PHILOSOPHY (PHIL)

PHIL 001 Introduction to Philosophy
Philosophers ask difficult questions about the most basic issues in human life. Does God exist? What can we know about the world? What does it mean to have a mind? How should I treat non-human animals? Do I have free will? This course is an introduction to some of these questions and to the methods philosophers have developed for thinking clearly about them.
For BA Students: Humanities and Social Science S
Taught by: Forbes
One-term course offered either term
Activity: Lecture
1 Course Unit
Notes: Also fulfills General Requirement in History Tradition for Class of 2009 and prior. Freshman Seminar sections offered

PHIL 002 Ethics
Ethics is the study of right and wrong behavior. This introductory course will introduce students to major ethical theories, the possible sources of normativity, and specific ethical problems and questions. Topics may include euthanasia, abortion, animal rights, the family, sexuality, bioethics, crime and punishment and war.
For BA Students: Society Sector
Taught by: S.Meyer, Tan, Lord, M.Meyer
One-term course offered either term
Activity: Lecture
1 Course Unit

PHIL 003 History of Ancient Philosophy
"What is philosophy? How does it differ from science, religion, literature, and other modes of human discourse? This course traces the origins of philosophy as a discipline in the Western tradition, looking to thinkers of Ancient Greece and Rome. We will examine how natural philosophers such as Thales, Anaximander, and Heraclitus distinguished their inquiries from the teachings of poets such as Homer and Hesiod; how ancient atomism had its origins in a response to Parmenides' challenge to the assumption that things change in the world; how Socrates reoriented the focus of philosophy away from the natural world and toward the fundamental ethical question, how shall I live? We will also examine how his pupil, Plato, and subsequently Aristotle, developed elaborate philosophical systems that address the nature of reality, knowledge, and human happiness. Finally, we will examine the ways in which later thinkers such as the Epicureans and Stoics transformed and extended the earlier tradition."
For BA Students: History and Tradition Sector
Taught by: S.Meyer
Course usually offered in fall term
Activity: Lecture
1 Course Unit

PHIL 004 History of Modern Philosophy
This course is an introduction to a few central themes in philosophy in the 17th and 18th centuries, and to some of the crucial thinkers who addressed those themes. Topics to be covered may include, among others, the nature of the human being (including the human mind), the relationship between God and the created world, the nature of freedom, and the relations among natural sciences, philosophy and theology in this rich period of human history.
For BA Students: History and Tradition Sector
Taught by: Hatfield, Detlefsen, Chignell
Course usually offered in spring term
Activity: Lecture
1 Course Unit

PHIL 005 Formal Logic I
This course provides an introduction to some of the fundamental ideas of logic. Topics will include truth functional logic, quantificational logic, and logical decision problems.
Taught by: Domotor, Weinstein
One-term course offered either term
Activity: Lecture
1 Course Unit
Notes: This is a Formal Reasoning course.

PHIL 006 Formal Logic II
An introduction to first-order logic including the completeness, compactness, and Lowenheim-Skolem theorems, and Godel's incompleteness theorems.
Taught by: Weinstein
Course usually offered in spring term
Activity: Lecture
1 Course Unit

PHIL 007 Critical Thinking
This course will provide the student with informal techniques for identifying and analyzing arguments found in natural language. Special attention will be paid to developing the ability to assess the strength of natural language arguments, as well as statistical arguments.
Course not offered every year
Activity: Lecture
1 Course Unit

PHIL 008 The Social Contract
This is a critical survey of the history of western modern political philosophy, beginning from the Early Modern period and concluding with the 19th or 20th Century. Our study typically begins with Hobbes and ends with Mill or Rawls. The organizing theme of our investigation will be the idea of the Social Contract. We will examine different contract theories as well as criticisms and proposed alternatives to the contract idea, such as utilitarianism. Besides the above, examples of authors we will read are Locke, Rousseau, Hume, Mill and Marx.
For BA Students: Society Sector
Taught by: Tan
Course usually offered in spring term
Also Offered As: PPE 008
Activity: Lecture
1 Course Unit
PHIL 015 Logic and Formal Reasoning
This course offers an introduction to three major types of formal reasoning: deductive, inductive (probabilistic and statistical), and practical (decision-making). The course will begin with the study of classical sentential and predicate logics. It will move on to elementary probability theory, contemporary statistics, decision theory and game theory.
For BA Students: Formal Reasoning and Analysis
Taught by: Domotor
Course usually offered in spring term
Activity: Lecture
1 Course Unit

PHIL 024 Philosophy of Biology
An introductory course about conceptual and ethical issues in the life sciences. Topics may include the nature of species, adaptation, fitness, the evolution of altruism, and debates about human nature. No prior background about biology or its history are required.
Activity: Seminar
1 Course Unit

PHIL 025 Philosophy of Science
What counts as a scientific theory? What counts as evidence for a scientific theory? Are scientific inferences justified? Does science give us truths or approximate truths about a world that exists independently of us? How can we know? Does it matter? These are all perennial questions in the philosophy of science, and the goal of this course is to look at how philosophers have answered these questions since the scientific revolution. In addition to reading classic work by philosophers of science, we will read material from living and dead scientists in order to gain a deeper appreciation of the philosophical questions that have troubled the most brilliant scientists in Western science.
For BA Students: Natural Science and Math Sector
Taught by: Weisberg, Spencer
One-term course offered either term
Activity: Lecture
1 Course Unit

PHIL 028 Introduction to Feminist Philosophy
This course is an introduction to feminist thought, both in theory and in practice. We will consider how feminist thought emerged and evolved, as well as how feminist theories respond to various intellectual, social and political challenges. Questions we will address include: What exactly is feminism? How does one's gender identity impact one's lived experiences? How should we revise, reformulate, or rethink traditional answers to political and ethical issues in light of feminist theories? How can feminist analyses contribute to the development of better science, and our conceptions of knowledge?
Taught by: M. Meyer
Course not offered every year
Activity: Seminar
1 Course Unit
Notes: Offered through the College of General Studies

PHIL 029 Philosophy of Sport
This is an introductory philosophy course that uses philosophical tools to understand and answer questions that arise in and about sports. Is there a principled basis for determining which methods of performance enhancement are acceptable? Developing a framework to answer this question will take us through: 1) questions about rules: what is their point in sports and what are appropriate reasons to change them; 2) questions about the point of participation in a sport; 3) questions about the kinds of virtues sports participants can demonstrate; and 4) questions about integrity of participants and a sport itself. A related set of questions concerns the appropriate competitors in sporting events: Should competition be restricted to single sex categories; Should competition be divided into disabled and non-disabled categories?
Taught by: M. Meyer
Course not offered every year
Activity: Seminar
1 Course Unit

PHIL 030 Plato: Democracy and the Power of Rhetoric
If you aspired to a political career in ancient Athens, public speaking was an essential skill. Athens was a direct democracy, which meant that having the ability to win over your fellow citizens was tantamount to political success. Young, ambitious citizens would therefore pay handsomely to study with rhetoricians, who professed to teach this all-important skill. Plato, however, was famously wary of the power of rhetoric. In this class, we will read selections from Plato's dialogues in which many of the most prominent rhetoricians are engaged in discussion with Socrates about the nature of rhetoric as well as its potential benefits and pitfalls. Students will then assume the role of citizens charged with speaking before the Athenian Assembly on various subjects. This will likely include a recreation of the trial of Socrates, who was himself accused of using rhetoric to make the weaker argument the stronger. By examining democracy at its threshold, and the power wielded by rhetoricians within a democracy, this CWiC seminar aims to provide both the context and perspective to consider its later evolution. Grades will be based on at least two oral presentations, as well as general participation in other class activities.
Taught by: Reese, Brian
Activity: Seminar
1 Course Unit

PHIL 034 Philosophy of Religion
An introductory philosophical examination of questions regarding the nature of religious experiences and beliefs; arguments for and against the existence of God; the problem of evil; the relationships of faith, reason and science, the possibility of religious knowledge, the role of religious communities, etc. Readings from the history of philosophy, 20th century and contemporary philosophy.
Taught by: Steinberg
Course not offered every year
Activity: Lecture
1 Course Unit

PHIL 044 Introduction to Cognitive Science
Scope and limits of computer representation of knowledge, belief and perception, and the nature of cognitive processes from a computational perspective.
Taught by: Kearns, Liberman, Weinstein, Hatfield
Course usually offered in fall term
Also Offered As: CIS 140
Activity: Lecture
1 Course Unit
Notes: Formal Reasoning Course. All Classes
PHIL 050 Introduction to Indian Philosophy
This course will take the student through the major topics of Indian philosophy first introducing the fundamental concepts and terms that are necessary for a deeper understanding of themes that pervade the philosophical literature of India—arguments for and against the existence of God, for example the ontological status of external objects, the means of valid knowledge, standards of proof, the discourse on the aims of life. The readings will emphasize classical Hindu, Buddhist, and Jain philosophical articulations (from 700 B.C.E. to 16th century CE) but we will also supplement our study of these materials with contemporary or relatively recent philosophical writings to modern India.
For BA Students: History and Tradition Sector
Activity: Lecture
1 Course Unit

PHIL 051 Yoga and Philosophy
“Yoga” means to yoke in Sanskrit. Metaphorically, this is often interpreted as union, or integration. This course will explore central aspects of yogic philosophy and practice, and how they relate to, and might be integrated with, contemporary analytic philosophy, college life, and beyond. We will focus on three key issues: (1) What is yogic philosophy? How does it relate to the western philosophical tradition more commonly taught in philosophy departments in the U.S.? (2) What does the practice of yoga have to do with theoretical understanding? (3) Is it possible to integrate a yogic worldview and a scientific worldview? Is there scientific evidence that yoga “works”? What does that even mean? This course will contain both a theoretical component and a practice component. In addition to writing analytical essays on these topics, students will maintain a yoga practice and a reflective journal throughout the course. No prior experience with yoga is required.
Taught by: Miracchi
Activity: Seminar
1 Course Unit

PHIL 055 Existentialism
An introduction to the philosophy and literature of Existentialism.
Readings from philosophers such as Nietzsche, Kierkegaard, Heidegger, de Beauvoir, Camus, Sartre, and writers such as Dostoyevsky, Ibsen, Kafka, and Beckett.
Course not offered every year
Activity: Seminar
1 Course Unit

PHIL 072 Biomedical Ethics
This course is an introduction to bioethics, focusing on ethical questions arising at the beginning and end of life. Topics will include procreative responsibilities, the question of wrongful life, and prenatal moral status as well as questions of justice related to markets for sperm, eggs and gestation. We will also attend to dilemmas at the end of life, including the authority of advance directives, euthanasia and the allocation of life-saving therapies.
For BA Students: Society Sector
Course not offered every year
Also Offered As: PPE 072
Activity: Lecture
1 Course Unit

PHIL 073 Topics in Ethics
This course examines some of the central theoretical and applied questions of ethics. For example, what is the good life? By what measure or principles do we evaluate the rightness and wrongness of actions? How does ethical reasoning help us understand and address real world problems such as world hunger, social injustice, sex and race discrimination, allocation of scarce resources and the like. The course can be organized around an applied topic or practical issue such as global ethics, just war, biomedical ethics or environmental ethics.
Taught by: Gibbons, M.Meyer
Course not offered every year
Also Offered As: PPE 073
Activity: Seminar
1 Course Unit

PHIL 074 Business Ethics
We will examine practical ethical issues facing businesses, and the philosophical tools for addressing them. Topics may include corporate responsibility, shareholders vs. stakeholders, whistle blowing, raiding and restructuring, the morality of markets, fair hiring practices, workers rights, sexual harassment, environmental impact.
Course not offered every year
Activity: Seminar
1 Course Unit

PHIL 076 Political Philosophy
An introduction to some central issues in social and political philosophy: liberty, equality, property, authority, distributive justice. Readings may be from Hobbes, Locke, Mill, Marx, and more recent theorists such as Rawls and Nozick.
Taught by: Freeman
Course not offered every year
Activity: Lecture
1 Course Unit

PHIL 077 Philosophy of Law
This course is an introduction to some of the central philosophical problems of law: What is law? What makes law? What is the relationship between law and morality? Can laws be unjust? Is there a moral obligation to obey the law? We will look at different theories of law, such as positivism and natural law theory, and discuss topics like civil disobedience, liberty and the law, and punishment and the law. The third and final section of the course will consider an unusual and particularly significant kind of law: constitutional law. We will consider the purpose(s) of constitutions, how constitutionalism relates to democracy, and how constitutions ought to be understood and interpreted, in light of our answers to these first two questions. Throughout the course, we will engage with both classic and contemporary work, reading work by Michelle Alexander, Jeremy Bentham, Angela Davis, Ronald Dworkin, John Hart Ely, H.L.A. Hart, Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, John Stuart Mill, Robert Nozick, Martha Nussbaum, Richard Posner, Jeremy Waldron, and others.
For BA Students: Society Sector
Taught by: Hutler
Course not offered every year
Activity: Lecture
1 Course Unit
PHIL 079 Environmental Ethics
In this course we will investigate some of the ethical issues that arise from our relationship with the environment. Topics may include: What are our responsibilities toward the environment, as individuals and as members of institutions? How do our responsibilities toward the environment relate to other ethical considerations? Do non-human animals/species/ecosystems have intrinsic value? What should conservationists conserve?
Course not offered every year
Activity: Seminar
1 Course Unit

PHIL 080 Aesthetics
This course examines philosophical issues centering on the nature and value of the arts. Some questions we’ll consider are: What is art? What does it mean to have an aesthetic experience? How are aesthetic experiences different from non-aesthetic ones? What is the relation between art and truth? How do the moral qualities in a work of art affect its aesthetic qualities? Why are emotions important in our interpretations of artworks? What is the relation between art and expression? Do forgeries necessarily have less aesthetic value than original artworks? What are aesthetic judgments, and are they merely expressions of taste? Lecture and discussion will center on both classical and contemporary works in aesthetics.
For BA Students: Arts and Letters Sector
Course not offered every year
Activity: Seminar
1 Course Unit

PHIL 155 Continental Philosophy
In this course we read various texts in the Enlightenment tradition and more recent ones critical of modern distortions of this tradition. Readings may include: Kant and Marx, two exemplars of this tradition, as well as the views of the Frankfurt School (e.g. Horkheimer and Adorno), Foucault, Derrida, Nietzsche and Saussure.
Taught by: Steinberg
Course not offered every year
Activity: Seminar
1 Course Unit

PHIL 203 Thinking with Models
When a flu pandemic strikes, who should get vaccinated first? What’s our best strategy for minimizing the damage of global climate change? Why is Philadelphia racially segregated? Why do most sexually reproducing species have two sexes, in roughly even proportions? These and many other scientific and practical problems required us to get a handle on complex systems. And an important part of deepening our understanding and sharpening our intuitions requires us to think with models. Students in this laboratory-based course will learn about the varied practices of modeling, and will learn how to construct, analyze, and validate models.
For BA Students: Formal Reasoning and Analysis
Taught by: Weisberg
Course not offered every year
Activity: Seminar
1 Course Unit

PHIL 205 What is Meaning?
This course will survey several central topics in philosophy of mind and language, as well as investigate how these areas of philosophy interact with the scientific study of the mind. Questions addressed may include: What is it to have a mind? What is consciousness? What is it to think, to perceive, to act, to communicate, to feel emotions? What is the relationship between the mind and the brain? Can there be a science of the mind? Of language? What can it tell us? What can philosophy contribute to cognitive science? We will look for more precise ways of asking these questions, and we will study some canonical answers to them.
Course not offered every year
Activity: Lecture
1 Course Unit

PHIL 209 Introduction to Plato
A survey of selected dialogues of Plato, an Athenian philosopher of the fourth century BCE. Works read may include the Euthyphro, Crito, Gorgias, Laches, Charmides, Phaedo, Philebus, Statesman, and Plato’s last dialogue, the Laws. The course will be run as a seminar. All works will be read in English translation. Topics to be discussed may include metaphysics, epistemology, psychology, ethics, and political theory.
Taught by: S. Meyer
Course not offered every year
Activity: Seminar
1 Course Unit

PHIL 210 Introduction to Aristotle
Aristotle (384-323 BCE) was one of the most important philosophers in Classical Greece, and his legacy had unparalleled influence on the development of the Western philosophical thought through the medieval period. We will study a selection of his works in natural philosophy, metaphysics, epistemology, psychology, ethics and politics. All texts will be read in English translation. No background in Greek philosophy or knowledge of Greek is required.
Taught by: S. Meyer
Course not offered every year
Activity: Lecture
1 Course Unit

PHIL 211 Ancient Moral Philosophy
A survey of ethical philosophy in the Ancient Greek tradition. We will study the work of Plato, Aristotle, Epicurus, and the Stoics, including writings of later Roman authors such as Cicero, Seneca, Epictetus, and Marcus Aurelius. The class will be run as a seminar. All works will be read in English translation.
For BA Students: Society Sector
Taught by: S. Meyer
Course not offered every year
Activity: Seminar
1 Course Unit
PHIL 221 Philosophy East and West
Our goal in this course is to bring Western Philosophy and Eastern Philosophy into dialogue. Topics we will cover include skepticism and knowledge, ethics and the good life, moral responsibility and personal relationships, and political obligations and justice. Do the Western and Eastern philosophical traditions approach these topics in the same way? Do they even share an understanding of what the problems and issues at stake are? And what can we learn from comparative philosophy? This freshman seminar does not presuppose prior knowledge of philosophy. Examples of authors we will study include Descartes, Aristotle, Mencius, and Confucius.
Taught by: Tan.
Course not offered every year
Activity: Seminar
1 Course Unit

PHIL 223 Philosophy and Visual Perception
In this course, we’ll use the biology, psychology and phenomenology of vision to explore philosophical questions about color, such as these: Color vision helps us get around in our environments, but in what sense is it a window onto reality, if it is? Are colors properties of objects, or are they inherently private, subjective properties of minds? What can non-human forms of color vision teach us about the nature of color, and how should we empirically study color vision? Do we need to see in color to understand it? How do our ordinary ways of talking and thinking about colors relate to the experiences we have in color? How does color vision figure in aesthetic judgment? And to what degree can it be influenced by learning, or by social biases like sexist or racist prejudices?
Taught by: Hatfield, Connolly
Activity: Seminar
1 Course Unit

PHIL 225 Introduction to Philosophy of Science
A discussion of some philosophical questions that naturally arise in scientific research. Issues to be covered include: The nature of scientific explanation, the relation of theories to evidence, and the development of science (e.g., does science progress? Are earlier theories refuted or refined?).
Taught by: Domotor
One-term course offered either term
Activity: Seminar
1 Course Unit

PHIL 226 Philosophy of Biology
This course consists of a detailed examination of evolutionary theory and its philosophical foundations. The course begins with a consideration of Darwin’s formulation of evolutionary theory and the main influences on Darwin. We will then consider two contemporary presentations of the theory: Richard Dawkins’ and Richard Lewontin’s. The remainder of the course will deal with a number of foundational issues including adaptation, the units of selection, the evolution of altruism, and the possibility of grounding ethics in evolutionary theory.
For BA Students: Natural Science and Math Sector
Taught by: Weisberg
Course not offered every year
Also Offered As: PPE 225
Activity: Seminar
1 Course Unit
Notes: Application required through Penn Global: https://global.upenn.edu/pennabroad/pgs

PHIL 228 Philosophy of Social Science
This course is about the foundations of contemporary social science. It focuses on the nature of social systems, the similarities and differences between social and natural sciences, the construction, analysis, and confirmation of social theories, and the nature of social explanations. Specific topics may include: What are social norms and conventions? What does it mean to have one gender rather than another, or one sexual orientation rather than another? Should social systems be studied quantitatively or qualitatively?
Taught by: Weisberg, Bicchieri
Course not offered every year
Also Offered As: PPE 314
Prerequisites: PPE 008, ECON 001, ECON 002, PSCI 182, PPE 153, PPE 201
Activity: Lecture
1 Course Unit

PHIL 231 Epistemology
Two basic assumptions of academic research are that there are truths and we can know them. Epistemology is the study how knowledge, what it is, how it is produced, and how we can have it. Metaphysics, the study of the basic constituents of reality, the study of being as such. In this introduction to metaphysics and epistemology, we will ask hard questions about the nature of reality and knowledge. No philosophy background is required for this course.
Taught by: Singer
Course not offered every year
Activity: Seminar
1 Course Unit

PHIL 233 Philosophy of Economics
In this course, general philosophy of science issues are applied to economics, and some problems specific to economics are tackled. While analytical questions like “What is economics?” or “What is an economic explanation” must be pursued, the ultimate goal is practical: What is good economics? How can economists contribute to a better understanding of society, and a better society? How can we make economics better? Topics to be discussed include the following: specific object and method of economics as a social science; its relation with other disciplines (physics, psychology and evolutionary theory); values in economics (welfare, freedom, equality and neutrality); the role of understanding and possible limits of a quantitative approach to human behavior (purposefulness, freedom, creativity, innovation); prediction, unpredictability and the pretension of prediction; causation in econometrics and in economic theory (equilibrium); selfishness and utility maximization (cognitive and behaviorist interpretations); economic models and unrealistic assumptions (realism and instrumentalism); empirical basis of economics (observation and experiment); microeconomics and macroeconomics (reductionism and autonomy); pluralism in economics (mainstream economics and heterodox schools).
Taught by: Pereira Di Salvo, Carlos
Course not offered every year
Also Offered As: PPE 233
Activity: Lecture
1 Course Unit
PHIL 234 Philosophy of Religion
This course will focus on arguments for and against the existence of God. It will begin by examining the ontological, cosmological, and design arguments for the existence of God. Included will be a discussion of purported evidence for the existence of God from modern biology and cosmology. It will then examine arguments against the existence of God based on human and animal suffering, followed by arguments against the existence of God arising from the scarcity of credible miracle claims.
Course not offered every year
Activity: Seminar
1 Course Unit

PHIL 244 Introduction to Philosophy of Mind
This course will survey several central topics in philosophy of mind, as well as investigating how philosophy of the mind interacts with scientific study of the mind. Among the questions we'll be asking are: What is it to have a mind? What is the relationship between the mind and the brain? Can there be a science of the mind? What can it tell us? What can philosophy contribute to a science of the mind? What is consciousness? What is it to think, to perceive, to act? How are perception, thought, and action related to one another?
Taught by: Domotor, Miracchi
One-term course offered either term
Also Offered As: PPE 244
Activity: Seminar
1 Course Unit

PHIL 247 Marx
Precious few, if any, communist states exist today as Karl Marx would have imagined them. Indeed, almost every part of the 19th-century culture Marx put under his philosophical microscope has in one way or another vanished or been radically transformed: the state, the school, even sex have been fundamentally altered during a long 20th century filled with revolutions of culture. This class asks: is there a future for a philosopher whose political projects seem so precarious—if they have not failed outright—in the face of global capitalism? We will try to answer this question by examining the origins and the implications of Marx’s writings, but also his complex legacy, from Lenin through Guevara to Foucault and Zizek. The course will conclude with a consideration of the role of the radical in today’s global politics and cultural sphere.
For BA Students: Humanities and Social Science S
Taught by: Jarosinski
Course not offered every year
Activity: Lecture
1 Course Unit

PHIL 249 Philosophy of Education
We sometimes see philosophy as an inaccessible subject and the philosopher a solitary academic musing about abstract concepts from her office chair. However, philosophical thinking lies at the heart of many aspects of human life. Anyone who has pondered over questions regarding goodness, value, personal identity, justice, how to live well, or how to determine the right course of action has thought philosophically. These issues are of great interest and importance not just to adults, but also to children and teenagers. Introducing younger students to philosophical thought consists, in part, of showing them the ways in which they are already thinking philosophically. In this course, we will study a variety of topics in philosophy with the aim of developing curricula and lesson plans for delivery in middle school (6th through 8th grades). Course participants will work with the instructor and with help from a curricular planner from Penn’s Graduate School of Education to develop a series of one-hour lessons in philosophy, which participants will then teach to the middle school students in a local school. Part of the course will be held on Penn’s campus, and part of the course will be held on-site with one of our partner schools. This course is an Academically Based Community Service course. Registration in this class requires a permit, following an interview with the instructor.
Taught by: Detlefsen
Course not offered every year
Activity: Seminar
1 Course Unit

PHIL 271 Global Justice
This course is an introduction to some of the central problems in global justice. Samples of these topics include: What are our duties to respond to world poverty and what is the basis of this duty? Is global inequality in itself a matter of justice? How universal are human rights? Should human rights defer to cultural claims at all? Is there a right to intervene in another country to protect human rights there? Indeed can intervention to protect human rights ever be a duty? Who is responsible for the environment? We will read some influential contemporary essays by philosophers on these topics with the goal of using the ideas in these papers as a springboard for our own further discussion and analysis.
Taught by: Tan
Course not offered every year
Also Offered As: PPE 271
Activity: Seminar
1 Course Unit

PHIL 277 Justice, Law and Morality
The course will focus on the philosophical background to the individual rights protected by the U.S. Constitution, including 1st Amendment freedoms of religion, expression, and association; the 14th amendment guarantee of Due Process and the rights of privacy, abortion, assisted suicide, and marriage; the Equal Protection clause and equal political rights and the legitimacy of affirmative action; and the Takings and Contract clauses and their bearing on rights of private property and economic freedoms. In addition to Supreme Court decisions on these issues, we will read works by political philosophers and constitutional theorists, including J.S. Mill, Ronald Dworkin, Cass Sunstein, Martha Nussbaum, Katherine MacKinnon and others.
Taught by: Freeman, Allen
Course not offered every year
Also Offered As: PPE 277
Activity: Lecture
1 Course Unit
PHIL 280 Topics in Aesthetics
What is beauty? What is the relationship between beauty and goodness? What does aesthetic judgment tell us, if anything, about the world? This course addresses these and other questions by focusing predominantly on Kant's highly influential aesthetic theory. It situates this text in the context of other works on aesthetics. We begin with Plato's view expressed in The Symposium that beauty is a form to which humans gain (some) access through love. We then turn to essays by Shaftesbury and Hume that introduce key aesthetic notions that Kant will elaborate (and revise) — including those of taste, common sense, harmony, and aesthetic disinterest. We also read selections from the work of Friedrich Schiller, John Dewey, and A. K. Coomaraswamy who offer alternative accounts of the relationship between beauty and ethical life — a relationship that Kant acknowledges but considers to be importantly limited. The question of the relationship between ethics and aesthetics will form the backdrop for this semester's reading overall.
Course not offered every year
Activity: Seminar
1 Course Unit

PHIL 291 Philosophy of Race
Historically, philosophical questions about race have been about the nature and reality of race, the nature of racism, and social or political questions related to race or racism. In fitting with that history, the first part of the course will focus on the nature and reality of race, as understood in biology and as understood by ordinary people. We will begin by looking at biological race theories from Francois Bernier in 1684 to Pigliucci and Kaplan in 2003. Next, we will look at the philosophical work that has been done on the nature and reality of race as ordinarily understood in the contemporary United States. We will discuss racial anti-realism, social constructionism about race, and biological racial realism from well-known philosophers of race like Anthony Appiah, Sally Haslanger, and Joshua Glasgow. The second part of the course will focus on the nature of racism and social or political questions related to race or racism. In our discussion of racism, we will cover, at least, intrinsic racism, extrinsic racism, and institutional racism. In our discussion of social or political issues related to race or racism, we will look at whether any US racial groups should be used to diagnose, study, or treat genetic disorders.
Taught by: Spencer
Course not offered every year
Activity: Seminar
1 Course Unit

PHIL 295 Identity
The content of the course may include the following, and related, themes: what makes a human the same human over time? What constitutes our identities? Are gender, race, sexual orientation, and the like essential features of our identities, and if so, how do they become so? How do ethics, politics and identity interact? After learning this philosophical content, Penn students will develop lesson plans for introducing this content to Philadelphia public high school students. Mid way through the semester, Penn students will start to prepare the high school students to present their own original work on the philosophy of identity at a conference to be held at Penn in May 2017. Penn students will be assessed on their own written and other work for the course, and in no way on the written or oral work of the high school students. Enrollment by permit only. Please contact Professor Detlefsen detlefse@sas.upenn.edu to schedule an interview for admission to the course.
Taught by: Detlefsen
Course not offered every year
Activity: Seminar
1 Course Unit

PHIL 299 Independent Study
Student arranges with a faculty member to pursue a program of reading and writing on a suitable topic.
One-term course offered either term
Activity: Independent Study
1 Course Unit

PHIL 301 Directed Honors Research
Open only to senior majors in philosophy. Student arranges with a faculty member to do an honors thesis on a suitable topic.
One-term course offered either term
Activity: Independent Study
1 Course Unit

PHIL 325 Topics in Philosophy of Science
The aim of this course is to explore the relationships between philosophy and physics, with a focus on prominent foundational issues in modern physics. The course is organized around four main areas. In the first part, we focus on the philosopher and classical relativistic) structure of space and time, including the proliferations of physical geometries (Lobachevskian and Riemannian) of curved space time. Are space and time real? If so, what kind of entities are they? Metaphysically, we have a choice between presentism and eternalism, and regarding the nature of physical objects in space-time, there is a choice between endurantism and perdurantism. Is time travel possible? In the second part, we concentrate on the basic metaphysical and epistemological questions posed by physics: causality, determinism, randomness, and the nature of physical laws. How is cause conveyed from one physical body to another? Are the laws of physics true? In the third part, we turn to the principal philosophical issues raised by quantum physics: structural realism and the interpretations of quantum mechanics, non-locality and Bell's theorem, the infamous Schrodinger cat paradox, hidden variables, and quantum measurement. What is primary — particles or waves? Finally, in the fourth part, we investigate the metaphysics underlying Big Bang and Ekpyrotic cosmological theories, and evidence for a parallel universe and baby universes. All these philosophical issues will be addressed by looking at some simple examples or episodes taken from modern physics. The bulk of the readings will come from two textbooks (available at the Barnes & Noble University Bookstore) and articles in journals.
PREREQUISITES: The course is entirely self-contained: All topics in physics that are necessary for understanding the pertinent philosophical problems will be reviewed in class.
Taught by: Weisberg
One-term course offered either term
Activity: Seminar
1 Course Unit
Notes: Department Majors Only

PHIL 343 Philosophy of Mind
This majors seminar will focus on selected topics in Philosophy of Mind.
Taught by: Miracchi
Course not offered every year
Activity: Seminar
1 Course Unit
Notes: Department Majors Only

PHIL 359 Topics in Theoretical Philosophy
This majors seminar will cover selected topics in metaphysics, epistemology, philosophy of mind, philosophy of science, or philosophy of language. Topics will vary from term to term.
Taught by: Spencer
Activity: Seminar
1 Course Unit
Notes: Department Majors Only
PHIL 361 Ancient Philosophical Figures
A study of selected topics, texts, and figures from classical Greek philosophy. Topics will vary from term to term.
Taught by: S. Meyer
Course not offered every year
Prerequisite: PHIL 003
Activity: Seminar
1 Course Unit
Notes: Department Majors Only

PHIL 362 Modern Philosophical Figures
A study of selected topics, texts, and figures from 17th and 18th century European philosophy. Figures studied may include Descartes, Leibniz, Locke, Berkeley, Hume, or Kant. Topics will vary from term to term.
Taught by: Hatfield, Detlefsen
Course not offered every year
Activity: Seminar
1 Course Unit
Notes: Department Majors Only

PHIL 372 Topics in Ethics
This majors seminar will cover selected topics in ethics. The content will vary from semester to semester.
Taught by: Freeman.
Course not offered every year
Prerequisite: PHIL 002 (or consent of the instructor)
Activity: Seminar
1 Course Unit
Notes: Department Majors Only

PHIL 376 Justice
This majors seminar will focus on contemporary works on liberalism, democracy, capitalism, and distributive justice. Questions to be discussed may include: Which rights and liberties are fundamental in a constitutional democracy? What is equality and what requirements does it impose? Are economic rights of property and freedom of contract equally important as personal liberties of speech, religion, and association? Does capitalism realize a just distribution of income and wealth? What is socialism and is it potentially just, or necessarily unjust? Readings from works by John Rawls, Robert Nozick, Milton Friedman, and others.
Taught by: Freeman
Course not offered every year
Activity: Seminar
1 Course Unit
Notes: Department Majors Only

PHIL 379 Topics in Political Philosophy
This majors seminar will focus on various topics in political philosophy. Topics will vary from term to term.
Taught by: Pereira Di Salvo
Course not offered every year
Activity: Seminar
1 Course Unit
Notes: Department Majors Only

PHIL 405 Philosophy of Language
This course provides an overview of 20th century analytic philosophy of language. Questions we will ask may include: How do words refer? How do they combine to express thoughts? How do words relate to concepts or to thoughts more generally? What do words and sentences mean? How do we use them to communicate with each other? How does word and sentence meaning depend on the contexts in which they are spoken or heard, or on stable features of environments of linguistic speakers?
Taught by: Miracchi
Course not offered every year
Prerequisite: PHIL 005 or PHIL 505 or permission of instructor
Activity: Seminar
1 Course Unit

PHIL 407 Aristotle
A study of Aristotle's main writings on language, reality, knowledge, nature and psychology. All texts will be read in English translation. No background in Greek philosophy or knowledge of Greek is required, although previous work in philosophy is strongly recommended.
Taught by: S. Meyer
Course not offered every year
Activity: Seminar
1 Course Unit

PHIL 409 Plato's Selected Dialogues
A study of selected dialogues of Plato. All texts will be read in translation. No prior experience in Plato is required, but students should have some background in philosophy. Dialogues studied will vary from term to term.
Taught by: S. Meyer
Course not offered every year
Activity: Seminar
1 Course Unit

PHIL 410 Introduction to Logic and Computability
Taught by: Weinstein
Course not offered every year
Prerequisite: Math 371 or Math 503
Activity: Lecture
1 Course Unit

PHIL 412 Topics in Logic
The course focuses topics drawn from the central areas of mathematical logic: model theory, proof theory, set theory, and computability theory.
Taught by: Weinstein
Course not offered every year
Also Offered As: CIS 518
Activity: Seminar
1 Course Unit
PHIL 414 Philosophy of Mathematics
The course will focus on the development of the foundations and philosophy of mathematics from the late nineteenth-century through the present day. Topics may include logicism, formalism, intuitionism, and the foundations of set theory. Ample consideration will be given to some of the fundamental results of mathematical logic, such as the Godel incompleteness theorems and the independence of the Continuum Hypothesis from Zermelo-Fraenkel set theory, that have had a profound impact on contemporary approaches to the philosophy of mathematics.
Taught by: Weinstein, Ewald
Course not offered every year
Activity: Seminar
1 Course Unit

PHIL 423 Philosophy and Visual Perception
Central issues in the philosophy of perception from the modern period, including: what we perceive, the meaningful content of perception, and its relation to a mind-independent external world. Additional topics may include: (1) color perception and color metaphysics; (2) object perception in its interplay between Gestalt organizational factors and background knowledge; (3) the role of ecological regularities in the formation of our visual system and in the ongoing tuning of the system to the environment; (4) the geometry of visual space and the phenomenology of visual appearances of size and shape; (5) the problem of how visual scenes are experienced by means of images. Readings from authors such as Bertrand Russell, R. W. Sellars, Tim Crane, Evan Thompson, Robert Swartz, Wolfgang Metzger, Nelson Goodman, Richard Wollheim, and William Hopp, among others.
Taught by: Hatfield
One-term course offered either term
Activity: Seminar
1 Course Unit

PHIL 425 Philosophy of Science
An advanced introduction to the central philosophical questions concerning the nature of scientific knowledge and its relation to experience, and the metaphysical assumptions underlying the natural sciences. Topics to be covered include: science versus pseudoscience, laws of nature, causation, determinism and randomness, theories and models in science, scientific explanation, underdetermination of theories by observation and measurement, realism and antirealism, reductionism and intertheory relations, objectivity and value judgments in science, hypothesis testing and confirmation of scientific theories, and classical paradoxes in scientific methodology.
Taught by: Domotor
One-term course offered either term
Activity: Seminar
1 Course Unit

PHIL 430 Philosophy of Mind
This course studies particular topics in contemporary philosophy of mind and cognitive science. Examples include: the nature of consciousness, naturalistic accounts of intentionality, the nature scope of scientific explanation in studying the mind, the intersection of philosophy of mind and epistemology, and theories of agency. Typically, readings include both philosophy and empirical work from relevant sciences.
Taught by: Miracchi
Course not offered every year
Activity: Seminar
1 Course Unit

PHIL 431 Theory of Knowledge
Selected topics in Epistemology such as: bridging the gap between mainstream and formal epistemology, the familiar tripartite definition of knowledge (knowledge as justified true belief), basic logical and probabilistic models of knowledge (Hintikka, Aumann, and Bayesian) and their multi-agent variants, logical omniscience and other problems (including the epistemic closure principle), attempts at formalizing joint and common knowledge, resource-bounded knowledge, knowledge under limited logical powers, and empirical knowledge obstructed by system complexity.
Taught by: Domotor
Course not offered every year
Activity: Seminar
1 Course Unit

PHIL 448 19th Century Philosophy
A study of selected figures in 19th century philosophy. Figures to be studied may include Hegel, Fichte, Schelling, Schopenhauer, Nietzsche and, Kierkegaard.
Taught by: Horstmann
Course not offered every year
Activity: Seminar
1 Course Unit

PHIL 450 African, Latin American and Native American Philosophy
This course is an introduction to philosophical work from Africa, Latin America, and the indigenous peoples of North America, covering topics in ethics, metaphysics, epistemology, philosophy of mind, aesthetics, social philosophy, and political philosophy. The course aims to give work from these traditions greater exposure and to provide a chance for students to encounter work that might spark an interest in future research. We will cover in some depth views held by Akan, Aztec, Blackfoot, Dogon, Iroquois, Lakota, Navajo, Ojibwa, and Yoruba peoples. We will also read work from a number of philosophers, including: Kwame Anthony Appiah, Kwame Gyekye, Julius Nyerere, Sor Juanna Ines de la Cruz, Simon Bolivar, Jose Marti, Jose Vasconcelos, Enrique Dussel, Gregory Cajete, Anne Waters, and many others. Throughout, we will also engage with related meta-philosophical issues that emerge with work from all three areas, allowing for interesting cross-discussion. Are these really proper fubfields of philosophy? How do we make sense of the idea of African (or Latin American, or Native American) Philosophy as a field? Are there philosophically important differences between oral traditions and written traditions? How should we understand ethnophilosophy and cultural worldviews as philosophical contributions? How should we think of the "sage" figure in relation to philosophy? How do these traditions engage discussions of identity, autonomy, and post-colonialism? Should this work be incorporated into the mainstream philosophical canon?
Activity: Seminar
1 Course Unit

PHIL 465 Kant I
The course will concentrate on the Critique of Pure Reason and discuss in detail Kant's conception of knowledge and experience, his criticism of traditional metaphysics and the resulting project of a system of transcendental philosophy.
Taught by: Horstmann
Course not offered every year
Prerequisites: PHIL 004, one advanced Philosophy course, or permission of instructor
Activity: Seminar
1 Course Unit
PHIL 466 Kant II
This course is a study of Kant's moral and political philosophy. Texts may include Kant's Lectures on Ethics, Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals, Critique of Practical Reason, Religion within the Boundaries of Mere Reason, and Metaphysics of Morals.
Course not offered every year
Prerequisites: PHIL 002, PHIL 004, or permission of instructor
Activity: Seminar
1 Course Unit

PHIL 468 Hegel
A study of Hegel's philosophy, focusing primarily on his Phenomenology of Spirit, with attention to relevant passages in other works such as Hegel's Logic and Philosophy of Right. Topics may include: (1) Hegel's conception of philosophy, (2) the development of his system, (3) the problem of an introduction to his system (Phenomenology of Spirit), (4) Hegel's criticism of traditional metaphysics, (5) his notion of a 'concept' (Begriff), his theory of the idea. The seminar will focus primarily on some of Hegel's early Jena writings, his Phenomenology of Spirit, on passages from different versions of Hegel's Logic and (maybe) on aspects of his Philosophy of Right. Topics that are dealt with include: (1) Hegel's conception of philosophy, (2) the development of his system, (3) the problem of an introduction to his system (Phenomenology of Spirit), (4) Hegel's criticism of traditional metaphysics, (5) his notion of a 'concept' (Begriff), his theory of the idea. Other topics might become of interest as well.
Taught by: Horstmann
Course not offered every year
Activity: Seminar
1 Course Unit

PHIL 472 Survey of Ethical Theory
This course is an investigation of the main questions and problems in metaethics since the turn of the 20th century. We will investigate questions about the metaphysics of morality, the philosophy of language of moral talk, the philosophy of mind of moral thought, the epistemology of morality, and the objectivity of morality.
Taught by: Lord
Course not offered every year
Activity: Seminar
1 Course Unit

PHIL 479 Modern Political Philosophy
A survey of several works in modern political philosophy, including Thomas Hobbes's, Leviathan; John Locke's, Second Treatise on Government and Letter Concerning Toleration; David Hume's 'Of the Original Contract' and 'On Justice'; John Stuart Mill's Utilitarianism, On Liberty, and The Subjection of Women; excerpts from Karl Marx's Capital and other writings; and John Rawls's A Theory of Justice.
Taught by: Freeman
Course not offered every year
Activity: Seminar
1 Course Unit

PHIL 488 The Idea of Nationalism
Nationalism has been the most important geo-political phenomenon of the past two hundred years. This seminar course will explore the ideology of nationalism, what it means, its philosophical foundations, underlying assumptions about the nature of human identity, moral implications, and political consequences. What is a nation? Does every identifiable ethnic or national group have a valid claim to a nation-state of its own? How are claims to national self-determination justified? How do nations differ from states, peoples, groups, communities, and citizenship? How does nationalism relate to notions of "chosenness" or ethnic and cultural superiority? Why do nationalist movements seem to so often engender political extremism and violent ethno-political conflicts? Is national self-determination compatible with our commitments to individualism, rationality, and universal human rights?
Taught by: Steinberg
Course not offered every year
Activity: Seminar
1 Course Unit

PHIL 489 Ethnicity, Identity and Nationhood
This MLA seminar will deepen our understanding of the role that political and cultural ideologies -- such as liberalism, conservatism, nationalism, totalitarianism, fundamentalism, etc. -- play in contemporary public discourse and the psychology of ideological thinking that makes political conflicts so difficult to resolve. Drawing on a series of case studies in contemporary political, social and cultural conflict such as recent political campaigns and nationalist movements around the globe, we will identify and examine the ideologies driving such conflicts, and from these we will draw out the common philosophical characteristics and psychological features of ideological thinking. We will begin by considering a series of case studies in contemporary political, social, and cultural conflict such as recent political campaigns and nationalist movements around the globe, etc. We will identify and examine the ideologies driving such conflicts, and from these we will draw out the common philosophical characteristics and psychological features of ideological thinking. Throughout, we will seek to understand the deep attraction of ideological commitments and why they tend to push public discourse and behavior to extremes and even violence. Finally, we will consider efforts to reduce or resolve ideological conflicts through strategies of political compromise, dialogue, toleration, and democratic deliberation.
Course not offered every year
Activity: Seminar
1 Course Unit

PHIL 505 Formal Logic I
This course provides an introduction to some of the fundamental ideas of logic. Topics will include truth functional logic, quantificational logic, and logical decision problems.
Taught by: Domotor, Weinstein
One-term course offered either term
Activity: Lecture
1 Course Unit
Notes: Undergraduates Need Permission
PHIL 506 Formal Logic II
An introduction to first-order logic including the completeness, compactness, and Lowenheim-Skolem theorems, and Godel's incompleteness theorems. UNDERGRADUATES NEED PERMISSION
Taught by: Weinstein
Course usually offered in spring term
Activity: Lecture
1 Course Unit
Notes: Undergraduates Need Permission.

PHIL 511 Aristotle's Ethics
Taught by: S. Meyer
Course not offered every year
Activity: Seminar
1 Course Unit
Notes: Undergraduates Need Permission

PHIL 521 Philosophy of Biology
This course consists of a detailed examination of evolutionary theory and its philosophical foundations. The course begins with a consideration of Darwin's formulation of evolutionary theory and the main influences on Darwin. We will then consider two contemporary presentations of the theory. Richard Dawkins' and Richard Lewontin's. The remainder of the course will deal with a number of foundational issues including adaption, the units of selection, the evolution of altruism, and the possibility of grounding ethics in evolutionary theory. UNDERGRADUATES NEED PERMISSION
Taught by: Weisberg
One-term course offered either term
Also Offered As: PPE 225
Activity: Lecture
1 Course Unit
Notes: Undergraduates need permission

PHIL 525 Topics in the Philosophy of Science
For the last four centuries, scientific research has provided our most reliable understanding of the world. Although the scientific revolution started modestly with attempts to understand stellar movement, we now know the age and constitution of the universe, the basis of heredity, and we can make and break chemical bonds at will. By all appearances, science seems to have made substantial progress from the scientific revolution to the global scientific enterprise of the 21st century. This course is about how science has generated this knowledge, and whether it has been as progressive and reliable as it seems. We will consider methodological issues such as the sources of scientific knowledge, objectivity, the growing importance of computation in the natural sciences, and the nature of modeling. We will examine products of scientific research: explanations, models, theories, and laws of nature. And we will discuss questions about science and values, including whether non-scientific values can and should enter scientific research, the relationship between science and religion, and the role of the public in guiding the scientific enterprise.
Taught by: Weisberg, Bicchieri
Course not offered every year
Activity: Seminar
1 Course Unit
Notes: Undergraduates Need Permission

PHIL 526 Philosophy and Psychoanalysis: Freud and the Interpretation of Culture
More than a century after Sigmund Freud transformed -- for better or worse -- our understanding of what it means to be human, Freudian psychoanalysis still exerts a profound influence in our culture. This seminar course is an exploration of the philosophical issues raised by Freudian psychoanalysis as a theory of mind and culture. After a close reading of Freud's theoretical writings on the nature of the mind and human behavior, we will explore why Freud's theories -- despite more than a century of criticism remain highly influential as a framework for the interpretation of art, literature, religion, society, politics, and history. Readings from Freud's "meta-psychological," cultural, and social writings, Paul Ricoeur's Freud and Philosophy, and other contemporary authors in philosophy, psychoanalysis, and other fields.
Taught by: Steinberg
Course not offered every year
Activity: Seminar
1 Course Unit
Notes: Undergraduates Need Permission

PHIL 530 Philosophy of Mind
This course explores core issues in philosophy of mind, such as: the nature of mental states and events, the mind-body problem, and the relationship between philosophy of mind and related disciplines, such as cognitive science. We approach these issues through more specific topics, depending on the interests of the instructor. Topics may include: identity theories, grounding physicalism, functionalism, computationalism, disjunctivism and knowledge-first theories, internalism and externalism, consciousness, self-knowledge, perception, emotion, action, representationalism, mental causation, and intersections with psychology, artificial intelligence, linguistics, and neuroscience. For details in a specific year, consult with the instructor and/or department.
UNDERGRADUATES NEED PERMISSION.
Taught by: Hatfield, Miracchi
Course not offered every year
Activity: Seminar
1 Course Unit
Notes: Undergraduates Need Permission

PHIL 531 Social Norms
This is a graduate research seminar covering interdisciplinary research in psychology, philosophy, sociology and behavioral economics related to social norms. Social norms are informal institutions that regulate social life. We will devote particular attention to the following questions: 1. What is a good, operational definition of social norms? 2. Is there a difference between social and moral norms? 3. How can we measure whether a norm exits, and the conditions under which individuals are likely to comply with it? 4. Are behavioral experiments a good tool to answer questions? 5. How do norms emerge? 6. How are norms abandoned? 7. What is the role of trendsetters in norm dynamics?
Taught by: Bicchieri
Course not offered every year
Activity: Seminar
1 Course Unit
Notes: Undergraduates Need Permission
PHIL 532 Topics in Epistemology
This seminar will cover topics of interest to contemporary epistemologists. Possible topics may include skepticism, accounts of knowledge and justification, virtue epistemology, formal epistemology, social epistemology, feminist epistemology, meta-epistemology and epistemic normativity.
Taught by: Lord, Errol
Course not offered every year
Activity: Seminar
1 Course Unit
Notes: Undergraduates Need Permission

PHIL 536 Stoicism
A study of some major texts in Ancient Greek Stoicism, the school founded by Zeno of Citium in the post-Aristotelian period. Topics may include: ethics, natural philosophy, epistemology, and metaphysics.
Authors may include: Cicero, Seneca, Epictetus, and Marcus Aurelius. All works will be read in English translation. Against the Ethicists will be the other major texts studied in this course. All readings will be in English translation. No knowledge of Greek or Latin is required.
Taught by: S. Meyer
Course not offered every year
Activity: Seminar
1 Course Unit
Notes: Undergraduates Need Permission

PHIL 540 Topics in Philosophy of Language
This course explores core issues in philosophy of language, such as: meaning, reference, truth, communication, speech acts, the norms governing language use, and the relationship between philosophy of language and related disciplines, such as linguistics. We approach these issues through more specific topics, depending on the interests of the instructor. Topics may include: the nature of propositions, truth, context-sensitive expressions, the relationship between logical structure and linguistic structure, the relationship between mental and linguistic meaning, the mechanisms of communication, the semantic/pragmatic distinction, the norms of assertion, relativism, expressivism, injustice in linguistic communication. For details in a specific year, consult with the instructor and
Course not offered every year
Activity: Seminar
1 Course Unit
Notes: Undergraduates Need Permission

PHIL 547 Leibniz/Locke
This course focuses on topics in philosophy of the 17-18th centuries.
Topics may include natural philosophy in the early modern period, the relation of metaphysics to the ‘sciences’ (including what is meant by “metaphysics”, and what falls under the scope of the various sciences), and the special role played by the life sciences. An examination of the development of a few topics in natural philosophy in the early modern period, such as: method (the evolution of hypotheses and their reception, the relation of theory to empirical work, and the importance of different kinds of empirical work, e.g. observation, experiment, use of instruments); the relation of metaphysics to the ‘sciences’ (including what is meant by “metaphysics”, and what falls under the scope of the various sciences); and the special role played by the life sciences.
Taught by: Detlefsen
Course not offered every year
Activity: Seminar
1 Course Unit
Notes: Undergraduates Need Permission

PHIL 550 Topics in Philosophy of Education
In this course, we will examine problems in contemporary philosophy of education, including: how much control over a child’s education ought to be allocated to parents and how much to the state; what role, if any, ought religion to play in education; how do race and gender impact individuals’ educational experiences and how should such issues should be addressed in the classroom; what sort of (if any) civic education ought to be taught in schools (especially in wartime such as in the post 9-11 USA); and how should schools be funded? We will deal with a number of case studies, mostly recent, but some crucial historical cases as well. Our readings will be primarily philosophical texts, supplemented with those from other fields, such as psychology, history and sociology, in order to provide empirical context to the theoretical problems facing education today.
Taught by: Detlefsen, Chignell
Course not offered every year
Activity: Seminar
1 Course Unit
Notes: Undergraduates Need Permission

PHIL 551 Topics in Early Modern Philosophy
125 A seminar in philosophy of the early modern period (roughly 1600-1800), covering specific figures and/or topics. Examples of figures studied include (but are not limited to) Descartes, Cavendish, Astell, Locke, Hume, Du Chatelet, or Kant. Examples of topics studied include (but again are not limited to) substance, causation, freedom, natural philosophy, education, the human being, the private and the public, or political authority.
Taught by: Detlefsen, Chignell
Course not offered every year
Activity: Seminar
1 Course Unit
Notes: Undergraduates Need Permission

PHIL 554 Contemporary Continental Philosophy
This MLA seminar is an introduction to 20th-century continental European philosophy, focusing on the origins and development of phenomenology, existentialism, hermeneutics, and deconstruction. No previous background in philosophy is required. We will begin with an introduction to the phenomenology of Edmund Husserl and the contemporary debate over its proper interpretation. Then we will examine three existentialist critics of Husserl, whose philosophies have influenced much of recent continental thought: Martin Heidegger, Jean-Paul Sartre, and Maurice Merleau-Ponty. Finally, we will examine the important influence of phenomenology and existentialism on contemporary trends in continental philosophy as exhibited in works by Paul Ricoeur, Hans Georg Gadamer, Jacques Derrida, Hannah Arendt, and Emmanuel Levinas.
Course not offered every year
Activity: Seminar
1 Course Unit
Notes: Undergraduates Need Permission
PHIL 558 Truth & Concealment
This course is an exploration of traditional philosophical questions concerning objectivity in science. We will start by addressing central questions in feminist philosophy of science, such as what is objective reality and what is objective knowledge? Next, we will explore whether science discovers objective real entities or relations, which is a central topic in the scientific realism debate. We will also explore whether scientific knowledge is objective. We will read mostly 20th and 21st century philosophers of science, such as Goodman, Kuhn, Psillos, and Longino. We will also apply what we learn to at least one case study.
Taught by: Spencer
Course not offered every year
Activity: Seminar
1 Course Unit
Notes: Undergraduates need permission.

PHIL 572 Contemporary Ethics
A venerable idea throughout the history of ethics is that rationality is a fundamental or foundational part of the metaphysics of the normative. The course will be an investigation of several different strains of this rationalist idea. We'll discuss four rationalist views of the nature of normative reasons (Kantian, Humean, Aristotelian, and new-fangled constructivism). Our aim will be to investigate the plausibility of these rationalist views against the backdrop of a more recent hypothesis about the metaphysics of the normative—viz., the claim that normative reasons themselves are the fundamental constituents of the normative.
Taught by: Freeman, Meyer
Course not offered every year
Activity: Seminar
1 Course Unit
Notes: Undergraduates need permission.

PHIL 576 Rationality, Morality and Law
This class will be dedicated to investigating topics related to rationality in its many forms. Potential areas of study are metaethics, epistemology, moral psychology, and the philosophies of mind, language and action.
Taught by: Freeman, Lord
Course not offered every year
Activity: Seminar
1 Course Unit
Notes: Undergraduates Need Permission.

PHIL 577 Topics in Philosophy of Law
This seminar will examine leading academic theories of constitutional interpretation, starting with classic texts by (for illustration) Thayer, Wechsler, Ely, Bobbitt, Dworkin, and Scalia, and emphasizing current debates within originalism and between originalists and their critics. While the focus will be on American constitutional interpretation, we will also see how that literature is currently running up against, and possibly contributing to, more "philosophical" or "jurisprudential" accounts of the contents of law. Consistent with the nature of the material, the reading load is likely to be somewhat heavier and more demanding than in the average seminar. Students will be expected to read the assigned material carefully and to participate actively in class discussions; they will have the option of submitting either a single research paper or several shorter papers.
Taught by: Perry, Berman, Finkelstein
Course not offered every year
Activity: Seminar
1 Course Unit
Notes: Undergraduates Need Permission.

PHIL 578 Topics in Political Philosophy
This is a topics-based graduate seminar in political philosophy. Examples of topics we can examine in this course include distributive justice, liberty, equality, and global justice. Course readings will be drawn from a combination of seminal and more recent works on the selected topics.
Taught by: Freeman, Tan
Course not offered every year
Activity: Seminar
1 Course Unit
Notes: Undergraduates Need Permission.

PHIL 600 Proseminar
An intensive seminar for first-year doctoral students, with readings drawn from recent and contemporary epistemology and metaphysics, broadly construed. Students will develop their abilities to present and discuss philosophical texts, and to write and revise their own papers.
Taught by: Singer, Daniel
Course usually offered in fall term
Activity: Lecture
1 Course Unit
Notes: Graduate Students Only.

PHIL 601 Consortium Course
For graduate students taking courses at other institutions belonging to the Philadelphia area Philosophical Consortium.
One-term course offered either term
Activity: Lecture
1 Course Unit
Notes: Graduate Students Only

PHIL 612 Topics in Hellenistic Philosophy
The ancient Stoics famously rejected the tripartite psychology of Plato and the Aristotelian division of the psyche into rational and non-rational parts. Everything we think, say, feel, and do is an exercise of reason, specifically, an assent to an impression. This includes the passions—emotions such as fear, anger, and pity and love. According to the Stoic doctrine of apatheia, we should eradicate the pathos from our lives. But there are some emotions of which the Stoics approve: the so-called "good feelings" (eupathetiai) which include joy, reverence, and goodwill. We will examine the difference between the pathos and the eupathetiai in the context of their Stoic doctrine of "impulse" (horme), and of their ethical theory more generally. All texts will be read in translation, and will include selections from: Cicero: Tusculan Disputations, On Ends, On Duties, Epicure: Discourses, Seneca: Letters, Stobaeus: Eclogues, Galen: On the Doctrines of Hippocrates and Plato.
Taught by: S. Meyer
Course not offered every year
Activity: Seminar
1 Course Unit

PHIL 672 Topics in Ethics
Phil 672 will be a workshop on writing papers for submission to either conferences or journals. Papers may address any topic in value theory, broadly construed, and some participants may choose to revise papers written for previous seminars. All participants will be responsible for generating short bibliographies and then leading class discussions on their topics, providing drafts of their papers for critique by the class, and presenting their papers to the class. Students who have passed their prelims are encouraged to participate as auditors.
Taught by: S. Meyer
Course not offered every year
Activity: Seminar
1 Course Unit
**PHIL 699 Independent Study**
Directed readings in consultation with individual faculty members.
One-term course offered either term
Activity: Independent Study
1 Course Unit

**PHIL 700 Dissertation Workshop**
Registration required for all third-year doctoral students. Third-year students and beyond attend and present their dissertation work or their preliminary exam prospectus. From time to time, topics pertaining to professional development and dissertation writing will be discussed.
Taught by: Weinstein, Scott
Two terms. Student must enter first term.
Activity: Seminar
1 Course Unit

**PHIL 990 Masters Thesis**
Taught by: Staff.
One-term course offered either term
Activity: Masters Thesis
1 Course Unit

**PHIL 995 Dissertation**
Ph.D. candidates, who have completed all course requirements and have an approved dissertation proposal, work on their dissertation under the guidance of their dissertation supervisor and other members of their dissertation committee.
One-term course offered either term
Activity: Dissertation
1 Course Unit

**PHIL 998 Teaching Practicum (Independent Study)**
Supervised teaching experience. Four semesters are required of all doctoral students in philosophy.
One-term course offered either term
Activity: Independent Study
1 Course Unit

**PHIL 999 Independent Study**
Directed readings in consultation with individual faculty members.
One-term course offered either term
Activity: Independent Study
1 Course Unit
Notes: May be repeated for credit