

DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY SPRING 2022 COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

PHIL 2300-002 **Beginning Philosophy** **11:00 -12:20** **TR** **MCOM 353**
Dr. Amy Flowerree

We live in an age of #MeToo, Covid-19, echo chambers, corrupt political parties, protests (riots?), climate disaster, and constant outrage. In this moment, how should you think and act?

The goal of this class is to use the tools of philosophy in order to understand and act in our current context. We will articulate and analyze arguments, we will clarify concepts, and we will discuss what responsibilities we have as citizens, social media members, students, and friends. We will pursue understanding in the context of great thinkers in the philosophical tradition.

PHIL 2300-003 **Beginning Philosophy** **12:00 - 12:50** **MWF** **PHIL 163**
Douglas Westfall

This class will examine the traditional topics of an intro to philosophy course (God, morality, free will, the soul, etc.) by examining what important transitional works have had to say about the subject. We will read Plato's *Republic* (Ancient), Boethius's *Consolation of Philosophy* (Medieval) and Descartes's *Meditations on First Philosophy* (Modern). This will allow you to understand the topics from radically different approaches, see the development of these ideas, and familiarize you with some classic texts.

PHIL 2300-005 **Beginning Philosophy** **12:30-1:50** **TR** **MCOM 075**
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** **ONLINE** **ASYNCHRONOUS**
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.
 Come for the humanities requirement, stay for the cute puppy videos!

PHIL 2310-001 **Logic** **11:00-11:50** **MW/F** **ENG 106**
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 2310-002	Logic	10:00-11:00	MWF	PHIL 151
Emily Adams				

In this class, we will study arguments. Specifically, we will study what a good argument is. Using good arguments is part of how we should reason; hence, this course gives a partial answer to the question "how should I reason?" The way we will study this is by developing systems of logic with clear-cut rules that tell us when an argument is good or bad and learning how to translate English sentences into these systems.

PHIL 2310-D01	Logic	ONLINE	ASYNCHRONOUS	
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.

PHIL 2320-001	Introduction to Ethics	9:00-9:50	MWF	PHIL 163
PHIL 2320-002	Introduction to Ethics	10:00-10:50	MWF	PHIL 163
PHIL 2320-003	Introduction to Ethics	1:00-1:50	MWF	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 2320-004	Introduction to Ethics	11:00-12:20	TR	PHIL 164
Shelby Hanna				

How should I live my life? What is good? What is bad? Do we have any moral obligations? Or should we simply pursue our own wants and desires? Ethics is the branch of philosophy concerned with questions like these. In this class, we will read about and discuss the three major, contemporary ethical theories: virtue theory, deontology, and consequentialism. In the last part of the class, we will apply these theories to some current ethical issues. This application should help us think more clearly about these theories and clarify our own moral reasoning capacity.

PHIL 2320-H01	Introduction to Ethics	9:30-10:50	TR	PHIL 264
Dr. Jeremy Schwartz				
<p>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.</p>				

PHIL 2320-D01	Introduction to Ethics	ONLINE	ASYNCHRONOUS
Dr. Justin Tosi			
<p>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</p>			

PHIL 2330-001	Science and Society	9:30-10:50	PHIL 260
Dr. Joel Velasco			
<p>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.</p>			

PHIL 2340-H01	Meaning and Value in the Arts	11:00-12:20	TR	PHIL 264
Dr. Daniel Nathan				
<p>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 these 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.</p>				

PHIL 2350-001	World Religion & Philosophy	11:00-11:50	MW/F	BIOL 101
Dr. Mark Webb				
<p>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.</p> <p>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.</p>				

PHIL 3303-D01	Modern European Philosophy	11:00-12:20	TR	SYNCHRONOUS
Dr. Francesca DiPoppa				ONLINE
<p>This course will offer an overview of the major philosophical debates in the age from Bacon to Kant (early 17th to late 18th century). Among the topics covered, issue in metaphysics and epistemology (such as the problem of causation and the quest for a clear and certain knowledge), ethics (questions on duty and human happiness), religious epistemology and some political thought. We will read, among others, Descartes, Bacon, Malebranche, Hobbes, Spinoza, Leibniz and Kant.</p>				

PHIL 3304-D01	Existentialism and Phenomenology	2:00-2:50	MWF	SYNCHRONOUS
PHIL 3304-DH1	Existentialism and Phenomenology	11:00-11:50	MWF	ONLINE
Dr. Howard Curzer				
<p>What unites the existentialists is not their individual philosophies, but the nature of the problems that they set out to explore. We will discuss the following themes:</p> <p>Primacy of the Individual: Traditional philosophy, modern science, and the industrial revolution have reduced people to an abstraction. Existentialists maintain that the truths of human existence cannot be known through detached observation and contemplation, but must be inwardly appropriated through the experience of personal involvement growing out of one's own passionate concern.</p> <p>Critique of Reason: If reason is but part of human nature, rational fulfillment alone is not enough for a complete and authentic life. Moreover, the investigation of reality cannot be left to logic and reason alone.</p> <p>Authenticity and Inauthenticity: The inauthentic person never acquires a distinctive individual identity, but simply plays a part, acts out an assigned role, unquestioningly follows a pattern of behavior given by society. The authentic person seeks self-awareness and chooses to actualize a true self, discovered through introspection.</p> <p>Boundary Situations: Suddenly there comes a moment when a direct awakening is inescapable. Inauthenticities and illusions are exposed. Typical boundary situations include chance, choice, guilt, and especially death. Typical responses include alienation, nothingness, and dread.</p>				

PHIL 3320-001	Political Philosophy	3:30-6:20	M	PHIL 164
Dr. Justin Tosi				
<p>One of the foundational commitments of the liberal tradition in political philosophy is that we are all born free and equal—no one is naturally in charge. Perhaps the core problem of political philosophy is to explain why the state has moral authority to issue binding directives to its subjects, if it has that authority. For those who accept liberalism, the problem is that much harder. This course will survey some of the more promising attempts to explain why states have a legitimate claim to political power, and some of the problems that hinge on an answer to that question. We'll discuss political obligation (i.e. the duty to obey the law), territory, secession, and immigration.</p>				

PHIL 3324-001	Philosophy of Religion	12:30-1:50	TR	PHIL 260
Dr. Joseph Gottlieb				
<p>This course is an introduction to analytic philosophy of religion. The core question to be explored is whether God—understood as 'the greatest possible being'—exists. We will carefully formulate and scrutinize both arguments for God's existence (the cosmological argument, the ontological argument, and the fine-tuning argument), and arguments against God's existence (the argument from evil, the problem of divine hiddenness). We will also explore several related issues, including the nature of religious belief and faith, God's so-called 'middle knowledge,' the Trinity, and the relationship between science and religion.</p>				

PHIL 3340-001	Minds, Brains, and Computers	9:30-10:50	TR	PHIL 164
Dr. Joseph Gottlieb				
<p>This course is an introduction to issues in philosophy of mind and philosophy of psychology. Topics include: the relationship between mind and brain, consciousness, the nature of mental representation, artificial intelligence, and "uploading" debates in personal identity.</p>				

PHIL 4323-001**Aesthetics****2:00-3:20 MW****PHIL 164****Dr. Anna Ribeiro**

What is art? From the prehistoric drawings in cave walls to Van Gogh's *Starry Night*, from Homer's *Iliad* to Toni Morrison's *Beloved*, from folk songs to Beethoven's *Fifth Symphony*, human beings have been engaging in what we today call aesthetic and artistic activities for at least forty thousand years. Yet in antiquity, the term 'art' related to any skill or product that was manmade as opposed to given by nature, so that the art of medicine and the art of painting fell under the same general category. Is art a natural proclivity, a recent Western invention, or just anything that we put in a museum? Is an artwork a physical object, an activity, a mental object, or an abstract object? Should we give the same answer for musical works and sculptures? When we say something is beautiful, are we attributing a property to that thing, or merely expressing a personal liking? What can we say about that experience of finding something beautiful—is it a unique kind of experience, unlike anything else? What is the right approach to the interpretation of works of art? And what makes art something that we value? In this course will examine these and other questions from a philosophical point of view.

PHIL 4331-001**Philosophy of Language****2:00-3:20 TR****PHIL 164****Dr. Christopher Hom**

How does language relate to the world? How do we manage to use words to talk about things? What is the relationship between the words we use and the thoughts that they express? These are the central questions for this course. Along the way, we will explore the concepts of meaning, truth, and belief. We will begin by investigating the work of Frege and Russell on the meaning of proper names. According to them, the relationship between a name and the object it picks out is mediated by descriptive information. The differences between these two competing approaches will be brought out in our discussion of propositions and belief reports. We will go on to examine further implications of direct reference theories for meaning and thought. Other related topics in the course include: truth and meaning, the role of contemporary linguistics, pragmatics and context, metaphor, and pejorative words.

PHIL 4340-001**Metaphysics****4:00-5:20 TR****PHIL 164****Dr. John DePoe**

Metaphysics examines some of the most fundamental questions about reality. In this metaphysics class, we'll begin asking and answering the following sorts of questions, using influential philosophical writings & the tools of philosophy to assist our journeys. What sorts of things are ultimately real, if there is anything like that? Are universal concepts ultimately real or particular concrete things? What are possible worlds and how should they affect what we say about reality? For instance, if we say that in another possible world, I could be a millionaire, does that mean I exist somewhere else with a boatload of money? And what the heck is time? Is the present moment uniquely real or are all times equally real? What is it that makes a person the same over time? Could I still be me and survive the death of my body? If I irremediably lost all of my memories, would I still be me or would that person become someone else? Finally, does language shape reality or is there an objective truth to reality that is unaltered by language? To what extent, does reality change based on a person's language?

GRADUATE COURSES

PHIL 5302-D01 **Studies in Modern Philosophy** **2:00-3:20** **MW** **SYNCHRONOUS**
Dr. Francesca DiPoppa **ONLINE**

This will be a survey of (mostly) metaphysics and epistemology during the 17th and 18th century. Readings will include (but not limited to) Descartes, Hume, Spinoza, Cavendish, Malebranche, Astell, Hobbes, Kant.

PHIL 5311-001 **Seminar in Epistemology** **2:00-3:20** **TR** **PHIL 264**
Dr. David Boylan

This course will be an introduction to Bayesian epistemology. You will learn what Bayesian epistemology is, what it has to offer to traditional epistemology and what special philosophical problems of its own it faces. We will start with an introduction to the basics of probability theory and decision theory, as well as covering their standard motivations. Then we will consider a range of applications of Bayesianism, such as its use in the debate about dogmatism about justification, peer disagreement and fine-tuning arguments for the existence of God. We will also consider questions such as where prior probabilities are supposed to come from, whether they should be sharp or mushy and what the relationship is between ungraded and graded beliefs. You will be assessed on the basis of a number of problem sets, a short paper, a final paper presentation and commentary and a final paper.

PHIL 5320-001 **Seminar in Ethics** **6:00-8:50** **W** **PHIL 264**
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.

PHIL 5322-001 **Law and Philosophy** **3:30-4:50** **TR** **PHIL 264**
Dr. Daniel Nathan

During the last part of the 20th century, a number of new critical looks at traditional legal theory arose under such labels as Critical Legal Studies, Feminist Legal Theory, and Critical Race Theory. One common thread these critical theories all share is a radical questioning of the place of standard visions of equality and neutrality under law. In this seminar our primary focus will be to gain an understanding of Critical Race Theory in particular and the way in which its criticisms of current notions of liberal neutrality may or may not require a fundamental break from liberal legal principles. The underlying issue here seems to turn on the nature and application of interpretive principles to law (specifically, the viability of liberal notions of the rule of law), and that will require we also spend some time in the seminar understanding the work of the dominant legal theorists of the past century, H. L. A. Hart and Ronald Dworkin.

PHIL 5324-001 **Philosophy of Religion** **3:30-4:50** **MW** **PHIL 264**
Mark Webb

Given that the best predictor of what a person's religion will be in adulthood is where they were born, it might seem to follow that your reasons to believe your religion are no better than mine, and so if either of us is right, it is a matter of luck, of a geographical accident. We will read Guy Axtell's new book, Problems of Religious Luck, as it grapples with the problem of how it can be right to give asymmetrical evaluations of different religions' doctrines (mine are right, yours are an abomination) while recognizing the role luck plays.

Everyone in the seminar should have read the following before the first meeting:
<https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/moral-luck/>