

# PHILOSOPHY

## Courses

### PHIL 101 - Introduction to Philosophy (4 Credit Hours)

This course introduces students to philosophical inquiry by confronting fundamental issues in areas of philosophy such as ethics and moral theory, political and social philosophy, metaphysics (what there is), and epistemology (how and what we can know). Students develop skills in rigorous thinking and engage in the process of philosophizing.

### PHIL 121 - Ethics: Philosophical Considerations of Morality (4 Credit Hours)

This course explores the fundamental questions of ethical theory, asking how ethical judgments can be made, what justifications they may receive, whether terms like "right" and "wrong" have fixed meanings, whether moral assertions can claim universal validity or whether morality is rather relative to a culture or to an individual's beliefs. Depending on the semester, issues of applied ethics - having to do with abortion, medical ethics, business and professional ethics, ethics and the environment, war and peace, etc. - will be raised as well.

### PHIL 126 - Social and Political Philosophy (4 Credit Hours)

This course is about justice, power, and freedom, as ideals and as realities, and about whether objective or rational justifications of political and social views and actions are practical or even possible. The course includes an exploration of some fundamental philosophical questions regarding the nature of the community, the state, the individual, and the relationships among them. Students will study great texts in Western political thought as well as contemporary discussions and critiques, including works from thinkers such as Plato, Hobbes, Locke, Marx, Rawls, Mills, and Pateman.

### PHIL 191 - Introductory Topics Seminar in Philosophy (4 Credit Hours)

Select introductory topics in Philosophy.

### PHIL 192 - Introductory Topics Seminar in Philosophy (4 Credit Hours)

Select introductory topics in Philosophy.

### PHIL 199 - Introductory Topics in Philosophy (1-4 Credit Hours)

A general category used only in the evaluation of transfer credit. Courses with this number do not count towards the major or minor in Philosophy.

### PHIL 205 - Logic (4 Credit Hours)

This course is an introduction to logic and its philosophy. We will begin by considering the nature and significance of arguments in everyday life as well as the cognitive psychology of human reasoning. We will then examine the fundamental features of arguments with a particular focus on the techniques of formal epistemology, decision theory, and deductive logic. Throughout this course, students will acquire a facility with logical methods, investigate the foundations of quantitative reasoning, apply general logical principles to specific cases, and examine the limitations and advantages of logical and formal methods by exploring theoretical puzzles and paradoxes.

### PHIL 210 - Philosophy of Science (4 Credit Hours)

This course considers a range of conceptual issues connected with the understanding and practice of science. Issues to be considered include explanation, theoretical reduction, rationality, methodology and the possibility of scientific progress, etc. Although these questions are raised from the perspective of philosophy, they are intended to provide insight into the actual practice of the sciences - from both contemporary and historical perspectives. This course should prove especially helpful to science majors seeking to achieve a different perspective on the scientific enterprise; however, non-science majors are equally welcome.

**Prerequisite(s):** One previous course in Philosophy, or Science Major with Junior or Senior standing, or consent.

### PHIL 231 - Greek and Medieval Philosophy (4 Credit Hours)

An examination of some fundamental problems in Metaphysics (what there is) and Epistemology (how we come to know), in the context of the origin and development of Greek thinking from the pre-Socratics, Sophists and Socrates, Plato and Aristotle, through selected writers in the Medieval period including Plotinus, Augustine, Thomas Aquinas, Duns Scotus, William of Ockham, and Nicholas Cusanus.

**Prerequisite(s):** One previous course in Philosophy, or one Classics course, or consent.

### PHIL 232 - Modern Philosophy (4 Credit Hours)

Thinkers such as Rene Descartes, David Hume, and Immanuel Kant are currently referred to so often, in so many different contexts, that their names have been transformed into immediately recognizable adjectives (Cartesian, Humean, Kantian). But what did these philosophers actually believe? And why did they believe it? This course is an intermediate-level survey of western philosophy from their period (now known as the "Early Modern" or "Modern" era, which runs roughly from 1600-1800). While these and other thinkers (such as Spinoza, Leibniz, Locke, and Berkeley) in this era dealt with a wide variety of subjects, we will focus mostly on their contributions to epistemology, metaphysics, and philosophy of mind. We will address their writings with three different aims: a) to appreciate the sense in which they were, at one time, fresh and radical; b) to understand how, for better or for worse, they set the foundation for much of the modern—western, anyway—worldview; and c) to determine if what they say is either true or false.

**Prerequisite(s):** One previous course in Philosophy or consent.

### PHIL 250 - Philosophy of Law (4 Credit Hours)

Does law have an intrinsic connection with the moral order, or is it whatever a legislature or judge says it is? This course will analyze the concept of law, with particular attention given to the conflict between the natural law tradition and legal positivism. The justification of legal authority and the nature of legal reasoning will be considered. Normative issues, including the relation between law and concepts of justice, equality, liberty, responsibility, and punishment will also be addressed.

**Prerequisite(s):** One previous course in Philosophy or consent.

### PHIL 260 - Environmental Philosophy (4 Credit Hours)

This course investigates the question of our ethical relations and responsibility to objects and systems in the natural world, including animals, other living beings, non-living entities, ecosystems, and "nature" as a whole. It also asks about nature as such: what nature is, what the place in it is of humans, the role of human action in transforming nature, etc. The question of the relation of the natural to the social will receive special attention.

**Prerequisite(s):** One previous course in Philosophy, Environmental Studies major/minor, or consent.

**Crosslisting:** ENVS 260.

**PHIL 269 - Philosophy of the Arts: Aesthetics (4 Credit Hours)**

This course addresses issues in philosophical aesthetics both in relationship to the arts as well as to other domains of human life (e.g., nature, food, and design). We will ask what makes something an artwork; how to differentiate between artworks and non-artworks; how to evaluate artworks; what it means to judge something aesthetically; how aesthetic judgment differs for different kinds of objects; and other central issues from the field.

**Prerequisite(s):** One previous course in Philosophy, ART, AHVC, DANC, CINE, MUS or THTR Major, or consent.

**PHIL 272 - Ethics of Data and Information (4 Credit Hours)**

This course is a problem-driven, technically informed engagement with the ethics of data and information as well as an investigation of the moral dimensions of collecting, analyzing, and protecting data. It aims to equip students with the ethical frameworks and philosophical tools necessary to effectively engage with the urgent questions posed by data-driven technology in its various forms. Students will hone their understanding of the ethics of surveillance, scientific research, algorithmic bias, and policy decision-making. We will also investigate how familiar moral notions like privacy, property, fairness, and equality are challenged or illuminated by computational tools and the advent of novel possibilities for data collection and analysis. Projects in the course will seek to put into practice the ethical principles and moral theories in hopes of tackling data-driven decisions prudently and permissibly.

**PHIL 275 - Philosophy of Feminism (4 Credit Hours)**

Feminism and philosophy both make the invisible visible, the implicit explicit. Both make us aware of assumptions we make in our everyday lives and challenge us to justify them. This course examines ways in which feminist theory enriches philosophy and vice versa. Feminist criticism probes some of the most fundamental philosophical assumptions about our knowledge of and interaction with the world and other people. How does feminism destabilize philosophy and affect philosophical conceptions of knowledge, reality, metaphysics, agency, or morality? How does philosophy enrich feminist understandings of oppression, privilege, or equality? We will consider a range of forms of oppression and privilege, particularly as they affect women, and conceptions of sex, gender, and race in the context of debates about gender violence, work and family, as well as feminist discussions of epistemology, ethics, and science. Prerequisite(s): One previous course in Philosophy or Women's and Gender Studies, or consent.

**Crosslisting:** QS 275, WGST 275.

**PHIL 278 - Technology, People, and Power (4 Credit Hours)**

One common understanding of technology is that it provides a set of tools with which humanity can control its environment. Philosophical thought about technology suggests that the situation may well be not only far more complex, but radically different. Life without the technologies we use daily can seem unimaginable. Yet those very same technologies raise profound political, social, and ecological concerns. Some authors have argued that technological advances in fields such as computing, medicine, robotics, and artificial intelligence are fundamentally changing (or have already fundamentally changed) who and what we are by making us post- or transhuman. This course poses questions such as: Does technology affect us in merely superficial or more fundamental ways? Has our technology made us fundamentally different from our ancestors? Are there essential differences between types of technology (hand tools, "simple" machines, cybernetic devices, so-called "smart" technologies, etc.)? How is technology related to politics? Is technology value-neutral? Can technology be sexist or racist?.

**Prerequisite(s):** One previous course in PHIL or consent of instructor.

**PHIL 280 - Philosophy of Mind (4 Credit Hours)**

This course addresses fundamental questions regarding the nature of the human mind and thought. Students will be introduced to the leading contemporary theories of mind as well as critical responses to these theories. They will become acquainted with the works of philosophers such as Gilbert Ryle, Ludwig Wittgenstein, Daniel Dennett, Patricia Churchland, Fred Dretske, Ruth Millikan, Hillary Putnam, and others. We will address questions such as whether we can know there are other minds, whether mental states are reducible to brain states, how our thoughts can be about anything at all, whether there is a "language of thought", what it means to view the mind as embodied or as extending into the world.

**Prerequisite(s):** One previous course in Philosophy, Neuroscience concentrator, or consent.

**PHIL 285 - Biomedical Ethics (4 Credit Hours)**

This course focuses on a variety of ethical issues arising in the context of biological research, health, and medicine. Students will be introduced to the major theories and methods of biomedical decision making. The aim is to provide them with the concepts and tools necessary for engaging critically with ethical questions arising from the practice of medicine and the rapid development and commercialization of biomedical technologies. Topics include genetic testing and genetic medicine, genetically modified organisms, abortion, cloning, the use of stem cells, reproductive technologies, and organ donation, as well as the just allocation of healthcare and other scarce resources (like organs, vaccines), ethical issues surrounding the use of human and nonhuman subjects in research, and global disparities in health and healthcare access.

**PHIL 291 - Intermediate Topics Seminar in Philosophy (4 Credit Hours)**

An inquiry into issues and problems that are now at the center of philosophical attention. Topics vary from semester to semester in accordance with current interests of students and faculty.

**Prerequisite(s):** One previous course in Philosophy or consent.

**PHIL 292 - Intermediate Topics Seminar in Philosophy (4 Credit Hours)**

An inquiry into issues and problems that are now at the center of philosophical attention. Topics vary from semester to semester in accordance with current interests of students and faculty.

**Prerequisite(s):** One previous course in Philosophy or consent.

**PHIL 293 - Topics in the History of Philosophy (4 Credit Hours)**

This course provides the opportunity for topical seminars on major issues in the history of philosophy.

**Prerequisite(s):** One previous course in Philosophy or consent.

**PHIL 294 - Topics in Ethics (4 Credit Hours)**

This course provides the opportunity for topical seminars on major issues in ethical theory.

**Prerequisite(s):** One previous course in Philosophy or consent.

**PHIL 295 - Topics in Social and Political Philosophy (4 Credit Hours)**

This course provides a venue in the curriculum for topical seminars dealing with major issues in social and political theory. Prerequisite(s): One previous course in Philosophy or consent.

**PHIL 296 - Topics in Contemporary Philosophy (4 Credit Hours)**

This course provides the opportunity for topical seminars on major issues and debates in contemporary philosophy. Prerequisite(s): One previous course in Philosophy or consent.

**PHIL 298 - Existentialism (4 Credit Hours)**

Existentialism asks how we can generate a meaning for our lives without appealing to outside sources. Many existentialists embrace a view characterized with the slogan "existence precedes essence." This slogan means that any attempt to figure out what one is must begin with the fact that one is. In addition, if existence precedes essence, then there may well be a multiplicity of ways that one can be, making choosing between these ways a difficult task. That one's existence may well be experienced as constrained by social forces seemingly beyond one's control complicates matters. We will read major philosophical sources of existentialism (e.g., Nietzsche, Kierkegaard, Sartre, Beauvoir, Fanon, Nishitani) and watch some of the existentialist films they inspired (by, e.g., Kurosawa, Tarkovsky, Bergman).

**PHIL 299 - Intermediate Topics in Philosophy (1-4 Credit Hours)**

A general category used only in the evaluation of transfer credit.

**PHIL 305 - Metaphysics (4 Credit Hours)**

This course is an introduction to the methodology of and various issues within metaphysics. Typically, these questions address certain general features about the nature of reality. Many of these are ontological, concerning whether certain kinds of entities exist—e.g., numbers, holes, fictional characters, gods, and possibilities. Other metaphysical questions concern the nature and interrelations among entities and various features of the world. Among the familiar metaphysical issues are debates regarding the nature of human beings, the reality of space and time, the limits of thought and possibility, and the connection between truth and existence. Readings will be drawn from a mix of contemporary and classical sources. Prerequisite(s): Two previous courses in Philosophy or consent.

**PHIL 306 - Theories of Knowledge (4 Credit Hours)**

An inquiry into the meaning, possibility, conditions, criteria, and types of truth and/or knowledge, and a discussion of representative theories of knowledge. The class aims to achieve clarity in respect to both classical and contemporary approaches to the problem of knowledge. The adequacy of those approaches will be assessed.

Prerequisite(s): Two previous courses in Philosophy or consent.

**PHIL 321 - Metaethics (4 Credit Hours)**

We spend much of our time trying to answer such questions as: How ought we to act? What should we value? and What type of person should we be? Yet, it seems right that we can evaluate our answers to these questions and decide among them only if we correctly answer another set of questions first. For instance, how can we know what we should value unless we understand what values are, whether they exist and whether we can know them if they do? How can we know how we ought to act if we do not know what it means for an act to be morally good or why we are even obligated to do what is morally good in the first place? This course pursues answers to this other set of questions. It inquires into the nature of ethical statements, properties, judgments and attitudes. As such, it draws on many other areas of philosophy, including epistemology, metaphysics and the philosophy of language.

Prerequisite(s): Two previous courses in Philosophy or consent.

**PHIL 326 - Theories of Justice (4 Credit Hours)**

This course focuses on contemporary work in political philosophy concerned with justice, including that of philosophers such as Rawls, Dworkin, Nozick, Young, MacIntyre, Sandel, Nussbaum, and Habermas. We will examine questions such as: What is justice? Can it be defined independently of consideration of what the "good" is for human beings? Is justice possible in a society marked by significant religious, ethnic, cultural or other sorts of pluralisms? What is the relation between justice and nationhood, and what can be said about justice between nations? How is justice connected to social equality, and to liberty? What is meant by economic justice? What is the relation between justice and democracy? The course will examine contemporary philosophical debates about these questions, in order to help students think critically about the issue of justice in the context of the pressing real world issues in which such questions play a crucial role.

Prerequisite(s): PHIL 126 or PHIL 250, and one other philosophy course, or consent.

**PHIL 330 - Nineteenth-Century Philosophy (4 Credit Hours)**

This course examines some of the most important developments in European philosophy during the nineteenth century. Figures to be read may include Hegel, Marx, Kierkegaard, Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, Mill, Frege, and others.

Prerequisite(s): PHIL 232 and one other Philosophy course, or consent.

**PHIL 333 - History of Analytic Philosophy (4 Credit Hours)**

This course is an introduction to the methods and the history of the analytic tradition. This tradition can be distinguished in a number of ways. Methodologically, it tends to employ careful argumentation and formal tools like logic and mathematics to provide analyses of scientific, psychological, and linguistic data. Historically, it is usually traced back to a group of Anglo-European philosophers—Frege, Russell, Moore, and Wittgenstein—writing around the beginning of the twentieth century. Thematically, it is primarily driven by the ambition of providing a systematic account of the relationship between language, thought, and the world. This course explores early and recent contributions of the analytic tradition to epistemology, metaphysics, philosophy of language, philosophy of science, and ethics. Prerequisite(s): Two previous courses in Philosophy or consent.

**PHIL 334 - Continental Philosophy (4 Credit Hours)**

This course traces the development of Continental Philosophy from 1900 to the present, including the phenomenological movement of Husserl, Heidegger, Sartre, and others; the neo-Marxism of the Frankfurt School and Habermas; the hermeneutics of Gadamer and Ricoeur; and the post-structuralism of Foucault, Derrida, and others.

Prerequisite(s): PHIL 232 and one other course in Philosophy, or consent.

**PHIL 360 - Philosophy of Language (4 Credit Hours)**

This course examines the nature of language, meaning and communication. It considers questions such as: What is a language? What is it for a word to have meaning? How is communication possible? Are meanings "in the head"? What is the relation between language and thought? It addresses topics such as reference, the role of speaker intentions, and the indeterminacy of translation as well as some applications and political implications of philosophy of language. Students will be introduced to several strands of philosophy of language such as formal semantics, ordinary language philosophy, and speech act theory and will become familiar with the writings of philosophers ranging from Frege, Russell, and Wittgenstein to Quine, Austin, Putnam, Chomsky, Davidson, Langton, and others. Prerequisite(s): Two previous courses in Philosophy or consent.

**PHIL 361 - Directed Study (1-4 Credit Hours)**

**PHIL 362 - Directed Study (1-4 Credit Hours)**

**PHIL 363 - Independent Study (1-4 Credit Hours)**

**PHIL 364 - Independent Study (1-4 Credit Hours)**

**PHIL 391 - Advanced Topics Seminar in Philosophy (4 Credit Hours)**

**PHIL 392 - Advanced Topics Seminar in Philosophy (4 Credit Hours)**

**PHIL 399 - Advanced Topics in Philosophy (1-4 Credit Hours)**

A general category used only in the evaluation of transfer credit.

**PHIL 431 - Seminar in Philosophy (Junior/Senior Seminar) (4 Credit Hours)**

An intensive study in a major figure in philosophic thought. The topic varies from semester to semester, depending upon the needs of the students and the interests of the Department. Recent seminars have dealt with Aristotle and Aquinas, Foucault, Deleuze, Wittgenstein, Kant, Putnam and Rorty, Hume, and Heidegger.

**Prerequisite(s):** PHIL 231 or PHIL 232, and one other Philosophy course, and junior/senior standing, or consent.

**PHIL 440 - Senior Symposium (1 Credit Hour)**

In the spring semester, senior philosophy majors orally present a paper in a symposium format to their peers and to philosophy faculty. The 12-page paper is the result of a year-long project. Students are also required to act as commentators for one other senior paper and to participate fully in all paper sessions.

**PHIL 451 - Senior Research (4 Credit Hours)**

**PHIL 452 - Senior Research (4 Credit Hours)**