PHIL - PHILOSOPHY

PHIL100 Introduction to Philosophy (3 Credits)
An introduction to the literature, problems, and methods of philosophy either through a study of some of the main figures in philosophic thought or through an examination of some of the central and recurring problems of philosophy.

PHIL101 AI and the Human Experience (3 Credits)
Broad overview of key concepts in artificial intelligence (AI) from the perspective of the humanities. Topics may include: the ethics and safety of AI deployment, AI and social justice, AI creativity and art, AI rationality, and the opportunities AI technology presents for advancing scientific understanding and enhancing human well-being. Students will also be introduced to a range of modern AI technologies, such as recommender systems, large-language models, facial recognition, and predictive analytics, critically addressing discussing both their positive impacts and potential negative consequences.
Credit Only Granted for: PHIL209M or PHIL101.
Formerly: PHIL209M.

PHIL121 Programming for AI 1 (3 Credits)
Designed for students with little to no prior programming experience to build a solid foundation in Python programming and the problem-solving skills essential for working with AI. Students will learn variables, data types, conditionals, loops, functions, input/output, and basics of object-oriented programming. Practical skills include setting up a development environment, using Jupyter notebooks, and version control with Git. Students will actively write, analyze, test, and debug code in and out of class. Beyond coding, students will learn to state problems clearly, break them into parts, track down mistakes, and evaluate AI-generated solutions. This is the first course in a two-course sequence introducing students to important topics in programming, specifically tailored for Artificial Intelligence (AI) applications.
Additional Information: This is the first course in a two-sequence set of courses on Programming for AI.

PHIL140 Contemporary Moral Issues (3 Credits)
The uses of philosophical analysis in thinking clearly about such widely debated moral issues as abortion, euthanasia, homosexuality, pornography, reverse discrimination, the death penalty, business ethics, sexual equality, and economic justice.

PHIL170 Introduction to Symbolic Logic (3 Credits)
This course will introduce the basic concepts and techniques of modern symbolic logic, with an emphasis on developing skills in two areas: first, translating between ordinary language and logical notation; second, establishing the validity or invalidity of arguments using the methods of truth tables, deductions, and countermodels. Although the subject of symbolic logic was developed by mathematicians and philosophers for their own special purposes (which we will discuss), logical concepts and techniques have found applications in a variety of disciplines, including computer science, economics, law, linguistics, and psychology. We may also consider some of these applications.

PHIL171 Reasoning For Humans: Clear Thinking in an Uncertain World (3 Credits)
Reasoning is a transition in thought in which some beliefs or thoughts provide grounds or reasons for others. What makes certain transitions of thought rational or reasonable and others irrational or erratic is a major focus of investigation in diverse research areas, such as philosophy, logic, artificial intelligence, cognitive science, and psychology. This course is an introduction to logic and probability with a focus on applications to the study of the foundations of human reasoning.
Credit Only Granted for: PHIL171 or PHIL218A.
Formerly: PHIL218A.

PHIL201 Spooky Action at a Distance? Where Physics Meets Metaphysics (3 Credits)
Einstein believed that physics should represent a "reality in space and time, free from spooky action at a distance." He worried that quantum theory failed this test. Later developments suggest that quantum systems really can influence one another instantly, no matter how far apart they are, but the question remains controversial and experiments are not sufficient to provide an answer. This self-contained course will draw on philosophy and physics to investigate the controversy.
Recommended: Students should be comfortable with moderately mathematical presentations. Placement into MATH110 or higher is strongly recommended.
Credit Only Granted for: PHIL201 or PHIL209I.
Formerly: PHIL209I.

PHIL202 Know Thyself: Wisdom Through Cognitive Science (3 Credits)
How do we improve our decision making? Cognitive science demonstrates that self-knowledge isn't as easy as we think, and that there are numerous biases and fallacies that impact our decision-making in ways that are hard for us to be aware of. In this course you will learn what some of these are and how they have been discovered, and you will explore potential strategies for avoiding these fallacies and for making wiser choices.
Credit Only Granted for: PHIL209N or PHIL202.
Formerly: PHIL209N.

PHIL203 The Rights and Wrongs of Killing People (3 Credits)
Virtually everyone thinks it's permissible to kill people only in special circumstances. But why is killing usually wrong? Is it ever acceptable to kill an innocent human being intentionally? This course raises these and related questions and examines cases such as terrorism, suicide, abortion, euthanasia, the death penalty, war. Except for a brief discussion of animals, all the controversies considered deal with killing and causing death to human beings.
Credit Only Granted for: PHIL209J or PHIL203.
Formerly: PHIL209J.

PHIL204 Happiness (3 Credits)
What does the discipline of philosophy teach us about happiness? This course explores how philosophers have addressed questions about the nature of happiness and its role in the good human life. Questions to be addressed include: what is it to be happy? What social, economic, and political institutions foster and support human happiness? Can an immoral person be happy? And is a happy life the same as a meaningful life?
Credit Only Granted for: PHIL209E or PHIL204.
Formerly: PHIL209E.

PHIL205 Are Sports Ethical? (3 Credits)
Things happen routinely in sports that would seem morally unacceptable in other context: violence between the participants, attempts to trick the referee, fans hoping that some players would do embarrassingly badly, spectators feeling anger towards whole nations. Nonetheless, all of this may seem reasonable and even justifiable within a sporting context. This course will investigate the ethical structure of sports, and what it tells us about the ethics of everyday life. Philosophy will provide the primary disciplinary context, but we will also think about sociological, legal and anthropological perspectives on sports. Issues will include the nature of sportsmanship, what types of violence in sports are acceptable, drug use in sports, what it means to be a fan (for example, asking why loyalty to your team is valuable) and how our view of sports interacts with our view of nations. By the end of the course you should have gained familiarity with a variety of ethical concepts and a sensitivity to the ethical issues in sports. You should also find that by thinking about morality in the context of sports, you will look at larger ethical issues in new ways.
Credit Only Granted for: PHIL205, PHIL209G, or HONR229E.
Formerly: HONR229E.

PHIL209 Philosophical Issues (3 Credits)
An examination of selected philosophical issues of general interest.
Repeatable to: 6 credits if content differs.

PHIL210 Philosophy of the Universe (3 Credits)
An exploration of how philosophy can help us understand our place in the cosmos. The course covers a variety of topics at the intersection of science and philosophy, such as: How does the world we observe emerge from the microscopic world science tells us about? What are laws of nature? What is time? What is life? The emphasis is not on leading students to particular conclusions about these topics. Instead, it is to learn how to ask these questions critically and to understand what would count as relevant evidence for an answer.
Credit Only Granted for: PHIL209U or PHIL210.
Formerly: PHIL209U.

PHIL211 AI & ETHICS (3 Credits)
An introduction to a major subfield of contemporary Philosophy, namely applied ethics, and the experience of using some major tools in the practice of philosophy more generally, namely, the construction and formal evaluation of arguments, conceptual analysis, the use of thought experiments, and clear, direct and persuasive writing. Learning how to execute the latter will involve an intense iterative process. The substantive focus of the course will be the ethical evaluation of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in some of its current and potentially future incarnations. We'll examine algorithmic opacity, algorithmic bias and decision-making, autonomous weapons systems, human-robot interaction, and artificial moral agents, in order to uncover what, if any, ethical issues they give rise to.
Credit Only Granted for: PHIL209D or PHIL211.
Formerly: PHIL209D.

PHIL218 Issues in in Epistemology/Metaphysics (3 Credits)
An examination of selected philosophical issues in epistemology or metaphysics.
Repeatable to: 12 credits if content differs.
Additional Information: Counts toward the epistemology/metaphysics requirement for the Philosophy major.

PHIL220 Bioethics: Regulating Right and Wrong (3 Credits)
Bioethicists formulate ethical guidelines. They answer questions such as: When life-saving health resources are scarce, who should get them? Should we increase supply of one such resource, kidneys, by buying them from living "donors"? If drug trials in developing countries benefit patients who consent to participate, are the trials ethical, even if the same research would be forbidden in the US? If a sick person aims to hasten her death, how, if at all, might her doctor permissibly help her? In this course, students construct and defend ethical rules in four domains: research ethics, allocation of scarce resources, markets in organs, and physician-assisted dying.
Credit Only Granted for: PHIL209A or PHIL220.
Formerly: PHIL209A.

PHIL228 Issues in History of Philosophy (3 Credits)
An examination of selected issues in the history of philosophy.
Repeatable to: 12 credits if content differs.
Additional Information: Counts toward the history of philosophy requirement for the Philosophy major.

PHIL234 Fundamental Concepts of Judaism (3 Credits)
A conceptional introduction to Judaism, analyzing its fundamental concepts from both analytical and historical perspectives. Discussion of "normative" Judaism as well as other conceptions of Judaism. Topics include: God, the Jewish people, authority, ethics, the sacred and the profane, particularism and universalism.
Cross-listed with: JWST250, RELS250.
Credit Only Granted for: JWST250, PHIL234, or RELS250.

PHIL235 Authority, Faith, and Reason in Judaism (3 Credits)
A broad survey of the concepts of authority, faith, and reason in Jewish tradition from the Bible to the modern period, and their interrelationships.

PHIL236 Philosophy of Religion (3 Credits)
A philosophical study of some of the main problems of religious thought: the nature of religious experience, the justification of religious belief, the conflicting claims of religion and science, and the relation between religion and morality.
Cross-listed with: RELS236.
Credit Only Granted for: PHIL236 or RELS236.

PHIL238 Issues in Value Theory (3 Credits)
An examination of selected issues in ethics, aesthetics, political philosophy and related areas.
Repeatable to: 12 credits if content differs.
Additional Information: Counts toward the value theory requirement for the Philosophy major.

PHIL245 Political and Social Philosophy I (3 Credits)
A critical examination of such classical political theories as those of Plato, Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau, Mill, Marx, and such contemporary theories as those of Hayek, Rawls, and recent Marxist thinkers.

PHIL250 Philosophy of Science I (3 Credits)
Main issues in the philosophy of science. Special attention to the ways scientific developments have influenced the philosophy of science and how philosophy of science has influenced scientific progress. Case studies of selected historical episodes in which science and philosophy have interacted significantly, focusing on the physical, biological, or social sciences.

PHIL261 Philosophy of the Environment (3 Credits)
An evaluation of different kinds of arguments for the claim that the natural environment should be preserved. Perspectives cut across the disciplines of philosophy (environmental ethics and philosophies of nature); economics (cost-benefit analysis); and biology (evolution, ecology, environmental studies).
Credit Only Granted for: HONR218F or PHIL261.
Formerly: HONR218F.

PHIL269 Speical Topics in Study Abroad II (1-6 Credits)
Special topics course taken as part of an approved study abroad program.
Repeatable to: 15 credits if content differs.

PHIL271 Symbolic Logic (3 Credits)
This course provides students with a thorough treatment of the basic concepts and techniques of modern symbolic logic, through classical first-order logic with identity. We will concentrate on the construction of natural deduction proofs and on the evaluation of logical statements in semantic models. Along the way, we will study some of the concepts from set theory (sets, functions, relations) used in the definition of semantic models for logical systems. We may also introduce some alternative, or non-classical logics. Although the subject of symbolic logic was developed by mathematicians and philosophers for their own special purposes (which we will discuss), logical concepts and techniques have found applications in a variety of disciplines, including computer science, economics, law, linguistics, and psychology. We may also consider some of these applications.
Recommended: PHIL170.

PHIL282 Free Will & Determinism (3 Credits)
A study of the main positions and arguments in the free will debate in contemporary analytic philosophy.

PHIL308 Studies in Contemporary Philosophy (3 Credits)
Problems, issues, and points of view of current interest in philosophy.
Prerequisite: 6 credits in PHIL courses.
Repeatable to: 6 credits if content differs.

PHIL309 Philosophical Problems (3 Credits)
A focused study of a contemporary philosophical problem or issue. Topics will vary, but the course will encourage students to to generate critical analyses or proposed resolutions of issues in the contemporary philosophical literature.
Prerequisite: 6 credits in PHIL courses.
Repeatable to: 12 credits if content differs.

PHIL310 Ancient Greek and Roman Philosophy (3 Credits)
A study of the origins and development of philosophy in ancient Greece and Rome, focusing on Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, the Epicureans, and Stoics.
Prerequisite: Must have completed 6 credits in philosophy or classics.
Cross-listed with: CLAS310, PHPE308Y.
Credit Only Granted for: PHIL310, CLAS310, or PHPE308Y.

PHIL313 From the Stoa to Silicon Valley: Ancient and Modern Approaches to Stoic Philosophy (3 Credits)
Stoicism, ancient Rome's most popular philosophy, posited that virtue is the only human good and that individuals must detach themselves emotionally from the material world in order to live ethical lives. Principles of Stoic philosophy will be explored together with the wide array of artistic, political, and intellectual traditions that have drawn inspiration from it, from the Haitian revolutionary movement of the late 18th century, to the sexist "manosphere" of Reddit and Twitter, to modern cognitive-behavioral therapy.
Cross-listed with: CLAS313, PHPE313.
Credit Only Granted for: CLAS313, PHIL313, or PHPE313.

PHIL318 Studies in Epistemology/Metaphysics (3 Credits)
Problems, issues, and points of view in epistemology or metaphysics.
Prerequisite: 1 course in PHIL.
Repeatable to: 12 credits if content differs.
Additional Information: Counts toward the epistemology/metaphysics requirement for the Philosophy major.

PHIL320 Knowing Oneself and Knowing the World: Early Modern Philosophy from Descartes to Kant (3 Credits)
A study of major philosophical issues of the 16th, 17th, and 18th centuries through an examination of such philosophers as Descartes, Spinoza, Leibniz, Cavendish, Locke, Berkeley, Hume and Kant
Prerequisite: 6 credits in PHIL courses; or permission of instructor.

PHIL328 Studies in the History of Philosophy (3 Credits)
Problems, issues, and points of view in the history of philosophy.
Prerequisite: 6 credits in PHIL courses.
Repeatable to: 6 credits if content differs.

PHIL338 Studies in Value Theory (3 Credits)
Problems, issues and points of view in ethics, aesthetics, political philosophy and related areas.
Prerequisite: 1 course in PHIL.
Repeatable to: 12 credits if content differs.
Additional Information: Counts toward the value theory requirement for the Philosophy major.

PHIL341 Ethical Theory (3 Credits)
A critical examination of classical and contemporary systems of ethics, such as those of Aristotle, Kant, Mill, and Rawls.
Prerequisite: 6 credits in PHIL courses.

PHIL344 Philosophy of Race (3 Credits)
A survey of philosophical arguments involving race and racism. Guiding questions will include: How have philosophers and scientists conceived of the concept of race? Is race a coherent concept? Does it help us explain differences in performance and behavior? What makes racism, racial prejudice, and discrimination wrong? What is the point of equality? Do we owe reparations to victims of racism?
Credit Only Granted for: PHIL344 or PHIL308Y.
Formerly: PHIL308Y.

PHIL347 Philosophy of Law (3 Credits)
Examination of fundamental concepts related to law, e.g. legal systems, law and morality, justice, legal reasoning, responsibility.
Credit Only Granted for: PHIL347 or PHIL447.
Formerly: PHIL447.

PHIL360 Philosophy of Language (3 Credits)
The nature and function of language and other forms of symbolism from a philosophical perspective.
Prerequisite: LING311; or 2 courses in PHIL and (PHIL170 or PHIL370); or permission of ARHU-Philosophy department.
Cross-listed with: LING350.
Credit Only Granted for: LING350 or PHIL360.

PHIL362 Theory of Knowledge (3 Credits)
Some central topics in the theory of knowledge, such as perception, memory, knowledge, and belief, skepticism, other minds, truth, and the problems of induction.
Prerequisite: 6 credits in PHIL courses; and PHIL170.
Formerly: PHIL462.

PHIL364 Metaphysics (3 Credits)
The study of some central metaphysical concepts and issues including the nature and validity of metaphysical thinking, universals, identity, substance, time, God, and reality.
Prerequisite: 6 credits in PHIL courses.
Formerly: PHIL464.

PHIL366 Philosophy of Mind (3 Credits)
An introduction to core issues in the philosophy of mind, focusing especially on the basic metaphysical question of dualism versus physicalism.
Prerequisite: 6 credits in PHIL courses.

PHIL369 Special Topics in Study Abroad III (1-6 Credits)
Special topics course taken as part of an approved study abroad program.
Repeatable to: 15 credits if content differs.

PHIL370 Logical Theory I: Metatheory (3 Credits)
This course is an introduction to logical "metatheory", that is, to logical reasoning about logic systems themselves. Topics include alternative alternative proof-theoretic presentations of logical systems as well as soundness and completeness theorems for propositional and first-order logic. Along the way, we will deepen our understanding of the elementary set-theoretic concepts underlying first order logic. Other topics may include basic results in the semantics of first order logic (such as the Craig interpolation theorem, the Beth definability theorem, or the Lowenhein-Skolem theorem).
Prerequisite: PHIL271 or CMSC250; or permission of the instructor.

PHIL386 Experiential Learning (3-6 Credits)
Restriction: Permission of ARHU-Philosophy department; and junior standing or higher.

PHIL408 Topics in Contemporary Philosophy (3 Credits)
An intensive examination of contemporary problems and issues. Source material will be selected from recent books and articles.
Repeatable to: 99 credits if content differs.

PHIL409 Advanced Studies in Contemporary Philosophy (3 Credits)
An in-depth study of a contemporary philosophical problem or issue. Topics will vary, but the course will encourage students to grapple with the primary literature in order to generate sustained critical analyses or proposed resolutions of issues under active consideration in contemporary philosophy.
Prerequisite: 6 credits in PHIL courses.
Repeatable to: 12 credits if content differs.

PHIL412 The Philosophy of Plato (3 Credits)
A critical study of selected dialogues.
Prerequisite: 6 credits in PHIL courses.

PHIL414 The Philosophy of Aristotle (3 Credits)
A critical study of selected portions of Aristotle's writings.
Prerequisite: 6 credits in PHIL courses.

PHIL417 The Golden Age of Jewish Philosophy (3 Credits)
Jewish philosophy from Maimonides in the 12th century to the expulsion of the Jews from Spain at the end of the 15th Century. Topics include the limitations of human knowledge, creation of the world, foreknowledge and free will, and the existence of God.
Prerequisite: 3 credits in PHIL courses; or permission of ARHU-Meyerhoff Program & Center for Jewish Studies; or permission of ARHU-Philosophy department.
Cross-listed with: JWST452.
Credit Only Granted for: JWST452 or PHIL417.

PHIL418 Topics in Epistemology/Metaphysics (3 Credits)
An intensive examination of contemporary problems and issues in epistemology or metaphysics. Source material will be selected from recent books and articles.
Prerequisite: 2 courses in PHIL.
Repeatable to: 12 credits if content differs.

PHIL428 Topics in the History of Philosophy (3 Credits)
Prerequisite: PHIL310 and PHIL320; or permission of ARHU-Philosophy department.
Repeatable to: 99 credits if content differs.

PHIL438 Topics in Value Theory (3 Credits)
An intensive examination of contemporary problems and issues in ethics, aesthetics, political philosophy and related areas. Source material will be selected from recent books and articles.
Prerequisite: 2 courses in PHIL.
Repeatable to: 12 credits if content differs.

PHIL440 Contemporary Ethical Theory (3 Credits)
Contemporary work on fundamental problems in ethical theory, such as whether there are moral truths, whether and how our moral claims can be justified, what exactly makes an act right or wrong, the nature of moral language, and the role of reason and emotion in moral judgment.
Prerequisite: PHIL341; or permission of instructor.

PHIL443 Moral Psychology (3 Credits)
Philosophers often stress reasoning as the appropriate source for practical and moral action. Would a realistic view of human psychology undermine this assumption? This course will examine recent philosophical and empirical work on the relevance of emotion and/or intuition to rationality, moral worth, and moral judgment.
Prerequisite: 2 courses in PHIL.
Recommended: PHIL341 is strongly recommended for background on the historical authors that the readings make reference to.
Credit Only Granted for: PHIL408P or PHIL443.
Formerly: PHIL408P.

PHIL445 Contemporary Political Philosophy (3 Credits)
Major trends in contemporary political philosophy: liberal, libertarian, communitarian, socialist, feminist.
Restriction: Must have completed 3 credits in philosophy or political theory; or permission of ARHU-Philosophy department. And sophomore standing or higher.

PHIL446 Law, Morality, and War (3 Credits)
An exploration of fundamental moral and legal issues concerning war.

PHIL453 Philosophy of Science II (3 Credits)
A comprehensive survey of developments in the main problems of the philosophy of science from logical positivism to the present. The nature of theories, models, laws, and counterfactuals, testing, inductive logic, and confirmation theory, experimental methodology, measurement, explanation, concept formation, growth of scientific knowledge, and scientific realism.
Prerequisite: Students must have completed a minium of two philosophy courses.

PHIL458 Topics in the Philosophy of Science (3 Credits)
A detailed examination of a particular topic or problem in philosophy of science.
Repeatable to: 6 credits if content differs.

PHIL469 Study Abroad Special Topics IV (1-6 Credits)
Special topics course taken as part of an approved study abroad program.
Repeatable to: 15 credits if content differs.

PHIL470 Logical Theory II: Incompleteness and Undecidability (3 Credits)
Introduces the formal theory of computation, and then presents the the central limitative results of modern first-order logic: Church's undecidability theorem and Godel's first and second incompleteness theorems. The primary focus of the course is a thorough technical study of these fundamental results, but we will also discuss some of the philosophical issues they raise. Further topics may include second-order logic.
Prerequisite: PHIL370; or permission of instructor.

PHIL478 Topics in Philosophical Logic (3 Credits)
Philosophical logics result from the application of formal techniques to problems of philosophical interest; these logics often have applications in other areas as well, such as AI, linguistics, psychology, economics, and law. This course will either concentrate on a particular family of philosophical logics (such as modal or temporal or defeasible logics) or else survey a number different logical systems.
Prerequisite: PHIL271; or permission of instructor.
Recommended: PHIL470.
Repeatable to: 9 credits if content differs.

PHIL488 Topics in Philosophy of Cognitive Studies (3 Credits)
Examination of a particular topic or problem in philosophy of cognitive studies.
Prerequisite: 3 credits in PHIL courses; or permission of ARHU-Philosophy department.
Repeatable to: 9 credits if content differs.

PHIL489 Undergraduate Seminar in Philosophy (3-6 Credits)
An intensive examination of a philosophical topic or topics.
Restriction: Permission of ARHU-Philosophy department.
Repeatable to: 6 credits if content differs.

PHIL490 The Practice of Philosophy: How To Develop Your Own Work (3 Credits)
Writing philosophical papers, presenting them to an audience, and responding critically and constructively to the papers and talks of others are skills central to the practice of philosophy. This course will help students to enhance those skills in a seminar-style format. Students should come to the course with a paper of their own (likely from another course) that they would like to develop.
Prerequisite: Three upper-level (300- or 400-level) courses in philosophy or permission of the instructor.
Credit Only Granted for: PHIL408R or PHIL490.
Formerly: PHIL408R.

PHIL498 Topical Investigations (1-3 Credits)