

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.

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Visiting Instructor of Philosophy

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 reproductive and contraceptive technologies, and the ethics raised by reproductive issues.

Offering: **Crosslisting**

Grading: **A-F**

Credits: **1.00**

Gen Ed Area: **NSM-BIOL**

Identical With: **BIOL118, FGSS118, STS118**

Prereq: **None**

PHIL151 Living a Good Life: Chinese Lab (CLAC.50)

This optional "lab" class is intended for students (1) who have taken or are currently taking PHIL 210: Living a Good Life; and (2) who have little or no exposure to classical Chinese. Each weekly session will introduce students to aspects of the classical Chinese language--the written language of pre-20th-century China. Students will be able to read (in Chinese) and discuss (in English) key passages from the Confucian classics on which the Living a Good Life courses is partly based. No previous knowledge of Chinese (classical or modern) is necessary.

Offering: **Host**

Grading: **Cr/U**

Credits: **0.50**

Gen Ed Area: **SBS-PHIL**

Identical With: **CGST224, CHIN151**

Prereq: **None**

PHIL152 Living a Good Life: Greek Lab (CLAC.50)

This half-credit "Greek Lab" uses a slow reading of Plato's Republic to invite students into the world of Ancient Greek. In the first three weeks of the semester, students will be introduced to the Ancient Greek alphabet and explore the meanings of two key Greek philosophical terms -- eudaimonia (often translated as "happiness" or "flourishing") and dikaiosune ("justice" or "righteousness") -- that will set the stage for our study of Plato. In subsequent weeks, we will progress through each of the ten books of the Republic, highlighting a pivotal Greek keyword in each class session and discussing how its nuances inform Plato's argument for the good life as the just life.

No prior experience with Greek (ancient or modern) is required, and all readings and discussion will be geared toward students with little to no background in classical languages. Our goal is twofold: to develop an appreciation for Attic Greek, and to discover how direct exposure to the language enhances our understanding of a core text in the history of philosophy. Through short reading assignments prior to class, followed by group work and guided discussion in class, students will gain a unique perspective on some of philosophy's most enduring questions, while also developing the tools to navigate Ancient Greek terminology with confidence. Please note: this course is part of Wesleyan's Cultures and Languages Across the Curriculum (CLAC) initiative and is not meant to replace a full introductory course in Ancient Greek. Students seeking more in-depth language training should enroll in GRK 101.

Offering: **Host**

Grading: **Cr/U**

Credits: **0.50**

Gen Ed Area: **SBS-PHIL**

Identical With: **CGST225**

Prereq: **None**

PHIL154 What Is Rationality?

What does it mean to be rational? Although this question has traditionally been the province of philosophy, reference to reason and rationality is also pervasive in the modern social and behavioral sciences. Humans are rational creatures--or, if they are not in practice, they should be. This course takes an expansive view of rationality and its history, tracing how the concept has changed over time, and critically examining its significance in the sciences and broader culture today. From the role of reason in human flourishing and civic discourse in the ancient world, to early modern conceptions of logic as "the art of thinking," to Cold War attempts to build machines that might reason more reliably than frail humans,

this exploration of reasoning and rationality explores several interlocking themes: the relationship between reason and other facets of the mind, especially emotion; conceptions of reason as an evaluative vs. a calculating faculty; the role of reason in human judgment; the relationship between rationality and rules; the relationship between choosing rationally and choosing ethically; and the fraught history of attempts to formulate universally valid principles of rationality.

Offering: **Crosslisting**

Grading: **A-F**

Credits: **1.00**

Gen Ed Area: **SBS-HIST**

Identical With: **HIST283, STS283**

Prereq: **None**

PHIL160 Philosophy and the Movies: The Past on Film

This course examines how films represent the past and how they can help us understand crucial questions in the philosophy of history. We begin with three weeks on documentary cinema. How do documentary films achieve "the reality effect"? How has the contemporary documentary's use of reenactment changed our expectations of nonfiction film? Much of the course is devoted to classic narrative films that help us critically engage questions about the depiction of the past. We think about those films in relation to texts in this history of philosophy and contemporary film theory.

Offering: **Crosslisting**

Grading: **OPT**

Credits: **1.00**

Gen Ed Area: **HA-FILM**

Identical With: **FILM360, HIST129**

Prereq: **None**

PHIL185 Let's Talk: Civil Disagreement and Dialogue

This class is designed to help students improve their communication and dialogue skills through character development. We will consider ways to build community and trust in order to productively engage in and facilitate difficult conversations across political and social differences. Rooted in a philosophical framework for the study of values and virtue, we will reflect upon and incorporate the moral and intellectual features of good dialogues into our everyday lives. Our goal is to become the sort of people who can communicate effectively across differences in careful, constructive, open dialogues aimed at truth and justice.

Offering: **Crosslisting**

Grading: **Cr/U**

Credits: **0.50**

Gen Ed Area: **SBS-ALLB**

Identical With: **CSPL184, RELI184, SOC276**

Prereq: **None**

PHIL185F Reasonable Disagreements: Science, Philosophy, Magic, & Society (FYS)

Much of contemporary social and political discourse revolves around science--with many assuming that science is rational, objective, true, and the ultimate source of knowledge. As a result, it would seem unreasonable to believe in things like astrology, magic, alchemy, and other non-scientific ideals, or even to suggest that science might not be as objective, rational, or true as we might think. In this class we will explore different historical and philosophical approaches to distinguishing "legitimate" forms of inquiry and knowledge, considering the ways that our contemporary perspectives on science have been shaped by a long history of philosophy, "natural" philosophy, magic, theology, and "pseudosciences." We will investigate issues and concepts within and about science, including topics such as the nature of theories, the nature of scientific progress, and the relations among science, values, and society.

Offering: **Crosslisting**

Grading: **OPT**

Credits: **1.00**

Gen Ed Area: **SBS-ALLB**

Identical With: **CSPL185F, RELI185F, STS185F**

Prereq: **None**

PHIL195 Mellon Mays Fall Seminar

This course is for participants in the Mellon Mays Undergraduate Fellowship program. It is designed to introduce students to the requirements and 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 antispesulative, 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-ALLB**

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**

PHIL207F Live Like a Philosopher (FYS)

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

What is race? Can philosophy account for it or describe it? This class will serve as an introduction to the field of philosophy of race, and examine the general crises or problems that race and racism raise for philosophical projects and methods. We will explore topics such as the ontology of race, its relationship to other social formations like class and gender, its foundations in violence, and its fugitive possibilities. We will read work from classical philosophers of race--like Charles Mills, Linda Alcoff, and David Haekwon Kim--and from scholars at the margins of philosophy--like Gloria Anzaldua, Adrian Piper, and Fred Moten.

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: **ENVS212**

Prereq: **None**

PHIL213 Introduction to Existentialism

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

Offering: **Host**

Grading: **A-F**

Credits: **1.00**

Gen Ed Area: **SBS-PHIL**

Identical With: **RL&L213**

Prereq: **None**

PHIL213F Introduction to Existentialism (FYS)

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

Offering: **Host**

Grading: **OPT**

Credits: **1.00**

Gen Ed Area: **SBS-PHIL**

Prereq: **None**

PHIL214 Reasoning About Justice

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

Offering: **Host**

Grading: **OPT**

Credits: **1.00**

Gen Ed Area: **HA-PHIL**

Prereq: **None**

PHIL214F Thinking with Animals (FYS)

Non-human animals are all around us but often we don't think about them, and more often than not, we don't consider thinking with them. Some people continue to believe that animals don't think at all. In this course we will explore our relationships with other animals, what we think of living with and around them, what we imagine they think about living with and around us. We will use philosophical, scientific, and literary texts to help us explore our complex relationships with other animals.

Offering: **Host**

Grading: **OPT**

Credits: **1.00**

Gen Ed Area: **SBS-PHIL**

Prereq: **None**

PHIL215 Humans, Animals, and Nature

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

Offering: **Host**

Grading: **A-F**

Credits: **1.00**

Gen Ed Area: **SBS-PHIL**

Identical With: **ENVS215, STS214**

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**

Gen Ed Area: **HA-PHIL**

Prereq: **None**

PHIL218F Personal Identity and Choice (FYS)

This course explores philosophical reflections on the problem of personal identity and its relationship to matters of choice and freedom. How do certain experiences and thoughts and physical materials compose the self? Am I the same person over time even through complete transformations of experience, thought, and material? Can I choose which elements of my existence to count as essential? Some argue the concept of a unified and enduring self partakes of illusion; at the other extreme, some argue for the permanent integrity of individual souls. Regarding choice and freedom, we find a related debate, ranging from those who deny free will altogether to those who define humanity's essence in terms of choice and agency. Might we coherently say that some human selves can have more integrity and others less? What gives a measure of meaningful coherence to a person's life? Similarly, can we distinguish some choices as more free than others? What makes for meaningful choice? Besides serving as an introduction to philosophical reasoning, the course will draw interdisciplinary connections on themes such as social identities, religious experience, political freedom, and legal responsibility.

Offering: **Host**

Grading: **OPT**

Credits: **1.00**

Gen Ed Area: **SBS-PHIL**

Prereq: **None**

PHIL220 Human Nature

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

Offering: **Host**

Grading: **OPT**

Credits: **1.00**

Gen Ed Area: **SBS-PHIL**

Identical With: **STS220**

Prereq: **None**

PHIL221F Philosophy as a Way of Life (FYS)

For many philosophers, East and West, philosophy has been more than an effort to answer fundamental questions. It has been an activity aimed at changing one's orientation to the world and, thus, how one lives one's life. We will explore Chinese, Greco-Roman, and contemporary versions of the idea that philosophy should be seen as a way of life. How does philosophical reasoning interact with lived practice? How do metaphysical views lead to ethical commitments? Despite their differences, Confucians, Christians, Aristotelians, and Stoics all agreed that philosophy should aim at making us better people. Can such an idea still get traction in today's world?

Offering: **Host**

Grading: **Cr/U**

Credits: **1.00**

Gen Ed Area: **SBS-PHIL**

Prereq: **None**

PHIL222 Global Philosophy

Philosophy is not now, nor has it ever been, narrowly confined to one culture, tradition, or civilization. As European and then American power reached around the world in recent centuries, so too have Euro-American philosophical traditions acquired a global audience, but other philosophical traditions did not disappear. These other ways of approaching philosophy have been re-emerging or reconstituting themselves--sometimes drawing on and sometimes contesting assumptions from the Euro-American traditions--in what can loosely be called our post-colonial world. This course asks what "philosophy" means in these different contexts and explores how philosophy was and is done within various traditions. In addition, we probe and assess distinct approaches to making philosophy more global, which at the very least must mean more cognizant of the presence of multiple ways of doing philosophy.

Offering: **Host**

Grading: **OPT**

Credits: **1.00**

Gen Ed Area: **SBS-PHIL**

Identical With: **CEAS252**

Prereq: **None**

PHIL224F Horror Film and Philosophy (FYS)

Why are we fascinated with films like Halloween and The Babadook? This class will use philosophical concepts and skills to explore the horror movie genre. Topics will include the definition of artistic genres, the phenomenology of horror, and the concept of monstrosity. You will be asked to closely examine both philosophical texts--including work by Noel Carroll, Cynthia Freeland, Catharine Malabou, and Eugene Thacker--and horror films themselves--including Night of the Living Dead, Christmas Evil, Titane, and The Love Witch.

Offering: **Host**

Grading: **OPT**

Credits: **1.00**

Gen Ed Area: **SBS-PHIL**

Prereq: **None**

PHIL225 Black Horror Film: A Philosophical Introduction

In this class, we will explore the philosophical implications of the tradition of Black horror cinema. We will explore the ethics of screened Black suffering, the genealogy of the Black monster, the connection between Black horror and Black existentialism, and the political power of cinema. This course will include close readings of films such as Atlantics and Nope, as well as earlier forms of the genre like Blacula and Son of Ingagi. We will contextualize these films with philosophical work by Frantz Fanon, Hortense Spillers, Kara Keeling, and Stanley Cavell, among others.

Offering: **Host**

Grading: **OPT**

Credits: **1.00**

Gen Ed Area: **SBS-PHIL**

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**

PHIL232F Beginning Philosophy (FYS)

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

Offering: **Host**

Grading: **OPT**

Credits: **1.00**

Gen Ed Area: **HA-PHIL**

Prereq: **None**

PHIL233F Bodies and Experiences (FYS)

Philosophers study the world with their minds. But who says that they should only discuss "mental" stuff such as concepts, rationality, or logic? This course is about bodies, and about the experiences that we have in virtue of those bodies. We will explore a variety of contemporary philosophical topics that have bodies and experiences at their center. These include the experience of skilled movement when we dance or play a sport, having a physical disability, or being shamed for our body size. We will discuss the ways we experience race, gender, sex, and sexual orientation. We will learn what makes a question

distinctly philosophical and what methods philosophers follow to answer it. But most importantly, we will learn to be OK with the fact that there might be no true answer at all.

Offering: **Host**

Grading: **OPT**

Credits: **1.00**

Gen Ed Area: **SBS-PHIL**

Prereq: **None**

PHIL234 Riddles of Existence: An Introduction to Metaphysics and Epistemology

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

Offering: **Host**

Grading: **A-F**

Credits: **1.00**

Gen Ed Area: **HA-PHIL**

Prereq: **None**

PHIL250 Thinking By Analogy: The Philosophical Use of a Literary Form

"Juliet is the sun!" So says Romeo, but what does it mean to say someone is the sun? Presumably, Juliet is the sun in being the source of warmth, life, and light in Romeo's world. Yet Juliet is of course not the sun in being an object of astrophysical study, or a giant ball of burning gas. Romeo's claim works, it seems, through a curious interweaving of being and not-being; of sameness and difference.

Analogical thinking serves as a source of illumination in all human cultures, and is a pivotal method of comparative and critical inquiry across a range of diverse fields. It facilitates the exploration of abstract themes in literature, aids in drawing insightful inferences in scientific discovery, navigates the complexities of case precedents in legal reasoning, and supports the crafting of compelling ethical arguments. This course will examine the art of analogy as a tool for philosophical understanding and creative thought, tracing its development in the history of philosophy through to its contemporary applications. Roughly half of the semester will focus on premodern perspectives on analogical thinking and verbal image-making, with an emphasis on the contributions of Plato and Aristotle. The remaining half will focus on later works of philosophy and literature that theorize about or employ analogical methods. Our interest throughout will be in how such thinking helps address issues surrounding the nature of reality, representation, and interpretation.

Offering: **Host**

Grading: **OPT**

Credits: **1.00**

Gen Ed Area: **HA-PHIL**

Identical With: **COL249**

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 Rée, and Nietzsche's unrequited paramour, Lou Andreas-Salomé. We will also look at prominent cases of his cultural reception--notably by the Nazi party (due to the influence of Nietzsche's sister, who was a party member) and simultaneously by opponents of totalitarianism such as Robert Musil, Karl Löwith, and Walter Kaufmann.

This course 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**

Gen Ed Area: **SBS-PHIL**

Prereq: **None**

PHIL257 Human Nature in Chinese Thought

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

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

Offering: **Host**

Grading: **OPT**

Credits: **1.00**

Gen Ed Area: **SBS-PHIL**

Identical With: **CEAS267**

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: **STS281**

Prereq: **None**

PHIL259 Neo-Confucian Philosophy

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

Offering: **Host**

Grading: **OPT**

Credits: **1.00**

Gen Ed Area: **HA-PHIL**

Identical With: **CEAS256, RELI206**

Prereq: **None**

PHIL260 Reading Mencius in Chinese (CLAC.50)

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

Offering: **Host**

Grading: **Cr/U**

Credits: **0.50**

Gen Ed Area: **SBS-CGST**

Identical With: **CGST260**

Prereq: **None**

PHIL261 Philosophical Classics III: Post-Kantian Analytic Philosophy

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

Offering: **Host**

Grading: **OPT**

Credits: **1.00**

Gen Ed Area: **SBS-PHIL**

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**

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 Confucian Ethics

Is human nature fundamentally good or fundamentally bad? How do we live a good life? Is there a universally correct priority in value conflicts? This course focuses on various ethical topics that are explored within the Confucian tradition. The course will combine lecture with discussion of primary and secondary sources, as well as group and individual presentations.

Offering: **Host**

Grading: **OPT**

Credits: **1.00**

Gen Ed Area: **SBS-PHIL**

Identical With: **CEAS270, 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 tenebosity 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.

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

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

Offering: **Host**

Grading: **OPT**

Credits: **1.00**

Gen Ed Area: **SBS-PHIL**

Identical With: **ENV5270**

Prereq: **None**

PHIL271 Data, Privacy, and Ethics

Paying for items at the grocery store has become automated thanks to self-checkout stations. Grabbing a coffee at McDonalds involves plugging an order onto a screen. These and other new technologies positively and negatively impact society. For instance, many of these now automated procedures were once occupations, and research shows that automation is displacing jobs that would normally serve underrepresented communities. What's more is that these machines store your information: what you bought, how many items, and at what time you made the purchases. The internet and various social media websites store even more information that is bought and sold to companies and organizations. Thus, should it be permissible for automation to replace workers? What is and isn't moral use of such information? Who is responsible if a machine does something wrong? Are there scenarios in which an organization should not have access to data? In this class, we will explore these questions and other normative questions on data-driven technologies by way of case studies on particular topics. We will explore the following topics: data ownership, surveillance and privacy, algorithmic bias and its solutions, misinformation,

'the black box problem,' opacity in machine learning, and societal implications of automaton. Authors to be read include Emmanuel Mesthene, Cathy O'Neil, Wendell Wallach, Frances Haugen, Sina Fazelpour, David Boonin, and more. Some relevant movies that touch on these topics include Chappie, Coded Bias, the Minority Report, and the Great Hack.

Offering: **Host**

Grading: **OPT**

Credits: **1.00**

Gen Ed Area: **SBS-PHIL**

Prereq: **None**

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 Aesthetics of the Uncanny

In contrast to beauty, pleasure, and harmony, uncanniness stands as the ugly stepchild of philosophical aesthetics. In this class, we will survey ways of interpreting, explaining, and appreciating the aesthetic experience that more literally translates from German as "the unhomely" or "the not-at-home." As such, and more precisely, this course will explore the aesthetic experience of the unfamiliar or the unnaturally familiar. Our survey will take us through the horror genre, the post/modernist avant-garde, Internet aesthetics, terror-tinged spirituality, and psychedelicism, as well through theorists like Stanley Cavell, Sigmund Freud, and Cynthia Freeland.

Offering: **Host**

Grading: **A-F**

Credits: **1.00**

Gen Ed Area: **SBS-PHIL**

Prereq: **None**

PHIL276 Virtue Ethics: Traditional, Comparative, and Contemporary Approaches

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

Offering: **Host**

Grading: **A-F**

Credits: **1.00**

Gen Ed Area: **SBS-PHIL**

Prereq: **None**

PHIL277 Feminist Philosophy and Moral Theory (FGSS Gateway)

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

Offering: **Host**

Grading: **OPT**

Credits: **1.00**

Gen Ed Area: **HA-PHIL**

Identical With: **FGSS277**

Prereq: **None**

PHIL278 Political Philosophy

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

Offering: **Host**

Grading: **A-F**

Credits: **1.00**

Gen Ed Area: **SBS-PHIL**

Prereq: **None**

PHIL279 Race and Animals

Is there any connection between racism and human exceptionalism? This course will explore questions of if and how the processes of racialization and animalization are linked. Are racialized others always also dehumanized? What is the ontological significance of animalized racial caricatures? How do both processes connect to colonial violence? Readings will draw from a wide variety of disciplines and media, including primary historical sources, philosophical essays, film and documentary, and works in political theory, critical theory, post- and de-colonial theory, and history.

Offering: **Host**

Grading: **A-F**

Credits: **1.00**

Gen Ed Area: **SBS-PHIL**

Prereq: **None**

PHIL280 Theory, Critique, Politics

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

Offering: **Host**

Grading: **A-F**

Credits: **1.00**

Gen Ed Area: **SBS-PHIL**

Prereq: **None**

PHIL281 Africana Political Philosophy 1800s-1970

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

Offering: **Host**

Grading: **OPT**

Credits: **1.00**

Gen Ed Area: **SBS-PHIL**

Prereq: **None**

PHIL282 Reason and Revelation: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Religion

With the dawning of modernity, Europe's colonial and scientific adventures opened a distinction of mutual suspicion between theology and philosophy. Broadly speaking, "philosophy of religion" is the effort to evaluate the claims of revelation and reason in terms of one another. We will examine some of the major texts within this field, whose authors include deep skeptics, committed Christians, committed anti-Christians, secular and nonsecular Jews, feminists, ethicists, idealists, empiricists, Romantics, and liberationists. Themes include proofs of God's existence--along with refutations of those proofs and rebuttals to those refutations--the problem of evil, religious ethics, religious experience, the possibility of a universal religion, "divine" racism, the gender of God, the ecodical tendencies of Abrahamic theology, and the role theology might or might not play in efforts toward ecological, sexual, and racial justice.

Offering: **Crosslisting**

Grading: **A-F**

Credits: **1.00**

Gen Ed Area: **HA-RELI**

Identical With: **RELI292**

Prereq: **None**

PHIL283 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.

Offering: **Crosslisting**

Grading: **A-F**

Credits: **1.00**

Gen Ed Area: **SBS-SISP**

Identical With: **STS293, ENV5284**

Prereq: **None**

PHIL285 Aesthetics and Race

This course explores what philosophers have termed the "race-aesthetics nexus": the entanglements of race and aesthetic experience in our discourse, politics, and experience. Specifically, we will consider both how aesthetic phenomena like artworks and landscapes can be racialized, and the ways in which race is an aesthetic phenomenon. Texts include Paul Taylor's *Black is Beautiful*, Monique Roelof's *The Cultural Promise of the Aesthetic*, and Angela Davis' *Blues Legacies and Black Feminism*.

Offering: **Host**

Grading: **A-F**

Credits: **1.00**

Gen Ed Area: **SBS-PHIL**

Prereq: **None**

PHIL286 Philosophy of Mind

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

Offering: **Host**

Grading: **OPT**

Credits: **1.00**

Gen Ed Area: **SBS-PHIL**

Identical With: **STS286**

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: **STS202**

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 examine 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: **STS296**

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 infinity 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 pluralities without any underlying unities--parts of parts of parts...and not a whole among them. Conceptual instability afflicted the infinitesimals used in calculus, as well. In some contexts they were treated as very small but non-zero 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 sensorium. But if there are no enduring substances or determinate forms, how are we to understand our perceptual relation to the world? How must perceptual experience be reconceived so as to accommodate the fleetingness and flux of material phenomena? And how is it that, though we are awash in ephemera, we nevertheless enjoy an (illusory?) impression of endurance and stability?

Offering: **Crosslisting**

Grading: **OPT**

Credits: **1.00**

Gen Ed Area: **HA-CHUM**

Identical With: **CHUM339, COL351, GRST249, STS339**

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**

PHIL304 Infinity and the Mathematization of Nature: Early Modern Perspectives

The "mathematization of nature" is a hallmark of the so-called "scientific revolution" in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Europe. By privileging quantitative methods for measuring and explaining natural phenomena, thinkers broke with the largely "qualitative" forms of explanation typical of the Aristotelian tradition. Especially with the development of new mathematical methods--notably, advances in algebra, analytical geometry, and the development of infinitesimal calculus--the scope and explanatory power of natural philosophy was considerably extended. At the same time, however, new puzzles arose about how the pristine models of abstract mathematics could apply to the messy reality of concrete nature. This question was especially pressing in connection with new mathematics' exploitation the notion of infinity: infinite series, infinite extensions, infinitesimally small quantities, and even infinities greater than other infinities. Should we take the successful application of such infinity mathematics to natural phenomena to imply that nature itself harbors an infinity of infinities? And how must we reconceive the cognitive powers of the human mind to make room for the fact that infinity has ceased to signify the unknowable as such and has instead become a primary tool for producing scientific knowledge?

In this seminar, we will examine some of the most prominent Early Modern applications of infinity mathematics in the study of natural phenomena as well as central debates about what sense, if any, can be made of these procedures and their apparent success.

Offering: **Crosslisting**

Grading: **OPT**

Credits: **1.00**

Gen Ed Area: **HA-COL**

Identical With: **COL300, STS304**

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: **Host**

Grading: **A-F**

Credits: **1.00**

Gen Ed Area: **SBS-CHUM**

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 Cornell West, Robert Brandom, Richard Rorty, Ian Hacking, and Ruth Millikan. These thinkers offer variations on the premise that all meanings gesture not only backward to facts and things but also forward to the practical circumstances and purposes of interpreters. As purposes shift, so do meanings, and as meanings shift, so does truth—for whether we accept a claim as true depends above all 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**

Prereq: **None**

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**

Gen Ed Area: **SBS-PHIL**

Identical With: **CEAS327**

Prereq: **None**

PHIL340 Human Nature

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

Offering: **Host**

Grading: **A-F**

Credits: **1.00**

Gen Ed Area: **SBS-PHIL**

Identical With: **STS340**

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**

PHIL344 Horror in Black Philosophy

This class will trace notions of horror through the history of Black philosophy, through close readings of works such as W.E.B. DuBois's *Souls of Black Folk*, Sylvia Wynter's "Unsettling the Coloniality of Being/Power/Truth/Freedom," Calvin Warren's *Ontological Terror*, and Denise Ferreira da Silva's *Towards a Global Idea of Race*. We will then examine Black horror films in the context of this philosophical lineage. We will pay special attention to the use of concepts of ineffability, inarticulability, and unintelligibility in the articulation of Blackness and anti-Black violence, and connect these concepts to the aesthetics and phenomenology of horror.

Offering: **Host**

Grading: **OPT**

Credits: **1.00**

Gen Ed Area: **SBS-PHIL**

Prereq: **None**

PHIL345 The Problem of the Negro as a Problem for Thought

Philosophical inquiries into the "the Negro problem" -- the question of what blackness is and how we socially reckon with its existence -- has historically flourished outside of the academic mainstream, weaving through a myriad of forms -- art, criticism, sociology, autobiography, oral traditions, etc. -- that are typically not counted as philosophy. This class will challenge our assumptions about where good and rigorous philosophy happens by attempting to track the metaphilosophical challenges that the study of blackness produces. We will read a survey of black studies texts from writers including Nahum Chandler, Marquis Bey, Christina Sharpe, and Fred Moten.

Offering: **Host**

Grading: **A-F**

Credits: **1.00**

Gen Ed Area: **SBS-PHIL**

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.

Given an account of thinking and action as always actively embodied and embedded in our surroundings, we will consider the hypothesis that shifts in action emerge together with shifts in perception. Radical accounts of metaphor and its uptake will help us develop accounts of perceptual change. Our readings will follow a variety of metaphorical directions, including animism and animacies, affordance and hyperobject, process, event and intra-action, native and other, inflammation and balance, dwelling and death, consumption and sustainability. How -- and with what risks and unexpected outcomes -- can these patterns of recognition help in orienting us to the challenges of environmental interdependence and volatility?

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

Offering: **Host**

Grading: **OPT**

Credits: **1.00**

Gen Ed Area: **SBS-PHIL**

Identical With: **ENVS347**

Prereq: **None**

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: **OPT**

Credits: **1.00**

Gen Ed Area: **SBS-PHIL**

Identical With: **COL303**

Prereq: **None**

PHIL351 Deconstruction and Politics

Following the later work of Jacques Derrida, we will investigate the significance of the concepts of sovereignty and democracy in some important texts of 20th-century continental philosophy. We shall attempt to understand why these notions are taken at face value and yet still pose many problems for that

tradition. Why did democracy and sovereignty give rise to many complications and paradoxes while, at the same time, they continue to hold a vital conceptual import within the political as such. We will thus ask why are political philosophies so invested in sovereignty and democracy? Ultimately, we will consider the possibility of a close affinity between the political and the rhetorical, and will try to understand why democracy and sovereignty tend to exceed conceptual grasp. Because our approach will be primarily deconstructive, we shall also attempt to compare it to other modern and contemporary approaches.

Offering: **Host**

Grading: **A-F**

Credits: **1.00**

Gen Ed Area: **SBS-PHIL**

Identical With: **RL&L351**

Prereq: **None**

PHIL352 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 conjoined 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 junctures. 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: **AFAM352, FGSS352**

Prereq: **None**

PHIL353 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 Anthropocene discourses have been powerful at disavowing racial antagonism in our current ecological crisis. More specifically, in this course, will study the ecological negative effects on black communities around the globe with the aim to questions the shortcomings of ethics in Anthropocene 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-PHIL**

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, ENVS247**

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-PHIL**

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-PHIL**

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-PHIL**

Prereq: **None**

PHIL359 Philosophy of Wang Yangming

This seminar offers a broad engagement with Wang Yangming (1472-1529), one of the most innovative and influential of all Chinese philosophers. We will read all of his writings that are available in English translation (his major work, the *Record for Practice* (Chuan Xi Lu); many of his letters; and a few poems) as well as the best recent scholarship on Wang, with the goal of both understanding and critically assessing his ideas, as well as opportunities to put Wang's ideas into constructive dialogue with contemporary philosophy. The seminar will also pay attention to the ways in which Wang's ideas have been understood and appropriated by thinkers, activists, and political leaders down to the present day.

Offering: **Host**

Grading: **A-F**

Credits: **1.00**

Gen Ed Area: **SBS-PHIL**

Identical With: **CEAS359**

Prereq: **None**

PHIL362 Origins of the Human Mind

Since classical antiquity, philosophers have often characterized human beings by way of contrasts between ourselves and nonhuman animals, particularly in terms of mental abilities humans possess and nonhuman animals (putatively) lack, such as reasoning and language. Only recently, however, have the sciences--particularly evolutionary biology, cognitive psychology, anthropology, and cognitive ethology--begun to offer the tools needed to characterize differences in the cognitive tool kits of different species and to attempt to piece together hypotheses about how human minds differ so greatly from those of our nearest relatives, the great apes, in spite of our genetic similarity and the comparatively brief period since the time of our last common ancestors. In this course, we will read several recent works by philosophers and scientists presenting theories of the evolution of distinctively human cognition.

Offering: **Host**

Grading: **A-F**

Credits: **1.00**

Gen Ed Area: **SBS-PHIL**

Prereq: **None**

PHIL363 Philosophy of Perception

Roughly, perception is the cognitive activity embodied creatures engage in in order to find out things about their environment. In the most basic sense, 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-PHIL**

Prereq: **None**

PHIL366 Bodies, Machines, and Meaning: Cultural Studies of the Sciences

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

Offering: **Crosslisting**

Grading: **OPT**

Credits: **1.00**

Gen Ed Area: **SBS-PHIL**

Identical With: **SISP366**

Prereq: **None**

PHIL368 The Ethics of Captivity

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

Offering: **Host**

Grading: **OPT**

Credits: **1.00**

Gen Ed Area: **SBS-PHIL**

Prereq: **None**

PHIL381 Topics in Philosophy of Mind

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

Offering: **Host**

Grading: **A-F**

Credits: **1.00**

Gen Ed Area: **HA-PHIL**

Prereq: **None**

PHIL383 Mind, Body, and World

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

Offering: **Host**

Grading: **OPT**

Credits: **1.00**

Gen Ed Area: **HA-PHIL**

Identical With: **STS383**

Prereq: **None**

PHIL385 Understanding Life and Mind

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

Offering: **Host**

Grading: **OPT**

Credits: **1.00**

Gen Ed Area: **HA-SISP**

Identical With: **STS385**

Prereq: **None**

PHIL389 A Book of Nonsense: Wittgenstein's Tractatus

Wittgenstein's Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus is one of the most enigmatic and yet influential texts of 20th-century European philosophy. In this seminar we will explore its major themes in depth. In the Tractatus, Wittgenstein advances a conception of the nature of all representation. This conception invokes, on the one hand, the making of pictures, and, on the other, the uses of language. Central to the conception is the idea that representation and represented necessarily share a common form. So if language represents reality, then reality has the form of language. Wittgenstein thus declares, "The limits of my language signify the limits of my world." The pre-eminent place of language in the Tractatus is one of its most impactful legacies, contributing to the "linguistic turn" that can be observed in analytic philosophy around the turn of the twentieth century. Via this linguistic turn, Wittgenstein transforms the Kantian idea of the bounds of sense into a doctrine of meaningful linguistic use: distinguishing significant linguistic representations from signs that merely seem to make sense -- i.e., nonsense masquerading as sense. The Tractatus rejects "traditional" metaphysical philosophy as at bottom nonsense which says nothing true or false. But Wittgenstein also advances a distinction between what can be said by means of language, and what shows itself in our uses of language. And it turns out that what can be shown cannot be said. The twin ideas of nonsense and of showing lead to the deepest mysteries of the Tractatus: some seemingly "metaphysical" positions, such as solipsism and mysticism, in spite of being nonsense, nevertheless show what are, in some sense, truths. Most paradoxically, the words of the Tractatus themselves turn out to be nonsense and say nothing. Our final aim is an elucidation of what and how one is to learn from such a book of nonsense.

Offering: **Host**

Grading: **OPT**

Credits: **1.00**

Gen Ed Area: **SBS-PHIL**

Identical With: **COL386**

Prereq: **None**

PHIL390 Topics in Metaphysics

Philosophy, especially in the European tradition, has perennially been interested in necessary features of reality, and in the nature of necessity itself. It has also been inveterately invested in rationality, and in discovering its nature. Is there

such a thing as necessity that stems from rationality? One answer that has had much staying power is that logic and its laws frame the most fundamental type of necessity: it is impossible, for example, that there both is and isn't anything that travels faster than the speed of light in vacuum, for any such supposed situation violates the logical law of non-contradiction, and so is in a sense not really intelligible. (Except possibly in Australia.) This seminar is an examination of this answer through discussion of views of two seminal figures in modern European philosophy: Immanuel Kant and Gottlob Frege. We will focus on a recently prominent style of reading Kant as inheriting and transforming Aristotle's hylomorphism, and on the ways in which some proponents of this style of interpretation see Frege's conception of logic as closer to that of G. W. Leibniz. We will assess the extent to which such interpretations may be sustained by the actual writings of the philosophers just mentioned, as well as how well they hold up philosophically.

Offering: **Host**

Grading: **A-F**

Credits: **1.00**

Gen Ed Area: **HA-PHIL**

Prereq: **PHIL293**

PHIL391 Topics in Philosophy of Logic and Mathematics

Is logic distinct from mathematics? This is the overarching question of this seminar. Specifically, we will discuss two contrasting types of answers to this question. One, which can be traced to Leibniz, holds that the answer is no, that the truths of mathematics, in part or altogether, are logical truths. The other, which can be traced to Kant, answers yes, because knowledge of mathematics requires some non-logical form(s) of intuition, perhaps of space and time. We will look closely at versions of the Leibnizian answer advanced by two originators of analytic philosophy: Gottlob Frege and Bertrand Russell. Both, but Frege in particular, have deep philosophical reasons for their positive answer, which is nowadays known as logicism. We will discuss some of those philosophical reasons. More importantly, both insist that their answers would not be truly compelling unless they identified precisely the fundamental truths of logic, and gave rigorous proofs of axioms of mathematical theories from the truths of logic. Part of our work is to understand Frege's proofs of the Dedekind-Peano axioms of arithmetic from his formulation of logic. We will discuss how Russell, through the Paradox that bears his name, demonstrates the inconsistency of Frege's logic. We will then investigate two programs of salvaging logicism. One, called neologicism, attempts to show how arithmetic is derivable from a consistent variant of Frege's logic. The other, due to Russell, is to circumvent his Paradox by a conception of logic as governing a hierarchy of types of entities, and then deriving arithmetic from this type-theoretic logic. We will next turn to a version of the Kantian answer advanced by David Hilbert. This answer, called (Hilbertian) formalism, holds that genuinely contentful mathematics rests on something like our intuitive knowledge of the possibilities of operations with signs, but that all of classical infinitary mathematics may be justified as a conservative extension of this content. If time permits, we will examine Kurt Gödel's theorems of the incompleteness of arithmetic and the trouble they raise for Hilbert's formalism.

Offering: **Host**

Grading: **OPT**

Credits: **1.00**

Gen Ed Area: **SBS-PHIL**

Prereq: **PHIL290 OR MATH243**

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**