The John U. Nef Committee on Social Thought

Department Website: http://socialthought.uchicago.edu

Chair

• Robert Pippin

Professors

• Lorraine Daston
• Wendy Doniger
• Hans Joas
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• David Wellbery

Emeriti

• Paul Friedrich
• Leon Kass
• Joel Kraemer
• Ralph Lerner
• James M. Redfield
The John U. Nef Committee on Social Thought was established as a degree granting body in 1941 by the historian John U. Nef (1899-1988), with the assistance of the economist Frank Knight, the anthropologist Robert Redfield, and Robert M. Hutchins, then President of the University. The Committee is a group of diverse scholars sharing a common concern for the unity of the human sciences. Their premises were that the serious study of any academic topic, or of any philosophical or literary work, is best prepared for by a wide and deep acquaintance with the fundamental issues presupposed in all such studies, that students should learn about these issues by acquainting themselves with a select number of classic ancient and modern texts in an inter-disciplinary atmosphere, and should only then concentrate on a specific dissertation topic. It accepts qualified graduate students seeking to pursue their particular studies within this broader context, and aims both to teach precision of scholarship and to foster awareness of the permanent questions at the origin of all learned inquiry.

The primary themes of the Committee’s intellectual life have continued to be literature, religion, philosophy, politics, history, art and society. The Committee differs from the normal department in that it has no specific subject matter and is organized neither in terms of a single intellectual discipline nor around any specific interdisciplinary focus. It exists to bring together scholars in a variety of fields sharing a concern with basic and trans-disciplinary issues, and to enable them to work in close intellectual association with other like-minded graduate students seeking to pursue their particular studies in this broader context. Inevitably, the faculty of the Committee does not encompass within itself the full range of intellectual disciplines necessary for these studies, and the fields represented by the faculty have changed substantially during the Committee’s history. Students apply to work with the faculty who are here at any particular time and, where appropriate, with other faculty at the University of Chicago. Although it offers a variety of courses, seminars, and tutorials, it does not require specific courses. Rather, students, with the advice of Committee faculty, discover the points at which study in established disciplines can shape and strengthen their research, and they often work closely with members of other departments. Through its several lecture and seminar series, the Committee also seeks to draw on the intellectual world beyond the University.

Students admitted to the Committee work toward the Ph.D. There are three principal requirements for this degree: the fundamentals examination, the foreign language examination and the dissertation. Study for the fundamental exam centers on twelve to fifteen books, selected by the student in consultation with the faculty. Each student is free to draw from the widest range of works of imaginative literature, religious thought, philosophy, history, political thought, and social theory and ranging in date from classical times to the twentieth century. Non-Western books may also be included. Study of these fundamental works is intended to help students relate their specialized concerns to the broad themes of the Committee’s intellectual life. Some of the student’s books will be studied first in formal
courses offered by faculty, though books may also be prepared through reading courses, tutorials, or independent study.

Preparation for the fundamentals examination generally occupies the first two or three years of a student’s program, together with appropriate philological, statistical, and other disciplinary training.

After successful completion of the fundamentals examination, the student writes a dissertation under faculty supervision on an important topic using appropriately specialized skills. A Committee on Social Thought dissertation is expected to combine exact scholarship with broad cultural understanding and literary merit. In lieu of an oral defense, a public lecture on an aspect of their research of general interest to the scholarly community is to be given.

As a partial guide, and to suggest the variety of possible programs, there follows a list of titles of some of the dissertations accepted by the Committee since 1994:

- Heidegger’s Polemos: From Being to Politics
- Nature’s Artistry: Goethe’s Science and *Die Wahlverwandtschaften*
- Nietzsche’s Schopenhauer: The Peak of Modernity and the Problem of Affirmation
- Feminism and Liberalism: The Problem of Equality
- A Hesitant Dionysos: Nietzsche and the Revelry of Intuition
- Conrad’s Case Against Thinking
- Reading the Republic as Plato’s Own Apology
- Cartesian Theodicy: Descartes Quest for Certitude
- Plato’s Gorgias and the Power of Speech and Reason in Politics
- World Government and the Tension between Reason and Faith in... Dante Alighieri’s *Monarchia*
- A House Divided: The Tragedy of Agamemnon
- Eros and Ambition in Greek Political Thought
- Natural Ends and the Savage Pattern: The Unity of Rousseau’s Thought
- Revisited
- A Sense of Place. Reading Rousseau: The Idea of Natural Freedom
- Churchill’s Military Histories: A Rhetorical Study
- A Nation of Agents: The Making of the American Social Character
- The Problem of Religion in Spinoza’s *Tractatus Theologico Politicus*
- A Great Arrangement of Mankind: Edmund Burke’s Principles and Practice of Statesmanship
- The Dance of the Muses
- Tocqueville Unveiled: A Historian and his Sources in *L Ancien Régime et la Révolution*
• The Search for Biological Causes of Mental Illness
• War, Politics, and Writing in Machiavelli’s *Art of War*
• Plato’s Laws on the Roots and Foundation of the Family
• The Philosophy of Friendship: Aristotle and the Classical Tradition on Friendship and Self Love
• Regions of Sorrow: Spaces of Anxiety and Messianic Tome in Hannah Arendt and W.H. Auden
• Converting the Saints: An Investigation of Religious Conflict using a Study of Protestant Missionary Methods in an Early 20th Century Engagement with Mormonism
• The Significance of Art in Kant’s *Critique of Judgment*
• Historicism and the Theory of the Avant Garde
• Human Freedom in the Philosophy of Pierre Gassendi
• Taking Her Seriously: Penelope and the Plot of Homer’s *Odyssey*
• Karna in the Mahabharata
• Hegel on Mind, Action, and Social Life: The Theory of Geist as a Theory of Explanation. Liberalism in the Shadow of Totalitarianism: The Problem of Authority and Values Since World War Two
• Nietzsche’s *Problem of Socrates and Plato’s Political Psychology*
• Tocqueville’s *New Political Science*: A Critical Assessment of Montesquieu’s Vision of a Liberal Modernity
• Magnanimity and Modernity: Self Love in the Scottish Enlightenment
• Hegel’s Conscience: Radical Subjectivity and Rational Institutions
• Religious Zeal, Political Faction and the Corruption of Morals: Adam Smith and the Limits of Enlightenment
• This Distracted Globe: Hamlet and the Misgivings of Early Modern Memory
• Teaching the Contemplative Life: The Psychagogical Role of the Language of Theoria in Plato and Aristotle
• The Allegory of the Island: Solitude, Isolation, and Individualism in the Writings of Jean Jacques Rousseau
• The Convergence of Homer’s *Odyssey* and Joyce’s *Ulysses*
• The Curiosity of the Idle Reader: Self Consciousness in Renaissance Epic
• Bacon on Virtue: The Moral Philosophy of Nature’s Conqueror
• Picturing the Path: The Visual Rhetoric of Barabudur
• Collecting Objects/Excluding People: Chinese Subjects and the American Art Discourse 1870-1900
• From Religionskrieg to Religionsgesprach: The Theological Path of Boden’s Colloquium Heptapleromeres
• The Problem of Autonomy in the Thought of Montaigne
• The Virtue of the Soul and the Limits of Human Wisdom: The Search for *SÔPHROSUNÊ* in Plato’s *Charmides*
• Nietzsche’s “Fantastic Commentary”: On the Problem of Self-Knowledge
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- Erotic Uncertainty: Towards a Poetic Psychology of Literary Creativity
- Cruelty: On the Limits of Humanity
- Hamletian Romanticism: Social Critique and Literary Performance from Wordsworth to Trollope
- Hamlet’s Arab Journey: Adventures in Political Culture and Drama 1952-2002
- Acquiring “Feelings that do not Err”: Moral Deliberation and the Sympathetic Point of View in the Ethics of Dai Zhen
- The Contest of Regimes and the Problem of Justice: Political Lessons from Aristotle’s *Politics*
- Socrates and the Second Person: The Craft of Platonic Dialogue
- In the Grip of the Future: The Tragic Experience of Time
- Thucydides on the Political Soul: Pericles, Love of Glory, and Freedom
- Connecting Agency and Morality in Kant’s Moral Theory
- Tocqueville and the Question of the Nation
- Pierre Bayle’s “Machiavellianism”
- The Burial of Hektor: The Emergence of the Spiritual World of the Polis in the *Iliad*
- Hegel’s Defense of Moral Responsibility
- Dostoevsky, Madness, and Religious Fervor: Reason and its Adversaries
- The Uses of Boredom
- Two Loves, Two Cities: *Intelectus* and *Voluntas* in Augustine’s *Political Thought*
- Power and Goodness: Leibniz, Locke and Modern Philosophy
- Soren Kierkegaard and the Very Idea of Advance Beyond Socrates
- Between City and Empire: Political Ambition and Political Form in Plutarch’s *Parallel Lives*
- Gluttony and Philosophical Moderation in Plato’s *Republic*
- Plato’s Immoralists and their Attachment to Justice: A Look at Thrasyvachus and Callicles
- The Great Law of Change: Edmund Burke, Thomas Paine, and the Meaning of the Past in a Democratic Age
- Devil’s Advocate: Politics and Morality in the Work of Carl Schmitt
- Relation without Relation: Emily Dickinson – Maurice Blanchot
- Perfecting Adam: The Perils of Innocence in the Modern Novel
- Stubborn Against the Fact: Literary Ideals, Philosophy and Criticism
- One Man Show: Poiesis and Genesis in the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*
- Political Theology in Eric Voegelin’s Philosophy of History
- The Ancient Quarrel Unsettled: Plato and the Erotics of Tragic Poetry
- Heroic Action and Erotic Desire in Sidney, Spenser, and Shakespeare
- Dostoevsky and Suicide: A Study of the Major Characters
- The Aesthetics of Ambivalence - Pirandello, Schopenhauer, and the Transformation of the European Social Imaginary
- Desire and Democracy - Spinoza and the Politics of Affect
Area of Study

Work with the Committee is not limited as to subject matter. Any serious program of study, based on the Fundamentals Examination, culminating in a scholarly doctoral dissertation, and requiring a framework wider than that of a specialized department, may be appropriate. In practice, however, the Committee is unwilling to accept a student for whom it is unable to provide competent guidance in some special field of interest, either from its own ranks or with the help of other members of the University.

Admission

Students in the Committee have unusual scope for independent study, which means that successful work in Social Thought requires mature judgment and considerable individual initiative. Naturally, the Committee wishes to be reasonably confident of an entering student’s ability to make the most of the opportunities the Committee offers and to complete the program of study. Hence, we request that the personal statement required by the University application should take the form of a letter to the Committee which addresses the following questions: What intellectual interests, concerns, and aspirations lead you to undertake further study and why do you want to pursue them with the Committee? What kind of work do you propose to do here? (If you can, include your intentions for the
Fundamentals requirement, further language study, and dissertation research.) How has your education to date prepared you? In addition, you should include a sample of your best written work, preferably relevant to the kind of work you propose to do at the Committee, though you may also include a short sample of fiction or poetry in addition. Should we consider the evidence submitted to be insufficient, we may ask you to add to it. Applicants are also required to take the Graduate Record Examination.

How To Apply

The application process for admission and financial aid for all Social Sciences graduate programs is administered through the divisional Office of the Dean of Students. The Application for Admission and Financial Aid, with instructions, deadlines and department specific information is available online at: https://apply-ssd.uchicago.edu/apply/.

Questions pertaining to admissions and aid should be directed to admissions@ssd.uchicago.edu (admissions@ssd.uchicago.edu) or (773) 702-8415. Most material for the application can be uploaded into the application system. Additional correspondence and materials sent in support of applications should be mailed to:

The University of Chicago
Division of the Social Sciences
Admissions Office, Foster 107
1130 East 59th Street
Chicago, IL 60637

Foreign students must provide evidence of English proficiency by submitting scores from either the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) or the International English Language Testing System (IELTS).

For additional information about the Social Thought program, please call 773-702-8410.

Courses

The department website offers descriptions of graduate courses scheduled for the current academic year: http://socialthought.uchicago.edu/page/social-thought-courses-descriptions. Or you may email the Committee directly com-soc-tht@uchicago.edu and request a copy of the current course schedule.
Social Thought Courses

**SCTH 30002. Performance as Subversion under Totalitarian Censorship. 100 Units.**
This course explores theater, music, and film as forms of subversion during periods of militaristic and totalitarian dictatorships where strict censorship was applied to public performance. Students choose topics and submit a final paper after a class presentation.
Instructor(s): D. Buch  
Terms Offered: Winter  
Equivalent Course(s): TAPS 29104

**SCTH 30104. Heidegger's The Basic Problem of Phenomenology. 100 Units.**
No description available.
Instructor(s): Irad Kimhi  
Terms Offered: Autumn

**SCTH 30105. Introduction to Spinoza's Ethics. 100 Units.**
As we read this work we will be concerned with its place in history of philosophy and we shall engage with some of its contemporary readers.
Instructor(s): I. Kimhi  
Terms Offered: Spring  
Prerequisite(s): Introduction to Spinoza’s Ethics is for advanced undergraduate students with background in philosophy and for graduate students.
Note(s): Introduction to Spinoza’s Ethics is for advanced undergraduate students with background in philosophy and for graduate students.
Equivalent Course(s): PHIL 27202, PHIL 37202

**SCTH 30108. The Children of Parmenides. 100 Units.**
Plato honors Parmenides with the title "father Parmenides", presumably for being the founder of philosophy as the "logical" study of being and thinking. In this course we shall discuss the struggle of ancient and modern philosophers to come to terms with this powerful heritage -- in particular, we shall focus on the elaboration, reception and criticism of Parmenides' theses that being and thinking are the same, and that talk of negation or falsity is incoherent or empty.
Among the philosophers whose work we shall discuss are Plato, Aristotle, Frege, Russell, and Wittgenstein.
Instructor(s): I. Kimhi  
Terms Offered: Winter
Equivalent Course(s): PHIL 21113, PHIL 31113

**SCTH 30925. The Humanities as a Way of Knowing. 100 Units.**
Despite intertwined histories and many shared practices, the contemporary humanities and sciences stand in relationships of contrast and opposition to one another. The perceived fissure between the “Two Cultures” has been deepened by the fact that the bulk of all history and philosophy of science has been devoted to the natural sciences. This seminar addresses the history and epistemology of what in the nineteenth century came to be called the “sciences” and the “humanities” since the Renaissance from an integrated perspective. The historical sources will focus on shared practices in, among others, philology, natural history, astronomy, and history. The philosophical source will develop an epistemology of the humanities: how humanists know what they know.
Instructor(s): L. Daston  
Terms Offered: Spring  
Note(s): Consent of instructor.
Equivalent Course(s): PHIL 20925, PHIL 30925
SCTH 32202. Ethical and Theological Issues in Hinduism. 100 Units.
An exploration of Hindu attitudes to, and mythologies of, women, animals, people of low caste, members of various religious groups, homosexuals, foreigners, criminals, and in general violators of the codes of dharma. The course is designed around the new Norton Anthology of Hinduism, supplemented by a history of the Hindus. The readings will focus closely on a few texts, some Sanskrit and some from vernacular literatures, from several different historical periods. It will situate each major idea in the context of the historical events to which it responded: the Rig Veda in the Indo-European migrations, the Upanishads in the social crisis of the first great cities on the Ganges, and so forth, up to the present day BJP revisionist tactics. And it will emphasize the alternative traditions of women and the lower classes.
Instructor(s): Wendy Doniger Terms Offered: Spring 2017
Prerequisite(s): Permission of instructor. 15-20 page paper at the end of the course.
Note(s): A seminar suitable for BA, MA and PhD students
Equivalent Course(s): SALC 38304, RLST 23904, HREL 33702

SCTH 32403. Frege's Foundations of Arithmetic as Philosophy and Literature. 100 Units.
One peculiarity of current English-language philosophy is that its founding text is a nineteenth-century German effort to reform mathematics. Gottlob Frege's *Grundlagen der Arithmetic* (1884) was ignored in its day, before the discovery of Russell's Paradox round 1900 seemed to make its mathematics otiose. But its impact on logic, metaphysics, philosophical method and style have made the book a classic, though a fragmentary one. This course aims to regain the unity of this dense but short work, reading for argument and intention, texture and style, in the original and J.L. Austin's fine English translation.
Instructor(s): Andrei Pop Terms Offered: Winter. Winter 2017

SCTH 34017. Fact and Fiction: Hoaxes and Misunderstandings. 100 Units.
This course will focus on fictional texts that readers have misrecognized as factual accounts, as well as the less frequent case of factual texts misidentified as fictional. Students will study the rhetorical strategies or historical and cultural circumstances responsible for these “errors of pragmatic framing” (O. Caïra) by investigating the contexts governing the production or reception of works such as Apuleius’ *The Golden Ass*, *Les Lettres d’une religieuse portugaise*, Denis Diderot’s *La Religieuse*, Wolfgang Hildesheimer’s *Marbot: A Biography*, and Orson Welles’ adaptation of *The War of the Worlds*, among others.
Instructor(s): Françoise Lavocat Terms Offered: Spring
Equivalent Course(s): FREN 24017, CMLT 24017, CMLT 34017, FREN 34017

SCTH 35001. Theatricality in Modern Art from 1700 to Present. 100 Units.
We examine the dramatic dimension of art in the modern era broadly speaking, paying attention to recurring themes like the Aristotelian theory of action, the Diderotian theory of acting, and the linguistic theory of speech acts, as well as to momentous historical events like the French Revolution, the rediscovery of antiquity, and the advent of photography and motion pictures. Paradigms that have been influential in one or another discipline like Michael Fried’s theory of theatricality (in art history), Heinrich Kleist’s theory of puppets (in German literature and theatre theory) and Friedrich Nietzsche’s theory of tragedy (in music and philosophy) and will also be scrutinized.
Instructor(s): Andrei Pop Terms Offered: Autumn
SCTH 35002. Rethinking the Social History of Art. 100 Units.
Prior to the Second World War, and again in the wake of the 1968 unrests, a politically committed art history carried out innovative research in the social and political stakes of art with the ambition to offer a comprehensive critique of society. What kind of social history of art does our troubled epoch need (or deserve)? Is the social history of art primarily activism by other means or does it aspire to be a value-free social science? If the latter, what economic, sociological, anthropological, or other foundation should it have? With readings in the Hegelian, Marxist, Feminist, and other art historical traditions.
Instructor(s): Andrei Pop Terms Offered: Winter. Winter 2017
Equivalent Course(s): ARTH 25002, ARTH 35002

SCTH 35003. Symbolism between Universality and Solipsism. 100 Units.
Symbolism in Western European literature and visual arts is usually seen as a triumph of the psychological, the navel-gazing, in the words of James Ensor, the "Moi universel". But it is as much a dogged search for objective grounds of expression and intelligibility amidst a sea of subjectivity: from Van Gogh's letters and Mallarme's poems to the new logical symbolism of Frege and the stream of consciousness of William James, the epoch saw an unprecedented effort to rationalize the private, the incommunicable, experience itself. This is a broad revisionist look at a transitional but key era in intellectual history, featuring some new material from the instructor's own work in progress.
Instructor(s): Andrei Pop Terms Offered: Spring. Spring 2017
Equivalent Course(s): ARTH 25003, ARTH 35003

SCTH 35901. Sophocles, Oedipus at Colonus. 100 Units.
A close literary and philological analysis of one of the most extraordinary of all Greek tragedies. While this play, in its many dimensions, will offer more than adequate material for classroom analysis and discussion, some attention will also be directed to its reception.
Instructor(s): G. Most Terms Offered: Winter 2013
Prerequisite(s): Greek or consent of instructor
Equivalent Course(s): GREK 40112, CMLT 35903
SCTH 37016. Goethe’s Novels II: Die Wahlverwandtschaften. 100 Units.

After considering Goethe’s Werther and Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre in the first phase of this three-part seminar, we turn to Goethe’s “most beautiful book” (as he put it): Die Wahlverwandtschaften of 1809. The remarkable feature of Goethe’s novelistic production is that each of his four novels develops a distinct formal or generic conception. In the case of Elective Affinities, we have what the philosopher-aesthetician Karl Ferdinand Solger referred to as a “tragic novel” and what others have called a “novel of society.” Other terms suggest themselves, for example: “experimental novel” (in view of the fact that it is a scientific experiment from which the novel draws its leading metaphorical model). The seminar will consider the question of genre along with other, related issues: the place of science/knowledge in the novel, the novel in its historical context, the novel’s mode of citation and signification. Major contributions to the criticism of the novel (from Solger to Kittler) will be discussed as we develop a close reading of the novel across the ten weeks of the quarter. The written requirement for the seminar is a suite of bi-weekly “response papers.” The seminar will include a special one-day roundtable on Walter Benjamin’s essay on Die Wahlverwandtschaften with the participation of guest scholars.

Instructor(s): D. Wellbery Terms Offered: Autumn
Equivalent Course(s): GRMN 37016

SCTH 37320. Leo Strauss on the Philosophic Life. 100 Units.

No philosopher before Leo Strauss stressed with similar emphasis that philosophy has to be conceived not as a discipline or a set of doctrines but as a way of life, and few have so sharply grasped the philosophic life and separated it from edifying trivializations or pious appropriations as Strauss did in the very same essay in which he introduced the concept for the first time: “The Law of Reason in the Kuzari.” The seminar will focus on this text, which seems to deal with a rather remote historical subject. Originally published in 1943, it is one of Strauss’s most intransigent essays. I shall also discuss “On Classical Political Philosophy” (1945), “The Spirit of Sparta or the Taste of Xenophon” (1939), and “Farabi’s Plato” (1945).

Instructor(s): H. Meier Terms Offered: Spring
Note(s): The seminar will take place in Foster 505 on Monday/Wednesday, 10:30 a.m. – 1:20 p.m.*, during the first five weeks of the term (March 27 – April 26, 2017). * The time may be changed after the first session to 10:00 a.m. – 12:50 p.m.
Equivalent Course(s): PHIL 37320

SCTH 37501. Psychoanalysis and Philosophy. 100 Units.

An introduction to psychoanalytic thinking and its philosophical significance. A question that will concern us throughout the course is: What do we need to know about the workings of the human psyche—in particular, the Freudian unconscious—to understand what it would be for a human to live well? Readings from Plato, Aristotle, Freud, Bion, Betty Joseph, Paul Gray, Lacan, Lear, Loewald, Edna O’Shaughnessy, and others.

Instructor(s): J. Lear Terms Offered: Autumn
Prerequisite(s): Course for Graduate Students and Upper Level Undergraduates. Student must have completed at least one 30000 level Philosophy course.
Equivalent Course(s): PHIL 38209,HIPS 28101,PHIL 28210
**SCTH 38004. Hegel’s Philosophy of Right. 100 Units.**
In this course we shall seek to understand Hegel’s 1821 book, *Elements of the Philosophy of Right*. This book is traditionally understood to contain Hegel’s “political philosophy,” but the book also proposes a metaphysics of human agency, claims about the relation of philosophy to its own historical time, a rejection of utopian political thinking, a theory of crime and punishment, and a theory of the relationship between individual and communal life that he says is based on his “speculative philosophy,” and so is “dialectical.” In Hegel’s terms, the book should be understood as his theory of “objective spirit,” and we shall attempt to understand what that subject matter might be. The course will be a seminar/discussion with restricted enrollment at both the undergraduate and graduate level.
Instructor(s): R. Pippin  
Terms Offered: Spring  
Prerequisite(s): Prior work in philosophy, especially in practical philosophy, is highly recommended.  
Note(s): Undergrads enroll in sections 01 & 02. Graduates enroll in section 03.  
Equivalent Course(s): PHIL 38203,FNDL 28204,PHIL 28203

**SCTH 38201. Pascal and Simone Weil. 100 Units.**
The course will examine two major French existential thinkers, Blaise Pascal and Simone Weil, focusing on their intellectual background, their strong originality, and their religious perspective.
Instructor(s): T. Pavel  
Terms Offered: Spring  
Prerequisite(s): Third- or fourth-year standing. Instructor consent required for first- and second-year undergraduates.  
Note(s): Taught in English, with a special weekly session in French for students seeking French credit.  
Equivalent Course(s): CMLT 29101,CMLT 39101,FREN 39100,RLST 24910,FNDL 21812,FREN 29100

**SCTH 38250. Don Quixote. 100 Units.**
The course will provide a close reading of Cervantes' Don Quixote and discuss its links with Renaissance art and Early Modern narrative genres. On the one hand, Don Quixote can be viewed in terms of prose fiction, from the ancient Greek romances to the medieval books of knights errant and the Renaissance pastoral novels. On the other hand, Don Quixote exhibits a desire for Italy through the utilization of Renaissance art. Beneath the dusty roads of La Mancha and within Don Quixote’s chivalric fantasies, the careful reader will come to appreciate glimpses of images with Italian designs. Taught in English. Spanish majors will read the text in the original and use Spanish for the course assignments. The course format would be alternating lectures by the two faculty members on Mondays and Wednesdays. Fridays are devoted to discussion of the materials presented on Mondays and Wednesdays.  
Instructor(s): F. de Armas, T. Pavel  
Terms Offered: Spring  
Prerequisite(s): SPAN 21703 for students seeking Spanish credit
SCTH 39126. Empire and Enlightenment. 100 Units.
The European Enlightenment was a formative period in the development of modern historiography. It was also an age in which the expansionist impulse of European monarchies came under intense philosophical scrutiny on moral, religious, cultural, and economic grounds. We chart a course through these debates by focusing in the first instance on histories of Rome by William Robertson and Edward Gibbon, as well as writing on law and historical method by Giambattista Vico.
Instructor(s): Ralph Lerner and Clifford Ando Terms Offered: Winter 2013 Equivalent Course(s): CLCV 25107, CLAS 35107, HIST 30502, HIST 20502

SCTH 39127. The Political Thought of James Madison. 100 Units.
A close examination of the philosophic underpinnings of Madison's political thought.
Instructor(s): Ralph Lerner Terms Offered: Autumn

SCTH 39128. Political Essays from the "Encyclopedie" 100 Units.
A window into the project of the radical enlightenment as exemplified by selected political essays in Diderot and d'Alembert's Encyclopedie.
Instructor(s): Ralph Lerner Terms Offered: Autumn. Autumn 2016 Equivalent Course(s): FNDL 29218

SCTH 39129. Burke's Politics. 100 Units.
An examination of Edmund Burke's speeches and writings on politics, empire, and revolution.
Instructor(s): Ralph Lerner Terms Offered: Winter. Winter 2017

SCTH 41607. Wisdom and other virtues of the intellect: Heidegger's comment. 100 Units.
This seminar will do a careful reading and investigation of Heidegger’s interpretation of Aristotle on the intellectual virtues, in particular phronesis and sophia. We shall consider how the intellectual virtues differ from the ethical virtues. We shall do a careful reading of Heidegger’s discussion of this material in his book Plato’s Sophist and we shall compare it closely with Aristotle’s own discussion in Book 6 of the Nicomachean Ethics.
Instructor(s): I. Kimhi; J. Lear Terms Offered: Winter Equivalent Course(s): PHIL 51714

SCTH 45712. Judah Halevi's Kuzari. 100 Units.
A close reading of select passages from this classic work of medieval Jewish philosophy and apologetics. The focus will be on Book 1, which presents the frame narrative -- a dialogue between the King of Kazaria and a philosopher, Christian, Muslim, and Jew -- along with the main ideas: the manifestation of the God of Israel in history, the chosenness of the people in the chosen land. The work will be read in light of its sources in the Islamic world (especially works of Ismaili and Sufi spirituality and anti-Aristotelianism) and the contemporary intellectual culture.
Instructor(s): James Robinson and Ralph Lerner Terms Offered: Winter 2017 Equivalent Course(s): ISLM 45712, RLST 25903, FNDL 25903, HIJD 45712
SCTH 50058. Sem: Pragmatism and Religion. 100 Units.
The American philosopher William James is not only one of the founders of pragmatism, but also the inaugurator of a methodological revolution in the empirical study of religion, namely of an approach that deals with religion not so much as a set of doctrines or institutions, but as articulations of intense experiences of self-transcendence. Starting with James's classical work "The Varieties of Religious Experience" of 1902, this class will also deal with the contributions of other pragmatist thinkers to the study of religion - ranging from classical authors (Peirce, Royce, Dewey) to contemporary thinkers (Putnam, Rorty, John Smith) and my own writings in this area.
Instructor(s): H. Joas Terms Offered: Autumn
Prerequisite(s): This is a 10 week course taught in 5 weeks
Equivalent Course(s): AASR 50081, SOCI 50081

SCTH 50400. Logic, Truth, and Pictures. 100 Units.
The course aims at the logic of pictures, but because it is controversial whether such a topic exists, or should exist at all (some arguing that pictures are alogical, others that they require a logic sui generis), the course will be less a primer in "visual logic" or "logic of artifacts" than a preliminary investigation of what sets pictures apart from and how they are like other modes of thinking. Resemblance, reference, and fiction will be recurring topics; we begin with questions about the nature and peculiarity of pictures and move on to the prospects of arguing about and through pictures, concluding with the questions of their relation to truth. We will actually look at pictures besides talking about them. We will also ask what kind of objects beside conventional two-dimensional images and sculptures might usefully be called pictures. Reading will include classics (Plato, Gombrich), as well as some of the instructor's own work in progress, based on the ideas of Gottlob Frege.
Instructor(s): Andrei Pop Terms Offered: Autumn

SCTH 50605. On Aesthetic Form. 100 Units.
This seminar is part of a joint research project (The Idealist Project: Self-Determining Form and the Foundation of the Humanities) sponsored by the Neubauer Collegium. The focus of the year’s activities is the topic of aesthetic form. There will be two conferences on this topic with the participation of leading international scholars in Fall 2016 and Spring 2017, with the conference participants returning for seminar sessions devoted to readings of their work. Particular (but not exclusive) attention will be paid to the theory of tragedy. Important points of reference are works by Goethe, Schelling, Hegel, Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, Benjamin, and Cavell.
Instructor(s): D. Wellbery; R. Pippin Terms Offered: Winter
Equivalent Course(s): PHIL 51903, GRMN 51917
SCTH 51302. The Formation of the Modern Concept of History. 100 Units.
This seminar aims to investigate the formation of the modern concept of History (from the end of the 18th and to the end of the 19th century), mainly in German and in France. Dealing with intellectual history, it will concentrate first on the great topos of the historia magistra vitae (History mistress of life), its questioning and finally its dissolution with the emergence of a modern concept of time and a new understanding of what is History. Time becomes an actor and history is understood in the singular as History and progress (die Geschichte in German). The period of the French Revolution will, then, play a capital role, both at a real and symbolic level, in France and beyond. The seminar will also follow the emergence and the progressive advent of the modern regime of historicity, even if expressions of resistance and even denial of it (through Restauration, Reaction, longing for an idealized past, etc.) were active and many.
Instructor(s): Francois Hartog Terms Offered: Autumn. Autumn 2016
Prerequisite(s): Required readings: Reinhart Koselleck, FUTURES PAST; ON THE SEMANTICS OF HISTORICAL TIME, MIT 1985; Francois Hartog, REGIMES OF HISTORICITY, PRESENTISM AND EXPERIENCES OF TIME, Columbia, 2015.

SCTH 51414. Monotheism and Its Discontents. 100 Units.
This course will study in the same framework some of the most radical heretics among Jews, Christians, and Muslims across the centuries, from antiquity to the twentieth century: dualists, deniers of prophecy, philosophical deists and atheists. The main purpose of this exercise is to detect similar patterns of rejection of the Abrahamic God, and to search for similarities and differences between such patterns and atheistic trends in other cultures, such as ancient Greece. The study of the different ways in which monotheism was rejected in history might help us identify more precisely core elements of the Abrahamic religions.
Instructor(s): Guy G. Stroumsa Terms Offered: Autumn. Autumn 2016

SCTH 55507. Kierkegaard's The Sickness unto Death. 100 Units.
This seminar will be a close reading of Kierkegaard's classic text, written under the pseudonym of "Anti-Climacus", among the topics to be discussed are the nature and forms of despair, hopelessness and hopefulness, faith, sickness, guilt and sin.
Instructor(s): Jonathan Lear Terms Offered: Autumn

SCTH 55604. Metaphysics: Substance, Subject, Freedom. 100 Units.
A graduate seminar devoted to the dual notions of ‘substance’ and ‘subject’ which are associated respectively with the ideas of nature and of freedom. We shall look at some of the transformations that the concept of ‘ousia’ undergoes through the history of philosophy from Aristotle to Kant and German idealism.
Instructor(s): I. Kimhi Terms Offered: Spring
Equivalent Course(s): PHIL 55604

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Font Notice

This document should contain certain fonts with restrictive licenses. For this draft, substitutions were made using less legally restrictive fonts. Specifically:

Times was used instead of Trajan.

Times was used instead of Palatino.

The editor may contact Leepfrog for a draft with the correct fonts in place.