The John U. Nef Committee on Social Thought

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

Chair

• Robert Pippin

Professors

• Lorraine Daston
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• David Wellbery

Emeriti

• Leon Kass
• Joel Kraemer
• Ralph Lerner
• James M. Redfield
• David Tracy
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 Heptaplomeres
• The Problem of Autonomy in the Thought of Montaigne
• The Virtue of the Soul and the Limits of Human Wisdom: The Search for SÔPHROSUNÉ in Plato’s Charmides
• Nietzsche’s “Fantastic Commentary”: On the Problem of Self-Knowledge
• 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: Intellectus 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 Thrasymachus 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
• The Multiplicity of Scripture - The Confluence of Textual Traditions in the Making of the Antwerp Polyglot Bible (1568-1573)
• Intelligence Incarnate: The Logic of Recognition in Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit
• King Lear and its Folktale Analogues
• Can There be Philosopher-Kings in a Liberal Polity? A Reinterpretation and Reappropriation of the Ideal Theory in Plato's Republic
• Intelligence Incarnate: The Logic of Recognition in Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit
• King Lear and its Folktale Analogues
• Can There be Philosopher-Kings in a Liberal Polity? A Reinterpretation and Reappropriation of the Ideal Theory in Plato's Republic
• Towards an Ethical Literature: Character Narration and Extended Subjectivity in the work of Robert Musil
• Modes of Valuation in Early Greek Poetry
• God in the Years of Fury: Theodicy and Anti-Theodicy in the Holocaust Writings of Rabbi Kalonymus Kalman Shapira
• Rousseau's Natural Man: Emile and Politics
• Existence and Temporality in Spinoza
• Explorations in Elegiac Space: Schiller, Nietzsche, Rilke
• Language, Necessity, and Human Nature in Thucydides' History
• Speculation and Civilization in the Social Philosophy of Alfred North Whitehead
• Caught between City, Empire, and Religion: Alfarabi's Concept of the Umma
• Elizabeth Anscombe's Wittgensteinian Third Way in Philosophy of Mind: A Thomist Critique

Areas 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 ssd-
admissions@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 31223. Homer's Odyssey: Estrangement and Homecoming. 100 Units.
One of the two foundational epics of so-called Western Culture, the Odyssey features a wily hero whose journeys are extraordinary and whose longing for home is unbounded. The Odyssey offers a complex meditation on brotherhood, bestiality, sexuality, kinship, and power; it is the great epic of cross-cultural encounter, in all its seductive and violent aspects, as well as the great poem of marriage. An adventure in nostos (homecoming), the Odyssey shows us the pleasures and dangers of voyaging among strangers. Constantly exploring the boundaries between the civilized and the savage, the poem offers as well as a political critique of many ancient institutions, not least the family patriarchy, hospitality customs, and the band-of-brothers so central to epic ideology. And as a masterwork of narrative art, the Odyssey asks us to consider the relation of fiction to "truth." We will explore these and other matters in the Odyssey, and may make a concluding foray into contemporary re-workings of Odyssean themes and characters.
Instructor(s): Laura Slatkin Terms Offered: Spring. Will be taught Spring 2017. This course will be taught the first five weeks of the quarter (March 27 thru April 26, 2017)
Prerequisite(s): Although no knowledge of Greek is required for this course, there will be assignment options for those who wish to do reading in Greek.
Note(s): Please note this course will be taught the first five weeks of the quarter (March 27, 2017 thru April 26, 2017.
Equivalent Course(s): CLAS 33616,FNDL 21223

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 33401. Conceptual Foundations of the Modern State. 100 Units.
The course will examine the evolution of western thinking about the modern concept of the state. The focus will be on Renaissance theories (Niccolò Machiavelli; Thomas More); theories of absolute sovereignty (especially Thomas Hobbes); theories about ‘free states’ (James Harrington, John Locke); and republican theories from the era of the Enlightenment.
Instructor(s): Q. Skinner Terms Offered: Autumn
Prerequisite(s): Open to undergraduates by consent of instructor.
Equivalent Course(s): PHIL 31399,PHIL 21399
SCTH 34012. Kurosawa and His Literary Sources. 100 Units.
This interdisciplinary graduate and advanced undergraduate course focuses on ten films of Akira Kurosawa which were based on literary sources ranging from Ryunosuke Akutagawa, Georges Simenon, and Shakespeare to Dostoevsky, Tolstoy, Gorky, and Arseniev. The course not only introduces some theoretical and intermedial problems of adaptation of literature to film but also address cultural and political implications of Kurosawa’s adaptation of classic and foreign sources. We will study how Kurosawa’s turn to literary adaptation provided a vehicle for circumventing social taboos of his time and offered a screen for addressing politically sensitive and sometimes censored topics of Japan’s militarist past, war crimes, defeat in the Second World War, and ideological conflicts of reconstruction. The course combines film analysis with close reading of relevant literary sources, contextualized by current work of political, economic, and cultural historians of postwar Japan. The course is meant to provide hands-on training in the interdisciplinary methodology of Comparative Literature.
Instructor(s): Olga Solovieva Terms Offered: Spring
Equivalent Course(s): CMLT 33302, EALC 23312, REES 29814, REES 39814, CMST 24922, CMST 34922, EALC 33312, CMLT 23302

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 35004. Goya and Manet. 100 Units.
Edouard Manet (1832–1883) is often regarded as the first modernist artist, but his practice was deeply rooted in the copying and emulation of Renaissance and Baroque painters, particularly Spaniards. Indeed, many of his subjects, and some of his techniques, from the use of firm outline to muted opaque tones with minimal modeling, are conspicuous in Francisco Goya (1746–1828), a Spanish court painter and moralist whose paintings and prints were received in the late nineteenth century, and in the twentieth, as prefiguring both modernist form and various crises of artistic meaning. This seminar proposes a binocular focus on the two artists, in their individual historical contexts and in dialogue, in order to understand the tension between tradition and innovation in modern art.
Instructor(s): A. Pop Terms Offered: Spring
Equivalent Course(s): ARTH 34720, ARTH 24720
SCTH 36014. T.S. Eliot. 100 Units.
With the major new edition of Eliot's poems by Jim McCue and Christopher Ricks, the new volumes of Eliot's letters, and two separate new editions of Eliot's complete prose, we are in a position to rethink the meanings and force of Eliot's life work. The course will be devoted to careful reading of his poems, essays, plays, and correspondence, with attention to his literary, cultural, and political contexts.
Instructor(s): Rosanna Warren Terms Offered: Spring
Equivalent Course(s): FNDL 26614, ENGL 26614, ENGL 34850

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 37501. Psychoanalysis and Philosophy. 100 Units.
This course shall read the works of Sigmund Freud. We shall examine his views on the unconscious, on human sexuality, on repetition, transference, and neurotic suffering. We shall also consider what therapy and “cure” consist in, and how his technique might work. We shall consider certain ties to ancient Greek conceptions of human happiness—and ask the question: what is it about human being that makes living a fulfilling life problematic? Readings from Freud’s case studies as well as his essays on theory and technique.
Instructor(s): J. Lear Terms Offered: Winter
Prerequisite(s): Course for Graduate Students and Upper Level Undergraduates. Student must have completed at least one 30000 level Philosophy course.
Note(s): Undergrads enroll in sections 01, 02, 03, and 04. Graduates enroll in section 05.
Equivalent Course(s): PHIL 38209, HIPS 28101, FNDL 28210, PHIL 28210

SCTH 38005. Nietzsche’s Critique of Morality. 100 Units.
Instructor(s): R. Pippin Terms Offered: Winter
Note(s): Undergrads enroll in sections 01 through 04. Graduates enroll in section 05.
Equivalent Course(s): PHIL 24709, PHIL 34709
SCTH 38230. Victor Hugo: Les Misérables. 100 Units.
In this course we read *Les Misérables* and discuss the work's message, structure, and aesthetic vision. We will be particularly attentive to Victor Hugo's role as an observer of nineteenth-century French society as well as an actor in the political life of his times.
Instructor(s): R. Morrissey Terms Offered: Spring
Prerequisite(s): FREN 20500
Note(s): All classes and texts in French; presentations preferred in French, but English will be acceptable depending on the concentration. Written work in French or English.
Equivalent Course(s): FREN 36103,FNDL 26100,FREN 26103

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 39911. Ancient Greek Aesthetics. 100 Units.
The ancient Greek philosophical tradition contains an enormously rich and influential body of reflection on the practice of poetry. We will focus our attention on Plato and Aristotle, but will also spend some time with Longinus and Plotinus. Topics will include: the analysis of poetry in terms of mimesis and image; poetry-making as an exercise of craft, divine inspiration, or some other sort of knowledge; the emotional effect on the audience; the role of poetry in forming moral character and, more broadly, its place in society; the relation between poetry, rhetoric, and philosophy; aesthetic values of beauty, wonder, truth, and grace. (A) (IV)
Instructor(s): G. Richardson-Lear Terms Offered: Winter
Note(s): Undergrads enroll in sections 01 & 02. Graduates enroll in section 03.
Equivalent Course(s): PHIL 29911, CLAS 36517, CLCV 26517, PHIL 39911

SCTH 40701. Many Ramayanas. 100 Units.
This course is a close reading of the great Hindu Epic, the story of Rama's recovery of his wife, Sita, from the demon Ravana on the island of Lanka, with special attention to the changes in the telling of the story throughout Indian history. Readings are in Paula Richman, Many Ramayanas and Questioning Ramayanas; the Ramayanas of Valmiki (in translation by Goldman, Sattar, Shastri, and R. K. Narayan), Kampan, and Tulsi; the Yogavasistha-Maharamayana; and contemporary comic books and films.
Instructor(s): W. Doniger Terms Offered: Winter
Prerequisite(s): Consent of instructor
Equivalent Course(s): FNDL 22901, RLST 26801, SALC 42501, HREL 42501

SCTH 42918. CDI Seminar: Exploratory Translation. 100 Units.
Focusing on the theory, history and practice of poetic translation, this seminar includes sessions with invited theorists and practitioners from North and South America, Europe, and Asia. Taking translation to be an art of making sense that is transmitted together with a craft of shapes and sequences, we aim to account for social and intellectual pressures influencing translation projects. We deliberately foreground other frameworks beyond “foreign to English” and “olden epochs to modern”—and other methods than the “equivalence of meaning”—in order to aim at a truly general history and theory of translation that might both guide comparative cultural history and enlarge the imaginative resources of translators and readers of translation. In addition to reading and analysis of outside texts spanning such topics as semantic and grammatical interference, gain and loss, bilingualism, self-translation, pidgin, code-switching, translationese, and foreignization vs. nativization, students will be invited to try their hands at a range of tactics, aiming toward a final portfolio of annotated translations.

Instructor(s): J. Scappettone and H. Saussy Terms Offered: Winter
Equivalent Course(s): CDIN 42918, CMLT 42918, RLLT 42918, ENGL 42918
SCTH 50204. Destruction of Images, Books and Artifacts in Europe and South. 100 Units.
The course offers a comparative perspective on European and South Asian iconoclasm. In the European tradition, iconoclasm was predominantly aimed at images, whereas in South Asian traditions it was also enacted upon books and buildings. The combination of these traditions will allow us to extend the usual understanding of iconoclasm as the destruction of images to a broader phenomenon of destruction of cultural artifacts and help question the theories of image as they have been independently developed in Europe and South Asia, and occasionally in conversation with one another. We will ask how and why, in the context of particular political imaginaries and material cultures, were certain objects singled out for iconoclasm? Also, who was considered to be entitled or authorized to commit their destruction? Through a choice of concrete examples of iconoclasm, we will query how religious and political motivations are defined, redefined, and intertwined in each particular case. We will approach the iconoclastic events in Europe and South Asia through the lenses of philology, history, and material culture. Class discussions will incorporate not only textual materials, but also the close collaborative study of images, objects, and film. Case studies will make use of objects in the Art Institute of Chicago and Special Collections at the University Library.
Instructor(s): Tyler Williams and Olga Solovieva Terms Offered: Spring
Equivalent Course(s): SALC 50204, CMLT 50204, RLVC 50204, HREL 50204, ARTH 50204, CDIN 50204

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 50606. Hegel on Logic as Metaphysics. 100 Units.
This course will be an introduction (that is, with no prior knowledge of Hegel presupposed) to what Hegel means by a "science of logic," and why he claims that such a logic should "now" (that is, after Kant), be considered a metaphysics. We will read the "Introduction" and the "Preliminary Conception" in the Encyclopedia version of the Logic (§1-83), the opening passages of the The Science of Logic, and shall conclude with Hegel's discussion of "Life" and "Absolute Idealism" at the end of that Logic.
Instructor(s): R. Pippin Terms Offered: Spring
Equivalent Course(s): PHIL 50605
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 concepts 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 51401. Spinoza's Psychological Politics. 100 Units.
Spinoza's philosophy is classical in conception, in that it aims to show us how to live wisely. But his ethical interpretation of wisdom is shaped by a psychological account of human affect and a firm sense of the empowering role of politics. To live wisely we have to understand our affects and use them to create co-operative ways of life. At the same time, we have to take account of the ways in which our affects are shaped by political circumstances and ideals.

This seminar will examine Spinoza's account of the shifting relations between these variables. Drawing on several of his writings (Ethics, Theologico-Political Treatise, Political Treatise, Correspondence) we shall examine his central conceptions of affect, imagination, understanding, power and politics. Our discussions will also address a sequence of questions. What constructive and destructive roles does imagination play in political life? How is social co-operation related to understanding? How far can Spinoza's conception of imagination help us to develop a compelling theory of ideology? Is politics, as Spinoza conceives it, fundamentally agonistic? What part does politics play in the blessed life envisioned at the end of the Ethics? What makes this way of life more empowering than any other?

Instructor(s): S. James Terms Offered: Autumn
Equivalent Course(s): PHIL 57201

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 51715. Plato and Aristotle on Craft and Wisdom. 100 Units.
Plato and Aristotle both made extensive appeal to craft knowledge as a model for theorizing practical and political wisdom. In this seminar we will examine their conceptions of craft and its relation to wisdom. Readings will likely come from Plato’s *Ion, Gorgias, Republic,* and *Statesman* and Aristotle’s *Nicomachean Ethics* and *Metaphysics.* (IV)
Instructor(s): G. Richardson-Lear Terms Offered: Autumn
Equivalent Course(s): PHIL 51715

SCTH 53501. Special Topics in Philosophy of Mind: Imagination. 100 Units.
What is imagination, and what functions does our power of imagination have in our lives? The seminar will approach these general questions via more specific ones such as the following. What are the relations between imagining, perceiving, remembering, and dreaming? Does our capacity for imagination play a role in enabling us to perceive? Does imagining something involve forming a mental image or picture of that thing? If not, how should we conceive of the objects of imagination? What is the nature of our engagement with what we imagine, and how does this engagement explain our ability to feel emotions such as fear, pity, and sympathy for imaginary beings? What is the role of imagination or fantasy in structuring our understanding of ourselves and our relations to other persons? Is there such a thing as the virtuous state of the power of imagination? Readings will be drawn from various classic discussions of imagination – e.g., Aristotle, Hume, Kant, Freud, Wittgenstein, Sartre – and from some contemporary sources. (III)
Instructor(s): M. Boyle; J. Lear Terms Offered: Autumn
Prerequisite(s): Graduate students in Philosophy & Social Thought only, except with permission of instructor.
Equivalent Course(s): PHIL 53501

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
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.