

Spring 2014 Undergraduate Philosophy Department Courses

PHIL-UA 1; Central Problems in Philosophy; M/W 2-3:15; Carla Merino-Rajme

In this course, students will be introduced to the methods of contemporary philosophy. We will focus on questions such as: Can we be certain that there is an external world? What can we rationally conclude about the future state of the world based on our past experiences? Can we change the past? Can we travel in time? What is a person? How do persons persist? Could you be teletransported? Do people have free will? No prior philosophy courses are required.

You must sign up for one of the following recitation times:

Chelsea Rosenthal: Wednesdays 3:30-4:45; 4:55-6:10

PHIL-UA 2; Great Works in Philosophy; T/R 3:30-4:45 Kristin Primus

This course is an introduction to some of the major texts, problems, and methods in Western philosophy. Readings will span the history of philosophy, and will include works by Plato, Aristotle, Sextus Empiricus, Augustine, Abelard, Aquinas, Maimonides, Descartes, Hume, Kant, and Nietzsche.

You must sign up for one of the following recitation times:

TBD: Fridays 9:30-10:45; 11-12:15

PHIL-UA 3; Ethics and Society; M/W 3:30-4:45; Barry Maguire

How should you live? Should you love your neighbour as yourself? Should you be digging wells rather than taking philosophy classes? Is taxation theft? What obligations do we have to the not-yet-born, and to the dead? Is it wrong to do a bad thing for a good reason? And says who? Are there really any answers to these questions? If so, what explains why they are one way rather than another? The will of God? Perhaps we need rules to ensure mutual benefits. But then, can I break them if no-one will find out? By the end of this semester, you will have improved your thinking about these and other important ethical issues.

You must sign up for one of the following recitation times:

Amanda Alex MacAskill: Mondays 12:30 - 1:45; 2:00 - 3:15

Harjit Bhogal: Fridays 11-12:15; 12:30-1:45

PHIL-UA 21; History of Modern Philosophy; T/R 4:55-6:10; Kristen Primus

In this course, we will study works by central figures in 17th and 18th century philosophy, including Descartes, Elisabeth, Spinoza, Malebranche, Locke, Conway, Leibniz, Berkeley, Hume, and Kant. Topics will include the relation of the self to the world, the possibility and extent of one's knowledge of the world, the nature of bodies and causation, and the role of God in nature.

You must sign up for one of the following recitation times:

TBD: Mondays 3:30-4:45; 4:55-6:10

TBD: Fridays 9:30-10:45; 11-12:15

Prerequisite: one Introductory course.

PHIL-UA 22; Plato; T/TH 9:30-10:45; Jessica Moss

Plato's dialogues form the foundation for Western philosophy; they are also literary masterpieces. We will closely study five dialogues, including Plato's masterpiece, the *Republic*. We will explore issues in ethics, metaphysics, epistemology, psychology, and political philosophy, learning Plato's views on these topics as well as working to critique them and to engage with them philosophically.

You must sign up for one of the following recitation times:

Jeremy Dolan: Thursdays 2-3:15; 6:20-7:35

Prerequisite: one Introductory course.

PHIL-UA 32; From Hegel to Nietzsche; T/TH 3:30-4:45; John Richardson

After briefer attention to Fichte and Schelling, the course will examine the ideas of Hegel, Schopenhauer, Marx, and Nietzsche. Our interest will be both in understanding the relations of

influence and reaction among these very different thinkers, as well as in assessing their ideas and arguments.

You must sign up for one of the following recitation times:

Eli Alshanetsky: Fridays 12:30-1:45; 2-3:15.

Prerequisite: one Introductory course.

PHIL-UA 40; Ethics; T/TH 9:30-10:45; David Velleman

The course will cover central topics in ethical theory on the basis of readings from the seventeenth century to the present day, including Hobbes, Hume, Kant, Mill, Rawls, Singer, Thompson, and Wolf. Topics will include: the relation between morality and human motivation; the objectivity or subjectivity of moral judgments; the relation between interpersonal obligations and self-interest; the basis of individual rights; the relative importance of reason, emotion, and convention in morality.

You must sign up for one of the following recitation times:

Simona Aimar: Friday 12:30-1:45 and 2-3:15

Camil Golub: Monday 9:30-10:45 and 11-12:15

Prerequisite: one Introductory course.

PHIL-UA 41; Nature of Values; M/W 12:30-1:45; Knut Skarsaune

This class is an intensive introduction to meta-ethics. Some of the questions we will be discussing are: "Can judgments about what is morally right and wrong be genuinely true or false? If they can, what exactly is it that makes them true or false?" "Are moral truths always objective or relative to individuals or cultures?" "Is the subject matter in morality fundamentally different from, say, the subject matter in science? In what respects?" "Is morality most like science, religion, or art?" The readings will largely be drawn from the works contemporary moral philosophers.

Prerequisite: one Introductory course.

PHIL-UA 43; Empirical Moral Psychology; T/R 2-3:15; Nick Riggle

PHIL-UA 50; Medical Ethics; M/W 12:30-1:45; Collin O'Neil

This course will explore ethical issues arising in medicine. We will begin by contrasting two general approaches to ethics, consequentialism and deontology, and then turn to specific issues such as the nature of health and disease, the badness of death, informed consent, euthanasia, deciding for others, abortion, the allocation of life-saving resources, organ sales, physicians' involvement in lethal injection and torture, experimentation on animals, experimentation on human subjects, procreative responsibilities, and rights to health care.

PHIL-UA 60; Aesthetics; T/TH 12:30-1:45; Robert Hopkins

This course discusses some of the philosophical issues thrown up by the arts, and our appreciation of them. What is art, and why is it important to us? What is representation in art? Does representation vary from one artform to another, so that, for instance, pictures and artworks involving words represent in very different ways? How does this affect the value of painting and literature? And what of photography? Is it an art at all, or just the mechanical recording of reality? What is it for art to express emotion? Experience seems crucial to art, but does it follow that if a perfect forgery is experienced in exactly the same way as the original, then, as works of art, the two are equally good? And what of our judgements about art? Are they all subjective—is beauty in the eye of the beholder? Can there be rational argument about artworks?

You must sign up for one of the following recitation times:

Martin Abreu Zavaleta: Fridays 9:30-10:45; 11-12:15

Prerequisite: one Introductory course.

PHIL-UA 70-001; Logic; M/W; 9:30-10:45; Daniel Fogal

This course is an introduction to first-order logic (FOL). Topics include: syntax in FOL, truth-functional operators, quantifiers, logical equivalence and consequence, tautological equivalence and consequence, proof by cases, proof by contradiction, formal rules of proof in FOL, and translation between FOL and English.

PHIL-UA 70-002; Logic; M/W 11-12:15; Jared Warren

An introduction to the basic techniques of sentential and predicate logic. Students learn how to put arguments from ordinary language into symbols, how to construct derivations within a formal system, and how to ascertain validity using truth tables or models.

PHIL-UA 70-003; Logic; M/W 2-3:15; Erica Shumener

This is an introductory course on formal logic. We will focus primarily on the syntax, semantics, and derivation systems of sentential logic and predicate logic. Students will learn how to translate sentences from English into these formal languages. Special attention will be paid to the notions of sentence, set, interpretation, deductive consequence, deductive validity and invalidity, consistency, equivalence, and proof.

PHIL-UA 76; Epistemology M/W 9:30-10:45; Carlotta Pavese

You must sign up for one of the following recitation times:

Katrina Przyjemski: Friday 9:30-10:45, 11:00-12:15.

Prerequisite: one Introductory course

PHIL-UA 80; Consciousness; M/W 4:55-6:10; Carla Merino-Rajme

We will focus on questions such as: When we speak of consciousness, what are we talking about? Are zombies possible and what could we learn from considering this question? What is the relationship between consciousness and the brain? Can someone who has never seen any color learn what it is like to see blue from reading a black and white book? Could there be someone for which red objects looked yellow and the other way round? What is the best way to think of the relation between consciousness and time? What is attention and how does it relate to consciousness? What is cognitive accessibility? What is the unity of consciousness? What are higher-order theories of consciousness? What is self-consciousness?

PHIL-UA 85; Philosophy of Language; M/W 11-12:15; Crispin Wright

This course will concentrate on a small number of central questions in recent and contemporary philosophy of language. Some familiarity with elementary formal logic may be helpful. Topics to be covered include skepticism about meaning, with special reference to writings of Quine and Kripke; the

nature of knowledge of a language, with special reference to the work of Davidson and Dummett; and the competing paradigms of singular reference deriving from Frege and from Kripke. Grades will be awarded on the basis of two mid-term papers, and a take-home final exam.

You must sign up for one of the following recitation times:

Ian Grubb: Monday 2-3:15; Wednesday 2-3:15

Prerequisite: one Introductory course

PHIL-UA 103; Topics in Metaphysics and Epistemology; M/W 4:55-6:10; Jane Friedman

What ought we to believe? This course will help us to start to get a better handle on this question and some answers to it by focusing on a much discussed topic in epistemology: justified belief. Here are some of the questions that we will think about. What sort of state is belief? When are our beliefs justified/unjustified or rational/irrational? Which features of our minds and/or the world contribute to the justification of our beliefs? What is evidence and how should we think of evidential support? How should a rational subject respect their evidence? What sort of control do we have over what we believe? What should we do when an epistemic peer disagrees with us?

Prerequisite: Epistemology (PHIL-UA 76) or Metaphysics (PHIL-UA 78) or Philosophy of Science (PHIL-UA 90)

PHIL-UA 102; Topics in Ethics and Political Philosophy; T/TH 11-12:15; Knut Skarsauane

In this class we will examine the acts of offering and accepting apologies from a moral, as well as political, perspective. We will address questions such as: 1) What distinguishes a genuine apology from a pseudo-apology? 2) What exactly does an apology restore between people? How can it do it? 3) Are we (ever) morally obligated to forgive? Are some acts “unforgivable”? 4) Can we apologize, or forgive, on behalf of others? 5) What is the moral and political significance of collective or official apologies?

Prerequisite: Ethics (PHIL-UA 40), The Nature of Values (PHIL-UA 41), or Political Philosophy (PHIL-UA 45).

PHIL-UA 200; Junior Honors Seminar; TH 1-3; Peter Unger

A seminar taken in fall of senior year. Students begin developing their thesis projects by presentations in the seminar, which is led by a faculty member. Students also begin to meet individually with a separate faculty adviser. See the description of the honors program in the "Program" section.

Prerequisite: open to junior majors with approval of the department; see requirements in the description of the departmental honors program.