PHIL 6030: TOPICS IN ANCIENT PHILOSOPHY  TR 11:00-12:15  TIM O’KEEFE
Epicureanism was one of the major philosophical systems competing for the allegiances of thoughtful people in the Hellenistic world. This course will range broadly over Epicurus’ (materialistic and reductionist) metaphysics, (empiricist and anti-skeptical) epistemology, and (egoistic and hedonistic) ethics. Particular topics include: Why the mind is identical to a bodily organ; why skepticism is unlivable and self-refuting; why living simply and reducing your desires leads to pleasure; why you have to love your friends as much as yourself for the sake of your own pleasure; how realizing that death is annihilation helps relieve the fear of death.

PHIL 6085: TOPICS IN HISTORY OF PHILOSOPHY  TR 5:30-6:45  SANDRA DWYER
Hannah Arendt and Feminist Theory: Reading The Human Condition: Was Hannah Arendt, one of the most controversial and original political philosophers of the 20th century, an anti-feminist? Commentators take her to be so, due to her reliance on an Aristotelian distinction between public and private. To familiarize us with key Arendtian ideas and recurring themes, excerpts from a variety of her works will be consulted, but our focus will be on The Human Condition. We will use the exegetical question among commentators to jumpstart an investigation into deeper questions about the essence and scope of feminist philosophy, and whether the public/private split itself is untenable or worth salvaging.

PHIL 6300: METAPHYSICS  TR 9:30-10:45  STEPHEN JACOBSON
The aim of this course is to read, write, and think intensively about a variety of topics in metaphysics—such as free will and determinism, the existence of God, the nature of truth, the nature of necessity, contingent identities, personal identity, the persistence of physical objects, universals and particulars, the relation between objects and their parts, and realism versus anti-realism regarding such areas as science, ethics, modality, the physical universe, among others.

PHIL 6330: PHILOSOPHY OF MIND  TR 4:00-5:15  GEORGE GRAHAM
Opening with a concise survey of the major classical problems in philosophy of mind—mind/body, other minds, consciousness, intentionality, selfhood, among others—the course will then turn to new avenues of research in the field. These include the problems of autism and mindblindness, alcoholism and self-control, and religion and delusion. Special attention will be given to the relevance of classical problems to the new avenues of research.

PHIL 6500: SYMBOLIC LOGIC  MW 12:00-1:15  ED COX
This class presents the concepts and methods of contemporary, first-order formal logic. Students will learn to symbolize statements and arguments, evaluate the validity of arguments, the logical status of sentences, consistency and inconsistency of sets of sentences, and equivalence of pairs of sentences in both sentential and predicate logic. Methods will include truth tables, truth trees and proofs in sentential logic, and interpretations, truth trees, and proofs in predicate logic. The skills acquired in this class are essential for advanced work in philosophy.

PHIL 6700: ETHICS  TR 2:30-3:45  ANDREW I. COHEN
A study of some leading historical and contemporary theories of what the good is, how we can know it, and what evaluative statements mean. The figures we study may include Plato, Aristotle, Epicurus, Hobbes, Hume, Kant, Mill, and some contemporary theorists such as Moore, Hare, Mackie, Gauthier, and Rawls.

PHIL 6770: MORAL PSYCHOLOGY  MW 1:30-2:45  EDDY NAHMIAS
Psychologists, neuroscientists, and other cognitive scientists are increasingly studying moral judgment and behavior, often with little explicit connection to the rich philosophical history of moral theory. Meanwhile, philosophers often neglect the relevance of this empirical research to debates about morality. We will consider how this gap should be bridged as we study the rich interdisciplinary field of moral psychology. Topics may include: reason and emotion, altruism and empathy, free will and moral responsibility; character and virtue; moral intuitions and moral disagreement. Readings will include historical and contemporary selections from philosophy and from relevant sciences.

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Modern societies are not possible without complex systems of law to regulate the actions and interactions of their members. But these systems of law raise many philosophical questions. What is law and how is it related to morality? When, if ever, is it justifiable to deliberately violate the law? What kinds of conduct can be legitimately criminalized? What is a war crime? What does the U.S. Constitution really mean? In this class, we will examine these and related questions by reading philosophical works as well as legal cases.

Beyond Good and Evil: Nietzsche and Moral Psychology. Nietzsche observes retrospectively that his devastating critique of morality has required “a higher swindler and ‘idealist’? There was no psychology at all before me.” Focusing on Beyond Good and Evil, cutting-edge work on that text, and contemporary work in moral psychology, we will examine the indispensible role that empirical psychology plays in Nietzsche’s philosophy, considering among other things in what sense Nietzsche is a “naturalist,” the intersection of his critique with evolutionary accounts of morality, and what his work means for “virtue”-based accounts of ethics.

European Cultural & Intellectual History. Science and Philosophy in the Romantic Age. This course explores the impact of Romanticism on science and philosophy in the early nineteenth century. With the German tradition of Naturphilosophie (philosophy of nature) as our main focus, we will study the contributions of thinkers such as Goethe, Schelling, Herder, and Humboldt to the emerging disciplines of biology and psychology; their interest in such topics as electricity, magnetism, and morphology; and trace their lingering influence in the post-Darwinian world.

Are Emotions Feelings, Judgments or Motivations? This seminar will focus primarily on the relation between actions and emotions. This is the topic of a book I am writing, in which I defend the view that emotions are neither feelings nor judgments but states of prioritized action readiness. I will distribute chapters of the book as we move along, jointly with background readings from philosophy and affective science. Some of the basic issues we will grapple with concern the difference between acting for reasons and acting out of emotions, the interplay between activity and passivity in emotional responding, the biological and social functions of emotions, and the Humean Theory of Motivation.

Images. This course will focus on a cluster of questions concerning the nature of images. How are images distinguished from other forms of representation? What does it mean for an image to depict something, or to be “realistic”? Do images express something essentially uncapturable in language? How are images and vision related, and how can we disentangle the biological and cultural influences on how we see and interpret images? How have the advent of photography and the “pictorial turn” in the culture shaped our interaction with images? What, if anything, is distinctive about photography as a practice of making images? We will address these questions as they arise with respect to a range of art and non-art images, particularly those from the sciences, medicine, religion, and practices of vernacular and technical image-making.

Constructivism in Ethics. With respect to the domain of morality that concerns our moral obligations, T.M. Scanlon claims that moral principles are constructed. He says that “our concern with right and wrong is based on a concern that our actions be justifiable to others on grounds that they could not reasonably reject insofar as they share this concern.” Christine Korsgaard argues for a more radical kind of constructivism in ethics. She claims that reasons, too, are constructed. As she puts it, constructivism goes “all the way down.” This course is a philosophical examination of constructivism in the work Scanlon and Korsgaard.