

Philosophy (PHL)

Note: Except where specific prerequisites are stated, all 100-, 200-, and 300-level courses are open to any student. 300-level courses without prerequisites require a higher degree of sophistication than lower level courses, but do not presuppose prior course work.

Note: All PHL courses satisfy CAS-B-PHL except PHL 273 and PHL 373 (CAS-E).

PHL 103. Society and the Individual. (3)

What makes a society just? Can individuals be free under conditions of inequality? Do we need to live in a good community to lead good lives? What kind of society would you choose? This course is an interdisciplinary study of the ethical, social, and political relations between individuals and the societies to which they belong – relations shaped by claims about freedom, power, equality, and justice. Course readings will include texts drawn (historical and contemporary) philosophy, literature, and political theory and practice, with an eye toward developing critical and creative thinking abilities and collaborative skills. IIB. PA-3B, SI02. CAS-B.

PHL 105. Theories of Human Nature. (3)

There have been various ways that human beings have understood themselves and their place in nature. Every conception of the self embodies a conception of what can be known, of how we ought to live, of what values we ought to hold, and to what extent we are free. We consider various conceptions of the person in light of these questions. Introduces fundamental questions of philosophy and basic reasoning skills, methodologies, and concepts used by philosophers. Students are prepared for further work in philosophy and develop skills in critical thinking, reading, and writing for any area of learning. IIB. PA-3B. CAS-B.

PHL 131. Introduction to Ethics. (3)

Introduces students to, and cultivates, ethical reasoning. The course will foster students' capacity to recognize ethical issues and situations, to understand different ethical perspectives and concepts, and to engage in ethical deliberation. Students will have opportunities to analyze concrete situations and human conduct in relation to ethical principles, ideas, and frameworks and thereby to reflect more deeply on their own values and on the social context of ethical obligations and ethical dilemmas. Course topics may include the nature of our responsibilities to ourselves and to others, confrontations between the rights of an individual and those of society, and consideration of what it means to lead a good life. The course aims to enrich students' ability to see themselves as ethical actors in the world. IIB. PA-3B, SI-02. CAS-B.

PHL 177. Independent Studies. (0-6; maximum 10)

PHL 205. Science and Culture. (3)

This course will examine philosophical questions that arise at the intersection of scientific understanding and everyday ways of living. Looking at the cultural, ethical, political, and social dimensions of various sciences, and reading across multiple genres, we will explore a variety of arenas where scientific knowledge and technological development have transformed human experience (including experience with the non-human world), and, conversely, arenas where reflection and insight are necessary to confront and navigate conundrums of meaning, value, and action presented by scientific endeavors. Potential topics might include: the roles of scientific, political, and ethical reasoning in considerations of public health; human/non-human animal relations; climate change and collective agency; the impact of new media and communication technologies on the boundary between public and private; the social transmission of (mis-)information; and the significance of social identity for scientific investigation. IIB. PA-3B, SI-03. CAS-B.

PHL 241. What is Art?. (3)

Introduction to basic notions of aesthetics and the philosophy of art, such as the definition of art, truth in the arts, characterization of aesthetic experience, etc. through examination of specific philosophies and problem areas. Readings may range from classical to contemporary texts and thinkers. PA-3A, SI-04. CAS-B.

PHL 245. Writing Philosophy. (3)

Provides philosophy majors with the reading, writing, and reasoning skills necessary for the successful presentation of philosophical ideas in written work, with writing oriented toward both specialized (philosophically experienced and disciplinarily appropriate) and non-specialized (non-philosophical) audiences. The course will have a rotating philosophical topic around which readings will be structured and will be writing intensive. ADVW. PA-1C.

PHL 263. Informal Logic. (3)

Informal analysis of discourse, especially argument, with the aim of improving understanding, criticism, evaluation, and construction of arguments in significant contexts.

PHL 265. Confronting Death. (3)

Explores philosophical approaches to death and dying. What does human mortality mean for how we should live? Topics might range from suicide, grief, and euthanasia to the immortality of the soul. Ideas will be taken up through a variety of sources, including history, literature, and film. PA-3B, SI-05. CAS-B.

PHL 273. Formal Logic. (4)

Introduction to formal reasoning with attention to various systems, usually including propositional and first order logic. V. PA-1A. CAS-E.

PHL 277. Independent Studies. (0-6; maximum 10)

PHL 301. Ancient Philosophy. (4)

Survey of ancient philosophical thought covering pre-Socratics, Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, and Hellenistic philosophy. Problems discussed include the nature of being and becoming, monism and pluralism, knowledge, value, and society. Emphasis given to philosophies of Plato and Aristotle. CAS-B.

PHL 302. Modern Philosophy. (4)

Philosophical study of the development of philosophy at the beginning of modern period, Descartes to Kant. Both the interrelationship of points within each philosopher's thought and the change of thought from earlier philosophers to later ones are emphasized. Specific issues for study include relation of thought and reality, knowledge and opinion, truth and appearance, value. CAS-B.

PHL 310. Special Topics. (1-4; maximum 8)

Treatment of selected topics or philosophers.

PHL 311. Ethical Theory. (4)

Topical and historical in-depth study of classical and contemporary ethical theories. Addresses such questions as the following: What are the fundamental principles of moral action? Can such principles be justified? What moral theories are most adequate and why? What constitutes the well-lived life? Are persons moral agents? What is the relationship between morality and happiness? What is the relationship between freedom and morality? Why be moral?

Prerequisite: PHL 131.

PHL 312. Contemporary Moral Problems. (4)

Moral argument and bases of moral decision. Discussion of such issues as sexuality, career and professional ethics, environmental responsibility, individual conscience and authority, abortion, suicide, and war. Prior completion of PHL 131 is recommended.

PHL 321. Being and Knowing. (3)

Critical examination of the nature of reality and our knowledge of it. Sample topics include relation of mind to body, freedom and determinism, whether the world is fundamentally material or mental, nature and extent of our knowledge of the world. CAS-B.

Prerequisite: at least one prior class in philosophy or permission of the instructor.

PHL 331. Political Philosophy. (3)

Inquiry into values and principles of government, justice and law, rights and responsibilities, freedom and power, violence and revolution.

PHL 335. Philosophy of Law. (4)

Philosophical study of some problems arising in law. Problems discussed include: concept of law and its relation to morality; logic of legal reasoning; legal rights, duties, responsibility, punishment, fault, voluntariness, etc.

PHL 340. Internship. (0-20)**PHL 355. Feminist Theory. (3)**

Examination of major writing by contemporary feminist thinkers. Traditional philosophical questions, such as justice, freedom, nature of a person, and relationship of an individual to society, are raised in context relevant to both male and female students.

Cross-listed with WGS.

PHL 373. Symbolic Logic. (4)

Study of standard notation, principles of inference, formal systems, methods of proof. Chief attention given to first-order predicate logic. Some focus placed on the philosophy of logic. CAS-E.

PHL 375. Medical Ethics. (4)

Purpose of course is to think together in an informed and critical manner about selected issues in the field of health care. Attempt made with each issue addressed to consider distinctive interests and perspectives of physicians, nurses, patients, and the public. Issues considered include physician/patient relationships; lying, truth-telling, paternalism, and trust; death and dying, including suicide, euthanasia, and treatment of defective newborns; treatment of mental illness and patient rights; allocating scarce resources; nature of health and purposes of medicine.

PHL 376. Environmental Philosophy. (4)

Critical study of metaphysical, epistemological, and moral problems associated with questions of ecology and humankind's relation to the natural environment. Considers such issues as conceptions of nature, character and impact of various forms of technology, relations of environment and economics, environmentalism and justice, and environmental ethics.

PHL 377. Independent Studies. (0-6; maximum 10)**PHL 394. Existentialism. (3)**

This course will explore the ways that the concept of human existence becomes a distinct theme for philosophical reflection in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The central question of the school of thought that has come to be known as Existentialism, 'what it means to be,' will drive our own inquiry. The course will consider the philosophical, aesthetic, and political dimensions of existentialism and address core themes such as freedom, death, subjectivity, and self-creation. The course will cover 19th precursors to Existentialism (such as Kierkegaard and Nietzsche), and an array of 20th century thinkers (such as Camus, Heidegger, Sartre, and Beauvoir). CAS-B.

PHL 402/PHL 502. 19th Century Philosophy. (4)

Detailed study of advances in philosophy attempted by major philosophers of the 19th century. Emphasis on solutions they offered to problems of early modern thought and to foundations laid for important developments in 20th century thinking. Course may follow philosophical systems of leading philosophers (e.g., Hegel, Feuerbach, Marx) or it may proceed topically (e.g., dialectics, alienation in Hegel, Marx, Kierkegaard).

Prerequisite: PHL 302.

PHL 404. What is Philosophy?. (3)

Addresses the questions of the nature and ends of philosophy. The capstone course offers both a culmination of a philosophical education through a discussion of various philosophical views on the meta-question of the nature of philosophy, and a culmination of a liberal education through a comparison of philosophy with other fields of inquiry. SC.

Prerequisite: 9 hours of completed philosophy courses and senior status.

PHL 410/PHL 510. Special Topics. (1-4)

Seminar treatment of selected topics or philosophers. New topics at student initiative.

PHL 411/PHL 511. Advanced Ethical Theories. (4)

Critical discussion of recent works in ethics.

Prerequisite: PHL 131.

PHL 420/PHL 520. Seminar in Twentieth Century Philosophy. (4; maximum 8)

Examination of one or more twentieth century philosophical figure (e.g., Heidegger, Wittgenstein, Foucault) and/or study of key philosophical issues of the twentieth century (such as being, language, power, action).

PHL 430/PHL 530. Seminar in Ancient or Medieval Philosophy. (4)

Intensive study of a major topic (e.g., universals, knowledge and perception, the human soul, God, morality, language and reality) or work of a major philosopher (e.g., Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Plotinus, Augustine, Anselm, Aquinas) of ancient or medieval period. Repeatable with different content up to two times.

PHL 440/PHL 540. Seminar in Modern Philosophy. (4)

Intensive study of philosophy of one major philosopher of early modern period, e.g., Spinoza, Descartes, Leibniz, Berkeley, Hume, Kant, or a topical study in the philosophy of the period. Repeatable with different content up to two times.

PHL 450/PHL 550. Seminar in Contemporary Philosophy. (4)

Examination of one or more contemporary philosophical figure or philosophical issue in any area of current philosophical research. Repeatable with different content up to three times.

PHL 459/PHL 559. Political Philosophy Seminar. (4)

Intensive study of a major political philosopher (e.g. Marx, Arendt, or Rawls) or intensive study of a focused theme in political philosophy (e.g., power, equality, freedom, or justice) and/or critical discussion of the texts and major work of a particular historical set of political philosophers.

PHL 470/PHL 570. Advanced Aesthetics. (4)

Selected topics in advanced study of philosophy of art. Topics may include film aesthetics, philosophy of tragedy, metaphysics of the novel, aesthetic formalism. Repeatable with different content up to three times. Prior completion of PHL 241 recommended.

PHL 477. Independent Studies. (0-6; maximum 10)**PHL 480. Independent Reading for Departmental Honors. (1-6)**

To earn departmental honors, a student must complete two semesters of independent reading courses.

PHL 494/PHL 594. Philosophy of Mind. (4)

Selected topics or authors, historical or contemporary. Topics include such problems as personal identity and individuation, the self, mind/body problems, the will, thought and cognition, perception, philosophy and psychology. Prior completion of PHL 321 is recommended.

PHL 496/PHL 596. Epistemology. (4)

Analysis of such concepts as knowledge, belief, certainty, evidence, truth, perception. Prior completion of PHL 321 recommended.

PHL 600. Independent Reading Philosophy. (0-6; maximum 12)

Intensive study of a group of problems in a limited field or of particular philosophers or of particular schools of philosophy.

PHL 601. Practicum in Teaching Philosophy. (2)

Introduces graduate students to the pedagogy of philosophy by practicing and reflecting upon the fundamentals of grading, teaching, giving a lecture, directing a discussion group and preparing a syllabus as these activities specifically apply to the discipline.

PHL 610. Research Seminar. (3-4)

Each student will take one paper written for a philosophy course and develop it into a length and quality suitable for publication in a scholarly journal. Members of the seminar will read each of these papers and suitable parts of its bibliography in order to critique the paper and assist its progress toward publication.