

Philosophy (PHIL)

PHIL 101 CRITICAL THINKING (4)

Critical thinking is the best defense against intellectual trickery and self-delusion. It provides specific techniques and tools whereby we can avoid basic fallacies in our own thinking and detect them in the thought of others. Reasoning is a highly complicated human activity and cannot be satisfactorily studied in an intellectual vacuum. Hence, in this course, critical and uncritical thought are contrasted in the context of the world of human interests and activities - social, political and scientific. All of the basic "tricks" for persuading people to accept false premises and conclusions as true are systematically laid out and their detection practiced. Satisfies GE, category A3 (Critical Thinking).

PHIL 102 INTRODUCTION TO LOGIC (3)

An introduction to the nature of contemporary systems of logic and their application. Students will learn how to abbreviate arguments in ordinary language, to deduce conclusions, and to locate fallacies. Recommended for students of the sciences, computer programming or mathematics, and the general student interested in the structure of arguments. Satisfies GE, category A3 (Critical Thinking).

PHIL 120 INTRODUCTION TO PHILOSOPHY (3)

This course provides an introduction to some of the enduring questions of thinking: What is the nature of knowledge, of morality, of justice, of the self, of religion, of the search for wisdom, of reality? Topics and approaches may vary from section to section. Consult the department office for current information. Satisfies GE, category C3 (Philosophy and Values).

PHIL 200 PHILOSOPHICAL ISSUES (3)

Students practice the techniques of reading and thinking critically, of expository writing, and of oral expression as they reflect together on philosophical issues. Recent topics have included Human Consciousness, Foundations of Greek and Chinese Thought, and Philosophical Issues in Global Climate Change. As students read and discuss the semester's topic, they will reflect consciously on the principles of thinking, speaking, and writing. This skills-oriented course reflects the assumption that we master skills more thoroughly when we are working on an interesting set of issues that are significant and relevant to our lives. Prerequisites: completion of GE categories A2 and A3.

PHIL 202 PROSEMINAR (3)

This course is designed to help students acquire the skills required to successfully major or minor in philosophy, skills such as making effective oral presentations or critically evaluating demanding philosophical texts. The course will be based on an investigation of important contemporary or historical problems, and attention will be paid to both analytic and continental approaches to these problems. Possible topics of discussion are: postmodern critiques of science; moral relativism; arguments for the existence of god; the good life; the nature of emotions; the nature of beauty. Topics will vary from year to year depending on the interests of faculty. Prerequisites: current philosophy major or minor, or permission of instructor.

PHIL 204 APPLIED ETHICS (3)

Applied ethics deals with ethical problems in different areas of human life in an interdisciplinary way. It includes, for instance, social and political ethics, computer ethics, medical ethics, bioethics, environmental ethics, business ethics, and it also relates to different forms of professional ethics. In a course in applied ethics a student can expect to explore the social and ethical impact of human behavior in specific areas of human endeavor, and can expect to learn how humans might apply normative rules in practical contexts.

PHIL 207 PHILOSOPHICAL MOVEMENTS (3)

This course will explore philosophical movements and figures in an interdisciplinary fashion, which includes metaphysical, epistemological and axiological questions. Topics will vary but may include: Historical frameworks of philosophical thought, a focused survey of a particular philosophical figure, an examination of a particular school of thought, or the impact of philosophical thought on global history or culture. This class will be comparative in nature and class will be held in the lecture/seminar format.

PHIL 301 PHILOSOPHY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY (3)

Our lives are fundamentally shaped by Science and Technology, this fact has concerned some of the best minds in philosophy. Recently the scope and speed of scientific discovery and technological change has noticeably accelerated with the advent of information technology. Fantastic claims have been made in regards to our potential to understand through science and control through technology nearly every aspect of the natural world, including our own bodies and minds. This fundamental alteration of humanity must not go unexamined. In this class we will explore the great impacts science and technology has on our ability to know about the world, to understand our origins, and our efforts to promote or challenge our social values and the rise of technoethics. We will look at science and technology as a human practice that inherently fosters certain social values at the expense of others.

PHIL 302 ETHICS AND VALUE THEORY (3)

An introduction to the philosophical analysis of ethics, morality and values, and a survey of the various systems of moral philosophy. The course covers such issues as: What is the good life? What considerations are relevant to making moral decisions? Are moral principles universal, or relative to a given society? How, if at all, can moral judgments be justified or moral disagreements resolved? Satisfies GE, category C3 (Philosophy and Values). Consult Schedule of Classes for topic to be studied. May be repeated (with a different focus) for credit.

PHIL 303 SOCIAL AND POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY (3)

A philosophical examination of the Western tradition of social and political thought. The course will discuss topics such as justice and the ideal society, the question of justified revolution, the role of private property, freedom, individual rights and social welfare, different forms of government and the role of values in political deliberation.

PHIL 305 TRUTH (3)

The aim of this course is to examine a wide sampling of answers to one of the great perennial questions of philosophy: what is truth? Depending on the interests of the faculty, possible readings might address, but are not limited to, the following thematic areas of interest: debates over truth from Socrates to Nietzsche and beyond; the meaning of truth in science, technology, religion and art; truth and power; non-Western approaches to truth; universal versus particular truth. This course is required of all students who are majoring in philosophy.

PHIL 306 CONTEMPORARY TOPICS IN PHILOSOPHY (3)

This course introduces students to themes, thinkers, and debates within contemporary philosophy. While the specific emphasis may vary, the course engages with the open-ended problems and concerns that currently animate philosophical research. Students will be encouraged to think self-reflexively about the nature of philosophical thinking and the ways in which philosophy participates in public debates today. Topics may include globalization and financial crisis, democracy and violence, post-colonialism, neo-liberalism, and market-critique, religious pluralism, media and pop culture, law and social movements.

PHIL 307 PHILOSOPHICAL FIGURES (3)

Selected each semester will be an important figure or grouping of figures, such as a school, movement, or noted debate, from the philosophical canon or outside the canon. The figure or figures' work will be introduced in such a way to historically contextualize their significance and place within the tradition.

PHIL 311 ROBOTICS AND THE TRANSHUMAN FUTURE (3)

The field of Cognitive robotics presents us with profound philosophical questions. Can robots be used to model or replicate human cognitive functions? How would robust robotic artificial intelligence change the world we live in? What would it mean to be human in a fully automated world? To begin to answer these questions we will create simple mechanical reasoning devices and discuss their relevance to philosophical theories of life and mind. We will use LEGO beams, plates, gears, motors, and a RCX micro controller board programmed in the LEGO or NQC (Not Quite C) language along with various sensors and motors to construct small autonomous robots. These robots will be used to try to recreate and explore the strengths and weaknesses of some recent experiments in the field of cognitive robotics.

PHIL 313 ETHICS IN SCIENCE, ENGINEERING, AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (3)

Advanced sciences and high technologies constantly challenge our notions of ethics and morality. In this class we will look at ethical theories that seek to give guidance to scientists, engineers, and other technologists whose work is not only changing the way we live our lives but also our very understanding of life and our place in the universe. Students will look at case studies on topics such as; biotechnology, ethical decision making in the technological design process, engineering disaster analysis, ethics and information technology, technology design and its impact on the traditional social contract.

PHIL 315 EXISTENTIALISM (3)

Existentialism points to the philosophical significance of human existence itself: to do philosophy means to take oneself seriously as an embodied, finite subject, existing in the world and relating to other subjects. Existentialist thought is both a historical movement in philosophy and also a methodology of philosophy. In this class, we will read several prominent existentialist philosophers and examine relevant themes such as the ethics of ambiguity, anxiety and dread, passion and desire, subjectivity and intersubjectivity, finitude and the divine, freedom and choice.

PHIL 325 ENVIRONMENTAL PHILOSOPHY (3)

This course examines the philosophical problems that emerge with sustained reflection on environmental issues. These problems include: the moral standing of non-human entities, the status of "value" in nature, and the status of "nature" itself as something other than human, and vice versa.

PHIL 335 RELIGION, SPIRITUALITY, AND SOCIAL JUSTICE (3)

In this seminar, we will explore the theme of spiritual or contemplative practice and its relations to social justice. More specifically, in order to probe the related questions--how is spiritual inwardness related to moral or political change, and how does contemplative practice lead to collaborative work for social justice?--this course will examine several key thinkers (eg. Kierkegaard, Arendt, Habermas) who give us resources for diagnosing the symptoms of violence and political apathy and who suggest different and complementary models of contemplative practice. The guiding question of the course will be: to what extent are forms of spiritual praxis--whether overtly religious, secular, or post-secular--inseparable from the search for non-violent means of social change?

PHIL 338 PHILOSOPHY OF EMOTION (3)

A philosophical study of emotion, raising definitional, epistemological, meta physical, and value questions about emotion. The course includes the study of particular emotions, such as love, compassion, fear and pride, and makes use of information about emotions from the sciences and social sciences.

PHIL 340 BUDDHISM AND PHILOSOPHY (3)

From its historical beginnings in India through to the schools of Japanese Zen and its eventual introduction to the West, Buddhism has had a distinctive and important impact on philosophical thought. The course will focus on the metaphysical, psychological, ethical, aesthetic, and practical dimensions of Buddhist teachings. Course content and historical emphasis will vary.

PHIL 350 TOPICS IN MORAL PHILOSOPHY (3)

The aim of this course is to examine recent research and scholarship dealing with a wide range of problems and issues of concern to philosophers who are working in the area of practical philosophy. Some possible topics include: the roles of reason and emotion in moral motivation and judgement; the objectivity of value; the nature of moral identity; social dimensions to moral experience; advanced work in the theory of justice; the scope and limits of morality; the relationship between morality and self-interest; the character of rational action.

PHIL 355 AMERICAN PHILOSOPHY (3)

This course surveys major themes and thinkers that define America's distinct philosophical tradition. Stress will be on the origins of "Pragmatism" as a philosophical movement. Our focus will be on the classical thinkers: Emerson, Thoreau, Peirce, James, Dewey, and Mead, and extend to cover the "Neo-Pragmatism" of Richard Rorty, Hilary Putnam, Cornell West, Stanley Cavell and others. Course content and emphasis may vary.

PHIL 360 PHILOSOPHY OF ART AND LITERATURE (3)

An inquiry into the nature of art and literature. This course includes consideration of such topics as: The Possibility of Defining Art, Artistic Imagination, Creativity and Genius, the Purpose of Art, The Interpretation, and Critical Evaluation of Artworks and Works of Literature, Art and Literature in Everyday Life, and The Intriguing relationship between Philosophy and Literature.

PHIL 368 PHILOSOPHY AND FILM (3)

A turn to film and film studies in search of contemporary culture's handling of philosophical themes. The course will develop strategies to study the hidden philosophical significance found within selections from film genres. Such study is indebted to the work of Stanley Cavell and his project to find in film the voices of a repressed American philosophy. Work from throughout critical theory will be considered.

PHIL 370 ADVANCED LOGIC (3)

This course is designed for students who have taken an introductory course in logic. The goal of this course is twofold. First, to consider some more complex logical languages and systems, and second, to consider some of the more properly philosophical issues raised by discussion of those systems. Possible topics of discussion include modality and modal propositional languages; the probability calculus and its application to problems of induction and confirmation; decision theory, and some of the paradoxes of rationality that it seems to give rise to; and game theory, and its relation to economic and moral reasoning.

PHIL 375 PHILOSOPHY OF LAW (3)

This course represents an advanced introduction to seminal problems and themes in the philosophy of law. Of central concern will be two themes: 1) the differences and relation between law, morality, and politics; and 2) the nature of legal reasoning and modes of justification. The course will examine historical and cultural influences on legal institutions and introduce students to rival philosophical approaches such as legal positivism, natural law and legal realism. Specific course emphases and themes may vary depending on faculty interest.

PHIL 378 FEMINIST PHILOSOPHY (3)

This course is an introduction to feminist philosophy. In this class, we will see how the meaning of concepts such as the body, identity, gender, sexuality, and race have changed throughout the past two centuries by looking at central debates within feminist thought. Questions may include: how is it that we come to expect behavior, appearance, and actions to be essentially gendered? What are the implications of gender for how we understand sexuality and race? Where can we find resources for changing such expectations? How do we decide when such transformation is necessary and worth pursuing?

PHIL 383 PHILOSOPHY OF LANGUAGE (3)

A study of classical and current theories about the nature and functions of language, and about truth and meaning. Analysis of the relevance of philosophy of language to other branches of philosophy, linguistics, psychology and the social sciences. Analysis of philosophical issues in the language of fiction and poetry.

PHIL 390 ADVANCED TOPICS IN PHILOSOPHY (1-6)

Topics courses are intended to cover some particular aspect of a philosophical problem, a particular philosopher, or some philosophical issue not normally explored in detail in any of the standard course offerings. Topics include: philosophy in literature, American philosophy, phenomenology, advanced logic, philosophy of science, eastern world views and 20th century philosophy. May be repeated (with a different focus) for credit.

PHIL 399 STUDENT INSTRUCTED COURSE (1-3)

An introductory or advanced course designed by a senior or graduate student and taught under the supervision of faculty sponsor(s).

PHIL 400 SENIOR SEMINAR (3)

A seminar for students in their senior year. Topics vary from semester to semester. May be repeated for credit.

PHIL 450 SENIOR THESIS (A) (3)

Writing of a paper deemed acceptable by a faculty director and reader. Superior papers nominated for distinction will be defended before the philosophy faculty. Students wishing to be candidates for graduation "with distinction" are urged to write a thesis. Prerequisite to PHIL 452: PHIL 450. Prerequisites: advanced standing and instructor consent.

PHIL 452 SENIOR THESIS (B) (3)

Writing of a paper deemed acceptable by a faculty director and reader. Superior papers nominated for distinction will be defended before the philosophy faculty. Students wishing to be candidates for graduation "with distinction" are urged to write a thesis. Prerequisite to PHIL 452: PHIL 450. Prerequisites: advanced standing and instructor consent.

PHIL 462 RESEARCH ASSISTANT IN PHILOSOPHY (1-6)

Intended to give selected students experience in participating in the construction of a professor's research project. Prerequisites: advanced standing and a faculty invitation.

PHIL 470 TEACHING ASSISTANT IN PHILOSOPHY (1-6)

Intended to give students experience in assisting the instructor in a philosophy course by doing research and tutoring students in the class. Prerequisites: advanced standing and consent of the instructor.

PHIL 495 SPECIAL STUDIES (1-3)

Advanced individualized instruction and research with one or more members of the philosophy faculty. The course is designed to provide advanced students with an opportunity to do specialized research and study under strict faculty supervision. Prerequisite: consent of the instructor.

PHIL 499 INTERNSHIP (1-4)

Supervised training and experience in applied philosophy for advanced students in community organizations. Internship contracts are required. Cr/NC only. Prerequisite: consent of the instructor.

PHIL 595 SPECIAL STUDIES IN PHILOSOPHY (1-6)

Advanced research and writing. Students work under close supervision of faculty members. Subject matter variable. May be repeated for credit.