

PHILOSOPHY COURSE OFFERINGS

– FALL 2021 –

200-level Courses (Tier Two)

PHIL 274: Logic | *Arnold Vander Nat*

This introductory course in logic is a detailed study of the methods and principles of correct reasoning, and focuses on the deductive techniques from both traditional logic and modern logic. Central to this study is first, a precise analysis of the logical structure that sentences have, and second, the logical consequences that sentences have because of their logical structure. The laws of logic themselves are extensively studied, and they are rigorously applied in the solution of concrete problems of argumentation. This course may also study the types of common errors in reasoning, known as logical fallacies. An important outcome in this course is the improvement of one's critical thinking abilities.

PHIL 277: Aesthetics | *Andrew Cutrofello*
(*Existence, Meaning, and Culture*)

What makes a work of art a work of art? Does it have to represent or express something? Does it have to be beautiful? What if it were not beautiful but exhibited some other aesthetic value such as sublimity or cuteness? What if it exhibited no aesthetic value but had a morally good message? Can a work of art be true in the way that a mathematical proof or scientific theory can be true? If not, can it be true in some other way? How can art appear in so many different forms – architecture, sculpture, painting, music, poetry, dance, NFTs, etc.? Is the category of art relevant to all cultures? Is it relevant at all, given that we can have aesthetic experiences of things that aren't works of art, such as flowers and waterfalls? These are some of the questions we will discuss in this course.

This course has an Existence, Meaning, and Culture (EMC) designation for the purposes of major specialization.

PHIL 279: Judgment and Decision-Making | *Marcella Linn*
(*Mind and Science*)

Our everyday conceptions of the way we think, make choices, and act often assume we exercise significant control and awareness. Many philosophical accounts of action and character make similar assumptions. But, current work in social psychology suggests we are prone to many cognitive biases and that our behavior is often influenced by minor situational factors rather than our conscious choices or character. These findings raise important questions pertaining to human agency as well as moral responsibility for action and character.

This course has a Mind and Science (M&S) designation for the purposes of major specialization.

PHIL 284: Health Care Ethics | *Jennifer Parks*
(*Ethics and Values*)

PHIL 284 is designed to provide you with an introduction to the philosophical approach to problems in health care ethics. You will be taught to recognize and critically apply various ethical theories and principles with a view to solving moral problems in a rationally defensible manner. We will consider

different ethical theories such as utilitarianism, Kantian ethics, care ethics, and the four principles of health care ethics (justice, autonomy, beneficence, and non-maleficence). A number of problematic issues will be covered, including roles and relationships in health care, abortion, caring for persons who are aging, euthanasia and physician-assisted suicide, and assisted reproductive technology.

This course has an Ethics and Values (E&V) designation for the purposes of major specialization.

PHIL 284: Health Care Ethics | *Elizabeth Hoppe*

(Ethics and Values)

This ethics course emphasizes the importance of using philosophical tools (concepts, values, theories, forms of argumentation, and so on) that illuminate, analyze, and evaluate the practice and domain of health care. The course aims to enable students to become better moral reasoners; that is, to improve one's ability to recognize, think through, assess, and articulate moral views as well as to understand, contribute to, and critique the views of others. The first part examines some of the key ethical theories that will be applied to the health care industry: Aristotelian ethics, Kantian deontology, and utilitarianism. In part two, we will investigate moral foundations such as moral norms, character, and status. The third and fourth parts address four principles that form a framework for medical ethics: autonomy, nonmaleficence, beneficence, and justice. The required textbook is: *Principles of Biomedical Ethics* by Tom L. Beauchamp and James F. Childress, 7th edition, Oxford University Press

This course has an Ethics and Values (E&V) designation for the purposes of major specialization.

PHIL 287: Environmental Ethics | *Paul Ott*

(Ethics and Values; Law, Society, and Social Justice)

Environmental ethics is the philosophical study of the value of nature (ecosystems, animals, plants), the human-nature relationship, and the ethical issues that arise from these two issues. The central issue has been the question of nature's value, answers to which range from strongly anthropocentric to strongly non-anthropocentric positions. Anthropocentrism regards humans as either the only or the highest entity of ethical worth (intrinsic value), with the non-human having either less value or only instrumental value. Non-anthropocentrism ascribes strong ethical value to various non-human entities, from individual animals (animal ethics) and living things (biocentrism) to holistic views concerning the moral status of species, ecosystems, and nature as a whole.

We will look at a number of related issues, such as the existence and nature of intrinsic value, animal ethics, the deep ecology/social ecology debate, ecofeminism, and issues in climate change and environmental justice. Before we investigate any of these issues, we will start by looking at the philosophical and historical origins of environmental and anti-environmental thinking. A central question we will discuss is the meaning of the concept of nature itself, which is fraught with controversy. We will also read a good portion of one of the most important books in environmental writing, Aldo Leopold's *A Sand County Almanac*.

This course has both an Ethics and Values (E&V) designation and a Law, Society, and Social Justice (LSSJ) designation for the purposes of major specialization

PHIL 288: Culture and Civilization – Friendship, Romance, and Technology |

Peter Bergeron

(Ethics and Values; Law, Society, and Social Justice)

We are deeply social creatures. The link between vibrant interpersonal relationships and a rich, flourishing human life was explored by the Greek philosopher Aristotle centuries ago. He claimed that even if we had all the goods that the world could offer, none of us would choose to have those at the expense of having friends. The importance of relationships continues to dominate the research of scholars in many fields. Our culture is profoundly technological. This has been true for decades and is not merely the result of the development of new forms of social media such as the smartphone. This culture shapes us in many ways, including the way we engage relationships with others. The Jesuit scholar John Culkin writes, “We become what we behold. We shape our tools and then our tools shape us.” The effects of these tools on our relationships with others are being widely researched and hotly contested. It is clear that these new tools are shaping us. This course will explore two kinds of relationships, friendship and romantic partnerships, and the ways in which our technological culture both enhances and diminishes our capacity to connect well with others.

This course has both an Ethics and Values (E&V) designation and a Law, Society, and Social Justice (LSSJ) designation for the purposes of major specialization.

PHIL 288E: Culture and Civilization – Philosophy and Biology for the Future |

Joseph Vukov

(Ethics and Values; Law, Society, and Social Justice; Engaged Learning)

The future is a minefield of technological challenges and the moral quagmires that accompany them. The looming specters of antimicrobial-resistant pathogens, human-driven climate change, corporate-controlled artificial intelligence, genetic engineering, artificial cognitive and moral enhancement, and a host of other nascent topics present us with major hurdles to overcome in the near future.

We can't address these challenges piecemeal. The solutions to these future challenges are interwoven. Simple science education alone is insufficient to correct this. And ethical reflection on them devoid of a scientific basis falls flat. Rather, the students best prepared to deal with and lead in the face of future challenges are those who have acquired two sets of knowledge: (a) detailed scientific understanding of the problems and (b) the creative, ethical, and logical skills to generate and apply solutions.

In this course—taught in conjunction with BIOL395E—we will therefore tackle problems of the future from both philosophical and biological perspectives, integrating knowledge from both fields, and along the way, reflect on ways to make progress on future problems. In PHIL288E, we'll be paying special attention to the way the Catholic Intellectual Tradition may provide us with distinctive resources. In both classes, we'll be pairing with community partners to bring our work beyond the university community. What's more: we'll be framing our units using some of our favorite science fiction texts.

Note that PHIL288E is an engaged learning course and must be taken concurrently with BIOL395E. BIOL282 (Genetics) is a recommended (but not required) prerequisite. Contact the instructor to register. This course has both an Ethics and Values (E&V) designation and a Law, Society, and Social Justice (LSSJ) designation for the purposes of major specialization.

300-level Courses (Upper-Division Courses)

PHIL 304: History of Ancient Philosophy | *Joshua Mendelsohn*

In this course, we will trace the development of philosophy in Greece from the earliest thinkers of record until Aristotle. Our guiding thread will be the relationship of Greek philosophy to the two major cultural practices it had to work to distinguish itself from: Sophistry and myth. The first part of the course tracks the early development of Greek philosophy in its dialogue with epic poetry. We will see how the earliest Greek philosophers appropriated the conventions of epic myth but challenged traditional theism and showed a new interest in the origin of the universe and the natural world. The second and third parts of the course focus on Socrates and Plato respectively. We will encounter them both through Plato's dialogues, and see how Socrates and Plato each challenged, and appropriated, sophistry and Greek myth. Readings from *Ion*, *Gorgias*, *Euthyphro*, *Apology*, and *Phaedo* will supply a sketch of Socrates' life and his fate as a subversive figure, while readings from *Phaedo*, *Meno*, *Republic* and *Timaeus* will show how Plato extends and transforms Socrates' ethical project into a metaphysical-epistemological program and a political philosophy. Finally, we will turn to Aristotle, and examine how he pioneers the study of nature and develops and transforms Plato's ideas about the good life, the ideal city, the soul and the nature of reality.

As well as studying the history of Greek philosophy, we will explore its relevance to our own lives and our political situation. Reflecting on the life of Socrates and on Plato's ideal city, we will ask questions such as: Why did the Athenians really kill Socrates? Are there circumstances under which you could be persuaded to put someone like Socrates to death? Can censorship be justified for good political ends? And what are we to make of the commitments of Greek philosophers that are repugnant to us today, such as Aristotle's endorsement of slavery?

This course is a requirement for the Philosophy major and is only taught in the Fall Term each year.

PHIL 308: Islamic Philosophy | *Staff*

This course covers the development of classical Islamic philosophy from 800 to 1200 CE. Attention will be given to the central topics (God, the cosmos, knowledge, the human good) with which Muslim philosophers were concerned and to major figures such as Al-Kindi, Al-Farabi, Ibn Sina (Avicenna), Al-Ghazali and Ibn Rushd (Averroes).

PHIL 311: Issues in Metaphysics – the Philosophy of Time | *James Harrington* (*Mind and Science*)

This is a course in the philosophy of time. Although it takes different forms in different places at different times, philosophy has always concerned itself with the relationship between being and becoming. Do the most fundamental components of the world simply exist? Or is coming into existence and passing out of existence a fundamental metaphysical fact? We will examine this question from a variety of different perspectives.

Among the questions we will address are the following:

- Are the characteristics of past, present and future objective features of various moments of time? Or are they merely a product of our limited human perspective on reality?
- Is there a logically consistent description of motion and change? Or is the very idea of change intrinsically contradictory, as alleged by the ancient philosopher Zeno?
- What is the relationship between time and ordinary material objects and events? Can time pass even when nothing happens—are temporal vacua possible?
- Is time travel into the future possible? Into the past?

This course has a Mind and Science (M&S) designation for the purposes of major specialization.

PHIL 321W: Ethics and Society – Philosophy of Race (Writing Intensive) | *Eyo Ewara* (*Ethics and Values; Law, Society, and Social Justice; Writing Intensive*)

In this course we will examine contemporary and historical readings exploring key questions surrounding in critical philosophy of race: What is race? Is it just one thing? How does it relate to gender, class, or sexuality? What is racism? How has it structured our society and ourselves? Can we move past it? Should we? How do we respond to it? Why do we care so deeply about race and what is it that race-talk does for us? Our goal will be to both develop our historical knowledge about race and a critical lens through which to become aware about how race and racism inform contemporary social and political issues.

This course has both an Ethics and Values (E&V) designation and a Law, Society, and Social Justice (LSSJ) designation for the purposes of major specialization. It also fulfills a Writing Intensive (WI) requirement.

PHIL 323: Philosophy of Law | *Vincent Samar* (*Law, Society, and Social Justice*)

This course will consider a number of topics residing at the cutting edge where law and legal philosophy meet, including: What is law? Must law be related to morality? What is the interpretative function of courts? Should integrity constrain what courts decide? From whence does the duty to obey law come? Are there any human rights? Might some of these rights be manifested by our ideas of liberty, privacy and freedom of expression? Need we respond to terrorism by changing our values? What is distributive justice as compared with corrective or retributive justice? Are distributive justice questions implicated by court decisions involving affirmative action, gender, and sexual orientation? How is corrective justice manifested in tort and contract law? What is ownership? Is ownership of intellectual property morally justified? What is the relationship of causation to responsibility, and what is punishment and how is it justified? Students taking this course for 3 hours credit will be required to take a midterm examination counting 30% of their grade and write a 7 page analytical paper on a philosophy of law topic of their choice that will be due on the last day of class and will count for 70% of their grade. In anticipation of the paper, students will be required to submit a one paragraph statement of their topic and how they plan to approach it. This will be followed by a more extensive outline of the paper.

This course has a Law, Society, and Social Justice (LSSJ) designation for the purposes of major specialization.

PHIL 369W: Philosophy of Medicine (Writing Intensive) | *Elizabeth Hoppe*
(*Mind and Science*)

This course revolves around the metaphysical question, what is medicine? The first half of the course addresses Greek conceptions of medicine, such as whether it should be classified as a craft or a science. We will turn to Galen's conception of human health as equilibrium along with his influence on medieval views on the nature of health and disease. The second part will investigate contemporary accounts of medicine as the profession is practiced in the US. The US version will be contrasted with alternative medical practices such as Buddhist, feminist, among others.

This course has a Mind and Science (M&S) designation for the purposes of major specialization. This course fulfills a Writing Intensive (WI) requirement.

PHIL 398: Capstone Seminar – Philosophies of Revolution | *Jennifer Gaffney*
(*Law, Society, and Social Justice*)

This course will focus on issues in social and political philosophy concerning revolution. Though we often use the word “revolution” uncritically, this concept operates at the very limits of the political and raises a number of important questions and puzzles about the stability and legitimacy of the state. Central to this course will be the questions of whether revolution can be justified, when certain forms of oppression and exclusion necessitate violence against the state, what it means to organize collectively in the name of revolution, and why it is that some revolutions are remembered while others are forgotten. To engage these questions, the course will include readings from figures such as John Locke, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Karl Marx, Hannah Arendt, C.L.R. James, and Frantz Fanon, each of whom offer distinct perspectives on the role of revolution in the modern state. The course will consider the relevance of these perspectives not only for understanding revolutions of the past but also for understanding the scope and limits of calls for revolution in contemporary political life.

This course has a Law, Society, and Social Justice (LSSJ) designation for the purposes of major specialization.

PHIL 399(01): Capstone Seminar – Platonism and Poetry | *Andrew Cutrofello*
(*Existence, Meaning, and Culture*)

“From Shakespeare to Plato, from the philosophic poet to the poetic philosopher, the transition is easy.” These words, written by the philosopher-poet Samuel Taylor Coleridge, could serve as the motto for this capstone seminar. We will focus not only on Plato and Shakespeare, but on the complicated relation between Platonism (including Neoplatonism) and poetry inspired by Homer. More specifically, we will consider how alternative versions of the pseudo-Homeric story of Troilus and Cressida reflect and challenge Platonic conceptions of beauty, unity, and truth. Our aim will be to assess the fate of what Plato calls in the *Republic* the “ancient quarrel between philosophy and poetry.”

This course has an Existence, Meaning, and Culture (EMC) designation for the purposes of major specialization.