PHILOSOPHY COURSE DESCRIPTIONS  
FALL 2019

GTX 2301.06  Intellectual Traditions of Ancient World  
Yancey    MWF  11:15-12:05    BRFLAT 135F

What do we owe to each other? A contemporary philosopher, T.M. Scanlon, posed this central question in a book on ethics (and in turn, it became an important topic for Chidi and Eleanor in NBC’s The Good Place!). But this question of obligations—be they of justice, friendship, or piety—has a much longer history. In this course we will engage this key question (and some related others) through a close reading of ancient texts, learning from Homer, Plato, Aristotle, Virgil and others about their own understandings of these themes, and how we might apply them in our lives and communities. We will gain skills in careful reading and discussion as well as reflective and interpretive essay writing.

PHI 1301.01  Introductory Topics in Philosophy: Faith and Reason  
Tomaszewski    MWF  1:25-2:15    MORRSN 108

In this course we will investigate three topics: God, human nature, and the afterlife. Concerning God, we will ask: Is there a God? If so, what is He like? Could God be a human being? Concerning human nature, we will ask: What are human beings? Are we just highly evolved animals, or something more? Do we have free will? Can we survive our deaths? Concerning the afterlife, we will ask: Do we have a soul? If so, what kind of thing is it? Is it immortal? What is Heaven like? What do we have to do to go there? What is Hell like? Might an everlasting afterlife be boring?

As the astute reading will note, each the last question of each topic touches on the next topic: these three topics are deeply interconnected. So we will look at them altogether. Along the way, we will discuss and read many classical and contemporary philosophical texts (from thinkers such as Plato, Aristotle, Saint Augustine, Saint Thomas Aquinas, and Descartes) on traditional philosophical questions and learn to write philosophically and rigorously. Even if you think the afterlife might be boring, this class won’t be!

PHI 1301.N1  Introductory Topics in Philosophy: Philosophy and Inklings HNR  
Ward    TR    11:00-12:15    MORRSN 205

C.S. Lewis and J.R.R. Tolkien are best known for their fictional works, The Chronicles of Narnia by Lewis and The Hobbit and The Lord of the Rings by Tolkien. But these works did not emerge from an intellectual vacuum. Lewis and Tolkien were not just good story-tellers but careful thinkers who were part of a circle of intellectuals, called 'The Inklings,' who challenged each other to think deeply about the relationship between reason, imagination, and faith. This course will introduce you to the philosophical thought of Lewis, Tolkien, some other members of The Inklings, and to some of their intellectual influences. We will explore traditional philosophical themes through the fiction and non-fiction of these and other authors. These themes include the existence of God, the problem of evil, virtue and vice, the possibility of moral knowledge, and the meaningfulness of figurative language. Since we will be examining these philosophical issues through imaginative literature, one question we will ask throughout the course is this: To what extent can imaginative discourse effectively communicate truth?
What has Athens to do with Jerusalem? That’s the way Tertullian famously put the question of the relationship of faith (Jerusalem) and reason (Athens) early in the third century. Does faith need reason’s support? Does reason require faith? Does each get on better in isolation from the other? Can they really be isolated, in the first place? This class introduces the study of philosophy by exploring answers to these questions, along with the challenges each faces. Our guides will be St. Thomas Aquinas, David Hume, Blaise Pascal, and a host of more recent thinkers, each of whom develop and defend interesting answers to these fundamental human questions. Our topics include the nature of faith and reason, the classic arguments for the existence of God, the problem of evil, the rationality of belief in miracles and revelation, and the compatibility of faith and science.

This course is an introduction to central questions in two fundamental areas of philosophy: epistemology and metaphysics. Roughly, epistemology is about the conditions under which a person has knowledge (in contrast to merely true belief, false belief, or the absence of belief). It is also about the conditions under belief is rational or reasonable as opposed to being irrational or unreasonable. Metaphysics is about the ultimate nature of reality—how things really are. The task of metaphysics is to figure out what there is, and how it is structured. Here’s a quick sample of some of the questions we will discuss: It seems that modern science focuses on describing material or physical objects, their properties, and then explaining what has happened or predicting what will happen, given their properties and the laws of nature. Is that all there is? Are human beings material objects? Is the mind the brain, and does it function like a computer? Are our decisions free? Is there a God? How should we think about these questions, or any other questions? By what methods can we gain knowledge? What do we know and how do we know what we know? Do we really know anything at all? Does anyone know that there is an external world distinct their mental life, full of material objects and other people? Do our past experiences justify out expectations about the future? Is time real, or is it an illusion? Can we change the past or travel through time? These are foundational questions, and thinking about them and possible answers to them is pretty darn interesting.

This course focuses on foundational issues in Western political thought from Plato to Augustine. We will focus on topics such as the relations between the individual and the political community, the family and the political community, and God/gods and the political community. We will also explore the nature, purpose, and abuse of freedom and what role the political community can and should play in securing and/or limiting freedom.
This course focuses on several paradigmatic authors in the tradition of political philosophy and teaches students how to think about the problems of politics in a philosophical rather than an ideological way. The authors include Plato, Aristotle, Augustine, Machiavelli, Hobbes, Locke, and Mill. Some of the questions we take up include: What is politics? What is justice? What forms of political association are most conducive to human flourishing? What ends ought politics pursue? What are the proper limits of political association?

You may have noticed: people try to persuade each other of lots of things. Friends, books, articles, advertisements—all attempt to get others, to get you, to believe things.

When others try to persuade you of something, they give, or at least should give, arguments: they should marshal some facts that support or imply their favored claim. But here’s the thing: the facts they cite aren’t always facts; and, more importantly, even if they were, they wouldn’t actually establish the conclusion (for, often enough, the supposed ‘evidence’ is weak, inconclusive, or even irrelevant). So you might wonder, How do we know when the arguments being offered to us are good arguments? How do we know when an argument is something that should persuade a reasonable person? That is the question Logic answers. Logic is the body of basic truths about good arguments. Knowing these truths is how we distinguish good arguments from bad ones.

In this class, we’ll study this body of truths, learning about what arguments are, their different types (deductive, inductive, and abductive), and what makes the good ones good and the bad ones bad. We’ll focus especially on proving that a valid argument requires, inescapably, its conclusion.

This study is (at least to me!) quite fun. More importantly, its highly valuable, cultivating in you a skill relevant to every dimension of life: the skill of presenting better arguments, and of better assessing the arguments presented to you. (Also, given that standardized tests (LSAT, GRE, etc.) test in part for this important skill, logic can help with such exams, too).
We both encounter and make many arguments in our day-to-day lives. That is, we frequently either give or receive reasons which are meant to work together to support particular conclusions. Just consider how many arguments you encounter each day on Facebook, news outlets, advertisements, or from your friends. Alternatively, consider how often you encounter or rely on arguments in writing term papers, taking standardized tests, or persuading clients. At its foundation, logic is the study of how we reason. In this course we will study formal and informal aspects of logic with two main aims in sight: first, understanding better why arguments work and second, becoming skilled in making arguments in an intellectually rigorous and yet honest manner. The course will equip each student with the skills and resources to identify, evaluate, and construct arguments with charity and respect, an eminently valuable skill set.

This course is meant to develop students’ capacities to think well in two senses. In the first sense, to think well is to reason about the truth in a way that fits with reality. We will be learning various forms of formal and informal reasoning, ranging from logical proofs to developing the ability to pick out an argument from pieces of philosophical and popular writing, which will help us understand our world better. In the second sense, to think well is to think well of someone. That’s not to say that we learn to look through rose-colored glasses, but that we engage with our conversation partners, especially those we disagree with, in a way that respects their capacity to reason. We will be discussing how to give and receive correction graciously and respectfully, using the writings of Thomas Aquinas to aid us. Through these discussions, we will consider how thinking well (full-stop) requires thinking well of our neighbors and fostering a community of people who seek goodness and truth, despite (and even because of) disagreement.

In logic, we study arguments. We learn about different kinds of arguments and the features that make for a good argument. The skills that we learn in logic, therefore, are invaluable for reasoned discourse. In this class, we will cover topics such as deductive arguments, inductive arguments, abductive arguments, formal logic, and informal logic. Along the way, we will put our logical skills into practice by analyzing excerpts from various philosophical text as case studies.

A study of the basic principles and methods for distinguishing good and bad reasoning across a broad range of contexts, with an emphasis on deductive reasoning. Students develop formal tools to identify, reconstruct, and evaluate arguments, and to compose argumentative essays of their own.
Logic is the study of human reason. Throughout our lives we have to make many decisions. A good grasp of logic can help us to make good decisions rather than bad ones. Moreover, if we are to flourish in the home and in the wider society, we need to agree with other people on how we are to live and work together. When people disagree, arguments can sometimes get quite heated. Logic shows us how to argue with other people in a way that is both calm and respectful. In this course we will be studying both the formal and the informal aspects of logic. You will have ample opportunity to put these aspects of logic into practice, both through classroom and homework exercises, as well as when you come to write an argumentative philosophical essay. The ultimate goal of this course is to help you understand how to reason well, both in the judgements you make, and in your interactions with other people.

Humans reason about things every day. What to eat, which friendships to pursue, and whether we have free will are just a few of the kinds of questions we ask and make arguments about. Logic is the study of the rules and principles which guide how we ought to reason in order to reason well. In this class we will focus on gaining facility working with valid argument forms and making good arguments, as well as learning to recognize bad ones. Not only is the study of logic an important step toward becoming a well-trained thinker about the big and the small questions of life, this course will also help prepare you for other philosophy classes, or any other classes in which you are called upon to evaluate the strength or weakness of arguments.

We study logic for the same reason we study grammar. The aim in both cases is to do better at something all do all the time. In the case of logic the aim is to do better at reasoning. Reasoning is an inevitable part of every area of ordinary life, and every field of academic inquiry. When we reason, we attempt to track some very important relationships between truths. The goal of reasoning is to see whether one truth entails another or makes another more likely. Logic is the study of these very important relationships between truths. In this class we will study the most important ways philosophers have devised for systematically tracking these relationships. We will also learn to evaluate reasoning in ordinary life and in academic study with the aid of these systems of logic.

The purpose of this course is to strengthen your ability 1) to understand and to clarify language, 2) to recognize informal fallacies in reasoning, and 3) to determine the validity and invalidity of deductive arguments. Every dimension of the course aims at enhancing your ability to reason, that is, to see and understand connections and relationships among ideas. This should be of inestimable value to you personally and professionally.
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Racism is endemic in the American cultural world, and American history is rife with racism—and genocide. This course focuses on contemporary and historical manifestations of racism in the American world, and especially on Western intellectual traditions that support that racism. Our goal is to understand the intellectual foundations of the racism pervasive in American culture and to seek alternative intellectual foundations that discourage that racism. Indigenous intellectual traditions, those not rooted in our European past, offer those alternatives. Figures considered include Plato, John Stuart Mill, Milton Friedman, Michael Sandel, W.E.B. DuBois, John Dewey, Ta-Nehisi Coates, Bryan Stevenson and Michelle Alexander, among others.

This course will address several theoretical and applied ethical issues that confront citizens of a democratic society, its democratic leaders, and those who serve in its Military (branches). Most generally, the focus is on the morality of war. Thus, we will discuss the concept of a just war -- under what conditions, if any, can initiating or engaging in the practices of warfare be morally justified? What are the alternatives to war? What forms of activities are legitimate forms of deterrence? Is pacifism, especially Christian pacifism, a reasonable, philosophically defensible alternative to war in the 21st century? Additional topics our readings and discussions may address are the following: what moral quandaries does war (or avoiding war) pose for the military, the individual military professionals, its democratic leaders and its citizens? How should we think about nuclear war and deterrence, terrorism and its deterrence, torture, preemptive strikes, cyber warfare, and humanitarian intervention, among other issues. In thinking about the morality of war, how should we think about the moral psychology of war (the psychology of preparing for war as a warrior, the damage war can do to its participants, especially the moral character of soldiers both in war and after war)? In short, we will seek to understand which military practices for a democratic culture are morally acceptable (and which are not). We will explore that language of moral rules, principles, duties and the moral virtues/vices in an effort to address the ethics of war and its alternatives.
PHI 1308.03 Contemporary Moral Problems: Love And Sex
Paddock   MWF  1:25-2:15 MORRSN 105

As human beings, we naturally desire both love and sex. Yet, love has many forms. Not surprisingly, how the various forms of love relate to sex are fraught with disagreement and raise many questions. What are the various forms of love? Can a life without love in one or more of its forms be a flourishing life - a good human life? Can a life without sex still be a flourishing life? What is sex? Is sex a good thing? If so, under what conditions? What do these various forms of love demand of us in the realm of sexual behavior? What is the purpose and nature of marriage? Is marriage the only morally fitting place for sexual activity or is this notion old-fashioned and outdated? After building up our moral vocabulary by reading some theoretical works on love by Plato, Aristotle, C.S. Lewis, and others, we will spend this course exploring contemporary issues related to love and sex. Issues explored may include, among others, the nature of consent, the #MeToo movement, pornography and the internet, celibacy and the "incel" movement, and marriage (including feminist issues and same-sex marriage issues).

PHI 1308.04 Contemporary Moral Problems: Law, Morality, and Justice
Beckwith  TR   9:30-10:45 MORRSN 106

This course will address several theoretical and applied issues that lie at the intersection of law, morality, and justice. These may include abortion, affirmative action, the death penalty, economic justice, natural law, euthanasia, religious liberty and establishment, sexual ethics, God and morality, censorship, equality and freedom, social justice, and morals legislation. Students in this course will not only be introduced to arguments and perspectives from differing sides, they will be taught how to think and talk about them in ways contrary to how they are addressed in popular culture and social media, both of which are typically deleterious to serious philosophical reflection.

PHI 1308.05 Contemporary Moral Problems: Nature, Animals, and Us
A. Myers   TR  11:00-12:15 MORRSN 110

In this course, we will consider four closely related social issues pressing in on us today: (1) environmental and climate issues; (2) the treatment of animals; (3) bioethical questions regarding biotechnology, genetics, and transhumanism; and (4) the social epidemic of loneliness, depression, and suicide. Several questions will guide our enquiry. For instance, what is nature? What is so special about the natural environment? How should we treat animals, and why should we treat them that way? What considerations should guide us as emerging technologies make new medical and biological possibilities real? Is there any relation between modern forms of social life and the rising rates of reported loneliness, clinical depression, and suicide? We will look at expert contemporary data and analyses as well as also try to look at these issues with fresh eyes, considering perspectives not only from multiple disciplines, such as economics and sociology, but also from film, literature, and even poetry. A pronounced writing component will complement lectures and group discussions.
PHI 1309.01  Introduction to Medical Ethics  
McAllister    MWF    12:20-1:10    MORRSN 106

Medical ethics is a subset of biomedical ethics, a larger area of academic and professional interest, and one that is relatively new. The field of biomedical ethics is vast and includes topics as diverse as the physician-patient relationship, beginning and end of life issues (abortion, euthanasia, assisted suicide), the range of, and limits to, permissible medical experimentation (on human embryos, on non-human animals), genetic engineering (gene therapy, genetic modification, cloning, selecting and enhancing humans), allocation of scarce or expensive resources, organ donation, appeals to rights or justice in health care alternatives, public health care and justice, and more. No single course can cover all of these topics extensively. In this course, we will focus on key issues that often arise in the practice of medicine by physicians, nurses, and other health care professionals, and that often arise for non-medical personnel over the course of their lives. In doing so, students will be presented with a variety of views on several such topics. Surveying diverse views should better equip students to participate in various debates within medical ethics. And while it is not the goal of this course to develop uniformity of belief in students, this course does aim to enhance students’ powers of reasoning and discernment so as to help them learn to discover, appreciate, pursue, and defend the truth in these matters.

PHI 1310.01  Computer Ethics  
Sneed    TR    2:00-3:15    MORRSN 105

The purpose of this class is to help students gain a practical understanding of some of the main themes and issues in ethics in general, and computer ethics in particular. Attention will be given to privacy and security concerns, as well as the role of technology in the workplace.

PHI 1310.02  Computer Ethics  
Sneed    TR    12:30-1:45    MORRSN 105

The purpose of this class is to help students gain a practical understanding of some of the main themes and issues in ethics in general, and computer ethics in particular. Attention will be given to privacy and security concerns, as well as the role of technology in the workplace.

PHI 2303.01  Philosophy and Literature: Existentialism  
Sneed    TR    11:00-12:15    MORRSN 106

This class will focus on a number of writers popularly described as “existentialists,” who are connected to each other not by agreement in their view of life but by wrestling with a common set of questions and concerns about the meaning of human life, the basis for responsible choice, and, ultimately, the quest for identity. One major divide that will be explored concerns the tension between religious and non-religious forms of existentialism. We will begin by looking at Søren Kierkegaard, Fyodor Dostoevsky, and Friedrich Nietzsche as the major nineteenth century figures who loom large over the movement, and then read some of the most important twentieth century figures: Miguel de Unamuno, Jean Paul Sartre, and Albert Camus. Readings will include philosophical writings, novels, and plays.
PHI 2303.02  Philosophy and Literature: Philosophy & Science Fiction  
J. Rosenbaum   MWF   2:30-3:20   MORRSN 108  
A critical engagement of the philosophical ideas represented in selected literary texts, focused on science fiction and dystopian fiction. A wide variety of philosophical topics may be addressed, including but not limited to the nature of science fiction (compared to other sorts of fiction), personal identity, free will, artificial intelligence, the nature of justice, the problem of evil, the limits of human knowledge.

PHI 2305.01  Philosophy & Religion  
Rickabaugh   MWF   11:15-12:05   MORRSN 108  
How do we, finite and imperfect creatures, relate to the divine? That’s what we explore in this class: a philosophical analysis and discussion of our relationships with God. We study and discuss some of the most difficult issues of the Christians faith. What is God’s nature? What does it mean to experience God? If Jesus is the only way to God, then what about those who have never heard of Jesus? How can we be free if God knows what we will do? Do our prayers matter if God knows the future? How could it be loving for God to keep people in hell?

PHI 3310.01  History of Philosophy: Classical  
Miner   TR   9:30-10:45   MORRSN 105  
In this course, we will listen to the ancient philosophers, seeking wisdom through an attentive reading of their texts. We’ll begin with two pre-Socratic thinkers, Parmenides and Heraclitus. Then we’ll read some dialogues by Plato: the Apology of Socrates, Meno, Phaedo, and Phaedrus. In the third part of the course, we will read selections from Plato’s most famous student, Aristotle. The course will conclude with great texts by Stoics and Epicureans.

PHI 3339.01  Law & Religion in the US  
Beckwith   TR   12:30-1:45   MORRSN 102  
This course (cross-listed as PSC 3339 and AMS 3339) concerns the relationships between government and religion, especially, United States Supreme Court decisions dealing with prayer and Bible reading in public schools, government aid to church-related schools, and religious liberty rights of individuals and churches. Philosophical debates about the nature of religious free exercise and establishment, their justification, and their relationship to different political theories.

PHI 4311.01  Epistemology  
Isaacs   TR   3:30-4:45   MORRSN 110  
This course concerns how we think about things. It is about knowledge, belief, and degrees of confidence. These subjects are central to our intellectual lives, but it's far from clear how they work. Most of us speak as if we know some things (whether it is now raining or not; that the shortest distance between two points is a straight line; that killing an innocent person is morally forbidden). Knowledge requires true belief. If you don't believe something then you don't know it, and if something isn't true then you don't know it. What more (if anything) does knowledge require? Does knowledge require certainty, or is it compatible with uncertainty? Can
you know that there is an external world around you, full of material objects and other people? What role does knowledge have in our general thinking? Is belief appropriate in the absence of knowledge, or can it be justified in other ways? Do your past experiences justify your expectations about the future, and if so how? There are many things we're confident of despite knowing that we don't know whether or not they're true. How does such confidence work?

PHI 4317.01 Philosophy of Mind
Haldane TR 9:30-10:45 MORRSN 110

All philosophy begins with reflection on thought and experience, but these very phenomena themselves give rise to philosophical questions about the nature of human beings. On the one hand we appear to be material objects, on the other we seem fundamentally different in being subjects. A rock or a tree is not conscious or have a perspective on the world but human beings are centres of thought, feeling, deliberation and action. We will explore the question what is to have a mind and to be a person? We will explore the theories of major historical, recent and contemporary figures: Plato, Aristotle, Augustine, Aquinas, Descartes, Locke, Hume, Reid, James, Freud, Stein and de Beauvoir, Ryle, Wittgenstein, Davidson and Parfit but always with a view to considering what can be learned from them in the general effort to understand the nature of mind and personhood. As well as reviewing major theories of the nature of mind and person, we will cover such topics as consciousness, intentionality, freedom, action, and personal identity.

PHI 4320.01 Philosophy of Religion
Pruss TR 11:00-12:15 MORRSN 105

What is God like and does God exist? While contemporary American society usually takes these kinds of questions to be the subject of a "blind faith" not open to reasoned examination, the history of philosophy contains 2.5 millennia of reasoned argument on this subject, and the last half century has been no exception to such philosophical debate. We will begin by asking whether it makes sense to talk of a being that is all powerful, all knowing and perfectly good. Then we will examine several of the arguments for the existence of God, including the cosmological argument ("Where do the things that exist come from?") and the design argument ("Why is there so much good in the world?") and the ontological argument ("Does the very concept of a perfect being require the being's existence?"). Finally, we will examine the two main arguments against the existence of God, the argument from evil and the argument from simplicity.

PHI 4324.01 Philosophy in Literature
Moore MW 2:30-3:45 MORRSN 105

In this course we will read selections from both the fiction and the non-fiction of the Kentucky agrarian writer Wendell Berry. Berry’s work addresses some of the most important and traditional philosophical questions. What is the good for human beings? What is happiness and human flourishing? How should we order our lives together in community? What is legitimate authority? What is real and what is true? How do we know that we know? We will read Berry in conversation with two other significant moral philosophers, Alasdair MacIntyre and Iris Murdoch.
PHI 4324.H1 Philosophy in Literature: For Honors Program Students Only
Moore    MW    2:30-3:45    MORRSN 105
In this course we will read selections from both the fiction and the non-fiction of the Kentucky agrarian writer Wendell Berry. Berry’s work addresses some of the most important and traditional philosophical questions. What is the good for human beings? What is happiness and human flourishing? How should we order our lives together in community? What is legitimate authority? What is real and what is true? How do we know that we know? We will read Berry in conversation with two other significant moral philosophers, Alasdair MacIntyre and Iris Murdoch.

PHI 4325.01 Literary & Philosophical Perspectives on Medicine
Marcum    TR    11:00-12:15    MORRSN 107
The course is designed to introduce students entering the healthcare vocations to the richness of literary and philosophical perspectives on those traditions. The readings reflect various perspectives—patients, physicians, and family members—as well as genres—fiction, non-fiction, poetry, film, and drama. The course begins with equipping students in terms of narrative analysis; and, it then turns to the analysis of various literary pieces, especially Gilman’s The Yellow Wallpaper, Tolstoy’s The Death of Ivan Ilyich, Kafka’s Metamorphosis, and Edson’s play Wit. The course concludes with exploring the healing power of poetry.

PHI 4342.01 Contemporary American Phil
S. Rosenbaum    MWF    10:10-11:00    MORRSN 110
Classical American philosophy has roots in the romantic tradition of Western intellectual culture. The classical pragmatists, William James and John Dewey, fall in the lineage from Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, Kierkegaard, Wordsworth and Keats. Existentialists and Romantic poets are their intellectual siblings.

This course explores this romantic tradition of philosophical culture with major emphasis on the works of James and Dewey, along with more contemporary “neo-pragmatists,” including Richard Rorty and Hilary Putnam.

PHI 4363.01 Philosophy & Medicine
Marcum    TR    12:30-1:45    MORRSN 110
The standard model of medical knowledge and practice has been the biomedical model, with its recent development as evidence-based medicine. Since the postgenomic era, precision medicine is rapidly becoming the standard—especially after the 2015 Precision Medicine Initiative. This change parallels and is dependent on a shift from molecular biology to systems biology. In this course, both the theoretical (such as systems theory, complexity theory, and network theory) and conceptual (such as holism, emergence, and robustness) foundations girding the change in medicine are explored. The goal is to examine, from a philosophical perspective, both the advantages and limitations of this change in medicine.
Liberalism can be viewed as a philosophical problem: “What is liberalism?” “What drives its apparently endless change?” “What will (or should) be its future?” This class works towards an overarching theory of liberalism by studying the history of its theory and practice from the 16th century to the present. Using the theoretical understanding achieved in the first part of the course, we proceed to a critical analysis of liberalism’s present state and future possibilities.

This focuses on the thought of Thomas Aquinas (1225-74) less in a historical and exegetical manner than with a view to understanding and critically assessing the interest of his work for ongoing philosophical enquiry. It will examine his general metaphysical framework as presented in such works as On Being and Essence (De ente et essentia) and the Principles of Nature (De principiis naturae) and his approach to specific themes and particular topics in the Summa Theologiae, Summa Contra Gentiles and some other smaller works. It will also set out and evaluate such central notions as those of nature and purpose, causality and explanation, experience and reality. In addition, it will look at particular areas of enquiry such as mind, reason and action, value and ethics, nature and beauty, God and evil as discussed. Additionally, it will review the legacy of Aquinas’s thought as that was developed in successive ‘Thomistic’ movements: ‘second Thomism’, neo-Thomism’, and ‘analytical Thomism’.

The Philosophical Writing course prepares students to write and revise (and revise and revise) papers until they are of publishable or at least conference-presentable quality.

Are there any mid-size objects like planets, chairs, dogs and people? Maybe some of these but not others? If so, why these? (This is basically the special composition question.) Assume now there are some mid-size objects. If so, what does the persistence of such an object consist in? (Endurance, perdurance, etc.) What constitutes the identity of such an object across time? Do such objects have to have parts? Forms? Matter?

This course will critically compare alternative metaethical accounts of moral obligations. We will consider error theory, expressivism (in various forms), constructivism, non-theistic non-natural realism, and naturalistic theories. We will also look at views that come in religious and non-religious forms, including natural law theory and virtue ethics. The course will include a close examination of contemporary divine command theories of moral obligation.
Although the focus of the course will be on metaethical accounts of obligation, some attention will also be given to normative ethics generally, for several reasons. One is that accounts of obligation must explain the relation of obligation to the good; another is that an important criterion of adequacy for a metaethical theory is whether it gives the right normative results.

**PHI 5362.01 Issues in Contemporary PHI of Science**

*Marcum R 2:00-4:45 MORRSN 107*

Personhood is a tricky philosophical problem that has eluded philosophers. Can big data discovery science come to their rescue? In this course, the answer to this question is explored, beginning with the twentieth-century Personalism movement and then transitioning to Christian Smith’s book, *What is a Person?* Big data discovery science is introduced next, especially in terms of postgenomic approaches to quantifying and digitizing the human person. Next, models of the person are discussed, especially the Human Virtual Person project, along with avatars and automata. The phenomenological distinction is then made between the ontic and the ontological status of personhood to address the debate over reductionism–wholism and mechanism–emergentism. The course concludes with constructing a conceptual-theoretical framework for pursuing the tricky problem of personhood vis-à-vis big data discovery science.

**PHI 5XXX.01 Grad Colloquium:**

*STAFF F 9:05-9:55 MORRSN 108*

**PHI 6XXX.01 PHI Faculty Meeting**

*STAFF F 2:30-5:15 MORRSN 107*