

Philosophy Spring 2026

Beginning Philosophy

Fulfills the Language, Philosophy, and Culture requirement

This class will examine how we ought to live in a community and how that impacts dialogue, love, and our responsibilities to each other. Authors we may read could include Plato, Boethius, Anselm, Jesus, Aquinas, and others. The class will systematically work through how to read philosophy texts, develop your own answers to important questions, and then express these views when speaking and writing.

PHIL 2300-002	Amy Flowerree	Tue, Thur	9:30 - 10:50 am
PHIL 2300-003	Doug Westfall	Mon, Wed, Fri	1:00 - 1:50 pm
PHIL 2300-004	Doug Westfall	Mon, Wed, Fri	2:00 - 2:50 pm

Logic

Fulfills Core Curriculum Math requirement
Counts towards Cognitive Science minor

This is an introduction to symbolic logic via the study of sentential and predicate logic. Topics to be discussed include analyzing arguments, translating ordinary English sentences into a formal language, the methods of truth tables, and natural deduction in sentential and predicate logic.

PHIL 2310 - 001/701	Cristina Ballarini	Tue, Thur	11:00 - 12:20 pm
PHIL 2310 - D01	Christopher Hom	ONLINE	ASYNCHRONOUS

Introduction to Ethics

Fulfills the Language, Philosophy, and Culture requirement

This class will examine questions like: Can personal choices be truly 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? 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.

PHIL 2320-001	Jeremy Schwartz	Tue, Thur	9:30 - 10:50am
PHIL 2320-002	Michael Schon	Mon, Wed, Fri	10:00 - 10:50 am
PHIL 2320-004	Michael Schon	Mon, Wed, Fri	11:00 - 11:50 am
PHIL 2320-D01	James Morton	ONLINE	ASYNCHRONOUS

Meaning and Value in the Arts

Fulfills Creative Arts Requirement

Is beauty in the eye of the beholder, as some say, or in the object itself? Did art begin with cave paintings and bone flutes, or long before? How can we define art in general, or music, literature, painting, etc.? Are artists geniuses or craftspeople? Is there a difference between art and craft? Is an artwork the idea in the mind of the artist or the thing we see or hear? Since we do not invent musical notes, is a musical work created or discovered? Is a theatrical play a work of literature or a performance art? Is our experience of art works and beautiful objects something special and different from other experiences? What if we were indifferent to beautiful sunsets and all the other beauties of nature? What is the value of art — what would our lives be missing if we had no poetry, no novels, no music, no movies, no plays, no dance, no sculptures, no paintings? We will discuss these and other questions as we read philosophical works on these topics.

PHIL 2340-001	Anna Ribeiro	Tue, Thur	11:00 - 12:20 pm
PHIL 2340-D01	Francesca Di Poppa	ONLINE	ASYNCHRONOUS

World Religions And Philosophy

Fulfills the Language, Philosophy, Culture requirement

This course is a study of seven major world religions: Hinduism, Buddhism, Taoism, Confucianism, Islam, Judaism, and Christianity. We will study the doctrines and practices of each of these religions; then, for each religion, we will critically examine some element of doctrine or practice to see if it can be justified. For example, we will critically examine the doctrines of karma and reincarnation, the doctrine of monotheism, the problem of evil, and the doctrine of the incarnation.

PHIL 2350-001	Michael Schon	Mon,Wed,Fri	2:00 - 2:50 pm
PHIL 2350-D01	James Morton	ONLINE	ASYNCHRONOUS

Asian Philosophy

This is a course giving a panoramic introduction to classical chinese philosophy and to modern analytic engagement with the classic texts. Classical figures we will likely study include the singular Confucius and the confucians Mencius, Xunzi, and Wang Yangming; the enigmatic Daoists, Laozi and Zhuangzi; the chinese utilitarian, Mozi; and the perfecter of Legalism, Han Feizi. If time permits, we will also study the distinctives of chinese buddhism and also the oft neglected, but highly intellectual, School of Names.

PHIL 3302 - 001	Frank Hong	Tue, Thur	12:30 - 1:50 pm
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Modern European Philosophy 1600-1800

This course will survey some of the most important philosophical texts in the modern era (ca. 1600-1800) of the Western tradition of philosophy with an emphasis on the development of metaphysics and epistemology during this period. The writings of philosophers such as René Descartes, Princess Elisabeth of Bohemia, Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, John Locke, Lady Masham, George Berkeley, David Hume, Lady Mary Shepherd, Immanuel Kant, and a few other philosophers from this era will be studied and critically assessed through the progress of the course.

PHIL 3303 - 001

John De Poe

Tue, Thur

9:30 - 10:50 am

Existentialism and Phenomenology

Where should philosophy begin? Existentialist philosophers urge us to begin with ourselves and our place in the world. Each of us is living a life. How do we find meaning, value, or purpose in our lives? Is meaning something we discover, a fact about the world or ourselves, or something we create through making choices? What does it take to choose freely? What does it take to live freely? In some things, we are not free to choose. Each of us will die. Should thinking about death make us anxious? Does the certainty of death render life absurd? Would immortality be preferable? Or is it through confronting the possibility of death that we are able to live authentically? As we think through these and similar issues, we will read texts by various authors, such as: Camus, de Beauvoir, Dostoevsky, Fanon, Kierkegaard, Heidegger, Nietzsche, Sartre, Tolstoy, and Unamuno.

PHIL 3304-001

Zara Amdur

Tue, Thur

12:30 - 1:50 pm

Philosophy of Law

This course will examine philosophical questions that arise in the law regarding causation and responsibility, punishment, and justice. Along the way, we'll discuss all sorts of interesting real-world legal cases—each time asking how the law should treat those involved. For example; Defendant uses Victim as a human shield while she is trying to escape the police, yet a stray police bullet kills V. Or: Defendant poisons Victim leaving him in constant, incurable pain, which results in V taking his own life six months later. Or: Defendant stabs Victim and while V's injuries are treatable, V refuses the treatment because it would require a blood transfusion, resulting in V's death. Each time, we can ask: what did the defendant do to the victim?; what punishment is most appropriate for defendant?; and why?

PHIL 3321-001

Thomas Byrne

Tue, Thur

11:00 - 12:20 pm

Biomedical Ethics

This course will survey a range of topics in biomedical ethics, while also serving as an introduction to philosophical thinking and methodology. Sample questions include: Should parents be allowed to choose the genetic characteristics of their children? Should consenting adults be allowed to sell their organs? How do the rights of fetuses weigh against those of pregnant persons? Is it permissible for doctors to help patients end their lives?

PHIL 3322-001	Kirsi Teppo	Mon,Wed,Fri	10:00 - 10:50 am
PHIL 3322-002	Kirsi Teppo	Mon,Wed,Fri	11:00 - 11:50 am
PHIL 3322-003	Kirsi Teppo	Mon,Wed,Fri	12:00 - 12:50 pm

Environmental Ethics

Should I have kids? Can I eat a burger without feeling guilty? Is my sweet minivan destroying the planet? Should I trade it in for a Prius? Given that we can't live without harming the environment in some way, what is a morally defensible approach to navigating our relationship with the planet and our obligations to future generations. In this class we will explore and refine our positions on these, and other, questions.

PHIL 3325-001	Doug Westfall	Mon,Wed,Fri	10:00 - 10:50 am
PHIL 3325-D01	Doug Westfall	ONLINE	ASYNCHRONOUS

Feminist Philosophy

People disagree about what feminism is. Our class will begin with this disagreement before asking questions, such as: What is sexism? How does it relate to misogyny? Does sexism or misogyny affect our sexual ethics? What forms do gendered oppression take? How do other aspects of one's social and political identities change gendered oppression? Are the characteristics and attitudes usually described as feminine desirable or merely oppressive? Can they function as grounds for resistance? What is gender, anyway? As we think through these and similar issues, we will hear about the theories and lived experiences of many particular women, including Sandra Bartky, Marilyn Frye, Kimberlé Crenshaw, and Audre Lorde.

PHIL 3332-001	Zara Amdur	Tue, Thur	3:30 - 4:50 pm
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Philosophy And Film

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. The course also has a lab component; we will watch films every Fridays 2:00 - 4:00 PM.

PHIL 3342-001	Anna Ribeiro	Mon, Wed	2:00 - 3:20 pm
PHIL 3342-501	Anna Ribeiro	Friday	2:00 - 3:50 pm

Advanced Logic

This is a course in philosophical logic. Topics that will be covered include: Semantics and proof theory for first order logic; some (minimal) metatheory; conditionals, conditional probability, and counterfactuals; modal logic; other forms of non-classical logic.

PHIL 4310-001	Joel Velasco	Mon, Wed	9:30 - 10:50 am
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Philosophy of Mind

This is an advanced introduction to the philosophy of mind via two main topics: the problem of consciousness (roughly, the problem of explaining experience in wholly naturalistic/physicalistic terms) and the problem of intentionality (roughly, the problem of explaining how our mental states can be about things in wholly naturalistic/physicalistic terms). In the later portion of the course, we'll explore the possibility of consciousness and intentionality in recent large language models (e.g., GPT-5), with close attention to the notion of substrate neutrality and the so-called symbol-grounding problem.

PHIL 4335-001	Joseph Gottlieb	Tue, Thur	11:00 - 12:20 pm
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