

Philosophy Course Descriptions – Fall 2023

Course and Section	Date and Time	Location	Instructor
101-101	T 6:30pm-9:20pm	Louise Pound Hall 101	Janelle Gormley
<p>Introduction to Philosophy <i>Philosophy</i> is used in various ways. Some may say “My philosophy is that we should always be loyal to friends,” and others may say “Philosophy is a place where the answers are never wrong.” The question, then, is just what <i>is</i> philosophy? In this course, students will be introduced to not only the main branches of philosophy such as metaphysics, epistemology, ethics, and value, but also to the history of philosophy and its value. To do so, the students will explore the following questions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What is philosophy, anyway? What is its value? 2. What is critical thinking, and should we believe everything we believe? 3. What is knowledge, and how do we know what we believe? Is there a world external to us? 4. What is free will and what role does freedom have with moral responsibility? 5. Is ‘rightness’ relative? That is, is being right something that can be true or false? 6. Does friendship play a crucial role in how we live? <p>The texts will be provided via canvas. Each week, the students will be expected to complete in class work, reading quizzes prior to class, and writing assignments that are in line with the skills of philosophical writing.</p>			
101-150	MW 11:30am-12:20pm	Morrill Hall 141	Harry Ide
<p>Introduction to Philosophy course content All of us make mistakes. Philosophical theories point to different things we might look at to understand our mistakes, so that we can avoid repeating them (and perhaps even make fewer in the first place). We’ll look at theories about ways in which actions can go wrong because of our beliefs, because of our desires, and because of more complex factors, focusing a lot on applying those theories to concrete situations.</p> <p>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 ...</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (1) be better able to give and use examples, in particular <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (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 <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (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 			

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- (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)
- (3) be better able to assess actions, taking into account some of the characteristic patterns of human reasoning and associated philosophical theories

assignments

- weekly short-answer review questions (focusing especially on giving and using examples relating to the theories we’re discussing (10 questions, 1-4 sentence answers) (course goals 1 and 3)
- exams (six short-answer questions very like the weekly review questions) (course goals 1 and 3)
- short papers (course goals 2 and 3)

There will probably be three exams and three short papers.

101-250	TR 9:30am-10:20am	Carolyn Pope Edwards Hall 213	Reina Hayaki
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Introduction to Philosophy

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?

This course is certified for both ACE 5 (Humanities) and ACE 8 (Ethics). You will be able to choose which one of these two requirements you want this course to count for.

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.

105-700	Does Not Meet	Online	Colin McLear
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The Philosophy of Food

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.

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This course can be used to satisfy either Ace 5 (Humanities) or Ace 8 (Ethics)			
105-790	Does Not Meet	Online	Eunhong Lee
<p>The Philosophy of Food</p> <p>The word “diet” comes to us from the ancient Greek term “diaita,” meaning “way of life.” Alexandra Plakias says, “without food, there would be no philosophy,” since eating food is also closely related to what we value— our cultural identities, ethical issues, and environmental issues. In this course, we will look into the connection between what we eat and how we live. One might wonder what the sandwich I ate for lunch had to do with the way I lived. This sandwich just provides me with some nutrients or some calories. However, is everything with nutrients food? Maybe, equating food with nutrition is too simple. Let us think of our pets, dogs, and cats. Don’t they have nutrients? If they do have nutrients, why not eat pets? Consider the 0-calorie coke you have been drinking. Is it food, even though it has no calories? We will start with the question of what food is and explore various ethical issues related to food.</p> <p>Our class will be divided into four parts. 1) What is food?, 2) The ethics of eating animals, 3) Agriculture and the environment, 4) Food justice. Throughout the semester, we will ask ourselves what we have been eating and how we are to eat and live. We will cover the textbook, Philosophy of Food (by Plakias) and various recent issues regarding food, factory farming, eating animals, environments, etc. There are no prerequisites for this course.</p>			
106-101	W 6:30pm-9:20pm	Louise Pound Hall 101	Seungchul Yang
<p>Philosophy and Current Issues</p> <p>The course will provide an engaging exploration of various moral theories and ethical dilemmas. Throughout the semester, we will devote equal attention to both theoretical and practical aspects of ethics. In the first half of the course, we will focus on theoretical questions, such as what it means by "moral," why we should act morally, and other philosophical inquiries. These discussions will enable us to build a foundation with justifications for the practical challenges we will face in the second half of the course.</p> <p>The second half of the course will shift our focus towards addressing practical ethical issues. We will actively engage with concerns such as global hunger, economic inequality, and racial justice. Through these discussions and explorations, we will gain a comprehensive understanding of the challenges at hand and explore ways to actively address them. We will strive to take positions on these issues supported by plausible reasons that can effectively convince others of the importance of our stance.</p>			
106-150	MW 9:30am-10:20am	Burnett 115	John Brunero
<p>Philosophy and Current Issues</p> <p>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?</p> <p>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</p>			

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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).

106-250

TR 9:30am-10:20am

Avery Hall 106

Adam Thompson

Philosophy and Current Issues

This course explores the complexities of current issues primarily through the lens of freedom, liberation, and individual and collective moral responsibility. In particular, we will explore, envision, and evaluate the extent to which freedom, personal responsibility, and collective responsibility is tied to the abolition of various institutions and how to work toward liberation in the face things like the military, prison, university, and healthcare industrial complexes.

Required Book:

Weston and Bloch-Schulman, *Thinking Through Questions*, Hackett Publishing, ~\$10 New (Paperback), Used from ~\$4.

Course Orientation and Assignments:

Inquiry-Based Course – 3 exams composed of responses to your personally designed main line of inquiry, metacognitive reflection, and weekly exercises.

ACE Certification: This course can be used to satisfy ACE 8 (Ethics).

106-350

TR 11:00am-11:50am

Hamilton Hall 102

Mark van Roojen

Philosophy and Current Issues

The class will focus on a number of ethical topics of current interest, most likely four of the following world hunger, war, economic inequality, rights to sexual privacy, 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 Philosophy Course Descriptions – Spring 2022 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 will satisfy either ACE 8 (Ethics) and ACE 9 (Global Awareness/Knowledge of Human Diversity)

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110-150	TR 9:30am-10:20am	Henzlik Hall 53	Al Casullo
<p>Introduction to Logic and Critical Thinking</p> <p>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 and nine quizzes. Textbooks: P. Hurley & L. Watson, <i>A Concise Introduction to Logic</i>, 13th edition. Assignments on Canvas.</p> <p>This class is certified for ACE 3 (Math/Stat/Reasoning), and satisfies the logic requirement for the philosophy major.</p>			
211-001	TR 11:00am-12:15pm	Henzlik Hall 107	Reina Hayaki
<p>Introduction to Logic and Critical Thinking</p> <p>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 arguments and statements 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. This course is certified for ACE 3, and satisfies the logic requirement for the philosophy major.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>All course materials will be posted on Canvas; no textbook purchase is required.</p> <p>Major assignments: two in-class exams and seven take-home problem sets.</p>			
213-150	TR 12:30pm-1:20pm	Hamilton Hall 102	Adam Thompson
<p>Medical Ethics</p> <p>This course aims to develop students' mature reasoning about complex moral issues in health care contexts. Toward that goal, students will critically explore, envision, and evaluate practical choice-making and moral reasoning in a manner that illuminates the normative contours of things like lying and withholding information from patients, trust-destroying medical atrocities, the nature of life and death, and virtues integral to integrity as medical practitioners.</p> <p><i>Required Book:</i> Jennifer Jackson, <i>Truth, Trust, and Medicine</i>, Routledge Publishing, 2001; price ranges from (used) \$10.00 – (new) \$40.00</p> <p><i>Course Orientation and Assignments:</i> Inquiry-Based Course – 3 exams composed of responses to your personally designed main line of inquiry, metacognitive reflection, and weekly exercises.</p> <p><i>ACE Certification:</i> This course can be used to satisfy ACE 8 (Ethics).</p>			

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213-700	Does Not Meet	Online	Aaron Bronfman
<p>Medical Ethics</p> <p>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.</p> <p>The course requires a reading response for most weeks, two 4-page papers, and participation in a weekly small-group videoconference.</p> <p>This course may be used to satisfy either ACE 5 (Humanities) or ACE 8 (Ethics).</p>			
225-001	TR 9:30am-10:20am	Teachers College 250	David Henderson
<p>Environmental Ethics</p> <p>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.” This is to ask what things are properly the focus of one’s fundamental—or nonderivative—moral engagement. We will consider a sample of writers advocating an expansion of ethical concern beyond humans. One traditional ethical position, utilitarianism, starts us out—as its classical form already implies such a concern for sentient animals. We will also consider the highly influential ethical position of Aldo Leopold whose career work ultimately touched upon almost all aspects of environmental thought. After this tour of some philosophical positions, we will take an extended look at one big issue that humans face today: carbon emissions and climate change. We will look at several discussions of energy and climate change—including the presentation in <i>The Seasons Alter</i>, which focuses on these matters from multiple perspectives (including differing cultural perspectives).</p>			
231-001	MWF 9:20am-10:20am	Oldfather Hall 208	Harry Ide
<p>History of Philosophy (Ancient)</p> <p>Course goals</p> <p>After preparing for, attending, and reviewing after classes, and doing the assignments, student will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • write an argumentative essay with a clear thesis, structure, and argument • rewrite their papers in response to substantive comments • explain and evaluate key classical views through Aristotle on (a) the relation of self-interest and morality, (b) how to reach knowledge, and (c) what there is in the universe <p>Assignments</p> <p>Several argumentative essays in two drafts, and short assignments.</p>			

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302-001	MWF 10:30am-11:20am	Richards Hall 114	Jennifer McKittrick
<p>Introduction to Metaphysics 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.</p>			
320-001	TR 12:30pm-1:45pm	Teachers College 112	Aaron Bronfman
<p>Ethical Theory 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 requires a reading response for most weeks, two 6-page papers, and class participation.</p> <p>This course may be used to satisfy either ACE 5 (Humanities) or ACE 8 (Ethics).</p>			
400-001	TR 2:00pm-3:15pm	Avery Hall 119	Mark van Roojen
<p>Undergraduate Seminar in Philosophy The point of the undergraduate seminar is to give undergraduates a sense of what a graduate class in philosophy might be like, without requiring you to compete for attention with more experienced graduate students. Hence, functioning of the class is more the responsibility of class members than is typical for undergraduate classes, and the ratio of participant discussion to instructor lecture will be somewhat higher. It will also be somewhat looser in structure than the typical undergraduate class because that is how graduate classes go. As of Spring 2023 the exact topic is still up in the air. It may be climate change or it may be something else.</p>			
471-001 871-001	W 3:30pm-6:10pm	Louise Pound Hall 308	Colin McLear
<p>Kant This course provides an intensive study of the metaphysical, epistemological, and moral doctrines of Kant's mature 'critical' philosophy. Our discussion covers three central themes of Kant's work: his conception of the nature and limits of the rational mind; his critique of traditional metaphysics; and his positive conception of morality as the expression of rational agency. Specific topics covered include: the limits of human knowledge; the role of the mind</p>			

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in the production of experience; the reality of space and time; the nature of matter; reason and its ability to critique itself; knowledge of the self; freedom of the will; the objectivity of morality; the existence of God; the afterlife of the soul; the status of metaphysics; and the relationship between ‘appearances’ and ‘ultimate reality’.

913-001

T 3:30pm-5:45pm

Louise Pound Hall 308

Al Casullo

Advanced Epistemology

Fallibility and Defeat

A major theme in contemporary epistemology is the rejection of the Cartesian concept of knowledge, which requires a guarantee of truth (infallibility) and immunity from rational revision (indefeasibility). The goal of the seminar is to investigate the concepts of fallibility and defeat, with an emphasis on the latter. John Pollock’s work is largely responsible for the central role that defeaters play in contemporary epistemology. Most contemporary discussions employ his theoretical framework and many of his assumptions.

We will begin with an examination of three of the central features of Pollock’s framework: (1) his distinction between *prima facie* and conclusive reasons, (2) his distinction between rebutting and undercutting defeaters, and (3) his treatment of issues pertaining to strength of justification. We will then turn to contemporary responses to Pollock’s work.

917-001

R 3:30pm-5:45pm

Louise Pound Hall 308

David Henderson

Philosophy of Science

We will look at the idea that Abduction—also known as Inference to the Best Explanation—is central to scientific theorizing and the acceptance of scientific theories as true of the world. The issues to be addressed include the extent to which one should be a realist about the entities that feature in theories, and the character of scientific models insofar as these might seem to be different from theories.

920-001

M 1:30pm-3:45pm

Louise Pound Hall 101

John Brunero

Ethical Theory: Fittingness

The course will explore various ways in which the concept of *fittingness* is relevant to contemporary ethical theory. My beliefs are fitting (or “correct” or “appropriate”) when they are true. My admiration of you is fitting when you are in fact admirable. My fear of you is fitting if you are in fact dangerous.

The plan is to read two books, and a collection of essays (along with some journal articles which will be posted on Canvas):

- Beri Marusic, *On The Temporality of Emotions: An Essay on Grief, Anger, and Love* (OUP 2022)
- Jonathan Way and Conor McHugh: *Getting Things Right: Fittingness, Reasons, and Value* (OUP 2023)
- Chris Howard and R.A. Rowland (eds.) *Fittingness: Essays in the Philosophy of Normativity* (OUP 2023)

The Marusic book is primarily concerned with a puzzle about the fittingness of grief: it’s appropriate for our grief over the loss of a loved one to diminish over time, yet the reason for such grief – the loss of the loved one – remains constant. Way and McHugh aim to show that

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we can use the concept of fittingness to explain all of normativity (including the concepts of a reason, ought, and value). The Howard & Rowland collection explores a variety of topics having to do with fittingness, including fitting emotions and the fundamentality of fit. Students will write 2 conference-length (2,500- 3,000 word) papers, one due mid-semester, and one due at the end. (If you have good reason to take an incomplete (“I”) to finish work over Winter Break, I’ll allow it. But those incompletes expire on January 21, 2024.)