

THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA ASHEVILLE  
FACULTY SENATE

Senate Document Number   SD5022S  
Date of Senate Approval    3/31/2022

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Statement of Faculty Senate Action:

**APC Document 45 (PHIL):**                   **Changes in titles and descriptions for PHIL 230, 304, and 310**

**Effective Date: Fall 2022**

- 1.     Delete:** On page 260, the entry **for PHIL 230:**

**230           Introduction to Metaphysics and Epistemology (4)**

An introduction to the main questions, methods, and figures in the fields of metaphysics and epistemology. Important topics include the nature of knowledge, the reliability of human cognitive abilities, the nature of fundamental entities, and causation. Emphasis will be placed on students developing their individual responses to fundamental issues in metaphysics and epistemology. Fall.

**Add:** On page 260, in place of deleted entry:

**230           Knowledge and Reality (4)**

An introduction to the questions, methods, topics and figures in two classical areas within philosophy--metaphysics (the nature of things and reality) and epistemology (our knowledge of things and reality). Topics include material things and their properties, causation, free will, social things, nature of categories such as race and gender, relation between belief and knowledge, nature of evidence, epistemic virtues, perception, skepticism and testimony, epistemic injustice and epistemic discrimination. Emphasis will be placed on students developing their individual understanding of the various structures--linguistic, historical, social and political--that are often at play in relation to the topics of this course. Fall.

- 2.     Delete:** On page 261, the entry **for PHIL 304:**

**304           Social and Political Philosophy (4)**

A critical study of the development of historical and contemporary philosophical thought about social, political and legal issues. Fall.

**Add:** On page 261, in place of deleted entry:

**304            Philosophies of Power in Societies (4)**

Addresses issues that are traditionally part of the field of Social and Political Philosophy, a broad area that focuses on aspects of social life, from the family, to the nation-state, to international relations. The course examines texts from ancient through contemporary times touching on topics such as rights, revolution, law, freedom, and justice, with special emphasis on how they reflect structures of power and inequalities. Questions of values as they pertain to groups and communities thus are central to this course. By pursuing questions such as “what is freedom?” and “why is ethnic diversity valuable?” students will be encouraged to apply their understanding of course materials to issues that have impacts on their own lives. See department chair.

**3.        Delete:** On page 261, the entry for **PHIL 310:**

**310            Aesthetics (4)**

A study of the nature and significance of art and beauty. Particular emphasis is given to understanding the nature of creativity and the place of artistic production and understanding in contemporary society. Spring.

**Add:** On page 261, in place of deleted entry:

**310            Philosophies of Art (4)**

A study of the nature and significance of art and beauty. Particular emphasis is given to understanding the nature of creativity and the place of artistic production and understanding in contemporary society. See Department Chair.

**Impact Statement:** We expect these changes to have a positive impact in aligning the course titles with the topics covered in these courses. We also hope that these adjustments will attract more students who might have previously not considered them given their unfamiliarity with the technical terms used in the titles to the courses. There should be no impact on staffing because no courses are being added or deleted; rather we are changing the presentation of the courses for students.

PHIL 230 is required for the major in Philosophy and an option for the minor. Changes in the description are intended to both bring the course in line with how it is being taught, and to give students a better sense of its content and relevance. Over the last 4 years the course has enrolled approximately 10-15 students and we assume it will continue to do so, although we hope that the changes in course description may encourage some students who didn’t respond to the technical terms. It has been taught by Keya Maitra and Scott Williams, but could be taught by anyone in the department; it is taught in a lecture and discussion format.

SLOs for the course are:

1. Students will be able to describe some of the major issues in Metaphysics and Epistemology;
2. Students will be able to outline clearly and evaluate critically central arguments offered in different traditions in defense of various positions adopted by many classical and contemporary philosophers;
3. Students will be able to formulate their own thoughts, beliefs and arguments on metaphysical and epistemological questions and their interrelatedness, and express those thoughts clearly in verbal and written communications;
4. Students will be able to apply basic concepts and themes from this course to re-imagine ways to address contemporary social and cultural issues.

PHIL 304 is among the options majors/minors can use to fulfill required electives, and is offered as an option for the Human Rights Studies minor. The impact on that program is presumably negligible, as so many options exist for the students to choose from and the course will continue to be offered on a regular basis. Changes to the description of the course bring it in line with what has been taught in the course in the last 10 years. The subject matter represents an important field in philosophy, but the current catalogue description is too brief to give students a real sense of its importance and relevance. The class will be capped at 22, but will probably enroll 12-15 students. It has been taught by Melissa Burchard and Brian Butler, but could be taught by anyone in the department; it is taught in a lecture and discussion format.

SLOs for the course are:

- 1) Students will demonstrate familiarity with major themes and figures in the field.
- 2) Students will demonstrate understanding of the relationships and dynamics of power present in the workings of social and political institutions.
- 3) Students will demonstrate understanding of the socially constructed nature of social and political institutions, identities and relationships of power and inequality.
- 4) Students will apply concepts and analytical strategies from course materials to their own experiences and contemporary issues through written and verbal exercises.

PHIL 310 is among the options majors/minors can use to fulfill required electives, and is a designated Arts and Ideas class which we offer every 1-2 years. The impact on that program is presumably minimal, as the course is not being changed, but only the title, to make the content more recognizable to potential students. The class generally fills, so is expected to continue to run 20-22 students, and is taught in a lecture and discussion format. The class has been and will continue to be taught by Brian Butler as part of his usual load and his expertise.

SLOs for the course are:

- 1) Students will demonstrate understanding of major philosophical theories of art.
- 2) Students will demonstrate competence in the ability to read and understand original materials in philosophical aesthetic analysis.
- 3) Students will demonstrate competence in critical thinking about arguments presented in philosophical readings.
- 4) Students will demonstrate the ability to express analysis of the course materials through written expression.

Concurrence has been received from Arts and Ideas and Human Rights Studies through email exchanges about the document.. None of these courses is part of the UNC System Common Numbering System.

**Rationale:** These changes will better reflect the course contents, especially to a student unfamiliar with philosophical vocabulary. Given that most students have no opportunity to study philosophy before college, we believe that most of them are not familiar with the technical terms in the discipline, and consequently do not see the titles of these courses as relevant or of interest to them. These changes also make explicit philosophy's role in a well-rounded liberal arts education, by indicating that the courses are directed toward helping students develop the kinds of critical thinking and questioning skills that are necessary for strong global citizenship and participation in the life of their own communities. The new descriptions show more clearly how the courses are aimed at encouraging students to apply their learning to contemporary and relevant issues and situations.