

DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY FALL 2023 COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

PHIL 2300-001	Beginning Philosophy	11:00 - 12:20	TR	CHEM 107
PHIL 2300-004	Beginning Philosophy	10:00 - 10:50	MWF	ENG/PHIL 260

Dr. Michael Schon

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

PHIL 2300-003	Beginning Philosophy	11:00 -11:50	MWF	ENG/PHIL 260
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Doug Westfall

This class will examine how we ought to live in community and how that impacts dialogue, love, and our responsibilities to each other. We will read Plato (parts of the Republic, Gorgias, and the Symposium), Anselm (On Truth), Jesus (Sermon on the Mount), Aquinas (Treatise on Law from the Summa), and John Stuart Mill (On Liberty). The class will systematically work through how to read philosophy texts, develop your own answer to one of these questions, and then express that view in a final paper.

PHIL 2310-001	Logic	2:00 - 3:20	TR	ENG/PHIL 260
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Dr. Joseph Gottlieb

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, truth trees, and natural deduction in sentential and predicate logic.

-----This class fulfills the Core Curriculum Mathematics requirement. -----

PHIL 2310-D01	Logic	ONLINE	ASYNCHRONOUS
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Dr. 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.

-----This class fulfills the Core Curriculum Mathematics requirement. -----

PHIL 2320-002 Doug Westfall	Introduction to Ethics	9:30 - 10:50	TR	ENG/PHIL 260
PHIL 2320-003 Dr. Justis Koon	Introduction to Ethics	11:00 - 11:50	MWF	HOLDEN 005
PHIL 2320-004 Dr. Zara Amdur	Introduction to Ethics	12:30 - 1:50	TR	ENG/PHIL 301

Most of us want to live a good life. But what does it mean to live a good life? Does that have anything to do with *being* good? If so, we might have a problem: in order *to be* good, one might sacrifice goods—and why would one do that? Ethical theories attempt to answer questions about what one ought to do and how one ought to live. This course will survey the major ethical theories (virtue ethics, utilitarianism, deontology) and consider whether they are any good at helping one lead a good life. Along the way, we will reflect on the relationship between our moral and emotional lives, apply these ethical theories, and consider major criticisms of them by feminists and other non-ideal theorists.

PHIL 2320-D01 Dr. Justin Morton	Introduction to Ethics	ONLINE	ASYNCHRONOUS
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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 Dr. Jeremy Schwartz	Introduction to Ethics	9:30-10:50	TR	ENG/PHIL 264
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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 2340-001	Meaning and Value	12:00 - 12:50	MWF	ENG/PHIL 260
Dr. Howard Curzer	in the Arts			
PHIL 2340-D01		ONLINE		ASYNCHRONOUS
Dr. Francesca di Poppa				

Introduction to philosophical questions raised across the arts, including such topics as the nature of art, ways of interpreting and evaluating works of art, and the difference between popular art and high art.

-----This class fulfills the Core Curriculum Creative Arts requirement. -----

PHIL 2350-001	World Religions And	10:00-10:50	MWF	MCOM 350
Dr. Mark Webb	Philosophy			
PHIL 2350-D01		ONLINE		ASYNCHRONOUS
Dr. Justin Morton				

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. This course satisfies the multiculturalism requirement.

PHIL 3300-001	Special Topics in Philosophy:	12:30 - 1:50	TR	ENG/PHIL 350
Dr. Jeremy Schwartz	Shakespeare and Philosophy			

What if anything do we owe to parents who have loved and raised us? Are even the most fortunate lives very little worth having? When we fall in love are we following a societal love script or inventing our own script? Shakespeare explored these and other fundamental questions in his plays, and we think that one of the best ways to think about these questions is by thinking alongside Shakespeare by reading his plays. We will not be trying to impose philosophy on Shakespeare nor we will be trying to turn Shakespeare into a philosopher. Instead, we will be asking the questions that Shakespeare himself was asking. By reading the plays closely, we will deepen our understanding of these fundamental questions as well as deepen our understanding of Shakespeare. This class is cross listed with English and will be taught jointly by Professor Jeremy Schwartz (Philosophy) and Professor Matt Hunter (English).

PHIL 3300-002	Special Topics in Philosophy:	2:00 - 3:20	TR	ENG/PHIL 450
Dr. Howard Curzer	Moral Development at the Dawn of Three Traditions			

The course will bridge cultures, disciplines, and centuries. It will investigate, compare, and contrast the foundational epics and philosophic dialogues of the ancient Greeks, Chinese, and Israelites. The core question of the course will be this: "How does a person become good?" Reading the epics philosophically and the dialogues as literary works brings them closer together in form, yet they disagree among themselves both about the nature of virtue and moral knowledge, and also about how to gain these things. For example, the dialogues suggest that people become good through directed conversations while the epics attempt to induce moral development via vicarious experience. Another example is this. While the Greek tradition endorses reason as the driver of the moral maturation process, the Confucian tradition takes ritual to be the main mechanism, and the Israelite tradition focuses upon righteousness, understood as following

PHIL 3301-D01	Classical Greek Philosophy	9:30-10:50	TR	ENG/PHIL 450
Dr. Zara Amdur				

Look out the window, you see trees, rocks, grass. What are those things made of? Prefiguring modern science, many ancient Greek natural philosophers, often called pre-Socratics, thought that all these separate things were made of some underlying matter. In making this claim, they substituted reason and observation for the mythological narratives of earlier thinkers. Our class will begin by reflecting on the relationship between myth and reasoned argumentation (“logos” in Greek, from which we get the word “logic” and all the “-ology” words). Next, we will turn to Plato’s texts. In those, Plato’s teacher and protagonist Socrates criticizes the materialist orientation of earlier thinkers and offers his own controversial “logos” that focuses on ethics more than nature. Plato will not have the last word. In the final third of the class, we will further develop this conversation about the relationship between nature and living well by focusing on Plato’s most famous student, Aristotle. In the end, Aristotle will offer us a compelling understanding of happiness and the good life—one that you will consider in relation to your own life. In short, we will consider how ancient Greek ontology, epistemology, and natural philosophy influenced their understanding of what it means to be a person and live well. Along the way, we will become better readers—and, maybe even, better people.

PHIL 3305 - 001	Modern Political Thought	2:00-3:20	MW	EDUC 213
Dr. Francesca di Poppa (1600-1800)				

An overview of some of the debates in political theory in the Early Modern period (roughly 1600-1800). Readings include Hobbes, Spinoza, Locke, Wollstonecraft, and others.

----This class fulfills the Early Modern History requirement. ----

PHIL 3322-001	Biomedical Ethics	9:00 - 9:50	MWF	EDUC 350
PHIL 3322-002	Biomedical Ethics	10:00 - 10:50	MWF	EDUC 350

Dr. Angela Curran

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	4:00 - 5:20	TR	ENG/PHIL 400
Dr. John DePoe				

This course aims at teaching students how to think philosophically about some of the most important topics in contemporary analytic philosophy of religion. Consequently, this class cannot be a comprehensive survey of all topics in the philosophy of religion. Instead, students will be taught the way to think philosophically about some of the main issues and arguments in philosophy of religion by critically engaging important texts in this field. Among the questions we will ask and attempt to answer are, ‘How is faith related to reason?’, ‘Are there good reasons to believe that God exists?’, ‘Can the existence of evil be reconciled with the existence of God?’, ‘Is it reasonable to believe in miracles?’ and many others. The aim of studying and engaging these topics analytically is that students will acquire knowledge of these subjects

PHIL 3325-001	Environmental Ethics	1:00 - 1:50	MWF	ENG/PHIL 302
PHIL 3325-D01	Environmental Ethics	ONLINE		ASYNCHRONOUS

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 3334-001	Philosophy Of Biology	9:30 -10:50	TR	ENG/PHIL 400
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Dr. Joel Velasco

In this class we will look at a number of philosophical issues related to human biology and genetics. Is our fate written in our genes? To what extent do our genes determine our physical traits? What about our behaviors and our psychological makeup? Is there such a thing as human nature--and does it matter? And finally, now that we have the ability to alter our genetic makeup, should we?

PHIL 3335-001	Philosophy of Cognitive Science	11:00 - 12:20	TR	ENG/PHIL 450
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Dr. Joseph Gottlieb

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 4330 -001	Epistemology	11:00 -12:20	TR	ENG/PHIL 400
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Dr. Justis Koon

Epistemology is the study of knowledge--what it means to know something, how we can come to know anything, whether knowledge is even an important topic to focus on, and other related issues. We will study a variety of answers to these questions, in the process learning about the important theories and debates in contemporary epistemology.

GRADUATE COURSES - FALL 2023

PHIL 5310-001 **History Of Aesthetics** **3:30 -6:20** **M** **ENG/PHIL 264**
Dr. Angela Curran

Contemporary philosophy of art and aesthetics builds on the concepts and arguments introduced through debates on the nature of art that started with Plato and Aristotle in the fifth century BCE and went up to the early twentieth century. In this class, we critically engage with these debates from the history of aesthetics. Topics we discuss include: what is art, and why does art matter? Can art change the way we see the world? Can art help us to become better people? Or does art lead us morally astray? Is there an objective standard of taste for judging art? What is originality in art, and are there artistic geniuses? Is the point of art to offer a distinctive sort of experience? Or to relate art to the world and learn?

PHIL 5311-001 **Seminar in Epistemology** **2:00-3:20** **TR** **ENG/PHIL 264**
Dr. Justis Koon

This course is an advanced introduction to epistemology, the study of knowledge, rationality, and evidence. In the first half of the semester, we'll explore four classic topics in epistemology: the analysis of knowledge as justified true belief, radical skepticism, the nature of justification, and where knowledge fits into our scientific picture of the world. The second half of the semester focuses on more recent topics, including the Bayesian conception of rationality, how we should respond to higher-order evidence suggesting that we're irrational or biased, the epistemic consequences of the echo chambers and filter bubbles that have been created by social media, and the significance of epistemic justice.

PHIL 5324 -001 **Philosophy of Religion** **2:00-3:20** **MW** **ENG/PHIL 264**
Dr. Mark Webb

To many, perhaps most people (including many theists), the existence of God is not obvious. If God does exist, why wouldn't he show himself to everyone, especially if he wants us all to believe in him? In other words, the fact that God is hidden from us seems to be reason to believe he does not, in fact, exist. In this seminar, we will (1) place this argument in the context of other arguments for atheism, (2) examine a few forms of this argument, and (3) discuss possible responses to this argument.

PHIL 5340 -001 **Seminar in Metaphysics** **3:30-6:20** **W** **ENG/PHIL 264**
Dr. Michael Schon

What is the relation between the mind and the brain? Or, more narrowly, what is the relation between properties of our experience and properties of physical objects? Are their differences merely matters of appearance, hiding a deeper similarity? Or is there a genuine and irreconcilable difference? These questions (and their more sophisticated counterparts) are at the heart of the mind-body problem. This class will focus on the contemporary debates surrounding the mind-body problem and survey the solutions that have been offered. We'll begin by exploring various arguments for dualism, the position that states that the mental and the physical are, indeed, fundamentally different. We'll then explore arguments for materialism, the position that states that the mind fundamentally is the brain, in some way or another. These are the two most popular sorts of solutions to the mind-body problem. We'll finish the course by exploring a burgeoning list of non-standard positions, such as neutral monism and contemporary forms of panpsychism and idealism.

PHIL 5350-001

Sem. In Teaching & Writing

3:30-6:20

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ENG/PHIL 264

Dr. Chris Hom

The course is composed of two parts. The first is a grounding in fundamental concepts and arguments in the philosophy of language about the nature of meaning and representation. The second part is on teaching and professional development. We'll discuss various issues about what makes for a good teacher, a good graduate student, a good writer, a good PhD applicant, and so forth.