

DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY FALL 2020 COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

**PHIL 2300-002**                      **Beginning Philosophy**                      **10:00-10:50**    **MWF**                      **PHIL 260**

**Staff**

An introduction to philosophical thinkers, ideas, and methods. Fulfills core Language, Philosophy, and Culture requirement.

**PHIL 2300-003**                      **Beginning Philosophy**                      **11:00-12:20**    **TR**                      **AGED 102**

**Dr. Amy Flowerree**

Do you have free will even if your actions are causally determined? Can you know that you are not living in a computer simulation? Can you survive your own death? Can you prove that God exists? Why should we be moral? What is morality? In this class, we will use the tools of philosophical reasoning to examine and evaluate these and other significant life questions.

**PHIL 2300-004**                      **Beginning Philosophy**                      **2:00-3:20**    **TR**                      **HUMSC 226**

**Dr. Anna Ribeiro**

What is philosophy? Has it always existed? Some of the questions that philosophers have tried to answer include what is the essence of all that exists, whether we have free will, what is the right way to live one's life, whether God's existence can be proven, and whether reason or sensory experience is the foundation of knowledge. We shall cover these and other questions in their historical context as we read through philosophical texts by some of the most influential thinkers in the Western tradition.

**PHIL 2300-D01**                      **Beginning Philosophy**                      **ONLINE**    **TBA**                      **TBA**

**Dr. Francesca DiPoppa**

What makes us the same person over time? How do we figure out what is the right thing to do? Do non-humans have moral rights? What is the difference between an opinion and an argument? Is it true that morality and truth are just points of view? Can philosophy be used to prove or disprove the existence of God? Come to think of it, what does "philosophy" even *mean*? In this online class, you will be introduced to some of the most important philosophical questions, and you will realize that they are not just for philosophers.

**PHIL 2310-D01**                      **Logic**                      **ONLINE**    **TBA**                      **TBA**

**Dr. Christopher Hom**

A central aspect of reasoning is the ability to give arguments for one's conclusions. Logic is the formal representation of arguments, so mastering logic is essential for good reasoning. In this course, we will investigate the underlying, logical form of sentences and the deductive relations that hold between them, thus giving us deeper insight into the notion of inference from premises to conclusion. The course will present three logical systems, each in increasing expressive power: sentential logic, monadic quantificational logic, and polyadic quantificational logic. For each system, we will closely examine the syntax of the system, its relation to English, its particular semantic features, and the general properties of satisfiability, validity, implication and equivalence.

This is an online course, so all lectures, handouts, assignments and exams will be on Blackboard. Exams require a regular computer (Windows/Mac computer or laptop). You cannot take exams from mobile devices (e.g. iPhone, iPad, Android devices, etc.). You also need a working webcam and microphone, and your computer will need the Google Chrome web browser.

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**PHIL 2310-004**                      **Logic**    **11:00-11:50**    **MW**                      **HUMSCI 226**

**Staff**

Development of formal methods for evaluating deductive reasoning. Additional topics may include uses of language, definition, nondeductive inference. Partially fulfills Core Mathematics requirement (in conjunction with a mathematics course).

**PHIL 2320-002**                      **Introduction to Ethics**    **9:30-10:50**    **TR**                      **CHEM 113**

**Dr. Jeremy Schwartz**

How should we live? What is a good life? Ought I to forgo my own interests for the interests of another? Is it sometimes permissible to kill innocent human beings? Is it permissible to kill animals for food? Ethical philosophy attempts to answer these sorts of questions through reason and reflection. Within current ethical philosophy, there are three major schools of thought on how these sorts of questions should be answered: utilitarianism, virtue theory, and deontology. While each of these attempts to shed light on all of these questions merely through reason and reflection, each of them arrives at very different answers to these questions. In this class, we will investigate utilitarianism, deontology, and virtue theory in some detail by closely reading both the founding texts of each of the ethical theories as well as reading some modern re-interpretations and criticisms. In addition, in the last part of the class, we will seek to apply these theories to three test cases: abortion, animal rights, and global poverty. The application to test cases should both shed light on our intuitions about these morally contested issues but also shed light on the ethical theories themselves.

**PHIL 2320-004**                      **Introduction to Ethics**    **12:00-12:50**    **MWF**                      **ENG/PHIL 164**

**PHIL 2320-005**                      **Introduction to Ethics**    **1:00-1:50**        **MWF**                      **ENG/PHIL 164**

**Douglas Westfall**

This class will examine questions like: Can personal choices be right or wrong? Are there things or acts that should appropriately be referred to as good or evil? Is there a right way to live, and why should I live that way? If there is one, how do you go about living it out in practice? Do I have obligations towards other people and if so, what are they? How should I think about conflicts between my self-interest and my responsibility to others? We will consider skeptical positions before turning to examine competing answers regarding these questions. This class will rely on original source materials (e.g. Plato's *Republic* and Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*) for us to understand the primary schools of ethics in hopes of becoming better people.

**PHIL 2320-D01**                      **Introduction to Ethics**    **ONLINE**    **TBA**                      **TBA**

**Dr. Justin Tosi**

Discussion of moral problems and theories of morality. Includes the application of philosophical techniques to issues of contemporary moral concern. Fulfills core Language, Philosophy, and Culture requirement.

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**PHIL 2320-H01**                      **Introduction to Ethics**                      **2:00-3:20**    **TR**                      **PHIL 264**

**Dr. Daniel Nathan**

How *ought* persons behave toward one another? Does it even make sense to *reason* about moral questions? After all, perhaps morality is just an individual subjective response, like one's taste in ice cream. Or maybe it's just a matter of religious dogma, so that one needn't think for oneself or bother trying to reason about it at all. Or perhaps all behavior boils down to self-interest anyway, so that talk of "moral obligation" is merely empty rhetoric. And, if it is not empty talk, what could possibly ground moral obligation? Imagine having one of those heavy late-night dorm discussions, but with Plato, Thomas Hobbes, John Stuart Mill, and Immanuel Kant sitting in. In this course, we will explore the potential of thinking hard and deeply about morality, and we will do so in the company of some of the giants of Western moral philosophy. **(Limited to students enrolled in the Honors College.)**

**PHIL 2350-0011**                      **World Religions And Philosophy**                      **11:00-11:50**    **MW**                      **LVRMC 101**

**Dr. Mark Webb**

This course introduces students to the major world religions while placing a special emphasis on the philosophical issues related to religion. My approach is to cover each religion alongside the other religions of the larger tradition. I give special attention to the the different understandings of human nature and personhood, problems of human existence, and proposed solutions. We cover the Vedic Tradition (Hinduism, Jainism, Sikhism, and Buddhism), the Chinese Tradition (Confucianism and Daoism), and the Abrahamic Tradition (Judaism, Christianity, and Islam). In addition to discussing the basic tenets, practices, and history of each religion, we consider some of the philosophical commitments entailed by various religious beliefs. When feasible, we will invite guest speakers representing different religions and take field trips to

**PHIL 3301-001**                      **Classical Greek Philosophy**                      **9:30-10:50**    **TR**                      **ENG/PHIL 163**

**Dr. Howard Curzer**

Love and friendship were important concepts in the ancient world, and of course they still are. In this class we will examine what Homer the poet, Empedocles the scientist, Euripides the playwright, Socrates the sage, Plato the dialectician, and Aristotle the philosopher all thought about love and friendship. Their ideas about love and friendship will prove to be both intrinsically interesting and applicable to our own day. These ideas will also provide an intriguing route into epistemology and ethics. For love is a way of knowing, and friendship is a moral problem.

**PHIL 3322-001**                      **Biomedical Ethics**                      **2:00-3:20**    **TR**                      **ENG/PHIL 260**

**Dr. Francesca DiPoppa**

Is abortion always immoral? Is euthanasia? Are these morally permissible under certain circumstances, or maybe always? Everyone has an opinion about this. But there is a big difference between feeling a certain way about abortion, or euthanasia, or stem cell research, and having a philosophically informed opinion. This class will offer you the tools to be a philosophically informed participant in some of the most important debates in bioethics today.

**PHIL 3324-001**                      **Philosophy of Religion**                      **2:00-3:20**    **TR**                      **ENG/PHIL 260**

**Dr. Amy Flowerree**

An examination of general philosophical problems that arise in connection with religion. Topics may include the nature of religion, the existence of God, the problem of evil, the relation between faith and reason, and the relation between religion and morality.

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**PHIL 3325-001**                      **Environmental Ethics**                      **10:00-10:50**    **MWF**                      **ENG/PHIL 164**

**Douglas Westfall**

Discussion of conceptual and moral questions surrounding human population and consumption of resources, loss of biodiversity and wilderness areas, and human use of nonhuman animals.

**PHIL 3342-001**                      **Philosophy And Film**                      **2:00-3:20**    **MW**                      **ENG/PHIL 163**

**Dr. Anna Ribeiro**

This course covers a variety of philosophical questions related to motion pictures: What is film? Is film art? What is the difference between fiction and documentary films? How does narration work in film? How should we understand our emotions for fictional characters? Who is the author of a film? Can we judge the quality of a film on the basis of the moral message it appears to endorse? Can we learn from films? We will read key works by contemporary philosophers in the analytic tradition as we consider these questions, such as Roger Scruton, Gregory Currie, Noël Carroll, Arthur Danto, George Wilson, and Mary Deveraux. The course also has a lab component; we will watch films every Friday afternoon.

**PHIL 4320-001**                      **Ethics**                      **12:30-1:50**    **TR**                      **ENG/PHIL 151**

**Dr. Jeremy Schwartz**

Prerequisite: [PHIL 2320](#) or instructor consent. Philosophical ethics investigates how we ought to live. Students will examine closely some of the most powerful thinkers on this subject.

**PHIL 5301-001**                      **Stds In Greek Philosophy**                      **12:30-1:50**    **TR**                      **ENG/PHIL 264**

**Dr. Howard Curzer**

Love and friendship were important concepts in the ancient world, and of course they still are. In this class we will examine what Homer the poet, Empedocles the scientist, Euripides the playwright, Socrates the sage, Plato the dialectician, and Aristotle the philosopher all thought about love and friendship. Their ideas about love and friendship will prove to be both intrinsically interesting and applicable to our own day. These ideas will also provide an intriguing route into epistemology and ethics. For love is a way of knowing, and friendship is a moral problem.

**PHIL 5314-001**                      **Comtemporary Aesthetics**                      **11:00-12:20**    **TR**                      **ENG/PHIL 264**

**Dr. Daniel Nathan**

Current problems in aesthetics: the nature of a work of art, of aesthetic experience and judgment; issues of interpretation and evaluation in the arts. May be repeated as topic varies.

**PHIL 5320-001**                      **Seminar In Ethics**                      **3:30-6:20**    **R**                      **ENG/PHIL 264**

**Dr. Justin Tosi**

Selected topics in ethical theory: relativism, moral reasons, the nature of moral value, deontological and teleological ethics. May be repeated as topic varies.

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**PHIL 5340-001**

**Seminar In Metaphysics**

**2:00-3:20 MW**

**ENG/PHIL 264**

**Staff**

An intensive study of one or two topics which include the nature of existence, cause, identity, kinds and their instances, change, and/or mind.

**PHIL 5350-001**

**Seminar in Teaching and Writing Phil**

**6:00-8:50 T**

**ENG/PHIL 264**

**Dr. Christopher Hom**

The course will be a proseminar for first-year MA students that focuses on core, analytic metaphysics and epistemology. Goals of the course include:

- exposure to key concepts and arguments in contemporary analytic philosophy
- develop fundamental skills in reading and writing philosophy
- discuss keys to success in graduate school and beyond
- introduce teaching in philosophy at the introductory level

Course is limited to and required for all first-year MA students in Philosophy.