

Recent Courses Taught (2006-2009)*

Thomas Nadelhoffer

Florida State University (2006):

The Philosophy of Mind (Spring 2006):

Course Description:

This course is designed to provide students with a general introduction to some of the perennial questions in the philosophy of mind—including, what does it mean to have a mind? What is the “mark of mentality?” What is the relationship between the mind and the body? What is the relationship between my “inner” mental states and my “outward” behavior? Can machines think? What do our beliefs refer to? What is the nature of consciousness? Is common-sense folk psychology threatened by the scientific study of mental states and processes? In attempting to answer these questions, we will examine classics in the philosophy of mind by Rene Descartes, Gilbert Harman, David Lewis, Saul Kripke, Daniel Dennett, Hilary Putnam, David Armstrong, J.J.C. Smart, Jaegwon Kim, Carl Hempel, Paul Churchland, Alan Turing, John Searle, Lynne Rudder Baker, and others.

Texts:

1. John Heil, *Philosophy of Mind: A Guide and Anthology* (Oxford University Press: 2004)
2. Jaegwon Kim, *Philosophy of Mind* (Westview Press: 1996)

The Philosophy of Law (Spring 2006):

Course Description:

This course is a comprehensive introduction to some of the perennial issues in the philosophy of law. We will focus on theories of law—i.e., accounts of the origin, nature, and justification of law—and on other jurisprudential issues such as law and morality, legal interpretation, law and liberty, and the limits and justification of criminal sanctions. By the end of the course, students will have gained a solid understanding of different schools of legal thought as well as the tools to decipher legal opinions. The course will be focused primarily on answers to the following questions: What is law? What is the proper relationship between morality and law? How is the U.S. Constitution to be interpreted? What ought to be the limits of our political and legal freedoms? What are the goals and limits of criminal sanctions?

Text: The Philosophy of Law: Classic and Contemporary Readings with Commentary. Frederick Schauer and Walter Sinnott-Armstrong (eds.)

Seminar: Neuroscience, Moral Responsibility, and the Law (Summer 2006)

Course Description:

In this course we will survey some of the recent literature on the relationship between the sciences of the mind and free will and moral/legal responsibility. Along the way, we will flesh out the boundaries of some of the key positions in the free will debate, discuss whether our gathering understanding of how the mind works sheds light on this debate, and consider whether our conception of the goal and justification of moral and legal responsibility ought to be revised in light of what scientists have learned in the past twenty years about neuro-psychology.

Texts:

1. Brent Garland (ed.), *Neuroscience and the Law: Brain, Mind, and the Scales of Justice* (2004)
2. Laurence Tancredi, *Hardwired Behavior* (2005)
3. Course packet

***Complete syllabi available upon request**

Dickinson College (2006-present):

Ethics (Multiple Sections):

Description:

This course is designed to provide students with an introduction to both classical ethical theories and applied moral issues. The course will be divided into two main parts: 1) a general introduction to the main traditions within ethical theory, and 2) an analysis of how the different ethical theories affect our answers to important, yet difficult, applied ethical issues such as abortion, euthanasia, animal rights, drug criminalization, free speech, punishment, and distributive justice. The goal throughout will be to focus on the interplay between moral philosophy and public policy.

Texts:

1. James Rachels, *The Elements of Moral Philosophy* (MP)
2. Hugh LaFollette (ed.), *Ethics in Practice* (EP)

Crime and Punishment (Fall 2006):

Course Description:

In this class we are going to examine some of the traditional justifications for criminal sanctions. More specifically, we will be examining different models of punishment with an eye towards determining which legal sanctions are pragmatically effective and morally acceptable. Issues to be discussed will include: What is the general justifying aim of punishment? What sorts of constraints must be put in place for various forms of punishment to be morally justified? What sorts of behaviors merit criminal sanctions? What sorts of criminal sanctions are effective? What is the hallmark of legal responsibility? Is capital punishment either effective or morally justified?

Texts:

1. *The Death Penalty in America: Current Controversies*, Hugo Bedau (ed.)
2. *Foundations of Criminal Law*, Leo Katz, Michael Moore, and Stephen Morse (eds.)

Seminar: Morality and the Mind (Fall 2006):

Course Description:

In this class we are going to examine some of the empirical evidence concerning the neuropsychological and evolutionary underpinnings of our moral faculties. Having examined some of the gathering data from moral psychology, we will consider how these data shed light on some traditional moral and legal problems. The goal will be to encourage students to view our moral faculties through a wide variety of lenses—both empirical and philosophical. Issues to be discussed will include: Do non-human primates have a moral faculty? How did human morality evolve? Is altruism possible? How did our sense of fairness evolve? What does contemporary neuroscience reveal about morality? What problems arise in moral and legal philosophy in light of recent and foreseeable developments in neuroscience?

Texts:

1. *Evolutionary Origins of Morality: Cross-Disciplinary Perspectives*, Leonard Katz (ed.)
2. *Sentimental Rules*, Shaun Nichols
3. Course packet

Free Will (Spring 2007):

Course Description

This course is designed to provide students with a general introduction to some of the perennial questions surrounding free will. Along the way we will examine determinism, indeterminism, moral responsibility, and the notion of alternative possibilities. In addition to investigating the traditional debate between determinists and indeterminists, we will also survey some of the contemporary literature on compatibilism, hard incompatibilism, free will skepticism, illusionism, and revisionism. Finally, we will consider whether recent discoveries in the social and brain sciences pose a threat to our picture of ourselves as free, autonomous, and responsible agents.

Texts:

1. Gary Watson (ed.), *Free Will*
2. Course packet

Critical Reasoning (Spring 2007):**Course Description:**

How do arguments work? What makes some arguments better than others? What is the relationship between logic and the law? These are some of the questions we address in this course. The goal is to equip students with the basic reasoning skills that are necessary for recognizing and analyzing argumentation as it occurs in a variety of contexts such as editorials, discussions, speeches, argumentative essays, philosophical texts, and legal cases. To accomplish this, we will study the components of good arguments, different types of arguments, common ways that arguments can go wrong, and techniques for criticizing and constructing arguments. Moreover, we will apply the analytical reasoning skills that we develop in the beginning of the course to real world contemporary moral, legal, and policy issues such as the nature of statutory interpretation, and the appropriateness of judicial activism. We will also consider the legal status of (a) enemy combatants, (b) abortion, (c) music sharing, (d) the insanity defense, (e) executing juveniles, (f) burning crosses, and (g) affirmative action.

Texts:

1. Elias Savellos and Richard Galvin, *Reasoning and the Law* (RL)
2. M. Ethan Katsh and William Rose, *Taking Both Sides: Clashing Views on Legal Issues* (TBS)

Seminar: Intuitions in Philosophy (Fall 2007):**Course Description:**

When doing contemporary analytic philosophy, one frequently finds philosophers appealing to intuitions in their efforts to support their preferred theories. And while this kind of intuition-driven philosophy has been common practice since Socrates, a number of pressing questions arise. What are intuitions? Whose intuitions count? How do we go about exploring the intuitions that matter? Recent discoveries by social psychologists, neuroscientists, and experimental philosophers have cast doubt on this entire approach to doing philosophy. The goal of this course is to familiarize students with (a) the metaphilosophical assumptions that undergird intuition-driven philosophy, (b) the problem with these assumptions, and (c) the various ways philosophers may try to salvage the use of intuitions in philosophy.

Texts:

1. *Rethinking Intuition*, Ramsey and Depaul (eds.)
2. Course packet

First Year Seminar: The Philosophy of Human Rights (Fall 2007)**Course Description:**

What does it mean to have a right? Are some human rights inalienable? What is the relationship between rights and the law? How ought human rights to be enforced? Is humanitarian intervention ever morally, politically, and legal justified? These are the kinds of issues that we will be addressing in our attempts to understand the nature and limitations of human rights. In our effort to shed light on these aforementioned questions, we will examine both traditional and contemporary philosophical treatments of human rights—paying particularly close attention to how these views can provide us with helpful lenses through which to examine the current global state of affairs with respect to human rights.

Texts:

1. Patrick Hayden, *Philosophy of Human Rights: Readings in Context* (2001)
2. Philip Gourevitch, *We wish to inform you that tomorrow we will be killed with our families: Stories from Rwanda* (1998).

Contemporary Philosophy Workshop (Spring 2008 & Spring 2009)

Course Description

This is a skills development course in the close analytic reading of texts in contemporary philosophy, and the challenges of writing a journal-length philosophical essay focused on a contemporary problem. Students will be introduced to a range of contemporary philosophy journals, and the principal research tools with which the contours of contemporary debates in philosophy can be traced. Each student will spend a significant part of the course writing successive drafts of a journal article attempting to respond to a recently published journal article which you have selected. It will be conducted in a seminar/workshop format supplemented by individual meetings with the professor.

Texts

1. Anthony Weston (ed.), *A Rulebook for Arguments*, 3rd Edition
2. Lewis Vaughn, *Writing Philosophy: A Student's Guide to Writing Philosophy Essays*
3. Peg Tittle, *What If...Collected Thought Experiments in Philosophy*

Animal Welfare and Morality (Spring 2008)

Course Description

The central issue that we will address is whether the interests of non-human animals matter, morally speaking. If we think that their interests should be taken into consideration, a number of thorny issues immediately arise. For instance, what obligations do we have towards non-human animals? Do they have rights? If so, whose job is it to enforce them and what kinds of laws should be put in place to protect their welfare? If not, then why should we care about their welfare at all? Should non-human animals be treated no differently than property? Is the consumption of meat morally permissible? Even if it is, are factory farms nevertheless problematic? Finally, is it immoral to use non-human animals for experimentation (e.g., vivisection), entertainment (e.g., circus acts) or sport (e.g., hunting, fishing, dog fighting)? These are the kinds of questions that we will be addressing in this course.

Texts

1. Peter Singer: *Animal Liberation*
2. Cass Sunstein & Martha Nussbaum (eds.): *Animal Rights: Current Debates and New Directions*

Seminar: Free Will and Science (Fall 2008)

Course Description

In this course we will survey some of the recent literature on the relationship between the sciences of the mind and free will and moral/legal responsibility. Along the way, we will flesh out the boundaries of some of the key positions in the free will debate, we will discuss whether our gathering understanding of how the mind works sheds light on this debate, and we will consider whether our conception of the goal and justification of moral and legal responsibility out to be revised in light of what scientists have learned in the past twenty years about neuro-psychology.

Texts

1. Fischer, Kane, Pereboom, and Vargas: *Four Views on Free Will* (Blackwell)
2. Baer, Kaufman, and Baumeister (eds.): *Are We Free? Psychology and Free Will* (OUP)