Philosophy (PHIL)

Courses

PHIL 101. Introduction to Philosophy. 3 Credits.
An introductory survey of the discipline of philosophy. Students will join the thoughtful search, in which philosophers have engaged through reading and discussion since ancient days, into the problems of reality (metaphysics), of truth and meaning (logic and philosophy of language), of moral standards (ethics), of knowledge (epistemology), of beauty (aesthetics), and other fundamental questions. F,S.

PHIL 105. Religions of Asia. 3 Credits.
This course is an introduction to the characteristic beliefs and practices of selected religions that developed in Asia: Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism, Daoism and Shinto. We will devote special attention to scriptures and other classic literature of the traditions. Students will gain an appreciation of the vitality and enduring significance of each of the religions as a way of life for large numbers of people. F.

PHIL 110. Introduction to Logic. 3 Credits.
A theoretical and practical introduction to the principles of reasoning--formal and informal, deductive and inductive. Students will study language and patterns of reasoning as vehicles for and obstacles to critical thinking. The central characteristics of deduction and validity; the role of hypotheses, inductive reasoning, probability estimates in scientific and quasi-scientific investigations and other models of critical thinking and their limits will be covered. F.

PHIL 120. Introduction to Ethics. 3 Credits.
This course investigates the nature of the Good Life, of moral principles, and the application of moral systems to contemporary debate. These may include questions about the morality of war, capital punishment, sexual behavior, welfare, and so forth. F,S.

PHIL 130. Introduction to Political Philosophy. 3 Credits.
An exploration of the central themes in political theory. Students will study topics such as justification of the state, liberty, justice, equality, rights, democratic participation. The course will include readings from classic and contemporary philosophers, emphasizing the connection between the theoretical issues addressed and contemporary political debates. S, even years.

PHIL 140. Introduction to Philosophy of Education. 3 Credits.
You've been in school your entire life, but how much do you know about education? Do we get an education to get a job? Be better people? Get the most from our freedom? And, why do we need diverse classrooms, or tests, or grades? Introduction to Philosophy of Education asks these and related questions, exploring a long and interesting history of controversies about the nature and goals of education. It examines the relationship between teacher and student, curriculum and politics, and how student abilities and disabilities affect the classroom. This discussion-based course will help you better understand why you've been in school and what you should hope to get out of it. F, odd years.

PHIL 217. Religion in America. 3 Credits.
This course examines the role that religion has played in the political, social, cultural, and intellectual history of America. F.

PHIL 221. Symbolic Logic. 3 Credits.
Symbolic logic is the application of formal, mathematical methods in the study of reasoning. Beyond its central role as a tool in philosophical inquiry, deductive logic is also important in the foundations of mathematics and computer science, as well as linguistics and psychology. S, even years.

PHIL 227. Philosophy of Religion. 3 Credits.
An introduction to the philosophy of religion, examining selected Western and non-Western approaches. Topics that may be considered include arguments about the existence of God or other religious Ultimates; religion and ethics; the problem of evil for religion; religion, embodiment, sex and gender; religious experiences, including revelations and "mysticism"; and understanding divergent religious claims. S, odd years.

PHIL 245. Death and Dying. 3 Credits.
An examination of various perspectives on death and dying in our own and other cultures with a view to coping with the problems of mortality and immortality. Medical, psychological, philosophical, and religious aspects contributing to an understanding of the meaning of death will be offered by resource people whose experience will lend assistance to the student's confronting the reality of death and dying. Lecture and discussion. S.

PHIL 250. Ethics in Engineering and Science. 3 Credits.
This course centers on the ethical issues of particular concern to both citizens and professionals involved in engineering and related technical/scientific fields. We review ethical history and ethical theory in all class discussions. The major focus of the course, however, is on ethical dilemmas, case studies, and codes relevant to contemporary engineering and scientific practice. F,S.

PHIL 251. Ethics in Health Care. 3 Credits.
Some ethical problems and ethical guidelines are of particular concern to citizens and to professionals interested in health care fields. Examples are informed consent, abortion, euthanasia, organ transplant policies, professional standards versus patient rights, assisted suicide, ethics of testing/screening, health care policy and reform. Class members will explore such issues through case studies in a context of relevant ethical history and theory. Junior/senior standing encouraged. F,S.

PHIL 252. Applied Business Ethics. 3 Credits.
An exploration of ethical issues occurring in business. Basic values promoted or inhibited by people and institutions in these areas will be investigated. Case studies will also be used within a context of ethical theory and history, to explore more defined problems such as unsafe products, employee rights, the relation between business life and personal life, and many more. S, odd years.

PHIL 253. Environmental Ethics. 3 Credits.
The course centers on the way that ethics helps us to understand environmental issues. We examine a broad cross-section of environmental issues from a variety of traditional and contemporary ethical frameworks. Issues include sustainability, animal rights, energy consumption, habitat loss, biodiversity, land conservation, and pollution. Class members will explore such issues through case studies in a context of relevant ethical history and theory. Offered Fall every 3 years. F.

PHIL 254. Unmanned Aircraft Systems Ethics. 3 Credits.
Unmanned Aircraft Systems include fields of study that pose significant public responsibilities. This course will review ethical history and ethical theory in the context of a UAS professional's life. The major focus of the course is on ethical dilemmas, case studies, and codes relevant to contemporary UAS and scientific practices. S, even years.

PHIL 255. Media Ethics. 3 Credits.
We are a society consumed by mass media. From TV, to newspapers, to the internet, we are under a constant barrage of information, persuasion, and digital manipulation. What are the ethical issues involved in broadcasting our perspectives and evaluating others? Do the traditional ideas of journalistic objectivity still apply? How much privacy should we have? How can we tell propaganda from the truth? In this class we will explore these and related questions, including taking a deep dive into the controversies surrounding free speech. S.

PHIL 285. Global Philosophy. 3 Credits.
This course will investigate a variety of different philosophical traditions that exist outside of the Western philosophical heritage, including Asian, African, and/or Native American. The course is repeatable when the course topic is different. Repeatable to 6.00 credits. F.

PHIL 300. History of Philosophy. 3 Credits.
An overview of the history of philosophy focusing primarily on the Ancient Greeks and Romans, the Medieval age, the 19th century, and modern philosophy. On demand.

PHIL 304. Existentialism & Phenomenology. 3 Credits.
The focus on Existentialism will explore questions about human existence and its relationship to experiences like freedom, solitude, anxiety, disgust, boredom, and personal identity. By examining the works of such philosophers and literary figures as Kafka, Dostoevsky, Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, Sartre, Camus, and Beauvoir, students will investigate the ways in which humans construct identity and meaning, often in the face of a seemingly absurd world. The focus on Phenomenology will explain phenomenology as a method that attempts to describe these lived human experiences from the embodied subject's point of view. Students will practice phenomenology as part of the class by undertaking guided experiments of description and narration. The course may investigate common human experiences of empathy, self-deception, forgiveness, fear, desire, or hospitality, through accounts by thinkers like Husserl, Levinas, and Merleau-Ponty. The course is repeatable, given the different emphases of Existentialism and Phenomenology. Repeatable to 6.00 credits. F, even years.

PHIL 310. Philosophy of Art, Literature, & Film. 3 Credits.
This course will investigate the philosophical questions pertaining to artistic expression (aesthetics), including the visual arts (e.g., painting, sculpture, and film), literature, and music. Questions that may be explored include: whether definitions of art or beauty are possible; what the relationship between form and substance is in art; whether or not art should be valued as a product or process; how have new technologies affected art and its reception in society; and what role, if any, does art play in politics. This course will utilize representative texts from the history of philosophy, as well as a variety of examples from the arts. The course is repeatable when the course topic is different. Repeatable to 6.00 credits. F, odd years.

PHIL 312. American Philosophy. 3 Credits.
This course will consider some of the major figures of 20th and 21st century American Philosophy and Pragmatism through the theme of democracy and its relation to education, along with related issues of privilege/class/race in the U.S.; protest movements and activism; anti-intellectualism; and individualism and the common good. Philosophers studied may include: Ralph Waldo Emerson, Henry David Thoreau, William James, Jane Addams, James Baldwin, John Dewey, W. E. B. Du Bois, and Cornel West. On demand.

PHIL 315. Philosophy of Race & Postcolonialism. 3 Credits.
This course will investigate philosophical issues surrounding race, racism, and postcolonialism. Topics that may be explored include: the role philosophers have played historically in shaping these discourses and practices; epistemic foundations for the concept of race; scientific treatments of race; theories of civilization, nationalism, and ethno-nationalism; and the ethical, social, and political consequences of race-thinking and postcolonialism and contemporary philosophical responses. Repeatable to 6.00 credits. S, even years.

PHIL 320. Hinduism. 3 Credits.
The Indian subcontinent is one of the great historic centers of world civilization, and it has extended its cultural influence throughout Asia and the world; like China, it now also comprises about one-fifth to one-sixth of the earth's population. This class will introduce students to the region's preponderant religious and philosophical tradition of Hinduism, treating topics such as understandings of God or gods, teachings of a universal Self, reincarnation, views for and against the caste system, and Hinduism and globalization. We will treat examples of Hinduism from the ancient to contemporary periods, devoting special attention to selections of classic texts. On demand.

PHIL 331. Contemporary European Philosophy. 3 Credits.
This course will investigate philosophical trends in contemporary (i.e., late 20th century until the present) European philosophy (aka Continental Philosophy). Students will read recent philosophical works on timely thematic issues such as: technology and society; identity; political sovereignty and resistance; theories of language and communication; and the nature of power. Repeatable to 6.00 credits. S, odd years.

PHIL 334. Judaism. 3 Credits.
Comparative Jewish thought in cultural context and as manifest in Jewish literature. Topics to be studied include the sacred, the human community, the role of Israel, ethics, the Holocaust. On demand.

PHIL 338. Christianity. 3 Credits.
A systematic and comparative investigation of the many varieties of Christianity that have occurred in the past and that exist in the contemporary world. On demand.

PHIL 342. Advanced Ethics. 3 Credits.
This course will examine contemporary (20th and 21st century) ethical theories as well as moral problems affecting societies around the world. Topics may include human rights, sexual ethics, ethical consumerism, and ways in which science and technology have affected moral deliberation and judgment. S, even years.

PHIL 350. Philosophy of Technology. 3 Credits.
In this course, students will study foundational and contemporary arguments in philosophy of technology on a wide range of questions and issues such as: the relationship between nature and techné; how technologies alter what we can know (epistemology) and how we conceive of reality (ontology); new ethical quandaries created by technologies; the impact technologies have on our social-political philosophies and practices; how technological innovations alter aesthetic creations and appreciation; and posthumanism. S, even years.

PHIL 355. Social and Political Philosophy. 3 Credits.
This course examines core issues in society and governance: the nature of justice, the limits of freedom, the role of religion, family and pluralism in the modern community, are a few examples of possible topics. Students in the course may examine both classical and contemporary theories of political society. Offered Fall every 3 years (2008). F, even years.

PHIL 356. Islam. 3 Credits.
Beginning with pre-Islamic Arabian culture, this course provides an academic survey of the genesis of Islam, including the life of the prophet Muhammad and formative events in the early Islamic community, Qur'an and Hadith, common beliefs, rituals, and practices, the development of schools of Islamic jurisprudence and theology, Sufism, and Islamic art and literature. On demand.

PHIL 360. Feminist Philosophy. 3 Credits.
This course will investigate theories and major ideas of feminist philosophers. The course may be approached as an historical examination of the different "waves" of feminism, or topically, by considering themes like: women and the body, the feminine and the spirit, philosophy of sex/gender, feminist art, postmodern feminism, etc. Central figures in feminist philosophy who may be studied include: Charlotte Perkins Gilman, Simone de Beauvoir, Susan Bordo, Catharine MacKinnon, Luce Irigaray, Audre Lorde, Judith Butler, Donna Haraway, Sara Ahmed, and Chandra Talpade Mohanty. S, odd years.

PHIL 371. Philosophy of Law. 3 Credits.
An investigation of the nature of both law and legal reasoning. Study of the nature of law focuses on theories of natural law, legal positivism, and legal realism. Legal reasoning concerns justified interpretation of precedent and statute within the common law tradition. Additional topics dealt with as time allows, encompass such issues as the justification of punishment and enforcement of morality. F.

PHIL 380. Buddhism. 3 Credits.
A historical and critical survey of different Buddhist schools in India, China, Tibet, and Japan. S, odd years.

PHIL 399. Topics. 1-3 Credits.
This course provides an opportunity for detailed examination of important topics in Philosophy and Religious Studies. Topics will vary depending on faculty and student interests. Investigations into philosophy of religion, foundations of logic, African American philosophic schools, political correctness, and many others are possible. Repeatable to 6.00 credits. On demand.

PHIL 450. Philosophy, Economics, and Politics. 3 Credits.
This course provides an introduction to the discipline sometimes called "political economy" and illustrates its connection to political philosophy in general. It focuses on the relationship between political and economic structures, with a special emphasis on the nature and problems of liberal capitalist democracies. Students will read classic and contemporary thinkers, and primary and secondary sources. S, even years.

PHIL 451. Current Topics in Political Philosophy. 3 Credits.
This course provides an in-depth study of the nature of citizenship, with special emphasis on how citizens deliberate collectively and individually. It focuses on questions of rationality, political activism, political education, and cosmopolitanism. Students will read classic and contemporary thinkers, and primary and secondary sources. Repeatable to 6.00 credits. S, odd years.

PHIL 480. Public Philosophy. 3 Credits.
Public philosophy is the process of engaging in philosophical reflection with non-philosophers. This course provides the opportunity for students to take existing work in academic philosophy and "translate" it into more accessible media. Students will write magazine articles, blog entries, opinion pieces suitable for newspapers, and engage in other activities that help philosophy expand past its home at the university. Prerequisite: 75 total credit hours. S.

PHIL 491. Seminar. 3-6 Credits.
A consideration of selected problems in Philosophy or Religious Studies, or the investigation of classic texts of mutual interest to departmental faculty and more advanced students. Previous work in Philosophy, Religious Studies, or related disciplines is recommended. Prerequisite: Junior or senior standing and consent of instructor. On demand.

PHIL 494. Independent Study. 1-3 Credits.
Supervised tutorial on an individual basis. Typically, a student will work independently to a considerable extent. In other cases, the course may take the form of regularly scheduled meetings. Prerequisite: Instructor consent. Repeatable to 8.00 credits. On demand.

PHIL 497. Projects. 1-6 Credits.
Projects is a course that allows students to engage in non-traditional, non-classroom based projects in Philosophy or Ethics. Projects may include internships, practicums, research or teaching assistantships, community engagement activities, or other projects that may differ from semester to semester. Students may enroll in this course with permission of instructor, but some projects (e.g. , internships) may be selective and subject to an application process. Prerequisite: Instructor consent. Repeatable to 12.00 credits. On demand.

PHIL 575. Data Science Ethics. 3 Credits.
Data Science Ethics is a philosophical exploration of the moral problems data scientists encounter in their daily lives. It is intended for both professionals who seek a data-science career and for the curious, who enjoy investigating modern ethical problems. In this course, we discuss compliance, the misuse of data throughout the history of science, the impact of large-scale data interpretation on democracy and the justice system, and ethical considerations for diversity, privacy, research, and artificial intelligence. S.