

Fall 2019 Philosophy Undergraduate Course Descriptions

PHIL 101-150 Introduction to Philosophy, J. McKittrick

MoWe 11:30 am – 12:20 pm

This course introduces philosophical methods and explores fundamental philosophical questions, including: Can I be certain of anything? Is morality relative? What's the relation between the mind and the brain? Can I survive the death of my body? Do I have free will? Does God exist?

Requirements: 2 essay exams, a 5 page paper, and participation in both lecture and quiz sections.

Texts:

Introduction to Philosophy: Classical and Contemporary Readings, 8th Edition, edited by John Perry, Michael Bratman and John Martin Fischer

What Does It All Mean? A Very Short Introduction to Philosophy, by Thomas Nagel

Writing Philosophy: A Student's Guide to Writing Philosophy Essays, 2nd Edition, by Lewis Vaughn

This course may be used to satisfy either ACE 5 (Humanities) or ACE 8 (Ethics).

PHIL 101-250 Introduction to Philosophy, R. Hayaki

MoWe 10:30 – 11:20 am

We will examine a range of important topics that have been discussed by philosophers through the ages: the existence or non-existence of God and the rationality of religious belief; the concept of knowledge, and whether we have any knowledge of the world around us; the nature of the mind and its relationship to the body, and how the two are related to the self; determinism, free will, and moral responsibility; the relationship between morality and rationality, and conflicting accounts of what makes an action right or wrong. These topics cover a lot of ground, but they are united by a couple of broad themes: Who are we, and how do we fit into the world?

Textbook: Gideon Rosen, Alex Byrne, Joshua Cohen, Elizabeth Harman, and Seana Shiffrin (eds.), *The Norton Introduction to Philosophy*, 2nd ed. (W. W. Norton & Co., 2018).

Major assignments: two exams and a paper. Additional smaller assignments, to be determined.

This course may be used to satisfy either ACE 5 (Humanities) or ACE 8 (Ethics).

PHIL 101-350 Introduction to Philosophy, J. Mendola

TuTh 11:00 – 11:50 am

This is an historical introduction to philosophy. We will consider a broad range of philosophical issues, including the nature of ethical truth, the relationship between the mind and the body, and the existence of God. We read a wide range of famous philosophers.

The principle text is Stephen Cahn (ed.), *Classics of Western Philosophy, 8th Edition*, 2012.

This course may be used to satisfy either ACE 5 (Humanities) or ACE 8 (Ethics).

PHIL 106-101 Philosophy and Current Issues, K. Psaroudaki

Tues 6:30 pm – 9:20 pm

Critical survey of current issues and the role of philosophy in attempts to resolve them. Recent topics: sexual morality, pornography and the law, capital punishment, sexism and racism, extraordinary treatment for the terminally ill, abortion, church and state, and nuclear war and disarmament.

This course may be used to satisfy either ACE 8 (Ethics) or ACE 9 (Global/Diversity).

PHIL 106-150 Philosophy and Current Issues, J. Brunero

MoWe 11:30 am – 12:20 pm

The course will introduce some of the important questions of moral philosophy: What is it for a life to go well? (Is the good life one of happiness, one in which you get what you want, or one in which you accomplish something of value?) What is it to act in a morally right way? (Is it to produce the best consequences possible? Is it to act in accordance with certain moral principles? If so, which principles?) Why should we act in a morally right way, especially when doing so often appears contrary to our self-interest? What is the relationship between morality and religion? Are there objective moral truths, or is ethical truth relative to cultures or individuals? We'll then consider the application of moral philosophy to some current ethical issues: Is it morally acceptable to kill and eat animals or use animals in experiments? Is abortion immoral? Is capital punishment unjust? Is torture ever permissible? What are our obligations to relieve world poverty? Is euthanasia ever morally permissible? Is there an obligation to obey the law? When is civil disobedience justified? Should the recreational use of drugs be illegal?

The course will consist of two lectures and one quiz section per week. Students are required to attend both the lectures and their assigned quiz section. There are no prerequisites for this course.

This course may be used to satisfy either ACE 8 (Ethics) or ACE 9 (Global/Diversity).

PHIL 106-250 Philosophy and Current Issues, J. Brunero

MoWe 9:30 am – 10:20 am

The course will introduce some of the important questions of moral philosophy: What is it for a life to go well? (Is the good life one of happiness, one in which you get what you want, or one in which you accomplish something of value?) What is it to act in a morally right way? (Is it to produce the best consequences possible? Is it to act in accordance with certain moral principles? If so, which principles?) Why should we act in a morally right way, especially when doing so often appears contrary to our self-interest? What is the relationship between morality and religion? Are there objective moral truths, or is ethical truth relative to cultures or individuals? We'll then consider the application of moral philosophy to some current ethical issues: Is it morally acceptable to kill and eat animals or use animals in experiments? Is abortion immoral? Is capital punishment unjust? Is torture ever permissible? What are our obligations to relieve world poverty? Is euthanasia ever morally permissible? Is there an obligation to obey the law? When is civil disobedience justified? Should the recreational use of drugs be illegal?

The course will consist of two lectures and one quiz section per week. Students are required to attend both the lectures and their assigned quiz section. There are no prerequisites for this course.

This course may be used to satisfy either ACE 8 (Ethics) or ACE 9 (Global/Diversity).

PHIL 106-450 Philosophy and Current Issues, M. van Roojen

TuTh 9:30 am – 10:20 am

The class will focus on a number of ethical topics of current interest, in particular world hunger, war, economic inequality, and racial justice. Each of these issues presents various choices between different and even conflicting individual and social policies. The class will focus on reasons for and against adopting various courses of action, and will explore the cogency of the reasons offered.

Students will work out their own positions and, hopefully, come to better understand opposing views. In the course of examining these reasons, we will become more familiar with a very general distinction between various forms of ethical justification - the distinction between consequentialist justifications and nonconsequentialist justifications. We will explore how various positions about the specific issues are amenable to either form of justification.

Readings for the class will encompass both classic texts and current articles from philosophy journals, but most of these will be available on line and on reserve so there will be very little if any reading to buy.

Major Assignments: Two tests; two papers; clicker participation.

This course may be used to satisfy either ACE 8 (Ethics) or ACE 9 (Global/Diversity)

PHIL 110-150 Introduction to Logic and Critical Thinking, A. Casullo

TuTh 9:30 am – 10:20 am

This course provides an introduction to the principles of formal reasoning and their application, with an emphasis on improving skills of critical thinking, analyzing and evaluating arguments objectively, and constructing sound arguments based on relevant evidence.

Requirements: Four examinations. Exam 1 (30 points) covers the basic concepts of logic. Exam 2 (80 points) covers the principles of syllogistic logic. Exam 3 (60 points) and Exam 4 (80 points) cover the principles of propositional logic. Nine quizzes, based on the weekly homework assignments, will be given in the Friday quiz sections. Each quiz is worth 10 points. Your lowest quiz score will be dropped, resulting in a combined quiz total of 80 points.

Textbooks: P. Hurley & L. Watson, *A Concise Introduction to Logic*, 13th edition. Assignments on Canvas.

This class is certified for ACE 3 (Math/Stat/Reasoning), and satisfies the logic requirement for the philosophy major.

PHIL 213-001 Medical Ethics, A. Thompson

TuTh 11:00 am – 12:15 pm

This course covers a wide variety of moral issues in the ethics of medicine and the allocation of healthcare. These issues include the moral status of the embryo and fetus (abortion, stem cell research), the current or future ways in which parents seek to change their children's physical attributes or genetic makeup (cochlear implants, genetic enhancement, cloning), the limits in a medical context of what can be bought and sold (commercial surrogacy, organ sales), the role of rights and fairness in a healthcare system (rights to healthcare, allocation of scarce resources), and the proper extent of control over one's own body (amputation by choice, assisted suicide, euthanasia, advance directives).

The primary learning objective of the course is to develop students' abilities to maturely reason about complex moral issues in the health care context. Toward that end, we will be assessing arguments for and against different positions on these moral issues, with background information provided as needed.

This course may be used to satisfy either ACE 5 (Humanities) or ACE 8 (Ethics).

PHIL 213-101 Medical Ethics, A. Spaid

Wed 6:30 pm – 9:20 pm

Philosophical study of moral problems in modern medicine, exploring such issues as the allocation of scarce medical resources, patients rights, research on human subjects, abortion, the care of seriously impaired newborns, and socialized medicine and the right to health care.

This course may be used to satisfy either ACE 5 (Humanities) or ACE 8 (Ethics).

PHIL 216-001 Philosophy and Psychology, D. Henderson

TuTh 2:00 pm – 3:15 pm

This course will survey a range of philosophical issues relating to the topics, methods, and results of psychology. The text—Weiskopf and Adams, *An Introduction to the Philosophy of Psychology*, Cambridge University Press, 2015—will serve as a framework for the course. Some articles will be added to flesh out specific topics. (Those wishing to get a more detailed idea of the topics to be covered could look at the table of contents for this textbook on Amazon.)

This course may be used to satisfy ACE 5 (Humanities)

PHIL 221-001 Political Philosophy, E. Becker

TuTh 11:00 am-12:15 pm

CONTENT: A discussion of the basic concepts and problems of political theory. Particular attention will be paid to freedom, equality, democracy, justice, and the relation of the individual to the state. Readings will be selected from both classical and contemporary sources. Some consideration will be given to current political issues.

Written work for the course will include one hour-exam, a paper, and a final exam at the end of the semester.

This course may be used to satisfy either ACE 5 (Humanities) or ACE 8 (Ethics).

PHIL 225-001 Environmental Ethics, D. Henderson

TuTh 9:30 am – 10:45 am

This course begins with a reflective overview of general approaches in philosophical ethics. This is background. The bulk of the class then is a survey of approaches specific to environmental ethics. We will consider the central matter of what persons, groups, things, and systems are properly taken to have fundamental “moral considerability.” What things are properly the focus of one’s the fundamental—or nonderivative—moral valuing or obligations, and what things are derivatively valuable or matters of obligation? Various positions treat persons, perhaps just humans or sentient beings, as the objects of fundamental concern. Some suggest that the environment can have such status. After this tour of some philosophical positions we focus on applications of these positions in connection with two matters: food and global climate change.

This course may be used to satisfy either ACE 8 (Ethics) or ACE 9 (Global/Diversity).

PHIL 231-001 History of Philosophy (Ancient), H. Ide

MoWeFr 9:00 am – 10:20 am

Western philosophy began in ancient Greece when people started to think systematically about the world and themselves. We'll look at some of their most interesting and influential questions and answers, concentrating on the two greatest Greek philosophers, Plato and Aristotle. We'll discuss three questions. What is moral, and why should anyone care about morality? What gives us good reason for believing something? What is there in the world? (For example, are humans simply matter arranged in various ways?)

The required written work will probably be:

- (a) two short argumentative essays (in two versions each)
- (b) a series of short assignments to improve student skills at either writing argumentative essays, using examples, reading difficult texts, or (for students who have taken Philosophy 211) analyzing arguments
- (c) exams (which may be short answer questions about the views we discuss in class)

This course is certified for ACE 5 (Humanities), and satisfies the history requirement for the philosophy major.

PHIL 265-001 Philosophy of Religion, E. Becker

TuTh 2:00 pm – 3:15 pm

This course treats some of the main traditional issues in the philosophy of religion, such as the existence of God, the immortality of the soul, and the relation between faith and reason. We also discuss the nature of religion itself, in the context of a comparative philosophical study of the world’s great religions. Readings are from both classical and contemporary sources.

Requirements include an hour exam, a term paper, and a final exam.

This course may be used to satisfy either ACE 5 (Humanities) or ACE 9 (Global/Diversity).

PHIL 302-001 Introduction to Metaphysics, J. Mendola

TuTh 2:00 pm – 3:15 pm

Introduction to some main problems, and some central concepts, of metaphysics. Focuses on the nature of being and existence, and on various questions concerning the relations between different kinds of entities: minds and bodies, causes and effects, universals and particulars, etc.

This course is certified for ACE 5 (Humanities), and satisfies the metaphysics and epistemology requirement for the philosophy major.

PHIL 325-001 Advanced Social and Political Philosophy, M. van Roojen

TuTh 12:30 pm – 1:45 pm

CONTENT: This class will take an in depth look at various relatively contemporary approaches to the theory of justice and what it requires of societies. Approaches examined will include: Utilitarianism, Democratic Egalitarian theories, Libertarian theories, and Feminist theories. We may also look at some particular issues, such as free speech or the value of democracy in greater depth.

GRADING: A least two papers and one in-class presentation will be required.

This course may be used to satisfy either ACE 8 (Ethics) or ACE 9 (Global/Diversity), and it satisfies the value theory requirement for the philosophy major.

PHIL 332-001 Spinoza, J. Cahan

TuTh 12:30 pm – 1:45 pm

In this course we study both the principal philosophical text, the 'Ethics', and the renowned work of political theory, the 'Theological-Political Treatise'. The former lays out Spinoza's distinctive conception of the mind/body relation, freedom and determinism in human affairs, and the nature of God. The second work, the 'Treatise', contains his innovative thinking on the bases of government and the conditions of a liberal society. Spinoza was one of the founders of modern liberal political theory, and we consider how his idea emerged in the context of the civil unrest and wars of the 17th Century in Europe and Britain.

This course is certified for ACE 5 (Humanities)

PHIL 345-001 Modern European Jewish Philosophy, J. Cahan

TuTh 9:30 am – 10:45 pm

Modern Jewish thought and philosophy, like philosophy more generally, has had to come to terms with the processes of modernization and secularization. In this course we survey some classic texts in European Jewish philosophy from the 18th century to the present. These texts seek to respond to the great issues of modernity, including world wars and the Holocaust. Thinkers discussed include: Mendelssohn, Hermann Cohen, Buber and Levinas.

Issues discussed: the nature and existence of God; the relations between religion, philosophy and the state; requirements of a just society.

This course is certified for ACE 5 (Humanities).

PHIL 409-001 Theory of Knowledge, A. Casullo

Tues 3:30 pm – 6:05 pm

This course has two primary goals: (1) to introduce some central issues in the theory of knowledge; and (2) to develop basic skills necessary for professional caliber work in philosophy.

The central issues are: (1) the analysis of the concept of knowledge; (2) the structure of epistemic justification; (3) perception and knowledge of the external world; (4) scepticism; (5) contextualism; (6) naturalism; and (7) a priori knowledge.

The basic skills are: (1) writing clear, concise papers on philosophical topics; (2) doing independent research on philosophical issues; and (3) effective oral communication.

PHIL 450-001 Ancient Philosophy, H. Ide

Mon 3:30 pm – 6:05 pm

We'll study a selection of topics from Classical Greek philosophy. I'm still considering which topics and authors, but I usually focus on Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle (with some presocratics to help make sense of them). Assignments will probably include two papers in two drafts, and short assignments each week. Students in PHIL 450 will have fewer and easier assignments and be graded according to easier standards.

Fall 2019 Philosophy Graduate Course Descriptions

PHIL 809 Theory of Knowledge, Prof. Casullo, T 3:30-6:05, LPH 312

This course has two primary goals: (1) to introduce some central issues in the theory of knowledge; and (2) to develop basic skills necessary for professional caliber work in philosophy.

The central issues are: (1) the analysis of the concept of knowledge; (2) the structure of epistemic justification; (3) perception and knowledge of the external world; (4) scepticism; (5) contextualism; (6) naturalism; and (7) a priori knowledge.

The basic skills are: (1) writing clear, concise papers on philosophical topics; (2) doing independent research on philosophical issues; and (3) effective oral communication.

PHIL 850 Ancient Philosophy, Prof. Ide, M 3:30-6:05, LPH 312

We'll study a selection of topics from Classical Greek philosophy. I'm still considering which topics and authors, but I usually focus on Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle (with some presocratics to help make sense of them). Assignments will probably include two papers in two drafts, and short assignments each week. Students in 450 will have fewer and easier assignments, and be graded according to easier standards.

PHIL 905 Philosophy of Language, Prof. Hayaki, W 3:30-5:35, LPH 312

The topic is subject to change, but currently I'm planning for the seminar to be on **predicativism about names**.

Predicativism is the view that proper names are predicates, similar to common count nouns such as "bicycle". On this view, a proper name N semantically expresses the property of bearing the name N . There is evidence for this view from syntax. For example, proper names can be pluralized ("There are two Marks in the department"), and they can be modified ("The only Salem that is a state capital is the Salem in Oregon"). These uses cannot be easily explained by the two main traditional theories of proper names, descriptivism and direct reference theory. For standard referential uses, in which a proper name is used to pick out and say something about a single individual, the name N is preceded by an unpronounced determiner ("the" or "that") and is semantically equivalent to "the bearer of N " (*the*-predicativism) or "that bearer of N " (*that*-predicativism).

The *locus classicus* for this view is Delia Graff Fara's "Names Are Predicates" (2015). We'll read this paper, some precursors, and objections and replies, mostly from the past few years. I plan to start the seminar with a couple of weeks on descriptivism and direct reference theory, so that those without a previous course in philosophy of language can pick up the necessary background.

PHIL 920 Ethical Theory, Prof. Bronfman, R 3:30-5:35, LPH 312

A seminar in ethics, with topic(s) to be determined.