To: Philosophy students

From: Jerry Samet, Philosophy, Chair

Registration for Fall 2017 is officially open, and I wanted to bring you up to date on what’s been happening in the Philosophy Department and point out some things about our schedule of courses for Fall 2017 (which is here).

**FACULTY.** Some information about faculty comings and goings.

**RETURNING FROM LEAVE.** We’re glad to have Marion Smiley back after her year long leave.

**ON LEAVE.** Jen Marušić will be on parental leave in the Fall and Beri Marušić will be on sabbatical in Spring 2018.

**VISITING FACULTY.** We are excited about two visitors who will be teaching new courses in the Fall:

- Jens Timmerman is Professor of Moral Philosophy and Director of the MLitt Programme in Philosophy at University of St Andrews in Scotland. He will be teaching a new course (that is not yet in the schedule as of this writing but will be very soon) **PHIL127a: Lying and Deception**

- Lisa Fishbayn Joffe has been a Lecturer in Law at University College London, Faculty of Laws and has recently been appointed the Interim Director of the Hadassah-Brandeis Institute; she is also the Director of the Project on Gender, Culture, Religion and the Law. She will be teaching a new course (that is also not yet in the schedule as of this writing but will be very soon) **PHIL128a: Gender, Multiculturalism and the Law**

**DEPARTING.** Ben Sherman, who has been a very important part of the Department for the past few years, will not be returning. We are grateful for his excellent teaching, for the new courses he’s introduced (25a: Business Ethics, 117a: Bias, Ethics and Reasoning, 139a: Belief and Probability), for his exceptional efforts in organizing our recent mini-conference on “Implicit Bias and Social Justice,” and for being a wonderful colleague. We wish him the best.

**NEW COURSES.** We have 3 new courses on our Fall schedule.

- Beri Marušić has designed a new epistemology course especially for non-advanced students entitled **PHIL 22a: ‘Truth Even Unto Its Innermost Parts’? -- The Ethics of Belief.** The quoted phrase is from Brandeis’ motto and the organizing question behind the course is whether it is rational to always seek truth? What if it's advantageous to believe falsehoods? What *ought* we to believe, and how can there be any norms about belief at all? Even though this is a below-100 level course, it is not a general introduction to epistemology; it will focus on a specific topic that is at the cutting edge of the field.

  Block K: MW 2:00 PM–3:20 PM [syllabus here]

- Jens Timmermann’s course **PHIL127a: Lying and Deception** will consider the philosophical debates around the notions of truthfulness, lying and deception, both from the perspective of contemporary
philosophers as well as from the perspective of key figures in the history of philosophy including Augustine and Kant. The course will focus primarily on the *ethics* of truthfulness, lying, and deception, but it will also include discussions about the definition of lying, the nature of self-deception, the semantics of lying, and the epistemological claims and assumptions involved in lying. [This course will satisfy the Advanced Normative requirement for Philosophy majors, and will be the Fall core seminar of the History of Ideas Program (HOID)]

Block V: TTh, 5 – 6:20pm [syllabus here]

- Lisa Fishbayn Joffe’s course PHIL128a: Gender, Multiculturalism and the Law will consider the timely subject of how the law accommodates cultural and gender differences, and how the law *ought* to respond to such differences. At the heart of the topic is the concept *culture*, and the question of how to find a balance between narrower cultural claims and more widely-shared civic values. The philosophical issues taken up in this course bear on a number of connected fields including politics, law, women’s studies, social justice, and religious studies. [This course will satisfy the Advanced Normative requirement for Philosophy majors and the University [WI] requirement. The WI element will focus on skills involved in writing law review articles. Completed papers might be suitable for submission to an undergraduate law journal.]

Block C: M,W,Th, 10 – 10:50am [syllabus here]

**FALL 17 COURSES LISTED BY DEPARTMENT REQUIREMENTS THEY SATISFY**

**LOGIC REQUIREMENT**

Phil 6: Introduction to Symbolic Logic (Samet – V block)

**LOWER LEVEL COURSES**

Phil 1a: Introduction to Philosophy (Teuber – N block)

Phil 1a: Introduction to Philosophy (Greenberg – F block)

Phil 17a: Introduction to Ethics (Smiley – L block)

Phil 22a: *Truth Even Unto Its Innermost Parts? -- The Ethics of Belief* (B Marušić – K block)

Phil 24a: Philosophy of Religion (Hirsch – J block)

**UPPER LEVEL GENERAL ELECTIVES**
Phil 123a: Existentialism (B Marušić – L block)

**UPPER LEVEL ETHICS/NORMATIVE ELECTIVES**

Phil 109b: Ethics and Emotions (Moran – J block)

Phil 114b: Topics in Ethical Theory: The Rights and Responsibilities of Citizenship (Moran – G block) [*Note. Students may take 114b for credit more than once – as long as it’s not the same topic.*]

Phil 127a: Lying and Deception (Timmermann – V block)

Phil 128a: Gender, Multiculturalism and the Law (Joffe – C block)

**UPPER LEVEL METAPHYSICS AND EPISTEMOLOGY ELECTIVES**

Phil 136a: Personal Identity (Greenberg – B block)

Phil 138b: Philosophy of Mathematics (Yourgrau - L block)

Phil 145b: Topics in the Philosophy of Language: Fiction (Yourgrau – M block)

**HISTORY OF PHILOSOPHY ELECTIVES**

Phil 167a: Hegel (Sheppard – N block)

Phil 168a: Kant (Greenberg – D block)

**MA PROGRAM.** We will be offering two MA-level courses in the Fall

Phil 200a: Proseminar (Teuber – H block) – *required for all first year MA students*

Phil 239a: Graduate Seminar in Metaphysics (Hirsch – P block)

**REGISTER EARLY.** Please – undergrads and graduate students – register early. If courses have low enrollments by key dates in the registration period, they are in danger of being canceled. So this is not about making sure you don’t get closed out of a course; if you think you want to take a course, please sign up for it early to make sure it doesn’t disappear.
CONFERENCE REPORT. The Philosophy Department holds a yearly one-day mini-conference, which presents three invited speakers who talk on a specific topic and is followed by a banquet dinner. This year’s topic was “Implicit Bias and Social Justice,” and the speakers were (our own) Ben Sherman, Natalia Washington (Wash U) and Jose Medina (Vanderbilt). The conference was well attended and drew both Brandeis students and a number of philosophers in the area. Keep an eye out for advertisements for the 2018 Spring Philosophy Mini-Conference next Fall. For those who would like to see/hear this year’s talks, they will soon be available on youtube (we will post links on the Department website).

HONORS THESES. If you are thinking of writing an Honors Thesis/Essay in Philosophy next year, please contact our Interim Honors Advisor Andreas Teuber to talk about the process; you can also find information here. If you’ve already been considering this option, I encourage you to approach faculty members you’re thinking of working with over the last weeks of this semester, so you can get a jump on the process over the summer. (Note: the Honors Advisor for 2017-8 will be Marion Smiley.)

PHILOSOPHY UDR. We’re happy to welcome our new Undergraduate Department Representative for next year, Matthew Reeves. If you have ideas about improving life in the department and/or would like to work with Matthew, please contact him at reevesm@.

ADMINISTRATIVE ROLES FOR 2017-8

- Chair: Jerry Samet (samet@)
- Department Administrator (jseeger@)
- Undergraduate Advising Head: Eli Hirsch (hirsch@)
- Minors Advisor: Andreas Teuber (teuber@)
- Honors Advisor: Marion Smiley (smiley@)
- Director of Graduate Studies: Beri Marušić – F17 (marusic@), Kate Moran – s18 (moran@)

OFFICE HOURS for Fall 2017 will be posted on the Department website.