

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.

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 and Spring.

PHILOS 105. Justice and Citizenship in the Modern World. 3 Credits.

This course is a critical examination of some of the most fundamental issues facing citizens in the modern world. Topics covered may include the nature of justice, the distribution of wealth and power, the legitimacy of state authority, the nature of extent of political liberty, the obligations of the citizen to the state, and the proper balance of private rights and public goods in the community.

Spring.

PHILOS 198. First Year Seminar. 3 Credits.

First Year Seminar

Reserved for New Incoming Freshman

Fall Only.

PHILOS 208. Biomedical Ethics. 3 Credits.

Implication of the social and natural science for human values; study of the history of the distinction between fact and value in segments of human life such as politics, law and medical technology.

Fall Only.

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 220. Environmental Ethics. 3 Credits.

This course aims to raise our awareness of deep philosophical questions about the nature and location of value and how this may alter our understanding of our ethical relation to the environment. You should expect to become more confident in your ability to identify, articulate, and defend your own opinions on ethical issues and to sharpen your critical thinking skills in the process. Topics discussed include whether human interests are ethically dominant, what defines the outer boundary of the ethical sphere, how to best decide between competing ethical interests, whether pragmatism is a value, and how technology informs the discussion.
Fall Only.

PHILOS 299. Travel Course. 1-4 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.

P: none; REC: Philos 213 and 214.

Fall Odd.

PHILOS 324. Contemporary Philosophy. 3 Credits.

Current philosophical movements in Europe and America, such as phenomenology, existentialism, analytic philosophy, intuitionism, pragmatism and Marxism.

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.

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.

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.

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 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.

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.