

UNDERGRADUATE
FALL 2021 COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

PHI 100 (DEC: B, SBC: CER, HUM) Concepts of the Person (II), Main Focus

An historical introduction to philosophy through readings and discussions on topics such as human identity, human understanding, and human values.

PHI 100.02

MWF 10:30-11:25

E. Mindich

What are the key categories of personhood, and through what processes and mechanisms do we demonstrate that we appreciate, or do not appreciate, the value of another human life? Humans share several key features or attributes, including but not limited to: having finitude, having mobility, having emotions, having knowledge and opinions, having political agency, as well as a desire to be treated respectfully, and *as a human being*. But, what does this latter claim mean? What does it mean to be *treated as a human being*, and what are the manifold ways in which we neglect to treat “others” as human beings? In this course, we will examine the concept of *ontological value*, that is, which beings are treated as *valuable*, and examine this phenomenon as one that is differentially distributed. In other words, not all humans appear to be valued equally; and in this course, we will examine the forms in which value is attributed and demonstrated, but also withheld. Finally, we will consider what an ethical and equitable distribution of ontological value might look like, and how we might be able to pursue it.

PHI 100.03

MWF 11:45-12:40

E. Russo

Philosophy of the Human Person: The Category of Sex

This course examines different perspectives on the concept of “sex” -- the classification of persons as “man/male” or “woman/female”— in the history of philosophy and today. We will read works by: Aristotle, Rousseau, Aquinas, Engels, de Beauvoir, hooks, Wittig, Nussbaum, Fausto-Sterling, JK Rowling and others. We will consider their views on questions including: the origins of sexual difference (“nature or nurture”); the relationship between sexual difference and gender inequality; how to account for individuals who do not fit in a given understanding of sexual difference; whether the category of sex could and should be abolished or transcended; how competing conceptions of sexual difference play out in contemporary debates about politics, law, medicine, and economic development. Special attention will be given to Black Feminist, Queer, Trans, and Post-colonial perspectives on these questions.

PHI 100.04

MF 1:00-2:20

S. Wrenn

This course will examine the problem of individuality. What do we mean when we assert our individuality? To what extent is individuality a misguided concept? How are we to account for ourselves as historical and social beings? What are the consequences for how we understand existence if we emphasize our collective or individual qualities? These are a few questions that we will explore in this course. We will draw from a variety of literary and philosophical texts and supplement our readings with works of art.

PHI 101 (DEC: G, SBC: HUM) Historical Introduction to Western Philosophy (I) Main focus

An introduction to pivotal theories of the Western philosophic tradition. Readings are drawn from ancient Greek, medieval, and modern classics of Philosophy. Topics may include philosophic theories of politics, morality, logic, metaphysics, knowledge, anthropology, art, and religion.

PHI 101.01**TUTH 8:00-9:20****R. Crease**

"An introduction to key philosophers, philosophies, and philosophical ideas of the Western tradition. Readings are from Plato, Aristotle, René Descartes, Mary Shelley, Søren Kierkegaard, Immanuel Kant, Friedrich Nietzsche, Maxine Sheets-Johnstone, James Baldwin, Hannah Arendt, and others."

PHI 104 (DEC: D; SBC: CER, HUM) Introduction to Moral Reasoning (II), Main Focus**PHI 104.01****TUTH 9:45-11:05****L. Miller**

This course will introduce students to the ways we think and reason about morality and ethics. We will apply the ideas to examples from contemporary life and society. Students will read one book and learn something about what Mill, Kant and Aristotle have said about ethics. There will be two exams.

PHI 104.02**TUTH 1:15-2:35****D. Dilworth**

Description: close readings of four famous philosophic and literary classics, time-honored resources for reflection and discussion on the fundamental topics of moral reasoning.

Degree of difficulty: intensive reading, and the four exams, in limited time frames will require consistent, assiduous concentration throughout the semester and a gradually expanding capacity for comparative evaluation.

Assigned readings:

1. Aristotle's NICOMACHEAN ETHICS, Books I-IV and XIII, IX, X. 6 classes/zoom sessions and exam.
2. Dante, INFERNO. 6 classes and exam.
3. Shakespeare, KING LEAR. Six classes and exam.
4. Hume, ENQUIRY CONCERNING THE PRINCIPLES OF MORALS. 6 or 7 classes; exam in finals week.

Bookstore: each of these readings is available in inexpensive paperback editions, available through Amazon (student link) and a variety of other sources.**

Grades: from the four exams. Optional papers in consultation with the professor.

PHI 104.03**MF 1:00-2:20****S. Struble**

Title: Animals, the Environment, and Technology

What are the conditions that must be met in order that one may be a subject of moral consideration? What are our ethical obligations to the animals we eat and farm? Is the environment something for which we can have moral concern? What new ethical issues emerge with ever evolving technologies? These are just some of the questions that we will explore in this course: Animals, the Environment, and Technology. This will be an interdisciplinary special topics course, which is to say that while we will indirectly discuss the major ethical theories we will more specifically be engaged with contemporary problems in ethics. Ethics is one of the most dynamic fields in Philosophy, as it responds to the ongoing development of human society and human choice making. As such, we will address some of the most relevant issues in contemporary life through the history of philosophy, contemporary ethical discourse, and the (re)presentation of these issues in the media.

PHI 104.04**MF 1:00-2:20****C. Driker-Ohren**

TITLE: Making Choices

This course will examine what it means to make an ethical choice. The capacity for human beings to make choices lies at the

foundation of virtue ethics, deontology, utilitarianism, and other ethical schools. Each theory tries, in its own way, to give an account of how to make moral decisions, often in accordance with rational principles. In our own lives, we are faced with moral and ethical dilemmas that do not admit of easy resolution. Yet we must choose; failing to make a choice is itself an ethically charged act. Through readings and class discussions, we will attempt to clarify the contexts and conditions that frame ethical choice-making and evaluate whether and how philosophy can aid us in our desire to live a good life. Readings will include Aristotle, Augustine, Hume, Mill, Kant, Nietzsche, and selections from 20th century philosophy and literature.

PHI 105 (DEC:G; SBC: CER, HUM) Politics and Society (II), Main Focus

An historical introduction to philosophy through an analysis of political theories, theories of action, and styles of political life. Main themes will include the relation of the individual to the state, the scope of social responsibility, and the nature of human freedom.

PHI 105.02

MW 8:30-9:50

M. Castor

What is a people? How does inquiring about what a people is inform our understanding of politics? Why ask these questions as a way to understand politics? This course will predominately—although not exclusively—draw upon the works of Michi Saagig Nishnaabeg scholar, writer, and artist Leanne Betasamosake Simpson and Genevan philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau in order to collectively think through these questions and, perhaps, even rethink these questions.

PHI 105.03

MF 1:00-2:20

A. Forsberg

As soon as philosophers ask questions such as: What is it to exist? “How do I know what exists?”, “What is the best way to exist?”, it seems they may have already implicitly assumed answers to questions like “Who am I in asking this question?”, “To whom am I asking this question?”, “Why am I able to ask this question in the first place?”, “What is the point of finding an answer?” In other words, it seems that to philosophize at all is always to be *a person placed in a social situation*, wherein philosophical questions are meaningful and wherein their answers are understood to have a certain value.

Once philosophers begin explicitly considering the questions above, they reformulate and expand them into questions like:

“Is there something essentially social about myself as an individual?”, “Is there something about me that cannot be reduced to a social category?”, “What obligations do I have to others, and what obligations do they have to me?”, “What makes me a member of a group: a shared identity? A shared history?” “What is it to ‘share a history’ in the first place?” “On what basis is authority legitimate?”, “Is it necessary for others to be excluded from a group if I am to be included in it?”

This class seeks to provide an overview of how these questions have been asked, answered and re-asked throughout the history of the Western philosophical tradition and beyond. We will do so by examining canonical texts from this tradition, as well as texts which criticize this tradition’s presumptions and reimagine its insights.

PHI 108 (DEC:B; SBC: ESI, HUM) Logical & Critical Reasoning, Main Focus

The principle aim of this course is to help a student acquire the skills of thinking, reading, and writing critically. The student develops a sensitivity to language and argumentation that is applicable to a wide range of situations and subject matters.

PHI 108.02

MW 2:40-4:00

A. Fishman

PHI 108.03**MF 1:00-2:20****J. Wheeler**

"This course will be an introduction to both formal and informal logic. We will cover a host of topics, including informal fallacies, basic logical operations, types of arguments, deductive and inductive reasoning, truth trees, venn diagrams, and more besides. Students will come away from this course with a better understanding of what it means to make a logically valid and sound argument, and will possess a firm grounding in the basics of logic that will be useful for further studies in philosophy, computer science, and mathematics."

PHI 108.04**MWF 2:40-3:35****J. Hook****PHI 108.30****Asynchronous****J. Carter**

This course examines how people reason, both formally and informally, and how to reason better. In addition to discussing formal and informal logic, the course covers illusion, cognitive error, social psychology, alternative logics, and computation and probability. The course begins by approaching reasoning from the point of view of personal decision-making. We will also investigate critical thinking by learning about fallacies, argumentation, syllogisms, and the basics of classical, formal, and philosophical logic. We will look at the relationship of computation to cognition, free will and determinism, incompleteness, and probabilistic reasoning. This course explores these questions through reading, writing, online discussion, group activities, and presentations.

PHI 112 (DEC:H; SBC: STAS) Technology and Modern Life, Main Focus

Investigates the history as well as the present and potential future impact of technology and artifacts not only on material human life but also on the human experience of the world. It addresses ethical questions concerning the uses and abuses of technology as well as asking such questions as whether technology is neutral and merely instrumental or should be seen as having a more profound impact on human life.

PHI 112.02**TUTH 8:00-9:20****J. Carter**

Technology is essential to our way of life. This course will explore the foundations of the culture of technology and the evolution of the concept. We will examine various kinds of technology and how it comes to define the culture of human work, life, and thought. We will discuss artificial intelligence, the environment, surveillance, and technology's relationship with the scientific method. We will also discuss how technology and race interact, as well as analyze ways that gender influences the development and understanding of technology. What does the future of science and technology hold and how can we shape that future in a meaningful way? This course will explore these questions through reading, writing, discussion, group activities, and presentations.

PHI 112.03**MW 8:30-9:50****D. Coutts**

This course presents an overview of the history and philosophy of technology, with an emphasis on the ways in which technology shapes our experience of the world. We will discuss ethical questions regarding past, present, and future uses of technology, and approaches to technological development.

Intermediate Courses

PHI 220 Introduction to Symbolic Logic (II) DEC: C; SBC: QPS

MWF 10:30-11:25

G. Mar

PHI 247 Existentialism (I) (DEC:G; SBC:CER, HUM)

MF 1:00-2:20

R. Harvey

While the themes mentioned in the Bulletin description – alienation, anxiety, nihilism, absurdity, the self, value, death, and immediacy – will necessarily color and shade our exploration this semester, our focus will be on reading, discussing, analyzing, and interpreting a selection of the salient texts that make up the philosophical (and literary) tendency that bears the name of *existentialism*, from its origins in the 19th century through its mid-20th-century heyday, in order to situate it in the *history of ideas*. Readings from Kierkegaard, Dostoevsky, Nietzsche, Camus, Sartre, and Beauvoir; plus a film by Hiroshi Teshigahara.

PHI 300 Ancient Philosophy (I) (DEC:I;SBS: HFA+)

TUTH 11:30-12:50

A. Kim

We will explore the nature of human excellence and happiness through a close reading of Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*.

PHI 306 Modern Philosophy (I) (DEC:I;SBC: HFA+)

TUTH 3:00-4:20

J. Edwards

Your aim in taking this course is to gain a historically well-grounded understanding of major philosophical concepts, principles, methods, and problems that have shaped our conceptions of material nature and the conditions of moral agency since 1600. This course is thus concerned with key developments in Western philosophy during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. By the end of the course, you will be able to understand pivotal metaphysical, epistemological, and moral arguments presented by the following thinkers: Descartes, Hobbes, Hume, Rousseau, and Kant.

PHI 336 Philosophy of Religion (II) (DEC: G; SBC:CER, HFA+) MW 2:40-4:00

A. Steinbock

The contemporary philosophical discipline of “hermeneutics” emerged from the task of interpreting religious scripture. Several issues were and still are at stake: does sacred scripture contain many meanings, or is there only one? Is the meaning of the text reducible to the author's (or authors') intention, or does it have meanings independently of such intentions? Who is able to interpret such texts: authorities, experts, or anyone who can read? Is it necessary to understand the historical setting of a work to understand it? Do the meanings change depending upon the historical context? Is it possible to speak of “the truth” of a text, of several truths, or is it only a matter of opinion? We will begin this course with an introduction to the discipline of hermeneutics as it relates to the philosophy of religion and religious scripture. We will then attempt such a hermeneutical practice by focusing on one short, but incredibly rich and challenging piece of scripture: The Book of Jonah.

PHI 365 Philosophy and Computers (III) (DEC:H; SBC:CER, HFA+) MW 2:40-4:00 G. Mar

PHI 366 Philosophy of the Environment (III) (DEC:G; SBC:CER, HFA+)MW 4:25-5:45 J. Taylor

Philosophical questions raised by human relations with the natural world, ranging from basic concepts such as nature, ecology, the earth, and wilderness, to the ethical, economic, political, and religious dimensions of current environmental problems, including the question of whether there are values inherent in nature itself beyond those determined by human interests alone.

PHI 367 Philosophy of War and Peace (III) (DEC:G; SBC: CER, HFA+) TUTH 11:30-12:50 A. O'Byrne

At this moment, the USA is at war in at least 7 countries around the world, but our lives as civilians here in the USA are barely touched by this fact. What does it mean that war is being waged in our name? What does it mean for a democracy to go to war? Is peace simply the absence of war? In this course we will take a philosophical approach to the study of war and peace as two active elements in the life of a democracy. We will study the historical relation between war and the emergence of democracy, and work to develop a critical understanding of the relations between modern war, terrorism, and contemporary democracy.

PHI 368 Philosophy of Science (III) (DEC:G;SBC:CER, HFA+) TUH 9:45-11:05 D. Dilworth

Description (tentative): the course will have a particular focus of exploring issues of philosophical and scientific interpretation of the hypothesis of planetary and cosmic evolution in the aftermath of Darwin's paradigm breakthrough, *The Origin of Species* (1859). The course will begin with two recent science-based narratives, of the American archeological-paleontologist Loren Eiseley (1907-1977) and of the British biological-paleontologist Simon Conway Morris. It will proceed to frame their factual and hermeneutical accounts of Darwinism in the epistemological and cosmological (cosmogonic) categories of Darwin's 19th century contemporary, C. S. Peirce (1839-1914); Peirce's thought pertaining to evolutionary theory conveyed major problematics of modern thought stemming from Spinoza, Kant and post-Kantian Idealism, and the Transcendentalism of Emerson and Thoreau.

Degree of difficulty: intellectually challenging and satisfying readings for serious-minded students of all majors. Prereqs.

Readings (to be finalized at a later point):

Selections from Charles Darwin's *Origin of Species* and *Descent of Man*.

Loren Eiseley, *The Immense Journey*, *The Firmament of Time*, *The Unexpected Universe*, essays from *The Star Thrower*.

Simon Conway Morris, *Life's Solution: Inevitable Humans in a Lonely Universe*.

Charles S. Peirce, *The Essential Peirce*, vol. one, metaphysical essays of 1891-93, "The Architecture of Theories," "The Doctrine of Necessity Examined," "The Law of Mind," "Man's Glassy Essence," and "Evolutionary Love."

Logistics (to be elaborated): Grades from three or four exams. Optional short papers in consultation.

Penalty for more than 3 absences. Campus disability and academic honesty protocols will be observed.

PHI 375 Philosophy of Law (III) (DEC:G;SBC:CER, HFA+) TUTH 11:30-12:50 J. Edwards

This course investigates how some major western philosophers have understood the idea of law and the fundamental roles that law plays in structuring relations between persons in political society. Readings will be taken mainly from works written by the following thinkers: Plato, Aristotle, Thomas Aquinas, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Immanuel Kant, Karl Marx, and John Rawls. Various issues in contemporary philosophy of law (e.g., the normative basis of legal punishment; the nature of property rights; law and material inequality in theories of distributive justice) will be treated in the context of our discussions of these

thinkers. We will also take into account various aspects of western social and political history that are crucial to understanding what philosophers have argued about law, freedom, and justice.

PHI 377 Contemporary Political Philosophy (II) (SBC:CER, HFA+) TUTH 1:15-2:35 A. O'Byrne

This course approaches contemporary political philosophy with the question of inclusion and exclusion in political life. How is it decided who belongs and who does not belong? What can we learn from early attempts to exclude but also include women? How can we come to terms with the United States' founding decision to exclude but also include enslaved people? How does political philosophy help us think about the stranger and the migrant? The indigenous and the settler? We will read influential 20th and 21st century authors such as Hannah Arendt, Jean-Luc Nancy, Maria Lugones, Charles Mills and Gloria Anzaldua.

PHI 379 Philosophy of Race (III) (DEC:KSBC:CER, HFA+, USA) MW 4:25-5:45 H. Cormier

In this class we'll consider the idea of "race," especially dwelling on the question what, if anything, really distinguishes one human race from another. Is there any way to distinguish races without racism? How have races been distinguished in the past, and is there anything that does or should survive in those ways of classifying human beings? And, especially, is there any continuing role for ideas of race in philosophical thought about morality and the self?

Seminars

PHI 395 Junior Seminar (ESI)

W 2:40-5:45

A. DeLaurentiis

Topic: "Aristotle on Mind, Body and Spirit"

This course aims at familiarizing you with one of the most influential ancient treatises in the history of western and near-eastern philosophy: Aristotle's *On the Soul (De Anima)*. Main topics: nature's life, the nature of the psyche, the logic of perception, human capacities for higher thought, god's nature. Our close reading of the text will be accompanied by forays into contemporary understandings of the mind-matter relationship (readings provided).

One required text: *Aristotle De Anima. With Translation, Introduction and Notes* by R.D. Hicks, Cambridge Univ. Press (1907), 2015. Please adopt this text and no other.

PHI 402 Analysis of Philosophic Texts: (I) (DEC:G;SBC: HFA+) TU 3:00-5:50 A. Kim

Topic: Neo-Platonism

This course will explore the nature of the One and its explication in the thought of Plotinus, Iamblichus, and Proclus, with the first half of the term devoted to Plotinus' *Enneads*, and the last two quarters to selections from Iamblichus' *On the Pythagorean Way of Life* and Proclus' *Elements of Theology*, respectively.