

Philosophy and Religious Studies (Phil and Rels)

B.A. with Major in Philosophy and Religious Studies: Philosophy Concentration (<http://und-public.courseleaf.com/undergraduateacademicinformation/departments/courses/programs/philosophyandreligion/phil-ba-phil>)

B.A. with Major in Philosophy and Religion: Religious Studies Concentration (<http://und-public.courseleaf.com/undergraduateacademicinformation/departments/courses/programs/philosophyandreligion/phil-ba-rel>)

B.A. with Major in Philosophy and Religious Studies: Pre-Law Concentration (<http://und-public.courseleaf.com/undergraduateacademicinformation/departments/courses/programs/philosophyandreligion/phil-ba-law>)

Minor in Philosophy & Religious Studies: Philosophy Concentration (<http://und-public.courseleaf.com/undergraduateacademicinformation/departments/courses/programs/philosophyandreligion/phil-minor-phil>)

Minor in Philosophy & Religion: Religious Studies Concentration (<http://und-public.courseleaf.com/undergraduateacademicinformation/departments/courses/programs/philosophyandreligion/phil-minor-rel>)

Minor in Ethics (<http://und-public.courseleaf.com/undergraduateacademicinformation/departments/courses/programs/philosophyandreligion/phil-minor-law>)

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 110. Forward or Delete? An 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.

PHIL 240. Getting Fit with Aristotle. 3 Credits.

How excellent of a person are you? Can you become better? These are the questions Aristotle asks in his Ethics. In this course, we will read Aristotle to see if his words can actually improve us. We will supplement his classic text with more modern studies in fitness, nutrition, friendship, cognitive science, food, and other topics. Additionally, this course is geared towards skills-development. It is designed to foster argumentation, writing, comprehension, and oral skills through in-depth reading, writing, and oral assignments. Students are expected to be able to understand challenging texts and write summaries, comparisons, and criticisms that represent both the philosopher's ideas and the students' own observations about those ideas. On demand.

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.

PHIL 282. Asian Philosophy. 3 Credits.

Study of major philosophical systems of India, China and/or Japan. On demand.

PHIL 300. History of Philosophy I (Ancient/Modern). 3 Credits.

The ancient Greeks and Romans laid the foundations for even The focus on Ancient Philosophy will investigate the foundations of Western philosophy through the study of ancient Greek and Roman thinkers like Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Cicero, Lucretius, and Seneca, who raised and attempted to answer questions about topics such as: the nature of truth and knowledge; what is and how/can we live the good life; and what is justice. The focus on Modern Philosophy will highlight 17th and 18th century rationalist and empiricist philosophers like Descartes, Spinoza, Leibniz, Hume, and Kant. Their influence on Enlightenment thought, including issues like doubt, certainty, free-will, perception, and belief will be explored in this version of the course. Course is repeatable, given the different emphases of Ancient and Modern Philosophy (Fall of odd years will be Ancient, even years will be Modern). Repeatable to 6 credits. F.

PHIL 301. History of Philosophy II (Medieval/19th Century). 3 Credits.

The focus on Medieval Philosophy will examine philosophical arguments on the existence of God, conceptions of the afterlife, arguments on whether humans have free-will or are subject to pre-destination, and the nature of sin, morality, and forgiveness, among other topics. Representative Medieval thinkers that may be studied include: Aquinas, Anselm, Augustine, Boethius, Dante, Ibn Tufayl, and Plotinus. The focus on 19th Century Philosophy will cover how philosophers responded to Kant's Enlightenment philosophy and the growing challenges to traditional value systems, paying special attention to the formation of the modern Western subject and the philosophy of history. Thinkers covered will include: Kant, Hegel, Feuerbach, Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, Marx, and Freud. Course is repeatable, given the different emphases of Medieval and 19th Century Philosophy (Spring of even years will be Medieval, odd years will be 19th Century.). Repeatable to 6 credits. S.

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 credits. S, odd 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 credits. S, even 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. F, odd years.

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 credits. F, even years.

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 credits. F, odd years.

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, odd 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).

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, even 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. S, even years.

PHIL 399. Philosophic Themes. 1-3 Credits.

This course provides an opportunity for detailed examination of important philosophic themes. 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. May be repeated for a maximum of 6 credits. Repeatable to 6 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. Offered Spring every 3 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 credits. On demand.

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. F.

PHIL 491. Seminar in Philosophy. 3-6 Credits.

A consideration of selected philosophical problems or classic texts of mutual interest to departmental faculty and more advanced students. Previous work in philosophy or related disciplines is recommended. Prerequisites: Junior or senior standing and consent of instructor. On demand.

PHIL 494. Independent Study in Philosophy. 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. May be repeated to 8 credits. Prerequisite: Instructor consent. Repeatable to 24 credits. F,S.

PHIL 497. Projects in Philosophy. 1-3 Credits.

Projects in Philosophy is a course that allows students to engage in non-traditional, non-classroom based projects in philosophy. 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. Repeatable up to 12 credits. Prerequisite: Instructor consent. Repeatable to 12 credits. On demand.

RELS Courses

RELS 100. Introduction to Religious Studies. 3 Credits.

This course is designed as an introduction to the academic study of religion. Topics discussed include problems with defining "religion," approaches to the subject in the humanities and social sciences, and the roles played by religion in the contemporary world. F,S.

RELS 101. Religions of the West. 3 Credits.

This course is an introduction to the comparative study of the many cultural manifestations of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. S, odd years.

RELS 102. 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, odd years.

RELS 201. Introduction to the Bible. 3 Credits.

This course is designed to introduce the student to the academic study of the Bible and to the relevant comparative material drawn from the surrounding cultures. F.

RELS 216. Sex, Gender, and Religion. 3 Credits.

This course presents issues generated by the interrelationship of sex, sexual orientation and gender with religion. Included in our investigation are examination of the various interpretations of sacred texts which produce discourses of sexual control, establish moral authority and seek to define sexual identity. Other discourses are those created from other religious experiences and therefore resist those of the dominant society. On demand.

RELS 220. Religion in America. 3 Credits.

This course examines the role that religion has played in the political, social, cultural, and intellectual history of America. S, even years.

RELS 227. Mysticism and Spirituality in Religion. 3 Credits.

A study of mystics and their writings from the Eastern and Western traditions and the application of methods of religious inquiry into the presence of mystical phenomena. S, even years.

RELS 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. F.

RELS 309. Atheism and Secularism. 3 Credits.

A systematic and critical examination of the fundamental concepts, ideas, and history of atheism and secularism. S, odd years.

RELS 315. Daoism and Confucianism. 3 Credits.

An introduction to two major religious and philosophical traditions indigenous to China and important throughout East Asia. Attention will also be directed to the relations of Daoist and Confucian traditions to the social and political order, from ancient times through the contemporary period. S, odd years.

RELS 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. S, even years.

RELS 325. Religious Violence. 3 Credits.

A critical examination of the theories used to explain and the history associated with violent acts attributed to "religious" actors and/or motivations. F, odd years.

RELS 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.

RELS 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. S, even years.

RELS 355. 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. F, even years.

RELS 380. Buddhism. 3 Credits.

A historical and critical survey of different Buddhist schools in India, China, Tibet, and Japan. F, even years.

RELS 399. Selected Topics. 1-3 Credits.

A selected topic in the area of religious studies such as Atheism, Religion and Public Life, Lessons of the Holocaust, Religion and the Environment, Greco-Roman Religion, African American Religious History, Women Religious Writers. Repeatable to 12 credits with different topics. Repeatable to 12 credits. On demand.

RELS 480. Seminar in Theory and Method. 3 Credits.

This course is required of all Religious Studies students and will fulfill the Essential Studies capstone requirement. Although the specific focus of the course may change each time it is offered, in every case it will focus critical attention on a variety of interdisciplinary approaches to the academic study of religion. Prerequisite: Junior or Senior standing. On demand.

RELS 491. Seminar in Religious Studies. 3 Credits.

A consideration of selected topics or religious classics of mutual interest to departmental staff and advanced students in Religion. Prerequisites: Junior or senior standing and some upper level work in Religion or consent of instructor. On demand.

RELS 494. Independent Studies in Religion. 1-3 Credits.

Supervised reading and study on an individual basis. Repeatable to 8 credits. Prerequisite: Instructor consent. Repeatable to 8 credits. F,S.

RELS 497. Projects in Religious Studies. 1-3 Credits.

Projects in Religion is a course that allows students to engage in non-traditional, non-classroom based projects in religious studies. 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: Permission of instructor. Repeatable to 12 credits. F,S.