the fundamental constituents of reality? What is knowledge, and how do we come to have it? And what makes for a just and healthy society? This course will introduce you to Presocratic philosophers, to Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle, and to Hellenistic schools of philosophy, all of whom attempt to answer these challenging questions. In texts like Plato's *Phaedo*, *Republic*, and *Meno*, as well as in Aristotle's *Metaphysics* and *Nicomachean Ethics*, we will discover that from the Ancient perspective, questions about what is fundamentally real are deeply connected to questions about what it means to live a good and happy life. After a look back to the Pre-Socratics and their influence on the Classical thinkers (Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle), we will then turn to the Hellenistic period and the debate between the Stoics and the Ancient Sceptics, who develop even further, sometimes surprising, insights into the nature of reality, the possibility of knowledge, and human well-being.

## **Phil 0167: Science Before Newton's Principia George Smith**

This is the first part of a two-course sequence focusing on Newton's *Principia*, the book that first showed the world how to do science in the modern sense of the term. In Philosophy 168 in the spring semester we will read the *Principia* itself. The revolution produced by the *Principia* is undoubtedly the most important single event in the history of science, ending controversies begun by the Copernican model of the planetary system and leading over the next 60 years to what we now call Newtonian mechanics. It produced no less of a revolution in scientific method by illustrating a way of marshaling evidence that stood in sharp contrast to both the narrow empiricist line then prevalent in England and the rationalist line prevalent on the continent. Because of this, the *Principia* is as important to philosophy of science as it is to history of science. It is the perfect work to focus on in investigating how science at its best succeeds in turning data into decisive evidence. The *Principia* is accessible to a wide range of students. It requires no background in physics or calculus. It does, however, require historical knowledge of the scientific context in which it was written. Thus, the goal of the fall semester is to cover the background needed to grasp the force of the evidential arguments in the *Principia*. We will review the work on planetary orbits by Kepler and those after him; Galileo's efforts toward a science of motion; Descartes' theory of planetary motion; and studies of curvilinear motion by Huygens and Newton that led directly into the *Principia*. Three 6 to 8 page papers will be required during the fall semester. In the spring semester we will examine the evidential argument developed throughout the *Principia* and responses to it. The sole written requirement will be a term paper dealing with one of the major historical or philosophical issues surrounding the work.

Studying the *Principia* can be of value to a wide range of students. Besides offering an ideal way of studying the philosophy of science, it gives history students a vehicle for getting into the history of science. It offers students in the physical sciences and engineering an opportunity to learn how the foundations of their disciplines were secured. And it offers students in the humanities a way of studying what science is like from the inside, where the fundamental problem is not to obtain



data, but to find ways of turning data into evidence. Science distribution credit is given for the spring semester.

**Phil 0191-01:**

**Nothingness**

**Stephen White**

What do the negative spaces of certain traditions of Japanese painting, the concept (from Buddhism and the thought of Nagarjuna) of nothing (mu), and the animism of Shinto have in common? And what do they share with the nihilism of Yukio Mishima and the Zen arts of kendo, flower arrangement, and the tea ceremony? In this course we will look at the multivalent concept of Nothingness in these and other Japanese cultural contexts through comparisons with concepts drawn from a variety of European philosophical traditions including Kantian and post-Kantian German Idealism, British Romantic literature, Phenomenology and Existentialism, and the philosophy of Wittgenstein. Chief among the concepts on the European side will be that of the experience of the sublime, variously understood as the experience of: the ground of being prior to the division of the self and nonself; that which is unrepresentable because a condition of the possibility of representation; and that, the embrace of which, in our ability to face our own immanent destruction, makes us truly agents. This last dimension of Nothingness, tying together as it does the work of Mishima and Kojève, Hegel, and Sartre, reveals the moral and political underpinning of a complicated metaphysical story. We will look at arguments that we must inhabit a dynamic and meaningful world more like the animistic world of Shinto or of the Gutai Manifesto than the disenchanted world of Max Weber. And we will look at Paul Schrader's suggestions (in *Transcendental Style in Film*) as to how such a world is given (the revelation of the invisible in the visible) in the work of Bresson and Ozu. The course is co-taught by Inouye (Japanese literature and visual studies) and White (Philosophy, aesthetics, and film).

**Phil 191-02:**

**Seminars: TA Training Workshop**

**David Denby**

TAs are expected to do many things—grade papers and tests, hold office hours, lead discussions, and work with struggling students. In this workshop, we'll discuss how best to do these things. The aim is to prepare students to take on TA-ships and ultimately to become better teachers. We will adopt the perspective of TAs in philosophy courses, but most of what we discuss will be relevant to TA-ing classes in other departments too. I also hope that the course will help the TAs themselves improve their own writing and presentation skills.

The class will meet once a week and will be conducted as a workshop. Often, I will give a short presentation and sometimes we'll do some short in-class exercises. But we will spend most of our time in discussion. The topics will include how to deal with arguments and theories, the basics of writing papers, designing paper assignments and tests, leading recitation sections, grading, office hours and dealing with students face-to-face, the first day, dealing with "difficult" students, giving presentations, etiquette, rules and regulations, designing courses and syllabi. Other matters will arise along the way.

The course will be worth ½ credit. There will be no grades.

**Phil 191-03:**

**Punishment and Responsibility**

**Erin Kelly**

This seminar will investigate the basic concepts of criminal law, including criminal responsibility, the significance of act, intent, causation, and result, and various rationales for punishment. We will analyze legal notions of justification and excuse—including self-defense, necessity, duress, intoxication, and insanity. Exploration of the connection or lack thereof between legal excuses and moral philosophies of blame, mitigation, and responsibility. Attention also to conditions of social injustice and their possible relation to moral concepts of individual responsibility. Readings from legal cases as well as philosophers and legal theorists, including, Hart, Lacey, Watson, Korsgaard, Strawson, Scanlon, Duff, Feinberg, Shelby, Davis, and Wellman.

**Phil 191-04:**  
**Assertion and the Future**  
**Dilip Ninan**

We routinely speak not only of the past and present---of how things were and how things are---but of the future---of how things will be. This seminar focuses on some of the distinct challenges posed by assertions about the future.

One set of issues concerns the idea---which has its roots in Aristotle's writings---that contingent statements about the future are indeterminate in truth value. According to this view, the future is unreal, and while there are many ways things might turn out, none of these represents the unique way things will turn out. We will begin our exploration of this idea by familiarizing ourselves with relevant work in modal logic, tense logic (including “branching time”), and the logic of indexicals. We will then take up a number of questions concerning “future contingents.” Topics here may include: how branching time relates to physical theories like the Special Theory of Relativity and the Many Worlds Interpretation of Quantum Mechanics; the connection between these issues and the problem of personal identity over time; and whether branching time can be used to motivate a form of “relativism” about future discourse.

A second set of issues arises in connection with a puzzle concerning assertion and the passage of time: it seems that there are cases in which one can lose one’s epistemic license to assert something simply by moving through time. We will use this puzzle to explore a number of issues in the semantics, pragmatics, and epistemology of future discourse. The discussion will lead us to consider a number of related questions concerning the meanings of epistemic modals, and the nature of the epistemic norms governing assertion, practical reasoning, and inquiry.

Overall, the seminar will touch on a broad set of issues in metaphysics, the philosophy of language, and epistemology. Although some of discussion will concern technical material in the philosophy of language, all relevant background will be provided; the seminar presupposes nothing more than introductory logic.

**Phil 0297:**  
**Graduate Writing Seminar**  
**Patrick Forber & Christiana Olfert**

A writing workshop open to all philosophy master's degree candidates who have completed at least one semester in the program. Graded SAT/UNSAT. Recommendations: Master's degree candidacy in Philosophy or permission of department chair; submission in advance of an acceptable paper draft or detailed paper outline to be polished during the course.