



THE UNIVERSITY *of* EDINBURGH
School of Philosophy, Psychology
and Language Sciences

Philosophy Honours Courses
Semester 1
2017/2018

SEMESTER 1

(Please note courses may clash – please check carefully before choosing.)

Ancient Theories of Knowledge

Course Organiser: Inna Kupreeva

Seminars: Tuesday 14:10-16:00

Introduction to the main theories of mind of Greek philosophy (Plato, Aristotle, Epicurus and Stoics), with sessions on Pre-Socratics, Greek medical schools, and Neoplatonism. We shall consider questions of definition and structure of the soul, its main functions, the seat of the soul in the human body, the problem of mind and the mental; place of mind in the world.

Belief, Desire and Rational Choice

Course Organiser: Wolfgang Schwartz

Seminars: Monday 14:10-15:00 **Tutorials:** tba

This course introduces the basics of contemporary decision theory, discusses general norms on rational belief and desire, and investigates whether decision theory can serve as a functionalist framework to define the concepts of (graded) belief and desire.

Feminism

Course Organiser: Elinor Mason

Seminars: Tuesday 13:10-14:00 **Tutorials:** tba

In this course we will examine philosophical approaches to feminism and feminist issues. Topics covered may include inequality in the work place and in family structures; global feminism; the relationships between lesbian and feminist philosophy; issues around sex and sexuality, including the objectification of the female body, pornography and prostitution.

Kant

Course Organiser: Alix Cohen

Seminars: Monday 14:10-16:00

The work of the German Enlightenment philosopher Immanuel Kant continues to have an extraordinary influence in philosophy. As well as its contributions to metaphysics, epistemology, the philosophy of mind, and moral philosophy, it offers one of the most significant and intricate reflections on the nature of philosophy itself. This course provides an introduction to some of the central issues in Kant's philosophy. Its main objective is to engage the student in a critical and detailed analysis so as to gain a firm understanding of both the overall structure and the central theses of one of the most important works in the history of philosophy. It will highlight the role of Transcendental Philosophy in the wider context of Kant's philosophy as well as its importance for the further development of philosophy.

Knowledge, Ignorance and Power

Course Organiser: Aidan McGlynn

Seminars: Monday 12:10-13:00 Tutorials: tba

This course will introduce and examine a range of topics at the intersection of epistemology and political/social/feminist philosophy, examining our actual epistemic practices in light of the relations of power and subordination that exist between differently placed groups in society, and looking at different proposals for how this should shape our theorizing about knowledge and ignorance.

Meta-Ethics

Course Organiser: Michael Ridge

Seminars: Thursday 11:10-13:00

If ethics is the general investigation of what is right/wrong, good/bad, what one may/ought to do, etc. then metaethics is the investigation of the nature of ethical judgments and facts. This involves questions about: (i) the objectivity and psychology of ethical judgment, (ii) the existence, nature and knowability of ethical facts, and (iii) the meaning of ethical terms and the sentences in which they figure. This course will introduce students this area of philosophy, which is an interesting arena for the interaction of moral theory, metaphysics, ontology, moral psychology, and the philosophy of language. We consider a wide range of metaethical theories which may include non-naturalism, emotivism, error-theory, naturalism, expressivism, and fictionalism. Through this, students will gain an overview of twentieth century meta-ethics and exposure to some recent developments. In addition to students interested in ethical theory, this course will be relevant to those interested in metaphysics, epistemology, and the theory of meaning.

Modal Logic

Course Organiser: Anders Schoubye

Lectures: Tuesday 16:10-18:00

This course is a follow-on course to Logic 1 focusing predominantly on modal extensions of classical propositional and first-order logic. Modal logic is standardly known as the logic of necessity and possibility, but this course will also focus on so-called deontic logic (the logic of obligations and permissions), epistemic logic (the logic of knowledge), and possibly temporal logic (the logic of time).

Philosophy: Fun and Games

Course Organiser: Michael Ridge

Lectures: Thursday 16:10-18:00

In this course we investigate the very concept of a game, the relationship between that concept and the concept of play, the way games figure in the good life and the normative role of games and play in Utopia. We also discuss some of the more interesting uses to which the concept of a game, and the closely associated concept of a constitutive rule, have been put in other areas of philosophy - e.g. moral theory and the philosophy of language. The aim is to bring insights from the philosophy of games proper to bear on the use philosophers working in other areas have made of the concept of a game.

Philosophy of Mathematics

Course Organiser: Casey McCoy

Lectures: Friday 11:10-13:00

A sketch of the views of Plato and Aristotle through to Kant and Mill. The various foundational positions: realism, logicism, constructivism, formalism and finitism. Logicism. Varieties of formalism. Finitism and Hilbert's programme. The significance of Godel's Incompleteness Theorems and related results concerning truth and computability. Constructivism and intuitionism. The emergence of axiomatic set theory as foundation for all mathematics. Set-theoretic realism. Structuralism. The applicability of mathematics and the indispensability of mathematics.

Philosophy of the Scottish Enlightenment

Course Organiser: Andrew Mason

Lectures: Wednesday 11:10-13:00

The course will present the thought of leading thinkers, such as Francis Hutcheson, David Hume, Adam Smith and Thomas Reid, focusing on their ethical and aesthetic views. Subjects covered will include such topics as the role of reason and sentiment in moral judgement, the idea of a moral sense, the standard of taste, virtue,

justice, duty, and freedom and necessity. The relevance of these ideas to modern debates will also be discussed.

Philosophy of Time

Course Organiser: Alasdair Richmond

Lectures: Tuesday 09:00-10:50

This course will offer detailed seminars on key philosophical issues in the philosophy of time, tense and persistence, both classical and modern. No detailed logical or metaphysical expertise will be assumed, and the course is intended to be accessible to students with a wide range of philosophical interests and aptitudes.

Political Philosophy

Course Organiser: TBA

Lectures: Monday 11:10-12:00 Tutorials: tba

The course will be divided into two related parts, each concerned in some way with contemporary liberalism. The first part will examine Rawls' Justice as Fairness and his conception of political liberalism. The second part will address the question of what restrictions on individual liberty modern states are justified in imposing.

Realism, Relativism, and Reality

Course Organiser: Michela Massimi

Lectures: Thursday 09:00-10:50

This course provides an introduction to the vast arena of philosophical inquiry that goes under the names of realism and relativism in science. What is truth in science? And why do experts disagree on scientific evidence? What good might relativism be? The course is structured in two Parts. In Part I, we read some classical texts (from Quine's ontological relativity, to Goodman's ways of world making and Rorty's epistemic relativism, among others). Part II of the course zooms into contemporary debates on realism in science and on the values of truth, objectivity, disagreement and progress in scientific research.

The Computational Mind

Course Organiser: Mark Sprevak

Seminars: Wednesday 09:00-10:50

Computation appears to be our best hope for explaining how the mind works. Over the past forty years, computational models have scored numerous successes in explaining various mental phenomena. Today, computation dominates cognitive science. This course introduces the computational approach to the mind and explores some foundational questions and challenges that it faces. Topics covered by the course include: What is a computation? If the mind is a computer, what kind is it? Is computation a real feature of brain, or a projection of our interests? Can consciousness be explained by computation? Are cognitive computations in the brain or do they spill into the environment?

The Early Continentals: Hegel and Nietzsche

Course Organiser: Dave Ward

Lectures: Monday 10:10-11:00 Tutorials: tba

This course will introduce students to the ideas of Hegel and Nietzsche, and examine the influence these thinkers had on the analytic and continental traditions in philosophy. The course will focus on reading and understanding key passages from Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit and Nietzsche's Genealogy of Morals. An important background figure on the course will be Kant, and we will begin by reading some important sections from his Critique of Pure Reason. We will compare and contrast the ways in which Hegel and Nietzsche both sought to articulate and overcome philosophical problems inherited from Kant. Where helpful, we will also take brief detours into the works of other thinkers who influenced or reacted to Kant, Hegel and Nietzsche, such as Fichte, Schelling and Schopenhauer. By the end of the course we will be in a position to appreciate and assess the historic trajectory of philosophical thought that runs from Kant through Hegel and Nietzsche, and look ahead to the divergent paths this trajectory has taken in contemporary philosophy.

The Nature of Moral Understanding

Course Organiser: David Levy

Seminars: Tuesday 11:10-13:00

The central question we will address is: what is the nature of the understanding someone has when he or she engages with moral challenges? These challenges arise in relatively ordinary situations of the kinds presented in life, literature and film. These situations include decisions about what to do, wondering how to live, questions of whether one is under a moral obligation, contemplation of shame or guilt. We will consider, for example, what makes something a moral matter, whether I have a duty to myself, whether others can oblige me and whether morality is principally about what to do. The course is in three sections. First we will compare the predominant approach to morality with an alternative. Second we will consider specific moral phenomena like forgiveness, individuality and remorse. Third we will consider the interpersonal dimension of morality as seen in argument, persuasion and absurdity.

The Philosophy of Well-Being

Course Organiser: Laura Candiotta

Seminars: Tuesday 16:10-18:00

This course will examine well-being, a central topic in philosophy. It has two (roughly equal) parts. In part 1 we examine the main theories of well-being. In part 2 we examine some general theoretical issues connected to well-being.

The Philosophy of Wittgenstein

Course Organiser: David Levy

Seminars: Tuesday 14:10-16:00

This course will study Wittgenstein's early and later philosophy, concentrating on the *Tractatus Logico-philosophicus* and *Philosophical Investigations*. We will learn to read Wittgenstein's own work, especially the *Tractatus* and the later sections on rule-following and private language. The course will highlight the differences between his earlier view of language and his later view based on language-games, while also noting the considerable points of continuity in Wittgenstein's philosophy. This course is oriented around a single philosopher and his work, but attention will also be given to the connections between Wittgenstein's philosophy and enduring problems in philosophy as seen in the work of Plato, Descartes and Kant.

Themes in Epistemology

Course Organiser: Martin Smith

Seminars: Wednesday 11:10-13:00

This course introduces students to a number of major ideas and themes in contemporary epistemology. We will examine debates about the nature of knowledge and of justified belief, and cover topics including scepticism, contextualism, pragmatic encroachment, knowledge-first epistemology, reliabilism and a little formal epistemology.

Theories of Mind

Course Organiser: Paul Schweizer

Lectures: Thursday 14:10-16:00

What is a mind, what are the essential characteristics distinguishing mental from non-mental systems? Two key features traditionally offered in response to this question are (1) representational content: mental states can be about external objects and states of affairs, they can represent and bear content or meaning; (2) conscious experience: only minds are consciously aware and have subjective, qualitative experiences, roughly, there is something it is like to be a mind. A central aim of the course will be to examine the extent to which these two features can be captured or explained by computational and/or physicalist methods, and to explore some of the conceptual issues basic to Cognitive Science and Artificial Intelligence as theoretical approaches to the mind.

Theory of Virtue

Course Organiser: Andrew Mason

Lectures: Tuesday 10:10 – 11:00 Tutorials: tba

The course will introduce students to central ideas in the theory of virtue from the ancient, early modern and contemporary periods, illustrating the development of this area of moral philosophy, the various ways in

which the concept of virtue has been interpreted, and the different views which have been held about its significance for ethics.