

PHILOSOPHY (PHIL)

PHIL-200 Problems in Philosophy - (3 Credits)

An introduction to central philosophical about knowledge and belief, causality and freedom, nature and metaphysics, mind, identity and artificial intelligence, and the problems of moral judgment.

PHIL-205 Philosophy Through Film - (3 Credits)

An introduction to philosophical issues raised by classical and modern cinema. As this is a philosophy course and not a course in film theory or history, we will use films to discuss questions of epistemology, metaphysics and ethics; among the topics considered are memory, time and the mind-body relationship; language and identity; illusion and reality; guilt, violence, forgiveness and justice. Extensive readings will be drawn from philosophy, literature, and film theory.

PHIL-208 History of Philosophy- Ancient to Medieval - (3 Credits)

A survey of major figures and theories from Greek and Roman antiquity to the Christian, Jewish and Islamic world of the Middle Ages, this course offers a critical introduction to philosophic debates about knowledge, nature, truth, the universe, goodness, death, religious belief, the body and the soul, politics and fate.

PHIL-209 Modern Philosophy:History and Problems - (3 Credits)

What is knowledge? Does consciousness exist? Is morality just a cover for human prejudices and fears? What do we think we're doing when we speak? This course introduces the key debates that have shaped modern philosophy through a close reading of philosophers ranging from Montaigne and Descartes to Kant, Hegel and Nietzsche representing a variety of positions from the empiricist and rationalist to the skeptical and nihilist.

PHIL-210 Ethics And Social Issues - (3 Credits)

This course asks how philosophy can contribute to the ways we encounter concrete moral problems in public and private life. Issues discussed in this course may include violence and war, human and animal rights, sexual freedom, giving and taking life,censorship and resistance, duties to other species, cultural and religious conflict, and poverty and famine.

PHIL-265 Aesthetics - (3 Credits)

What is the difference between art and the real world? Why have works of art been considered interesting, pleasurable, powerful, dangerous or deceptive? Does art have a future? This course introduces traditional and contemporary arguments about the place of aesthetic experience and aesthetic judgments in philosophy and life.

PHIL-292 Philosophy and Feminism - (3 Credits)

What is the meaning of the categories 'masculine' and 'feminine'? Is feminist a natural condition or a carefully monitored fiction? This course introduces some of the most influential arguments about desire, sexual difference and sexual indifference, gender inequality and gender ideology, asking what kind of tools philosophy can provide for understanding feminism's past and future.

PHIL-301 Logic - (3 Credits)

An elementary introduction to logical thinking. One-third of the course is devoted to problems of language and semantics.

PHIL-307 Philosophy and Critical Theory Theory - (3 Credits)

What is critique? What is ideology? What is the culture industry? How does philosophy address problems of technology, art, oppression, violence, modernity and difference? Readings may include Hegel, Marx, Nietzsche, Freud, Marcuse, Adorno, Arendt, Fanon, Foucault, Angela Davis, Judith Butler, Achille Mbembe and others.

PHIL-311 Philosophy of Literature - (3 Credits)

What can classical and contemporary literature reveal about the problems of the self and identity, about illusion, meaning and madness, about nonsense, desire and doubt? The class will explore what brings together philosophic and literary thinking, and also what separates them.

PHIL-312 Philosophical Ethics - (3 Credits)

Ethics may be broadly defined as the inquiry into what we should or ought to desire, feel or do. All lives and all cultures there is an ethical dimension, but in philosophical ethics we look for the reasons behind moral thinking, and we ask: what is an ethical judgment? Are ethical judgments universal or culturally specific? Are they expressions of emotional preferences or do they correspond to facts about the world? What is the goal of ethical action: individual happiness, pleasure or fulfillment. The greatest good of the greatest number? And can we know what is right or wrong, what we ought to do? We will examine these issues through contemporary examples and recent philosophical discussion. Moral theories discussed will include utilitarianism, moral realism versus moral relativism, intuitionism and deontology, and perfectionism.

PHIL-320 Existentialism - (3 Credits)

This course is a general introduction to existentialism. The primary focus of the course will be to engage the core existentialist themes of freedom, subjectivity, alienation, authenticity, death, and absurdity as they were developed in the 19th and 20th centuries. Writers studied range from the European tradition to writers from the Caribbean and North America who extend the existentialist spirit into recent cultural and political contexts.

PHIL-350 Metaphysics - (3 Credits)

Metaphysics is the study of reality and its nature. Raising fundamental questions about time, matter, space, identity, action, objects, chance, causation and freedom, metaphysical inquiry underlies all specialized forms of knowledge and discourse, from the natural sciences to recent and early modern theories of consciousness, subjectivity and meaning. Other central topics in metaphysics are the mind/body relationship, the existence of God, the relation of substance and accidents, and the reality of number.

PHIL-355 Theories of Knowledge - (3 Credits)

This course examines the nature and scope of knowledge. Is knowledge innate, or is it the product of our experiences? What makes it possible, what makes it legitimate, and what are its limits? We will read and consider some of the major arguments from the ancient world through the modern era and into the present day, addressing concepts such as skepticism, truth, justification, rationality, evidence, testimony, illusion, and perspective, as well as investigation the conception of knowledge pursued in the natural and social sciences.

PHIL-356 Environmental Ethics - (3 Credits)

If we can be ethical in our relation to others, why can't we be ethical in our relations with the environment? This course assesses the capability of traditional ethical paradigms (and their alternatives) to address current environmental issues, including global climate change, food ethics, sustainable consumption practices, and the intrinsic value of non-human nature.

PHIL-400 Phenomenology - (3 Credits)

Phenomenology is most commonly used to refer to a movement in 20th century philosophy, the central figures of which were Edmund Husserl, Martin Heidegger, Jean-Paul Sartre, and Maurice Merleau-Ponty. What these philosophers share is their view that the proper subject matter of philosophy-what distinguishes it from other disciplines, including the objective sciences-is experience, and that experience can only be studied subjectively from within the first person point of view. In addition to the general topic of the nature and structure of experience, related areas of interest will include first person perspectives on the self and its relation to itself, body, world, and other selves, as well as the emotions that are constituted by those relations (pride, shame, anxiety, love, hate).

PHIL-415 Philosophy & Race - (3 Credits)

What can philosophy offer with respect to the notion of "race"? How can it contribute to a discourse and struggle that largely finds itself spoken of along the lines of biology, psychology, anthropology, sociology, culture, politics, history, and even geography? In this course we will cover these and other like questions in a way that surveys that many ways in which race has become a theme for philosophers in thinking about our social being as well as individual identity.

PHIL-450 Advanced Topics in Philosophy - (3 Credits)

Philosophy is a conversation in which ideas and arguments are the speakers; the most important thinkers in the tradition are those who create concepts, transform categories and habits of reading, and reshape the map of thinking. This seminar offers a close engagement with the work of a single major thinker, or movement through: (1) an in-depth study of one influential book (The Critique of Pure Reason, Being and Time, Philosophical Investigations, Madness and Civilization, Capital, or The Phenomenology of Perception); or (2) a sequence of key texts.