

**Department of Philosophy**  
**Course Descriptions for Spring 2020**  
**(term code 1201)**

**PHIL 101-101: Introduction to Philosophy**

**Staff**

Tuesday 6:30 pm – 9:20 pm

Historical-cultural introduction to philosophy. Considers a broad range of philosophical problems in relation to the major historical and cultural conditions which have influenced their formulations and proposed solutions. Topics: the principles of rational inquiry; the nature of knowledge; the metaphysics of mind, world, and God; and the sources and authority of morality.

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

**PHIL 101-150: Introduction to Philosophy**

**R. Hayaki**

TuesThurs 9:30 am – 10:20 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 101-250: Introduction to Philosophy**

**J. Mendola**

TuesThurs 11:00 am – 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**

**Staff**

Thursday 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**

**E. Becker**

TuesThurs 9:30 am – 10:20 am

This course deals in a philosophical manner with political and ethical issues that are of current interest. Among the topics to be discussed will be drug legalization, abortion, pornography, same-sex marriage, and distributive justice.

Readings will be from both contemporary and classical sources.

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

Textbooks:

**Required:** Daniel Bonevac, *Today's Moral Issues*, 7<sup>th</sup> edition (McGraw-Hill Education; 2012)

Optional: Jay F. Rosenberg, *The Practice of Philosophy*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition (Pearson, 1995).

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

**PHIL 106-250: Philosophy and Current Issues**

**M. van Roojen**

MonWed 11:30 am – 12:20 pm

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 106-350: Philosophy and Current Issues****J. Brunero**

TuesThurs 11:00 am – 11:50 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 110-150: Introduction to Logic and Critical Thinking****A. Casullo**

TuesThurs 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*, 13<sup>th</sup> edition. Assignments on Canvas.

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

**PHIL 211-001: Introduction to Modern Logic****R. Hayaki**

TuesThurs 11:00 am – 12:15 pm

PHIL 211 is an introduction to symbolic logic, covering sentential (propositional) logic, monadic predicate logic (with one-place predicates and simple quantifiers), and polyadic predicate logic (with relational predicates and nested quantifiers). At each stage, you will learn how to translate English sentences into the relevant logical language and vice versa; how to construct proofs of valid arguments using natural deduction; and how to test arguments for validity, as well as sets of sentences for consistency, using the tree method. This course is highly recommended for those planning to take the LSAT, GRE, or other standardized tests with an analytical component; and for philosophy majors who are considering going to graduate school.

PHIL 211 has no prerequisites. It does not presuppose PHIL 110 (Introduction to Logic and Critical Thinking), although it is more advanced than PHIL 110. There is a small amount of overlap between the last part of PHIL 110 and the first part of PHIL 211. Both PHIL 110 and PHIL 211 satisfy the logic requirement for the philosophy major.

Textbook: Virginia Klenk, *Understanding Symbolic Logic*, 5th edition (Prentice-Hall, 2008).

Major assignments: two in-class exams and seven take-home problem sets.

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

**PHIL 213-001: Medical Ethics****A. Thompson**

TuesThurs 9:30 am – 10:45 am

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****Staff**

Wednesday 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 213-700: Medical Ethics****A. Bronfman**

Online Distance Class

This online 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, genetic enhancement), the role of information (confidentiality, informed consent, scientific research), 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 (assisted suicide, euthanasia, advance directives).

The focus of the course is on assessing arguments for and against different positions on these moral issues, with background information provided as needed. The course requires a reading response for most weeks, two 4-page papers, and participation in a weekly videoconference.

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

**PHIL 225-001: Environmental Ethics****D. Henderson**

TuesThurs 2:00 pm-3:15 pm

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 230-001: Philosophy of Law****J. Brunero**

TuesThurs 2:00 pm – 3:15 pm

This course is divided into three parts. In the first part, we'll discuss various issues concerning the relationship between law and morality. In the second part, we'll consider several important legal and moral concepts, including liberty, privacy, justice, and equality. In the third part, we'll consider issues related to punishment and responsibility. We'll read essays by philosophers and lawyers, as well as the judicial opinions in several important US Supreme Court cases. The course does not presuppose any background in philosophy or in law.

Here are some of the questions we'll consider in this course: Are unjust laws legally valid? Is there a moral obligation to obey the law? Which standards should we employ when we attempt to interpret the law and the Constitution? Why is liberty important and to what extent should people be left free to do as they choose? What are the proper limits to free speech and expression? What are the Constitutional and moral grounds for personal privacy and autonomy? What does it mean to treat people justly and equally? Why, and to what extent, should we punish criminals? Is capital punishment morally permissible? Should we punish unsuccessful attempts at murder less severely than successful attempts, and, if so, why? Should people be held legally responsible for their omissions as well as their actions? When are people excused from responsibility for their acts?

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

**PHIL 232-001: History of Philosophy (Modern)**

**J. McKittrick**

MonWedFri 9:30 am – 10:20 am

This course offers an introductory survey of some of the key figures in early modern (17th—18th century) European philosophy. These include: Descartes, Spinoza, Locke, Berkeley and Hume. Our main focus will be on their metaphysics and epistemology. Modernized and simplified translations of texts will be available online.

Assignments include five short papers and a final exam.

This course satisfies the history of philosophy requirement for the philosophy major.

**PHIL 301-001: Theory of Knowledge**

**A. Casullo**

TuesThurs 2:00 pm – 3:15 pm

This course provides an Introduction to some major problems of epistemology, with emphasis on the understanding and evaluation of the problems, rather than what various philosophers have said about them.

Course topics (tentative) include scepticism, the concept of knowledge, the concept of justification, the sources of human knowledge, knowledge of the external world, and a priori knowledge.

Course goals: To provide an understanding of some central issues in contemporary epistemology and their historical backgrounds. To develop the following skills: read analytically primary philosophical texts, evaluate critically philosophical positions and arguments, write sustained, coherent philosophical essays and papers, and conduct philosophical research.

Course Requirements (tentative): Two or three essay exams, Library Research Project and Research Paper, and oral presentation.

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

**PHIL 320-001: Ethical Theory**

**A. Bronfman**

TuesThurs 12:30 pm – 1:45 pm

This course is a survey of ethical theory, including general theories of right and wrong action and theories of the nature of morality, with readings primarily drawn from the past 50 years.

One half of the course is devoted to understanding the content of ethics and morality. Questions to be considered include: What experiences and accomplishments make for a valuable life? Is there a single principle of morality, or are there many particular obligations of different types? Do distinctions such as those between killing and letting die, or between intending and merely foreseeing, matter in morality? What is the connection between the rightness of an action and the goodness or badness of its consequences? What character traits count as virtues, and is it possible for human beings to be virtuous?

The other half of the course is devoted to more foundational questions about the nature of morality itself. These questions include: Are there moral facts, or are moral judgments simply expressions of emotion? Is morality objective, or always relative to particular societies? What similarities and differences are there between ethics and natural science? What connections exist between moral judgments, moral motivation, and reasons to act? Can people properly be held morally responsible for what they do?

The course text is "Ethical Theory: An Anthology" (2nd Ed.), by Russ Shafer-Landau. Requirements consist of a reading response for most weeks, two 6-page papers, and class participation.

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

**PHIL 337-001: Knowledge: Ancient and Medieval**

**H. Ide**

TuesThurs 12:30 pm – 1:45 pm

Questions about the source of human knowledge—in particular, whether perception or some other source is at the root of knowledge—and about the appropriate response to skepticism are among the historically central questions of epistemology. We'll consider central classical and medieval answers to those questions.

After preparing for, participating in, and reviewing the classes and assignments, students will be able to (a) explain and evaluate different classical and medieval approaches to answering Democritus's skeptical arguments, (b) be able to extract premisses and conclusions from unclear argumentative texts and do at least some clarification of the arguments, and (c) be able to write argumentative essays with a clear structure, focused sharply on explaining and defending a thesis.

The course grade will be determined by one paper (written in multiple drafts, with comments by me), and frequent short assignments (some relevant to the paper, some relevant to the readings and independent of the paper).

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

**PHIL 400-001: Undergraduate Seminar in Philosophy**

**H. Ide**

TuesThurs 12:30 pm – 1:45 pm

The course will function as a seminar, with significant amounts of discussion, and the grade determined by one paper (written in multiple drafts with comments from me), at least one presentation, and perhaps also short assignments. We'll pick a topic together; I'll suggest some possibilities, but I will allow student suggestions too.

The course satisfies a requirement for the Philosophy BA and also satisfies ACE 10.

**PHIL 405-001 / 805-001: Philosophy of Language**

**E. Becker**

Tuesday 3:30 pm – 6:05 pm

This course will be an introductory survey of the philosophy of language. Topics to be covered will include: reference, descriptions, names, demonstratives, truth, meaning, speech acts, and propositional attitudes. The authors whose writings we will study will include: Frege, Russell, Strawson, Mill, Kripke, Kaplan, Quine, Grice, Tarski, and Davidson. There will be a mid-term exam, a term paper, and a final exam. Students taking the class under the number 405 will be graded less stringently than students taking it under the number 805. There are no prerequisites, but some knowledge of quantificational logic would be helpful.

**PHIL 420-001 / 820-001: Philosophy of Social Science**

**D. Henderson**

Thursday 3:30 pm – 6:05 pm

The epistemological character of the social sciences. Character and explanatory role of social scientific generalizations, various explanatory strategies for social matters, the continuity or discontinuity of the social sciences with the special sciences, the importance of interpretation, and the place of rationality.

**PHIL 914-001: Philosophy of Mind**

**J. Mendola**

Wednesday 3:30 pm – 5:35 pm

The topic of this seminar will be belief. We will consider different accounts of what belief is, of its relations to analogous cognitive states such as credence, and of its content. The reading list for the course is still evolving, but today's version includes chunks from the following books: H. H Price, *Belief*; Aaron Zimmerman, *Belief*; José Bermudez, *Thinking without Words*; Jesse Prinz, *Furnishing the Mind*; David Chalmers, *Constructing the World*; Juhani Yli-Vakkuri and John Hawthorne, *Narrow Content*. The course requirements besides attendance and discussion will be a presentation on your chosen subtopic, the draft of a seminar paper on which I'll provide written comments, and then a final version of the paper. Seminar papers throughout most of the range of philosophy of mind, much of the range of philosophy of language, and some areas of epistemology would be germane to the course.

**PHIL 925-001: Social and Political Philosophy**

**M. van Roojen**

Monday 3:30 pm – 5:35 pm

This course will focus on current theories of political justice, with primary emphasis on issues of distributive justice. It is an attempt to both cover some stuff everyone really should know and also to read some newer political philosophy. We will approach these issues by doing a lot of reading in the current and semi-current literature. Readings will include works by Mill, Rawls, Nozick, Dworkin and likely Estlund and another more contemporary reading.