

**Department of Philosophy**  
**Course Descriptions for Spring 2021**  
**(term code 1211)**

**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**

**H. Ide**

Tues/Thurs 9:30 am – 10:20 am

**DESCRIPTION**

Whether we have good reason to do something depends (at least partly) on whether we have good reasons for our beliefs and for our desires. We'll look at different theories about the rationality of beliefs, desires, and actions.

**COURSE GOALS**

After taking this course (including preparing for each class, participating in each class, reviewing after each class, doing the assignments, and reviewing the comments on assignments), students will ...

- (1) be better able to give and use examples, in particular
  - (a) when applying a general theory to a specific situation,
  - (b) when arguing from examples to a general theory,
  - (c) when raising counter-examples to a theory,
  - (d) when using hypothetical (even wildly hypothetical counter-examples) to evaluate a theory
  - (e) understanding the difference between using examples to prove specific claims (or disprove general claims), on the one hand, and using examples to support general claims (or refute specific claims), on the other hand
  
- (2) be better able to write coherent argumentative essays
  - (a) with an explicit, clear, thesis (that is, conclusion, not simply a topic)
  - (b) with a clear structure that emphasizes the student's key ideas supporting the thesis
  - (c) with paragraphs that have paragraph thesis sentences that tie the claims in the paragraph into a single coherent whole, and make clear how that helps establish the thesis
  - (d) with evidence in favor of the thesis (including giving evidence for empirical claims)
  - (e) with references as required (including whenever the paper claims someone says or believes something, and for all quoted words and borrowed ideas)and to rewrite them
  
- (3) be better able to assess actions, both prospectively and retrospectively, taking into account some of the characteristic patterns of human reasoning and associated philosophical theories

**FORMAT**

Lectures will be offered by "web conferencing", that is. meetings will be held at scheduled times over Zoom. Recitation sections will be in person meetings.

## ASSIGNMENTS

Assignments will probably include:  
weekly review questions (with one-paragraph answers)  
two exams (with questions very like the weekly review questions)  
two papers  
short writing assignments preparing to write the papers  
comments on other students writing assignments

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

## **PHIL 101-250: Introduction to Philosophy**

**J. Mendola**

Tues/Thurs 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 body, and the existence of God. We will 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 105-150: The Philosophy of Food**

**C. McLear**

Tues/Thurs 11:00 am – 11:50 am

Food is a central part of human life, both in its production and consumption. Food is closely tied to the values that we hold and the cultural identities that we endorse (e.g. the sorts of things that we eat vs. the sorts of things that they eat). Our choices about food, both as individuals and as a society, raise a variety of moral, political, social, and economic questions. In this course we'll investigate these questions using a variety of methods and sources, but with an eye to their philosophical importance.

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****Q. White**

Tues/Thurs 9:30 am – 10:20 am

Sometimes it's easy to know what one should do: study hard, brush your teeth, eat healthy meals, be kind to your friends, don't steal. This class considers questions of what one should do, and why, where the answers are anything but easy. Suppose you know that if you tell the truth about some sensitive matter, your friend will be crushed. Should you lie to protect his feelings? If not, why not? Why should we tell the truth? And when, if ever, should we conceal it? Or imagine you are about to spend \$20 on a nice meal. Should you spend that money on yourself when that same \$20 could pay for the deworming of 60 school children in the developing world—one of the best ways to increase school completion rates? In general, our time, effort, money and attention can do tremendous good if it is directed towards the very needy instead of to ourselves or our friends and family; should we give our money, time or even our careers to helping those in need? Is it immoral not to? Having considered these questions about how we should treat human beings, we will turn to the topic of non-human animals. Can we eat them? Use them for scientific experimentation? Why or why not? And what, if anything, are our obligations towards them? Lastly, we will turn to the topic of race and racism: what is race? What is racism? How do they shape us? And how should racism be addressed?

This class does not offer simple answers; it equips students with the philosophical tools necessary for clear, systematic, and rigorous thought about these and other topics in ethics that we encounter in our every day lives. Students in this writing intensive course will grow as creative and independent thinkers, with heavy emphasis placed on developing students' argumentative writing and developing the skills to read and unpack the arguments and ideas of others.

This course may be used to satisfy either ACE 8 (Ethics) or ACE 9 (Global/Diversity). It also meets the Human Diversity in U.S. Communities requirement for the College of Arts and Sciences.

**PHIL 106-250: Philosophy and Current Issues****A. Thompson**

Mon/Wed 11:30 am – 12:20 pm

This course aims to develop students' ability to maturely reason about current, complex moral issues. Students will design approaches and solutions to problems that animate relationship violence (broadly construed) and abolition movements like those targeting prisons, the police, taxes, and regulation.

Major Assignments: 2 design sprints, 1 final analysis of the results of one of those design sprints, and correlated weekly response activities.

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

**PHIL 107-150: Ethics of Emerging Media****A. Thompson**

Mon/Wed 9:30 am – 10:20 am

This course aims to develop students' ability to maturely reason about complex moral issues that arise at intersection of emerging media arts and emerging technology. Students will design approaches and solutions to problems that animate the digital divide, bias in design (broadly construed), and alienation.

Major Assignments: 2 design sprints, 1 final analysis of the results of one of those design sprints, and correlated weekly response activities.

This course is certified for ACE 8 (Ethics).

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

Tues/Thurs 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 (60 points) covers the principles of syllogistic logic. Exam 3 (50 points) and Exam 4 (60 points) cover the principles of propositional logic. Three quizzes (30 points), based on the homework assignments, will be given in the Friday quiz sections.

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

Tues/Thurs 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, and how to construct proofs of valid formulas and arguments using natural deduction. 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 planning to go to grad 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. Each of PHIL 110 and PHIL 211 satisfies the logic requirement for the philosophy major.

Major assignments: two exams and seven problem sets. Reading and homework exercises will be assigned for each class.

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

**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 small-group videoconference.

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

**PHIL 216-001: Introduction to Psychology and Philosophy****D. Henderson**

Tues/Thurs 2:00 pm – 3:15 pm

Philosophy of science and of mind respond to ongoing work in psychology by raising a set of issues that are continuous with substantive and methodological issues confronting the psychologists. Psychologists have taken some inspiration (for better or worse) from the philosophers' work. We will survey a range of issues of mutual concern.

This course is certified for ACE 5 (Humanities).

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

Tues/Thurs 9:30 am – 10:45 am

Ethical dimensions in human relations to the environment. What is the nature of moral value generally, and what are the range of things that are morally valuable? Are there things that are fundamentally morally valuable beyond humans or human happiness (i.e., sentient creatures, ecosystems, and species)? What is the right thing to do given various answers to such value questions?

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

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

Tues/Thurs 9:30 am – 10:45 am

This course surveys the metaphysical and ethical views of some key figures in Early Modern (17th–18th century) European philosophy. We will examine five key ideas that drove much of the philosophical debate of the Early Modern period: Dualism, Materialism, Idealism, Monism, and Skepticism. Figures discussed include Astell, Cavendish, Descartes, Galileo, Hobbes, Hume, Leibniz, Newton, Poullain de la Barre, and Spinoza. This course satisfies ACE requirement 5 (Humanities).

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

**PHIL 314-001: Problems in the Philosophy of Mind**

**J. Mendola**

Tues/Thurs 2:00 pm – 3:15 pm

This course is an introduction to philosophy of mind. We will discuss the relationship between the mind and body, mental content, and consciousness.

The principle texts are Jaegwon Kim, *Philosophy of Mind*, third edition, George Berkeley, *Three Dialogues between Hylas and Philonous*, and Michael O’Shea, *The Brain*.

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

**PHIL 320-001: Ethical Theory**

**M. van Roojen**

Tues/Thurs 11:00 am – 12:15 pm

The class will concern itself with two broad areas within ethics, normative ethics and metaethics.

Normative ethics concerns what things are in fact right and wrong, and what makes them so. It turns out that the most obvious general answers to these questions seem to conflict with settled convictions about particular cases. And that puts pressure on us to revise what we think to resolve the conflict. But there are multiple ways you might revise your views, and people disagree about the right way to do that. So we wind up with multiple different theories in this domain, each with something going for it but also with some difficulties. We will examine various theoretical responses to the issues raised.

Metaethics is the study of the nature and status of moral judgements and their subject matter. It tries to answer questions like: What does it mean to say that something is right or good? Is morality about some domain of facts, and if so which facts? Are there "objective" answers to questions regarding moral values? Are such answers true? Might the truth or correctness of such claims be relative, and if so to what? How can our accounts of such judgements make sense of our claims to moral knowledge?

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: three or four papers.

**PHIL 338-001: Metaphysics: Ancient and Medieval**

**H. Ide**

Tues/Thurs 12:30 pm – 1:45 pm

CONTENT: Aristotle’s hylomorphism claims that living things are matter with a certain kind of form. He also claims that human intellects are immortal. How to reconcile those two theories isn’t obvious, since an immortal intellect apparently wouldn’t require the matter that Aristotle’s hylomorphic theory says that it does. His successors reacted in various ways, including offering alternatives to hylomorphism, and developing versions of hylomorphism that allowed for some forms to exist without matter. We’ll look at the history of hylomorphism from Aristotle through the end of the medieval period.

**COURSE GOALS**

After taking this course (including preparing for each class, participating in each class, reviewing after each class, doing the assignments, and reviewing the comments on assignments), students will ...

(a) be able to write argumentative essays of ca 2000 words that  
(a) have a clear thesis,  
(b) make a plausible argument for that thesis,  
(c) are structured to make that case clearly, and  
(d) appropriately cite sources (primary, and where relevant, secondary).

(b) be able to read philosophical articles, and in particular  
(a) find the thesis of the article,  
(b) identify the overall structure, and  
(c) restate the key evidence the author presents for the thesis,  
(d) giving appropriate references throughout.

(c) be able to discuss and evaluate different classical and medieval theories of the structure of living things, and in particular humans.

#### FORMAT

This course will be offered by “web conferencing”, that is. meetings will be held at scheduled times over Zoom. No in-person meetings will be held.

GRADING: Grades will (probably) be based on short assignments, and two papers, in two versions each.

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

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

**A. Bronfman**

Tues/Thurs 12:30 pm – 1:45 pm

This course is a discussion-style seminar, designed to help you write a single, long paper on a topic of your choice in any area of philosophy. Over the term, you will work toward this in a series of shorter assignments, including a statement of possible topics, a set of thoughts/questions on an article, a short discussion of an article, and drafts of parts of the paper. For most classes, you will also write short comments related to another student's project.

This course is certified for ACE 10 (Integrated Project) and satisfies a requirement for the Philosophy BA.

#### **PHIL 411-001 / 811-001: Formal Logic**

**R. Hayaki**

Tues/Thurs 2:00 pm – 3:15 pm

Prerequisite: PHIL 211, MATH 310, MATH 325, or CSCE 235.

PHIL 411/811 is a second course in symbolic logic. It presupposes familiarity with propositional (sentential) and first-order predicate logic. You will learn how to construct metatheoretic proofs about various formal systems (rather than derivations using the rules of a formal system, as in PHIL 211 and other first courses in symbolic logic). The main topics covered will be: the soundness and completeness of classical propositional logic, non-classical propositional logics, and propositional modal logics; and extensions of and alternatives to classical first-order predicate logic.

This course satisfies the logic requirement for the Ph.D. in philosophy.

Textbooks: Theodore Sider, *Logic for Philosophy* (Oxford University Press, 2010); Daniel J. Velleman, *How to Prove It: A Structured Approach*, 3rd edition (Cambridge University Press, 2019).

Major assignments: two exams and four problem sets. Reading and homework exercises will be assigned for each class.

**PHIL 418-001 / 818-001: Metaphysics**

**J. McKittrick**

Monday 3:30 pm – 6:05 pm

This course will investigate some central issues in metaphysics by studying contemporary texts in the analytic tradition. Topics include ontology, identity, persistence, persons, modality, properties, and causation. Students will take a leading role presenting and critiquing philosophical texts. Grade will be determined by a term paper, as well as presentations and participation

**PHIL 913-001: Advanced Epistemology**

**A. Casullo**

Tuesday 3:30 pm – 5:35 pm

**PHIL 920-001: Ethical Theory**

**M. van Roojen**

Thursday 3:30 pm – 5:35 pm