PHILOSOPHY

Doing philosophy means reasoning about questions that are of basic importance to the human experience—questions like, What is a good life? What is reality? How are knowledge and understanding possible? What should we believe? What norms should govern our societies, our relationships, and our activities? Philosophers critically analyze ideas and practices that often are assumed without reflection. Wesleyan’s philosophy faculty draws on multiple traditions of inquiry, offering a wide variety of perspectives and methods for addressing these questions.

FACULTY

Stephen Angle
BA, Yale University; PHD, University of Michigan
Mansfield Freeman Professor of East Asian Studies; Professor of Philosophy; Director, Center for Global Studies; Professor, East Asian Studies

Lori Gruen
BA, University of Colorado Boulder; PHD, University of Colorado Boulder
William Griffin Professor of Philosophy; Professor of Philosophy; Chair, Philosophy; Professor, Science in Society; Professor, Feminist, Gender, and Sexuality Studies; Coordinator, Animal Studies

Tushar Irani
BA, Colgate University; PHD, Northwestern University
Associate Professor of Philosophy; Associate Professor of Letters; Associate Professor, Education Studies

Steven W. Horst
BA, Boston University; PHD, University of Notre Dame
Professor of Philosophy; Professor, Science in Society; Coordinator, Christianity Studies

Joseph T. Rouse
BA, Oberlin College; MA, Northwestern University; MAA, Wesleyan University; PHD, Northwestern University
Hedding Professor of Moral Science; Professor of Science in Society; Professor of Philosophy; Professor, Environmental Studies

Sanford Shieh
AB, Cornell University; BA, Cornell University; BA, Oxford University; PHD, Harvard University
Professor of Philosophy

Elise Springer
BA, Wesleyan University; MA, University of Connecticut; PHD, University of Connecticut
Associate Professor of Philosophy; Associate Professor, Feminist, Gender, and Sexuality Studies

AFILIATED FACULTY

Mary-Jane Victoria Rubenstein
BA, Williams College; MA, Columbia University; MPHIL, Cambridge University; MPhil, Columbia University; PHD, Columbia University
Dean of the Social Sciences; Professor of Religion; Professor, Science in Society; Professor, Philosophy; Professor, Feminist, Gender, and Sexuality Studies

Daniel Smyth
BA, University of Chicago; MA, University of Chicago; PHD, University of Chicago
Assistant Professor of Letters; Assistant Professor, Philosophy; Assistant Professor, German Studies

VISITING FACULTY

Muhammad Velji
BA, University of Toronto; MA, Carleton College; PHD, McGill University
Visiting Assistant Professor of Philosophy

EMERITI

Brian C. Fay
BA, Loyola Marymount University; DPHIL, Oxford University; MA, Oxford University; MAA, Wesleyan University
William Griffin Professor of Philosophy, Emeritus

DEPARTMENTAL ADVISING EXPERTS

All departmental faculty

- Undergraduate Philosophy Major (https://catalog.wesleyan.edu/departments/phil/ugrd-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 contraceptive technologies, and the ethics raised by reproductive issues.
Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: NSM-BIOL
Identical With: BIOL118, 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

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
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 rigors 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 rigors 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 time dense, difficult, and perplexing. The course requires no prior experience in philosophy and should be of equal interest to students who are pursuing or intend to pursue other majors.
Offering: Host
Grading: OPT
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: HA-PHIL
Identical With: COL359, CLST217
Prereq: None

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 antipspeculative, 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

PHIL206 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

PHIL207 Live Like a Philosopher
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

PHIL210 Living a Good Life
For many philosophers, Eastern and Western, philosophy has been more than an effort to answer fundamental theoretical 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 living a good life. How does philosophical reasoning interact with lived practice? How do views about metaphysics or psychology lead to ethical commitments? Despite their differences, Confucians, Daoists, 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?

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 WesMaps for more information.

Offering: Host
Grading: Cr/U
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: SBS-PHIL
Identical With: CEAS253, COL210
Prereq: None

PHIL211 Critical Philosophy of Race
This course starts with WEB Du Bois, not only because he is formative, but because like Hobbes’s philosophy of law, he sets out many of the major themes of the course. We then explore “What is Race” through an understanding of social construction, what problems people of mixed races and non-Black/white races pose to metaphysical theories of race, and finally the relationship between the social construction of race and the “reality” of the biological differences in races. We look at the position—both for and against—that the goal of racial justice is “no longer seeing race,” but also from the interesting perspective of those who literally don’t “see” race: the blind. We look at the mini-topic of what the role of white people should be in racial justice. We then look at the first-person experience of being a racialized subject through Frantz Fanon and through Frank Wilderson’s new book “Afro-Pessimism.” We also look at sexual desire and its connection to race. The course ends with a timely look at the connection of race, criminalization, policing, and incarceration, as well as prison and police abolition.

Offering: Host
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: SBS-PHIL
Identical With: AFAM211
Prereq: None

PHIL212 Introduction to Ethics
This course will begin 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. Yet both insist that moral life is essentially connected to individual happiness.

Turning next to modern ideas of moral action ( Kantian and utilitarian), we find that they both emphasize a potential gulf between individual happiness and moral rightness. Yet, like the ancients, they disagree over whether morality’s basic insights derive from experience.
The last third of the course explores more recent preoccupations with ideas about moral difference, moral change, and the relation between morality and power. Especially since Marx and Nietzsche, moral theory faces a sustained challenge from social theorists who allege moral norms and judgments serve hidden ideological purposes. Some have sought to repair universal ethics by giving an account of progress or the overcoming of bias, while others have argued for plural or relative ethics. Ecological critics have challenged moral theorists to overcome their preoccupation with exclusively human interests and ideals. What kinds of moral reflection might be adequate to problems of global interdependence?

Students will come to understand the distinctive insights and arguments behind all of the positions considered, to recognize more and less cogent lines of response to them, 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: ENV212
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

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: ENV215, 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
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
or reconstituting themselves--sometimes drawing on and sometimes contesting traditions acquired a global audience, but other philosophical traditions did not disappear. These other ways of approaching philosophy have been re-emerging around the world in recent centuries, so too have Euro-American philosophical 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 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 challenge 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

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: 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 this 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

PHIL221F Philosophy as a Way of Life (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 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

PHIL222F 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

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

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.
36 senses when he proposes “Versucher” as “the not-undangerous name [he] dares convictions and provokes latent desires. Friedrich Nietzsche draws on all these maker of experiments and hypotheses, and (iii) a tempter who seductively tests The term “Versucher” combines three meanings: (i) a writer of essays, (ii) a physics and Darwin’s evolutionary biology) on our conceptions of value and 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 freedom, morality, and beauty.

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, 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

PHIL251 Classical Chinese Philosophy: Chinese Lab (CLAC.50) This 0.5 credit course is conducted in Chinese and designed to supplement the standard English-language Classical Chinese Philosophy (PHIL205) course. Students must have taken PHIL205 in the past or be enrolled in it simultaneously. The course will have two main foci: introducing students to modern and contemporary Chinese-language debates about Chinese philosophy and exploring in greater depth the meaning of key passages from the classical works students are reading in translation in PHIL205.

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-CEAS
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 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 Réé, 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 is part of the Fries Center for Global Studies’ Cultures and Languages Across the Curriculum (CLAC) initiative. It is taught in German and associated with COL290/PHIL252 “Nietzsche - Science, Psychology, Genealogy,” though 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
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
Prereq: None

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 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
Prereq: PHIL201 OR PHIL231

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
Gen Ed Area: HA-PHIL
Prereq: None

**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: HA-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
Grading: OPT
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: HA-COL
Identical With: COL269, GRST269
Prereq: None

**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.
PHIL272 Human Rights Across Cultures
Are human rights universal? Do cultural differences matter to judgments about human rights? We will look at the current international human rights institutional framework and at theoretical perspectives from Europe and America, China, and the Islamic world. We will look primarily at philosophical materials but will also pay some attention to the premises of international legal documents like the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and to the assumptions behind activist organizations such as Amnesty International.

Offering: Host
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: SBS-PHIL
Identical With: CEAS262

Prereq: None

PHIL273 Philosophy of Law
This course will consist of four sections. We will start by understanding what law is by looking at a classic debate within the philosophy of law between natural law and legal positivism (whether law and morality are connected). We will then look at adjudication, the different methods that judges use to interpret laws and we will do this by looking at famous, recent supreme court judgments. We will then look at freedom of religion cases and think about whether religious practices should be exempt from general laws that normally applies to everyone. We will end with the largest section of the course: the legal regulation of freedom of speech and then connect it to freedom of speech on the internet.

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

Prereq: None

PHIL274 Self & Social Transformation
Racism, sexism, and classism are deeply ingrained in our habits and feelings. It seems that in order to change objective conditions we need to change ourselves and our communities. But given that our habits and feelings are often unconscious and resistant to change, how do we philosophically go about doing this? This class tries to answer this question. It starts theoretically with ancient Greek and ancient Chinese virtue ethics as well as Foucault’s later work on self-transformation. It then takes these concepts/theories and sees them in action in contemporary movements of self/community transformation. We start with a paradigmatic political activist movement of self-transformation: the Black 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
they have defined themselves, and how they have sought to redefine the basic
dimensions of Africana political thought. Through our readings and discussions,
This course aims to introduce students to both the critical and the constructive
PHIL281 Africana Political Philosophy 1800s-1970
Prereq: None
Gen Ed Area: SBS-PHIL
Credits: 1.00
Grading: A-F
Offering: Host

Second, what is the role of critique for political judgment? We will begin with
philosophy. First, what can theory bring to our understanding of politics?
The subject of this course centers on two questions in 20th century continental
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.

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
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.

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
possibility of a universal religion, "divine" racism, the gender of God, the eccodial
tendencies of Abrahamic theology, and the role theology might or might not play in
efforts toward ecological, sexual, and racial justice.

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.

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

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.

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.

PHIL276 Animal Law and Policy
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.

PHIL275 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
possibility of a universal religion, "divine" racism, the gender of God, the eccodial
tendencies of Abrahamic theology, and the role theology might or might not play in
efforts toward ecological, sexual, and racial justice.

PHIL274 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.

PHIL273 Animal Law and Policy
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.

PHIL272 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.

PHIL271 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.

PHIL266 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
Prereq: None

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, ENV5205
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
Gen Ed Area: HA-PHIL
Identical With: COL292, GRST292
Prereq: None

PHIL292 Theory of Knowledge
This course will examines a subset of the following topics: the analysis of the nature of knowledge, skepticism, responses to skepticism, knowledge and truth, knowledge and virtue.

Offering: Host
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: HA-PHIL
Prereq: [PHIL202 or COL360] OR [PHIL201 or COL359 or CLST217] OR PHIL231

PHIL293 Metaphysics
An advanced introduction to some central topics in traditional and contemporary metaphysics, topics may include time, universals, causation, freedom of will, modality, realism, and idealism.

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

PHIL294 Heidegger and the Being Question
Martin Heidegger argued in BEING AND TIME that philosophy has only one question at its heart, the question of the sense of being, even though that question has been trivialized or obscured by the philosophical tradition. This course will explore this question; its relation to more traditional topics in metaphysics, epistemology; and the philosophy of mind, language, and science; and its implications for how philosophy should be done, to what ends. Our primary readings will be BEING AND TIME and various secondary literature, but the aim will be to formulate, pose, and address the question of what it means to be, rather than to interpret or assess Heidegger's own views about this question.

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

PHIL295 Philosophy of Mathematics and Logic
An introduction to the principal philosophical positions on the nature of mathematics and logic. The theories of mathematics to be examined include logicism, formalism, intuitionism, constructivism, and structuralism. The theories about logic to be discussed include monism vs. pluralism, extensionalism vs. intensionalism, theories of logical constants, and the status of second-order logic. Some of knowledge of deductive logic, such as PHIL 231 or MATH 243, is very helpful, but not required.
Offering: Host
Grading: OPT
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: SBS-PHIL
Prereq: PHIL202 OR PHIL231

PHIL296 Philosophy of Psychology
How does the mind work? So-called "computationalists" think that the mind (and the brain) works as a computer, which first forms and manipulates symbols (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 analogy. 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.
Offering: Host
Grading: OPT
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: SBS-PHIL
Identical With: SISP296
Prereq: None

PHIL297 The Problem of Language in Chinese Philosophy
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.
Offering: Host
Grading: OPT
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: HA-CEAS
Identical With: CEAS298
Prereq: None

PHIL298 Feminist Epistemology
Traditionally, the project of theorizing about knowledge (including concepts such as justification, belief formation, and rationality) assumes that such an enterprise is possible even if one ignores the context and situation of the knower: Philosophers can theorize about, say, belief formation, even if we ignore who is forming the belief--that is, we can ignore their educational, socio-economic background, gender, ethnicity, race, and disability status. Feminist epistemologists question this assumption: They think the context and situation of the knower is relevant for knowledge acquisition and generation. In this course, we will specifically focus on scientific knowledge, since science is typically assumed to be 'pure' and 'isolated' from socio-political and cultural influences. Some questions we will address include the following: Is the notion of scientific objectivity gendered? Is rationality gendered? In what ways can the process of scientific theorizing be more equitable? Do the ideals and standards of science themselves need to change? This course will study the work of Linda Alcoff, Elizabeth Anderson, Sandra Harding, bell hooks, Helen Longino, Maria Lugonés, Alison Wylie, and more.
Offering: Host
Grading: OPT
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: SBS-PHIL
Prereq: None

PHIL301 Du Châtelet's Philosophy of Science
Émilie Du Châtelet was a respected and lauded natural philosopher, mathematician, and physicist during her time. She published an essay on fire in 1739 alongside Voltaire, and published two editions of her work on physics and philosophy, namely the Foundations of Physics, in 1740 and 1742. After Du Châtelet's death in 1749, her former math tutor collected and submitted for publication her translation and commentary of Newton's Principia. It was successfully published and remains the leading translation of Newton's work today in France. Despite her success in the 18th century, Du Châtelet has been a neglected, and she remains an understudied figure in the history and philosophy of science since the 20th century. This course seeks to critically examine Du Châtelet's philosophy of science taking into account the authors with whom she engaged (Newton, Leibniz, and Descartes in particular) as well as the current state of scholarship concerning her work. The main text of study will be her Foundations of Physics, and the main topics of discussion will include the following: principles of knowledge, hypotheses, method, space and time, matter, motion, and gravity. Alongside the Foundations of Physics, we will also read Katherine Brading's Émilie Du Châtelet and the Foundations of Physical Science.
Offering: Host
Grading: OPT
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: SBS-PHIL
Prereq: None

PHIL302 Catching Glimpses: Perceiving Infinitesimals in the Scientific Revolution
The rise of mathematical natural science in the early modern period marked the dissolution of objective reality as it had previously been known. Since Aristotle, perceptible objects had been understood to be enduring substances whose identities were inscribed in their very being and which retained these identities through change. The mechanistic worldview of the 17th and 18th centuries exploded this stable order into a telescoping multiplicity of material systems, from the infinitesimally small to the infinitely large. Rather than encountering a world of enduring and identifiable substances--animals, vegetables, and minerals; people and artifacts--the perceiver was instead confronted with fleeting constellations of homogeneous matter in a perpetual flux, no sooner glimpsed than gone. This metaphysical picture of infinitary flux was complemented by a new branch of mathematics, the infinitesimal calculus, which proved immensely successful both in uncovering new theorems and in modeling empirical phenomena.

Both the metaphysics and the mathematics of the new science were, however, rife with paradox. If material objects not only harbor a microscopic substructure but are, in fact, divisible without end, then we are faced with pluralities of quantities, in others as strictly zero--provoking one critic to call them "ghosts of departed quantities."
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 perceptible objects to signet rings impressing their distinctive forms on the receptive wax of the human sensibility. 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?

Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: OPT
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: HA-CHUM
Identical With: CHUM339, COL351, GRST249, SISP339
Prereq: None

PHIL303 Plato's REPUBLIC
"The safest general characterization of the European philosophical tradition is that it consists of a series of footnotes to Plato." This declaration, famously made by Alfred North Whitehead in the early 20th century, seems especially true of Plato's Republic. No other work in the Western tradition can lay claim to setting the tone so influentially for the development of philosophy as a discipline. Almost every branch of philosophical thought we are familiar with today--on matters of ethics, politics, moral psychology, epistemology, metaphysics, and aesthetics--receives a major formulation in this text. This seminar will be devoted to a close reading of each of the 10 books of The Republic alongside various perspectives that have been taken on this magisterial work in contemporary philosophy, journalism, and literature. We will focus on The Republic primarily as a work of moral psychology by investigating the topical question of the dialogue: Why is it better to live justly rather than unjustly? For Plato, a just life is one governed by the pursuit of wisdom or learning, and this he believes will also be 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 consider the political project Plato embarks upon in the Republic in constructing a just society, as well as connected issues he raises in the dialogue concerning the nature of human motivation, the distinction between belief and knowledge, the distinction between appearance and reality, the importance of a proper education to the human good, and the role of art and beauty in furthering the common good. Alongside Plato, we will read various works of secondary literature, journalistic pieces, and works of fiction this semester, all inspired by The Republic.

Offering: Host
Grading: OPT
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: SBS-PHIL
Identical With: CLST257, COL341
Prereq: None

PHIL306 Sophist, Statesman, Philosopher: Plato's Later Metaphysics and Politics
How is it possible to speak falsely? Plato connects this question with a puzzle he inherits from the great pre-Socratic philosopher Parmenides: to speak falsely is to speak about what is not; but in speaking about what is not, we ascribe being somehow to not-being, which sounds like a contradiction. This seminar will focus on the metaphysical, epistemological, and political issues generated by Parmenides's puzzle and explore Plato's solution to them in two of his later-period works: the Sophist and the Statesman. In the process, we will see how Plato rethinks his theory of forms in these dialogues, how he learns to let go of Socrates, how a sophist should be distinguished from a philosopher, and how all of this is relevant to politics and the art of ruling.

Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: SBS-CHUM
Identical With: CHUM331, COL335
Prereq: None

PHIL321 American Pragmatist Philosophy: Purposes, Meanings, and Truths
This course sketches and evaluates an American tradition of more or less overtly 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 Cornel 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 else 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 true 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.

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

PHIL327 Progressive Confucianism and Its Critics
Contemporary "Confucianism" designates a diverse set of philosophical, social, political, and religious approaches that are rooted in traditional East Asia and are playing significant--and increasing--roles in the modern world. "Progressive Confucianism" designates a subset of these approaches, emphasizing the ways that the Confucian tradition has developed throughout the centuries and arguing both that modern Confucianism must continue to develop, and that a properly developed Confucianism has much to contribute to contemporary philosophy and to modern societies. This seminar will explore the background out of which progressive Confucianism has emerged; its distinctive approach and key contributions to Confucianism and to global philosophy more generally; and central criticisms that it has faced, with sources ranging from more conservative (or even fundamentalist) Confucians to liberals and progressives.

Offering: Host
Grading: OPT
Credits: 1.00

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.

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: ENV5347  
Prereq: None

PHIL350 Radical Self-Care  
This is a higher-level seminar on philosophy as a way of life that will explore how the notion of self-care has been developed and deployed throughout history by several political theorists and activists, including Mohandas Gandhi, MLK Jr., Nelson Mandela, Audre Lorde, Angela Davis, bell hooks, and Sara Ahmed.

When conducted in the present day, reflection on how one should live naturally requires attending to matters of sociopolitical concern, such as healthcare inequities, environmental degradation, wealth disparities, and prison reform. An investigation into the links between personal and social well-being has so far been something of a lacuna in the field of philosophy as a way of life, though in a variety of formulations and across several traditions, practices of self-care and self-formation have typically been seen as continuous with (and even a prerequisite for) a robust engagement with others and the pursuit of social justice causes. We will explore the connection between these two domains in this course. As a project during the semester, students will be asked to engage in a cause that matters to them by implementing selected ideas from the thinkers and activists that we’ll be studying.

Offering: Host  
Grading: A-F  
Credits: 1.00  
Gen Ed Area: SBS-PHIL  
Identical With: AFAM352, FGSS352  
Prereq: None

PHIL353 Black Thought and Critical Theory  
This course follows Stuart Hall’s insistence in "What is this ‘Black’ in Black Popular Culture?" that the theoretical articulations of "blackness" are always "conjunctural." We will investigate how black thought has been conjoint with critical theory through phenomenology, pragmatism, Marxism, semiotics, and psychoanalysis. In our readings of a variety of 20th- and 21st-century thinkers, we will elaborate the philosophical richness and contradictory tensions embedded in the notion of "blackness" at specific historical and theoretical conjunctions. How is "blackness" useful for social theory? Must we assume there is a transhistorical identity to "blackness"? In what ways does "blackness" conjoin with the conceptualizations of gender, sexuality, class, and religion? Black thought and critical theory is the provocation that we attend to the tensions these questions raise. In this course, we will read the works of James H. Cone, Cornel West, Hortense Spillers, Saidiya Hartman, Sylvia Wynter, Denise Ferreira da Silva, Frank Wilderson, Calvin Warren, Tommy J. Curry, Stuart Hall, and Frantz Fanon.

Offering: Host  
Grading: A-F  
Credits: 1.00  
Gen Ed Area: SBS-PHIL  
Identical With: RL&L351  
Prereq: None

PHIL355 Blackness in the Anthropocene  
To deny the "unprecedented" geological impact of humans' force on nature is now practically untenable. Theorists in the humanities, nonetheless, remain unimpressed with what this "new era" has afforded us in terms of critical potential. From accusations that what we now call the "Anthropocene" has merely established a hegemony of brute facts at the expense of critique, to concerns about the multiple ways in which the term continues to obscure
catastrophic socio-ecological relations, it is fair to say that the scenes of the "Anthropocene" are still contested terrains. The aim of this course is to investigate the Anthropocene’s many forms of socio-political erasures and theoretical “blind-sights.” We will examine the ways in which Anthropocenean discourses have been powerful at disavowing racial antagonism in our current ecological crisis. More specifically, in this course, we will study the ecological negative effects on black communities around the globe with the aim to questions the shortcomings of ethics in Anthropocenean times. We will explore questions like "who are 'recognizable/legitimate' victims in environmental disasters," "do events like hurricane Katrina or the migration crisis teach us anything about our human condition," and "what is the 'post' in post-humanism." We will read philosophical works ranging from Immanuel Kant and Baruch Spinoza to Rosi Braidotti and Karen Barad.

Offering: Host
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: SBS-PHI
Identical With: AFAM353
Prereq: None

PHIL354 Ecologies of Attention: Biosemiosis, Attunement, and Ethics
We consider variants on biosemiotic accounts of meaning, following one thread through Emerson to Nietzsche, another from Peirce and James to Bateson (Ecology of Mind, 1972) and Gibson (Ecological Approach to Visual Perception, 1979), and a third through contemporary indigenous thinkers and anthropologists attempting to bridge scientific ecology and animist panpsychism—Kimmerer, Whyte, Kohn, Ingold, Strathern. While most of the texts here focus on the nature of meaning as a living process, they are also in constant dialogue with normative concerns, being both motivated by subversive or non-humanist ecological values and inspiring distinctive insights about how to lead meaningfully connected lives.

Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: OPT
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: HA-CHUM
Identical With: CHUM366, ENV5247
Prereq: None

PHIL356 Afro-Caribbean Philosophy
This seminar focuses on the philosophical production of Afro-Caribbean thinkers since the middle of the twentieth-century. We focus on close readings of Frantz Fanon, Édouard Glissant, and Sylvia Wynter alongside others to consider a Caribbean approach to questions and problems of modernity, relationality, space, race, belonging, the human, creolization, language, anti-colonialism, and liberation. We consider the roots of some of these questions in the work of earlier thinkers such as Aimé Césaire, as well as contemporary influences of their work across and beyond the Caribbean. We will work beyond the linguistic divisions of the Francophone, Hispanophone, or Anglophone Caribbean to consider conversations in common across the archipelago, in a multiplicity of languages.

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

PHIL357 Animal Minds
Can animals reason? Do they form intentions, do they have beliefs, might they act ethically? What do other animals know? How can we know what they might know, and what can exploring the minds of other animals tell us about our own minds? In this course we will attempt to answer these questions by adopting a largely comparative perspective and examining philosophical, scientific, psychological, and popular writing about minds. We will examine evidence for mindedness and reasoning in social species. We will also explore the ethical implications of this research.

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

PHIL358 Decolonial Theory
Decolonial/Post-Colonial theory has always been a creatively different way to approach topics of social justice. This course has four parts. The first quarter will be both about defining what post-colonialism is through foundational texts, but also differentiating its methodology from liberalism and Marxism. We will then apply this knowledge by looking at how decolonization/post-colonialism feminism thinks differently about equality and freedom. In the second half of the course, we will focus on contemporary and cutting-edge readings on how decolonial/post-colonialism can help us think differently about our degraded environment and the looming climate crisis. The third quarter of the course links together Indigenous sovereignty and environmentalism, and we end the course with a look at the new internationalism about climate justice.

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

PHIL363 Philosophy of Perception
Perception involves conscious awareness of something other than ourselves, 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-PHI
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
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
Identical With: SISP366
Prereq: None

PHIL368 The Ethics of Captivity

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
Prereq: None

PHIL381 Topics in Philosophy of Mind

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

PHIL383 Mind, Body, and World

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 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

PHIL420A Student Forum
Student-run group tutorial, sponsored by a faculty member and approved by the chair of a department or program.
Offering: Crosslisting
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