

Committee on Social Thought **SPRING 2014** Course Schedule --- 1

20697. Plato in the Medieval Islamic World **ORWIN, Alex** 10:30-11:50a F 305 xPLSC 20697/FNDL 20697
T/R Undergrad course

Why did the leading philosophers of medieval Islam turn to the ancient Greek Plato for guidance in facing the challenges of their place and time? This course will consist mainly of a careful reading of the greatest surviving medieval commentary on Plato, Averroes' *Commentary on Plato's Republic*. It will be studied in conjunction with the *Republic* itself, and supplemented by various excerpts from Alfarabi, the father of the medieval Arabic philosophical tradition and a great influence on Averroes.

Prior knowledge of Plato's *Republic*, which will be discussed frequently but not reread word by word, is required. This is meant to be an advanced undergraduate level course with relatively little reading that should be done with great care. I will provide original texts in Hebrew and Arabic for anyone who is interested. We will not be reading the *Republic* in Greek for the simple reason that Averroes himself never did so. I am not assigning secondary sources but would be happy to suggest some if asked: they may be especially useful for writing papers.

25703. Unhappiness **KIMHI, Irad** 1:30-2:50p F 305 xPHIL 21402 & 31402; CMLT
35703. T/R 25703 & 35703
Undergrad course.

"Nothing is funnier than unhappiness" says Nelly in Beckett's *Endgame*. We shall seek to distinguish between unhappiness, as the subject of poetic works, from unhappiness as it is understood by philosophy, which, I would argue, is precisely as funny as nothing. We shall discuss some famous unhappy families. A Greek tragedy (Sophocles: *Oedipus Tyrannus*), a Renaissance tragedy (Shakespeare, *Hamlet*), a modern theater of the absurd (Beckett, *Endgame*).

30411. Mythical History, Paradigmatic Figures: **MORRISSEY, Robert &** 3:00-4:20p xBPRO 26700/CLAS 36713/
Caesar, Augustus, Charlemagne, Napoleon **LOWRIE, Michele** MW CLCV 26713/FNDL 22912/FREN 26701 & 36701
PQ: Third- or Fourth-year standing.

What is the process by which some historical figures take on mythical proportions? This course examines four case studies of conquerors who attained sovereign power in times of war (conquest, civil war, revolution), who had a foundational role in empire-building, and who consciously strove to link themselves to the divine and transcendent. Their immense but ambiguous legacies persist to this day. Although each is distinct as a historical individual, taken together they merge to form a paradigm of the exceptional leader of epic proportions. Each models himself on exemplary predecessors: each invokes and reinvents myths of origin and projects himself as a model for the future. Basic themes entail mythic history, empire, the exceptional figure, modernity's fascination with antiquity, and the paradox of the imitability of the inimitable.

30613. Philosophy and Film: Stanley Cavell **RODOWICK, D.N.** 10:30a-1:20p xCMST 27310 & 37310
W (Seminar)
3:30-6:30p LC 201
T

This seminar is devoted to Stanley Cavell's writings on film as read in the context of his larger philosophical project. Two principal ideas unite Cavell's writings on film and philosophy. These are less separate ideas than iterations of the same ethical problem that succeed one another more or less chronologically, namely, the philosophical confrontation with skepticism and the concept of moral perfectionism accompaniment to our everyday lives, we will discuss all of his major works on cinema and many of the occasional essays while examining his major conceptual contributions to the study of photography and moving images. Cavell's original contributions to the critical study of Hollywood and European cinema, the phenomenology of film and photography, the concept of genres, the study of gender, acting, and film stardom, and to relation between psychoanalysis and film will also be discussed.

PQ: CMST 10100, ARTH 20000, ENGL 10800, ARTV 25300, or consent of instructor.

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30652. What is Art? **TAMEN, Miguel** 3:00-5:50p Wb 207 xRLLT 32000/CMLT 32001
W

This course will address contemporary arguments and claims in aesthetics and the philosophy of art via a detailed discussion of a small number of major texts: Oscar Wilde's "The Decay of Lying" and "The Critic as Artist" (1891), Leo Tolstoy's *What is Art* (1898), and Martin Heidegger's *The Origin of the Work of Art* (1935-7; published 1950). The extravagant claims of these texts are presumed to be of help in describing the ubiquitous attention to art in contemporary affluent societies. A number of more recent essays on aesthetics will also be discussed.

30922. Observation: A History of the Sciences, The Senses, and the Self **DASTON, Lorraine** 9:30a-12:20p F 305 xHIST 44904
M With consent of instructor.

Observation is the most fundamental and pervasive of scientific practices, but it is also integral to everyday experience. Regimens of observation, whether of insects, the weather, the stock market, or city dwellers, refine the senses and cultivate the self. Attention is schooled; tastes are formed; vocabularies expanded. Because observation refers both to an act of perception and the recording of that act, techniques of observation and description, in both word and image, are often inseparable. This seminar explores the history of observation as a way of knowing, sensing, and being. We will read primary sources drawn from the history of both the human and natural sciences, as well as more literary sources.

31924. Plato's Republic **REDFIELD, James** 1:30-2:50p F 305 xFNDL 23105
TR

A close reading of Plato's *Republic*.

34601. How to Think about Literature: the Main Notions **PAVEL, Thomas** 1:30-4:20p xRLLT 36000/CMLT 36001
F

In literary studies new trends and theories rarely supersede older ones. While in physics and biology Aristotle has long been obsolete, literary scholars still find his *Poetics* to be a source of important insights. And yet literary studies are not resistant to change. Over time, they have experienced a genuine historical growth in thinking. Perhaps one can best describe the discipline of literature as a stable field of recurring issues that generate innovative thinking. *How to Think about Literature* will introduce graduate students to the main notion of the field. The aim of the course is to identify an object of study that is integral, yet flexible enough to allow for comparisons between its manifestations in various national traditions.

37316. Friedrich Nietzsche's Thus Spoke Zarathustra **MEIER, Heinrich** 10:00a-12:50p F 505 xGRMN 37314/PLSC 37316/
MW PHIL 34716& 24716/FNDL 27316

This seminar will be taught during the first 5 weeks of the quarter (March 31-April 30, 2014)

In this seminar and a second seminar to be taught in 2015 I shall present a new reading of Nietzsche's most famous work. *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* combines philosophy and poetry, wisdom and prophecy, solitude and politics, speech and deed, preaching in riddles and parody of the Gospel. The work is a challenge to faith in revelation and a task for philosophical interpretation.

In the spring of 2014 I shall interpret books I and II. Books III and IV I shall teach in the spring of 2015. This procedure may be justified in light of Nietzsche's own procedure: He published each of the books before the following book was written and in fact without announcing that one, two or even three books would follow the first one.

I shall use the English translation by Graham Parkes, Oxford World's Classics (ISBN 0199537097). Those who can read the text in German should know that I use the Colli/Montinari edition (Kritische Studienausgabe, Bd. 4, DTV, ISBN 3423301546).

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52000. WKSHP: Political Theory	PITTS, Jennifer	12-1:20p M	P 506	xPLSC 520000
53306. Language and Self-Consciousness	FINKELSTEIN, David & KIMHI, Irad	4:30-7:20p W		xPHIL 53306
55392. Aristotle's <i>Politics</i>	LEAR, Gabriel	9:30a-12:20p W		xPHIL55911

A close reading of this important work of ethical and political theory. Among the topics we will discuss: the relation between the individual and the political community; the relation between private associations and the public, political community; civic virtue; the role of the political community in moral development; slaves and other marginal members of the political community; and the possibility of virtue and happiness in degenerate regimes.

59900. Dissertation Research	Staff	ARR	ARR	
		Admission to Candidacy or Consent of Instructor. Enter section from faculty list on web.		