

# Spring 2022 Course Descriptions & Distribution Areas

## **PHIL 406: Aquinas**

### ***The Virtues***

**PhD and MA in Philosophy distribution area:** Medieval

**MA in Social Philosophy distribution area:** Moral

**Dr. Peter Hartman**

**Thursdays 10:00am-12:30pm**

We will study Thomas Aquinas's theory of the virtues, both moral and intellectual. We will begin with his basic views about the mind and actions, and then turn to his discussion of the role of the virtues in both thought and action. While influenced explicitly by Aristotle's "virtue theory" as developed, for instance, in the *Nicomachean Ethics*, Aquinas also draws from Roman authors, such as Seneca and Cicero, as well as Christian thinkers. His virtue theory, thus, is unique, sophisticated. Moreover, it proved influential. Latin is not required. Topics discussed will be the nature of the will, freedom, the formation of habits, the nature of habits, the role of habits, the distinction between habits of character and virtues of the intellect, and happiness.

## **PHIL 415: Kant**

### ***Critique of Judgment***

**PhD and MA in Philosophy distribution area:** Modern, Continental

**MA in Social Philosophy distribution area:** N/A

**Dr. Naomi Fisher**

**Wednesdays 7:00pm-9:30pm**

In this course we will examine Kant's *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, an influential work of philosophy written in 1790. The first part of the *Critique* addresses aesthetics; the second part addresses biology. Through reading the primary text and some secondary literature, we will come to understand why Kant chose to focus specifically on aesthetics and biology as objects of philosophical inquiry that could not be subsumed under his previous theoretical and practical philosophy. This class will prepare you to understand later developments that were in large part inspired by this work: the philosophical movements of German Idealism and Romanticism, the subsequent history of aesthetics, the 19th century biological revolution, and certain developments in 20th century phenomenology.

## **PHIL 421: Marx**

### ***Feminism, Capitalism and Social Transformation***

**PhD and MA in Philosophy distribution area:** Continental, Ethics/Social-Political

**MA in Social Philosophy distribution area:** Social

**Dr. Johanna Oksala**

**Tuesdays 10:00am-12:30pm**

Feminist theorists today are increasingly returning to the insight that 'capitalist society' must constitute the critical frame for understanding contemporary forms of women's subordination and feminist struggles to overcome it. This renewed interest in the connections between feminism and capitalism raises a host of difficult questions concerning capitalism, socialism as an alternative to it, the challenges feminism presents to both of them, and the challenges they present to it. What is capitalism? Can it be adequately

conceived in gender-blind fashion or is capitalism's social organization inherently androcentric, incapable in principle of instantiating egalitarian forms of gender relation? How do capitalism's gender asymmetries relate to its other characteristic forms of domination, including class exploitation, imperialist predation, racial/ethnic subjugation, and ecological devastation? What sorts of challenges do such 'intersections' pose for feminist struggles in capitalist contexts? How have feminists responded to these challenges? Are feminism and socialism natural 'bedfellows'? How have they related to each other in the course of history? Finally, how do these problems appear today? What specific forms do gender asymmetry and feminist struggle assume in societies where capitalism is financialized, globalizing and neoliberal? How might the current conditions require revising classical theories that have sought to clarify the relations between feminism, capitalism, socialism, and social transformation?

In this course, we investigate some important attempts, both historical and contemporary, to answer these questions. By working through the respective insights and omissions of various authors, we also aim to develop some answers of our own. We will read such thinkers as: Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels, Alexandra Kollontai, Lise Vogel, Angela Davis, Maria Mies, Nancy Fraser, Michael Hardt and Toni Negri, and Kathi Weeks.

**PHIL 468: Topics in Ethics**

***Critical Philosophy of Race***

**PhD and MA in Philosophy distribution area:** Continental, Ethics/Social-Political

**MA in Social Philosophy distribution area:** Moral, Social

**Dr. Jacqueline Scott**

**Thursdays 7:00pm-9:30pm**

In this course we will examine several contemporary arguments within the field of critical race theory. In particular, the focus will be on racial identity formation and how these identities (mal)function in US society.

Two major questions that guide this field are: What is race? What values do and/or should we assign to race in our society? The course will be divided into three parts: 1) the historical roots of contemporary arguments about race; 2) several contemporary arguments about race and racial identity formation; 3) a few of the social/political implications about these arguments.

**PHIL 468: Topics in Ethics**

***International Ethics***

**PhD and MA in Philosophy distribution area:** Ethics/Social-Political

**MA in Social Philosophy distribution area:** Moral, Social

**Dr. Joy Gordon**

**Tuesdays 7:00pm-9:30pm**

This course is intended to give students an overview of the theoretical frameworks for thinking about ethical questions within the international arena, as well as some of the critical issues in this field. Some would argue that ethics is simply irrelevant in international affairs—that states and non-state actors simply pursue their interests, and that's all that can be expected of them. But even in war, there has long been a set of articulated principles about constraints on warfare, and what moral duties are owed even to an enemy in combat.

The twentieth century saw the emergence of institutions of global governance that addressed ethical violations in warfare, as well as human rights; and which also established means for enforcing international law against states and individuals. But many have raised questions about their focus and adequacy: are there ways in which international law reflects a gender bias? Why are economic rights treated as secondary, when the human damage from poverty is far greater than the destruction that is done in warfare, or even genocide? Should there be measures of accountability that are binding on institutions of global governance themselves?

**PHIL 490: Current Philosophical Issues**

***Judith Butler: Queer Theory, Performativity, Power***

**PhD and MA in Philosophy distribution area:** Continental, Ethics/Social-Political

**MA in Social Philosophy distribution area:** Moral, Social

**Dr. Eyo Ewara**

**Mondays 4:15pm-6:45pm**

Few living thinkers have had nearly the level of public impact as has the philosopher, feminist, and queer theorist Judith Butler, whose now famous *Gender Trouble* is arguably the source of the now oft-cited claim that 'gender is performative.' In this course we will introduce Butler's work, asking about what she meant when she talked about performativity, how performativity relates to her thinking on LGBTQ issues and feminist work, and how it is situated relative to her ongoing thinking about social and political power, norms, mourning, race, and about the ethics of precarity. Students will read selections from *Gender Trouble*, *Bodies That Matter*, *Undoing Gender*, *Precarious Life*, *Frames of War*, and *The Force of Nonviolence*, working to gain a sense of Butler's arguments and the development of her thought.