**Spring 2025 Graduate Courses and Descriptions[[1]](#footnote-1)**

**Department of Philosophy**

**Loyola University Chicago**

**Note:** Distribution requirements for the PhD, MA, BA/MA, and MA in Social Philosophy (both new and old programs) are included below. Students in the MA in Social Philosophy program should consult the GPD about which courses in AY 24–25 can contribute to course clusters (for non-Jesuits) and tagged electives.

**Spring 2025**

***At A Glance***

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| PHIL 406: Aquinas, Topic: Abilities and Disabilities | *Hartman* |
| PHIL 415: Kant, Topic: Kant’s *First Critique* | *Cutrofello* |
| PHIL 438: Topics in Continental Philosophy: Hannah Arendt on Action, Politics, and Thinking | *Gaffney* |
| PHIL 459: Philosophy of Law (hybrid course; cross-listed with PHIL 323) | *Samar* |
| PHIL 468: Topics in Ethics, Topic, Critical Philosophy of Race | *Scott* |
| PHIL 480: Social and Political Philosophy, Topic: Critical Theory and Phenomenology | *Ingram* |
| PHIL 487: Moral and Legal Issues of Economic Sanctions | *Gordon* |

**PHIL 406: Aquinas, *Topic: Abilities and Disabilities***

**Dr. Peter Hartman**

**TH 4:15–6:45PM**

***Description***

Skills or abilities—our ability to count, or reliably recognize breeds of cattle, or reliably do the courageous thing—play an important role in our mental and moral lives. A recent debate in the philosophy of mind concerns how much of our mental lives might best be explained by such skills, and an ongoing debate in contemporary virtue theory concerns the degree to which virtues (and vices) are like skills that we acquire. This course explores the conception of skill in Thomas Aquinas’s philosophy. We will look at how Aquinas defined skills or abilities, both moral and mental, and the role that he thought such skills or abilities play in our mental and moral lives. We will also discuss the nearby issue of disabilities and Aquinas's views on disabilities.

***Distribution Requirements***

PhD, MA, BA/MA: Medieval, M&E

New MA in Social Philosophy: Medieval (for Jesuit Foundational Track), European History of Philosophy (for Jesuit Enhanced Track)

**PHIL 415: Kant, *Topic: Kant’s* First Critique**

**Dr. Andrew Cutrofello**

**T 10:00–12:30PM**

***Description***

In this course we will read the Guyer/Wood translation of Kant’s *Critique of Pure Reason* (1781, 1787). Like the Lisbon Earthquake (1755) and the French Revolution (1789-99) – both of which Kant wrote about – the publication of the first *Critique* was a monumental event. Just as Kant’s career is conventionally divided into pre-critical and post-critical periods, so the history of Western philosophy is often divided into pre-Kantian and post-Kantian phases. Our aim in this course will be to understand the scope and significance of Kant’s critical project. We will try to get through the entire text, but we will inevitably focus on some sections more than others.

***Distribution Requirements***

PhD, MA, BA/MA: Modern, M&E

New MA in Social Philosophy: Modern (for Jesuit Foundational Track), European History of Philosophy (for Jesuit Enhanced Track)

**PHIL 438: Topics in Continental Philosophy: *Hannah Arendt on Action, Politics, and Thinking***

**Dr. Jennifer Gaffney**

**T 4:15–6:45**

***Description***

This course will introduce students to the work of Hannah Arendt by focusing on her analysis of the relationship between action and thinking. At first glance, these activities appear to have little in common. Whereas action is public, intersubjective, and beholden to the contingencies of worldly life, “sheer thinking,” as Arendt calls it, stands at a distance from the world. It is solitarily and meditative, able to retreat from reality in order to ask unanswerable questions. Yet, as far apart as action and thinking may seem, Arendt suggests that understanding their bearing on one another is crucial for confronting the political crises of the present age. This course will develop Arendt’s approach to understanding the relationship between action and thinking along three lines: (1) by developing her analysis of action and politics in light of her concern to “*think* what we are doing” in *The Human Condition*; (2) by evaluating her diagnosis of the political dangers of Adolf Eichmann’s thoughtlessness in *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil*; and (3) by considering how, in *The Life of the Mind*, she answers the question that she believes Eichmann’s thoughtlessness imposed: can sheer thinking play a role in conditioning human beings to abstain from evil doing? Through our analysis of these and related themes, we will ask how Arendt complicates traditional approaches to the relationship between action and thinking while examining the implications of her analysis for critique, judgment, dissent, and intervention in contemporary political life.

***Distribution Requirements***

PhD, MA, BA/MA: Continental Philosophy, Ethics/Social and Political Philosophy

Old MA in Social Philosophy: Moral Philosophy, Social Philosophy

New MA in Social Philosophy: Contemporary/Critical Perspectives (for Jesuit Foundational and Enhanced Tracks), Social and Political Philosophy/Ethics (may count as Level I for Jesuit Foundational Track)

**PHIL 459: Philosophy of Law (cross-listed with PHIL 323-001)**

**Dr. Vincent Samar**

**W 2:45–5:15**

***Description***

This course will consider a number of topics residing at the cutting edge where law and legal philosophy meet, including: What is law? Must law be related to morality? What is the interpretative function of courts? Should integrity constrain what courts decide? From whence does the duty to obey law come? Are there any human rights? Might some of these rights by manifested by our ideas of liberty, privacy and freedom of expression? Need we respond to terrorism by changing our values? What is distributive justice as compared with corrective or retributive justice? Are distributive justice questions implicated by court decisions involving affirmative action, gender, and sexual orientation? How is corrective justice manifested in tort and contract law? What is ownership? Is ownership of intellectual property morally justified? What is the relationship of causation to responsibility, and what is punishment and how is it justified.

***Distribution Requirements***

PhD, MA, BA/MA: Ethics/Social and Political, Analytic

Old MA in Social Philosophy: Social Philosophy

New MA in Social Philosophy: Social and Political Philosophy/Ethics (may count as Level I for Jesuit Foundational Track), Foundational Track Contemporary/Critical Perspectives (for Jesuit Foundational and Enhanced Tracks)

**PHIL 468: Topics in Ethics: *Critical Philosophy of Race***

**Dr. Jacqueline Scott**

**M 7:00–9:30PM**

***Description***

This course will provide a survey of the field of critical philosophy of race in 3 areas: the historical roots of philosophy of race (Kant, Hegel, de Gobineau, Du Bois), contemporary arguments about race and racial identity formation, and social/political implications about these contemporary arguments.

***Distribution Requirements***

PhD, MA, BA/MA: Ethics/Social and Political, Continental

Old MA in Social Philosophy: Moral Philosophy, Social Philosophy

New MA in Social Philosophy: Social and Political Philosophy/Ethics, non-European Philosophy, Contemporary/Critical Perspectives (for Jesuit Foundational and Enhanced Tracks)

**PHIL 480: Social and Political Philosophy, *Topic: Critical Theory and Phenomenology***

**Dr. David Ingram**

**TH 10:00AM–12:30PM**

***Description***

Critical Theory is the name that Max Horkheimer gave to the distinctive brand of social philosophy undertaken by members of the Frankfurt School of Social Research, of which he was director. Critical theory uses the tools of social science not only to describe, explain, and predict social processes but to criticize society’s failure to bring about freedom and happiness, despite that society’s remarkable progress in science, technology, and material prosperity. Phenomenology, by contrast, is the name Edmund Husserl gave to a method of philosophical inquiry that begins from the standpoint of individual experience. He upheld direct, lived experience as a touchstone for criticizing the artificial, theoretically abstract, and one-sided “naturalizing” (or “objectifying”) image of the world that positivistic defenders of natural science dogmatically presume to be the only true picture of reality. Our course surveys the intersection of these two kinds of critical philosophy from the critical theory perspective. Prominent critical theorists such as Georg Lukács, Theodor Adorno, Herbert Marcuse, Jürgen Habermas, Seyla Benhabib, Rainer Forst, and Axel Honneth have been deeply influenced by some of the major exponents of phenomenology and existentialism (Husserl, Heidegger, Sartre, Arendt, De Beauvoir, Levinas, and Derrida) in their own theories of human subjectivity, moral experience, and social existence. At the same time, they have criticized what they perceive to be phenomenology’s overly subjective, idealizing, essentializing and ahistorical description of human experience/existence. Some of the questions we will discuss are: Should experience, reason, or objective reality be the primary foundation for moral and ethical existence? Are consciousness and materiality (subject and object) fundamentally irreducible, essentially related in some form of identity, or interrelated in some other, more complicated way? What role does art and aesthetic experience play in a critical understanding of modern science and technology? How do objective structures (economic and political systems, cultural systems (of race, and gender, etc.) shape consciousness? Is there such a thing as false consciousness and ideology?

***Distribution Requirements***

PhD, MA, BA/MA: Ethics/Social and Political, Continental, M&E

Old MA in Social Philosophy: Social Philosophy

New MA in Social Philosophy: Social and Political Philosophy/Ethics (Level II for Foundational Track), Contemporary/Critical Perspectives (for Foundational and Enhanced Tracks)

**PHIL 487: Moral and Legal Issues of Economic Sanctions**

**Dr. Joy Gordon**

**M 2:45–5:15**

***Description:***

This course will provide an introduction to economic sanctions in the contexts of international relations and global governance. We will then look closely at the issues of effectiveness and humanitarian impact. Throughout the course, we will draw on materials from a number of sanctions regimes, including South Africa, Cuba, Iraq, and Iran. We will examine ethical topics including the issues of intent, consent, and moral agency in the context of economic sanctions. We will also look at a several legal issues: whether sanctions come into conflict with international human rights law, such as the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights; the problem of extraterritoriality; and the significant cases coming out of the European Courts on asset freezes, such as the Kadi case.

**Distribution Requirements**

PhD, MA, BA/MA: Ethics/Social and Political, Analytic

Old MA in Social Philosophy: Moral Philosophy, Social Philosophy

New MA in Social Philosophy: Social and Political Philosophy/Ethics (Level II for Jesuit Foundational Track), Contemporary/Critical Perspectives (for Jesuit foundational and enhanced tracks)

1. Distribution requirements for the MA in Social Philosophy program include “MA SP” in parentheses after the requirement. All other distribution requirements refer to the PhD, MA, and BA/MA programs. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)