PHILOSOPHY (PHIL)

PHIL112 Virtue and Vice in History, Literature, and Philosophy
Examines the long, complex and sometimes contradictory associations of virtue with piety, salvation, righteousness, intensity, strength, and, more recently with vulnerability and suffering. Beginning with Confucius and Aristotle, and winding our way through Christianity, humanism, postmodernism until the present, we will explore the ethics, power, and politics of the ideas of virtue and vice.
Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: OPT
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: HA-COL
Identical With: COL228, CHUM228, HIST140
Prereq: None

PHIL118 Reproduction in the 21st Century
This course will cover basic human reproductive biology, new and future reproductive and contraceptive technologies, and the ethics raised by reproductive issues.
Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: NSM-BIOL
Identical With: BIO1118, FGSS118, SISP118
Prereq: None

PHIL151 Living a Good Life: Chinese Lab (CLAC.50)
This optional "lab" class is intended for students (1) who have taken or are currently taking PHIL 210: Living a Good Life; and (2) who have little or no exposure to classical Chinese. Each weekly session will introduce students to aspects of the classical Chinese language—the written language of pre-20th-century China. Students will be able to read (in Chinese) and discuss (in English) key passages from the Confucian classics on which the Living a Good Life courses is partly based. No previous knowledge of Chinese (classical or modern) is necessary.
Offering: Host
Grading: Cr/U
Credits: 0.50
Gen Ed Area: SBS-PHIL
Identical With: CGST224, CHIN151
Prereq: None

PHIL152 Living a Good Life: Greek Lab (CLAC.50)
This optional "lab" class is intended for students (1) who have taken or are currently taking PHIL 210: Living a Good Life; and (2) who have little or no exposure to Classical Greek. Each weekly session will introduce students to aspects of Attic Greek—the written language of most of the Greek texts we will be studying this semester. Students will be able to read (in Greek) and discuss (in English) key passages from Aristotle’s Nicomachean Ethics and Epictetus’ Encheiridion, on which the Living a Good Life course is partly based. No previous knowledge of Greek (classical or modern) is necessary.
Offering: Host
Grading: Cr/U
Credits: 0.50
Gen Ed Area: SBS-PHIL
Identical With: CGST225
Prereq: None

PHIL154 What Is Rationality?
What does it mean to be rational? Although this question has traditionally been the province of philosophy, reference to reason and rationality is also pervasive in the modern social and behavioral sciences. Humans are rational creatures—or, if they are not in practice, they should be. This course takes an expansive view of rationality and its history, tracing how the concept has changed over time, and critically examining its significance in the sciences and broader culture today.
From the role of reason in human flourishing and civic discourse in the ancient world, to early modern conceptions of logic as "the art of thinking," to Cold War attempts to build machines that might reason more reliably than frail humans, this exploration of reasoning and rationality explores several interlocking themes: the relationship between reason and other facets of the mind, especially emotion; conceptions of reason as an evaluative vs. a calculating faculty; the role of reason in human judgment; the relationship between rationality and rules; the relationship between choosing rationally and choosing ethically; and the fraught history of attempts to formulate universally valid principles of rationality.
Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: SBS-HIST
Identical With: HIST283, SISP283
Prereq: None

PHIL160 Philosophy and the Movies: The Past on Film
This course examines how films represent the past and how they can help us understand crucial questions in the philosophy of history. We begin with three weeks on documentary cinema. How do documentary films achieve "the reality effect"? How has the contemporary documentary’s use of reenactment changed our expectations of nonfiction film? Much of the course is devoted to classic narrative films that help us critically engage questions about the depiction of the past. We think about those films in relation to texts in this history of philosophy and contemporary film theory.
Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: OPT
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: HA-FILM
Identical With: FILM360, HIST129
Prereq: None

PHIL195 Mellon Mays Fall Seminar
This course is for participants in the Mellon Mays Undergraduate Fellowship program. It is designed to introduce students to the requirements and rigor of graduate school. A central focus of the seminar will be to develop a research project on which the students would work over a two-year period.
Offering: Host
Grading: Cr/U
Credits: 0.50
Gen Ed Area: SBS-HIST
Prereq: None

PHIL196 Mellon Mays Spring Seminar
This course is for participants in the Mellon Mays Undergraduate Fellowship program. It is designed to introduce students to the requirements and rigor of graduate school. A central focus of the seminar will be to develop a research project on which the students would work over a two-year period.
Offering: Host
Grading: A-F
Credits: 0.50
Gen Ed Area: SBS-HIST
Prereq: None

PHIL201 Philosophical Classics I: Ancient Western Philosophy
This course provides an overview of the development of Ancient Greek and Roman philosophy, from its inception in the 6th century BCE through to Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, the Epicureans, and the Stoics. In exploring this material, we will touch on all or nearly all of the central concerns of the Western philosophical tradition: metaphysics, epistemology, ethics, politics, aesthetics, religion, and logic. Our focus in class will be on the close analysis of primary texts. Students must be willing to engage with readings that are fascinating but at the same
PHIL202 Philosophical Classics II: Early Modern Philosophy from Descartes Through Kant
Can we ever hope to attain certain knowledge of the external world? Can we know ourselves? How is our mind related to our body? Are our senses more reliable than our intellect? Or is it the other way round? Can we have science without a belief in God? These are some of the questions that excited the philosophical imagination of the major intellectual figures of the early modern period, an era of unparalleled collaboration between science and philosophy. In this course we will examine how the Scientific Revolution encouraged philosophers toward radical innovation in epistemology and philosophy of mind, laying the foundations for our own modern conceptions of natural law, scientific explanation, consciousness and self-consciousness, knowledge and belief. We will be reading, analyzing, and arguing with some of the most influential works in the history of Western philosophy, including Descartes’ MEDITATIONS, Locke’s ESSAY CONCERNING HUMAN UNDERSTANDING, Hume’s ENQUIRY CONCERNING HUMAN UNDERSTANDING, and Kant’s CRITIQUE OF PURE REASON.
Offering: Host
Grading: OPT
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: HA-PHIL
Identical With: COL360
Prereq: None

PHIL204 Philosophical Classics IV: 20th-Century Analytic Philosophy
This course will study selected writings by the antipspectivists, logic- and language-oriented thinkers who have shaped 20th-century Anglo-American philosophy— including Peirce, Frege, Moore, Russell, Wittgenstein, Carnap, Quine, Ryle, and Austin.
Offering: Host
Grading: OPT
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: HA-PHIL
Prereq: PHIL202 OR PHIL101

PHIL205 Classical Chinese Philosophy
Topics in this critical examination of issues debated by the early Confucian, Daoist, and Mohist philosophers will include the nature of normative authority and value, the importance of ritual, and the relation between personal and social goods.
Offering: Host
Grading: OPT
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: HA-PHIL
Identical With: CEAS261, RELI228
Prereq: None

PHIL210 Community-Engaged Philosophy: Teaching the Search for a Good Life
In this half-credit course, students who have successfully served as discussion facilitators for PHIL210: Living a Good Life will learn how to teach an abbreviated version of the course to local high school students in a nine-week voluntary after-school program. Having been trained in this special approach to discussion facilitation for their fall semester work in PHIL210, students will be able to deepen their knowledge of both course content (philosophy) and their facilitation skills through guided experiential learning. Course topics will focus on the skills of learning through close observation and reflection on one’s teaching (reflective practice), understanding one’s students (adolescent development, cultural consciousness), and pedagogical knowledge regarding lesson planning, student engagement, developing productive classroom climate, promoting self-directed learning, and authentic assessment. Students must have served as discussion facilitators/leaders for PHIL210.
Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: Cr/U
Credits: 0.50
Gen Ed Area: SBS-PHIL
Identical With: CSPL310
Prereq: None

PHIL210 Living a Good Life
Philosophy in the ancient world was viewed not simply as a discipline or body of doctrine but as a way of life. In this project-based learning course, we will study and put into practice the theoretical views of four schools of ancient philosophy in the Greek and Roman world: Platonist, Aristotelian, Epicurean, and Stoic. After some preliminary work introducing ourselves to each of these schools, the majority of this course will be divided into four units. In each unit, students will “live like a philosopher” by incorporating the thought of each school into their daily lives. The aims of this course are to test the viability of these philosophical theories, consider how they may be put into practice, and explore how they may illuminate for us what it means to lead a well-lived life.
Offering: Host
Grading: Cr/U
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: SBS-PHIL
Prereq: None

This course will typically have a large-group lecture each Monday, smaller breakout sections with the instructors on Wednesdays in which the texts and ideas will be discussed, supplemented by smaller weekly student-led dialogue sessions on Fridays. For details about the structure of the course and a syllabus of class meetings, along with the locations of plenary lecture sessions, breakout sessions, and dialogue sessions, please see this year’s course website and past versions of the course at the following link: https://livingagoodlife.com.

Students who would like to explore the ancient Chinese and Greek texts on which the course draws are encouraged to enroll in either of two, optional 0.50-credit classes that are associated with our course: PHIL151 Living a Good Life: Chinese Lab; and PHIL152 Living a Good Life: Greek Lab. These courses will expose students with no prior background to the Classical Chinese and Greek languages. See their separate entries in WestMaps for more information.
Offering: Host
Grading: Cr/U
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: SBS-PHIL
Identical With: CEAS253, COL210
This course begins with some ancient questions about values. We find that two ancient approaches to right living (Platonic-Stoic and Aristotelian) differ radically over how much experience or society can teach us about what is good.

Students will come to understand the distinctive insights and arguments behind all of the positions considered, to recognize more and less cogent lines of reasoning and to shape their own patterns of moral reasoning through careful reflection.

Offering: Host
Grading: OPT
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: HA-PHIL
Identical With: ENVS212
Prereq: None

PHIL213 Introduction to Existentialism

This course covers the wide variety of thinkers who may be considered a part of the existentialist tradition. The political and cultural phenomenon of existentialism asks questions concerning the essence of freedom in modern society, the role of emotions and passions in subjectivity, how meaning is brought to life, and the tensions between individuality and society. We will address these questions through the writings of thinkers such as Friedrich Nietzsche, Fyodor Dostoevsky, Jean-Paul Sartre, Simone de Beauvoir, Emilio Uranga, Leopoldo Zea, Gloria Anzaldúa, and Frantz Fanon. Throughout we will investigate what lessons for political life and belonging we can draw from these thinkers in our contemporary world.

Offering: Host
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: SBS-PHIL
Identical With: RL&L213
Prereq: None

PHIL213F Introduction to Existentialism (FYS)

This course covers the wide variety of thinkers who may be considered a part of the existentialist tradition. The political and cultural phenomenon of existentialism asks questions concerning the essence of freedom in modern society, the role of emotions and passions in subjectivity, how meaning is brought to life, and the tensions between individuality and society. We will address these questions through the writings of thinkers such as Friedrich Nietzsche, Fyodor Dostoevsky, Jean-Paul Sartre, Simone de Beauvoir, Emilio Uranga, Leopoldo Zea, Gloria Anzaldúa, and Frantz Fanon. Throughout we will investigate what lessons for political life and belonging we can draw from these thinkers in our contemporary world.

Offering: Host
Grading: OPT
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: SBS-PHIL
Prereq: None

PHIL214 Reasoning About Justice

This course introduces students to the disciplined study of philosophy through reflection on justice and the grounding and authority of claims invoking justice. The central theme of the course is that conceptions of justice and its authority cannot be understood or established in isolation. The meaning and authority of claims about justice and injustice can only be established through inferential relations to other philosophical issues, for example, concerning reason, knowledge, reality, agency, and identity. These issues will be explored through reflective engagement with classic treatments of these issues by Plato, Hobbes, Kant, and more contemporary philosophical work. The contemporary readings include discussions of distributive justice (concerning access to resources and opportunities); the interplay between gender, race, and conceptions of justice; and whether justice and injustice can be assessed comparatively without reference to a comprehensive, ideal social order.

Offering: Host
Grading: OPT
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: HA-PHIL
Prereq: None

PHIL215 Humans, Animals, and Nature

A variety of important issues are central to understanding the complexity of relationships between humans, nonhumans, and the rest of nature. The goals of the course are to help students to think critically, to read carefully, to argue well, and to defend their own reasoned views about the moral relations between humans, animals, and nature.

Offering: Host
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: SBS-PHIL
Identical With: ENVS215, SISP214
Prereq: None

PHIL216F Whither Democracy? Introduction to Political Philosophy (FYS)
The course introduces students to some of the major philosophical perspectives that continue to inform contemporary social and political thought. We begin with the two paradigmatic arguments for obedience to the state and arguments for civil disobedience given by Plato and Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. We then look at the main justifications for obedience to the state—the social contract, freedom and equality (by looking at the topic of work and a universal basic income)—and then explore the contemporary crisis of democracy. We then conclude by exploring civil disobedience as the legacy of Dr. King in light of Tahrir Square/ Occupy Wallstreet/BLM.
Offering: Host
Grading: OPT
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: SBS-PHIL
Identical With: SISP220
Prereq: None

PHIL218 Personal Identity and Choice
This course explores philosophical reflections on the problem of personal identity and its relationship to matters of choice and freedom. How do certain experiences and thoughts and physical materials compose oneself? Am I the same person over time even through complete transformations of experience, thought, and material? Can I choose which elements of my existence to count as essential? Some argue the concept of a unified and enduring self partakes of illusion; at the other extreme, some argue for the permanent integrity of individual souls. Regarding choice and freedom, we find a related debate, ranging from those who deny free will altogether to those who define humanity's essence in terms of choice and agency. Might we coherently say that some human selves can have more integrity and others less? What gives a measure of meaningful coherence to a person's life? Similarly, can we distinguish some choices as more free than others? What makes for meaningful choice? Besides serving as an introduction to philosophical reasoning, the course will draw interdisciplinary connections on themes such as social identities, religious experience, political freedom, and legal responsibility.
Offering: Host
Grading: OPT
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: HA-PHIL
Prereq: None

PHIL218F Personal Identity and Choice (FYS)
This course explores philosophical reflections on the problem of personal identity and its relationship to matters of choice and freedom. How do certain experiences and thoughts and physical materials compose the self? Am I the same person over time even through complete transformations of experience, thought, and material? Can I choose which elements of my existence to count as essential? Some argue the concept of a unified and enduring self partakes of illusion; at the other extreme, some argue for the permanent integrity of individual souls. Regarding choice and freedom, we find a related debate, ranging from those who deny free will altogether to those who define humanity's essence in terms of choice and agency. Might we coherently say that some human selves can have more integrity and others less? What gives a measure of meaningful coherence to a person's life? Similarly, can we distinguish some choices as more free than others? What makes for meaningful choice? Besides serving as an introduction to philosophical reasoning, the course will draw interdisciplinary connections on themes such as social identities, religious experience, political freedom, and legal responsibility.
Offering: Host
Grading: OPT
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: SBS-PHIL
Prereq: None

PHIL220 Human Nature
The idea of “human nature” plays an important role in all sorts of explanations, but what does it mean? What is it to be a human? Are we just rational animals? Do some humans have different natures than others? Is it possible for us to change our nature or is it innate? Are we products of nature, nurture, or some combination? Are humans fundamentally evil or good? By examining philosophical, historical, religious, theoretical, and scientific literatures, this course will examine various answers to these questions.
Offering: Host
Grading: OPT
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: SBS-PHIL
Identical With: SISP220
Prereq: None

PHIL221F Philosophy as a Way of Life (FYS)
For many philosophers, East and West, philosophy has been more than an effort to answer fundamental questions. It has been an activity aimed at changing one's orientation to the world and, thus, how one lives one's life. We will explore Chinese, Greco-Roman, and contemporary versions of the idea that philosophy should be seen as a way of life. How does philosophical reasoning interact with lived practice? How do metaphysical views lead to ethical commitments? Despite their differences, Confucians, Christians, Aristotelians, and Stoics all agreed that philosophy should aim at making us better people. Can such an idea still get traction in today's world?
Offering: Host
Grading: Cr/U
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: SBS-PHIL
Prereq: None

PHIL222 Global Philosophy
Philosophy is not now, nor has it ever been, narrowly confined to one culture, tradition, or civilization. As European and then American power reached around the world in recent centuries, so too have Euro-American philosophical traditions acquired a global audience, but other philosophical traditions did not disappear. These other ways of approaching philosophy have been re-emerging or reconstituting themselves—sometimes drawing on and sometimes contesting assumptions from the Euro-American traditions—in what can loosely be called our post-colonial world. This course asks what “philosophy” means in these different contexts and explores how philosophy was and is done within various traditions. In addition, we probe and assess distinct approaches to making philosophy more global, which at the very least must mean more cognizant of the presence of multiple ways of doing philosophy.
Offering: Host
Grading: OPT
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: SBS-PHIL
Identical With: CEAS252
Prereq: None

PHIL231 Reason and Paradox
This course introduces students to some of the major philosophical perspectives that continue to inform contemporary social and political thought. We begin with the two paradigmatic arguments for obedience to the state and arguments for civil disobedience given by Plato and Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. We then look at the main justifications for obedience to the state—the social contract, freedom and equality (by looking at the topic of work and a universal basic income)—and then explore the contemporary crisis of democracy. We then conclude by exploring civil disobedience as the legacy of Dr. King in light of Tahrir Square/ Occupy Wallstreet/BLM.
Offering: Host
Grading: OPT
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: SBS-PHIL
Identical With: SISP220
Prereq: None

PHIL232 Reason and Paradox
This course is an introduction to philosophy, logic, and conceptual issues underlying the foundations of the natural and social sciences. We will examine and analyze a range of patterns of reasoning that lead to surprising, even alarming, conclusions. These go from fallacious arguments whose mistakes can be clearly pinpointed, to conceptual puzzles whose resolution leads to insights about reasoning, to four genuine paradoxes for which there are no clear solutions at all. Most of these paradoxes have been known since antiquity: Zeno’s Paradox, about the concepts of space, time, and motion; the Liar Paradox, about the notions of truth and reference; the Sorites Paradox, about the notion of vagueness; and a surprise paradox to be announced in class. The analysis of fallacies and puzzles leads to the study of deductive logic. On the basis of a working knowledge of logic, we will be in a position to see how the paradoxes
challenges both the fundamental assumptions that we make in thinking about the world and the very assumptions that underlie rational thought itself.

Offering: Host
Grading: OPT
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: NSM-PHIL
Prereq: None

PHIL232 Beginning Philosophy
This introduction to philosophy for first-year students includes close study and discussion of some major classical texts, as well as some contemporary works.

Offering: Host
Grading: OPT
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: HA-PHIL
Prereq: None

PHIL232F Beginning Philosophy (FYS)
This introduction to philosophy for first-year students includes close study and discussion of some major classical texts, as well as some contemporary works.

Offering: Host
Grading: OPT
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: HA-PHIL
Prereq: None

PHIL233F Bodies and Experiences (FYS)
Philosophers study the world with their minds. But who says that they should only discuss "mental" stuff such as concepts, rationality, or logic? This course is about bodies, and about the experiences that we have in virtue of those bodies. We will explore a variety of contemporary philosophical topics that have bodies and experiences at their center. These include the experience of skilled movement when we dance or play a sport, having a physical disability, or being shamed for our body size. We will discuss the ways we experience race, gender, sex, and sexual orientation. We will learn what makes a question distinctly philosophical and what methods philosophers follow to answer it. But most importantly, we will learn to be OK with the fact that there might be no true answer at all.

Offering: Host
Grading: OPT
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: SBS-PHIL
Prereq: None

PHIL234 Riddles of Existence: An Introduction to Metaphysics and Epistemology
Philosophy, according to one of the earliest philosophers, Aristotle, begins in wonder. This course is an introduction to some central aspects of the world and of our lives that give rise to wonder. Specifically, we will begin a rigorous examination of the natures of reasoning, knowledge, identity, mind, body, time, freedom, morality, and beauty.

Offering: Host
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: HA-PHIL
Prereq: None

PHIL253 Nietzsche als Versucher (CLAC.50)
This course will interrogate Nietzsche’s conception of a philosophical Versucher and examine how this concept might apply to Nietzsche himself: as an experimenter with literary style and genre (including the essay form) and as a polarizing cult figure who has attracted the fascination of generations of teenagers and the most diverse (often diametrically opposed) ideological movements. How is it that Nietzsche inspires such passionate attachment in such radically different readers? What is it about his philosophical style and literary form that cultivates a feeling of intimacy and fierce allegiance while also admitting such aggressively divergent interpretations? To explore these questions, we will read and discuss excerpts from Nietzsche’s writings and correspondence alongside texts by his friends and interlocutors—such as Richard Wagner, Paul Rée, and Nietzsche’s unrequited paramour, Lou Andreas-Salomé. We will also look at prominent cases of his cultural reception—notably by the Nazi party (due to the influence of Nietzsche’s sister, who was a party member) and simultaneously by opponents of totalitarianism such as Robert Musil, Karl Löwith, and Walter Kaufmann.

This course will be taught in German and is associated with COL290/PHIL252 “Nietzsche - Science, Psychology, Genealogy,” though...

Both advanced learners of Chinese (fourth-year level or above) and native speakers are welcome. Familiarity with classical Chinese is desirable but not required. Assignments will include presentations in Chinese and some written work in English; evaluation will be tailored to each student’s language background. If you are unsure whether your language background is sufficient for the course, please contact the instructor.

Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: Cr/U
Credits: 0.50
Gen Ed Area: HA-COL
Identical With: CHIN351, CGST251
Prereq: None

PHIL252 Nietzsche - Science, Psychology, Genealogy
This course offers an intermediate survey of Friedrich Nietzsche’s mature philosophical writings. Nietzsche’s thought is centrally concerned, throughout his career, with a cluster of classical philosophical questions—does human life have meaning? What makes an action right or wrong? Can we comprehend the true nature of reality? What undergirds our normative judgments (of beauty or justice)? We will be especially concerned with tracking Nietzsche’s reflections on the impact of modern science (especially the advent of Newton’s mechanical physics and Darwin’s evolutionary biology) on our conceptions of value and meaning in human life.

Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: OPT
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: HA-COL
Identical With: COL290, GRST290
Prereq: None

PHIL253 Nietzsche als Versucher (CLAC.50)
The term "Versucher" combines three meanings: (i) a writer of essays, (ii) a maker of experiments and hypotheses, and (iii) a tempter who seductively tests convictions and provokes latent desires. Friedrich Nietzsche draws on all these senses when he proposes "Versucher" as "the not-undangerous name [he] dares to bestow" on the "philosophers of the future"—a coming generation of free spirits who will (finally) be capable of appreciating and continuing his intellectual legacy (Beyond Good and Evil, §42).

This course will...
students can take either course independent of the other. No background in philosophy or literature is required for this course, but advanced-intermediate (B2+) reading and spoken German is a must.

Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: Cr/U
Credits: 0.50
Gen Ed Area: HA-GRST
Identical With: CGST290, GRST330, COL287
Prereq: None

PHIL254 The Rationalist Tradition in Early Modern European Philosophy
This course offers an intermediate-level survey of the Rationalist tradition in Early Modern European Philosophy. Broadly speaking, Rationalism (with a capital 'R') is the view that human reason can deliver insight into significant philosophical truths, without relying on sense experience. We will explore varieties of this methodological commitment in connection with several core topics – including the existence of God, the nature of the human mind (or soul), its relation to the body, and the possibility of empirical knowledge. We will read texts by René Descartes, Princess Elisabeth of Bohemia, Margaret Cavendish, Baruch Spinoza, G.W. Leibniz, and Emilie Du Châtelet.

Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: OPT
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: HA-COL
Identical With: COL283
Prereq: None

PHIL255 Moral Psychology
Moral psychology is the study of our minds that is aimed at an understanding of how we develop, grow, and flourish as moral beings. In this course we will examine historical and contemporary texts from philosophy, psychology, and spiritual writings that deal with the nature of the good life for human beings, the development of virtues, and the cultivation of ethical understanding and moral sensibilities. Emphasis will be both on careful understanding of the texts and on the attempt to relate the theories discussed to our own moral lives.

Offering: Host
Grading: Cr/U
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: SBS-PHIL
Prereq: None

PHIL257 Human Nature in Chinese Thought
This is a course on theories and practices regarding human nature in the history of Chinese traditions, such as Confucianism, Daoism, Legalism, Buddhism, and Neo-Confucianism. What does it mean to be a human? Do all humans have something in common? How should we conduct our lives with respect to those common characteristics? Thinkers from both Western and Eastern traditions have offered their own distinctive and thought-provoking answers to those questions.

In the West we are more familiar with the concept of "rational animal" which remains the classical understanding of human nature since the time of Plato and Aristotle. In the history of the Chinese tradition, however, very different approaches towards human nature were adopted, such as the concepts of sympathy, effortless action, no-self, and original enlightenment. Together they can offer us some new insights into the concept of human nature beyond just rationality.

Offering: Host
Grading: OPT
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: SBS-PHIL
Identical With: CEAS267

PHIL258 Post-Kantian European Philosophy
In this study of 19th- and 20th-century philosophy in Europe (primarily France and Germany), special attention will be devoted to the interpretation of modern science, its significance for understanding the world as distinctly modern, and ourselves and the world as natural (or as transcending nature). Related topics include the scope and limits of reason, the role of subjectivity in the constitution of meaning, the place of ethics and politics in a science-centered culture, and the problems of comprehending historical change. Philosophers to be read include Kant, Hegel, Marx, Nietzsche, Husserl, Heidegger, Weber, Marcuse, Habermas, and Foucault. The course is designed to introduce students to a very difficult but widely influential philosophical tradition and will emphasize close reading and comparative interpretation and assessment of texts and reasoning. This course meets the Social, Cultural, and Critical Theory Certificate's requirement in philosophical origins of theory.

Offering: Host
Grading: OPT
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: HA-PHIL
Identical With: SISP281
Prereq: None

PHIL259 Neo-Confucian Philosophy
This course presents critical discussion of issues central to Neo-Confucian (11th--19th centuries CE) philosophers that in many cases are still central in East Asian thought today. Topics will include the relation between knowledge and action, Neo-Confucian conceptions of idealism and materialism, and the connection between Neo-Confucian philosophy and spirituality. While our primary focus is on China, we will also look at distinctive Neo-Confucianism issues in Korea and Japan.

Offering: Host
Grading: OPT
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: HA-PHIL
Identical With: CEAS256, RELI206
Prereq: None

PHIL260 Reading Mencius in Chinese (CLAC.50)
This course offers students the opportunity for guided reading of the original, classical Chinese text of the great Confucian classic Mencius (or Mengzi). Advanced (fourth-year level or above) competence in Chinese (including native Chinese competence) is required for the class, but previous experience in classical Chinese is not. The pace of reading and language of discussion will be determined based on student enrollment.

Offering: Host
Grading: Cr/U
Credits: 0.50
Gen Ed Area: SBS-CGST
Identical With: CGST260
Prereq: None

PHIL261 Philosophical Classics III: Post-Kantian Analytic Philosophy
This course focuses on the development of a central strand of European and American philosophy after Kant: the analytic tradition of philosophy. The philosophical orientation, problems, and methods of this tradition animate much of contemporary philosophy, and this course aims to provide a basic grounding in this tradition, and thereby a gateway to current mainstream philosophizing. Topics include: logic, mathematics, science, necessity, thought, knowledge, and reality.

Offering: Host
Grading: OPT
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: SBS-PHIL
PHIL262 Phenomenology and Existentialism
In this course, we will study and discuss two interrelated and complementary schools of thought in Western philosophy: phenomenology and existentialism. We will cover both history and contemporary debates, as well as phenomenology-inspired research in cognitive science, psychology, and neuroscience. Roughly half the course will be devoted to the origins of phenomenology and existentialism, setting the main views within their historical context. The other half will discuss contemporary philosophical debates and scientific research, for example in artificial intelligence and robotics, involving phenomenological approaches.
Offering: Host
Grading: OPT
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: HA-PHIL
Prereq: None

PHIL263 Modern Chinese Philosophy
We will critically examine Chinese philosophical discourse from the late 19th century to the present, including liberalism, Marxism, and New Confucianism. Topics will include interaction with the West, human rights, the roles of traditions and traditional values, and the modern relevance of the ideal of sagehood.
Offering: Host
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: HA-PHIL
Identical With: CEAS264
Prereq: None

PHIL264 Japanese Philosophy
This course traces the development of lines of thought from the Heian Period (794-1185) to the 21st century. Students will consider Japanese forms of Buddhism (including Zen) and Confucianism, as well as Japan’s native tradition of Shinto. Students will also gain familiarity with the confluence of these traditions in the samurai (Bushido), and later incorporations of Western thought by the Kyoto School. The final section of the course, focused on Japanese aesthetics, invites students to engage in Japanese philosophy as a way of life.
Offering: Host
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: SBS-PHIL
Identical With: CEAS257
Prereq: None

PHIL265 Postanalytic Philosophy: Science and Metaphysics
The analytic movement in early 20th-century philosophy distinguished the domain of philosophy from that of empirical science. The sciences were empirical disciplines seeking facts, whereas philosophy primarily involved the analysis of linguistic meaning, often using the resources provided by formal logic. Criticisms of this conception of philosophy and its relation to the sciences have shaped much of the subsequent development of anglophone philosophy. This course will examine closely some of the most influential later criticisms of the early analytic movement and the resulting reconceptions of philosophy as a discipline. The central themes of the course cut across the fields of epistemology, metaphysics, and the philosophy of language and mind. Special attention will be given to philosophy’s relation to the empirical sciences, since this has been a prominent issue raised by the criticisms of the early analytic movement. Among the philosophers most prominently considered are Quine, Sellars, Davidson, Putnam, Dennett, Kripke, Brandom, and Haugeland.
Offering: Host
Grading: OPT
Credits: 1.00

PHIL266 Buddhism and Social Justice
In this course students will get a basic introduction to Buddhism, covering major concepts including interdependent origination, suffering, not-self, and Buddhist ethical practices. Through major historical texts, we will establish a uniquely Buddhist basis for social justice. Historical texts to be covered include the Dhammapada, Therigatha, Jataka Tales, and Shantideva’s A Guide to the Bodhisattva’s Way of Life. We will discuss major philosophical questions such as, “how can we strive for change, while simultaneously accepting things as they are?” “How do we respect the importance of identities while denying the existence of a self?” “If the world will always be imperfect, why bother trying to improve social conditions?” We will then discuss contemporary applications of Buddhism for social change, and compare these with non-Buddhist approaches. Modern texts include “Soaring and Settling” by Rita Gross, “Freedom in Exile” by His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama, “Burdened Virtues” by Lisa Tessman, and “Strength to Love” by Martin Luther King Jr.
Offering: Host
Grading: OPT
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: SBS-PHIL
Identical With: FGSS263, RELI266
Prereq: None

PHIL267 History and Limits of Aesthetic Theory
This class will engage significant contributions to Aesthetic Theory in the West from antiquity to the modern period along three dimensions: theoretical, critical, and historical. From a theoretical standpoint, we will address perennial questions in aesthetics, such as what makes something a work of art in the first place, what it means for art to be “beautiful” or otherwise “successful,” how differences in media condition and contribute to artistic meaning, what genera are and how they evolve, whether and how art can be ethically or politically significant, why we care about fiction, why and how we “enjoy” tragic plays or horror films, and how artistic tradition can (and should) inform individual works. From a critical standpoint, we will consider how works of art contemporaneous with each theoretical account either reinforce or challenge its specific proposals. And from a historical standpoint, we will seek to understand how aesthetic theories both respond to the specificities of their own epoch and situate themselves relative to the artistic and aesthetic traditions of their predecessors. Readings will include texts by Aristotle, Hume, Kant, Lessing, and Hegel.
Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: OPT
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: HA-COL
Identical With: COL266
Prereq: None

PHIL269 Modern Aesthetic Theory
As a philosophical discipline, aesthetic theory initially coalesced around a cluster of related issues concerning the nature of beauty and the norms governing its production, appreciation, and authoritative assessment. Beginning in the nineteenth century, however, both art and aesthetics undergo a conspicuous yet enigmatic shift, signaled by (among other things) Hegel’s declaration that “art, in its highest vocation, is and remains for us a thing of the past.” Rather suddenly, classical accounts of beauty, genius, aesthetic experience, and critical taste are beset by anxieties about the autonomy and significance of aesthetic praxis in human life and, subsequently, by a series of challenges to the tenability of traditional aesthetic categories—author, text, tradition, meaning and interpretation, disinterested pleasure, originality, etc. Our aim in this course is to track these conceptual shifts and to interrogate the rationale behind them. (This course complements, but does not presuppose COL 266: History and Limits of Aesthetic Theory.)
Offering: Crosslisting
PHIL270 Environmental Philosophy
This course offers philosophical resources for understanding and addressing environmental concerns. At the same time, we will recognize how ecological insights challenge some of the most influential ideas in the European philosophical tradition—human-centered and individualist accounts of existence, agency, knowledge, and value.

Shared questions may include:

- Is there a coherent way of distinguishing "nature" from the non-natural?
- What can we understand about non-human experience and value?
- How do people become motivated to recognize and respond to problems whose effects play out in far-away or unfamiliar bodies?
- How do concepts of moral responsibility apply to climate change?
- How does environmentally directed action relate to social justice?
- When there are ecological impacts attached to choices that are conventionally seen as matters of personal liberty (such as food choices, living arrangements, reproductive choices), how do we constructively engage with one another?

Despite near consensus about our times being rife with environmental crises, concepts like "environment" and "nature" defy any straightforward account. Similarly, it seems even when people come together around problems of injustice and unsustainability, they may not share any clear positive account of justice or of sustainability.

Rather than be defeated by the lack of shared foundational concepts, students will become familiar with at least three patterns of critique—each of these being not a theory or kind of information but a set of skills with perceptual, conceptual, and dialogical aspects. These three patterns of critique are ecological critique, standpoint critique, and sustainability critiques, and they correspond roughly to three traditional domains of philosophy: inquiry into being (metaphysics), inquiry into knowledge and understanding (epistemology), and inquiry into norms and ideals for action (ethics).

Understanding these three patterns of critique allows students to address emerging environmental problems more effectively, recognizing the intertwined relations among empirical inquiry, moral accountability, and social justice.

PHIL271 Data, Privacy, and Ethics
Paying for items at the grocery store has become automated thanks to self-checkout stations. Grabbing a coffee at McDonalds involves plugging an order onto a screen. These and other new technologies positively and negatively impact society. For instance, many of these now automated procedures were once occupations, and research shows that automation is displacing jobs that would normally serve underrepresented communities. What’s more is that these machines store your information: what you bought, how many items, and at what time you made the purchases. The internet and various social media websites store even more information that is bought and sold to companies and organizations. Thus, should it be permissible for automation to replace workers? What is and isn’t moral use of such information? Who is responsible if a machine does something wrong? Are there scenarios in which an organization should not have access to data? In this class, we will explore these questions and other normative questions on data-driven technologies by way of case studies on particular topics. We will the explore the following topics: data ownership, surveillance and privacy, algorithmic bias and its solutions, misinformation, ‘the black box problem,’ opacity in machine learning, and societal implications of automaton. Authors to be read include Emmanuel Mesthene, Cathy O’Neil, Wendell Wallach, Frances Haugen, Sina Fazelpour, David Boonin, and more. Some relevant movies that touch on these topics include Chappie, Coded Bias, the Minority Report, and the Great Hack.
feminist transformative justice movement with the goal of prison abolition. But as we progress, we will explore less obvious and seemingly more mundane movements of self- and community transformation such as Saba Mahmood’s dawa movement from Egypt, Weight Watchers, and finally “ballroom” culture from Detroit. Anthropological ethnographies of these movements will help show how we can self-reflexively shape our own habits and transform ourselves.

Offering: Host
Grading: OPT
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: SBS-PHIL
Identical With: ANTH274, FGSS274
Prereq: None

PHIL275 Calderwood Seminar in Public Writing: Writing for Social Justice
One of the greatest strengths of learning philosophy is that it helps us become better thinkers and clearer communicators. In this course, students will develop skills for communicating publicly about pressing issues of social justice. We will write on topics including race, gender, animals, immigration, prisons, politics, climate change, and other topics chosen by the class.

Offering: Host
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: SBS-PHIL
Prereq: None

PHIL276 Virtue Ethics: Traditional, Comparative, and Contemporary Approaches
This course provides an overview and evaluation of various virtue-based approaches to ethics in the Western and Eastern traditions. In the first part of the course, we will get a basic sense for the structure and distinctive features of ancient virtue-based ethical theories. In the second part of the course, we will follow the trajectory of these approaches through to their revival in the late 20th century in the contemporary virtue ethics movement.

Offering: Host
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: SBS-PHIL
Prereq: None

PHIL277 Feminist Philosophy and Moral Theory (FGSS Gateway)
This course explores the dialogue between feminist concerns and moral theory. It will explore not only how moral theory might support certain central feminist insights and aims but also why some feminists cast doubt on the project of “doing moral theory.” Does the language of existing philosophical moral theories (reason, fairness, equality, utility, human nature, rights) sufficiently allow articulation of feminist problems? If not, how can feminist moral theorists move us beyond the grip of familiar gender-loaded oppositions? After surveying a range of perspectives on feminism and philosophy, we will give a deep reading to three book-length developments of feminist ethics: one from a Kantian perspective, one focused on care, and one focused on virtue ethics. As a gateway course for the FGSS program, this course serves to introduce critical thinking about the construction of gender and the intersection of gender with race, ethnicity, class, and sexuality.

Offering: Host
Grading: OPT
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: HA-PHIL
Identical With: FGSS277
Prereq: None

PHIL278 Political Philosophy
The United States incarcerates more people than any other country in the world. Over 2 million people are caught in the criminal justice system today. A disproportionate number of those incarcerated are people of color, particularly black, Latino, and indigenous men. Women, too, are a growing part of the prison population, as are queer, transgender, and gender-nonconforming people. Children, particularly impoverished black youth and, increasingly, immigrants, are funneled into correctional supervision. In this course we will ground philosophical explorations of freedom and captivity by exploring the vexing problems faced by those who are incarcerated.

Offering: Host
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: SBS-PHIL
Prereq: None

PHIL280 Theory, Critique, Politics
The subject of this course centers on two questions in 20th century continental philosophy. First, what can theory bring to our understanding of politics? Second, what is the role of critique for political judgment? We will begin with Kant for an understanding of the meaning of “critique” that many 20th century continental philosophers draw upon. Following this introduction, the course will be split between German philosophers and French philosophers to allow us to understand the tensions and convergences between the two camps. The German philosophers we will read are Heidegger, Adorno, Herbert Marcuse, and Ernst Bloch. For the French philosophers, we will read Jean-Paul Sartre, Simone de Beauvoir, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, and Michel Foucault. By the end of the course students will be able to assess how different thinkers attempted to resolve the relationship of the philosopher to political society.

Offering: Host
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: SBS-PHIL
Prereq: None

PHIL281 Africana Political Philosophy 1800s-1970
This course aims to introduce students to both the critical and the constructive dimensions of Africana political thought. Through our readings and discussions, we will assess the claims that Africana thinkers have made upon the polity, how they have defined themselves, and how they have sought to redefine the basic terms of public life away from either slavery or colonization. Among the themes that we will explore are the relationship between slavery and democracy, the role of historical memory in political life, the political significance of culture, the connections between “race” and “nation,” and the tensions between claims for black autonomy and claims for integration, as well as the meaning of such core political concepts as citizenship, freedom, equality, progress, power, and justice. As we focus our attention on these issues, we will be mindful of the complex ways in which the concept of race has been constructed and deployed throughout historical periods and its interrelationship with other elements of identity such as gender, sexuality, class, and religion. Furthermore, we will attend to differences across black geographies from the Americas to the Caribbean, and parts of Africa.

Offering: Host
Grading: OPT
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: SBS-PHIL
Prereq: None

PHIL282 Reason and Revelation: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Religion
With the dawning of modernity, Europe’s colonial and scientific adventures opened a distinction of mutual suspicion between theology and philosophy. Broadly speaking, “philosophy of religion” is the effort to evaluate the claims of revelation and reason in terms of one another. We will examine some of the major texts within this field, whose authors include deep skeptics, committed Christians, committed anti-Christians, secular and nonsecular Jews, feminists, ethicists, idealists, empiricists, Romantics, and liberationists. Themes include proofs of God’s existence—along with refutations of those proofs and rebuttals to those refutations—the problem of evil, religious ethics, religious experience, the
This course will provide an overview of law and public policy as they apply to non-human animals. The course will explore the historical and philosophical treatment of animals; discuss how such treatment impacts the way judges, policymakers, lawyers, legal scholars, and lay people see, speak about, and use animals; survey current animal protection laws and regulations, including overlap with such policy issues as food and agriculture, climate change, and biodiversity protection; consider recent political and legal campaigns to reform animal protection laws; examine the concept of "standing" and the problems of litigating on behalf of animals; interrogate the current classification of animals as "property" and the impacts of that classification; and debate the carceral turn in animal legal advocacy.

**Offering:** Host  
Grading: A-F  
Credits: 1.00  
Gen Ed Area: SBS-PHIL  
Identical With: SISP286  
Prereq: None

**PHIL286 Philosophy of Mind**

This class is a philosophical investigation into the nature of the mind. We will explore such questions such: What kinds of beings are capable of having mental states? Can non-human animals or computers think and feel? What is it to be conscious, and can the subjective, first-personal experience of consciousness be adequately captured by a scientific theory? How do our minds represent the world? By what mechanism do our thoughts, feelings, and desires get linked up to the things around us? We will ask these questions with the goal of shedding light on our nature as thinking, feeling beings, and on the relation of our inner lives to the physical world.

**Offering:** Host  
Grading: OPT  
Credits: 1.00  
Gen Ed Area: SBS-PHIL  
Identical With: SISP286  
Prereq: None

**PHIL287 Philosophy of Science**

This course is a fast-moving introduction to some central topics in the philosophy of science, aimed at students with some college-level study of at least one natural science. Topics include the norms of scientific understanding or explanation; the relation between finished theories or explanations and ongoing research; the recognition and dissemination of discoveries; the justification of scientific claims; conceptual and technical (revolutionary) change in the science; the significance of instrumentation, experiment, and artifice in science; the places of laws, models, and causal relations in scientific understanding; and whether various sciences differ fundamentally in their aims, methods, and achievements. Considerable attention will be given to examples of scientific practice, both historical and contemporary.

**Offering:** Crosslisting  
Grading: OPT  
Credits: 1.00  
Gen Ed Area: HA-SISP  
Identical With: SISP202

**PHIL288 Sciences as Social and Cultural Practices**

Philosophers long construed scientific knowledge as achieved and assessed by individual knowers, but recent work has recognized a greater epistemic role for scientific communities, disciplines, or practices and has taken seriously the social and cultural context of scientific research. This course surveys some of the social, cultural, and political aspects of the sciences that have been most important for scholars in science studies, including differences between experimental, field, and theoretical science; the role of disciplines and other institutions in the sciences; interactions between science and its various publics; the politics of scientific expertise and science policy; the globalization of science; the social dimensions of scientific normativity, from metrology to conceptions of objectivity; race and gender in science; and conceptual exchanges between sciences and other discursive practices. The concept of the social will also receive critical attention in its purported contrasts to what is individual, natural, rational, or cultural.

**Offering:** Crosslisting  
Grading: OPT  
Credits: 1.00  
Gen Ed Area: SBS-SISP  
Identical With: SISP205, ENVS205  
Prereq: None

**PHIL289 Philosophy of Language**

This course is a study of recent attempts by philosophers to explain the nature of language and thought. The focus of the course will be on one or more of the following topics: reference, sense, analyticity, necessity, a priori truth.

**Offering:** Host  
Grading: A-F  
Credits: 1.00  
Gen Ed Area: HA-PHIL  
Prereq: PHIL201 OR PHIL202 OR PHIL231

**PHIL290 Philosophical Logic**

This course will study the philosophical and conceptual foundations of deductive reasoning, developing into an exact theory of the fundamental principles of such reasoning. A subsidiary aim is to equip the student with the necessary background for reading contemporary philosophical texts.

**Offering:** Host  
Grading: OPT  
Credits: 1.00  
Gen Ed Area: NSM-PHIL  
Prereq: PHIL231 OR PHIL230

**PHIL291 Reason and Its Limits**

This course offers a close study of Immanuel Kant's magnum opus, the Critique of Pure Reason, supplemented by related writings by Kant and some secondary literature. Kant observes that the history of philosophy is rife with disagreements, even though philosophers purport to traffic in necessary truths disclosed by reason alone. This scandalous fractiousness calls into question reason's ability to offer substantive insights into necessary truths. Kant's "critique" aims to vindicate reason by distinguishing, in a principled manner, the sorts of things we can know with certainty from those that lie beyond the limits of human understanding. His central thesis, "transcendental idealism," holds that "reason has insight only into what it produces after its own plan" (Bxiii). In other words, we can indeed be certain of key structural features of reality such as its spatiotemporality and causal interconnectedness—but only because those features are, in some crucial sense, mind-dependent. This class will explore in detail the arguments for these claims as well as prominent interpretations of their philosophical upshot. 

**Offering:** Crosslisting  
Grading: A-F  
Credits: 1.00
This course is devoted to comparing and contrasting the computationalist and
mind can extend beyond the boundaries of our skull and even of our whole body.

How does the mind work? So-called "computationalists" think that the mind
usually called "mental representations") according to rules, and then issues
"commands" to guide behavior. On the other hand, the "SE" (Ecological, Embodied, Embedded, Enactive, Extended) approach rejects the computer
analogies. SE theorists insist that minds, and minded organisms more generally,
cannot be understood in isolation from their environment. Cognition doesn't
happen "in a vacuum," and it isn't separable from action. As a consequence, the
mind can extend beyond the boundaries of our skull and even of our whole body.
This course is devoted to comparing and contrasting the computationalist and
the SE approaches to cognition. We will examine similarities and differences,
assumptions and commitments with respect to core debates at the interface of
philosophy, psychology, and cognitive science such as, for instance, the nature of
visual perception.

The class examines the criticisms of language in various schools of Chinese
thought, exploring themes such as the ineffability of the absolute, the rejection
of logic, naturalistic criticism of language as a vehicle of propositional knowledge,
the "heart that precedes words" in apophatic practice, words as generator of
duality, and more. Special emphasis will be given to the paradox of "saying the
unsayable" in Daoism and Chan Buddhism, and on the various literary techniques
by which the early thinkers have tried to avoid this conflict.

How does the mind work? So-called "computationalists" think that the mind
usually called "mental representations") according to rules, and then issues
"commands" to guide behavior. On the other hand, the "SE" (Ecological, Embodied, Embedded, Enactive, Extended) approach rejects the computer
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This course is devoted to comparing and contrasting the computationalist and
the SE approaches to cognition. We will examine similarities and differences,
assumptions and commitments with respect to core debates at the interface of
philosophy, psychology, and cognitive science such as, for instance, the nature of
visual perception.
matters of ethics, politics, moral psychology, epistemology, metaphysics, and
almost every branch of philosophical thought we are familiar with today--on
declared, famously: "The safest general characterization of the European philosophical tradition
is that it consists of a series of footnotes to Plato." This seminar will be devoted
to a close reading of each of the 10 books of The Republic alongside various
pragmatist theories have been subjected to frequent caricature as
philosophical turbulence induced by the new science--in particular, by the
Aristotle, perceptible objects had been understood to be enduring substances
the dissolution of objective reality as it had previously been known. Since
Plato rethinks his theory of forms in these dialogues, how he learns to let go of
"The safest general characterization of the European philosophical tradition
its consequences for the philosophy of perception. Aristotle compared
the distinction between belief and knowledge, the distinction between appearance and reality, the importance of a proper
Both the metaphysics and the mathematics of the new science were, however,
rife with paradox. If material objects not only harbor a microscopic substructure
in the infinitesimally small to the infinitely large. Rather than
encountering a world of enduring and identifiable substances--animals,
In conjunction with the CHUM theme "Ephemera," this class will study the
philosophical turbulence induced by the new science--in particular, by the
mechanical philosophy and infinitesimal calculus. We will pay special attention
to its consequences for the philosophy of perception. Aristotle compared
perceivable objects to signet rings impressing their distinctive forms on the
receptive wax of the human sensorium. But if there are no enduring substances
or determinate forms, how are we to understand our perceptual relation to the
world? How must perceptual experience be reconceived so as to accommodate
the fleetingness and flux of material phenomena? And how is it that, though
we are awash in ephemera, we nevertheless enjoy an (illusory?) impression of
endurance and stability?
In the Sophist and the Statesman. In the process, we will see how
consider the political project Plato embarks upon in the Republic in constructing
a psychologically healthy one. By contrast, a life governed by the indiscriminate
pursuit of power--the life of a tyrant--is psychologically corrupted. These are
both metaphysics--receives a major formulation in this text. This seminar will be devoted
a psychologically healthy one. By contrast, a life governed by the indiscriminate
pursuit of power--the life of a tyrant--is psychologically corrupted. These are
bold claims. What is Plato's argument for them? In raising this question, we will
This course sketches and evaluates an American tradition of more or less
overly pragmatist thinkers in philosophy and the human sciences, stretching
roughly from Emerson and Peirce at the beginning; through William James,
George Herbert Mead, and John Dewey in the heyday of the pragmatist public
intellectual; to recent and current writers as diverse as Cornell West, Robert
Brandom, Richard Rorty, Ian Hacking, and Ruth Millikan. These thinkers offer
variations on the premise that all meanings gesture not only backward to facts
and things but also forward to the practical circumstances and purposes of
interpreters. As purposes shift, so do meanings, and as meanings shift, so does
truth--for whether we accept a claim as true depends above all on its
meaning. Pragmatist theories have been subjected to frequent caricature as
implying that ideas can mean whatever we take them to mean or that what is
ture varies according to what each individual finds convenient and expedient to
believe. What does it mean, then, to retain a sense of respect for truth? While
some pragmatist accounts do explicitly deflate the importance of the concept
of truth, others claim not only to respect truth but to offer an account of truth
that allows us to inquire more clearly into the evolving but real meaning of moral
judgments, religious and aesthetic claims, psychological attributions, and other
deeply contested candidates for human belief.
Given an account of thinking and action as always actively embodied and
eMBEDDED in our surroundings, we will consider the hypothesis that shifts
in action emerge together with shifts in perception. Radical accounts of
metaphor and its uptake will help us develop accounts of perceptual change. Our
readings will follow a variety of metaphorical directions, including animism and
animacies, affordance and hyperobject, process, event and intra-action, native
and other, inflammation and balance, dwelling and death, consumption
and sustainability. How -- and with what risks and unexpected outcomes -- can these
patterns of recognition help in orienting us to the challenges of environmental
interdependence and volatility?

This course benefits from collaborative visits with philosopher-dancer Jill Sigman,
via Wesleyan’s Creative Campus Initiative. Sigman will co-shape discussion and
activities during at least two of our sessions.

Offering: Host
Grading: OPT
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: SBS-PHIL
Identical With: ENVS347
Prereq: None

PHIL340 Human Nature

The idea of “human nature” plays an important role in all sorts of explanations,
but what does it mean? What is it to be a human? Are we just rational animals?
Do some humans have different natures than others? Is it possible for us
to change our nature or is it innate? Are we products of nature, nurture, or
some combination? Are humans fundamentally evil or good? By examining
philosophical, historical, religious, theoretical, and scientific literatures, this
course will examine various answers to these questions.

Offering: Host
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: SBS-PHIL
Identical With: SISP340
Prereq: None

PHIL341 Empathy and Radical Care

This course will explore the philosophical and perceptual issues that empathy
generates by focusing on specific contexts of both human and nonhuman
captivity. Philosophical explorations will be supplemented with political insights
of activists engaged in mutual aid, abolition, and animal and eco-justice.

Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: OPT
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: HA-CHUM
Identical With: CHUM318
Prereq: None

PHIL347 Ethics, Ecology, and Moral Change

People commonly recognize that in facing global climate crises, we need to
change our habits and practices. Yet our activities are bound up with our
perceptions and with our embodied experience of value and possibility.
This seminar dives into recent attempts to radically rework our ways of
understanding and inhabiting the world. As the flip-side of environmental
alienation is alienation from our embodiment, our sessions will incorporate
movement and other challenges to sedentary classroom habits.
Text not provided.
which causally depends on sensory organs (our eyes, ears, nose, etc.) being stimulated by something external to our physical body. In this course, we will explore the several different "levels" at which philosophers think about perception and the different questions being asked. At the metaphysical level, the central question is: What kind of "things" do we perceive? What is perceptual awareness of? At the epistemological level, we will deal with the question: can we gain knowledge about the world through perception? Finally, at the psychological level, we will ask: How do the psychological processes—studied by sciences like cognitive science, neuroscience, physiology, etc.—relate to the metaphysical and epistemological questions?

Offering: Host
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: SBS-PHIL
Prereq: None

PHIL366 Bodies, Machines, and Meaning: Cultural Studies of the Sciences
Cultural studies of the sciences shift the focus of interdisciplinary science studies from understanding the sciences as producing and justifying knowledge to understanding them as meaning-making and world-transforming practices. Cultural studies attend to scientific meaning-making at multiple levels, and to the interactions among them: concrete material relations among bodies, technologies, and their settings or situations; verbal, visual, corporeal, mathematical, and other expressive performances; and social, cultural, or political institutions, practices, boundaries, and movements across and within them. Cultural studies of science also emphasizes political engagement with scientific practices and their broader cultural entanglements. This course explores what it means to do cultural studies of science, with a focus on three interrelated themes: alternative conceptions of what it means to make claims and reason about what happens in "nature"; case studies in how scientific meaning and understanding are embodied and prosthetically extended technologically; and some specific conceptual and material relations among scientific understandings of life, bodies, sex, reproduction, and being human.

Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: OPT
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: SBS-PHIL
Identical With: SISP366
Prereq: None

PHIL368 The Ethics of Captivity
There are a variety of forms of captivity and a wide array of individuals who are kept in captivity. In this course, we will explore the conditions of captivity (including prisons, zoos, laboratories, and sanctuaries) and explore the variety of ethical and political issues that captivity raises for humans and other animals.

Offering: Host
Grading: OPT
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: SBS-PHIL
Prereq: None

PHIL381 Topics in Philosophy of Mind
This course will explore recent discussions in philosophy of mind. Topics will change from year to year. This year we will look at perspectival pluralism - the view that we understand the mind through a variety of cognitive lenses -- perspectives, frames, models -- that bring different things into focus and involve different forms of reasoning and representation. In addition to an introduction to perspectival pluralism, we will explore its possible implications in philosophy of science, theory of knowledge, truth, and metaphysics.

Offering: Host
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: HA-PHIL

PHIL383 Mind, Body, and World
This seminar in the metaphysics of mind and meaning begins with the philosophical and scientific background to cognitivist conceptions of mind and artificial intelligence. Both classic and recent criticisms of cognitivism and early AI emphasize the role of bodily movement and skill, language, social normativity, and engagement with and within the world as integral to conceptualization and understanding. These themes will then be explored constructively in some recent reconceptions of cognition as embodied and social-pragmatic, and of language and other conceptual repertoires as integral to bodily involvement in the world and with one another.

Offering: Host
Grading: OPT
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: HA-PHIL
Identical With: SISP383
Prereq: None

PHIL385 Understanding Life and Mind
Philosophical conceptions of mind and language are now typically "naturalistic" in the sense that they take these phenomena to be part of the natural world and understandable scientifically. Naturalistic conceptions of mindedness (and many of the sciences of mindedness) still mostly take their lead from a Cartesian tradition of understanding mindedness as an "internal" representation of an "external" world, now located in the brain or central nervous system rather than an immaterial soul. This advanced seminar instead explores the possible philosophical significance of recent developments in evolutionary and developmental biology for understanding mindedness. The course takes up four primary themes: organism/environment entanglement; relevant background from the recent emergence of an "extended evolutionary synthesis;" reconceptions of mindedness as ways organisms inhabit and respond to environments rather than as internal representations; and the evolution and development of language as a form of evolutionary niche construction that coevolves with human organisms and ways of life.

Offering: Host
Grading: OPT
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: HA-SISP
Identical With: SISP385
Prereq: None

PHIL390 Topics in Metaphysics
If I say to you, "It's been a very warm fall," and you reply, "Yeah, I think so too," do we not think the same thing? Doesn't this mean that there is a thing that we both think? This seminar is devoted to the question: is there indeed a thing that we both think, and, if so, what is it? We start with the view that this thing is a "thought," which represents the world as being a certain way. We then move to a contrasting view that the thing is a "proposition," which is an entity composed of items in the world, rather than a representation of the world. We next consider a view on which the thing is what is common to mental acts that we perform and express by saying what we said to one another. The next view we'll examine is that the thing is a "fact" about me and you, which represents a fact about the world. Finally, we will consider the view that there is no thing at all that we both think. Throughout our discussions, we will keep in mind something obvious: sometime what we think is true, and sometimes it is false. In this way, we will see how the metaphysics of thinking intertwines with the metaphysics of truth and falsity, and thereby also with the metaphysics of reason.

Offering: Host
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: HA-PHIL
Prereq: PHIL293
PHIL401 Individual Tutorial, Undergraduate
Topic to be arranged in consultation with the tutor.
Offering: Host
Grading: OPT

PHIL402 Individual Tutorial, Undergraduate
Topic to be arranged in consultation with the tutor.
Offering: Host
Grading: OPT

PHIL403 Department/Program Project or Essay
Project to be arranged in consultation with the tutor.
Offering: Host
Grading: A-F

PHIL404 Department/Program Project or Essay
Project to be arranged in consultation with the tutor.
Offering: Host
Grading: OPT

PHIL407 Senior Tutorial (downgraded thesis)
Downgraded Senior Thesis Tutorial - Project to be arranged in consultation with the tutor. Only enrolled in through the Honors Coordinator.
Offering: Host
Grading: A-F

PHIL408 Senior Tutorial (downgraded thesis)
Downgraded Senior Thesis Tutorial - Project to be arranged in consultation with the tutor. Only enrolled in through the Honors Coordinator.
Offering: Host
Grading: A-F

PHIL409 Senior Thesis Tutorial
Topic to be arranged in consultation with the tutor.
Offering: Host
Grading: OPT

PHIL410 Senior Thesis Tutorial
Topic to be arranged in consultation with the tutor.
Offering: Host
Grading: OPT

PHIL411 Group Tutorial, Undergraduate
Topic to be arranged in consultation with the tutor.
Offering: Host
Grading: OPT

PHIL412 Group Tutorial, Undergraduate
Topic to be arranged in consultation with the tutor.
Offering: Host
Grading: OPT

PHIL419 Student Forum
Student-run group tutorial, sponsored by a faculty member and approved by the chair of a department or program.
Offering: Host
Grading: Cr/U

PHIL420 Student Forum
Student-run group tutorial, sponsored by a faculty member and approved by the chair of a department or program.
Offering: Host
Grading: Cr/U

PHIL465 Education in the Field, Undergraduate
Students must consult with the department and class dean in advance of undertaking education in the field for approval of the nature of the responsibilities and method of evaluation.
Offering: Host
Grading: OPT

PHIL470 Independent Study, Undergraduate
Credit may be earned for an independent study during a summer or authorized leave of absence provided that (1) plans have been approved in advance, and (2) all specified requirements have been satisfied.
Offering: Host
Grading: OPT
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: None
Prereq: None

PHIL491 Teaching Apprentice Tutorial
The teaching apprentice program offers undergraduate students the opportunity to assist in teaching a faculty member’s course for academic credit.
Offering: Host
Grading: OPT

PHIL492 Teaching Apprentice Tutorial
The teaching apprentice program offers undergraduate students the opportunity to assist in teaching a faculty member’s course for academic credit.
Offering: Host
Grading: OPT