

# Philosophy Courses Fall 2008

---

All philosophy courses except 215 and 216 satisfy the Humanities requirement. Two logic courses, 215 and 216, can be used to satisfy the Math/Logic requirement. Many philosophy courses (e.g., Business Ethics, Philosophy of Law) complement other major programs. For those with a sustained interest in philosophy there are both a *major* and a *minor* in philosophy.

**REQUIREMENTS FOR THE MAJOR IN PHILOSOPHY:** 30 semester hours in philosophy which must include 215 or 216; 220; 230; and 450. Of the remaining 18 hours of electives in philosophy, at least 12 hours must be taken in courses at or above the 200 level, with at least six of these at or above the 300 level.

**REQUIREMENTS FOR THE MINOR IN PHILOSOPHY:** 18 semester hours in philosophy which must include 101 or 102; 215 or 216; and 220, 230, 235, 305, 306, 307, or 310. Two of the remaining courses must be at or above the 200 level.

## Philosophy Course Offerings

PHIL 101.001	Introduction to Philosophy	Schonbein	MWF	9:00 - 9:50	MYBK 206
PHIL 101.002	Introduction to Philosophy	Schonbein	MWF	10:00-10:50	MYBK 206
PHIL 101.003	Introduction to Philosophy	Boyle	MWF	11:00-11:50	ECTR 111
PHIL 101.004	Introduction to Philosophy	Boyle	MWF	12:00-12:50	ECTR 111
PHIL 101.005	Introduction to Philosophy	Hough	TR	9:25 - 10:40	ECTR 111
PHIL 101.006	Introduction to Philosophy	Hough	TR	10:50-12:05	ECTR 111
PHIL 101.007	Introduction to Philosophy	Krasnoff	TR	12:15 - 1:30	MYBK 206
PHIL 115.001	Critical Thinking	Wilder	MWF	1:00 - 1:50	ECTR 118
PHIL 150.001	Nature, Technology, & Society	Grantham	TR	10:50-12:05	MYBK 206
PHIL 155.001	Environmental Ethics	Hettinger	TR	12:15 - 1:30	ECTR 111
PHIL 155.002	Environmental Ethics	Hettinger	TR	1:40 - 2:55	ECTR 111
PHIL 203.001	Philosophy of Human Nature	Williams	MWF	12:00-12:50	MYBK 206
PHIL 215.001	Symbolic Logic I	Nunan	MWF	9:00 - 9:50	ECTR 111
PHIL 215.002	Symbolic Logic I	Nunan	MWF	10:00-10:50	ECTR 111
PHIL 216.001	Symbolic Logic II	Schonbein	MWF	1:00 - 1:50	ECTR 111
PHIL 220.001	History of Ancient Philosophy	Lesses	MWF	11:00-11:50	MYBK 206
PHIL 255.001	Philosophy of Religion	Hettinger	TR	9:25 - 10:40	MYBK 206
PHIL 285.001	Philosophical Issues in Literature	Hough	TR	1:40 - 2:55	MYBK 206
PHIL 298.001	Special Topic: Eastern Philosophy	Coseru	MW	2:00 - 3:15	ECTR 111
PHIL 305.001	Topic History Phil: Women in Modern Phil	Boyle	TR	12:15 - 1:30	TBD
PHIL 325.001	Theory of Knowledge	Grantham	MW	3:20 - 4:35	ECTR 111

### **PHIL 101: Introduction to Philosophy**

Prof. Schonbein

Section 001 MWF 9:00 – 9:50

Section 002 MWF 10:00 – 10:50

NO PREREQUISITE

For thousands of years philosophers have contemplated issues involving the ultimate nature of the universe, the possibility of certain knowledge, and the source of morality. In this course we will consider some of these issues and how they interact. For example, are human beings genuinely free, or are our actions determined only by the laws of physics? If we are not free, can a person truly be morally responsible for his or her actions? Similarly, we will look at arguments surrounding the existence of a Judeo-Christian God, and consider what implications they have for the nature of morality: What alternative ethical systems, not grounded in religion, are available? What are their strengths and weaknesses? In addition to these questions, additional topics may include: skepticism about the existence of the world, the identity of persons through time, and/or the pros and cons of various political systems.

### **PHIL 101: Introduction to Philosophy**

Prof. Boyle

Section 003 MWF 11:00 – 11:50

Section 004 MWF 12:00 – 12:50

NO PREREQUISITE

We will examine several traditional, fundamental philosophical questions that still have contemporary significance. Is knowledge possible? What are the sources of knowledge -- does all knowledge come to us ultimately through the senses, or is there anything that we know innately? What is it to be a person? Do we have free will, or are all of our actions determined by causal laws? What about God – is it possible to prove that God exists? If God does exist, how can we explain the existence of evil in the world? What kinds of actions are morally right, which are morally wrong, and how can we justify our claims to know this?

### **PHIL 101: Introduction to Philosophy**

Prof. Hough

Section 005 TR 9:25 – 10:40

Section 006 TR 10:50 – 12:05

NO PREREQUISITE

What is a human being? The model of the self at work in an ethical theory is crucial: our beliefs about the human constitution necessarily shape our sense of what is good for us (indeed, the realization, actualization or fulfillment of our 'nature' is usually the aim of an ethical account). Do human creatures have immortal souls, or souls of a very different sort? Are we essentially rational? Political? Products of our culture, or beings already equipped with knowledge in our souls? Do our lives 'mean' anything? Is human life part of a grand cosmic scheme, or is it a meaningless series of actions and accidents? Is the cosmos moral and just? Can a life that ends in calamity be redeemed? What is redemption?

In order to answer these questions, we will read from a number of influential accounts of human nature, both ancient and modern. These philosophical models of the self will guide our exploration of what it means to be human, and about what the best kind of life for a human truly is.

### **PHIL 101: Introduction to Philosophy**

Prof. Krasnoff

Section 007 TR 12:15 – 1:30

NO PREREQUISITE

An introduction to philosophy through close reading of classic texts from the history of philosophy, supplemented with relevant works of literature. Our focus will be on the following question: what, if anything, can justify our claims about the nature of the world, and about how we should live our lives?

## **PHIL 115: Critical Thinking**

Prof. Wilder

MWF 1:00 – 1:50

NO PREREQUISITE

If our thinking guides our action (as it surely should), then to do well we must think well. This means we must think critically about our own beliefs, about the sources and quality of information available to us, and about the countless attempts that confront us every day to persuade us to change our beliefs, to buy new things, and to follow new leaders. This course provides tools for effective critical thinking, insights into where and why critical thinking is important, and help in overcoming obstacles to critical thinking. This is a practical, skills-oriented course. Requirements include homework, quizzes, exams and two papers.

## **PHIL 150: Nature, Technology, and Society**

Prof. Grantham

TR 10:50 – 12:05

NO PREREQUISITE

This course examines the nature of technology and how technological developments affect society. We will explore several questions: What is technology? How are technology and science related? To what extent can we (as individuals and as a society) control the development and/or implementation of new technologies? Are technological changes inherently "progressive"? How have technological developments affected the environment and our view of nature? We will study one or two topics (such as genetic engineering or the prospects of biofuels) in greater detail.

## **PHIL 155 (2 sections): Environmental Ethics**

Prof. Hettinger

Section 001 TR 12:15 – 1:30

Section 002 TR 1:40 – 2:55

NO PREREQUISITE

We humans are massively transforming the earth and not all for the good. If present trends continue, there will be 50% more people, consuming twice as much on a warmer, more polluted planet with diminished fertility, fewer resources, less biological and cultural diversity, and more weeds, pests, trash, and inequality.

Environmental ethics examines the moral issues involved in this human impact on earth and its inhabitants. Are we eroding the quality of our lives or perhaps even threatening our existence? Is this influence on the planet an appropriate role for humanity? Does it treat others fairly (including future generations and other species)? What are our obligations to animals, plants, and wild nature, if any? Some argue that these concerns overlook nature's resilience, ignore humans' positive contributions to the planet, and fail to acknowledge the importance of property rights and our unparalleled standard of living. Are they right?

This course will introduce you to environmental issues from a philosophical perspective. Its goal is to get you to think seriously and carefully about the moral dimensions of these issues and to help you develop your own views about the proper relationship between human civilization and the natural world.

**Course requirements:** midterm, final, term paper, reading quizzes, class participation (including an oral presentation to the class), and attendance.

## **PHIL 203: Philosophy of Human Nature**

Prof. Williams

MWF 12:00 – 12:50

NO PREREQUISITE

This course offers a comparative study of the problems of human nature and moral agency. We will explore the ways in which metaphysical presuppositions about human nature come to bear on the normative structure of ethical thought in Euro-American moral frameworks. We will explore contemporary research directly relating to questions such as: *What is the nature of human existence? To what extent are persons autonomous?* These and similar questions will be broached as you will be invited to exercise your thoughts about human nature and moral responsibility, especially as these issues relate to ideas about community and the common good.

## **PHIL 215 (2 sections): Symbolic Logic**

Prof. Nunan

Section 001: MWF 9:00 – 9:50

Section 002: MWF 10:00 – 10:50

NO PREREQUISITE

*NOTE: This course does not count toward the humanities minimum degree requirement. It does count toward the minimum degree requirement in mathematics or logic.*

Symbolic logic is concerned with isolating the logical form of an argument by translating it from English into symbolic notation. It is also concerned with developing methods for determining the validity or invalidity of *deductive* arguments (such as truth tables and formal proofs). Good deductive arguments are those for which the conclusion can be *deduced* to follow, of necessity, from the assumptions of the argument.

In PHIL 215, the smallest unit of analysis used in symbolic translations is the simple sentence, which can then be joined to other simple sentences to create compound sentences by means of logical connectives such as the expressions 'and', 'or', 'if/then', 'not', etc. This form of analysis contrasts with that used in the second logic course, PHIL 216, which includes additional symbolic language necessary to analyze simple sentences into subjects and predicates (including new "connective" expressions such as 'all', 'some', and 'none'). The second course also covers additional proof procedures using this new symbolic language.

In using symbolic notation rather than English, both of these courses are rather like math courses, but using no numbers or calculations. Like math courses however, an understanding of formal deductive logic can give you some appreciation of the power and elegance of formal systems. Learning logic can also enhance your skills in abstract reasoning, which is helpful in many other courses, from economics to English literature, and on standardized graduate school application tests such as the GRE or the LSAT. It's also quite helpful for evaluating abstract arguments we run across in everyday life.

## **PHIL 216: Symbolic Logic II**

Prof. Schonbein

MWF 1:00 – 1:50

PREREQUISITE: PHIL 215 or permission of the instructor

*NOTE: This course does not count toward the humanities minimum degree requirement. It does count toward the minimum degree requirement in mathematics or logic.*

Logic has its historical roots in the analysis of arguments and in attempts to avoid faulty reasoning. However, humans argue and reason in a myriad of ways. Consequently, different types of logic must be used to deal with different types of reasoning. In this course we expand on the basic methods of formal logic to develop a logical system that can handle more complicated aspects of argumentation. We will then explore how this new system of logic – 'predicate logic' – relates to other topics, such as mathematical induction, simple axiomatic systems, and/or metatheoretical logic.

## **PHIL 220: History of Ancient Philosophy**

Prof. Lesses

MWF 11:00 – 11:50

PREREQUISITE: 3 semester hours in philosophy or permission of the instructor.

All of Western thought owes an incalculable debt to ancient Greek philosophy. What fascinated Greek philosophical thinkers accordingly constitutes a major part of the Western intellectual inheritance. This course examines the development of the philosophical views of (i) several early Greek thinkers, (ii) Socrates, (iii) Plato, and (iv) Aristotle. As much as possible, these philosophers will be read in the original sources in translation.

## **PHIL 255: Philosophy of Religion**

Prof. Hettinger

TR 9:25 – 10:40

NO PREREQUISITE

*Note: this course may not be taken for credit if credit has been received for RELS 255*

This course evaluates religious phenomena from a philosophical perspective. We consider the question--Does God exist?--by examining the traditional philosophical arguments for God's existence. Must God exist because anything exists? Is God the best account for the marvelous complexity and design apparent in our world? Does religious experience provide sufficient evidence for belief in God? Does the greatest possible being exist of necessity? Is the utility of belief in God a good reason for such belief? We also ask--What do we mean by "God"?--and consider alternative conceptions of the object of religious attitudes, including identification of the ultimate with the earth or nature. Other questions the course addresses include: Is religious belief rational? What is faith and does it provide reason for belief in God? Does the existence of evil show that a certain type of god can't exist? Are atheism and/or humanism rational alternatives to religious belief? Is there only one true religion? What can we learn from a philosophical evaluation of religion about death and the meaning of life? What are appropriate implications of our society's commitment to the separation of church and state? Should creationism be taught in schools alongside biological evolution?

**Course requirements:** Midterm, final, term paper, reading quizzes, class participation (including oral presentations) and attendance.

## **PHIL 285: Philosophical Issues in Literature**

Prof. Hough

TR 1:40 – 2:55

NO PREREQUISITE

In his essay "The Philosophy of Composition" Edgar Allan Poe remarks, "the death...of a beautiful woman is, unquestionably, the most poetical topic in the world" because death "is most poetical when...it most closely allies itself to Beauty." We will consider the implications of Poe's aesthetic claim by thinking about a deeper issue: what genre best allows humans to reflect on the fragility of life and their own transience? How do literary accounts of our impermanence differ from philosophical ones? In what way does literature enhance (or diminish) the arguments provided by the philosophers? How can these genres be fruitfully, or therapeutically, read in tandem?

We will consider these questions by reading a number of philosophical texts (Plato, Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, Husserl, Heidegger) and a variety of literary works (Sophocles, Dostoyevsky, Woolf, Poe, Barth).

## **PHIL 298: Special Topics: Eastern Philosophy**

Prof. Coseru

MW 2:00 – 3:15

NO PREREQUISITE

This course offers an introduction to some of the most important Buddhist and Brahmanical thinkers in Classical India. We will begin with an inquiry into the methods and scope of Indian philosophy with a focus on rationality, debate, and the sources of knowledge, as first outlined by Gautama; second, Nāgārjuna will acquaint us with the intricacies of Buddhist dialectics; in Vasubandhu, we will discover a unique type of Buddhist phenomenology; Vātsyāyana and Udyotakara will introduce us to a complex metaphysics backed by an elaborate method of analytical inquiry; for a thorough rational defense of key Buddhist doctrines (and a lively Buddhist-Nyāya debate) we will turn to Dignāga and Dharmakīrti; then, Śāntarakṣita and Kamalaśīla will guide us through the subtleties of Buddhist thought as found in the School of the Middle Way (Madhyamaka) and the School of Yoga Practice (Yogācāra); finally, in Vācaspati we will recognize one of the most unbiased and erudite thinkers in Classical India. We will conclude with readings from Confucius, Laozi, and Zhuangzi, highlighting the differences between Classical Indian and Chinese thought. This course aims to provide students with more than a superficial exposure to the philosophical sophistication of Eastern thinkers and make them sensitive to common assumptions and misconceptions about the nature and scope of Eastern Philosophy.

## **PHIL 325: Theory of Knowledge**

Prof. Grantham

MW 3:20 – 4:35

PREREQUISITE: Six (6) hours in Philosophy (excluding PHIL 215 and PHIL 216) or permission of the instructor

This course surveys the main problems and positions in epistemology (theory of knowledge), focusing particularly on 20<sup>th</sup> century developments. Topics will include: The nature of knowledge (e.g., What is knowledge? What is the difference between knowledge and wisdom?), skepticism (e.g., do we have any reliable or certain knowledge? Is induction a reliable or justifiable way to gain knowledge?), justification (does knowledge have a firm and enduring "foundation," or is justification always contextual?) and perception (Is perception reliable? Is perception influenced by theory or theory-neutral?).

## **PHIL 305: Topics in the History of Philosophy: Women in Modern Philosophy**

Prof. Boyle

TR 12:15 – 1:30

PREREQUISITE: Course prerequisite is 6 hours in philosophy (excluding PHIL 215 and PHIL 216), but others may enroll with the permission of the instructor. *Women's and Gender Studies minors are especially encouraged.*

Standard courses in the History of Modern Philosophy tend to focus on works by the great male philosophers of the period (Descartes, Spinoza, Leibniz, Locke, Berkeley, Hume, Kant). But in the 17th and 18th centuries, a number of women began to write philosophical works. Often their writings were responses to the views of the more famous male philosophers, but in several cases, women philosophers developed their own philosophical systems.

We will begin by reading Descartes' Discourse on Method, which has recently been criticized by some feminists for its dualism and emphasis on the use of pure reason, which, it is said, devalues women. However, women philosophers of the 17th and 18th centuries actually saw Descartes' conception of reason as liberating for women; we will read writings by Mary Astell and Damaris Masham, to examine the extent to which they embraced a Cartesian view of reason and used it to argue for better education for women.

Then we will turn to metaphysics. One of Descartes' sharpest contemporary critics was Princess Elisabeth of Bohemia, who pointed out problems with his account of how mind and body interact. The philosophers Anne Conway and Margaret Cavendish developed their own fascinating metaphysical systems, which we will study in some depth. We will also look at two responses by women philosophers (Catharine Trotter Cockburn and Mary Astell) to the views of John Locke.