Philosophy

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Courses

PHI 101
Philosophy
A basic introduction to the study of philosophical core ideas and processes, with a focus on the use of critical analysis in understanding ideas and issues. Does not count towards philosophy concentration. General Studies Foundations-Humanities

PHI 102
Philosophy and Fiction
This course is an introduction to philosophical problems through an examination of works of fiction. The types of fiction chosen may include science fiction, existentialism or other genres. Questions covered may include the nature of the mind and self, the possibility of free will, the sources and reliability of knowledge, artificial intelligence, and moral problems. Films will supplement readings. Does not count towards philosophy concentration.

PHI 120
Truth and Beauty
What makes you who you are? How did you choose the goals you are currently pursuing? What do you most value, and why are those things so important to you? Throughout this course, we will try to develop your answers to these three questions. Along the way, we will evaluate both historically significant and contemporary responses to these issues. Our primary goal, though, is to develop your own critical, constructive and creative answers to these questions. General Studies Foundations-Humanities

PHI 130
Individual and Society
The course investigates certain historical, social, and ethical dimensions of what is called "social philosophy." We start with some historical explorations of the emergence and/or the relevance of the "individual" in ancient Greece, ancient China and classical Islam. Afterward, the class will approach different theories dealing with the question of the "individual versus society," giving particular attention to social contract theories, libertarianism, anarchism and socialism. The course concludes with the study of some contributions of Friedrich Nietzsche and of Cornelius Castoriadis to the various political
and ethical issues raised throughout the semester. General Studies Foundations-Humanities

**PHI 135**

**Race, Class and Gender**
This course introduces students to questions of self, self-consciousness and identity, and addresses philosophy as a way of living and relating to the world. A special focus is accorded to how humans in communities relate to "others" and how social, cultural or political categories associated with "race," "class" and "gender" have developed historically and how they may still function today. A closer look at the relation between race and ethnicity, between class and status, and between gender and sexuality allows the class to assess and distinguish "domination" functioning within asymmetries of power and "difference" functioning within negotiable and heterogeneous social and political spaces. General Studies Connections Humanities

**PHI 140**

**Human Nature**
This course examines the diverse views of human nature developed by philosophers as well as by biologists and psychologists. Course topics include free will, minds, bodies and souls, psychological egoism, the state of nature, animal personhood and artificial intelligence. Readings include selections from philosophers and scientists such as Aristotle, Descartes, Darwin, Freud, Hobbes, Rousseau, Marx, Nietzsche, Sartre, Skinner and Wilson. General Studies Foundations-Humanities

**PHI 150**

**Critical Thinking**
This course is a study of arguments and rules for correct thinking. Topics include recognition of arguments, uses of language, fallacious arguments and the art of persuasion. Emphasis is on the application of critical thinking skills in both professional and everyday contexts.

**PHI 175**

**Philosophy and Film**
This course focuses on the study of how the medium of film, and other media involving image and sound, reflect, express, and/or (re)present philosophical questions creatively, and how they provide innovative forms of engaging in philosophical theory and practice. The aim of the class is to deal with metaphysical, ethical, and political issues through analyses of films and related readings, and to arrive at some kind of philosophical understanding of films and the role that images and representations play in our daily lives. The class will view films and read texts and articles dealing with reality, truth, representation, self, identity, society, power and politics, among other themes and topics. General Studies Foundations-Humanities

**PHI 180**

**Philosophy, Culture and History Study Abroad Course**
This interim or summer course introduces students to the history, culture and philosophy of a particular country or region. The course integrates intensive studies (through various lectures and reading assignments, including primary and secondary texts, as well as writing assignments about the texts and their historical and cultural contexts) and experiential learning (through organized visits to museums and sites of cultural and historical significance, walking tours of sites and neighborhoods, explorations of cultural artifacts, and experiences of cultural activities, events, or
and will be assigned preparatory readings before the interim or summer class. The course will have different focal themes and titles, relative to the specific country, region, or time period whose history, culture, and philosophy is under study. This class would count as either a “history of philosophy” or a “difference and diversity” philosophy requirement credit.

PHI 203
Ethics
This is a study of the nature, origin, and development of ethical theories from a historical perspective and their relevance to some significant problems in contemporary life. Special attention is given to the exploration of enduring moral concerns, such as moral relativism, the place of reason in ethics, egoism and altruism, and the nature of moral responsibility. General Studies Foundations-Humanities

PHI 204
Contemporary Moral Problems
This course is a philosophical examination of current problems in key areas of society. These problems may include abortion, nuclear war, capital punishment and famine relief, among others. A strong effort is made to show the link between these contemporary problems and traditional ethical reasoning and theories, thus enabling the student to formulate moral judgments from a sound philosophical position.

PHI 206
Philosophy of Sex, Love and Friendship
This course seeks to help students become familiar with the conceptual frameworks and ethical theories that philosophers and others have used in coming to understand the philosophical significance of family, friendship, gender and sexuality. The course emphasizes critical reasoning and analysis, with the goal of developing students' ability to distinguish well-supported from poorly supported arguments in each of the course areas. As the most intimate aspects of our lives are explored, students should begin to understand the complexity of our intimate lives and the need for a careful, rigorous and sensitive approach to the study of these areas. General Studies Connections Humanities

PHI 210
Classical Philosophy
This is a historical introduction to earliest Western philosophy, such as the pre-Socratic nature philosophers, the thought of Parmenides, Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, and the medieval philosophers, Augustine, Aquinas, Al-Farabi and Maimonides. Reading and discussion of primary sources. Offered in alternate years. General Studies Foundations-Humanities

PHI 211
Modern Philosophy
This course will cover basic philosophical texts of 17th and 18th century Europe, with a special emphasis on Continental Rationalism, British Empiricism, and German Idealism. We will study selected texts from the major contributions of Descartes, Spinoza, Leibniz, Berkeley, Locke, Hume, Kant, Schelling, Schopenhauere and/or Hegel. After an overview of the history of Western Philosophy until the 17th century, the class will focus on reading, discussing and writing on the selected texts. The course will conclude with an assessment of the relevance of Rationalism, Empiricism, and Idealism to subsequent philosophers. General Studies Foundations-Humanities

PHI 214
Roman Philosophy: Between Duty and Pleasure
This Foundation-Humanities course will introduce Roman Philosophy as it developed from Republican times to the rise and fall of the Empire. Students will read primary philosophical texts while studying their settings and their historical, social, cultural, and technological contexts. A special attention will be accorded to Stoic philosophy (and to its cosmological perspective) as well as to Epicurean philosophy (and to its materialist perspective) that inspired the major humanistic endeavors of the first millennium of our common era. The course will analyze the underlying ethical life for the Epicureans (building on the construction of happiness in relation to pleasure, friendship and communal relationships, and thought) as well as for the Stoics (Duty, independence and self-sufficiency, order and rationality, and wisdom). The course will conclude with an attempt to analyze our own times/ways of living by transposing analyses applied to Roman times/ways of living. General Studies Foundations-Humanities

PHI 216

Contemporary Philosophy
This course studies some of the main currents of philosophical thought in this century. Representative figures may include those of the analytic movement in England and America, American Pragmatism; and the European tradition of phenomenology and existentialism, post-structuralism, and feminism. Course content will vary from year to year focusing on one or more particular movements in this period. May be repeated with a new topic. Offered in alternate years. General Studies Foundations-Humanities

PHI 217

Asian Philosophy
This course focuses on the study of ancient Asian philosophical traditions associated with Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism and Taoism. The salient metaphysical, ethical and political contributions of these philosophies are presented within their historical context. The class introduces from within these philosophical value systems the unique characteristics of: 1) setting as value human harmony with nature and life—perceived as some kind of chaos or transformation—over a form of order and stability promulgated through social and political impositions; 2) privileging process and moment over goal (telos) and past or future; 3) establishing plurality and indeterminacy at the basis of epistemology and ontology; 4) and rejecting a human-centered view of progress built on the promise of technological control over the universe for a concern with ecology and with human self-fulfillment as an integral part of the balance of the universe. Primary and secondary texts will be read. General Studies Connections Humanities-Global

PHI 220

Philosophy of Religion
This course considers traditional defenses and arguments for God which claim to provide a rational basis for faith. Other topics include God's nature and attributes, the problem of evil, the religious experience, freedom and divine omniscience, and miracles. Cross-listed with REL 220.

PHI 222

World Philosophy
This course is an introduction to the philosophical contributions selected from the following: the ancient world (such as Mesopotamia, Egypt, China and India), the medieval world (such as the Jewish tradition and the Islamic world-system), and the post-colonial world (such as Africana and Latin American post-colonial thought). It
highlights the interconnections as well as the interdependencies between various social and political practices, beliefs, and interpretations across time and space.

PHI 225

What is Life?
This course explores the philosophical assumptions underlying attempts to understand the nature of life and of living organisms and what constitutes the differences, if any, between the living and the non-living. Topics covered include ancient and early modern views, with an emphasis on contemporary conceptions of life. The course may also examine topics of contemporary interest, such as evolution vs. creationism, religious/ethical issues, and artificial life.

PHI 228

Feminism and Philosophy
This course examines theoretical, ethical and practical issues in feminist thought, with a focus on the relationships between the sexes in contexts such as sexuality and love, prostitution, pornography, raising children, the workplace, the female body and reproductive technology. Some attention is given to the differences in approach in feminist philosophies and traditional philosophical methods.

PHI 230

Philosophy and Law
Philosophy and law are intimately connected, and many of the fundamental questions about the law are philosophical questions. Specific topics include the nature of law and crime; the relationship between law and morality; liability and responsibility (including insanity and the law); punishment and capital punishment; civil rights and preferential treatment; and alternative theories of justice. Includes a combination of readings, case studies and discussion.

PHI 245

Philosophy and History of Science
This course examines the history of conceptions of nature expressed by philosophers and scientists from antiquity to the 20th century. It begins with the construction of Aristotle's theoretical framework and its final overthrow by Newton during scientific revolution. It then examines how Newton's framework was modified and challenged by the development of modern ideas of nature, including those of evolution, relativity and quantum physics. It may also include consideration of the relationship between science and other disciplines, such as religion and art.

PHI 250

Business Ethics
This course gives students a concise background in ethical reasoning and ethical theories and applies these theories to specific moral issues in business, using current cases and practices. The following general considerations will guide the class: What is the relationship between the most profitable and the moral? What is the social purpose and justification for business, if any? We will approach these questions by looking at current issues, including the role of the free market, business liability and consumer protection, business and the environment, and ethical considerations in employee relations.

PHI 256

The Buddha and His Teachings
development of the traditional three vehicles of Buddhism: the vehicle of the discipline, the greater vehicle of enlightenment beings, and the tantric vehicle of supernatural beings. Cross-listed with REL 256. General Studies Foundations-Humanities

PHI 257

Buddhism Across Cultures
This course covers the history of Buddhist thought and practice as it evolved in India and then migrated to Southeast Asia, China, Tibet, Korea, Japan, and most recently to Europe and the United States. It begins with the historical Buddha's life, his teachings and the competing schools of thought that dominated Northeastern India during his time. It continues through the study of Indian Buddhism after the Buddha's death, including the early Buddhist schools, the development of the Mahayana, the great philosophers Nagarjuna and Vasubandu, and the emergence of Tantric forms of Buddhism. From the foundations of Indian Buddhism, students examine how the religion was interpreted and expressed in its many cultural forms, such as Thervavada, Dzogchen, Zen, T’ien Tai and Pureland. Cross-listed with REL 257. General Studies Connections Humanities-Global

PHI 260

Bioethics
This course examines the life and death issues of biomedicine. It emphasizes critical reasoning and analysis, with the goal of developing students’ ability to distinguish well-supported from poorly supported positions. Students have the opportunity to apply these theories to some of the most important moral problems in medicine and the biomedical sciences.

PHI 270

Environmental Ethics
Human activities have changed conditions on earth on a massive scale and threaten to cause the greatest mass extinctions since the end of the dinosaur age. The world population continues to grow, resulting in the degradation of air, water and land and the depletion of natural resources. However, people need to be fed and sheltered and our demand for energy continues to grow. Such environmental problems raise important questions on how we should live. What obligations do we have concerning the environment? What justifications can we give for the protection of wildlife, land and water? Does nature have value apart from human needs? What do we owe future human beings? Are some parts of nature more valuable than others? This course examines and assesses critically various responses to these and other questions.

PHI 280

Philosophy of Self
This course investigates philosophical theories of self, consciousness, and subjectivity textually and historically. The aim of the class is to introduce students to different philosophical questions associated with “consciousness” and to their development, across time and space, in relation to notions of self, individuality and subjectivity. Readings may include the views of the self in *The Epic of Gilgamesh*, modern philosophers from Descartes to Kant, Nietzsche, Freud and contemporary philosophers. The class concludes with a reading in political economy that practically addresses issues related to theories of self.

PHI 310

Classical Philosophy
A historical introduction to the beginning of Western philosophy: the pre-Socratic nature philosophers, the thought of Parmenides, Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle, and the medieval theologians, Augustine and Aquinas. Reading and discussion of primary sources. The course will meet with PHI210 but will require higher level written work appropriate for a Philosophy concentrator.

PHI 311
Modern Philosophy
This course will cover basic philosophical texts of 17th and 18th century Europe, with a special emphasis on Continental Rationalism, British Empiricism, and German Idealism. We will study selected texts from the major contributions of Descartes, Spinoza, Leibniz, Berkeley, Locke, Hume, Kant, Schelling, Schopenhauer and/or Hegel. After an overview of the history of Western Philosophy until the 17th century, the class will focus on reading, discussing and writing on the selected texts. The course will conclude with an assessment of the relevance of Rationalism, Empiricism, and Idealism to subsequent philosophers. The course will meet with PHI211 but will require higher level written work appropriate for a Philosophy concentrator.

PHI 314
Ancient and Medieval Political Thought
This course examines the classical political ideals of liberty and justice. Our goal is: (1) to trace the historical bases of these ideals, and (2) to examine how they came to shape modern accounts of political order. General Studies Connections Humanities-Global

PHI 315
Political Theory
An examination of the major political concepts which have molded our modern world, through the examination and discussion of original works of political philosophy. The course covers major theorists and their ideas, and major schools of thought, focusing primarily on the Early Modern to Modern periods, but also including thinkers of earlier periods. Open to all students.

PHI 316
Contemporary Philosophy
A study of some of the main currents of philosophical thought in this century. Representative figures from the analytic movement in England and America (Russell, Moore, Wittgenstein); American Pragmatism (Peirce, James, Dewey); and the European tradition of phenomenology and existentialism (Heidegger, Merleau-Pontry, Sartre, Foucault). Course content will vary from year to year focusing on one or more particular movements in this period. May be repeated with a new topic. The course will meet with PHI216 but will require higher level written work appropriate for a Philosophy concentrator.

PHI 320
Philosophy of Religion
A consideration of traditional defenses and arguments for God which claim to provide a rational basis for faith. Other topics: God’s nature and attributes, the problem of evil, religious experience, freedom and divine omniscience, and miracles. The course will meet with PHI220 but will require higher level written work appropriate for a Philosophy concentrator.

PHI 326
Constructing Reality
The course will trace modes of constructing reality from Ancient, to Modern, and to Contemporary, times. At each historical intersection, we will analyze how "reality" is constructed (imagined, constituted, and instituted) via social and cultural meanings, values, and affects along with associated teleological and eschatological constructs. With modern forms of constructing reality, epistemological theories start supplementing anthropological and evolutionary approaches, before contemporary (postmodern) modes of constructing reality start relying on ontological structures and on trans-individual relations—using constantly changing but inter-connected environmental, biological, neuro-chemical, psychological, linguistic and sociological axiomatic assumptions among others.

**PHI 328 Feminism & Philosophy**

Do traditional answers to philosophical questions reflect male viewpoints and ways of thinking? Are there alternative philosophical positions that reflect female ways of thinking? To answer these questions, this course will include 1) an examination of some philosophers’ views of women, 2) an assessment of feminist and feminine critiques of the philosophy of knowledge and of the nature of morality, and 3) a consideration of contemporary moral problems concerned with women’s issues, such as pornography and reproductive technologies. The course will meet with PHI228 but will require higher level written work appropriate for a Philosophy concentrator.

**PHI 330 Philosophy & Law**

Philosophy and law are intimately connected, and many of the fundamental questions about the law are philosophical questions. Specific topics include the nature of law and crime; the relationship between law and morality; liability and responsibility (including insanity and the law); punishment and capital punishment; civil rights and preferential treatment; and alternative theories of justice. A combination of readings, case studies, and discussion. The course will meet with PHI230 but will require higher level written work appropriate for a Philosophy concentrator.

**PHI 360 Biomedical Ethics**

Biomedical ethics seeks to help students become familiar with the ethical theories that philosophers, physicians, biomedical researchers, and other thinking people have used in coming to understand themselves and their world. Students have the opportunity to apply these theories to some of the most important moral problems in medicine and the biomedical sciences. The course emphasizes critical reasoning and analysis, with the goal of developing students’ ability to distinguish well-supported from poorly supported positions. As the life and death issues of biomedicine are explored, students should begin to understand the complexity of our moral problems and the need for a careful, rigorous, and sensitive approach to these problems. The course will meet with PHI260 but will require higher level written work appropriate for a Philosophy major.

**PHI 370 Environmental Ethics**

Human activities have changed conditions on earth on a massive scale and threaten to cause the greatest mass extinctions since the end of the dinosaur age. The world population continues to grow, resulting in the degradation of air, water and land and the depletion of natural resources. Yet people need to be fed and sheltered and our demand for energy continues to grow. Such environmental problems raise
important questions on how we should live. What obligations do we have concerning the environment? What justifications can we give for the protection of wildlife, land and water? Does nature have value apart from human needs? What do we owe future human beings? Are some parts of nature more valuable than others? This course will examine and assess critically various responses to these and other questions. The course will meet with PHI270 but will require higher level written work appropriate for a Philosophy major.

PHI 380
Philosophy of Self
The course will investigate philosophical theories of self, consciousness, and subjectivity textually and historically. The aim of the class is to introduce students to different philosophical questions associated with "consciousness" and to their development, across time and space, in relation to notions of self, individuality, and subjectivity. Readings may include the views of the self in The Epic of Gilgamesh, modern philosophers from Descartes to Kant, Nietzsche, Freud, and contemporary philosophers. The class will conclude with a reading in political economy that practically addresses issues related to theories of self. The course will meet with PHI280 but will require higher level written work appropriate for a Philosophy major.

PHI 391
Seminar in Philosophy I (W)
This is an in-depth study of some great philosopher, historical movement, or period in philosophy, such as Plato, Marx, Wittgenstein, medieval philosophy, Darwin's century or linguistic philosophy. May be repeated, with a new topic. Fulfills philosophy seminar requirement.
Prerequisite: One course in philosophy or permission of the instructor

PHI 481
Advanced Research--Thesis
Students partake in an independent research project directed by a faculty member resulting in a substantial thesis (25-30 pages), which may be a reworking and deepening of a paper written for a seminar or as part of an independent study.

PHI 491
Seminar in Philosophy II (W)
This is an in-depth study of some philosophical theme or topic such as morality and the law, theories of perception, science and religion. The seminar is aimed at giving concentrators and other qualified students a greater opportunity for an interchange of ideas and individual research. May be repeated, with a new topic.
Prerequisite: One course in philosophy or permission of the instructor