

Philosophy (PHILOS)

Courses

PHILOS 101. Introduction to Philosophy. 3 Credits.

This course will acquaint you with some of the more interesting topics and methodologies in Philosophy. Our principal focus is to learn to identify and evaluate philosophical arguments, which we will do by considering topics that circle our endeavor to grasp and understand ultimate reality. Here are some of the questions we will ask: Does the mind exist apart from the body? Do we have free Will? Is life inherently meaningful? Is moral value something that humans alone possess, or is it present in the world around us? Is there such a thing as a 'good' human life?

Fall and Spring.

PHILOS 102. Contemporary Ethical Issues. 3 Credits.

Ethics is one branch of philosophy, and philosophy is an attempt to understand the most basic concepts and theories that people use to understand the nature of the world, human beings, and human beings' place in the world. The main concerns of ethics are the nature of good and evil and the basis of right and wrong conduct. It is easy to form a quick belief about what a good life is, or about whether abortion is right or wrong, whether capital punishment is justified, and so on. Someone may even have some reasons for his/her beliefs on such issues. But in ethics that is not enough. Ethics asks whether the reasons are really good ones, ones that truly justify the belief in question, ones that can truly withstand an objective critical examination, ones that truly fit in well with a solid system of ethical beliefs. This course deals with some of the most important questions of ethics, and tries to answer them on the basis of the highest standards of reasoning. We will first examine a number of different ethical theories. After we have studied ethical theories, we will go on to consider particular ethical issues. These issues will also be critically and systematically examined. Such issues may include abortion, genetic engineering, euthanasia, the death penalty, freedom of speech, war and terrorism, and animal rights.

Fall and Spring.

PHILOS 103. Logic and Reasoning. 3 Credits.

This course introduces the students to the basic concepts and skills of logical reasoning which is central to critical thinking. With the objective of constructing good arguments for successful persuasion and defending ourselves against the illogical and fallacious appeals that bombard us daily, this course examines formal and informal fallacies, rules of syllogisms, and propositional logic and applies these logical tools to samples of real-life situations.

Fall Only.

PHILOS 105. Is Morality for Sale?. 3 Credits.

This course hopes to introduce us to the study of morality and moral practice by first asking whether we ought to behave morally and, if so, what, exactly, it might mean to think and act in a moral way. The course will explore several challenges to morality--such as relativism, evolution, and the possibility that God does not exist. We will also examine the moral implications of birth, death, and pleasure, as well as how freedom, equality, and loyalty enter into our moral lives. We will conclude by considering a host of ways in which moral values are or ought (not) to be for sale.

Fall and Spring.

PHILOS 112. Scientific Reasoning, Risk, and Probability. 3 Credits.

Science is a battery of special methods and procedures that has proven to be extraordinarily successful in producing knowledge and understanding of the natural world. Scientific reasoning is the ability to gain this knowledge on the basis of systematic observation, evidence, and hypotheses. This course introduces the student to some of the basic components of scientific methodology, procedures, and reasoning. Students will explore a range of topics: truth, facts, objectivity of observation, the nature of science and its differences from non-science and pseudo-science, the structure of scientific theories, the nature of scientific explanation, principles of scientific inference, limitations of science, hypothesis confirmation and rejection, Mill's methods of experimental inquiry, and probability.

Spring.

PHILOS 113. AI, Algorithms, and Truth. 3 Credits.

This course examines how we know what we know in an age of information overload, exploring both ancient philosophical questions and contemporary challenges. Students will learn how social media, algorithms, and artificial intelligence have transformed our relationship with truth, while developing practical skills for evaluating information and conducting research. Through studying philosophical ideas about knowledge alongside modern theories of information literacy, students will learn systematic approaches to finding, evaluating, and using information effectively. The course features a scaffolded annotated bibliography project that guides students through researching contemporary information challenges such as: How do we evaluate the accuracy of artificial intelligence? What impact do algorithms have on our ability to acquire truth? How has social media transformed how we collectively determine what is true? From developing search strategies to proper citation, students will combine philosophical frameworks with hands-on research skills to develop both the theoretical understanding and practical tools needed to navigate today's complex information landscape and contribute thoughtfully to academic discourse.

Fall Only.

PHILOS 198. First Year Seminar. 3 Credits.

First Year Seminar

Reserved for New Incoming Freshman

Fall Only.

PHILOS 208. Biomedical Ethics. 3 Credits.

This course introduces students to some of the major issues of biomedical ethics. Biomedical ethics refers to the study of ethical issues that arise within the fields of medicine, biology, and healthcare, particularly regarding the application of new technologies in research, treatments, and prevention, and the possible impact of such practices on societal norms. Among the issues of biomedical ethics are the morality of: genetic engineering, organ donation, medical resource allocation, cloning, stem cell research, privacy and data security, the environmental impact of technologies and procedures, and whistleblowing on defective medications, incompetent healthcare professionals, and dereliction of duty. Students will become acquainted with the different moral frameworks which guide decision-making processes, and examine major biomedical problems in today's society. Ultimately, students will develop and defend their own views on controversial topics through discussion and writing.

Spring.

PHILOS 212. Philosophy, Religion, and Science. 3 Credits.

This course considers the relationship between science and religious beliefs, explores the value of knowledge, and asks if science needs a moral vision. After considering these theoretical questions, it then examines issues like religion and evolution, religion and natural laws, the mind-body relationship, genetic engineering, human experimentation, cloning, and euthanasia. Students will read texts from thinkers like Francis Bacon, Charles Darwin, Stephen Jay Gould, Richard Dawkins and John Paul II.

Spring Even.

PHILOS 213. Ancient Philosophy. 3 Credits.

The primary objective of this course is to introduce the student to the writings and arguments of the major ancient Greek philosophers. Accordingly, the course is both philosophical and historical. It is philosophical in the sense that we will try to understand the major components of the philosophical theories of the most influential thinkers of ancient Greece as well as examine the reasoning through which they arrived at these theories. It is historical in the sense that we will look at the development and growth of philosophical thought in ancient Greece and, as much as possible, situate these thinkers in their historical context. The course will cover five historical figures or groups of figures in ancient Greek philosophy: 1) Pre-Socratic Philosophers, 2) Socrates, 3) Plato, 4) Aristotle, and 5) Hellenistic Philosophers.

Fall Only.

PHILOS 214. Early Modern Philosophy. 3 Credits.

This course explores the philosophical ideas that served as the catalyst for the radical and moderate enlightenment, spanning roughly from the early 17th century to mid-18th century. Topics discussed include the nature of human identity, the physical and mental world, God, causation, free will, knowledge, and skepticism. We will read selections from Rene Descartes, Nicolas Malebranche, Benedict Spinoza, Gottfried Leibniz, John Locke, George Berkeley, and David Hume. This course will emphasize the critical reading, thinking, and writing skills indicative of the Philosophy discipline.

P: none; REC: Philos 101..

Spring.

PHILOS 216. Introduction to Asian Philosophy. 3 Credits.

The objectives of this course are (1) to help the students to acquire a basic knowledge of the metaphysics, ethics, and natural philosophy of three major Asian philosophies: Buddhism, Confucianism, and Daoism, (2) to enable the student to acquire a deeper understanding of the living values and ways of life characteristic of a major portion of the world's non-Western population, and (3) to aid students in the development of critical thinking and writing skills. Students will gain proficiency in (a) reading philosophical texts closely, (b) critically analyzing arguments, and (c) formulating their own opinions both verbally and in writing. This course is divided into three parts. The first part is on Buddhism, the second part on Confucianism, and the third part on Daoism.

Spring.

PHILOS 217. Introduction to the Philosophy of Religion. 3 Credits.

This course introduces students to the exciting field of the Philosophy of Religion. After exploring basic questions in metaphysics and epistemology, the course will consider topics like God's existence and attributes, problems of evil, religious experience, love, miracles, hell, purgatory, heaven and contemporary atheism. Students will understand controversies about these topics and will be encouraged to develop their own ideas about them.

Fall Only.

PHILOS 218. Power of Philosophy: Ancient Greece to Renaissance. 3 Credits.

The primary objective of this course is to introduce the student to the writings and arguments of major philosophers from Ancient Greece through the Renaissance. Accordingly, the course is both philosophical and historical. Students will examine the major components of the philosophical theories of many of the most important and influential thinkers of Western civilization. Particular emphasis will be placed on the reasoning by which they arrived at their theories. We will read, interpret, and criticize their arguments, both in discussions and in writing. Special attention will be paid to their views about the meaning of life, justice, law, pleasure, happiness, virtue, knowledge, and God. Students will examine the historical development and growth of philosophical thought from Ancient Greece through the Renaissance and situate important philosophical ideas in their historical contexts.

Fall Only.

PHILOS 220. Environmental Ethics. 3 Credits.

This course explores the philosophical foundations of environmental sustainability, focusing on the ethical principles that guide our relationship with the natural world. Students will engage with diverse perspectives, including Traditional Ecological Knowledge, scientific principles, and Western philosophical traditions, to further their understanding of environmental ethics. This course will examine the ethical principles underlying environmental sustainability, encouraging students to identify, articulate, and defend their own ethical positions on environmental issues. By integrating scientific principles of environmental sustainability with Traditional Ecological Knowledge, the course fosters an interdisciplinary approach to understanding the natural world and our place within it.

Fall Even.

PHILOS 227. Business Ethics. 3 Credits.

Business ethics is the descriptive and normative study of human conduct and organizational decision-making in business practices. It examines descriptive and normative ethical principles that govern and should govern the behaviors and decision-making of individuals and organizations in business. Students will a) explore the ethical challenges and responsibilities that individuals and organizations face in the complex world of business in making business decisions, b) study normative ethical principles that should govern human behaviors and decision-making in business, c) gain a deeper understanding of how business decisions impact not just corporate stakeholders, but also local, national, and global communities, and d) develop the capacity for ethical and responsible business decision-making through reflecting on the importance of ethical leadership, empathetic communication, and social responsibility in modern business practices.

Fall and Spring.

PHILOS 299. Travel Course. 1-6 Credits.

Travel courses are conducted to various parts of the world and are led by one or more faculty members. May be repeated to different locations.

P: cons of instr & prior trip arr & financial deposit.

PHILOS 301. Ethical Theory. 3 Credits.

This course aims at acquainting students with a number of major ethical theories in the Western philosophical tradition. Students will read classical and contemporary writings on a number of major ethical topics such as pleasure, egoism, relativism, happiness, moral responsibility, utilitarianism, deontological ethics, and virtue ethics. In addition to the reading, students will focus on reconstructing and critically reflecting the arguments on the issues on these topics in class discussions and writings.

P: none; REC: jr st and one philos cse.

Spring Even.

PHILOS 308. Philosophy and the Sciences. 3 Credits.

Science is often thought to be the ultimate form of objectivity and rational inquiry. But what is 'science'? Is there one scientific method? What reasons do we have to regard it as more truth-conducive than other routes to knowledge? Is there such a thing as a truly unbiased experiment? Do we mean to say that our scientific theories are true? What kind of justification would be required for such claims? And what about the many strange entities of science? Do electrons exist, or are they just useful fictions to fill holes in scientific theories? Are laws of nature real entities?

P: none; REC: Philos 214.

Fall Even.

PHILOS 309. Religion and Medieval Philosophy. 3 Credits.

This course examines main themes in medieval philosophy. After examining the relationship between faith and reason, students will explore the nature of the soul, knowledge, the afterlife, God's existence, the ontology of universals and other important philosophical topics. Readings will include selections from the work of Christian, Islamic and Jewish thinkers like Anselm, Thomas Aquinas, Bonaventure, Duns Scotus, William of Ockham, Maimonides, Averroes and Avicenna.

P: none; REC: Philos 213 and 214.

Spring Odd.

PHILOS 323. Modern Philosophy. 3 Credits.

Course topics vary. In one iteration, this course will work its way through seminal thinkers in nineteenth century philosophy including (though not limited to) Hegel, Marx and Nietzsche. Our aim will be to both connect these thinkers to earlier ideas and trends in Philosophy and to see how they extend such ideas in radically different ways. In another iteration, this course will delve into a somewhat later historical movement in Philosophy - the existentialists. We will begin with the early influence of Russian authors before moving through later thinkers such as Heidegger, Camus and Sartre. The course will include literary and philosophical readings. Course is repeatable for credit if topics differ; may be taken 2 times for a total of 6 credits.

P: none; REC: Philos 213 and 214.

Fall Odd.

PHILOS 324. Contemporary Philosophy. 3 Credits.

Course topics vary, but may include Philosophy of Mind and/or Emotion, Experimental Philosophy, Phenomenology, Contemporary French Philosophy or other recent movements afoot in Europe and America, representing both Analytic and Continental traditions in Philosophy. Course is repeatable if topics differ; may be taken 2 times for a total of 6 credits.

P: PHILOS 214

Spring Odd.

PHILOS 326. Philosophy, Politics and Law. 3 Credits.

The primary objective of this course is to acquaint students with the fundamental concepts, issues, theories, and arguments of political and legal philosophy. Students will read selections from classical and contemporary philosophers on fundamental political and legal issues. We will consider such controversial topics as surrogate motherhood, disability, affirmative action, and same-sex marriage. The emphasis throughout will be on the understanding and critically evaluating the argumentation of the philosophers we will studying. Students will be required to formulate their own arguments on important issues, but their argumentation must be informed with the political and legal theories found in the text.

P: none

Fall Even.

PHILOS 351. Happiness and the Good Life. 3 Credits.

This course examines the concept of a happy life through a study of the Asian philosophies of Buddhism, Confucianism, Daoism. We will be reading primary texts and secondary philosophical texts, and we will watch and examine influential movies and videos on the topic.

P: None REC: Philos 102.

PHILOS 401. Plato and Aristotle. 3 Credits.

This course is critical investigation of the first two comprehensive, philosophical systems of Western civilization. Plato and Aristotle each proposed and argued for a full metaphysics, epistemology, ethics, political philosophy, and philosophy of art. In this course students will be engaged in an in-depth study of their major works.

REC: Philos 213

Fall Odd.

PHILOS 403. Topics in Philosophy. 3 Credits.

Course topics vary. This will be an in-depth study of a current topic or a figure in philosophy and/or an area of research for one of our faculty members. The aim will be to include students in live and contemporary philosophical literature and debates. Course is repeatable for credit if topics differ; may be taken 5 times for a total of 15 credits.

P: upper level cse in Philos.

Fall Even.

PHILOS 420. Metaphysics. 3 Credits.

Metaphysics is the study of Being and the various forms it takes in this world and possibly beyond. It comprises some of the oldest and most difficult questions in Philosophy. In this class we will investigate some of its major historical and contemporary topics, which may include the status of Platonic Forms, the reality and identity of ordinary particulars, what kind of thing causality is, what makes states of affairs possible or necessary, what are space and time, and whether any progress can be made in such endeavors (the question of anti-realism). In a special iteration of this course we look specifically and in great depth at the question of Free Will. We rely entirely on primary-source readings to explore the challenge of free will, the plausibility of compatibilism, and tenability of hard determinism. Along the way, we will discuss how the free will debate informs our thinking about God's foreknowledge, criminal punishment, love and friendship, possible worlds, and even time-travel. Course is repeatable for credit; may be taken 2 times for a total of 6 credits.

P: Philos 213 or Philos 214 REC: Philos 309 or Philos 324

Spring Even.

PHILOS 478. Honors in the Major. 3 Credits.

Honors in the Major is designed to recognize student excellence within interdisciplinary and disciplinary academic programs.

P: min 3.50 all cses req for major and min gpa 3.75 all UL cses req for major.

Fall and Spring.

PHILOS 495. Teaching Assistantship. 1-6 Credits.

The student and supervising teacher must prepare a statement that identifies the course with which the assistantship will happen, objectives for the assistantship, and expectations in order to fulfill the course objectives. Students are not eligible to receive credit in both the course they assist the instructor with and the teaching assistantship in the same semester. Typically student has previously taken the course prior to enrollment in the assistantship. Course is repeatable for credit.

Fall and Spring.

PHILOS 497. Internship. 1-12 Credits.

Supervised practical experience in an organization or activity appropriate to a student's career and educational interests. Internships are supervised by faculty members and require periodic student/faculty meetings. Course is repeatable for credit.

P: jr st.

Fall and Spring.

PHILOS 498. Independent Study. 1-4 Credits.

Independent study is offered on an individual basis at the student's request and consists of a program of learning activities planned in consultation with a faculty member. A student wishing to study or conduct research in an area not represented in available scheduled courses should develop a preliminary proposal and seek the sponsorship of a faculty member. The student's advisor can direct him or her to instructors with appropriate interests. A written report or equivalent is required for evaluation, and a short title describing the program must be sent early in the semester to the registrar for entry on the student's transcript.

P: fr or so st with cum gpa > or = 2.50; or jr or sr st with cum gpa > or = 2.00.

Fall and Spring.

PHILOS 499. Travel Course. 1-6 Credits.

Travel courses are conducted to various parts of the world and are led by one or more faculty members. May be repeated to different locations.

P: cons of instr & prior trip arr & financial deposit.