To engage in philosophy is to ask a variety of questions about the world and our place in it—questions that we confront in our everyday lives or that underlie our ordinary practices. What is a good, meaningful, or happy human life (ethics and politics)? What do we owe non-human species and future generations (applied ethics/practical philosophy)? Does god exist? (metaphysics)? What can we know, and what makes a belief or statement true (epistemology)? Are there objective standards for judging works of art? Thus, philosophers also address questions relevant to many disciplines.

The program in philosophy is designed to aid students in thinking about such questions, by acquainting them with influential work in the field, past and present, and by giving them tools to grapple with these issues themselves. The program emphasizes training in clear, critical thinking and in effective writing. Most of our courses are offered as small seminars or tutorials in which students have multiple opportunities to develop skills in reasoning and writing interpretive and critical essays.

**MAJOR**

The Philosophy major consists of nine semester courses: three required courses and six electives. The required courses are: any 100-level philosophy course, Philosophy 201 (History of Ancient Greek Philosophy) or Philosophy 202 (History of Modern Philosophy), and Philosophy 401 (Senior Seminar). The six electives are structured by a distribution requirement. Students must take at least one course in each of three areas: Contemporary Metaphysics and Epistemology [M&E], Contemporary Value Theory [V], and History [H]. These requirements apply to majors in the Class of 2018 and after.

Courses taught in other departments at Williams or at other institutions will not count toward the distribution requirement (Williams-Exeter tutorials may count, however, with the approval of the Department Chair). Up to two cross-listed courses taught in other departments may count as electives toward the major. No more than one 100-level course may count toward the major (and one 100-level course is required for the major—no exceptions).

We recommend the following trajectory through the major:

- By the end of the first year, take a 100-level philosophy course (this is typically the first step in the major) and one other philosophy course.
- By the end of the second year, complete a 100-level philosophy course, Phil 201 or Phil 202, and at least one other philosophy course. (If you will be away for the whole of your junior year, you should complete at least five courses by the end of the second year, preferably six.)
- By the end of the junior year, complete a 100-level philosophy course, Phil 201 or Phil 202, and at least four other philosophy courses.

Other recommendations: take at least one tutorial; distribute your six electives evenly across the three distribution baskets; take a logic course; and take both PHIL 201 and PHIL 202.

**The Degree with Honors in Philosophy**

The degree with honors in Philosophy is awarded to the student who has demonstrated outstanding achievement in a program of study that extends beyond the requirements of the major. The extension beyond major requirements may take the form either of independent work culminating in a senior essay or thesis (the independent-study route) or of additional course work (the directed-study route). Candidates must have GPAs of 3.6 or higher in their courses in philosophy at the end of the junior and senior years. The independent-study route to honors requires the completion and defense of either a senior essay produced in the fall semester plus winter study period (maximum 40 pages) or a year-long senior thesis (maximum 75 pages). Plans for either essay or thesis (including a brief proposal and bibliography, worked out in consultation with an advisor) must be submitted to the department in mid-March (before spring break) of the junior year. The directed-study route to honors requires the completion of two courses in
philosophy in addition to the nine required for the major. Candidates taking this route must also submit to the department revised copies of two term papers (15 pages or longer) written for philosophy courses they have taken. Students should register for a directed study over their senior year winter study and work with an advisor on the paper revisions. A recommendation for graduation with honors will be made on the basis of the thoroughness, independence, and originality of the student's work.

**STUDY AWAY**

The Williams-Exeter Programme at Oxford (WEPO): the first full Oxford philosophy tutorial will count as the equivalent of two full-semester philosophy courses at Williams; the second full Oxford philosophy tutorial will count as the equivalent of one full-semester philosophy course at Williams, for a total of three Williams philosophy courses. Courses must be pre-approved by the Chair of the Philosophy Department, who will also determine which, if any, courses will count toward the philosophy major distribution requirements.

Courses taken in other Study Away programs: Students may petition the Philosophy Department for credit for philosophy courses taken at their Study Away institution. They should consult with the department Chair before they commit to a program. Final determinations will be made on the basis of the course syllabus and the quality of the student’s written work for the course. Typically, courses taken while studying away will not fulfill distribution requirements for the philosophy major at Williams.

**PHILOSOPHY RELATED COURSES**

The following courses offered in other departments, while not cross-listed with Philosophy, may be of interest to philosophy students:

**ANTH 224 / REL 225 Culture and Morality**
- Taught by: Les Beldo
- [Catalog details](#)

**ARTH 541 Aesthetics After Evolutionary Biology: Darwin, Nietzsche, Freud**
- Taught by: Emmelyn Butterfield-Rosen
- [Catalog details](#)

**ENGL 138(S) What is a Self? Investigations in Literature, Philosophy, and Psychology**
- Taught by: Bernard Rhie
- [Catalog details](#)

**ENGL 445 / ENVI 445 World's End: Literary Ecologies of the Limit**
- Taught by: Christopher Pye
- [Catalog details](#)

**ENGL 456 / COMP 456 Topics in Critical Theory: Hegel and the Dialectic**
- Taught by: Christian Thorne
- [Catalog details](#)

**HIST 301 Approaching the Past: Other People's History**
- Taught by: Alexander Bevilacqua
- [Catalog details](#)

**HIST 331(F) European Intellectual History from Aquinas to Kant**
- Taught by: Alexander Bevilacqua
- [Catalog details](#)

**HIST 485 T / PSYC 158(F) Freud: A Tutorial**
- Taught by: Thomas Kohut
- [Catalog details](#)

**PSCI 203(F, S) Introduction to Political Theory**
- Taught by: Nimu Njoya, Mark Reinhardt
- [Catalog details](#)

**PSCI 235 / ENVI 235 Survival and Resistance: Environmental Political Theory**
- Taught by: TBA
- [Catalog details](#)

**PSCI 273 / ENVI 273 / STS 273(F) Politics without Humans?**
- Taught by: Laura Ephraim
- [Catalog details](#)

**PSCI 312 T / LEAD 312 American Political Thought**
- Taught by: Justin Crowe
- [Catalog details](#)

**PSCI 339 T / JWST 339(F) Politics in Dark Times: Hannah Arendt**
- Taught by: Laura Ephraim
- [Catalog details](#)

**REL 238 Faith and Rationality in Islam: Skepticism and the Quest for Certainty**
- Taught by: Zaid Adhami
- [Catalog details](#)

**REL 244 / ASST 244 Mind and Persons in Indian Thought**
- Taught by: Georges Dreyfus
- [Catalog details](#)
PHIL 104 (S) Philosophy and Tragedy

Tragedy and philosophy were two of the finest achievements of classical Athenian civilization, and each attempts to reveal to the reader something fundamental about our shared human condition. The worldview that underlies classical tragedy, however, seems markedly different from the one that we find in classical philosophy. While Plato and Aristotle differ on many points, they share the belief that the cosmos and the human place within it can be understood by rational means. Furthermore, they share the conviction that the most important components of a successful life are within the control of the individual human being. The picture that we find in the works of the tragedians, Aeschylus, Sophocles and Euripides is markedly different. The tragedians emphasize the ways in which the cosmos and our role in it resists any attempt to be understood, and emphasize the ways in which the success or failure of our lives often turns on things completely beyond our control. The view of the tragedians can lead to a thoroughgoing nihilism according to which --the best thing of all [for a human being] is never to have born--the next best thing is to die soon (Aristotle's Eudemus as quoted in Nietzsche's Birth of Tragedy; see also Sophocles' Oedipus at Colonus)." Despite these rather grim pronouncements, tragic drama has continued to fascinate and educate generations. Furthermore, philosophers have continued to revisit the existential questions vividly raised by Greek tragedy. In this course, we will examine a number of Greek tragedies and philosophical writing on tragedy and the tragic. We will read the Oresteia and Prometheus Bound by Aeschylus, Sophocles' Theban Cycle, and the Hippolytus, Bacchae and Philoctetes by Euripides. As we read through these plays, we will also examine a number of philosophical works about tragedy. We will begin with Aristotle's Poetics and will continue with Hume's Of Tragedy, Hegel's various writings on tragedy, and Nietzsche's The Birth of Tragedy. If possible, we will arrange to see a live performance of a Greek tragedy.

Class Format: tutorial

Requirements/Evaluation: 5 papers, 5 responses and a final paper in multiple drafts; each week one student will write a paper responding to the week's readings and the other student will write a response to that paper

Prerequisites: none; this tutorial is an appropriate first course in PHIL

Enrollment Limit: 10

Enrollment Preferences: first-year students

Expected Class Size: 10

Grading: no pass/fail option, no fifth course option

Distributions: (D2)

Spring 2020

TUT Section: T1    TBA    Keith E. McPartland

PHIL 114 (F) Freedom and Society
Freedom is one of our fundamental values as Americans. It is emphasized in our founding documents, and it occupies a central place in our contemporary political discourse. But do we ask: What is freedom? and Why do we value it? In the first unit of this course, we will consider the relationship between freedom and social order. Do society's laws limit our freedom in order to make us safe? Or do laws somehow enhance or enable our freedom? We will read Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, and Jean-Jacques Rousseau in seeking answers to these questions. We will then turn to some specific social forms in the second unit. We will ask whether they promote or preclude our freedom. We will read Adam Smith and Karl Marx on capitalism, and Simone de Beauvoir on gender.

**Requirements/Evaluation:** weekly reading response papers; take-home midterm and final exams

**Prerequisites:** none

**Enrollment Limit:** 19

**Enrollment Preferences:** first-years and sophomores

**Expected Class Size:** 19

**Grading:** yes pass/fail option, yes fifth course option

**Unit Notes:** meets 100-level PHIL major requirement

**Distributions:** (D2)

**Attributes:** JLST Interdepartmental Electives

Not offered current academic year

---

**PHIL 115  (F)(S)  Personal Identity  (WS)**

Through lectures, discussions, close readings and assigned writings, we will consider a variety of philosophical questions about the nature of persons, and personal identity through time. Persons are subjects of experiences, have thoughts and feelings, motivation and agency; a person is thought of as continuous over time, and as related to, recognized and respected by other persons. Thus, the concept of person plays a significant role in most branches of philosophy: metaphysics, epistemology, moral and political philosophy, and of course in the philosophy of mind. Conceptions of person are equally important for scientific research programs (especially in psychology), for Law, and for the arts (especially mimetic arts). Questions about persons are of central importance for a myriad of our theories and practices, and for the ways in which we live our lives. The aim of this course is to explore and evaluate a number of rival conceptions of persons and personal identity over time. Some of the questions which we will discuss are: What is a person? How do I know that I am one? What constitutes my knowledge of myself as a person, and does that knowledge differ in any significant respect from my knowledge of physical objects and of other people? What makes me the particular person that I am, and how is my identity as this individual person preserved over time? While addressing these questions through lectures and class discussions, the course will place special emphasis on developing students' intellectual skills in the following domains: - close, analytical reading; - recognizing, reconstructing and evaluating claims and reasons that support them; - producing original ideas and arguments, orally and in writing; - responding to the claims and arguments presented in texts and in class; - writing clear, polished, well-argued papers.

**Class Format:** discussion

**Requirements/Evaluation:** class attendance, preparedness and participation; small group weekly meetings; weekly short writing assignments

**Prerequisites:** none; open to first year students

**Enrollment Limit:** 19

**Enrollment Preferences:** freshmen, sophomores, and philosophy majors who need a 100 level course to satisfy requirement for the major

**Expected Class Size:** 19

**Grading:** yes pass/fail option, yes fifth course option

**Unit Notes:** meets 100-level PHIL major requirement

**Distributions:** (D2)  (WS)

**Writing Skills Notes:** Students will write a short paper (about 800 words) every week. Six of these will be letter-graded, and six will be graded pass/fail. All papers will receive detailed comments on substance as well as on writing skills and strategies. There will be no final paper.

---

Fall 2019

SEM Section: 01  MW 7:00 pm - 8:15 pm  Bojana Mladenovic

Spring 2020

SEM Section: 01  MW 7:00 pm - 8:15 pm  Bojana Mladenovic
PHIL 116  (S)  Perception and Reality

This course is an introduction to philosophy through four major themes: The nature of the universe, the existence of gods, thought itself, and the mind/body problem. Throughout, we will appeal to reason and evidence in forming our best beliefs. Our discussions will range over historical and contemporary works in the Western Tradition.

Requirements/Evaluation:  active participation; four (5-6 page) essays
Prerequisites: none
Enrollment Limit: 19
Enrollment Preferences: first-years and sophomores; there is no need to email the professor in advance to indicate interest in the course
Expected Class Size: 19
Grading: yes pass/fail option, no fifth course option
Unit Notes: meets 100-level PHIL major requirement
Distributions: (D2)

Not offered current academic year

PHIL 119  (S)  Justice, Democracy and Freedom: Plato with Footnotes  (WS)

This course addresses a central question in both ethics and political philosophy: How should we live? The question has two parts: What is the best life for individuals? And what social and political arrangements make such a life possible? In attempting to answer these questions we also engage related theoretical questions concerning what is real and how we have access to it. We begin with readings from Plato’s *Republic*, a seminal work in the history of philosophy that has exerted a powerful influence on nearly every subsequent attempt to answer these questions in the context of the Western philosophical tradition. After reading from early Platonic dialogues and the *Republic*, we also consider some of the best of these attempts in the Western philosophical canon (“footnotes on Plato”) and the challenges they present to Plato’s conclusions. Our principal focus will be on issues that continue to be of paramount importance in the world today, namely, democracy, justice and the meaning of freedom.

Class Format: seminar
Requirements/Evaluation: eight 2-page response papers based on readings (first three are pass/fail), two five-page papers, and class participation
Prerequisites: none
Enrollment Limit: 19
Enrollment Preferences: none, open to all students
Expected Class Size: 19
Grading: no pass/fail option, no fifth course option
Unit Notes: meets 100-level PHIL major requirement
Distributions: (D2)  (WS)

Writing Skills Notes: Professor will provide detailed comments on short and long writing responses; facilitate peer review of short papers in class; and discuss frequent types of errors, writing in philosophy, writing approach and process, drafting, and the importance of using writing tutors. Handouts will be provided on both informal fallacies and numerous writing tips. Students will be encouraged, but are not required, to make appointments to discuss ideas and drafts.
Attributes: JLST Interdepartmental Electives  LEAD Ethical Issues of Leadership

Spring 2020
SEM Section: 01    TR 8:30 am - 9:45 am    Jana Sawicki

PHIL 121  (F)(S)  Truth, Goodness, and Beauty

In our everyday lives, we routinely assume that our clocks can tell us the truth about what time it is, that committing murder is wrong, and that there are people, landscapes, and works of art that are beautiful. But we are also aware that people can and often do disagree about what is true, what is good or right, and what is beautiful. Should the fact of such disagreement lead us to conclude that truth, goodness, and beauty are in some basic sense relative to human beings, perhaps as individuals, perhaps as members of societies or cultures? Some philosophers defend such conclusions,
but others argue that truth, goodness, and beauty are "objective," in some important sense, despite the fact that people disagree about them. This introductory course addresses these and related issues.

Requirements/Evaluation: attendance, frequent short papers totaling about 30 pages, class participation
Prerequisites: none
Enrollment Limit: 19
Enrollment Preferences: first-year students and potential Philosophy majors
Expected Class Size: 19
Grading: no pass/fail option, yes fifth course option
Unit Notes: meets 100-level PHIL major requirement
Distributions: (D2)

Fall 2019
SEM Section: 01    MWF 10:00 am - 10:50 am     Alan White
Spring 2020
SEM Section: 01    MWF 10:00 am - 10:50 am     Alan White

PHIL 122  (F) Philosophical Approaches to Contemporary Moral Issues  (WS)
In this tutorial we will examine a number of prominent and controversial social issues, using our study of them both as an opportunity to better understand the moral dimensions of those issues in and of themselves, and to consider the ways in which selected classical and contemporary moral theories characterize and address those moral dimensions. Topics will depend to some extent on student interest, but are likely to include concerns that fall under such headings as euthanasia, conscientious eating, abortion, capital punishment, and the ethics of protest. The course will use a case-based approach to examine these issues, and so in most weeks we will (1) read philosophical articles focused on a key concept or set of arguments central to the issue, and (2) consider in detail one morally complex case in which the concept or arguments have special application or relevance. In addition, we will devote several class meetings interspersed throughout the semester to reading foundational sources in ethical theory.
Requirements/Evaluation: bi-weekly tutorial papers, oral commentaries, and tutorial discussion
Prerequisites: none; this course is suitable for first-year students
Enrollment Limit: 10
Enrollment Preferences: first-year students, then sophomores, then Philosophy majors
Expected Class Size: 10
Grading: no pass/fail option, no fifth course option
Distributions: (D2)  (WS)
Writing Skills Notes: Students will write five tutorial papers of 5-7 pages in length, one of which they will revise and submit at the end of the term. In each of the tutorial papers students will describe and evaluate arguments that appear in the assigned readings, and will develop arguments in support of their own ethical positions. Students will receive written and oral feedback, concentrated particularly in the first half of the semester, to improve their ability to present clear and effective written arguments.

Fall 2019
TUT Section: T1    TBA     Julie A. Pedroni

PHIL 123  (F)(S) Objectivity in Ethics  (WS)
Is morality simply a matter of opinion? In this course we'll examine several influential attempts to provide a rational foundation for morality, along with Nietzsche's wholesale rejection of these efforts. Readings will include work by Plato, Hobbes, Kant, Mill, Nietzsche, and contemporary authors.
Requirements/Evaluation: participation in discussion; short response papers; four 5-page papers, evenly spaced throughout the semester
Prerequisites: none
Enrollment Limit: 19
Enrollment Preferences: first-years and sophomores and students who need to fulfill their 100-level requirement for the philosophy major
Expected Class Size: 19

Grading: no pass/fail option, no fifth course option

Unit Notes: meets 100-level PHIL major requirement

Distributions: (D2) (WS)

Writing Skills Notes: Four 5-page papers, evenly spaced throughout the semester. Students will receive from the instructor timely comments on their writing skills, with suggestions for improvement.

Fall 2019
SEM Section: 01 TR 11:20 am - 12:35 pm Melissa J. Barry

Spring 2020
SEM Section: 01 MWF 11:00 am - 12:15 pm Melissa J. Barry

PHIL 125 (F) Introduction to the Philosophy of Law (WS)
This tutorial, designed especially for first year students, is a philosophy course, not a prelaw course. We will examine basic questions in the philosophy of law: What is the relationship between law and morality? Why should one obey the law (if one should)? When, if ever, is paternalistic interference by the state into the lives of its citizens justified? We will look at civil disobedience and theories of legal interpretation. We will pay special attention to the first amendment and questions concerning free speech and hate speech. We will read classic works (such as John Stuart Mill, On Liberty and H. L. A. Hart, The Concept of Law), contemporary articles, and United States Supreme Court cases.

Class Format: meeting with the instructor in pairs for an hour each week

Requirements/Evaluation: a 5- to 7-page paper every other week (6 in all), prepare and present a written critique of their partners’ papers in alternate weeks, and revise and re-write

Prerequisites: none

Enrollment Limit: 10

Enrollment Preferences: first-year students

Expected Class Size: 10

Grading: yes pass/fail option, no fifth course option

Distributions: (D2) (WS)

Writing Skills Notes: A 5- to 7-page paper every other week (6 in all), prepare and present a written critique of their partners’ papers in alternate weeks, and revise and re-write one of their papers. Students will receive from the instructor timely comments on their writing skills, with suggestions for improvement.

Fall 2019
TUT Section: T1 TBA Steven B. Gerrard

PHIL 126 (S) Paradoxes
There are three grains of sand on my desk. This is unfortunate, but at least there isn't a heap of sand on my desk. That would be really worrisome. On the other hand, there is a heap of sand in my backyard. I don't know how exactly how many grains of sand are in this heap, but let's say 100,000. My daughter removes one grain of sand. I don't know why, she just does. It seems like there is still a heap of sand in my backyard. In fact, it seems like you can't change a heap of sand into something that isn't a heap of sand by removing one grain of sand. Right? But now we have a problem. By repeated application of the same reasoning, it seems that even after she removes 99,997 grains of sand--I don't know what she wants with all this sand, but I'm starting to worry about that girl--there is still a heap of sand in my backyard. But three grains isn't enough for a heap. So there is not a heap in my backyard. Now I'm confused. Where did my reasoning go wrong? What we have here is an example of the sorites paradox. It is a paradox, because I started with seemingly true statements and used valid reasoning to arrive at contradictory conclusions. We can learn a lot about logic, language, epistemology and metaphysics by thinking through and attempting to resolve paradoxes. In this class, we'll work together to think through some ancient and contemporary paradoxes. We'll also work on writing lucid prose that displays precisely the logical structure of arguments, engages in focused critique of these arguments, and forcefully presents arguments of our own. Other topics could include: Zeno's paradoxes of motion and plurality, the liar's paradox, the surprise exam paradox, paradoxes of material constitution, Newcomb's Problem, and the Prisoner's Dilemma.
PHIL 128 (S) Utopias and Dystopias

The touchstone of our course will be Plato's *Republic*: the first and perhaps greatest Utopia as well as perhaps the greatest work in political philosophy. We will prepare for the *Republic* by reading two Socratic dialogues: the *Euthyphro* and the *Meno*. After several weeks on the *Republic* we will turn to Shakespeare's last play: *The Tempest*. From there it is a natural transition to Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World*. We will continue with B. F. Skinner's *Walden Two*, and finish by comparing the dystopias of the first book and first film of *The Hunger Games*.

Class Format: seminar
Requirements/Evaluation: several short papers totaling at least twenty pages
Prerequisites: none
Enrollment Limit: 19
Enrollment Preferences: first-years and sophomores
Expected Class Size: 19
Grading: yes pass/fail option, yes fifth course option
Unit Notes: meets 100-level PHIL major requirement
Distributions: (D2)
Not offered current academic year

PHIL 201 (F) History of Ancient Greek Philosophy

Cross-listings: CLAS 203, PHIL 201

Primary Cross-listing

Very few people believe that everything is water, that we knew everything before birth, that philosophers ought to rule the state, or that some people are natural slaves. Why then should we spend our time studying people who in addition to having these surprising beliefs have been dead for 2500 years? First of all, Greek thinkers, especially Plato and Aristotle, radically shaped the trajectory of western thought in every area of philosophy. No one can have an adequate understanding of western intellectual history without some familiarity with the Greeks, and we might think that an understanding of our intellectual history can deepen our understanding of our own situation. More importantly, many of the thinkers that we will read in this class are simply excellent philosophers, and it is worthwhile for anyone interested in philosophical problems to read treatments of these problems by excellent philosophers. We will begin the course by looking briefly at some of the Presocratic philosophers active in the Mediterranean world of the seventh through fifth centuries BCE, and some of the sophists active in the fifth century. We will then turn to several of Plato's dialogues, examining Plato's portrayal of Socrates and his development of a new and profoundly powerful philosophical conception. We will then read some of Aristotle's works on metaphysics, epistemology and ethics, considering some of the ways Aristotle's thought responds to that of predecessors.

Class Format: discussion
Requirements/Evaluation: short papers, possibly supplemented by one or more exams
Prerequisites: none
Enrollment Limit: none
Enrollment Preferences: none
Expected Class Size: 20-40
Grading: yes pass/fail option, yes fifth course option
PHIL 201 (S) History of Modern Philosophy

This course is a survey of 17th- and 18th-century European philosophy with a focus on the nature of reality and the limits of knowledge (metaphysics and epistemology, respectively). That span—the "modern" era of philosophy—was active and exciting in a way that continues to attract much scholarly interest. Moreover, it remains a crucial inspiration for many contemporary philosophical approaches and themes. Understanding modern philosophy is to confront the ambitions and hopes of the Enlightenment, and to uncover the foundations and assumptions of contemporary Western philosophy.

Topics include the origin and composition of the universe, the relation of mind and body, skepticism, free will, rationality, and the role of science in human understanding.

Requirements/Evaluation: weekly papers plus midterm and final exams

Prerequisites: none

Enrollment Limit: none

Enrollment Preferences: none

Expected Class Size: 25

Grading: yes pass/fail option, yes fifth course option

Unit Notes: Philosophy majors must take either PHIL 201 or PHIL 202 (and can take both)

Distributions: (D2)

PHIL 203 (S) Logic and Language (QFR)

Logic is the study of reasoning and argument. More particularly, it concerns itself with the difference between good and bad reasoning, between strong and weak arguments. We all examine the virtues and vices of good arguments in both informal and formal systems. The goals of this course are to improve the critical thinking of the students, to introduce them to sentential and predicate logic, to familiarize them with enough formal logic to enable them to read some of the great works of philosophy, which use formal logic (such as Wittgenstein's Tractatus), and to examine some of the connections between logic and philosophy.

Class Format: discussion

Requirements/Evaluation: a midterm, a final, frequent homework and problem sets

Prerequisites: none

Enrollment Limit: none

Enrollment Preferences: none

Expected Class Size: 50-80

Grading: yes pass/fail option, yes fifth course option

Distributions: (D2) (QFR)

Attributes: Linguistics PHIL Contemp Metaphysics & Epistemology Courses

Not offered current academic year

PHIL 204 (F) Hegel and Marx

This course will explore the themes of alienation, fetishism, ideology, dialectic, sociality, and freedom in the philosophical writings of G.W.F. Hegel and
Karl Marx. We will focus our study on Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit* and Marx's early writings. We will conclude by considering some critical appropriations of Marx by 20th Century philosophers, including Georg Lukacs, Max Horkheimer, and Theodor Adorno.

**Requirements/Evaluation:** midterm and final papers

**Prerequisites:** none

**Enrollment Limit:** none

**Enrollment Preferences:** Philosophy majors

**Expected Class Size:** 15

**Grading:** yes pass/fail option, yes fifth course option

**Distributions:** (D2)

**Attributes:** PHIL History Courses

Not offered current academic year

**PHIL 207 (S) Contemporary Philosophy of Mind**

The philosophy of mind has been one of the liveliest and most active areas of philosophical inquiry over the last century, and it has taken a place at the center of the field. Part of the explanation for this is the rise of compelling scientific accounts of who and what we are. The question of whether the mind can be fully understood within a physicalist, materialist framework has taken on an exciting urgency. In this course we will investigate the mind/body problem, mental representation, the conceptual and nonconceptual content of mental states, and the nature of consciousness. Throughout we will attend to the relevant empirical literature.

**Class Format:** seminar

**Requirements/Evaluation:** weekly two page papers on focused topics and two 8- to 10-page papers

**Prerequisites:** at least one prior 100- or 200-level PHIL course

**Enrollment Limit:** 19

**Enrollment Preferences:** prospective Philosophy majors and Cognitive Science concentrators

**Expected Class Size:** 14

**Grading:** no pass/fail option, no fifth course option

**Distributions:** (D2)

**Attributes:** COGS Interdepartmental Electives PHIL Contemp Metaphysics & Epistemology Courses

Not offered current academic year

**PHIL 209 (S) Philosophy of Science**

**Cross-listings:** SCST 209 PHIL 209

**Primary Cross-listing**

It is a generally held belief, in our time and culture, that science is the best source of our knowledge of the world, and of ourselves. The aim of this course is to examine the origins, grounds, and nature of this belief. We will analyze and discuss various accounts of scientific method, structure and justification of scientific theories, scientific choice, change, and the idea that scientific knowledge is progressive. The course will begin with the "received view" of science, advanced by logical empiricists, which assumes the objectivity and the rationality of science. We will then discuss philosophies of science which emerged out of various criticisms of this view - especially those of Popper, Lakatos, Kuhn and Feyerabend - and the challenges to the assumptions of scientific objectivity and rationality their works provoked. This discussion will naturally lead us to the relativist and social-constructivist views developed within contemporary science studies. Finally, we will analyze the current debate about cognitive credentials of science and proper approach to the study of science, which came to be known as "the science wars."

**Class Format:** short lecture component in each class

**Requirements/Evaluation:** class attendance, preparedness and participation; three short assignments; three 5 pages long papers, the last of which will be the final paper, due a week after the end of classes

**Prerequisites:** one PHIL course, or declared major in a natural science, or permission of instructor

**Enrollment Limit:** 19

**Enrollment Preferences:** Philosophy majors and prospective majors
PHIL 212 (S) Ethics and Reproductive Technologies

Cross-listings: WGSS 212 SCST 212 PHIL 212

Primary Cross-listing

In her groundbreaking book, The Tentative Pregnancy, Barbara Katz Rothman writes that "[t]he technological revolution in reproduction is forcing us to confront the very meaning of motherhood, to examine the nature and origins of the mother-child bond, and to replace--or to let us think we can replace--chance with choice." Taking this as our starting point, in this course we will examine a number of conceptual and ethical issues in the use and development of technologies related to human reproduction, drawing out their implications for such core concepts as "motherhood" and "parenthood," family and genetic relatedness, exploitation and commodification, and reproductive rights and society’s interests in reproductive activities. Topics will range from consideration of "mundane" technologies such as in vitro fertilization (IVF), prenatal screening and testing, and surrogacy, to the more extraordinary, possibly including pre-implantation genetic diagnosis (PGD), post-menopausal reproduction, and post-mortem gamete procurement. Background readings include sources rooted in traditional modes of bioethical analysis as well as those incorporating feminist approaches.

Class Format: discussion

Requirements/Evaluation: active participation in class discussions, three or four short reflection papers, and two longer papers (5-7 and 7-10 pages)

Prerequisites: none, but introductory-level course in PHIL and/or WGSS recommended

Enrollment Limit: 19

Enrollment Preferences: WGSS and PHIL majors or prospective majors

Expected Class Size: 19

Grading: yes pass/fail option, yes fifth course option

Unit Notes: meets Contemporary Value Theory requirement only if registration is under PHIL

Distributions: (D2)

This course is cross-listed and the prefixes carry the following divisional credit:

WGSS 212 (D2) SCST 212 (D2) PHIL 212 (D2)

Attributes: PHIL Contemporary Value Theory Courses PHLH Bioethics + Interpretations of Health

Not offered current academic year

PHIL 213 (S) Biomedical Ethics (WS)

Much like the construction of medical knowledge itself, it is from specific cases that general principles of biomedical ethics arise and are systematized into a theoretical framework, and it is to cases they must return, if they are to be both useful and comprehensible to those making decisions within the biomedical context. In this tutorial we will exploit this characteristic of biomedical ethics by using a case-based approach to examining core concepts of the field. The first portion of the course will be devoted to developing and understanding four moral principles which have come to be accepted as canonical: respect for autonomy, beneficence, nonmaleficence, and justice. The remainder of the course will consider key concepts at the core of medical ethics and central issues for the field, such as privacy and confidentiality, the distinction between killing and "letting die," and therapy vs. research. To this end, each week we will (1) read philosophical material focused on one principle or concept, and (2) consider in detail one bioethics case in which the principle or concept has special application or relevance. In some weeks, students will be asked to choose from a small set which case they would like to address; in others the case will be assigned.

Class Format: tutorial; students will meet with the professor in pairs for approximately 75 minutes per week, writing and presenting 5- to 7-page essays every other week, and commenting orally on partners’ essays in alternate weeks

Requirements/Evaluation: bi-weekly papers, oral commentaries, and tutorial discussions
Prerequisites: none

Enrollment Limit: 10

Enrollment Preferences: PHIL, PHLH or STS majors or concentrators, especially those who need the course to complete their majors/concentrations; and students committed to taking the tutorial

Expected Class Size: 10

Grading: no pass/fail option, no fifth course option

Distributions: (D2) (WS)

Writing Skills Notes: Students will write six tutorial papers of 5-7 pages in length, one of which they will revise and submit at the end of the term. In each of the tutorial papers students will describe and evaluate arguments that appear in the assigned readings, and will develop arguments in support of their own ethical positions. Students will receive written and oral feedback, concentrated particularly in the first half of the semester, to improve their ability to present clear and effective written arguments.

Attributes: PHIL Contemporary Value Theory Courses  PHLH Bioethics + Interpretations of Health

Spring 2020

TUT Section: T1  TBA  Julie A. Pedroni

PHIL 216 (S) Philosophy of Animals

Cross-listings: ENVI 216  PHIL 216

Primary Cross-listing

Animals are and always have been part of human life. To name just a few: We treat animals as companions, as food, as objects of wonder in the wild, as resources to be harvested, as testing grounds for science, and as religious sacrifice. The abstract philosophical question before us is, what are animals such that they can be all these things? In this course we aim to engage that abstract question through two more focused projects. Firstly, we will try to understand the mental lives of non-human animals. Secondly, we will try to make sense of the moral dimensions of our relationship to animals. Throughout we will to fuse a rigorous scientific perspective with more humanistic themes and philosophical inquiry. Topics include sentience, animal cognition, language in non-human animals, empathy and evolution, the history of domestication, animal rights, cross-cultural views on animals, arguments against and for vegetarianism and veganism, the morality of zoos, hunting and fishing, and pets and happiness.

Requirements/Evaluation: four 4- to 5-page papers and one 10- to 12-page final paper

Prerequisites: none

Enrollment Limit: 19

Enrollment Preferences: students with at least one previous philosophy course; there is no need to email the professor in advance to indicate interest in the course

Expected Class Size: 19

Grading: no pass/fail option, no fifth course option

Unit Notes: meets Contemporary Metaphysics & Epistemology requirement only if registration is under PHIL

Distributions: (D2)

This course is cross-listed and the prefixes carry the following divisional credit:
ENVI 216 (D2) PHIL 216 (D2)

Attributes: COGS Interdepartmental Electives  PHIL Contemp Metaphysics & Epistemology Courses

Not offered current academic year

PHIL 220 (F) Happiness

According to Aristotle the ultimate good is happiness—everything we desire we desire for the sake of happiness. Yet what is it to be happy? Should we value other things (say justice or passionate commitment and curiosity) over happiness? Are happiness and pleasure the same thing? Is happiness an emotional or mental state or is it a social construct? What do the social and psychological sciences have to teach us about happiness? Philosophy? Is the happy life a life of virtue? Does being virtuous guarantee happiness? How important are honor, money, love, work, friendship and our connections to others to our happiness? In this tutorial we will read from Ancient, modern and contemporary philosophical sources as well several relevant studies in the social sciences and positive psychology movement in order to engage questions concerning happiness.
**PHIL 222 (F) Minds, Brains, and Intelligent Behavior: An Introduction to Cognitive Science**

**Cross-listings:** PSYC 222 COGS 222 PHIL 222

**Secondary Cross-listing**

This course will emphasize interdisciplinary approaches to the study of intelligent systems, both natural and artificial. Cognitive science synthesizes research from cognitive psychology, computer science, linguistics, neuroscience, and contemporary philosophy. Special attention will be given to the philosophical foundations of cognitive science, representation and computation in symbolic and connectionist architectures, concept acquisition, problem solving, perception, language, semantics, reasoning, and artificial intelligence.

**Class Format:** discussion

**Requirements/Evaluation:** midterm and final exams, and self-paced weekly exercises

**Prerequisites:** PSYC 101 or any introduction to PHIL course or CSCI 134 or permission of instructor; background in more than one of these is recommended

**Enrollment Limit:** 25

**Enrollment Preferences:** first-year and sophomore students

**Expected Class Size:** 25

**Grading:** yes pass/fail option, no fifth course option

**Unit Notes:** meets Contemporary Metaphysics & Epistemology requirement only if registration is under PHIL

**Distributions:** (D2)

**This course is cross-listed and the prefixes carry the following divisional credit:**

PSYC 222 (D2) COGS 222 (D2) PHIL 222 (D2)

**Attributes:** Linguistics PHIL Contemp Metaphysics & Epistemology Courses PSYC 200-level Courses

---

**PHIL 223 (S) Philosophy of Sport**

Sports: many of us (at Williams, in the US, throughout most of the world) play them, yet more of us watch them, and we invest not only our time but enormous amounts of money in them (we build sports arenas, not cathedrals; in 2013, in 40 of the 50 United States, the highest-paid public official was a football or basketball coach). Why do sports matter so much to us? Should they? The topics we consider in responding thoughtfully to these questions will include sports and health, sports and education, ethical issues in sports (including issues of class, gender, and race), and sports and beauty.

**Class Format:** discussion

**Requirements/Evaluation:** short writing assignments for most classes

**Prerequisites:** none

**Enrollment Limit:** 30

**Enrollment Preferences:** seniors, then juniors, then sophomores

**Expected Class Size:** 30
The writings of Marx, Nietzsche and Freud continue to influence important debates in the humanities and social sciences. Marx's historical materialism, Nietzsche's post-metaphysical and naturalistic turn in ethics, and Freud's emphasis on the unconscious determinants of human behavior all represent what has been referred to as the decentering of human consciousness in explanations of human history and existence. All three thinkers have had a profound influence on critical theories of the 20th century. In this tutorial, we will focus on questions concerning their methods of critique, and their respective diagnoses of modern culture and societies. All three attempt to explain particular sources of human suffering such as loss of meaning, the sense of alienation from self and others, constraints on free expression, and nihilistic world-weariness. The course texts may include several short selections from important historical influences such as Kant and Hegel as well as 20th century figures who have reacted to, revised, or responded to them in creative ways. Among the latter one could include Louis Althusser, Michel Foucault, Gilles Deleuze, Jacques Lacan, Luce Irigaray, Judith Butler, Wendy Brown, Elizabeth Grosz and Peter Sloterdijk, to name only a few.

Class Format: Tutorial

Requirements/Evaluation: bi-weekly papers, oral commentaries, and tutorial discussions

Prerequisites: 100-level Philosophy course, PHIL 202, or permission of instructor

Enrollment Limit: 10

Enrollment Preferences: Philosophy majors or prospective majors and students with background and interest in critical theories

Expected Class Size: 10

Grading: no pass/fail option, no fifth course option

Distributions: (D2) (WS)

Writing Skills Notes: Students will write six tutorial papers on assigned topics or questions of 5- to 6-pages in length, one of which they will revise and submit at the end of the term. Students will receive written and oral feedback, concentrated particularly in the first half of the semester, to improve their ability to present clear and effective written arguments and interpretations.

Attributes: PHIL History Courses

Spring 2020

TUT Section: T1    TBA    Jana Sawicki

PHIL 225 (S) Existentialism

We will study the philosophical and literary works of Soren Kierkegaard, Friedrich Nietzsche, Martin Heidegger, Jean-Paul Sartre, and Simone de Beauvoir. What makes these thinkers "Existentialists"? It's not merely that they ask the question, "What gives meaning to a human life?" And, it's not merely that their answers invoke our freedom to determine our own identities. More than this, Existentialists emphasize the subjective relation we bear to our belief systems, moral codes, and personal identities. Existentialists investigate deeply irrational phenomena of human life, including anxiety, boredom, nausea, tragedy, despair, death, faith, love, hate, sadism, masochism, authenticity, guilt, and care. And, Existentialists express their thought in philosophical treatises as often as in literary texts. In this course we will attempt to understand these dimensions in which Existentialism is a distinctive intellectual tradition.

Requirements/Evaluation: four mid-length papers

Prerequisites: none

Enrollment Limit: 30

Expected Class Size: 20

Grading: yes pass/fail option, yes fifth course option

Distributions: (D2)

Attributes: PHIL History Courses

Not offered current academic year
PHIL 227  (F)  Death and Dying

In this course we will examine traditional philosophical approaches to understanding death and related concepts, with a special focus on the ethical concerns surrounding death and care for the dying. We will begin with questions about how to define death, as well as reflections on its meaning and function in human life. We will move on to examine ethical issues of truth-telling with terminally ill patients and their families, decisions to withhold or withdraw life-sustaining treatments, the care of seriously ill newborns, physician-assisted suicide, euthanasia, and posthumous interests. In addition to key concepts of death, dying, and terminal illness, we will develop and refine notions of medical futility, paternalism and autonomy, particularly within the context of advance directives and surrogate decision making.

Class Format: discussion

Requirements/Evaluation: class attendance and participation, periodic short essays (3 or 4 total, 2-3 pages each), two mid-length papers (5-7 pages and 7-10 pages, respectively); possible experiential learning component

Prerequisites: none

Enrollment Limit: 19

Expected Class Size: 10-15

Grading: yes pass/fail option, yes fifth course option

Distributions: (D2)

Attributes: PHIL Contemporary Value Theory Courses  PHLH Bioethics + Interpretations of Health

PHIL 228  (F)  Feminist Bioethics  (WS)

Cross-listings:  WGSS 228  STS 228  PHIL 228

Primary Cross-listing

In this course we will explore the ways in which feminist approaches to moral thinking have influenced both the methodology and the content of contemporary bioethics. The first portion of the course will address the emergence of the "Ethics of Care," critically assessing its origins in feminist theory, its development within the context of the caring professions, and its potential as a general approach to bioethical reasoning. The second portion of the course will use feminist philosophy to inform our understanding of the ways in which gender structures the individual's interactions with the health care system. To do this we will explore topics that might traditionally be considered "women's issues" in healthcare, such as medicine and body image (e.g., cosmetic surgery, eating disorders), reproductive and genetic technologies, and research on women and their health care needs. In addition we'll also look at feminist analyses of topics that traditionally have not been regarded as "gendered," such as resource allocation and end of life issues.

Class Format: discussion

Requirements/Evaluation: active participation in class discussions; periodic short papers (2-3 pages); midterm and final paper (5-7 and 7-10 pages, respectively); and one oral presentation

Prerequisites: none, although previous coursework in WGSS is desirable

Enrollment Limit: 19

Enrollment Preferences: prospective and declared majors or concentrators in PHIL, WGSS, STS, and PHLH, especially those who need the course to satisfy major or concentration requirements

Expected Class Size: 19

Grading: yes pass/fail option, yes fifth course option

Unit Notes: meets Contemporary Value Theory requirement only if registration is under PHIL

Distributions: (D2)  (WS)

This course is cross-listed and the prefixes carry the following divisional credit:

WGSS 228 (D2)  STS 228 (D2)  PHIL 228 (D2)

Writing Skills Notes: Students will write periodic short papers (2-3 pages each), a midterm paper (5-7 pages) and a final paper (7-10 pages). Short papers focus on concepts, arguments, and writing skills needed in the midterm and final papers, in which students are expected to describe and evaluate arguments from assigned readings, and to present clear and effective arguments in support of their own ethical positions. Students receive feedback on all papers and have the opportunity to revise midterm and final papers.

Attributes: AMST Critical and Cultural Theory Electives  JLST Interdepartmental Electives  PHIL Contemporary Value Theory Courses  PHLH
PHIL 231  (S)  Ancient Political Thought  

Cross-listings:  PSCI 231  PHIL 231  

Secondary Cross-listing 

The core activity of this seminar is the careful reading and sustained discussion of selected works by Plato and Aristotle, but we will also engage such other thinkers as Epictetus and Augustine, and, from a political and theoretical point of view, selections from the Hebrew Bible and New Testament. Among the questions that we will address: What is justice? How can it be known and pursued? How is political power generated and exercised? What are the social and ethical prerequisites—and consequences—of democracy? Must the freedom or fulfillment of some people require the subordination of others? Does freedom require leading (or avoiding) a political life? What distinguishes that kind of life from others? What does it mean to be "philosophical" or to think "theoretically" about politics? Although we will attempt to engage the readings on their own terms, we will also ask how the vast differences between the ancient world and our own undercut or enhance the texts' ability to illuminate the dilemmas of political life for us. 

Class Format: lecture/discussion 

Requirements/Evaluation:  three 7- to 8-page papers 

Prerequisites:  none 

Enrollment Limit:  25 

Enrollment Preferences:  Political Science majors 

Expected Class Size:  18 

Grading:  yes pass/fail option, yes fifth course option 

Distributions:  (D2) 

This course is cross-listed and the prefixes carry the following divisional credit:  
PSCI 231  (D2) PHIL 231  (D2) 

Attributes:  PSCI Political Theory Courses 

--- 

PHIL 232  (F)  Modern Political Thought  

Cross-listings:  PHIL 232  PSCI 232  

Secondary Cross-listing 

This course is a chronological survey of major works of political theory from the 16th to the 20th century. In discussions and writing, we will explore the diverse visions of modernity and of politics offered by such thinkers as Machiavelli, Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau, Marx, Mill, and Freud. They help us ask: What is freedom? Who is equal? Who should rule? With what limits and justifications? What form of government best serves the people? Who are the people, anyway? And on what grounds can we justify confidence in our provisional answers to such questions? Class will be primarily driven by discussion, often preceded by brief lectures. Attention to the writing process and developing an authorial voice will be a recurrent focus of our work inside and outside the classroom. 

Class Format: discussion 

Requirements/Evaluation:  four formal papers of 5-7 pages; brief informal writing tasks inside and outside of class 

Prerequisites:  none; open to all 

Enrollment Limit:  19 

Enrollment Preferences:  Political Science majors 

Expected Class Size:  19 

Grading:  yes pass/fail option, yes fifth course option
Distributions: (D2)

This course is cross-listed and the prefixes carry the following divisional credit:
PHIL 232 (D2) PSCI 232 (D2)

Attributes: PSCI Political Theory Courses

Not offered current academic year

PHIL 235  (S)  Morality and Partiality: Loyalty, Friendship, Patriotism

The aim of this tutorial is to critically examine the nature, importance, and ethical value of personal attachments and loyalties. Loyalty is frequently expected by family, friends and lovers, and demanded by institutions, religious and political communities, as well as by the state. A person incapable of loyalty is often characterized as fickle, cold, self-serving and sometimes even pathological. However, the status of loyalty as a virtue has always been suspect: it has been argued that it is incompatible with impartiality, fairness and equality, and claimed that it is always exclusionary. So, some relationships with other people--such as friendships, familial ties, love, patriotism--seem to be ethically desirable, central to the quality of our lives, and yet prima facie in tension with the widely held belief that morality requires impartiality and equal treatment of all human beings. Are we ever justified in having more concern, and doing more, for our friends, family, community or nation? Does morality require that we always subordinate our personal relationships to universal principles? Is patriotism incompatible with cosmopolitanism, and if so, which of the two should we value? If loyalty is a virtue, what are the proper limits of its cultivation and expression?

Class Format: tutorial pairs will meet with the instructor for one hour a week

Requirements/Evaluation: tutorial attendance and participation; bi-weekly tutorial papers, each about 5 pages long (totaling 6 per student); bi-weekly oral responses to the paper of the tutorial partner

Prerequisites: none; open to first year students

Enrollment Limit: 10

Enrollment Preferences: Philosophy majors and then sophomores

Expected Class Size: 10

Grading: no pass/fail option, no fifth course option

Distributions: (D2)

Attributes: PHIL Contemporary Value Theory Courses

Not offered current academic year

PHIL 236  (S)  Contemporary Ethical Theory

This course will be an in-depth exploration of central questions in normative ethics, including the following: Which features of actions are morally important and why (e.g., their motive, their intrinsic nature, or their consequences)? When should we give morality priority over our personal commitments and relationships, and why? Are there universal moral principles that apply to all cultures? Are we capable of disinterested altruism, or are we motivated solely by self-interest? By which methods can we answer these questions? We will examine these and related issues by looking closely at two influential moral theories: consequentialism and deontology. While both have important historical roots -- consequentialism in Mill and Sidgwick, deontology in Kant -- we will focus on contemporary developments of these views. In the last few weeks, we'll examine contractualism, which outlines a different approach to these questions.

Class Format: seminar

Requirements/Evaluation: short response papers; an 8- to 10-page midterm paper; a 10- to 12-page final paper

Prerequisites: at least one PHIL course or permission of instructor

Enrollment Limit: 19

Enrollment Preferences: Philosophy majors

Expected Class Size: 10-15

Grading: no pass/fail option, yes fifth course option

Distributions: (D2)

Attributes: PHIL Contemporary Value Theory Courses

Not offered current academic year
PHIL 239  (S)  The Ethics of Artificial Intelligence

Cross-listings:  STS 239  PHIL 239

Primary Cross-listing

We will someday live alongside artificially intelligent beings who equal or exceed us. Commentators ranging from technology magnates to physics geniuses—not to mention decades of apocalyptic science fiction—have urged that that future is nothing short of an existential threat to human beings. Whether this is hyperbole or wise prognostication, it cannot be denied that the rise of AI will be a tectonic shift for culture, technology, and our fundamental sense of ourselves. When AI is fully realized, it is likely to be amongst the most important things to happen to our species. Some challenges we face are broad and about the future, though perhaps not the far future. How can we ensure that AI’s will act morally? Is a world with AI’s overall better or worse for us? How do we create legal and policy frameworks that cover a new kind of thinking being? If they are conscious, will AI’s have dignity and rights? Other questions are pressing and immediate: Artificial intelligence techniques are used today to help decide whether someone gets a bank loan, is eligible to be released on bail, or in need of particular medical treatment. And right now there are autonomous vehicles deciding how to behave in traffic, and autonomous weapons capable of delivering lethal force. Is it moral for us to pass along these sorts of decisions to AI’s? What if they are biased, unbeknownst to us? What if they are more fair? In this course we will engage ethical questions surrounding the seeming inevitability of AI.

Class Format: mixture of lectures and discussion

Requirements/Evaluation:  four short (3- to 4-page) writing assignments and a final essay (8-10 pages)

Prerequisites:  none

Enrollment Limit:  25

Enrollment Preferences:  CSCI or PHIL majors or STS or COGS concentrators

Expected Class Size:  25

Grading:  no pass/fail option,  yes fifth course option

Distributions:  (D2)

This course is cross-listed and the prefixes carry the following divisional credit:

STS 239 (D2) PHIL 239 (D2)

Attributes:  PHIL Contemporary Value Theory Courses

Spring 2020

LEC Section:  01    MW 7:00 pm - 8:15 pm     Joseph L. Cruz

PHIL 240  (F)  Philosophy of Education

Cross-listings:  PHIL 240  INTR 240

Primary Cross-listing

Why are you here? What do you expect to learn? How do you expect to learn? The College Mission Statement says that "Williams seeks to provide the finest possible liberal arts education by nurturing in students the academic and civic virtues, and their related traits of character." How have you already been taught the academic and civic virtues? Where have you been taught them? In school? On the sports field? At home? How did you develop your character? This first-year seminar will examine the philosophy of education through educational autobiographies: works that tell the story of a moral and intellectual education. Each book was chosen by and will be introduced by a professor from a different department, and then Professor of Philosophy Steve Gerrard will continue the discussion.

Requirements/Evaluation:  several short papers

Prerequisites:  none

Enrollment Limit:  12

Enrollment Preferences:  only first-year students

Expected Class Size:  12

Grading:  yes pass/fail option,  no fifth course option

Distributions:  (D2)

This course is cross-listed and the prefixes carry the following divisional credit:

PHIL 240 (D2) INTR 240 (D2)
PHIL 241 (F) Contemporary Metaphysics

In this course, we will examine a number of issues in contemporary metaphysics through a discussion of the nature of kinds. The problem of universals has vexed philosophers at least since the time of Plato. Oscar is a dog and Annie is a dog. Oscar and Annie aren't identical but they have something in common; each of them is a dog, each of them belongs to a single kind and they share the property of being a dog. But what is going on here? We, at least most of us, are happy to say that Oscar and Annie exist. But is there a third entity that we need to countenance: the universal caninity? If we do think that there is such a thing as caninity, what sort of thing is it? If we don't, what accounts for the truth of our judgment that Oscar and Annie have something in common? Scientists often give explanations for the behavior of objects in terms of their properties. What role do properties play in causation, explanation and laws of nature? Finally there are different kinds of kind. Some kinds or properties seem to be pretty natural, e.g. being an electron or a dog. Other kinds seem to be less natural and seem somehow to be socially constructed, e.g. being a work of art, an American or a sausage. But are there really natural kinds? Can we, as Plato put it, "carve nature at the joints", or are all kinds constructed rather than discovered? Furthermore what is involved in the social construction of a kind? Finally, the nature and existence of some kinds is a hotly contested political matter. How should we think about racial kinds or about gender kinds? While we will be concerned to place our discussions of these issues in historical context, most of the reading for the class will consist in articles written by contemporary philosophers.

Class Format: discussion

Requirements/Evaluation: one 10 page midterm paper and one 15 page final paper which will involve draft and revision, possible short response papers, and active participation in class

Prerequisites: one PHIL course; familiarity with formal logic helpful but not required; or permission of instructor

Enrollment Limit: 18

Expected Class Size: 10-15

Grading: yes pass/fail option, yes fifth course option

Distributions: (D2)

Attributes: PHIL Contemp Metaphysics & Epistemology Courses

Not offered current academic year

PHIL 243 (F) The Philosophy of Higher Education: College Controversies

What are the purposes of higher education? What are the purposes of liberal arts colleges in America? What should be the goals of Williams College? We will begin examining these questions by studying the history of controversies in American higher education, concentrating especially on debates about the curriculum. We will then turn to contemporary controversies such as campus free speech. This course is part of the John Hyde Teaching Fellowship.

Requirements/Evaluation: several short papers (20 pages total), longer final paper (12-15 pages)

Prerequisites: none

Enrollment Limit: 20

Enrollment Preferences: seniors, juniors, and sophomores in that order

Expected Class Size: 20

Grading: yes pass/fail option, yes fifth course option

Distributions: (D2)
What ethical standards should guide our individual and societal choices when those choices affect current and future environmental conditions? This course will introduce students to fundamental concepts, methods, and issues in environmental ethics. Initial tutorial meetings will focus on theoretical materials that will background later discussions and will include classic readings from the environmental ethics literature (e.g., Leopold, Taylor, Rolston). Subsequent sessions will pair readings about key concepts with specific cases that raise complex ethical issues, including the concept of moral standing and, e.g., people who do not yet exist, non-human individuals, species, and complex living systems; the concept of moral responsibility and complicity in environmentally damaging practices; the legitimacy of cost-benefit analysis as an environmental policy tool; and the valuation of human lives.

Class Format: tutorial

Requirements/Evaluation: six essays (5-7 pages each) and six carefully prepared oral responses to partners' essays; evaluation will be based on essays, oral responses, and quality of discussion

Prerequisites: ENVI 101 or one course in PHIL

Enrollment Limit: 10

Enrollment Preferences: declared and prospective Environmental Studies majors and concentrators

Expected Class Size: 10

Grading: no pass/fail option, no fifth course option

Unit Notes: meets Value Theory requirement only if registration is under PHIL

Distributions: (D2) (WS)

This course is cross-listed and the prefixes carry the following divisional credit:
ENVI 244 (D2) PHIL 244 (D2)

Writing Skills Notes: Students will write six tutorial papers of 5-7 pages in length, one of which they will revise and submit at the end of the term. In each of the tutorial papers students will describe and evaluate arguments that appear in the assigned readings, and will develop arguments in support of their own ethical positions. Students will receive written and oral feedback, concentrated particularly in the first half of the semester, to improve their ability to present clear and effective written arguments.

Attributes: ENVI Environmental Policy  EVST Culture/Humanities  PHIL Contemporary Value Theory Courses
PHIL 250  (F)  Philosophy of Economics  (WS)
The status of economics as a predictive science has been most prominently brought into question, historically, by three unpredicted yet extremely important economic events: the Great Depression of the 1930s, stagflation of the 1970s, and bursting of the mortgage bubble in 2008. The issue of prediction was also raised by economist Donald McCloskey who, in 1988, asked his fellow economists, "If you're so smart, why ain't you rich?" Some critics find predictive failures of economists unsurprising, given the frequent reliance of the latter on assumptions known to be false (e.g., that economic agents are always selfish, have perfect information, and never make mistakes) and on models that unavoidably ignore potentially relevant factors. Perhaps, then, economics is not primarily a predictive science, but instead a descriptive, historical, and/or mathematical one. In this course, relying on works by economists and philosophers, we examine the status of economics as an academic discipline, focusing on its assumptions, methods, and results.

Requirements/Evaluation:  six 6- to 8-page essays, six 2- to 3-page response papers, participation in discussions
Prerequisites:  none
Enrollment Limit:  10
Enrollment Preferences:  Philosophy majors and potential majors, then Economics majors and potential majors
Expected Class Size:  10
Grading:  no pass/fail option,  no fifth course option
Distributions:  (D2)  (WS)
Writing Skills Notes:  Six 6- to 8-page essays. Students will receive from the instructor timely comments on their writing skills, with suggestions for improvement.
Attributes:  PHIL Contemporary Value Theory Courses

Fall 2019
TUT Section: T1     TBA     Alan White

PHIL 251  (S)  Offensive Art
Cross-listings:  THEA 251  PHIL 251
Primary Cross-listing
Twenty-four centuries ago Plato argued for censorship of art. In the last century New York City mayor Rudy Giuliani attempted to shut down the Brooklyn Museum "Sensations" exhibit because he claimed it offended Christians, and the Cincinnati Contemporary Arts Center was prosecuted for exhibiting allegedly obscene photographs by Robert Mapplethorpe. Just recently, the magazine The Nation apologized for publishing Anders Carlson-Wee's poem adopting the voice of a homeless person, writing "We are sorry for the pain we have caused to the many communities affected by this poem." At Williams College a mural in The Log was temporarily boarded over, Herman Rosse's painting "Carnival of Life" was removed from the '62 Center, and the Theater department cancelled the production of Aleshea Harris' Beast Thing. What should be done about offensive art? What is offensive art? Does it matter who is offended? Does offensive art harm? Is there a difference between being offended and being harmed? Is there a difference between cultural appropriation and cultural appreciation? What are the responsibilities of museum curators and theater producers when presenting art that might offend? Who gets to decide the answer to these questions; indeed, who gets to decide what questions to ask? We will attempt answers by studying classical works (such as Plato's Republic and John Stuart Mill's On Liberty), contemporary articles, and works of art in various media. Trigger Warning: all the works of art studied in this class will be chosen partly because they have offended a significant number of people. You are very likely to be offended by some of the art we discuss. This will be the only trigger warning for the class; if you don't want to be offended then this course is not for you. This course is part of the John Hyde Teaching Fellowship.
Class Format:  Seminar
Requirements/Evaluation:  several short responses (including op-eds on current controversies) and longer final projects (a 12- to 15-page paper or equivalent work in other media)
Prerequisites:  none
Enrollment Limit:  25
Enrollment Preferences:  seniors, juniors, then sophomores in that order
Expected Class Size:  17
Grading:  yes pass/fail option,  yes fifth course option
Materials/Lab Fee:  potential additional material costs if individual students opt for final projects in other media
PHIL 272 (F) Free Will and Responsibility (WS)

Primary Cross-listing

Our practice of holding people responsible seems justified as long as their choices are free. But when does a choice qualify as free? Must it be unaffected by any outside influences? If so, freedom may seem impossible since we're all deeply influenced by factors ranging from the general laws of nature to specific features of our genetic endowment and social environment (including religion, political ideology, and advertising). These affect not only our particular choices but also, more fundamentally, who we are and what we value. The real question, then, seems to be whether, and how, free choice is possible amidst all of these influences. We'll attempt to answer this question by examining recent philosophical work on the nature of free will and responsibility.

Class Format: students meet with the instructor in pairs for roughly an hour each week

Requirements/Evaluation: five 5-page papers and five 2-page papers

Prerequisites: one PHIL course

Enrollment Limit: 10

Enrollment Preferences: current and prospective Philosophy majors

Expected Class Size: 10

Grading: no pass/fail option, no fifth course option

Distributions: (D2) (WS)

This course is cross-listed and the prefixes carry the following divisional credit:

PHIL 272 (D2) JLST 272 (D2)

Writing Skills Notes: Five 5-page papers and five 2-page papers, evenly spaced throughout the semester. Students will receive from the instructor timely comments on their writing skills, with suggestions for improvement.

Attributes: PHIL Contemporary Value Theory Courses

Fall 2019

TUT Section: T1 TBA Melissa J. Barry

PHIL 274 (S) Messing with People: The Ethics of Human Experimentation

The Tuskegee Syphilis Study and Stanley Milgram's Obedience experiments are infamous. Yet, other lesser known experiments are equally important landmarks in research ethics, as well, such as the Willowbrook experiment, in which residents of a state home for mentally impaired children were intentionally infected with a virus that causes hepatitis, and the Kennedy-Krieger Lead Abatement study, which tested the efficacy of a new lead paint removal procedure by housing young children in partially decontaminated homes and testing those children for lead exposure. In this tutorial we'll closely examine a series of contemporary and historical cases of human experimentation (roughly, one case per week) with an eye toward elucidating the moral norms that ought to govern human subjects research. A number of conceptual themes will emerge throughout the course of the term, including notions of exploitation and coercion, privacy and confidentiality, and the balance between public interests and individual rights. Specific issues will include the ethics of placebo research, deception in research, studies of illicit/illegal behavior, genetic research, experimentation with children, pregnant women and fetuses, and persons with diminished mental capacity, among other topics.

Class Format: tutorial; students will meet with the professor in pairs for approximately 75 minutes per week, writing and presenting 5- to 7-page essays, and commenting orally on their partners' essays in alternate weeks

Requirements/Evaluation: evaluations will be based on written work, on biweekly papers, oral commentaries, and tutorial discussions
PHIL 280 (S) Frege, Russell, and the Early Wittgenstein

The last line of Ludwig Wittgenstein's Tractatus famously reads: "Whereof one cannot speak, thereof one must be silent." Are there things that cannot be put into words? What are the limits of language? What is the nature of language? How do logic and language relate? We will examine these (and other questions) in the context of the great philosophical revolution at the beginning of the last century: the linguistic turn and the birth of analytic philosophy. We will see how a focus on language affects our understanding of many traditional philosophical questions, ranging from epistemology and metaphysics to aesthetics and ethics. Our texts will include Gottlob Frege, The Foundations of Arithmetic, Bertrand Russell, Principles of Mathematics, and Ludwig Wittgenstein, Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus. While you're debating whether to take this class, consider the following puzzle. There is a village where the barber shaves (a) all those and (b) only those who do not shave themselves. Now, ask yourself: who shaves the barber? You will see that if the barber does not shave himself, then by condition (a) he does shave himself. And, if the barber does shave himself, then by condition (b) he does not shave himself. Thus, the barber shaves himself if and only if he does not shave himself. See if you can figure out why this is sometimes called a paradox, and then ask yourself what this has to do with our opening questions.

Class Format: seminar
Requirements/Evaluation: two short papers (5 pages) and one longer final paper (12-15 pages)
Prerequisites: at least two PHIL courses; PHIL 202 and 203 recommended
Enrollment Preferences: Philosophy majors, then seniors and juniors of any major
Expected Class Size: 12-15
Grading: yes pass/fail option, yes fifth course option
Distributions: (D2)
Attributes: Linguistics PHIL History Courses
Not offered current academic year

PHIL 281 (S) Philosophy of Religion (WS)

Our goal will be to determine how far reason can justify belief in God. We will examine well-known philosophical arguments for and against the existence of God (including the ontological argument, the cosmological argument, the teleological argument, the argument from religious experience, and the argument from evil). For each argument, we will first look at historically important formulations and then turn to contemporary reformulations. Our aim will be to identify and evaluate the strongest version of each argument. After working through these arguments, we will reflect more generally on the proper roles of reason and faith in justifying religious belief. Near the end of the semester, we'll also examine some evolutionary explanations of religious belief. Our tools in this course will be logic and reason, even when we are trying to determine what the limits of reason might be. Authors will include Plato, Anselm, Aquinas, Pascal, Paley, Hume, Kant, Kierkegaard, and several contemporary philosophers.

Class Format: tutorial; students meet with instructor in pairs for an hour each week; emphasis will be placed on developing skills in reading, interpretation and oral argument as well as critical reasoning and writing
Requirements/Evaluation: five 5-page papers and five 2-page papers
Prerequisites: one PHIL course
Enrollment Limit: 10
Enrollment Preferences: current and prospective Philosophy majors
Expected Class Size: 10
Grading: no pass/fail option, no fifth course option

Distributions: (D2) (WS)

This course is cross-listed and the prefixes carry the following divisional credit:
PHIL 281 (D2) REL 302 (D2)

Writing Skills Notes: Five 5-page papers and five 2-page papers, evenly spaced throughout the semester. Students will receive from the instructor timely comments on their writing skills, with suggestions for improvement.

Attributes: PHIL History Courses

Spring 2020
TUT Section: T1  TBA  Melissa J. Barry

PHIL 286  (F)  Contemporary Systematic Philosophy
Systematic philosophy, also describable as comprehensive theorization, was central to the philosophical enterprise from at least the time of Aristotle until that of Hegel, but has been out of style, in both analytic and continental philosophy, for more than 100 years. This course examines a current attempt to return systematic philosophy to its long-central position. We begin by assessing Alan White's *Toward a Philosophical Theory of Everything* (2014), which, although not yet receiving widespread attention, was described by one reviewer as "a critically important work for all those deeply interested in philosophical issues and their significance for basic human concerns." Because of the scope of systematic philosophy, this course provides students with the opportunity to investigate theories currently under development on a much richer variety of issues than is usual in philosophy courses (which are often restricted to specific subdisciplines of philosophy or to works of historical figures). Among those issues are ones involving semantics, ontology, truth, knowledge, moral and other values, human freedom, beauty, and God.

Class Format: seminar

Requirements/Evaluation: participation, one or more essays

Prerequisites: none

Enrollment Limit: 12

Enrollment Preferences: Philosophy majors and potential Philosophy majors

Expected Class Size: 6

Grading: yes pass/fail option, yes fifth course option

Distributions: (D2)

Attributes: PHIL Contemp Metaphysics & Epistemology Courses

Not offered current academic year

PHIL 288  (F)  Embodiment and Consciousness: A Cross-Cultural Exploration

Cross-listings: PHIL 288  REL 288

Secondary Cross-listing

This course examines some of the central questions raised by the study of the consciousness: the place of intentionality, the role of emotions, the relation with the body, the nature of subjectivity, the scope of reflexivity, the nature of perceptual presence, etc. In confronting these difficult questions, we do not proceed purely theoretically but consider the contributions of various observation-based traditions, from Buddhist psychology and meditative practices to phenomenology to neurosciences. We begin by examining some of the central concepts of Buddhist psychology, its treatment of the mind as a selfless stream of consciousness, its examination of the variety of mental factors and its accounts of the relation between cognition and affects. We also introduce the practice of meditation as a way to observe the mind and raise questions concerning the place of its study in the mind-sciences. We pursue this reflection by examining the views of James, Husserl, Sartre and Merleau-Ponty, particularly as they concern the methods for the study of the mind and the relation between consciousness, reflexivity and the body. In this way, we develop a rich array of analytical tools and observational practices to further our understanding of the mind. But we also question the value of these tools based on first person approaches by relating them to the third person studies of the mind. In this way, we come to appreciate the importance of considering the biology on which mental processes are based and the light that this approach throws on the nature of consciousness. We conclude by considering the relation between first and third person studies of the mind, focusing on the concept of the embodied mind as a fruitful bridge between these different traditions.

Requirements/Evaluation: regular practice of meditation, a class presentation, a short essay (6-pages); a long final research paper (15 pages)
Prerequisites: any introduction to philosophy and at least two upper level courses in PHIL, at least one of which meets the Contemporary Metaphysics or Epistemology distribution requirement for the major, no exceptions;

Enrollment Limit: 18

Enrollment Preferences: Religion and Philosophy majors

Expected Class Size: 18

Grading: yes pass/fail option, no fifth course option

Unit Notes: there is no need to email the professor in advance to indicate interest in the course

Distributions: (D2)

This course is cross-listed and the prefixes carry the following divisional credit:
PHIL 288 (D2) REL 288 (D2)

Attributes: COGS Interdepartmental Electives PHIL Contemp Metaphysics & Epistemology Courses

Fall 2019
SEM Section: 01 M 7:00 pm - 9:40 pm Georges B. Dreyfus, Joseph L. Cruz

PHIL 294 (S) Philosophy and Narrative Fiction

Cross-listings: PHIL 294 COMP 294

Primary Cross-listing

What is it for a novel, a story, a play or a film to be a *philosophical* narrative? It is not enough for it merely to be about a character who happens to be a philosopher; nor is it just that philosophical positions are reviewed in the narrative, as in Gaarder’s *Sophie’s World*. Milan Kundera tried to answer this question by saying that a good philosophical novel does not serve philosophy but, on the contrary, tries to “get hold of a domain that (...) philosophy had kept for itself. There are metaphysical problems, problems of human existence, that philosophy has never known how to grasp in all their concreteness and that only the novel can seize.” If Kundera is right, fictional narratives (such as novels) sometimes do the philosophical work that philosophy cannot do for itself. What kind of work is that, and how is it accomplished? Why can’t argumentative prose—philosophers’ preferred form of expression—clearly say, and moreover prove, what literature, theatre and film illustrate, show and display? One possible answer which we will examine is that, while many philosophers recognize that there are intimate connections between what we believe, feel and do, philosophical argumentation by its very nature appeals to belief alone; narrative art, by contrast, can simultaneously engage our reason, emotions, imagination and will, thus resulting not only in deepening our understanding, but also in transformation of the self. To properly address a number of interrelated questions concerning philosophy in literature and film, and philosophical problems of meaning, interpretation and evaluation of narrative fiction, we will discuss both narrative works of art and theoretical approaches to their analysis. We will consider the ways in which narrative fiction presents and engages its audience in philosophical reflections on personal identity, nature of the self, interpersonal relationships, memory, time, human existence, freedom, and the meaning in life. The choice of literary works and films to be discussed will to some extent depend on students’ interest. Most of the authors will come from this list, however: Sartre, de Beauvoir, Kafka, Dostoyevsky, Thomas Mann, Camus, Ecco, Kundera, Borges, Charlie Kaufman, Bergman, Tarkovsky, Resnais, Kurosawa, Bunuel, Kubrick, Godard, Visconti and Guillermo del Toro. The theoretical aspect of the course will involve close readings of selected articles in contemporary aesthetics, philosophy of literature and philosophy of film.

Class Format: tutorial

Requirements/Evaluation: weekly film screenings on Monday nights (7-10 pm); tutorial attendance and participation; bi-weekly tutorial papers, each about 5 pages long (totaling 6 per student); bi-weekly oral responses to the paper of the tutorial partner

Prerequisites: none

Enrollment Limit: 10

Enrollment Preferences: students who can demonstrate informed interest in the course and who can commit the time that the course will require

Expected Class Size: 10

Grading: no pass/fail option, no fifth course option

Distributions: (D2)

This course is cross-listed and the prefixes carry the following divisional credit:
PHIL 294 (D2) COMP 294 (D1)

Attributes: FMST Core Courses
PHIL 306 (S) The Good Life in Greek and Roman Ethics

Cross-listings: PHIL 306 CLAS 306

Primary Cross-listing

Most thoughtful human beings spend a good deal of time musing about how we ought to live and about what counts as a good life for a human being. The philosophers of ancient Greece and Rome were among the first thinkers to develop rigorous arguments in response to such musings. Much of the moral philosophy produced in Greece and Rome remains as relevant today as when it was written. In this course, we will examine some central texts in ancient Greek and Roman moral philosophy. We will begin by reading some of Plato’s early dialogues and his Republic. We will then turn to Aristotle’s Nicomachean Ethics. We will then examine writings in the Stoic and Epicurean traditions, as well as Cicero’s On the Ends of Good and Evil. As we proceed through the course, we will look at the way in which each thinker characterizes happiness, virtue and the relation between the two. We will also pay close attention to the way in which each of these thinkers takes the practice of philosophy to play a key role in our realization of the good human life. This course is part of the Williams College program at the Berkshire County Jail and House of Corrections and will be held at the jail. Transportation will be provided by the college. The class will be composed equally of Williams students and inmates, and one goal of the course will be to encourage students from different backgrounds to think together about issues of common human concern.

Requirements/Evaluation: several short response pieces; a final paper of 10-15 pages

Prerequisites: none

Enrollment Limit: 9

Enrollment Preferences: juniors & seniors & students who can demonstrate an interest in the subject matter of the class; there will not be any preference purely on the basis of major; final selection for the course will be made on the basis of an interview with the instructor

Expected Class Size: 9

Grading: no pass/fail option, no fifth course option

Distributions: (D2)

This course is cross-listed and the prefixes carry the following divisional credit:

PHIL 306 (D2) CLAS 306 (D2)

Attributes: PHIL History Courses

PHIL 308 (F) Wittgenstein’s "Philosophical Investigations"

Bertrand Russell claimed that Ludwig Wittgenstein was “perhaps the most perfect example I have ever known of genius as traditionally conceived—passionate, profound, intense, and dominating.” Wittgenstein’s two masterpieces, the Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus and the Philosophical Investigations, stand like opposing poles around which schools of twentieth-century analytic philosophy revolve. The Wittgenstein of the Tractatus is known as the “earlier Wittgenstein,” the Wittgenstein of the Investigations is known as the “later Wittgenstein.” This course is an intensive, line-by-line study of the Investigations—one of the greatest (and thus, one of the most controversial) books in the history of philosophy. Aside from its overwhelming influence on 20th and 21st century philosophy and intellectual culture, any book which contains the remark, “if a lion could talk, we could not understand him,” deserves serious attention.

Requirements/Evaluation: one short midterm paper (5-7 pages) and one longer final paper (12-15 pages)

Prerequisites: at least two Philosophy Courses, PHIL 202 highly recommended

Enrollment Limit: 19

Expected Class Size: 12

Grading: yes pass/fail option, yes fifth course option

Distributions: (D2)

Attributes: Linguistics PHIL History Courses

PHIL 310 (F) Wittgenstein’s Later Philosophy (WS)

Ludwig Wittgenstein (1889-1951) is probably the greatest philosopher of the 20th century. His later work, best known through posthumously published
Philosophical Investigations continues to influence contemporary thinking about language, mind, action, knowledge, ethics, religion, aesthetics, culture, and of course, philosophy itself. Understanding later Wittgenstein is thus vital for engaging in contemporary philosophy, but neither the interpretation nor the evaluation of his thought is straightforward or easy. Later Wittgenstein is a controversial, polarizing figure; but serious reading of his work is invariably intellectually enriching and fertile. This tutorial aims to provide students with the skills necessary for careful, serious and thorough reading of Wittgenstein’s later philosophy. In the first part of the course, we will read Wittgenstein’s Philosophical Investigations, one of the greatest books ever written. In the second part of the course, we will read On Certainty, and selections from other of Wittgenstein’s posthumously published works: Zettel, Philosophical Grammar, Remarks on the Philosophy of Psychology, Culture and Value, Lectures and Conversations on Aesthetics, Psychology and Religious Belief, and The Big Typescript. Throughout the course, we will consult and discuss the important secondary literature on Wittgenstein, and analyze different philosophical presuppositions and goals that motivate particular readings. The central topics of the course will be: meaning, rule following, human languages; private experiences and other minds; intention and action; knowledge and skepticism; and especially, the methods and nature of philosophy.

**Requirements/Evaluation:** tutorial attendance and participation; bi-weekly tutorial papers, each about 5 pages long (totaling 6 per student); bi-weekly oral responses to the paper of the tutorial partner

**Prerequisites:** two Philosophy courses

**Enrollment Limit:** 10

**Enrollment Preferences:** preference will be given to students who already took a course on Wittgenstein, for example, PHIL 309

**Expected Class Size:** 10

**Grading:** no pass/fail option, no fifth course option

**Distributions:** (D2) (WS)

**Writing Skills Notes:** Students will write two short (about 800 words) seminar papers; five 5-7 pages long papers; five 2-3 pages long comments on their tutorial partner's papers; and a final paper (also 5-7 pages long) which will be a revision of one of the previously written papers. Students will get regular feedback from their tutorial partner and from the instructor on the substance of their work as well as on their oral and writing skills, with suggestions for improvement.

**Attributes:** Linguistics PHIL History Courses

---

PHIL 312 (S) Philosophical Implications of Modern Physics (QFR)

**Cross-listings:** PHIL 312 SCST 312 PHYS 312

**Secondary Cross-listing**

Some of the discoveries made by physicists over the last century seem to show that our common sense views are deeply at odds with our most sophisticated and best confirmed scientific theories. The course will present the essential ideas of relativity theory and quantum theory and explore their implications for philosophy. We will ask, for example, what these theories tell us about the nature of space, time, probability and causality.

**Requirements/Evaluation:** attendance, participation, problem sets, exams, six 1- to 2-page papers and a 12- to 15-page term paper

**Prerequisites:** MATH 140, high-school physics, and either a 200-level course in PHIL or a 100-level course in PHYS

**Enrollment Limit:** 20

**Enrollment Preferences:** Philosophy majors and Physics majors

**Expected Class Size:** 20

**Grading:** yes pass/fail option, yes fifth course option

**Distributions:** (D3) (QFR)

**This course is cross-listed and the prefixes carry the following divisional credit:**

PHIL 312 (D3) SCST 312 (D3) PHYS 312 (D3)

**Attributes:** PHIL Contemp Metaphysics & Epistemology Courses

Not offered current academic year

---

PHIL 315 (F) Kant’s “Critique of Pure Reason”
Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* is perhaps the most significant text in the history of philosophy. It puts an end to the Early Modern traditions of Rationalism and Empiricism, and it stands at the beginning of both the Analytic and Continental traditions in contemporary philosophy. Love it or hate it, you cannot ignore it. In this course, we will study the most important and influential chapters of the Critique with the help of some secondary literature.

**Requirements/Evaluation:** students will be required to participate actively in discussion and write a number of papers

**Prerequisites:** PHIL 202

**Enrollment Limit:** 15

**Enrollment Preferences:** Philosophy majors

**Expected Class Size:** 10

**Grading:** yes pass/fail option, yes fifth course option

**Distributions:** (D2)

**Attributes:** PHIL History Courses

Not offered current academic year

---

**PHIL 321 (F) Introduction to Critical Theory** (DPE) (WS)

**Cross listings:** WGSS 322 PHIL 321

**Primary cross-listing**

"Dare to know! Have courage to use your own reason—that is the motto of Enlightenment." Thus the 18th century German philosopher Immanuel Kant exhorts his contemporaries to muster the courage to cultivate their capacity for reason. Modern faith in the prospects of universal human dignity, rational autonomy, the rights of man, individual liberty, democracy, open scientific inquiry and social and political progress depend upon it. Yet from its inception and continuing into the 19th and 20th centuries we find the promise of Enlightenment challenged by colonialist expansion, the rise of nationalism and the persistence of racism, sexism, genocide, terrorism, and religious extremism as well as the emergence of wars of mass destruction, environmental degradation, and the potential for manipulation of populations by consumerist mass media. Can the promise of Enlightenment be redeemed? Should it be? Among the possible topics addressed will be: criticizing capitalism, alienation and objectification, progress and freedom, the entanglements of power and reason, radical liberalism, the future of democracy as well as post-structuralist, post-colonial, feminist and anti-racist critiques of the Frankfurt School. Readings may include historical as well as contemporary figures such as: Kant, Freud, Horkheimer, Adorno, Marcuse, Habermas, McCarthy, Honneth, Fraser, Amy Allen, Foucault, Ranciere, Achilles Mbembe, Judith Butler, Wendy Brown, Spivak, and Charles Mills, among others.

**Class Format:** students will work in pairs and meet for 75 minutes each week with the professor

**Requirements/Evaluation:** each student will write and present five 5- to 6-page paper every other week and a commentary on their partner's essay on alternate weeks; evaluations are based on written work as well as level of preparation and intellectual engagement in tutorial meetings

**Prerequisites:** PHIL 202, Kant course, or permission of instructor

**Enrollment Limit:** 10

**Enrollment Preferences:** Philosophy majors and students with background in political theory, feminist theory, or post-colonial theory

**Expected Class Size:** 10

**Grading:** no pass/fail option, no fifth course option

**Distributions:** (D2) (DPE) (WS)

**This course is cross-listed and the prefixes carry the following divisional credit:**

WGSS 322 (D2) PHIL 321 (D2)

**Writing Skills Notes:** Tutorial format requires significant writing (six 5-page papers), weekly commentary on writing, and instructor comments on papers.

**Difference, Power, and Equity Notes:** In this course power, differences, and overcoming injustice, inequality, and domination are central topics.

**Attributes:** PHIL History Courses WGSS Theory Courses

---

Fall 2019

TUT Section: T1 TBA Jana Sawicki
PHIL 328  (S)  Kant's Ethics

Although Kant initially planned for his magnum opus to comprise theoretical and practical chapters, his metaphysics and epistemology take up all of his Critique of Pure Reason while his ethics is spread out over a series of works—Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals, Critique of Practical Reason, and Religion within the Boundaries of Mere Reason. These latter writings of Kant's had a tremendous influence on the development of subsequent moral philosophy and indeed set the stage for contemporary discussions of the nature of practical reason, motivation, freedom, and morality. Our seminar will have two aims: (1) to reconstruct the single most compelling moral theory from Kant's various ethical writings, and (2) to trace the influence of Kant's ethics in contemporary philosophy.

Requirements/Evaluation:  two 8-page seminar papers and a 12-page final paper

Prerequisites:  two courses in PHIL (including a 100-level PHIL course; PHIL 201 or 202 recommended); or permission from the instructors

Enrollment Limit:  20

Enrollment Preferences:  Philosophy majors

Expected Class Size:  15

Grading:  no pass/fail option, no fifth course option

Distributions:  (D2)

Attributes:  PHIL History Courses

Not offered current academic year

PHIL 332  (S)  Aristotle's Metaphysics

Cross-listings:  CLAS 332  PHIL 332

Primary Cross-listing

In this course we will study Aristotle's Metaphysics concentrating of books gamma-theta. Aristotle sets out to study being qua being, or what is insofar as it is. The thoughts that Aristotle expresses in these books were instrumental in setting an intellectual agenda that dominated western thought through the Middle Ages and provided the backdrop against which the modern philosophical tradition arose. Furthermore, many of the issues that Aristotle takes up in these books remain of central importance in contemporary philosophy. Our main goal in this course is to work our way through Aristotle's text which can be extremely daunting, and to reconstruct his central positions and his arguments for these positions. We will also read selections from the vast secondary literature on Aristotle's Metaphysics.

Class Format:  seminar

Requirements/Evaluation:  discussion leadership, weekly short papers, term paper

Prerequisites:  PHIL 201, CLAS 203

Enrollment Limit:  12

Enrollment Preferences:  Philosophy and Classics majors

Expected Class Size:  8-10

Grading:  no pass/fail option, no fifth course option

Distributions:  (D2)

This course is cross-listed and the prefixes carry the following divisional credit:

CLAS 332 (D1) PHIL 332 (D2)

Attributes:  PHIL History Courses

Spring 2020

SEM Section: 01    TR 9:55 am - 11:10 am    Keith E. McPartland

PHIL 337  (F)  Justice in Health Care

Justice is a notoriously complex and elusive philosophical concept, the conditions of which are even more difficult to articulate within real world institutions and contexts than in the abstract. In this course we'll explore justice as a fundamental moral principle and as a desideratum of the US health care system. The first portion of the course will be devoted to considering general theories of justice as well as alternative conceptions of justice
within the health care context. This will provide the background for subsequent examination of specific topics, which may include, among others: justice in health care financing and reform, which may itself include an analysis of the Affordable Care Act or current legislative proposals; justice in health care rationing, with particular attention to the relationship between rationing criteria and gender, "race," disability, and age; justice in the procurement and allocation of organs for transplantation; obesity and personal responsibility for illness; and justice in medical research, including "double standards" for research conducted in less developed countries.

Requirements/Evaluation: biweekly papers, oral commentaries, and tutorial discussions

Prerequisites: none

Enrollment Limit: 10

Enrollment Preferences: Philosophy majors, Public Health concentrators, and students committed to taking the tutorial

Expected Class Size: 10

Grading: no pass/fail option, no fifth course option

Distributions: (D2

Attributes: JLST Interdepartmental Electives PHIL Contemporary Value Theory Courses PHLH Bioethics + Interpretations of Health

Not offered current academic year

PHIL 338  (F) Intermediate Logic  (QFR)

Cross-listings: MATH 338 PHIL 338

Primary Cross-listing

In this course, we will begin with an in-depth study of the theory of first-order logic. We will first get clear on the formal semantics of first-order logic and various ways of thinking about formal proof: natural deduction systems, semantic tableaux, axiomatic systems and sequent calculi. Our main goal will be to prove things about this logical system rather than to use this system to think about ordinary language arguments. In this way the goal of the course is significantly different from that of Logic and Language (PHIL 203). Students who have take PHIL 203 will have a good background for this class, but students who are generally comfortable with formal systems need not have taken PHIL 203. We will prove soundness and completeness, compactness, the Lowenheim-Skolem theorems, undecidability and other important results about first-order logic. As we go through these results, we will think about the philosophical implications of first-order logic. From there, we will look at extensions of and/or alternatives to first-order logic. Possible additional topics would include: modal logic, the theory of counterfactuals, alternative representations of conditionals, the use of logic in the foundations of arithmetic and Godel's Incompleteness theorems. Student interest will be taken into consideration in deciding what additional topics to cover.

Requirements/Evaluation: problem sets and exams

Prerequisites: some class in which student has studied formal reasoning

Enrollment Limit: 20

Enrollment Preferences: Philosophy majors; juniors and seniors

Expected Class Size: 15

Grading: yes pass/fail option, yes fifth course option

Distributions: (D2) (QFR)

This course is cross-listed and the prefixes carry the following divisional credit:
MATH 338 (D3) PHIL 338 (D2)

Quantitative/Formal Reasoning Notes: This is a class in Formal Logic. PHIL 203 satisfies the QFR requirement. If anything, this class will be significantly more formal.

Attributes: Linguistics

Fall 2019

SEM Section: 01  MR 1:10 pm - 2:25 pm  Keith E. McPartland

PHIL 340  (S) Locke and Leibniz

Modern philosophy centers on two debates: Empiricism vs. Rationalism and Realism vs. Idealism. Locke is the first great Empiricist Realist, and Leibniz the greatest Rationalist Idealist. The debate between Empiricism and Rationalism concerns whether all our knowledge derives from
experience, or any is innate. The debate between Realism and Idealism concerns whether reality is composed of mind-independent matter, or mind-like substances. Leibniz wrote his New Essays in 1704 as a critical response to Locke's Essay of 1690. He hoped it would occasion a public debate between Locke and himself, and prompt the intellectual community to decide, once and for all, between Empiricism and Rationalism, Realism and Idealism, and on related issues concerning the mind, language, truth, God, natural kinds, causation, and freedom. The debate never transpired - indeed, Leibniz suppressed his New Essays - because of Locke's death in 1705. This tutorial will bring to life the debate between Locke and Leibniz, and enable students to reach their own conclusions about Empiricism vs. Rationalism, Realism vs. Idealism, and related issues.

Class Format: tutorial

Requirements/Evaluation: weekly tutorial papers and response essays

Prerequisites: PHIL 202 History of Modern Philosophy, or instructor's permission

Enrollment Limit: 10

Enrollment Preferences: preference to Philosophy majors

Expected Class Size: 10

Grading: no pass/fail option, no fifth course option

Distributions: (D2)

Attributes: PHIL History Courses

Not offered current academic year

PHIL 360  (F)  The Political Thought of Frantz Fanon  (WS)

Cross-listings: LEAD 360  PHIL 360  PSCI 370  AFR 360

Secondary Cross-listing

Martinican psychiatrist, philosopher, and revolutionary Frantz Fanon was among the leading critical theorists and Africana thinkers of the twentieth century. Fanon ushered in the decolonial turn in critical theory, a move calling on those both within and outside of Europe to challenge the coloniality of the age and to forge a new vision of politics in the postcolonial period. This course is an advanced seminar devoted to a comprehensive examination of Fanon's political thought. We will begin with an analysis of primary texts by Fanon and end by considering how Fanon has been interpreted by his contemporaries as well as activists and critical theorists writing today.

Requirements/Evaluation: attendance and participation, weekly online reading response papers, a class presentation, two 7-page essays, and one 20-page final research paper

Prerequisites: none

Enrollment Limit: 19

Enrollment Preferences: Africana Studies concentrators, Leadership Studies concentrators, and Political Science majors

Expected Class Size: 10

Grading: no pass/fail option, yes fifth course option

Distributions: (D2)  (WS)

This course is cross-listed and the prefixes carry the following divisional credit:

LEAD 360 (D2) PHIL 360 (D2) PSCI 370 (D2) AFR 360 (D2)

Writing Skills Notes: Students write weekly online reading response papers, two 7-page essays, and one 20-page final research paper. Students receive written feedback from me throughout, meet with me 1-on-1 to discuss 7-page essays to then revise/re-submit and also receive written feedback before final submission. Students will receive from the instructor timely comments on their writing skills, with suggestions for improvement.

Attributes: AFR Core Electives  AMST Comp Studies in Race, Ethnicity, Diaspora  AMST Critical and Cultural Theory Electives  PSCI Political Theory Courses

Fall 2019

SEM Section: 01  MR 1:10 pm - 2:25 pm  Neil Roberts

PHIL 364  (S)  Mental Health and Illness: Philosophical Considerations

Cross-listings: PHIL 364  STS 364
This course will raise and discuss a number of philosophical questions concerning our current understanding of mental health and mental illness. We will begin by examining the general concepts of health and disease, and then apply them to human psychology. Throughout the course, our focus will be on the best theoretical and practical knowledge we now have to diagnose, explain, and alleviate mental illness. Some of the questions that we will discuss are: What is psychopathology and what are its causes? Is it possible to have systematic knowledge of subjective experience? If so, is that knowledge importantly different in kind or in rigor from the knowledge we gain through physics, chemistry or geology? Are there metaphysical and ideological assumptions in contemporary psychiatry, and if so, could and should they be avoided? What is the basis on which current psychiatric diagnostic manuals are organized? Is that principle of organization justifiable or not? Do particular case histories offer good explanations of psychopathology? In framing and answering these questions, we will discuss subjective experience (or phenomenology) of mental illness; holism vs. reductionism; functional, historical and structural explanations of psychopathology; theory formation, evidence, and the role of values in psychology and psychiatry; the diversity and disunity of psychotherapeutic approaches; relationship between knowers and the known; and relationship between theoretical knowledge in psychiatry and the practices of healing.

Class Format: Seminar

Requirements/Evaluation: several writing assignments, evenly spaced throughout the semester

Prerequisites: two philosophy courses; or one philosophy and one STS course; or consent of the instructor

Enrollment Limit: 20

Enrollment Preferences: students who took Philosophy of Science or Philosophy of Mind; Philosophy and Psychology majors

Expected Class Size: 20

Grading: no pass/fail option, yes fifth course option

Distributions: (D2)

This course is cross-listed and the prefixes carry the following divisional credit:

PHIL 364 (D2) STS 364 (D2)

Attributes: PHIL Contemp Metaphysics & Epistemology Courses

Spring 2020

SEM Section: 01 MR 1:10 pm - 2:25 pm Bojana Mladenovic

PHIL 379 (F) American Pragmatism

Cross-listings: AMST 379 PHIL 379

Primary Cross-listing

Along with jazz, pragmatism stands as the greatest uniquely American contribution to world culture. As the music wails in the background, we will study the classic pragmatists: William James, C. S. Peirce, and John Dewey. We will continue with the contemporary inheritors of the tradition: Cornel West, Richard Rorty, and Hilary Putnam. Although it has influenced both analytic and continental philosophy, pragmatism is a powerful third philosophical movement. Always asking what practical difference would it make, our authors investigate the central questions and disputes of philosophy, from epistemology and metaphysics to ethics and religion. Rather than seeing philosophy as an esoteric discipline, the pragmatic philosophers (with the possible exception of Peirce) see philosophy as integral to our culture and see themselves as public intellectuals.

Requirements/Evaluation: final paper, several short assignments

Prerequisites: at least two PHIL courses

Enrollment Limit: 25

Enrollment Preferences: Philosophy and American Studies majors, then seniors and juniors of any major

Expected Class Size: 12-15

Grading: yes pass/fail option, yes fifth course option

Distributions: (D2)

This course is cross-listed and the prefixes carry the following divisional credit:

AMST 379 (D2) PHIL 379 (D2)

Attributes: AMST Critical and Cultural Theory Electives PHIL History Courses TEAC Related Courses

Not offered current academic year
PHIL 380 (F)  Relativism
The aim of the course is to survey, analyze and discuss many varieties of relativism—semantic, epistemic, ontological and moral—from Plato's *Theaetetus* to contemporary social constructivism. We will pay special attention to the structure of arguments for and against relativism, as well as to the philosophical motivations and perceived consequences of its endorsement or rejection. We will thus be led to discuss some of the concepts common to epistemology, metaphysics and ethics: reason, justification, objectivity, understanding, reality and truth. Some of the questions we will consider are: Are moral standards relative to cultural frameworks? Are there incompatible but equally true ways of describing the world? Is rationality relative to cultural norms? Is relativism a form of skepticism? Is it forced on people who endorse cultural pluralism as their political ideal as the only tenable philosophical position? Our readings will include the relevant works of Plato, Sextus Empiricus, Carnap, Quine, Davidson, Goodman, Elgin, Hacking, Krausz, Foot, and Williams, among others.

Class Format: seminar
Requirements/Evaluation: class attendance, preparedness and presentation; weekly small group discussions and one or two group presentations in class; three short writing assignments (1-2 pgs. each) and three 5 pages long papers
Prerequisites: two philosophy courses, or consent of the instructor
Enrollment Limit: 19
Enrollment Preferences: Philosophy majors and intended majors
Expected Class Size: 7-10
Grading: yes pass/fail option, yes fifth course option
Distributions: (D2)
Attributes: PHIL Contemp Metaphysics & Epistemology Courses
Not offered current academic year

PHIL 388 (S)  Consciousness
The nature of consciousness remains a fundamental mystery of the universe. Our internal, felt experience—what chocolate tastes like to oneself, what it is like to see the color red, or, more broadly, what it is like to have a first person, waking perspective at all—resists explanation in any terms other than the conscious experience itself in spite of centuries of intense effort by philosophers and, more recently, by scientists. As a result, some prominent researchers propose that the existence of consciousness requires a revision of basic physics, while others (seemingly desperately) deny that consciousness exists at all. Those positions remain extreme, but the challenge that consciousness poses is dramatic. It is at the same time the most intimately known fact of our humanity and science's most elusive puzzle. In this tutorial we will read the contemporary literature on consciousness. We will concentrate both on making precise the philosophical problem of consciousness and on understanding the role of the relevant neuroscientific and cognitive research. Tutorial partners will have an opportunity to spend the end of the semester working on a special topic of their choosing including, for instance, consciousness and free will, pain and anesthesia, consciousness and artificial intelligence, or disorders of consciousness.

Class Format: expect several short lectures by the instructor over the course of the semester where all the tutorial members convene
Requirements/Evaluation: participants will present substantial written work in the tutorial every other week, and will be responsible for commenting on their tutorial partner's work on off weeks
Prerequisites: any introduction to philosophy and at least two upper level courses in PHIL, at least one of which meets the Contemporary Metaphysics or Epistemology distribution requirement for the major, no exceptions; no need to email the professor in advance
Enrollment Limit: 10
Enrollment Preferences: Philosophy majors, Neuroscience or Cognitive Science concentrators; open to sophomores; every effort will be made to pair students according to similar or complementary background
Expected Class Size: 10
Grading: no pass/fail option, no fifth course option
Distributions: (D2)
Attributes: COGS Interdepartmental Electives PHIL Contemp Metaphysics & Epistemology Courses
Not offered current academic year
PHIL 401 (F) Senior Seminar: Contemporary Moral Psychology and Virtue Ethic

The seminar will focus on contemporary philosophical work on practical and intellectual virtues considered indispensable for a good, meaningful human life. We will begin by reading selections from seminal ethical writings by Plato, Aristotle and Hume, then move on to the 20th century revival of eudaimonistic and sentimentalist traditions of virtue ethics. Special stress will be placed on discussing the nature of virtues such as integrity, empathy, self-knowledge, authenticity and emotional maturity, and on articulating realistic psychological and social preconditions for their development.

Requirements/Evaluation: active participation in class discussion; seminar presentations; 10 weekly several short papers; a 12- to 15-page final paper

Prerequisites: required of all senior Philosophy majors
Enrollment Limit: 15
Enrollment Preferences: enrollment is limited to senior Philosophy majors
Expected Class Size: 8-10
Grading: no pass/fail option, no fifth course option
Distributions: (D2)

Not offered current academic year

PHIL 401 (F) Senior Seminar: Skepticism

In this course we will examine and evaluate some of the most important historical and contemporary skeptical arguments.

Requirements/Evaluation: short (750 word) weekly seminar papers, in-class colloquium presentation, final paper (3000-4000 words)

Prerequisites: required of, and open only to, senior Philosophy majors
Enrollment Limit: none
Enrollment Preferences: senior Philosophy majors only
Expected Class Size: 16
Grading: no pass/fail option, no fifth course option
Distributions: (D2)

Fall 2019
SEM Section: 01  W 1:10 pm - 3:50 pm  Joseph L. Cruz

PHIL 491 (F) Senior Essay: Philosophy

This course involves Independent Study under the supervision of a member of the department. The objective is the presentation and writing of a senior essay (maximum 40 pages).

Grading: no pass/fail option, yes fifth course option
Distributions: (D2)

Fall 2019
HON Section: 01  TBA  Jana Sawicki

PHIL 493 (F) Senior Thesis: Philosophy

This course involves independent study under the supervision of a member of the department. The objective is the preparation and writing of a senior thesis (maximum 75 pages). This is part of a full-year thesis (493-494).

Grading: no pass/fail option, yes fifth course option
Distributions: (D2)

Fall 2019
HON Section: 01  TBA  Jana Sawicki
PHIL 494  (S)  Senior Thesis: Philosophy
This course involves independent study under the supervision of a member of the department. The objective is the preparation and writing of a senior thesis (maximum 75 pages). This is part of a full-year thesis (493-494).

Class Format: independent study
Grading: no pass/fail option, yes fifth course option
Distributions: (D2)

Spring 2020
HON Section: 01    TBA     Jana Sawicki

PHIL 497  (F)  Independent Study: Philosophy
Philosophy independent study.

Grading: yes pass/fail option, yes fifth course option
Distributions: (D2)

Fall 2019
IND Section: 01    TBA     Jana Sawicki

PHIL 498  (S)  Independent Study: Philosophy
Philosophy independent study.

Class Format: independent study
Grading: yes pass/fail option, yes fifth course option
Distributions: (D2)

Spring 2020
IND Section: 01    TBA     Jana Sawicki

Winter Study -------------------------------------------------------

PHIL 11  (W)  Philosophy of Chess
Chess is one of the noblest and most fascinating of human endeavors. We will examine chess in many of its facets: its history, philosophy and literature. We will look at the art of chess and the art that chess has inspired. Above all, we will work together on improving our playing skills: we will study chess openings, middle games and endgames, and engage in continual tournament play. Evaluation will be based on class participation and problem assignments.

Requirements/Evaluation: final project or presentation
Prerequisites: all students should know the rules of chess and be able to read chess notation
Enrollment Limit: 20
Enrollment Preferences: students will be selected according to playing strength, as indicated by USCF ratings, results in the College chess club, or other measures
Grading: pass/fail only

Winter 2020
LEC Section: 01    TWR 1:00 pm - 3:50 pm     Steven B. Gerrard
PHIL 14 (W) Ethics of Technology

Cross-listings: CSCI 14 PHIL 14 STS 14

Primary Cross-listing

A prominent company recently realized the machine-learning algorithm trained on its past hiring data had learned a bias against female candidates and so was unsuitable for resume evaluation. But given competing definitions of fairness, how should we decide what it means for an algorithm to be unbiased? Machine vision algorithms are systematically less likely to recognize faces of people of color. Since many face recognition algorithms are used for surveillance, would improving these algorithms promote justice? Deep fakes may pose serious challenges to democratic discourse, as faked videos of political leaders making incendiary statements cast doubt on the provenance of real videos. Do the researchers developing these algorithms, often academics funded by National Science Foundation grants, have an obligation to desist? In a field filled with such vexing questions, the ethical issue most commonly addressed by the media is whether a self-driving car should swerve to hit one person in order to avoid hitting two. In this class, we will go beyond the headlines to explore the ethics of technology. We will discuss issues such as transparency, bias and fairness, surveillance, automation and work, the politics of artifacts, the epistemology of deep fakes, and more. Our discussion will rely on articles from the course packet, enlivened by discussions with experts in the field over Skype. Students will apply their ethical knowledge to write multiple newspaper length op-eds arguing for their views. If students choose to submit these op-eds for publication, the instructor will coach them on appropriate procedures and venues. Adjunct Instructor Bio: Kathleen Creel ’10 is an advanced doctoral student in the Department of History & Philosophy of Science at the University of Pittsburgh. Her research focuses on epistemic and ethical issues in computer science and its scientific applications, such as transparency in machine learning and the ability of algorithmic decisions to provide reasons.

Requirements/Evaluation: 3 op-eds for a total of 10 pages

Prerequisites: none

Enrollment Limit: 15

Enrollment Preferences: based on a written paragraph expressing interest

Grading: pass/fail only

Materials/Lab Fee: $20

This course is cross-listed and the prefixes carry the following divisional credit:
CSCI 14 PHIL 14 STS 14

Winter 2020

LEC Section: 01    MWR 1:00 pm - 3:50 pm    Kathleen Creel

PHIL 19 (W) Living a Good Life: Insights from Philosophy and the Science of Human Nature

Cross-listings: PHIL 19 PSYC 19

Primary Cross-listing

This course pairs central test from the classical and contemporary Western philosophical tradition with recent findings in cognitive science and related fields. In addition, life-long learners from the Berkshire Osher Life-Long Learning Institute will be paired with Williams students from all years and all readings from classical and contemporary western philosophy, and recent findings in the cognitive sciences will provide a context for intergenerational participants from the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute and Williams College to explore promising answers to fundamental questions like the following: What makes life most worth living? What is happiness? What are the components of human flourishing and how can they be best secured for as many people as possible, now and in the future? What kinds of answers can we anticipate from philosophical reflection and empirical research? Required reading: Selections from Plato Crito, The Republic and Aristotle Nicomachean Ethics; articles from psychology journals; books available at the college bookstore: Thomas Hurka The Best Things in Life; Jonathan Haidt The Happiness Hypothesis; Martin Seligman Learned Optimism; Williams MacAskill Doing Good Better. Adjunct Instructor Bio: Virginia O'Leary recede her Ph.D. in Social Psychology at Wayne State University in 1969. Her early research was on women and work. Later she focused on resilience and thriving in the face of adversity and gender in cross-cultural context. Adjunct Instructor Bio: Tom Hodgson received his MA in philosophy from Yale University, after majoring in philosophy and in religion at Williams. He taught philosophy and coached various sports at Phillips Academy for 40 years, helped found the urban squash program in Lawrence, MA, and directed summer programs in Kunming, China. He currently coaches squash at Williams.

Requirements/Evaluation: 10-page paper; short paper and final project or presentation

Prerequisites: none

Enrollment Limit: 15
**Enrollment Preferences:** lottery 15 williams students 15 OLI students

**Grading:** pass/fail only

**Materials/Lab Fee:** $50 and cost of books

**This course is cross-listed and the prefixes carry the following divisional credit:**

PHIL 19 PSYC 19

---

**Winter 2020**

**LEC Section:** 01  MR 10:00 am - 12:50 pm  Tom Hodgson, Virginia E. O'Leary

**PHIL 25 (W)  Eye Care and Culture in Nicaragua**

We will spend around ten days in Nicaragua, chiefly in the Atlantic Coast Autonomous Regions. Almost all of the days in those regions will be spent in clinics, where student--in conjunction with optometrists who volunteer their time for the trip--will administer eye exams, write prescriptions, and distribute glasses. While in Nicaragua, the students will keep detailed journals that they will complete following their return to Williamstown. They will interact with Nicaraguans during the eye clinics, and will have opportunities for speaking with them during evenings. Students will also be required to attend organizational and training meetings and to complete a number of relevant readings prior to the trip. We will spend nine days in Nicaragua, chiefly in the Atlantic Coast Autonomous Regions. Almost all of the days in those regions will be spent in clinics, where students--in conjunction with the optometrists (usually three) who volunteer their time for the trip--will administer eye exams, write prescriptions, and distribute glasses. While in Nicaragua, the students will keep detailed journals that they will complete following their return to Williamstown. They will interact with Nicaraguans during the eye clinics, and will have opportunities for speaking with them during evenings.

**Requirements/Evaluation:** class participation and journals as described above, along with on-site observation of the students¿ participation in the eye clinics

**Prerequisites:** none, though it is helpful to include three to six students who are fluent in Spanish

**Enrollment Limit:** 12

**Enrollment Preferences:** students will submit applications indicating why they want to take the course

**Grading:** pass/fail only

**Materials/Lab Fee:** $3,350

**Attributes:** EXPE Experiential Education Courses  TRVL Winter Study Travel Course

---

**Winter 2020**

**TVL Section:** 01  Cancelled

**PHIL 26 (W)  Morocco**

Students spend winter study in Morocco, a country at the intersection of the Middle East, Africa, and Europe. Threads of Islam, Arab traditions, and the heritage of the native Berber people are woven into a distinctive cultural tapestry, while traces of French colonialism can still be seen in the political and social structure. Travel there is a powerful way to introduce intellectual themes that require and reward a subtle blend of insight from history, literature, political science, religion, and philosophy. Students spend the first 8-10 days studying at the Center for Cross Cultural Learning (CCCL) in Rabat, attending lectures by local university faculty on various aspects of Moroccan history and culture, and taking introductory lessons in Moroccan Arabic. During this period students live with Moroccan host families in the Rabat medina. In the final week of the course, students travel in the interior of Morocco, exploring contemporary urban centers such Fez, Marrakesh, and Casablanca along with remote Berber villages in the Atlas Mountains. Evaluation based on active participation in all lectures and language instruction; a 10- to 15-page research paper before the trip on some facet of Moroccan culture (e.g., politics, religion, literature, history, architecture, gender relations); a 5-page reflective addendum to the paper after returning from Morocco.

**Requirements/Evaluation:** 10-page paper

**Prerequisites:** none

**Enrollment Limit:** 12

**Enrollment Preferences:** 1-page essay describing background and interests in the course; interviews

**Grading:** pass/fail only
**Materials/Lab Fee:** $3,600.

**Attributes:** TRVL Winter Study Travel Course

Winter 2020

TVL Section: 01    TBA    Melissa J. Barry, Jana Sawicki

**PHIL 30 (W) Senior Essay: Philosophy**

Philosophy senior essay.

**Class Format:** senior essay

**Grading:** pass/fail only

Winter 2020

HON Section: 01    TBA    Jana Sawicki

**PHIL 31 (W) Senior Thesis or Essay: Philosophy**

To be taken by students registered for Philosophy 491 or 493-494.

**Class Format:** thesis

**Grading:** pass/fail only

Winter 2020

HON Section: 01    TBA    Jana Sawicki

**PHIL 99 (W) Independent Study: Philosophy**

Open to upperclass students. Students interested in doing an independent project (99) during Winter Study must make prior arrangements with a faculty sponsor. The student and professor then complete the independent study proposal form available online. The deadline is typically in late September. Proposals are reviewed by the pertinent department and the Winter Study Committee. Students will be notified if their proposal is approved prior to the Winter Study registration period.

**Class Format:** independent study

**Grading:** pass/fail only

Winter 2020

IND Section: 01    TBA    Jana Sawicki