

## PHILOSOPHY (Div II)

Chair: Professor Joseph Cruz

- Melissa J. Barry, Professor of Philosophy
- Joseph L. Cruz, Chair and Professor of Philosophy, Chair of Cognitive Science; affiliated with: Philosophy, Cognitive Science
- Steven B. Gerrard, Mark Hopkins Professor of Philosophy
- Keith E. McPartland, Associate Professor of Philosophy
- Bojana Mladenovic, Professor - Named of Philosophy; on leave Fall 2024
- Julie A. Pedroni, Lecturer in Philosophy; affiliated with: Philosophy, Center for Environmental Studies
- Jana Sawicki, Morris Professor of Rhetoric
- Justin B. Shaddock, Associate Professor of Philosophy

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 students who have demonstrated outstanding achievement in a program of study that extends beyond the requirements of the major. This additional required work can take the form either of a senior essay written over one semester plus winter study (maximum 40 pages) or a year-long thesis (maximum 75 pages). Students planning to pursue a degree with honors must first write a brief proposal after having consulted with an advisor, then submit the proposal to the Department in mid-March (before spring break) of the junior year. To be eligible for honors candidates must have GPAs of 3.6 or higher in their courses in philosophy at the end of the junior and senior years. A recommendation for graduation with honors will be made on the basis of the thoroughness, independence, and originality of the student's written work as well as their performance in a defense that will be organized by their advisor in consultation with the Chair.

### 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:

[PSCI 130\(F, S\) SEM Introduction to Political Theory](#)

Taught by: [Laura Ephraim](#), [Mark Reinhardt](#)  
[Catalog details](#)

[PSCI 334\(S\) SEM Theorizing Global Justice](#)

Taught by: [Nimu Njoya](#)  
[Catalog details](#)

[REL 255 / ANTH 255 / ASIA 255\(F\) LEC Buddhism: Ideas and Practices](#)

Taught by: [Georges Dreyfus](#)  
[Catalog details](#)

[REL 301 / SOC 301 / STS 301 / WGSS 302 / COMP 315\(S\) SEM Social Construction](#)

Taught by: [Jason Josephson Storm](#)  
[Catalog details](#)

[REL 308 / SOC 308 / STS 308 SEM What is Power?](#)

Taught by: [Jason Josephson Storm](#)  
[Catalog details](#)

## PHIL 109 (F) Skepticism and Relativism (WS)

Intellectually, we are ready skeptics and relativists. We doubt, we point out that no one can be certain in what she believes, and we are suspicious of declarations of transcendent reason or truth (unless they are our own). Emboldened by our confidence in skeptical arguments, we claim that knowledge is inevitably limited, that it depends on one's perspective, and that everything one believes is relative to context or culture. No domain of inquiry is immune to this destructive skepticism and confident relativism. Science is only "true" for some people, agnosticism is the only alternative to foolish superstition, and moral relativism and, consequently, nihilism are obvious. But is the best conclusion we can come to with respect to our intellectual endeavors that skepticism always carries the day and that nothing at all is true? In this tutorial, we will investigate the nature of skepticism and the varieties of relativism it encourages. Our readings will come primarily from philosophy, but will be supplemented with material from anthropology, physics, psychology, and linguistics. We will look at relativism with respect to reason and truth in general as well as with respect to science, religion, and morality. Along the way, we will need to come to grips with the following surprising fact. With few exceptions, thoroughgoing skepticism and relativism have not been the prevailing views of the greatest minds in the history of philosophy. Were they simply too unsophisticated and confused to understand what is for us the irresistible power of skepticism and relativism? Or might it be that our skepticism and relativism are the result of our own laziness and failure? Of course, this question cannot really be answered, nor is there any value in trying to answer it, and any "answer" will only be "true" for you. Right?

**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.

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

**Enrollment Limit:** 8

**Enrollment Preferences:** This tutorial is specifically designed for first-year students, and they will be given absolute preference. Do not write to the instructor indicating a special interest, this will make no difference. If oversubscribed, students will be selected randomly.

**Expected Class Size:** 8

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

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

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

**Writing Skills Notes:** Students will write a tutorial essay every other week and will receive written feedback on composition and structure. Essays

later in the semester will reflect the writing lessons of earlier in the semester.

Not offered current academic year

### **PHIL 110 (F) History of Modern Moral and Political Philosophy (WS)**

This course is a survey of 17th-, 18th-, and 19-century moral and political philosophy. We will consider what, if anything, justifies the rules of morality and law, and we will consider the nature, value, and limits of freedom. We will ask whether our individual actions and our social and political structures are based in our self-interested desires, our natural instincts, or our rationality. Authors will include: Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau, Hume, Kant, Smith, Marx, and Mill.

**Requirements/Evaluation:** Students will write a number of short essays.

**Prerequisites:** none

**Enrollment Limit:** 19

**Enrollment Preferences:** first-years

**Expected Class Size:** 19

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

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

**Writing Skills Notes:** Students will write a series of short essays, developing key skills of philosophical writing, including, most prominently, formulating a thesis and developing an argument. Students will receive feedback on drafts, and be required to substantially revise their papers prior to submission.

Fall 2024

SEM Section: 01 TR 8:30 am - 9:45 am Justin B. Shaddock

### **PHIL 115 (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, e.g. metaphysics, epistemology, moral and political philosophy, philosophy of mind. Conceptions of person are equally important in science (especially in psychology), law, and the 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? Our starting and central question will be: **What makes me the particular person that I am, and how is my identity as this individual person preserved over time?** The course will place special emphasis on developing students' intellectual skills in close, analytical reading; 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; and writing clear, polished, well-argued papers.

**Requirements/Evaluation:** Class attendance, preparedness and participation; additional small group weekly meetings, and reports from these meetings (group members rotate in writing the report); 12 short writing assignments. No final paper and no exam.

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

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

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

**Writing Skills Notes:** Students will write weekly short assignments (at most 1000 words long), six of which will be letter-graded (but only five best assignments will count for the final grade). All assignments will receive detailed comments on substance as well as on writing skills and strategies.

Spring 2025

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

**PHIL 116 (S) Mind, Knowledge, and Reality (WS)**

This course is an introduction to philosophy through three major themes: The nature of the universe, the existence of gods, 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:** Strong preference given to first-years and sophomores; do not contact the instructor to plead for special enrollment consideration.

**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:** Students will craft 4 six page essays, and each will receive extensive comments on structure and composition with an eye toward developing skills in philosophical writing.

Spring 2025

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

**PHIL 117 (S) Arguing about God (WS)**

"Faith is a fine invention," according to Emily Dickinson's poem, "when gentlemen can see; but microscopes are prudent in an emergency." This introduction to philosophy will see how far the microscopes of reason and logic can carry us in traditional arguments about the existence and nature of God. We will closely analyze classical arguments by Augustine, Avicenna, Aquinas, Anselm, Maimonides, Descartes, and others. Pascal's wager is a different approach: it argues that even though proof of the existence of God is unavailable, you will maximize your expected utility by believing. We will examine the wager in its original home of Pascal's *Pensees*, and look at William James' related article, "The Will to Believe." The millennia old problem of whether human suffering is compatible with God's perfection is called "the problem of evil." We will examine this issue in Hume's *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion*, classic sources and contemporary articles. Students should be aware that, in the classic tradition, this class resembles a logic course.

**Class Format:** seminar

**Requirements/Evaluation:** 5 short papers

**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) (WS)

**Writing Skills Notes:** Five 4 or 5 page papers, evenly spaced throughout the semester. Students will receive timely comments on their writing skills, with suggestions for improvement.

Not offered current academic year

**PHIL 118 (F) Meaning, Communication and Society (DPE)**

The primary way we interact with others is through the use of language. We use language to communicate meanings in order to accomplish a variety

of goals: to convey information, make requests, establish rules, utilize power, issue protests, and much more. We coordinate our lives through sounds from mouths, signs from hands, and squiggles on paper because somehow sounds, signs, and squiggles have *meanings*. This course is an investigation into how language is used to express meaning, and how such expression can have real interpersonal and societal impact. Using resources from philosophy and linguistics, we will study various ways in which literal and non-literal uses of language influence our social lives. Of particular interest will be how language can be used to establish, reinforce, and resist power relationships involving race and gender.

**Class Format:** This class will have both lecture and seminar elements.

**Requirements/Evaluation:** 5-6 papers over the course of the semester.

**Prerequisites:** none

**Enrollment Limit:** 19

**Enrollment Preferences:** Preference given to first year students and philosophy majors.

**Expected Class Size:** 19

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

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

**Difference, Power, and Equity Notes:** This course has a focus on the role of language in relationships involving power, oppression, and group inclusion between individuals belonging to various socio-political identities.

**Attributes:** Linguistics

Fall 2024

SEM Section: 01 MR 2:35 pm - 3:50 pm Christian De Leon

### **PHIL 119 (F)(S) Why Obey the Law? (WS)**

What social and political arrangements are most conducive to fostering human well-being and the common good? What makes governmental authority legitimate? A foundation in reason and morality? Popular sovereignty? Does might make right? We turn first to two of Plato's most famous dialogues, *The Apology* and *The Republic* in which we encounter Socrates' trial for impiety and corrupting the youth, and, Socrates effort to defeat an argument that might makes right, that only the weak agree to obey the law, by envisioning an ideal (non-democratic) city-state ruled by benevolent philosopher-kings. The rest of the course is devoted to figures in the history of modern political philosophy, both defenders and critics of democratic liberalism (egs., Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau, Marx, J.S. Mill, Nietzsche, W.E.B Dubois, etc.). We conclude with contemporary reflections on the fate of democracy today.

**Class Format:** Class participation will involve individual and group activities meant to give you practice in thinking quickly, working with others, and building arguments.

**Requirements/Evaluation:** Six pass/fail short response essays of approximately 500 words each in which students write about a particular part of the assigned text (such as explaining what a passage means, drawing connections between different parts of the text, identifying an argument, responding to an argument, etc); two 5-page papers based on prompts; participation.

**Prerequisites:** None. Open to any student interested in the sources of our current understandings of government, the basis of its authority, and strengths and weaknesses of democracy.

**Enrollment Limit:** 19

**Enrollment Preferences:** Majors, first years, and sophomores will normally receive preference if the course over enrolls.

**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:** The professor and the teaching assistant will provide detailed comments on short and longer essays and provide occasional peer review opportunities, handouts and discussions of frequent types of errors, different approaches to writing and drafting, and the importance of editing and seeking the help of writing tutors. I encourage, but do not require, that students make appointments to discuss ideas and drafts with the TA or me.

**Attributes:** JLST Interdepartmental Electives LEAD Ethical Issues of Leadership

Fall 2024

SEM Section: 01 TR 11:20 am - 12:35 pm Jana Sawicki

Spring 2025

SEM Section: 01 TR 11:20 am - 12:35 pm Jana Sawicki

**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, the ethics of protest, and Covid-19. 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.

**Class Format:** Groups of three students (rather than the more conventional two students) will meet weekly with the professor.

**Requirements/Evaluation:** three tri-weekly tutorial papers and two short papers, oral commentaries, and tutorial discussion

**Prerequisites:** none; this course is suitable for first-year students

**Enrollment Limit:** 15

**Enrollment Preferences:** first-year students, sophomores, Philosophy majors, and those who have previously been dropped from the course for over-enrollment

**Expected Class Size:** 15

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

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

**Writing Skills Notes:** Students will write three tutorial papers of 5-7 pages in length, one of which they will revise and resubmit, as well as two 2-3 page papers. In each, students will describe and evaluate arguments that appear in the assigned readings, and will develop arguments in support of their own 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:** JLST Interdepartmental Electives

Not offered current academic year

**PHIL 123 (F) Objectivity in Ethics (WS)**

Are moral beliefs simply expressions of opinion, or can we construct good arguments on their behalf? 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 timely comments on their writing skills, with suggestions for improvement.

Not offered current academic year

**PHIL 126 (S) Paradoxes (WS)**

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*.

**Requirements/Evaluation:** (i) short response papers; (ii) midterm paper (~5-6 pages) (iii) Final term-paper (~10 pages) in multiple drafts; (iv) Active and informed participation in class discussions.

**Prerequisites:** none

**Enrollment Limit:** 19

**Enrollment Preferences:** First and second year students. Prospective philosophy majors.

**Expected Class Size:** 15-19

**Grading:** no 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 number of short papers. Both the content and the writing will be evaluated. These papers will focus on clear and precise presentation and evaluation of arguments. There will be a midterm paper revising an earlier short paper. There will be a final term-paper written in multiple drafts.

Spring 2025

SEM Section: 01 TF 2:35 pm - 3:50 pm Keith E. McPartland

### **PHIL 127 (F)(S) Meaning and Value (WS)**

What gives an individual life meaning? Pleasure? Success in fulfilling desires? Flourishing in ways distinctive to a rational agent or a human being (including, for example, developing rational capacities and self-mastery, succeeding in worthwhile projects, cultivating relationships, living morally, developing spiritually)? Can we be mistaken about how well our lives are going, or about what has value? What are the main sources of uncertainty here? Does the fact that our lives will end threaten their meaning? How can science contribute to our understanding of these issues? We'll examine these and related questions through historical and contemporary readings. This course aims to teach skills required for good philosophical thinking, including those involved in reading texts closely, reconstructing and evaluating arguments, articulating ideas clearly in discussion, and crafting well-structured and carefully-reasoned papers.

**Class Format:** Students will meet in trios for this tutorial. We will meet on a fixed weekly schedule agreed to by the instructor and participants.

**Requirements/Evaluation:** Four lead tutorial papers (5-6 pages in length), seven critiques (2 pages in length), and one rewrite.

**Prerequisites:** First-years and sophomores only.

**Enrollment Limit:** 12

**Enrollment Preferences:** First-years and sophomores, and students who need to fulfill their 100-level requirement for the philosophy major. This tutorial is an appropriate first course in PHIL.

**Expected Class Size:** 12

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

**Unit Notes:** This tutorial meets the 100-level PHIL major requirement.

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

**Writing Skills Notes:** Each student will write a lead tutorial paper (5-6 pages in length) or a peer critique (2 pages) in alternating weeks. The instructor will provide timely comments on writing skills, with suggestions for improvement.

Fall 2024

TUT Section: T1 TBA Melissa J. Barry

Spring 2025

TUT Section: T1 TBA Melissa J. Barry

### **PHIL 129 (S) Language and the Mind**

**Cross-listings:** COGS 129

**Primary Cross-listing**

Many animals communicate, but only humans can use language. What is language? Is the ability to learn it specialized, or just a matter of having enough cognitive processing power? Do successes of large language models and AI chat bots confirm or challenge traditional linguistic theory? Does language in any way determine, shape, or enable thought? How sophisticated could a mind without language be? Does knowledge of language require consciousness? In this course we will investigate (a) what makes language stand out from other kinds of communication system and (b) what makes human minds uniquely capable of acquiring language. Drawing on debates about the evolution of language, Chomskyan universal grammar, the computational theory of mind, and more, we will explore the philosophical consequences of our existence as linguistic creatures.

**Requirements/Evaluation:** Short reading responses (approx. 2 pages) every other week, two exams

**Prerequisites:** None

**Enrollment Limit:** 20

**Enrollment Preferences:** Priority given to first and second years

**Expected Class Size:** 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:**

PHIL 129(D2) COGS 129(D2)

**Attributes:** Linguistics

**Not offered current academic year**

### **PHIL 201 (F) History of Ancient Greek Philosophy**

**Cross-listings:** CLAS 203

**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 the earth is at the center of the cosmos. 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. Finally, we will examine some of Aristotle's works on metaphysics, epistemology and ethics, considering some of the ways Aristotle's thought responds to that of predecessors.

**Requirements/Evaluation:** There will be a midterm and final exam. There will also be short writing assignments.

**Prerequisites:** none

**Enrollment Limit:** 20

**Enrollment Preferences:** Philosophy and Classics Majors.

**Expected Class Size:** 15-20

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



**Unit Notes:** Philosophy majors must take either PHIL 201 or PHIL 202 (and are encouraged to take both)

**Distributions:** (D2)

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

CLAS 203(D1) PHIL 201(D2)

Fall 2024

LEC Section: 01 MWF 11:00 am - 12:15 pm Keith E. McPartland

**PHIL 202 (S) History of Modern European Philosophy**

This course is a survey of 17th- and 18th-century metaphysics and epistemology. Topics will include: What can we know through our senses? Can we know anything through reason alone? What is the mind? What is the body? What is the relationship between the mind and the body? What are space and time? Are we rationally justified in drawing causal inferences? Are we justified in believing in God? Authors will include: Descartes, Spinoza, Leibniz, Locke, Berkeley, Hume, and Kant.

**Requirements/Evaluation:** 3 mid-term papers, and a final exam

**Prerequisites:** It is recommended that students have taken a 100-level Philosophy course, though not strictly required.

**Enrollment Limit:** 15

**Enrollment Preferences:** Enrollment preference will be given to majors, prospective majors, students who have taken a 100-level PHIL course, and first-years and sophomores.

**Expected Class Size:** 15

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

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

**Distributions:** (D2)

Spring 2025

SEM Section: 01 MR 1:10 pm - 2:25 pm Justin B. Shaddock

SEM Section: 02 TF 1:10 pm - 2:25 pm Justin B. Shaddock

**PHIL 203 (S) Introductory Logic (QFR)**

Logic is the study of reasoning and argument. More particularly, it concerns itself with the differences between good and bad reasoning, between strong and weak arguments. This course is an introduction to the precise characterization of good logical reasoning. We will learn a formal language, Monadic First-Order Logic, designed to cleanly represent good inference patterns. Learning this language will primarily involve learning two skills: (i) translation between sentences of English and formulas of the logical language, and (ii) proving the validity of logical arguments using a system of natural deduction. No prior mathematical/logical/formal experience is assumed for this course.

**Requirements/Evaluation:** A midterm, a final, frequent problem sets.

**Prerequisites:** none

**Enrollment Limit:** 40

**Enrollment Preferences:** Preference given to philosophy majors.

**Expected Class Size:** 40

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

**Distributions:** (D2) (QFR)

**Quantitative/Formal Reasoning Notes:** This course teaches two formal languages of logic: sentential logic and predicate logic.

**Attributes:** Linguistics PHIL Contemp Metaphysics + Epistemology Courses

Spring 2025

LEC Section: 01 MR 1:10 pm - 2:25 pm Christian De Leon

### **PHIL 206 (S) Philosophy and Tragedy (WS)**

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-but 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.

**Requirements/Evaluation:** five papers, five 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;

**Enrollment Limit:** 10

**Enrollment Preferences:** Philosophy and Classics Majors

**Expected Class Size:** 10

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

**Unit Notes:** Satisfies the philosophy department history (H) requirement.

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

**Writing Skills Notes:** This is a tutorial in which each student will write 5 papers and 5 paper responses. We will spend a good bit of time discussing writing mechanics and skills as we discuss the papers.

Not offered current academic year

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

The philosophy of mind has been one of the most active areas of philosophical inquiry over the last century. Whether the mind can be fully understood within a scientific framework has taken on an exciting urgency. In this course we will investigate the the broad topics of consciousness and thought by surveying the many approaches to mind that yield the contemporary debates.

**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 or COGS course

**Enrollment Limit:** 19

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

**Expected Class Size:** 14

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

**Distributions:** (D2)

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

Not offered current academic year

### **PHIL 211 (S) Ethics of Public Health (WS)**

From questions about contact tracing apps to racial and age disparities in health risk and outcomes, the COVID-19 pandemic has foregrounded the importance of ethics as a key concern in public health policies and activities. Moreover, the ethical issues that are implicated in responses to the

pandemic reflect the range of those manifested across the field of public health as a whole. In this course, we will survey the ethics of public health through the lens of the COVID-19 pandemic, investigating concepts and arguments that are central to the ethics of public health research and practice. For example, we will examine the ethics of disease surveillance, treatment and vaccine research, resource allocation and rationing, compulsion and voluntariness in public health measures, and social determinants of health outcomes, among other topics. To do this, we will need to become familiar with key ethical theories; think deeply about such concepts as privacy, paternalism and autonomy, exploitation, cost-benefit analysis and justice; and compare the function of these concepts in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic with the way they work in responses to other public health concerns.

**Requirements/Evaluation:** Biweekly 5-7 page papers, oral commentaries, and tutorial discussions.

**Prerequisites:** none

**Enrollment Limit:** 10

**Enrollment Preferences:** declared and prospective Philosophy majors and Public Health concentrators, students with a specific curricular need for the course, and students with a high level of interest who are unlikely to have an opportunity to take the course in a future term

**Expected Class Size:** 10

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

**Unit Notes:** Public Health concentrators may use either PHIL 211T Ethics of Public Health or PHIL 213T Biomedical Ethics to fulfill their 3-elective requirement, but they may not use both courses to do so.

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

**Writing Skills Notes:** Students will write five biweekly papers of 5-7 pages in length, one of which they will revise and resubmit. In each of the tutorial papers students will describe and evaluate arguments 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

Not offered current academic year

## **PHIL 212 (F) Ethics and Reproductive Technologies (WS)**

**Cross-listings:** WGSS 212 / STS 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 contraception, abortion, in vitro fertilization (IVF), prenatal genetic screening and testing, and surrogacy, to the more extraordinary, possibly including pre-implantation genetic diagnosis (PGD), post-menopausal reproduction, uterine transplants, and "artificial wombs." 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 (declared or prospective), PHLH and STS concentrators (declared or prospective)

**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 212(D2) PHIL 212(D2) STS 212(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:** PHIL Contemporary Value Theory Courses PHLH Bioethics + Interpretations of Health

Fall 2024

LEC Section: 01 TF 2:35 pm - 3:50 pm Julie A. Pedroni

### **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.

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

**Prerequisites:** none

**Enrollment Limit:** 10

**Enrollment Preferences:** PHIL majors, PHLH concentrators, those who have a curricular need for the course, those who have been dropped from the course in previous semesters due to over enrollment

**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 resubmit. 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 2025

TUT Section: T1 TBA Julie A. Pedroni

### **PHIL 221 (F) Introduction to Formal Linguistics (QFR)**

**Cross-listings:** COGS 224

**Secondary Cross-listing**

The sentence "Every cookie is chocolate chip and three of them are oatmeal raisin" is a perfectly grammatical sentence of English, but it's self-contradictory. What does it take to realize this fact? One must grasp the meanings of the various parts of the sentence. In particular, one must grasp that "three of them" picks out a subset of the group picked out by "every cookie", and that there's no such thing as a cookie that is both chocolate chip *and* oatmeal raisin. There two ways to understand "Many students took every class". According to one, there is a single group of students that had their hands extremely full this semester. According to the other, every class was well-populated, potentially by different groups. The reason for this is that there are two underlying structures that the original sentence can realize. This course serves as an introduction to formal methods in the scientific study of language. Our goal will be to characterize phenomena like those above with logical and mathematical precision. The focus will be on model-theoretic semantics, the sub-field of linguistics that studies meanings. Along the way we will discuss principles of syntax, the sub-field that studies sentence structures, and pragmatics, the sub-field that studies inferences of non-literal content. This is a formal course, but no

prior logical or mathematical background will be expected. Starting from scratch, students will learn the building blocks of current-day linguistic research. This introduction will be of use to students interested in language from a variety of perspectives, including philosophy, cognitive science, and computer science.

**Requirements/Evaluation:** Weekly problem sets, plus a final project (paper/presentation/other type, to be discussed with instructor)

**Prerequisites:** No prerequisites

**Enrollment Limit:** 20

**Enrollment Preferences:** Preference given to seniors and philosophy/cognitive science majors.

**Expected Class Size:** 20

**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:**

PHIL 221(D2) COGS 224(D2)

**Quantitative/Formal Reasoning Notes:** This course teaches the fundamentals of the formal analysis of language. Students will learn to provide translation schemes from English to a logical language (typed lambda calculus).

**Attributes:** COGS Interdepartmental Electives COGS Related Courses Linguistics PHIL Contemp Metaphysics + Epistemology Courses

Fall 2024

LEC Section: 01 MR 1:10 pm - 2:25 pm Christian De Leon

### **PHIL 222 (F) Minds, Brains, and Intelligent Behavior: An Introduction to Cognitive Science**

**Cross-listings:** PSYC 222 / COGS 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.

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

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

**Enrollment Limit:** 25

**Enrollment Preferences:** sophomore and first-year students, with additional preference given to students who satisfy more of the prerequisites. Do not contact the instructor to plead for special enrollment consideration.

**Expected Class Size:** 25

**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 222(D2) PSYC 222(D3) COGS 222(D2)

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

Fall 2024

LEC Section: 01 TR 11:20 am - 12:35 pm Joseph L. Cruz

### **PHIL 224 (S) Nietzsche, Marx and Freud (WS)**

Nietzsche, Marx and Freud have had a profound influence on literature, philosophy, and critical theories of the 20th and 21st centuries. In this tutorial we will treat them as diagnosticians of modernity who engaged in unveiling illusions and opening up possible alternative human futures. Each questioned the emancipatory effects of dominant understandings of reason and freedom as well as idealist and humanist accounts of moral progress in history; each aimed to liberate human beings from unnecessary suffering. We will focus on questions concerning their distinctive diagnostic and

critical methods, the problems they identified, and their respective understandings of religion and and modern science.

**Class Format:** We may also meet in a seminar format once or twice during the semester.

**Requirements/Evaluation:** Bi-weekly papers, 2-3 page commentaries, and tutorial discussions.

**Prerequisites:** One of the following: 100-level Philosophy course or permission of instructor. Exposure to history of modern European philosophy and/or intellectual history will be very helpful.

**Enrollment Limit:** 10

**Enrollment Preferences:** Philosophy majors or prospective majors and students with background and interest in modern philosophy and critical theories more generally.

**Expected Class Size:** 10

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

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

**Writing Skills Notes:** Students write five or six 5-6 page tutorial papers. Each will receive regular feedback to improve their ability to present clear, well-supported and engaging written arguments and interpretations.

**Attributes:** PHIL History Courses

Spring 2025

TUT Section: T1 TBA Jana Sawicki

### **PHIL 225 (S) Existentialism**

We will study the philosophical and literary works of Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, Dostoevsky, Tolstoy, Kafka, Sartre, de Beauvoir, and Camus. One of our guiding questions will be: What makes a thinker an "Existentialist"? The answer is not merely that they ask the question, "What gives meaning to a human life?" And, it's not merely that their answer invokes 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, tragedy, melancholy, despair, death, faith, sexuality, love, alienation, hate, sadism, masochism, and authenticity. And, Existentialists express their thought in philosophical treatises as often as in literary works. In this course we will seek to comprehend the dimensions in which Existentialism is a distinctive intellectual tradition.

**Class Format:** Students will meet in pairs or trios with the instructor for 60 minutes each week.

**Requirements/Evaluation:** Students will take turns as the lead writer one week, and the respondent the next. The week's lead writer will write a 5- to 6-page essay on the assigned reading, due 36 hours before the meeting. The week's respondent will write a 2-page essay on the leader's essay due at the time of the meeting. At the meetings, both students will present their essays and hold a discussion. Students will be evaluated cumulatively on their essays and contributions to discussion.

**Prerequisites:** none

**Enrollment Limit:** 15

**Enrollment Preferences:** preference to 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 228 (F) Feminist Bioethics (WS)**

**Cross-listings:** WGSS 228 / STS 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 interactions with and within 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:**

PHIL 228(D2) WGSS 228(D2) STS 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 Bioethics + Interpretations of Health

Not offered current academic year

### **PHIL 231 (F) Ancient Political Thought**

**Cross-listings:** PSCI 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:** 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:**

PHIL 231(D2) PSCI 231(D2)

**Attributes:** PSCI Political Theory Courses

Fall 2024

LEC Section: 01 MR 2:35 pm - 3:50 pm Nimu Njoya

### **PHIL 232 (S) Modern Political Thought**

**Cross-listings:** 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.

**Requirements/Evaluation:** three papers of 4-6 pages; class participation; brief informal writing tasks inside and outside of class meetings

**Prerequisites:** none; open to all

**Enrollment Limit:** 25

**Enrollment Preferences:** Political Theory concentrators, then Political Science majors

**Expected Class Size:** 25

**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 232(D2) PSCI 232(D2)

**Attributes:** PSCI Political Theory Courses

**Not offered current academic year**

### **PHIL 236 (S) Contemporary Ethical Theory**

This course will examine central questions in normative ethics, including the following: Which features of actions are morally important and why (e.g., their motive, intrinsic nature, or consequences)? Which characteristics of persons give them moral status? How should moral equality be understood, and what is its foundation? When should we give morality priority over personal commitments and relationships, and why? Are we capable of disinterested altruism, or are we motivated solely by self-interest? By which methods should we pursue answers to these questions? We will examine these and related issues by looking in depth at contemporary defenses of consequentialist, deontological, and contractualist theories.

**Requirements/Evaluation:** Weekly seminar discussion questions; midterm paper (8-10 pages); final paper (10-12 pages)

**Prerequisites:** At least one previous PHIL course or permission of instructor

**Enrollment Limit:** 15

**Enrollment Preferences:** Current and prospective philosophy majors

**Expected Class Size:** 10-15

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

**Primary Cross-listing**

Human beings will someday live alongside artificially intelligent beings who equal or exceed us. 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. 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? How should we understand intellectual and creative work in an era of generative models that take on some aspects of thought? 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:**

PHIL 239(D2) STS 239(D2)

**Attributes:** COGS Interdepartmental Electives PHIL Contemporary Value Theory Courses

Spring 2025

LEC Section: 01 MW 8:25 pm - 9:40 pm Joseph L. Cruz

### **PHIL 241 (S) Contemporary Metaphysics**

Our focus in this class is going to be on the nature of causation. We make causal judgments constantly in our everyday lives and in scientific contexts. It turns out, however, to be surprisingly difficult to say what causation is. We will begin the course by looking at Hume's and Kant's discussion of causation. We will then turn to a variety of more recent attempts to give a clear characterization of causation. In addition to examining general accounts of causation, we will examine particular problems that come up in thinking about mental causation and causation in indeterministic contexts.

**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 seminar

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

**Enrollment Limit:** 15

**Enrollment Preferences:** Philosophy Majors

**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 (S) The Philosophy of Higher Education: College Controversies (WS)**

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 some controversies in American higher education, and then turn to contemporary controversies such as campus free speech, cancel culture, divestment, decolonization, and admissions criteria.

**Class Format:** This course is a tutorial. Students will meet in pairs with the instructor one hour per 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

**Prerequisites:** none

**Enrollment Limit:** 10

**Enrollment Preferences:** I will be seeking a balance of interests and backgrounds; preference given to students who have taken at least one philosophy course

**Expected Class Size:** 10

**Grading:** no 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 will receive from the instructor timely comments on their writing skills, with suggestions for improvement.

**Attributes:** PHIL Contemporary Value Theory Courses TEAC Teaching Sequence Courses

Spring 2025

TUT Section: T1 TBA Steven B. Gerrard

### **PHIL 244 (S) Environmental Ethics (WS)**

**Cross-listings:** ENVI 244

**Secondary Cross-listing**

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, among others. Most 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.

**Requirements/Evaluation:** five essays (5-7 pages each) and five 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 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.

**Attributes:** ENVI Humanities, Arts + Social Science Electives EVST Culture/Humanities PHIL Contemporary Value Theory Courses

Spring 2025

TUT Section: T1 TBA Julie A. Pedroni

### **PHIL 245 (S) Mind and Persons in Indian Thought**

**Cross-listings:** ASIA 244 / REL 244

**Secondary Cross-listing**

In this course, we follow the Indian philosophical conversation concerning the self and the nature of consciousness, particularly as they are found in its

various Yogic traditions. We start with some of the Hindu views about the self and the mind and consider their ethical implications. We then consider a range of Buddhist critiques of these views, focusing more particularly on the Madhyamaka, which radicalizes the critique of the self into a global anti-realist and skeptical stance. We also examine the Yogacara school, which offers a process view of reality focusing on the analysis of experience. We conclude by considering some of the later Hindu holistic views of the self as responses to the Buddhist critique. In this way we come to realize that far from being the irrational foil of "the West," Indian tradition is a rich resource for thinking through some of the central questions that have challenged philosophers in both traditions.

**Class Format:** discussion

**Requirements/Evaluation:** full attendance and participation, three short essays (6 pages each)

**Prerequisites:** none

**Enrollment Limit:** 18

**Enrollment Preferences:** selection based on the basis of relevant background

**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:**

ASIA 244(D2) PHIL 245(D2) REL 244(D2)

**Attributes:** GBST South + Southeast Asia Studies

Spring 2025

LEC Section: 01 M 7:00 pm - 9:40 pm Georges B. Dreyfus

### **PHIL 251 (S) Offensive Art**

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 today (15 February 2022) *The New York Times* removed some solutions from their recently purchased game *Wordle*, saying that words such as "pussy", "slave", and "wench" are "offensive or insensitive". At Williams College a mural was removed from The Log and Herman Rosse's painting "Carnival of Life" was removed from the '62 Center. 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.

**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:** 25

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

**Materials/Lab Fee:** potential additional material costs up to \$50 if individual students opt for final projects in other media

**Distributions:** (D2)

**Attributes:** PHIL Contemporary Value Theory Courses

Not offered current academic year

### **PHIL 272 (S) Free Will and Responsibility (WS)**

**Cross-listings:** JLST 272

**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? 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 key question, then, is whether, and how, agency 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.

**Requirements/Evaluation:** Six tutorial papers (5-6 pages in length) and five critiques (2-3 pages in length)

**Prerequisites:** one PHIL course (or permission of instructor; please email with any questions)

**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:** Students will write a tutorial paper (5-6 pages in length) every other week, and a peer critique (2-3 pages in length) in alternating weeks, evenly spaced throughout the semester. The instructor will provide timely comments on writing skills, with suggestions for improvement.

**Attributes:** JLST Theories of Justice/Law PHIL Contemporary Value Theory Courses

Spring 2025

TUT Section: T1 TBA Melissa J. Barry

**PHIL 274 (F) Messing with People: The Ethics of Human Experimentation (WS)**

The Tuskegee Syphilis Study and Stanley Milgram's Obedience experiments are infamous. Yet, other lesser known experiments are equally important landmarks in research ethics that continue to shape the design, conduct, and regulation of research involving human participants. 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 such 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. The cases will be drawn from different domains of research, including clinical medicine, public health, social and behavioral sciences, and education. Specific issues are likely to include the ethics of placebo research; deception in research; studies of illicit/illegal behavior; genetic research; research involving social media; experimentation with children, pregnant people and fetuses; research involving persons with mental illness, justice and research with marginalized populations, among other topics.

**Requirements/Evaluation:** evaluations will be based on written work, on biweekly papers, oral commentaries, and tutorial discussions

**Prerequisites:** none

**Enrollment Limit:** 10

**Enrollment Preferences:** Philosophy majors (declared and prospective); Public Health concentrators (declared and prospective)

**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 resubmit. 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

Fall 2024

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

**Cross-listings:** 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:**

REL 288(D2) PHIL 288(D2)

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

**Not offered current academic year**

**PHIL 306 (S) The Good Life in Greek and Roman Ethics**

**Cross-listings:** 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.

**Requirements/Evaluation:** several short response pieces; a final paper of 10-15 pages; active participation in seminar discussion

**Prerequisites:** Phil 201 will be helpful but is not necessary.

**Enrollment Limit:** 15

**Enrollment Preferences:** Philosophy majors

**Expected Class Size:** 15

**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(D1)

**Attributes:** PHIL History Courses

Not offered current academic year

### **PHIL 312 (F) Philosophical Implications of Modern Physics (QFR)**

**Cross-listings:** PHYS 312 / STS 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:** (D2) (QFR)

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

PHYS 312(D3) PHIL 312(D2) STS 312(D2)

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

Not offered current academic year

### **PHIL 314 (S) Linguistic Meaning and Reference**

"The 100th US President will be shorter than Aristotle was" is a sentence that is either true or false, we don't know which. Either way, it's true/false thanks to a special relationship it has to somebody in the far future and to somebody in the distant past. What is the nature of that relation? How does it work? What makes it possible? In this course we will investigate *reference*, a central topic in the philosophy of language. We will discuss competing theories about how different representational types refer, including names (like "Aristotle"), definite descriptions (like "the 100th US President"), indexicals (like "you"), and even non-verbal deixis (like pointing gestures). Of particular interest will be the relation between reference and linguistic meaning. Is reference all there is to meaning, or is there more to what some (or all) referring expressions mean? We'll explore this topic with an eye toward making connections with philosophical questions about the mind--do thoughts refer in the same way that words do? Must a speaker's linguistic reference always match their mental reference?

**Requirements/Evaluation:** 4-5 papers across the semester.

**Prerequisites:** At least one philosophy course

**Enrollment Limit:** 13

**Enrollment Preferences:** Priority given to philosophy majors and seniors

**Expected Class Size:** 10

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

**Distributions:** (D2)

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

Spring 2025

SEM Section: 01 MR 2:35 pm - 3:50 pm Christian De Leon

### **PHIL 315 (S) 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:** Student will be required to write three 8-10 page papers.

**Prerequisites:** PHIL 202

**Enrollment Limit:** 10

**Enrollment Preferences:** 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 319 (F) Topics in Philosophy of Race: Hegel and Africana Philosophy (DPE)**

**Cross-listings:** AFR 327

Primary Cross-listing

How are individual and social subjects formed, and how do they connect to questions of race? What is the nature of consciousness and how can it be unhappy, false or double? What do we mean when we talk about racial capitalism? This course introduces philosophy students to these and related questions through a parallel reading that brings together 19th century German philosopher Hegel and a tradition of Africana philosophy running through Douglas, Du Bois, Fanon, Gilroy, Hartman and Wynter. While Hegel studies tends to occur in isolation from philosophers in the Africana tradition, many of the above explicitly refer to and take up questions in Hegel. This course argues that by reference to the historically specific modes of subjectivity and sociality that resulted from the Transatlantic Slave Trade and the Haitian Revolution, for instance, we can better understand and address long-standing questions in European Social Philosophy. Topics to be considered include the nature of freedom (both individual and social), the master/slave dialectic and subject constitution, self-consciousness and double consciousness, the stages of history, and racial capitalism

**Requirements/Evaluation:** Progressive writing assignments including 4 exegetical commentaries, one 5 page paper and one 10-12 page final paper.

**Prerequisites:** One prior 100 level philosophy course or permission of instructor.

**Enrollment Limit:** 15

**Enrollment Preferences:** Preference given to philosophy majors and Africana studies concentrators.

**Expected Class Size:** 10-15

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

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

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

PHIL 319(D2) AFR 327(D2)

**Difference, Power, and Equity Notes:** Course material involves self-conscious and critical engagement with the history of racial subject formation as well as Africana philosophy, and thinking about how power's distribution connects to questions of race.

**Attributes:** PHIL History Courses

Not offered current academic year

### **PHIL 320 (F) Topics in Critical Theory: What is Critique? What Can It Do? (DPE) (WS)**

In this course, we focus on the aims of critique and on how we might use critical theory to further our social and political agendas today. You will become familiar with immanent critique, ideology critique, genealogical critique, and negative critique. Key questions include: What are the foundations and aims of critique? Does critique require postulating alternatives? How is power exercised? Should we abandon the idea of moral progress in history? Readings may include texts by Adorno, Horkheimer, Foucault, Deleuze, Judith Butler, Amy Allen, Raymond Geuss, Wendy Brown and Nancy Fraser.

**Class Format:** We may schedule at least one seminar meeting during the semester.

**Requirements/Evaluation:** Evaluation is based on written work (six 5-6 page papers, and six 2-3 page commentaries on a partner's papers) as well as the quality and level of preparation and intellectual engagement in our weekly meetings.

**Prerequisites:** Demonstrated background in the history of modern philosophy (PHIL 202), modern political theory, or critical and social theories.

**Enrollment Limit:** 10

**Enrollment Preferences:** Preference will be given to philosophy majors and prospective majors and students with background in critical or social theories.

**Expected Class Size:** 10

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

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

**Writing Skills Notes:** Students will write six 5-6 page papers, and six 2-3 page commentaries on their partner's papers in alternative weeks. Papers and commentaries will receive significant oral feedback in our weekly 75 minute tutorial sessions.

**Difference, Power, and Equity Notes:** In this course, we raise questions at the center of debates in critical theory, a form of theory oriented toward emancipation or, at the very least, toward resisting unnecessary constraints on freedom that result in intolerable conditions and suffering.

**Attributes:** PHIL Contemporary Value Theory Courses

Fall 2024

TUT Section: T1 TBA Jana Sawicki

### **PHIL 321 (S) Introduction to Critical Theory: The Enlightenment and Its Critics (DPE) (WS)**

**Cross-listings:** WGSS 322

#### **Primary Cross-listing**

We often associate 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 with the Enlightenment. How can we reconcile this faith with the persistence of domination today? Critical theory aims not merely to understand the "struggles and wishes of the age" as Marx one described it, but with emancipation from domination. Understood in this way, critical theory is identified closely with the intellectual tradition of the Frankfurt School. In this tutorial, will read works in critical theory from the 18th century to the present, some from the Frankfurt tradition, and some not. We will focus on particular topics, examples of which are the following: normative critique, capitalism, authoritarianism, mass culture, enlightenment and reason, progress, violence, the domination of nature, white supremacy, patriarchy and colonialism.

**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 a 5 or 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 the quality of intellectual engagement in tutorial meetings

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

**Enrollment Limit:** 10

**Enrollment Preferences:** Philosophy majors and students with background in modern political theory, or other relevant demonstrated background.

**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:**

PHIL 321(D2) WGSS 322(D2)

**Writing Skills Notes:** The tutorial format requires significant writing (six 2500-3000 word papers, and six 1000-1250 word commentaries), weekly commentary on writing, and instructor comments on papers.

**Difference, Power, and Equity Notes:** In this course power, difference, domination and the prospects of and obstacles to liberatory political struggle are central topics.

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

**Not offered current academic year**



**PHIL 326 (S) Foucault Now** (DPE) (WS)

**Cross-listings:** WGSS 336

**Primary Cross-listing**

If we think of Michel Foucault as engaged in writing histories, or genealogies, of his own present designed to undercut the sense of the obviousness of certain practices and ways of thinking, categorizing, and knowing, we can easily imagine that he might now be questioning different aspects of our contemporary "present" than the ones standardly associated with his name, namely, panopticons and surveillance, discipline, criminalization, the biopolitics of health, the normal and the abnormal, etc. In this course we address the question: How is the present we find ourselves living today different from the one that the author Foucault wrote about in the 1960s, 70s and early 80s before his untimely death in 1984? What differentiates today from yesterday? And what present practices and ways of thinking and knowing might be questioned using Foucault's tools, genealogy in particular, for resisting unnecessary constraints on freedom and the perpetuation of unnecessary suffering? What is his legacy today? In this tutorial you will read from a selection of Foucault's texts (books, lectures, interviews) in order to acquire a firm grasp of his method of "critique" and his way of looking at the interconnections between forms of power and the knowledge associated with particular disciplines. We will also read more recent work by Foucault inspired scholars on topics such as the biopolitics of gender, the genealogy of terrorism, the informational person (how we become our data), and neoliberal subjects.

**Class Format:** I may use a seminar format at least twice during the semester.

**Requirements/Evaluation:** evaluation will be based on written work (six 5- to 6-page papers, and six 2-3 page commentaries on their partner's papers) as well as the quality and level of preparation and intellectual engagement in our weekly meetings.

**Prerequisites:** Relevant background in critical theory, social theory, political theory or philosophy.

**Enrollment Limit:** 10

**Enrollment Preferences:** I will give preference to philosophy majors and to upper class students with a demonstrated background in critical theories. Some sophomores may be eligible.

**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 336(D2) PHIL 326(D2)

**Writing Skills Notes:** This is a tutorial. Students will write five or six 5-6-page papers during the course of the the semester and receive significant feedback on each paper. At the end of each tutorial meeting the student is asked to reflect on how they would approach the paper differently if they were to rewrite it.

**Difference, Power, and Equity Notes:** In this course we address power and domination, reflect on the difference between them, and treat power relations as not only an inevitable feature of any society, but as both enabling and constraining. Moreover, we will read material that uses Foucauldian tools to address contemporary issues involving sexism and racism, digital surveillance, and the abolition of prisons.

**Attributes:** PHIL History Courses

**Not offered current academic year**

**PHIL 328 (F) 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*, *Religion within the Boundaries of Mere Reason*, and *The Metaphysics of Morals*. 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:** weekly seminar discussion questions; 8-10-page midterm paper; 12-14-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

Fall 2024

SEM Section: 01 TF 1:10 pm - 2:25 pm Melissa J. Barry, Justin B. Shaddock

**PHIL 329 (F) Four Challenging Moral Philosophers (DPE) (WS)**

Elizabeth Anscombe, Philippa Foot, Amelie Rorty, and Cora Diamond all challenged the prevailing philosophical tenets of their times. Anscombe and Foot resurrected virtue ethics for Anglo-American philosophy and made moral psychology academically respectable. (Foot also invented the infamous trolley car thought experiment.) Rorty challenged the very concept of morality and questioned all moral theory. Diamond investigated the methodology of moral philosophy, paying special attention to the role of literature. In order to hit the ground running, students will be expected to read *The Women Are Up to Something: How Elizabeth Anscombe, Philippa Foot, Mary Midgley, and Iris Murdoch Revolutionized Ethics* by Benjamin J. B. Lipscomb before the first meeting, preferably over the summer.

**Requirements/Evaluation:** Tutorial papers and rewrites

**Prerequisites:** At least three PHIL courses, including at least one in moral philosophy.

**Enrollment Limit:** 10

**Enrollment Preferences:** Philosophy majors, seniors, juniors in that order

**Expected Class Size:** 10

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

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

**Writing Skills Notes:** Students will meet with the instructor in pairs for an hour each week; 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 five papers

**Difference, Power, and Equity Notes:** Our four challenging moral philosophers are all women in a field dominated by men. They all challenged the prevailing philosophical tenets of their times.

**Attributes:** PHIL Contemporary Value Theory Courses

Not offered current academic year

**PHIL 330 (S) Plato (WS)**

**Cross-listings:** CLAS 330

Primary Cross-listing

Plato is one of the most important and influential thinkers in the history of the western tradition. His depiction of the trial and death of Socrates is one of the classics of western literature, and his views on ethics and politics continue to occupy a central place in our discussions 2400 years after they were written. It is, in fact, quite difficult to get through any course of study in the liberal arts without some familiarity with Plato. Nevertheless, comparatively few people realize that the views we commonly think of as "Platonic" represent only one strand in Plato's thought. For example, we commonly attribute to Plato a theory of the Forms on the basis of his claims in the so-called "middle dialogues" (mainly Republic, Phaedo, and Symposium). However, in his philosophically more sophisticated and notoriously difficult later dialogues (such as the Parmenides, Philebus, Sophist and Statesman), Plato engages in radical criticism and revision of his earlier views. In this course, we will spend the first third of the semester attempting to understand the metaphysics and epistemology in Plato's middle dialogues. We will spend the balance of the semester coming to grips with Plato's arguments in the later dialogues. We will read several complete dialogues in translation, and will also read a wide variety of secondary source material.

**Class Format:** lecture/discussion; this class will be a roughly equal mixture of lectures, student presentations, and seminar discussion

**Requirements/Evaluation:** students will be expected to prepare a seminar presentation, to write several focused short analytical pieces, and to write a 15- to 20-page term paper in multiple drafts

**Prerequisites:** PHIL 101, PHIL 102 or permission of instructor; a prior course in logic will be extremely helpful, but is not necessary

**Enrollment Limit:** 15

**Enrollment Preferences:** upper-level Philosophy and Classics majors

**Expected Class Size:** 15

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

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

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

CLAS 330(D1) PHIL 330(D2)

**Writing Skills Notes:** Instructor will provide regular commentary on papers.

**Attributes:** PHIL History Courses

Not offered current academic year

### **PHIL 333 (F) Kant on Beauty, Life, and History**

In this course, we will study Kant's theories of aesthetic and teleological judgments. Aesthetic judgments are puzzling, since we call things "beautiful" because they cause us to feel pleasure, and yet we expect others to find the same things beautiful as we do (e.g., the sunset over the Taconic Ridge), while we do not generally expect others to find the same things pleasurable as we do (e.g., your favorite ice cream flavor at Lickety). Teleological judgments are likewise puzzling, since we often explain living things as designed for certain purposes (e.g., the hummingbird's long bill is for accessing nectar deep inside flowers) or as striving for certain goals (e.g., the sunflower turns toward the sun to take in energy), and yet we are committed to a scientific world-view, where nature is governed by mechanistic causal laws. Indeed, we sometimes describe human history as progressive (aiming toward greater rationality, morality, equality, or freedom, e.g.), even though we regard individual humans as free to choose whether to act well or poorly. Our course will consider Kant's attempts to account for these sorts of paradoxical judgments.

**Requirements/Evaluation:** A midterm and a final essay.

**Prerequisites:** PHIL 202 is recommended

**Enrollment Limit:** 20

**Enrollment Preferences:** Philosophy majors, prospective Philosophy majors

**Expected Class Size:** 10

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

**Distributions:** (D2)

**Attributes:** PHIL History Courses

Not offered current academic year

### **PHIL 335 (S) Contemporary Metaethics**

We speak as if moral judgments can be true or false, warranted or unwarranted. But how should objectivity in this domain be understood? Is moral objectivity like scientific objectivity, assuming that we have a clear sense of what that involves? If not, should this concern us? What are other models for understanding moral objectivity? While answers to such questions are implicit in historically important accounts of morality, these issues became the topic of explicit, sustained debate in the twentieth and twenty-first century. Our focus will be on recent influential work in this area. We will examine several different approaches in depth, including realism, constructivism, expressivism, and skepticism.

**Class Format:** seminar

**Requirements/Evaluation:** weekly seminar discussion questions; 8-10-page midterm paper; 12-14-page final paper

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

**Enrollment Limit:** 15

**Enrollment Preferences:** current and prospective Philosophy majors

**Expected Class Size:** 10-12

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

**Distributions:** (D2)

**Attributes:** PHIL Contemporary Value Theory Courses

Not offered current academic year

### **PHIL 336 (F) Political Liberalism and its Critics (WS)**

Political liberalism has been both celebrated and lamented. The philosopher John Rawls is widely credited with reviving liberalism in the late 20th

century and providing its most persuasive defense. In this tutorial, we'll read portions of Rawls' major works, *A Theory of Justice* and *Political Liberalism*, and trace how his theory evolved in response to an array of critics, including libertarians, perfectionists, communitarians, feminist philosophers, and critical race theorists. Among other things, these critics challenged Rawls' interpretation and defense of the social contract framework, the ideals of freedom and equality, the content of principles of justice, political neutrality about the good, the nature of the self, the division between public and private spheres, and the distinction between ideal and non-ideal theory. We'll examine these criticisms in depth. If time permits, we'll also look briefly at some recent post-Rawlsian debates about the nature of distributive justice (e.g., luck vs. relational egalitarianism, or global justice).

**Class Format:** This tutorial will meet on a fixed weekly schedule agreed to by the instructor and participants.

**Requirements/Evaluation:** Six tutorial papers (5-6 pages in length) and six critiques (2-3 pages in length)

**Prerequisites:** Two previous PHIL courses (including a PHIL 100-level course), or permission of instructor

**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)

**Writing Skills Notes:** Students will write a tutorial paper (5-6 pages in length) every other week, and a peer critique (2-3 pages in length) in alternating weeks, evenly spaced throughout the semester. The instructor will provide timely comments on writing skills, with suggestions for improvement.

**Attributes:** PHIL Contemporary Value Theory Courses

Not offered current academic year

### **PHIL 337 (S) Justice in Health Care (WS)**

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 specifically within the health care context. While social justice and distributive justice are deeply intertwined in the health care context and we will discuss both, we will focus primarily on the concept of distributive justice. This theoretically oriented work will provide the background for subsequent examination of specific topics, which may include, among others: justice in health care financing and reform; justice in health care rationing and access to health care, with particular attention to the intersections of rationing criteria with gender, sexuality, 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 low resource settings.

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

**Prerequisites:** none

**Enrollment Limit:** 10

**Enrollment Preferences:** PHIL majors, PHILH concentrators, those with curricular need for the course, those who have been dropped from the course in previous semesters due to over enrollment, and those who are unlikely to have an opportunity to take the course in a later term

**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:** JLST Interdepartmental Electives PHIL Contemporary Value Theory Courses PHILH Bioethics + Interpretations of Health

Not offered current academic year

### **PHIL 338 (F) Intermediate Logic (QFR)**

**Cross-listings:** MATH 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 taken 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:**

PHIL 338(D2) MATH 338(D3)

**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:** PHIL Contemp Metaphysics + Epistemology Courses

Fall 2024

SEM Section: 01 TF 2:35 pm - 3:50 pm Keith E. McPartland

### PHIL 345 (S) Alienation

What does it mean to feel or to be alienated? Wanting things just because other people do? Not being able to identify with our social and political institutions? Or does it mean the narrowing of our activities, becoming workers who carry out tiny parts of broader processes that we can't see and that we can't control? How do ideas of alienation and meaninglessness have to do with ways that social life is organized -- with the capitalist economy, for one, but also with institutions like race and gender? This course traces different views of alienation and its critique that runs through Lukacs, Marx, Fanon, Kierkegaard, Rousseau, de Beauvoir and others. We'll also look at less conventional forms of alienation critique as part of our inquiry: Afrofuturist fiction by Octavia Butler, work on ornamentation by Anne Anlin Cheng, and films like *A Woman Under the Influence*.

**Requirements/Evaluation:** Progressive writing assignments including: One argument reconstruction, One 6-8 page paper, commentaries on fellow student work, and one final 10-12 page paper.

**Prerequisites:** At least one prior philosophy course

**Enrollment Limit:** 19

**Enrollment Preferences:** Philosophy majors

**Expected Class Size:** 12

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

**Distributions:** (D2)

**Attributes:** PHIL Contemporary Value Theory Courses

Not offered current academic year

### PHIL 355 (S) Other Minds

We will discuss, in this course, several different kinds of problems concerning other minds. Our starting point will be the traditional philosophical

problem of solipsism - the skeptical challenge to our belief in the existence of other minds. Since I cannot have direct access to anyone else's experiences, how do I know that I am not the only being in the world that has experiences? What gives me the idea that there are others like me? What justifies my application of the same psychological concepts (such as *sad*, *curious*, *intends*, *fears*) to myself *and* to others? How do I check whether the application is correct? Is self-knowledge a different kind of knowledge than knowledge of other minds? After considering these philosophical questions and various answers that have been given to them, we will turn our attention to natural, everyday questions about others. *How* do we manage to understand each other? Do we directly observe each other's psychological lives? Or do we make inferences, or form theories? To what extent can we really know one another, and can we refine and deepen our understanding? Is knowledge of other minds crucial for our ethical practices? Are there people who lack the capacity for such knowledge? If so, are they exempt from at least some of our ethical expectations? Finally, how far can our understanding of others go? For example, how do we understand 'inner lives' of infants, of people with dementia, of people with schizophrenia, or of people without any empathy whatsoever? How do we understand mental lives of non-human animals? For that matter, how do non-human animals understand *us*? Is it true that other minds will always remain unknown and inscrutable to a considerable degree? The literature on other minds is vast and heterogeneous. In addition to a number of philosophical texts, we will be reading in a wide area of contemporary scientific research: on 'mindreading', social cognition, empathy, and on so-called psychopathology. Time permitting, we will also consider the role of narrative fiction (in literature and film) in expanding and deepening our knowledge of other minds.

**Requirements/Evaluation:** Class attendance, preparedness and participation; Additional small group meetings, and rotating reports from these meetings; Weekly short assignments, oral or written. Some of these will be tutorial-style presentations, followed by comments by another student. A midterm paper, 5-6 pages long; A final paper, 7-8 pages long

**Prerequisites:** Declared Philosophy major or 4 Philosophy courses (one of which should be a Writing Skills course) or (exceptionally) consent of the instructor

**Enrollment Limit:** 12

**Enrollment Preferences:** Philosophy majors

**Expected Class Size:** 12

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

**Distributions:** (D2)

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

Spring 2025

SEM Section: 01 MR 2:35 pm - 3:50 pm Bojana Mladenovic

### **PHIL 379 (S) American Pragmatism**

**Cross-listings:** AMST 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 three 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:**

PHIL 379(D2) AMST 379(D2)

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

Spring 2025

SEM Section: 01 TR 9:55 am - 11:10 am Steven B. Gerrard

### **PHIL 390 (S) Discourse Dynamics (WS)**

**Cross-listings:** COGS 390

**Secondary Cross-listing**

It'd be perfectly natural to say "I might've left the stove on", then check the stove, then say "I didn't leave the stove on". But perform those exact same steps in a different order--check the stove, say "I didn't leave the stove on", then say "I might've left the stove on"--and something's gone quite wrong. Conversation is dynamic--the back and forth exchange of information is a process that grows and adapts to the surrounding context. The order in which you say things matters, and it matters for what you communicate what actions you take and what events happen around you. In this course, we will investigate dynamic communicative phenomena and discuss competing theoretical explanations about how they're interpreted. Of particular interest will be the extent to which discourse dynamics are built into the meanings of linguistic expressions vs. the extent to which they're consequences of our rational cognition. Is a sentence's relation to previously uttered sentences similar to its relation to extra-linguistic events? How much inference goes into interpreting what's said? In pursuing the answers to these questions, we will discuss both classic and contemporary theories from philosophy and linguistics.

**Requirements/Evaluation:** Four short papers (3-4 pages), take-home midterm paper (5-7) pages, take-home final paper (6-8 pages)

**Prerequisites:** At least one philosophy or cognitive science course (any level), or permission of instructor.

**Enrollment Limit:** 19

**Enrollment Preferences:** Preference given to seniors and philosophy/cognitive science majors, then to students who have taken 200-Level Intro to Formal Linguistics

**Expected Class Size:** 19

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

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

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

COGS 390(D2) PHIL 390(D2)

**Writing Skills Notes:** There will be four short papers (3-4 pages each) that will receive written comments on substance, argument structure, and writing style. These will be designed to include sections that, upon revision in light of comments, can be incorporated into the longer midterm and final papers (5-7 pages and 6-8 pages respectively). Students will be required to meet with the instructor before the midterm and final papers to discuss outlines and revisions of short papers.

**Attributes:** COGS Interdepartmental Electives COGS Related Courses Linguistics PHIL Contemp Metaphysics + Epistemology Courses

**Not offered current academic year**

### **PHIL 401 (F) Senior Seminar--Philosophy in the Public Sphere**

In this seminar we will study contemporary philosophers who see themselves as public intellectuals, using various media to engage in the wider world.

**Requirements/Evaluation:** Weekly short response papers; Class presentation; Final paper.

**Prerequisites:** Limited to senior philosophy majors.

**Enrollment Limit:** 25

**Enrollment Preferences:** The seminar is required of all senior philosophy majors, and limited to them.

**Expected Class Size:** 8-10

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

**Distributions:** (D2)

Fall 2024

SEM Section: 01 M 7:00 pm - 9:40 pm Steven B. Gerrard

**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).

**Requirements/Evaluation:** Not applicable

**Prerequisites:** Not applicable

**Enrollment Preferences:** Not applicable

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

**Distributions:** (D2)

Not offered current academic year

**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 2024

HON Section: 01 TBA Joseph L. Cruz

**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).

**Requirements/Evaluation:** Not applicable

**Prerequisites:** Not applicable

**Enrollment Preferences:** Not applicable

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

**Distributions:** (D2)

Spring 2025

HON Section: 01 TBA Joseph L. Cruz

**PHIL 497 (F) Independent Study: Philosophy**

Philosophy independent study.

**Requirements/Evaluation:** not applicable

**Prerequisites:** not applicable

**Enrollment Preferences:** not applicable

**Expected Class Size:** 0

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

**Distributions:** (D2)

Fall 2024

IND Section: 01 TBA Joseph L. Cruz



**PHIL 498 (S) Independent Study: Philosophy**

Philosophy independent study.

**Requirements/Evaluation:** Not applicable

**Prerequisites:** Not applicable

**Enrollment Preferences:** Not applicable

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

**Distributions:** (D2)

Spring 2025

IND Section: 01 TBA Joseph L. Cruz

**Winter Study -----****PHIL 12 (W) Yoga: Meditation in Action**

Students will be introduced to the 8 limbs of yoga according to the *Yoga Sutras of Patanjali*, including ethics, physical poses, and breathing meditation. Class time will be spent in fun, experiential exploration of yoga poses and the physical, emotional, and mental benefits they bring. By the end of Winter Study, students should have a foundation to continue their own practice of yoga as an embodied philosophy of life. We will read excerpts from the *Yoga Sutras of Patanjali* to complement the class. Open and accessible to students of all abilities, including those with mobility restrictions.

**Requirements/Evaluation:** Paper(s) or report(s); Performance(s); Other: Students will be evaluated on class attendance and a one-page written self-assessment of their learning.

**Prerequisites:** None

**Enrollment Limit:** 14

**Enrollment Preferences:** Email or in-person interview to assess student motivation and to determine if the course is a good fit.

**Expected Class Size:** NA

**Grading:** pass/fail only

**Unit Notes:** Anne O'Connor is a Certified Iyengar Yoga Teacher and long-time student of yoga. Raised in Williamstown, she attended Williams College and spent many years living in France and Germany before returning to the Berkshires in 2013.

**Materials/Lab Fee:** \$75

**Attributes:** EXPE Experiential Education Courses WELL Winter Study Wellness

Not offered current academic year

**PHIL 15 Automata to AI: Ancient Ethical Assumptions Implicit in Our Current Attitudes toward genAI**

Why do we automatically refer to generative AI as a tool? Why does it feel natural to discuss its social impacts from a perspective of labor? Why do stories of sentient tech prompt certain visceral reactions? While LLMs are new, our moral imaginations have had millennia of history developing robust theories about artificial beings' place in human relations. We will interrogate original texts from antiquity (as well as contemporary scholarship) which explore ethical concerns relevant to artificial entities: agency, control, sentience, language, creativity, soul, and more. Through critical reading, discussion and weekly writing, as well as guided encounters with generative AI, students will situate our current cultural conversations within the long philosophical traditions which tacitly shape them.

**Requirements/Evaluation:** Paper(s) or report(s)

**Prerequisites:** None

**Enrollment Limit:** 20

**Enrollment Preferences:** None

**Expected Class Size:** NA

**Grading:**

**Unit Notes:** Gerol Petruzella holds a Ph.D. in Philosophy and an M.A. in Classics, and works in OIT at Williams College. In 2018 he served on the IEEE working group for Ethically Aligned Design v2, a standards guide for ethical development of AI.

**Attributes:** EXPE Experiential Education Courses STUX Winter Study Student Exploration

Not offered current academic year

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

Philosophy senior essay.

**Class Format:** senior essay

**Grading:** pass/fail only

Not offered current academic year

**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

Not offered current academic year

**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

Not offered current academic year