Philosophy Courses

Fall 2023

PHIL 001  Introduction to Philosophy (4)  HU
43452 PHIL 001-010  Prof. Barry Hulsizer (MWF, 10:45-11:35)
43453 PHIL 001-011  Prof. Nathan Schmidt (MW, 10:45-12:00)
43454 PHIL 001-012  Prof. Filippo Casati (TR, 10:45-12:00)

Philosophy is a broad discipline which critically addresses many different branches of human experience. Aesthetics, politics, ethics, religion and even the structure of the world have all represented great sources of philosophical discussion in both eastern and western traditions. Study of historical and contemporary texts will introduce students to this vast philosophical universe and provide the skills necessary to benefit from its further exploration. Course not open to seniors.

PHIL/MATH 014-010  Symbolic Logic (4)  MA
44028/44303  Prof. Aladdin Yaqub (TR, 15:00-16:15)

This course is an introduction to logical theory. Our primary goal is to study the notions of logical consequence and provability. The central question that we will try to answer is this: What exactly does it mean to say that some conclusion is a logical consequence of or is provable from a certain collection of premises? To answer this question as clearly and rigorously as possible, we will develop three symbolic logical systems: Term Logic, Sentence Logic, and Predicate Logic.

PHIL 102-010  Philosophical Thinking (4)  HU
43455  Prof. Ricki Bliss (MW, 10:45-12:00)

We can think philosophically about almost any topic: mathematics, ethics, ordinary objects, explanations, race, even philosophy itself. But if philosophy has no special subject matter, what exactly is it? Philosophy is a distinctive kind of activity - an activity that involves certain ways of thinking and certain kinds of conceptual tools. This class will familiarize students both with the tools philosophers take for granted and with philosophical patterns of reasoning and argumentative strategies that go beyond basic critical thinking.

PHIL/ETH/HMS/REL 116-010  Bioethics (4)  HU
43153/43155/43156/42128  Prof. Nathan Schmidt (MW, 15:00-16:15)

Moral issues that arise in the context of health care and related biomedical fields in the United States today, examined in the light of the nature and foundation of moral rights and obligations. Topics include: confidentiality, informed consent, euthanasia, medical research and experimentation, genetics, and the distribution of health care.

PHIL/FILM 120-010  Philosophy and Film (4)  HU
45024/45025  Prof. Ricki Bliss (MW, 12:10-13:25)

This seminar course will explore a variety of themes, genres, and movements within cinema from a philosophical perspective. Regular screenings of films from silent era to present. Content may vary depending upon instructor.
PHIL 125-010 Social and Political Philosophy (4) HU 45023
Prof. Filippo Casati (TR, 12:10-13:25)
We live in a world in which theology and politics are often fighting on opposite fronts. For this reason, the intersection between socio-political ideas and religious traditions has become essential to understand our times. This course tries to cast some light on such an important intersection. On the one hand, it introduces students to three important political traditions, that is, liberalism, conservatism and marxism. On the other hand, this course helps students to understand how these political traditions have employed and wrestled with religious traditions and, in particular, Christianity and Buddhism.

PHIL 131-010 Ancient Philosophy (4) HU 43458
Prof. Nathan Schmidt (MW, 13:35-14:50)
Historical survey of selected texts and issues in the classical world, from the pre-Socratics through Aristotle, with emphasis on the origins of the western philosophical traditions in ethics, metaphysics, and epistemology.

PHIL 137-010 Nineteenth Century Philosophy HU 45022
Prof. Chad Kautzer (TR, 13:35-14:50)
Historical survey of selected texts and issues in 19th century philosophy. Areas of focus may include post-Kantian idealism; period-specific critiques of religion, politics, and morality; theories of history; the origins of utilitarianism, pragmatism, existentialism, and mathematical logic; etc. Figures may include Hegel, Marx, Kierkegaard, Mill, Peirce, Frege, Nietzsche, James, etc.

PHIL 139-010 Contemporary Philosophy (4) HU 44035
Prof. Gordon Bearn (MW, 15:00-16:15)
Philosophical thought from the late 19th century to the present; pragmatism, linguistic analysis, existentialism, and Marxism. Truth and knowledge, values and moral judgment, meaning, the place of the individual in the physical world and society, and the impact of the scientific method upon all of these.

PHIL 141-010 Islamic Philosophy (4) HU 45026
Prof. Aladdin Yaqub (TR, 19:15-20:30)
The medieval era was the golden age of Islamic civilization. Science, mathematics, theology, philosophy, logic, jurisprudence, and many other disciplines flourished during that time. The course is an introduction to medieval Islamic philosophy. There is no indigenous Islamic philosophy other than medieval Islamic philosophy and theology, and commentaries on and interpretations of medieval Islamic philosophical and theological texts. The readings cover selections from the writings of al-Kindī, al-Rāzī, al-Fārābī, Ibn Sinā (Avicenna), al-Ghazālī, Ibn Ṭūfayl, and Ibn Rushd (Averroes).

PHIL 228-010 Philosophy of Physics (4) HU 43456
Prof. Mark Bickhard (MW, 15:00-16:15)
Philosophy of Physics will address fundamental philosophical issues involved in relativity and quantum theories, including the perplexities involved in how to integrate them. Topics can include string theory and loop quantum gravity. We will work with a particular emphasis on metaphysical issues. We begin with a general overview, and then focus more deeply in accordance with interests of the class.
A close reading of Wittgenstein’s mature masterpiece, *Philosophical Investigations* (c. 1945). This text is a force resistant to the professionalization of English language philosophy which occurred during the middle years of the last century, and from which we still suffer. By reframing our conception of linguistic and indeed existential meaning, Wittgenstein attempted to reorient our approach to understanding, rule following, sensation, and indeed to what matters, period. What he was resisting was a philosophy centered on the formal and the analytical and it is a sign of his radical approach to philosophy that in 1949 he could write: "For a philosopher there is more grass growing down in the valleys of silliness than up on the barren heights of cleverness" (*Culture and Value*).