

Philosophy Courses for Fall 2024

Courses marked with * satisfy general education requirements.

***PHIL 1000: Introduction to Philosophy**

Note that credit will not be given for both this course and PHIL 1001, which is the honors version of this course.

Section 1: TTh 9:00-10:20 Blakley

Major works on such themes as appearance and reality, human nature, nature of knowledge, relation of mind and body, right and good, existence of God, and freedom and determinism.

Section 2: TTh 10:30-11:50 Blakley

Major works on such themes as appearance and reality, human nature, nature of knowledge, relation of mind and body, right and good, existence of God, and freedom and determinism.

Section 3: MWF 12:30-1:20 E. Cogburn

We will study key classic and contemporary texts in the Western Philosophical tradition using short stories as thought experiments to help us to work out the issues raised in the philosophy. Issues covered will include: the study of knowledge, political philosophy, gender and race theory, religious experience, ethics, philosophy of mind, and the human condition.

Section 4: MWF 2:30-3:20 Wells

This course provides an introduction to philosophy through a survey of a number of figures and themes in western philosophy. We will especially consider the relationships between belief, understanding, reason, and self. Along the way we will ask, for example: What do I believe, what should I believe, and on what grounds? Can the use of reason lead to social and historical progress? Are there boundaries and limits to what we can know? What is the self? If we are free, then are there justifiable limits that can be placed on one's choices and actions by others? Why is democracy something of value to us? Figures we will discuss include (but are not limited to): Plato, Descartes, Hume, Kant, Marx, Nietzsche, Mill.

Section 5: MWF 3:30-4:20 Wells

This course provides an introduction to philosophy through a survey of a number of figures and themes in western philosophy. We will especially consider the relationships between belief, understanding, reason, and self. Along the way we will ask, for example: What do I believe, what should I believe, and on what grounds? Can the use of reason lead to social and historical progress? Are there boundaries and limits to what we can know? What is the self? If we are free, then are there justifiable limits that can be placed on one's choices and actions by others? Why is democracy something of value to us? Figures we will discuss include (but are not limited to): Plato, Descartes, Hume, Kant, Marx, Nietzsche, Mill.

Section 6: MWF 4:30-5:20 **Felty**

Major works on such themes as appearance and reality, human nature, nature of knowledge, relation of mind and body, right and good, existence of God, and freedom and determinism.

Section 7: Online Asynchronous **STAFF**

Major works on such themes as appearance and reality, human nature, nature of knowledge, relation of mind and body, right and good, existence of God, and freedom and determinism.

PHIL 2010: Symbolic Logic I

Also offered as LING 2010.

Section 1: TTh 12:00-1:20 **Roland**

Classical propositional and first-order predicate logic; syntax and semantics of formal languages; translation between formal languages and English; formal methods of proof.

***PHIL 2020: Ethics**

Note that credit will not be given for both this course and PHIL 2050, which is the honors version of this course.

Section 1: TTh 10:30-11:50 **Kelley**

What am I morally obligated to do? What should I care about and pursue for its own sake? This course introduces students to the philosophical study of ethics by investigating these fundamental and perplexing questions of human existence. The course is divided into three parts. First, we'll investigate the normative ethics of behavior by asking questions such as whether the rightness or wrongness of an action depends solely on its consequences or whether the intentions of the person performing the action also matter. Second, we'll focus on well-being and ask what kind of life would be best for you to lead. The third part of the course examines controversial topics such as immigration, affirmative action, and abortion. More generally, the course is designed to help the student become a better thinker and writer, especially as it relates to the utilization of ethical concepts, terms, and reasoning.

Section 2: TTh 1:30-2:50 **Blakley**

Classical and recent theories of obligation and value, including works of philosophers such as Plato, Aristotle, Kant, Hume, and Nietzsche; topics including freedom, rights, justification of moral judgments.

Section 3: MWF 9:30-10:20 **Wells**

In this course we examine major positions in the history of ethical theory, as well as their applications and challenges to them. In the most basic sense, this course asks: What is right? How ought we act? How ought we live? In considering these primary questions, we will ask further: How ought we treat, and what do we owe, each other? Where do these obligations

and responsibilities come from, i.e., what are their foundations? Our aim will be not only to understand these questions in theory, but to grapple with how they challenge us to live our lives, give us meaning, and determine what we value. Our task is to consider who we are and who we want to (or, perhaps, who we ought to) become. In pursuing this task, we will consider virtue ethics, stoic ethics, Kantian ethics, utilitarianism, and care ethics. We will also consider critiques of morality.

Section 4: MWF 10:30-11:20 **Wells**

In this course we examine major positions in the history of ethical theory, as well as their applications and challenges to them. In the most basic sense, this course asks: What is right? How ought we act? How ought we live? In considering these primary questions, we will ask further: How ought we treat, and what do we owe, each other? Where do these obligations and responsibilities come from, i.e., what are their foundations? Our aim will be not only to understand these questions in theory, but to grapple with how they challenge us to live our lives, give us meaning, and determine what we value. Our task is to consider who we are and who we want to (or, perhaps, who we ought to) become. In pursuing this task, we will consider virtue ethics, stoic ethics, Kantian ethics, utilitarianism, and care ethics. We will also consider critiques of morality.

Section 5: MWF 11:30-12:20 **Wells**

In this course we examine major positions in the history of ethical theory, as well as their applications and challenges to them. In the most basic sense, this course asks: What is right? How ought we act? How ought we live? In considering these primary questions, we will ask further: How ought we treat, and what do we owe, each other? Where do these obligations and responsibilities come from, i.e., what are their foundations? Our aim will be not only to understand these questions in theory, but to grapple with how they challenge us to live our lives, give us meaning, and determine what we value. Our task is to consider who we are and who we want to (or, perhaps, who we ought to) become. In pursuing this task, we will consider virtue ethics, stoic ethics, Kantian ethics, utilitarianism, and care ethics. We will also consider critiques of morality.

Section 7: Online Asynchronous **Felty**

In this course we examine major positions in the history of ethical theory, as well as their applications and challenges to them. In the most basic sense, this course asks: What is right? How ought we act? How ought we live? In considering these primary questions, we will ask further: How ought we treat, and what do we owe, each other? Where do these obligations and responsibilities come from, i.e., what are their foundations? Our aim will be not only to understand these questions in theory, but to grapple with how they challenge us to live our lives, give us meaning, and determine what we value. Our task is to consider who we are and who we want to (or, perhaps, who we ought to) become. In pursuing this task, we will

consider virtue ethics, stoic ethics, Kantian ethics, utilitarianism, and care ethics. We will also consider critiques of morality.

PHIL 2029: Ethics and New Weapons Technologies

Section 1: MWF 2:30-3:20 STAFF

Ethical issues raised by recent advancements in military and weapons technologies.

PHIL 2033: History of Ancient and Medieval Philosophy

Section 1: MW 3:00-4:20 Nathan

In this course, we will look at the works of Plato, Aristotle, Epicurus, the ancient skeptics, and Stoics. We will focus on ethics, what they have to say about a good and happy life, and we will also cover important contributions these philosophers make to metaphysics and epistemology. We will be reading the texts closely, seeking to understand their claims and their reasons for making those claims.

PHIL 2745: Knowledge & Reality

Section 1: TTh 3:00-4:20 Roland

Introduction to central epistemological and metaphysical questions: mind and matter; causation and free will; space and time; meaning and truth; the nature of knowledge and justified belief; perception, memory, reasoning, and testimony as sources of knowledge and justified belief.

PHIL 3001: Existentialism

Section 1: TTh 1:30-2:50 Bacon

Existentialism is the perfect confluence of the questions that drive our lives and how those questions are asked and answered by philosophy. Such questions include: Why do we exist? What is the meaning or point of life? Why do we suffer and die? What is the point of art? What is the basis of individual identity? Is it possible to live authentically? How do we pursue meaning in an absurd and meaningless world? The purpose of this course is to introduce the main questions, concepts, theories, problems, themes, and theories of Existential philosophy. Through this engagement we will strengthen our capacity of self-reflection and in-depth philosophical examination. I anticipate that you will also bring to class your own guiding questions, and that some questions you will find throughout the course. I am immensely interested in what questions matter to you and why. Authors include Camus, Sartre, De Beauvoir, as well as works in film and literature.

PHIL 3020: Special Topics: Metaphysics of the Paranormal

May be taken twice for credit when topics vary.

Section 1: MW 6:00-7:20

E. Cogburn

This course will explore some of the different metaphysical positions in philosophy including theories of the mind such as physicalism, dualism, and panpsychism as well as related theories about the universe including monism. Our investigation will then consider how these theories can be used to study and assess various paranormal claims such as life after death, the persistence of consciousness, and mystical revelations.

PHIL 3090: Nietzsche

Also offered as GERM 3090. Knowledge of German is not required.

Section 1: TTh 3:00-4:20

Blakley

Our aim is to gain a thorough understanding of the key ideas or “doctrines” in Nietzsche’s philosophy (e.g. Apollonian/Dionysian duality, death of God, the eternal return, Overman, relativism, moral skepticism, critique of morality, etc.), some of the scholarly debate over how to understand those ideas best and consider whether Nietzsche’s philosophy is self-contradictory or incoherent.

PHIL 4924: Aristotle

Prereq.: PHIL 2033 or equivalent.

Section 1: MW 6:00-7:20

Nathan

The course focuses on three central themes in Aristotle’s ethics and politics alongside his psychological views: the function and role of emotions for virtue, desire and practical reasoning, the basis of community and friendship and its role in eudaimonia. We will also consider some ways in which Aristotle’s ethics is valuable in our contemporary world.

PHIL 4943: Problems in Ethical Theory: Well-Being

Prereq.: two courses in philosophy or consent of the instructor. May be taken for a max. of 6 sem. hrs. of credit when topics vary.

Section 1: TTh 1:30-2:50

Kelley

What is of ultimate benefit and harm to beings like us? What is it for a life to go well for the person who lives it? Is it always good for you to get what you want? Could something be good for you in the most basic and fundamental way even if you were not at all interested in it? Is a life that starts out poorly but gets better over time better than one that starts out well but gets progressively worse? These are some of the central questions of *well-being*—or *quality of life* or *welfare*—that we will investigate in this course. We will also study closely related topics concerning the nature of pleasure and the meaning of life, depending on student interest. The course is designed to help graduate students and advanced undergraduates to

become better readers and writers of philosophy, especially as it relates to the philosophical study of well-being.

PHIL 4946: Philosophy of Law

Bound with CRIM LAW 5009.

Section 1: MWF 1:50-2:50 Levy

Overview of substantive criminal law, including basic criminal concepts, statutes, cases, policies, problems, and theories.

PHIL 4948: Phenomenology

Prereq.: PHIL 2035 or 4936 or equivalent.

Section 1: TTh 10:30-11:50 Bacon

Phenomenology is the philosophical study of phenomena as they manifest in lived experience, the study of consciousness in terms of the way we perceive and understand the material and manifest world, and the meaning direct objects have for subjective experience. Phenomenology is the study of the lived experience of the world. In this class we will read classic phenomenology texts such as Merleau-Ponty as well as contemporary critical phenomenology. This class will pay special attention to the body and the lived experience of embodiment and the way in which we understand this (and fail to) philosophically. While this may seem abstract and needlessly obtuse (and indeed some of the texts will seem this way as well) this is meant to be an engaging and curious interrogation of what it feels like to live a human life and the multifaceted registers of our engagement in a complex, variegated, and lush lifeworld.

PHIL 4951: Philosophy of Science

Prereq.: consent of instructor.

Section 1: MWF 1:30-2:20 STAFF

Philosophical issues related to concept formation and theory construction in the natural, behavioral, and social sciences.

PHIL 4952: Topics in Metaphysics: The Metaphysics of Artificial Intelligence

May be taken for a max. of 6 sem. hrs. of credit when topics vary.

Section 1: M 4:30-7:30 Goldgaber

The course focuses on the idea and prospects for Artificial General Intelligence (AGI), that is generally understood as intelligence that performs at or better than human-level intelligence. In what does AGI consist and how will we know when it has been achieved? Is AGI necessarily linked to human forms of intelligence? Does AGI require embodiment or determinate material substrates? In order to assess the possibilities of AGI (and its possible

futures) we will need to know something about the nature of thought, mind and consciousness, and also something about the nature of thinking, conscious beings, or beings with minds. This course explores the intersection of philosophy of AI and metaphysics, including fundamental questions in the philosophy of mind, philosophy of identity and trans- and post- humanism.

PHIL 7901: Graduate Seminar in History of Philosophy

May be taken for a max. of 6 sem. hrs. of credit when topics vary.

Section 1: W 4:30-7:20

J. Cogburn

We will look at three different contemporary philosophers grappling in deep ways with how we might derive meaning and purpose in a universe where, for all any of us can tell (and as Tom Waits puts in a song of the same name) "God's away on business."

Historically, continental philosophers have tended to respond to evidence of cosmic indifference with some form of existentialism, where "man" must heroically invent meaning where none has been found. Analytic philosophers have tended to respond with some form of milquetoast liberalism. Both ignore large swaths of Nietzsche that should have made us wary of both existentialism and liberalism, continentals ignoring the sexist, slavery supporting, genocide praising themes (and the fact that standard voluntarist existentialism and the thankfully now passé academic cult of transgression have no ground to criticize these themes) and analytics ignoring Nietzsche's critique of the idea that post Reformation Protestant morality and politics could survive the death or radical hiddenness of God.

Recent books by Drew Dalton, Shannon Mussett, and Philip Goff have all explored the indifference of the cosmos in fundamentally new ways that arguably neither instantiate the worst of, nor ignore the best of, Nietzsche. Goff's panpsychism grows out of analytic philosophy of mind, but his tracing the existential themes appropriate to panpsychism leads him to affirm intrinsic positive meaning in the cosmos without affirming the traditional perfect deity. Dalton on the other hand finds intrinsic negative meaning in the cosmos and in different ways show how one can ground a meta-ethics and substantive normative ethics via that very realization. Mussett radicalizes some suggestions of Emmanuel Levinas that one also finds in Buddhist philosophy to the effect that terrifying cosmic entropy and finitude lead not to nihilism, but rather must be seen as a precondition for the realization of truth, beauty, and goodness.