

DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY FALL 2022 COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

PHIL 2300-001	Beginning Philosophy	1:00 - 1:50	MWF	MCOM 359
PHIL 2300-004	Beginning Philosophy	10:00 - 10:50	MWF	ENG/PHIL 260
PHIL 2300-005	Beginning Philosophy	11:00 - 11:50	MWF	ENG/PHIL 164

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 2300-006	Beginning Philosophy	11:00 - 12:20	TR	ENG/PHIL 164
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Dr. Anna Ribeiro

We all want to live a good life. But what is a life well lived? Some of us want lots of money. Others want success. Others want to play video games or watch Netflix all day long. How do we find out what is best? Philosophers have been grappling with this question for thousands of years. It takes us into many directions, including the question as to what makes us human, how we should make moral choices, whether we are free to choose, what we should believe, what love is, and what it is to be a full-fledged person. We will tackle these in turn, concluding the course with perhaps the biggest question of all: what is the meaning of life?

PHIL 2300-D01	Beginning Philosophy	ASYNCHRONOUS ONLINE		
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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 2310-001	Logic	12:00 - 12:50	MW/F	ENG/PHIL 106
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Dr. David Boylan

Here's one argument: Roger is a gerenuk; therefore, *something* is a gerenuk. Compare it to another: *some* babirusas have horns; therefore *all* babirusas have horns. You don't need to know what a gerenuk or a babirusa is to tell that the first argument is better than the second. Why? Because arguments can be good or bad simply because of their *structure*. But how do we know what the structure of an argument is? And how can you tell what structures are good? This is the subject matter of logic. In this course, we will study two systems of logic, propositional and first order, which rigorously define of this notion of structure and give us purely mechanical tools for assessing arguments.

PHIL 2310-D01

Logic

ASYNCHRONOUS ONLINE

John DePoe

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.

PHIL 2320-002

Introduction to Ethics

9:00 - 9:50

MWF

ENG/PHIL 163

PHIL 2320-003

Introduction to Ethics

10:00 - 10:50

MWF

ENG/PHIL 163

PHIL 2320-004

Introduction to Ethics

1:00 - 1:50

MWF

ENG/PHIL 163

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

ASYNCHRONOUS ONLINE

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 264
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-H01	Science and Society: Philosophy of Medicine	9:30 - 10:50	TR	ENG/PHIL 301
Dr. Joel Velasco				

What is the field of modern medicine and how does it work? First, we will look at fundamental concepts in medicine: What exactly is the nature of health and disease? How does medical classification work? What is death? Next, we will look at evidence in medicine: How does causal and statistical reasoning work in medicine? What counts as a good explanation? Finally, we will look at medicine in the broader social context: How do values play a role in the practice of medicine? Is race a medically relevant category? What are the appropriate roles of public health and the specialized treatment of individuals?

PHIL 2350-001	World Religions And Philosophy	11:00-11:50	MWF	HUMSCI 069
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-D01	Classical Greek Philosophy	9:30-10:50	TR	ONLINE
Dr. Howard Curzer				
<p>What makes a character trait a virtue? Which character traits qualify as virtues? How are these virtues acquired? How can they be instilled in recalcitrant people? How are the virtues related to each other, and to other character traits (including vices)? These questions are addressed in Plato's dialogues <i>Euthyphro</i>, <i>Laches</i>, <i>Meno</i> and <i>Protagoras</i>, Aristotle's <i>Nicomachean Ethics</i>, and the ancient Confucian work entitled <i>The Mengzi</i>. We will compare and contrast the answers found in these texts.</p> <p>We will also explore the differing formats in which these answers are presented. Plato writes dialogues starring Socrates, but the character of Socrates is not a mouthpiece for Plato. Thus, Plato expresses his philosophy indirectly, as playwrights do. Is <i>The Mengzi</i> also a work of indirect discourse? Is the <i>Nicomachean Ethics</i>? How can readers uncover the philosophy of authors employing indirect discourse?</p>				

PHIL 3302 - 001	Asian Philosophy	1:00 - 1:50	MWF	ENG/PHIL 164
Dr. Mark Webb				
<p>Until recently, philosophy has been pursued in Asia quite independently of philosophy as pursued in the West. We will be examining major movements in Asian philosophy from three parts of Asia: India, China, and Japan. We will start with dualistic and non-dualistic forms of Hindu philosophy, or Vedanta. We will then move on to Buddhism, covering Theravada Buddhism, and then the various Mahayana traditions as they evolved in China. The third main division of the course will cover the native traditions of China, including Confucianism and Taoism, as well as some of the movements that arose as responses to these. Recurring themes will be the nature of ultimate reality, the difference between appearance and reality, the idea of the good life, the requirements for good government, and the role of reason in human life. This course is a core course in the Religion Studies program and also counts toward the Asian Studies Program.</p>				

PHIL 3305-001	Modern Political Thought (1600-1800)	2:00-4:50	W	ENG/PHIL 164
Dr. Justin Tosi				
<p>**This course will meet the History of Modern Philosophy requirement for the philosophy major.</p> <p>This course surveys the development of political thought through such major figures as Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau, Burke, Mill, and Marx. By reading their original texts we will consider perennial questions in political philosophy about concepts including freedom, equality, justice, property, democracy, rights, and the social contract. For instance, how can individual freedom be reconciled with the state? What is property, and how can someone come to have property rights? Do we have rights against the state? Do just laws make us less free? Do self-interest and the common good conflict? How would resources be allocated in an ideally just society?</p>				

PHIL 3311-001	Social Epistemology:	12:30 -1:50	TR	ENG/PHIL 163
Dr. Amy Flowerree	Conspiracy Theories, Disinformation and the Attention Economy			

Did you know birds are really robots? Or that 9/11 was an inside job? Well, no, you can't know these things because they're not true. But as social beings, we rely on others to form our beliefs about the world. And this dependency makes us vulnerable to misinformation, fake news, and conspiracy. Social media makes it possible for fake news to trend internationally within minutes. How do we distinguish fake from fact? What effect does pervasive false information have on our information ecosphere? Is it ever rational to believe conspiracy theories? What responsibilities do we have as individuals to form beliefs in a responsible way? This is a class in social epistemology. Our particular focus will be epistemic pathologies: misplaced trust and doubt, fake news, conspiracy theories, and misinformation. We will examine these phenomena through the lens of social media and the attention economy.

PHIL 3322-D01	Biomedical Ethics	11:00 - 12:20	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	12:00 - 12:50	MWF	ENG/PHIL 163
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 3335-001	Philosophy of	11:00 - 12:20	TR	ENG/PHIL 163
Dr. Joseph Gottlieb	Cognitive Science			

This course is an introduction to the philosophy of cognitive science. Cognitive science is the interdisciplinary study of the mind. It includes fields such as psychology, neuroscience, philosophy, computer science, anthropology, and linguistics. Our focus will be on mental representation, perception, consciousness, concepts and concept possession, memory, and the nature of psychological architecture. We will have cause to examine not just the foundational philosophical literature, but also various experimental studies.

PHIL 4310-001	Advanced Logic	2:00 -3:20	TR	ENG/PHIL 164
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Dr. David Boylan

What use is formal logic, of the kind you will have studied in Introduction to Logic? We will focus on two different uses. Philosophers and mathematicians developed such systems in part because they wanted to answer *philosophical* questions about logical reasoning. They wanted to know what *exactly* is a proof and whether *any* true claim of logic be proved. In this class, we will see how logic can tell us about the nature of proofs, infinity and computability. But philosophers have realised that logic is a useful framework for giving theories of important philosophical notions like possibility and necessity, vagueness and truth itself. We will study some more advanced logical frameworks and see how they can be applied to these long-standing questions in philosophy.

PHIL 4322-001	Metaethics	12:30 - 1:50	TR	ENG/PHIL 164
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Dr. Jeremy Schwartz

Metaethics asks not about the virtues of any particular normative ethical theory but about the status of ethical claims. Are ethical claims a form of knowledge? Are they objective? Are they part of the fabric of the world? Are they projections of our attitudes onto the world? This course seeks to make progress on these questions. Of particular importance will be developing an understanding of expressivism and realist non-naturalism.

GRADUATE COURSES

PHIL 5301-D01	Studies In Greek Philosophy	12:30-1:50	TR	ONLINE
Dr. Howard Curzer				
<p>What makes a character trait a virtue? Which character traits qualify as virtues? How are these virtues acquired? How can they be instilled in recalcitrant people? How are the virtues related to each other, and to other character traits (including vices)? These questions are addressed in Plato's dialogues <i>Euthyphro</i>, <i>Laches</i>, <i>Meno</i> and <i>Protagoras</i>, Aristotle's <i>Nicomachean Ethics</i>, and the ancient Confucian work entitled <i>The Mengzi</i>. We will compare and contrast the answers found in these texts.</p> <p>We will also explore the differing formats in which these answers are presented. Plato writes dialogues starring Socrates, but the character of Socrates is not a mouthpiece for Plato. Thus, Plato expresses his philosophy indirectly, as playwrights do. Is <i>The Mengzi</i> also a work of indirect discourse? Is the <i>Nicomachean Ethics</i>? How can readers uncover the philosophy of authors employing indirect discourse?</p>				

PHIL 5311-001	Seminar in Epistemology	3:30 -4:50	TR	ENG/PHIL 264
Dr. Amy Flowerree				
<p>This seminar in social epistemology will examine misinformation, fake news, and conspiracy through the lens of social media and the attention economy. Our primary focus will be how to understand the epistemic significance of pathologies within our information ecosphere. We will additionally explore the relationship between these pathologies and the phenomena of trust, agency, and responsibility.</p>				

PHIL 5314-001	Contemporary Aesthetics	2:00 -4:50	M	ENG/PHIL 264
Dr. Anna Ribeiro				
<p>How and when did art begin, and why? Are cave paintings art? Is body ornamentation art? Are religious and other didactic plays, paintings, and songs art? Is the concept 'art' a modern Western construct? How do we define 'art'? What kinds of things are symphonies, novels, movies and dance performances—concrete, abstract, or some other kind? What are aesthetic properties such as beauty, and how do they relate to the other properties of an object or event? What is an 'aesthetic experience', and do we ever have those? When we interpret works of art, must we always defer to the artist's own interpretation if we are to be correct? How do we evaluate one work of art as better than another—are there correct criteria of evaluation? Why do we value art at all? We will discuss these and other questions as we consider particular art forms and art works and read philosophical works on these topics from the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. This is a reading- and writing-intensive course.</p>				

PHIL 5331-001 **Philosophical Psychology** **2:00 - 3:20** **TR** **ENG/PHIL 264**
Dr. Joseph Gottlieb

This seminar covers theories of consciousness. We will look at the empirical evidence for unconscious perception, and then ask: what is the difference between unconscious perception and conscious perceptual experience? Our approach will be organized around two theoretic-families: first-order theories of consciousness and higher-order theories of consciousness.

PHIL 5350-001 **Sem. In Teaching & Writing** **6:00 - 8:50** **W** **ENG/PHIL 264**
Dr. Justin Tosi

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.