

PHILOSOPHY INTERDISCIPLINARY (PHO)

PHO 365. The Crisis in the Financial Markets: Vivisection, Justice, Reforms. 3 Credit Hours.

The Crisis in the financial markets, which exploded in the fall of 2008, very nearly led to a global economic collapse. Arguably, elements of the Crisis endure; arguably, the specter of an encore crisis looms on the horizon.

In the first portion of this course, we will perform a Vivisection of the Crisis—from the bubble in the markets for housing, to the bubble in the market for bonds and various exotic financial instruments (derivatives), and the actions of government institutions to prevent a collapse. In the second portion of the course, we will consider the issues of justice in a liberal democracy, guided by John Rawls, Justice as Fairness. Special attention will be focused on issues of economic justice: distributive justice generally, and taxation in particular. And we will investigate the threats to democracy posed by economic inequalities. The third portion of the course will be devoted to reforms: resolving problems discovered in the Vivisection through the application of principles of Justice.

Corequisites: Ethics.

Fulfills Core Requirement(s): IDS.

PHO 366. The Self, Society, and Justice. 3 Credit Hours.

The self is one of the most familiar and yet most mysterious of concepts. We take for granted the idea that we have or are a self, and we regularly and comfortably refer to selves. But what is the self? And what are the moral and political implications for how we understand justice and the self? This course explores the nature of the self through philosophical and social scientific lenses. We will consider classic philosophical and social scientific discussions of the self, as well as the ways in which these disciplines can challenge, enrich, and play off of each other. Fulfills Core requirement(s): Interdisciplinary Studies (IDS).

Prerequisites: PHL 110.

Cross-listed Courses: PSC 320

PHO 368. Time, the Universe and You. 3 Credit Hours.

Astronomer Carl Sagan wrote, "Who are we? We find that we live on an insignificant planet of a humdrum star lost in a galaxy tucked away in some forgotten corner of a universe in which there are far more galaxies than people." And the evolutionary biologist Richard Dawkins has written that "We are survival machines - robot vehicles blindly programmed to preserve the selfish molecules known as genes." How well does this scientifically informed picture of who we are fit with our everyday conception of our lives as filled with significant (as well as insignificant) events in time? Does our sense of "living in time" survive scientific scrutiny? This course will survey historical and present-day understandings of the physical and chronological universe, explore the place of humanity in its immensity, and ask whether the scientific conceptions that emerge are compatible with our everyday experience of time.

Fulfills Core Requirement(s): Interdisciplinary Studies (IDS).