

DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY FALL 2021 COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

PHIL 2300-003 **Beginning Philosophy** **12:00-12:50** **MWF** **MUSEUM 0J102**
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** **MUSEUM 0J102**
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.

DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY FALL 2021 COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

PHIL 2320-004	Introduction to Ethics	12:00-12:50	MWF	ENG/PHIL 260
PHIL 2320-005	Introduction to Ethics	1:00-1:50	MWF	ENG/PHIL 260

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

What makes a human life go well? Can I be wrong about what is good for me, or is it just good to get what I want? Is figuring out the right thing to do in any case just a matter of figuring out what would do the most good, or are there some things we should not do no matter how much good results? And isn't all of this just subjective anyway? This course surveys some of the main philosophical views on these issues. Along the way we'll apply what we've learned to contested moral questions about issues like abortion, poverty relief, and freedom of expression.

PHIL 2320-H01	Introduction to Ethics	9:30-10:50	TR	ENG/PHIL 164
----------------------	-------------------------------	-------------------	-----------	---------------------

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 2330-001	Science and Society	9:30-10:50	TR	TALK 104
PHIL 2330-H01	Science and Society	11:00-12:20	TR	ENG/PHIL 164

Dr. Joel Velasco

In this class we will not be doing science, but rather will be reflecting on the nature of science and the role that it should and does play in our modern lives. During the course we will examine such questions as whether there is a sharp dividing line between science and non-science (a "demarcation criterion") and we will carefully consider the relationships between science and religion, between science and ethics, between science and the humanities, and between science, business, and politics. Finally, we will examine the role that science plays in a democratic society such as ours and how we as citizens should think about funding and directing scientific research.

DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY FALL 2021 COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

PHIL 2340-H01

Meaning & Value in the Arts

2:00-3:20 TR

EDUC 165

Dr. Daniel Nathan

Art is a central part of almost everyone's life. But what makes something a work of art? And once we know we are confronting a work of art, how are we to handle the task of making sense of it?

Focusing on specific and often challenging works of art, this course will introduce students to critical thinking in and across the arts—including music, literature, theatre, architecture, and the visual arts—with an emphasis on issues that apply across the artistic disciplines. Focusing on twentieth and twenty-first century art and theory, this course will center on a few broad questions: What, if anything, sets art apart from other areas of human activity (craft, technology, and sport, for example)? Is there a *right* way and a *wrong* way to interpret artworks? And, how do the arts *fit into* or perhaps *complicate* our lives; is there a distinct value of art to human life?

Through such an examination, the course will foster a better understanding of the various art forms, of their unique connections and differences, and of the variety of critical approaches to interpreting and evaluating particular works of art.

PHIL 2350-001

World Religions And Philosophy

10:00-10:50 MW

ENG 00001

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 worship sites.

PHIL 3301-001

Classical Greek Philosophy

9:30-10:50 TR

ONLINE

Dr. Howard Curzer

The theme of this course is **ancient philosophy of mind**. However, for Plato and Aristotle philosophy of mind is just a starting point. (a) In the *Phaedo*, Socrates offers arguments about the mind/body problem and the immortality of the soul, but underneath those arguments lies a Platonic inquiry into the form/matter relationship and the nature of change. (b) In the *Theaetetus*, Socrates sets out to understand perception, but that project becomes an inquiry into the nature of true and false belief, and eventually into a cryptic description of the nature of knowledge. (c) In the *Charmides*, Socrates takes up the problem of self-knowledge, but that project somehow turns into a discussion of the nature of a meta-theory about bodies of knowledge. (d) Aristotle's *De Anima* (On the Soul/Mind) begins as an account of perception, reasoning, and imagination, but eventually turns mystical and theological. In this course, ancient philosophy of mind will be a train station from which trains depart into the neighborhoods of (a) metaphysics, (b) epistemology, (c) philosophy of science, and (d) philosophy of religion.

DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY FALL 2021 COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

PHIL 3322-001 Biomedical Ethics 2:00-3:20 TR ONLINE

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 3325-001 Environmental Ethics 10:00-10:50 MWF MCOM 269

Douglas Westfall

We will discuss the conceptual and moral questions surrounding human population and consumption of resources, loss of biodiversity and wilderness areas, and human use of nonhuman animals by focusing on questions like: Since we probably can't live without harming the environment in some way, is there a way to reduce or offset that harm? How do we decide between competing harms? Is there a moral justification for eating meat? What do we do if our obligations to present and future people conflict? A surprising variety of questions are inextricably linked to environmental concerns and we will try to understand the implications of various positions by using the concepts and methods of inquiry introduced in this course. You will be encouraged to explore and refine your own positions by familiarizing yourself with some contemporary arguments in these areas and making a recommendation for action with your final assignment.

PHIL 3341-001 Philosophy And Literature 12:30-1:50 TR TFPETR 110

Dr. Jeremy Schwartz

Jane Austen is today one of the most recognized names in British literature — familiar from her novels themselves, modern film versions, and updated adaptations. One reason she remains so compelling to us is the way her novels present ethical dilemmas and ethical ideas. In this course, we'll read all of Austen's major novels and consider them through the lenses of both literary and philosophical analysis, focusing on what they have to say about ethics: what constitutes moral action? What are the distinctively Austenian virtues and how do they relate to living a good life? What is the right ethical relation between the self and others?

PHIL 4330-001 Epistemology 11:00-12:20 TR ENG/PHIL 260

Dr. David Boylan

You might not know it, but chances are that at some point in your life you have been bothered by *epistemological questions*. Many of us have asked ourselves if we really know anything at all. (And often we feel forced to conclude we do not.) Other times, practical concerns force us to think about epistemology: what should you do if somebody just as intelligent and well-informed as you disagrees with you about politics, religion or ethics? Can there be a number of different *justified* opinions given the *same* evidence? Or is one of you making a *mistake*? Epistemology is the study of questions like these: it is the branch of philosophy about knowledge, justification and rationality. In this class, we will cover a mixture of classic issues, like skepticism and the nature of knowledge, and more recent questions, like what we learn from peer disagreement and whether there is always a uniquely rational opinion, for a given body of evidence.

DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY FALL 2021 COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

PHIL 5310-001 **History of Aesthetics** **2:00 - 4:50** **M** **ENG/PHIL 264**

Dr. Anna Ribeiro

This course is a chronological survey of theories of art from Plato to the early 20th century. Questions to be covered include: How do artworks affect us? Should these effects be controlled? Is the beautiful merely what pleases us? Can there be a standard for judging art? Can there be a hierarchy of the arts? Is there a type of experience or attitude peculiar to our engagement with artworks? Are artworks concrete or abstract objects? What is the purpose of art, if any?

PHIL 5321-001 **Social/Political Phil** **3:30-6:20** **W** **ENG/PHIL 264**

Dr. Justin Tosi

This is a survey course on important work in contemporary political philosophy. Topics will likely include state legitimacy, immigration, distributive justice, and relational egalitarianism.

PHIL 5331-001 **Philosophical Psychology** **12:30-1:50** **TR** **ONLINE**

Dr. Howard Curzer

*“I can't explain myself, I'm afraid, Sir,” said Alice, ‘because I'm not myself today you see.’ ‘I don't see,’ said the caterpillar.” – Lewis Carroll, *Alice in Wonderland**

What is the self? Is it an artifact that each of us creates? An innate part of us? An immortal part? A social construction? An illusion? A solution to the problem of personal identity? The transcendental unity of apperception? With a theory of the self in hand, we will turn to further issues. What does an agent with **self-knowledge** know? How is **self-deception** even possible? Who (or what) do people with **self-control** control; who is the controller; and how can anyone lack self-control? Is being **proud or ashamed of oneself** really a relationship to other people? **How many selves** do we have?

PHIL 5333-001 **Sem. In Philosophy of Language** **6:00-8:50** **M** **ENG/PHIL 264**

Dr. Christopher Hom

The seminar will focus on how contemporary theories of meaning account for expressive aspects of language. Expressive language includes insults (e.g. 'jerk'), exclamations (e.g. 'oops'), swear words (e.g. 'f**k'), racial epithets (e.g. the N-word), honorific terms (e.g. 'sir'), evaluative terms (e.g. 'honorable') and pornographic representations. Along the way, we will consider various issues such as the internalism-externalism distinction, the semantics-pragmatics distinction, nominalism about meaning, context-sensitivity, social dimensions of language, and how (or whether) norms are linguistically represented.

Requirements include a seminar presentation, a presentation commentary, a short paper, and a longer, research paper.

DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY FALL 2021 COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

PHIL 5350-001

Sem. In Teaching & Writing

2:00-3:20 TR

ENG/PHIL 264

Dr. Amy Flowerree

This is a class for all first year graduate students. It is designed to equip students with the professional skills necessary to succeed in various aspects of academic philosophy: teaching, reading, writing, and applying to PhD programs. These skills will be developed through rigorous and careful study of the core concepts, arguments, and texts in contemporary theories of action.