

# Winter 2018 Philosophy Graduate Course Descriptions

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## **PHIL 526: Topics in Feminist Philosophy: Sexuality** **Professor Peter Higgins** **MW 2-3:15 p.m.**

This course brings philosophical methods to bear on ethical, ontological, and political questions related to sexuality (in the sense of sexual identity and preference). Questions to be considered in this course include:

- What are the arguments for the alleged moral wrongness of homosexuality? Are these arguments sound? Are there reasons for questioning the morality of heterosexuality?
- Should (same-sex) marriage be legal?
- Are there circumstances in which “outing” is morally justified?
- What is “heterosexism”? How is this different from homophobia?
- Is there a single social group the initials LGBT(etc.) identify? Who should (not) be included?
- What does “queer” mean? Who is “queer”?
- How is the oppression of sexual minorities related to gender oppression? How is feminism useful (or not) for the liberation of sexual minorities?

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## **PHIL 542: Philosophy of Mind** **Professor Brian Bruya** **R 3:30-6:10 p.m.**

In this course, we will explore some of the perennial questions regarding the mind. For instance, how can brains cause minds and minds have causative effects on our bodies? What do our modes of perception tell us about the world and about our own minds? What is the will and how free is it? What is a human self? What does it mean to be an intentional being? What is the unconscious? What do different states of consciousness tell us about the mind?

As part of this inquiry, we will explore advanced work in understanding what brain injury tells us about the mind, how artificial intelligence informs our understanding of the mind, and how embodiment is involved in different aspects of mentality.

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**PHIL 595: Phenomenology**  
**Professor Laura McMahan**  
**MW 3:30-4:45 p.m.**

“Phenomenology” names a movement in twentieth-century European Philosophy inaugurated by Edmund Husserl and carried on by Martin Heidegger, Jean-Paul Sartre, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, and a large number of contemporary thinkers. It also names a philosophical methodology: the rigorous description of experience as it is actually lived. In this course, we will approach the study of Phenomenology through a focus on the themes of *embodiment*, *art*, and *politics*. We will focus predominantly on writings by Merleau-Ponty and Heidegger, as well as by contemporary philosophers working in the phenomenological tradition. We will ask questions such as:

- How does our relationship to the world always take an embodied, situated, and perspectival form?
- How is embodied existence characterized by and expressive of individual and cultural habits?
- In what ways do our creative expressions and thinking emerge from our embodied, habitual existence?
- In what ways do artistic expressions reveal the world to us in creative ways, and in what ways might they transform our relationship to our situations, at the individual and the cultural levels?
- In what ways can social and political institutions be organized in ways that *deny* our fundamentally embodied and expressive character?
- As embodied, situated, and perspectival beings, what is the experience of encountering other habitual ways of perceiving and behaving, and what are the ethical and political demands that emerge from this experience?

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**PHIL 602: Teaching Seminar and Practicum**  
**Professor John Koolage**  
**TR 2-3:15 p.m.**

This course will survey contemporary work related to the teaching of philosophy and the philosophy of teaching philosophy. Students will also engage, in a discipline specific way, with the scholarship of teaching and learning. The course will provide students with meaningful, practical experiences, with the goal of preparing them to teach philosophy at the college level.