A. Course Description

This course is required of all first-year PhD students. Others may audit at the discretion of the Course Directors.

This seminar will explore philosophical issues arising from the determination and use of concepts, categories, and kinds across several philosophical areas as well as at the intersections between philosophy and the natural and social sciences. We will ask the following set of core questions, among others: What are natural kinds and why do we need to posit them? Are there social or human kinds in the social domain, just as there are natural kinds in the natural domain? Do all scientific categories correspond to natural kinds? And do categories in the social sciences correspond generally to social kinds? Are all or some social kinds significantly different from natural kinds, since they are supposed to be evaluative, normative, interactive, and/or subjective? The first half of the seminar will be devoted to abstract, theoretical debates about concepts, categories, and kinds, while the second half will turn to investigation of such debates as they appear in the special context of the philosophy of law.

B. Requirements and Evaluation

Evaluation will be based entirely on weekly writing assignments and class participation. Students will be required to submit a 1200-1500 word paper each week and will often be called upon to briefly present and defend their papers in class. Students must submit eight papers in all, four in each half of the course (four in Weeks 2-6, and four in Weeks 7-11). Papers are due 24 hours before the seminar (11:30 am on Thursday) and should be submitted electronically (as an email attachment) to both course directors. Evaluation will be based entirely on the papers and on class participation (including presenting and defending papers in class). Late papers will not be accepted. Evaluation will be as follows:

Eight short papers: 80%
Class participation: 20%

C. Reading Schedule

Starred readings (*) are required and will form the basis of class discussion, while unstarred readings are recommended. All readings will be posted on the course Moodle site.
Week 1 (Sept 11): Introduction

Week 2 (Sept 18): Background on Natural Kinds


Week 3 (Sept 25): Categories and Kinds


Week 4 (Oct 2): Socially Constructed and Mind-Dependent Kinds


Searle, John (2009), Making the Social World (Oxford: Oxford University Press). (excerpts)

Week 5 (Oct 9): Interactive and Looping Kinds

University Press).


**Week 6 (Oct 16): Value-Laden and Normative Kinds**


**Week 7 (Oct 23): Legal Positivism and the Rule of Law**


**FALL READING DAYS: Oct 29-Nov 1**

**Week 8 (Nov 6): Moralized Concepts of Law**


**Week 9 (Nov 13): Necessity**


**Week 10 (Nov 20): Constructing Concepts of Law**


**Week 11 (Nov 27): Legal Realism**

*Green, Leslie “Law and the Causes of Judicial Decision”, available on SSRN.


**Week 12 (Dec 4): Wrap-Up**