**SPRING 2022 SELECTED TOPICS COURSE DESCRIPTIONS**

**English 289: Black Environmentalism**

Nels Christensen

Black Environmentalism is an interdisciplinary exploration of past and present relationships between Black folks and the land, with a particular interest in the way the environmental movement in the U.S. has been unjustly motivated by and for white folks.

We’ll read works of Black environmental history written by Black historians and some environmental fiction written by Black authors.  We’ll encounter the work of a new generation of young, social-media savvy Black environmental activists who love the natural world and want you to love it too.  And, of course, we’ll learn and play outside as we come to appreciate and understand the natural systems that inspire and sustain us.

**PHIL 189: MEANING IN LIFE**

**CRN 8101**

*D. Mittag*

*MWF 1:00 – 2:05pm*

Many of us seek to engage in activities that give our lives meaning, but what exactly are we aiming at when we seek this?   Is there some true universal account of what living a life filled with meaning requires?  Does it ultimately depend upon the truth of some religious worldview?  In this class we consider such questions as we explore prominent theories philosophers have developed on this topic.

**PHIL 289: FEMINIST PHILOSOPHY**

**CRN 8102**

***Fulfills Women, Gender and Sexuality Studies major and minor requirement***

***Fulfills Gender Studies category***

*A. Adamson*

*MW 2:15 – 4:05pm*

This course will offer an overview of feminist philosophy as it has made contributions to major philosophical fields such as epistemology, phenomenology, ethics, and political philosophy. Showing the breadth of feminist scholarship and the critical diversity of philosophical and political focus, the course is broken into six major units. Unit 1 offers a brief survey of prominent women theorists, activists, and philosophers from 1700-1950 who laid the groundwork for the kinds of questions, approaches, and social, political, and economic struggles that would be taken up by the later self-proclaimed feminists of the 20th century to the present. Unit 2 will cover the concepts of sex, gender, and sexuality. Unit 3 will look at the history of the concept of intersectionality the contributions of feminist philosophers to the fields of epistemology and phenomenology. Unit 4 will overview contemporary feminist and decolonial political philosophy.

**Phil 289: PHILOSOPHY OF RACE**

**CRN 8103**

*A. Adamson*

*TR 10:30am – 12:20pm*

The first half of the course will survey the history of philosophy and race and the philosophies of race within the contemporary United States. We will begin with a study of the use of Aristotle’s *Politics* as it was taken up by 15th and 16th century theologians and philosophers in the context of the colonization of the Americas. We will then look at early modern philosophy and the shift away from theological hierarchies to “scientific” analyses of race as they were developed alongside Enlightenment political values of individual freedom and republicanism as promised in social contract theory. This unit will end with a case study of the French and Haitian Revolutions and the international abolitionist movement. The second half of the course will look specifically at the philosophies of race within the United States as a settler colonial nation. We will look at the social construction of “whiteness” as it coalesced around specific labor and property relations, the prison industrial complex, and contemporary decolonial and abolitionist political philosophy.

**PHIL 389: DATA SCIENCE AND ETHICS**

**CRN 8107**

*B. Madhok*

*MWF  10:30 – 11:35am*

The all-pervasive presence of data science in contemporary society cannot be overstated. Large-scale digitization of information processes has provided access to enormous amounts of data in all spheres of our lives. While data-collection on such a scale through highly efficient computing algorithms (“big data”) has generated important findings in diverse fields such as medical research, public security, and consumer behavioral preferences, it has also, in some cases, undermined basic human values of privacy, free expression, autonomy, and trust, and revealed biases generating hate speech, false information, and racial and gender discrimination. In this course, we delve into the ethical challenges associated with distinguishing between analyses of data as a force for societal and individual good versus harm, and examine ways undertaken to retain the goods while mitigating unavoidable harms. In this connection, we discuss ethical principles of utility, non-maleficence, beneficence, justice, and autonomy and their application to case studies in data science.

**THEA 189: THEATRICAL RENDERING STYLES** MW 2:15-4:05

Kiah Kayser

This course will explore the different forms of visual communication that designers use while working on theatrical productions. Students will first learn various rendering techniques with a physical base (sketching, drawing and watercolor), then progress to various digital mediums such as Photoshop, Sketchup, etc. and their uses as contemporary rendering methods.

**THEA 289: STAGE MANAGEMENT** MWF 11:45-12:50

Kiah Kayser

This course will explore the best methods for stage-managing a theatrical production. Students will learn how to run rehearsals, manage meetings, call live performances, and to communicate effectively. This class will also explore the application of these skills to other art forms**.** Regardless of experience or major, students will sharpen their creative problem solvingand professional skill sets.