

PHI 101 Basic Issues in Philosophy [OC-KD/H]

This course is an introduction to a wide variety of philosophical issues. We will engage problems in metaphysics (the theory of reality), ethics and politics (the theory of right and good), and epistemology (the theory of knowledge). And we will consider the development of these issues in the history of philosophy.

A variety of class formats is central to the course. While there will be some lecture (as is appropriate), there will also be class discussion, possibly "Roundtable" discussions, panel debates or oral presentations. Required graded assignments include several argumentative papers and one or two exams. As with most humanities courses, grades in this course are largely earned through careful completion of written assignments.

Students are expected to be serious about learning something and open to becoming involved in significant philosophical inquiry.

PHI 104 Ideal of Democracy [MC-ICL]

The purpose of The Ideal of Democracy is to think seriously and critically about the nature and moral justification of democracy and democratic institutions. Conceptions of democracy that are explicit or implicit in the civic traditions and diverse cultures in the United States will provide the primary basis for discussion, though some attention will also be paid to the origins and history of democracy and to its practice in other societies. Students will be introduced to the methodology of moral reasoning and to various conceptions of the person and of human nature that underlie ethical ideals relating to democracy. They will also see how to interpret and integrate work done in a variety of disciplines (e.g., law, economics, political science, history) that bears on the resolution of the fundamental moral questions concerning the justification of democracy that provide the unifying focus for the course. They will also be expected to think in a reasoned way about what their own responsibilities are as citizens in a democratic society.

PHI 112 Language, Logic and Math [MC-QR]

This is a course in modern symbolic logic. The fundamental objective of the course is to provide you with the abilities with which to understand and to apply the principles of formal reasoning. Not only are these principles essential to rational discourse, they are the basis of both mathematical reasoning and (symbolic) computation. Among the issues to be explored are: the nature of arguments, statements, truth, and formal systems; the relation between language (formal and natural), signs, and the world; logical relations and properties; deduction vs. induction; and techniques for evaluating arguments.

PHI 150 Science and Human Culture [Outer Core]

Are men sexually unfaithful because of their genes? Are women "naturally" good mothers? Are certain "races" more aggressive or violent than others? Does race have anything to do with IQ?

Recently, science has begun to play an increasingly important role in explaining how human society works. Sociobiologists propose to extend the same principles of evolutionary

biology that apply to all species to human beings and thereby explain both our psychological make-up and our social organization.

This course will begin with an examination of the criteria scientists themselves use to judge the adequacy of scientific theories and scientific explanations. Next, we will investigate the role society (with all of its biases and prejudices) plays in defining what counts as good science and what counts as bad or biased science. At this point, students will be prepared to read and analyze some modern scientific (biological, sociobiological, and evolutionary-psychological) accounts of human society. We will study these scientific theories about culture in light of what we have learned about the role of culture in shaping scientific knowledge.

PHI 201 Epistemology, Metaphysics, Mind and Language

Introduction to contemporary issues in metaphysics and epistemology and related issues in philosophy of mind and language.

PHI 202 Sex, Values, Human Nature [OC-DKCC/H]

This course gives students an opportunity to examine in detail some contemporary issues surrounding sex, gender and sexuality. The course begins by exploring how two quite different approaches to human nature—biological determinism and social constructionism—set about explaining facts about sex, gender and sexuality. So we will raise such questions as whether, for instance, men are biologically determined to be more sexually aggressive than females, or if gender differences like this one can instead be explained by facts about how our society is structured. Having examined two quite different theories about these matters, we will then go on to see how they might affect our answers to some normative questions about sex, gender and sexuality. Should there be gay marriage? What should we do to prevent sexual violence? Should there be legal restriction of pornography? What kinds of sexual activities should be considered immoral? We will explore how accepting a particular theory of human nature might influence the answers we give to normative questions like these.

PHI 204 Philosophy Of Mind

An examination of the mind/body problem, consciousness, self-knowledge, mental content, mental causation, personal identity and agency.

PHI 208 Buddhist Philosophy

In this course we will examine the origins and development of Buddhist thought. The Buddha made three substantial claims about the nature of the world: that all human existence involves suffering, that there is no such thing as a self, and that everything that exists is impermanent. We will begin by analyzing these claims, assessing the arguments advanced in their support, and examining their bearing on the Buddha's proposed solution to the problem of suffering, the path to Nirvana. We will then investigate several later developments in Buddhist philosophy, including the two major schools of Indian Mahayana Buddhism, as well as Zen Buddhism. We will examine the answers given by these schools to further questions about the ultimate nature of reality and how knowledge of reality is obtained. A major focus of the course will be the following question: Why do Buddhists take doing philosophy to be crucial to solving the problem of suffering?

PHI 222 Philosophy and Christian Theology

When language is used to profess a Christian world view, the resulting statements are Christian theology. A great many different Christian theologies have been produced by different people. In this course we will take a philosophical look at some of the common ideas and themes found in these Christian statements. Our goal will not be to decide which are the best, or which are true. Rather, the goal will be to explore how philosophy can shed light on theology, and how philosophical analysis can raise important issues about theology. For example, we can look at how some versions of Christian theology imply that non-Christian religions are worthless, while other versions do not have that implication. And, we can explore the question of what Christian theology might be based on.

PHI 224 Meaning & Religious Belief [OC-DKCC/H]

Each normal adult person at a given time has a set of attitudes towards life—ways of seeing his or her place (or lack of it) in the grand scheme of things—ways of thinking or refusing to think about mortality. These attitudes, or ways of thinking, do not operate merely at the intellectual or cognitive level, but rather constitute both a basis for cognitive understanding of the world as well as a way of being—an overall ethos, if you will.

In this course we will examine in detail the general character of *religious* ways of thinking in relation to religious ways of being—that is, religious ethos—and explore how one might responsibly think about and evaluate such ways. We do *not* explore in any substantial way various world religions, but rather we examine how to think about religious perspectives, how to understand their complexity and force, how to look at a religious perspective “from the inside”, how to begin to evaluate what point of view—religious or antireligious—it would be reasonable to take. Thus, in this course, we examine one of the most central aspects of life for a human being.

PHI 232 Introduction To Ethics

An introduction to ethics, including utilitarian, deontological and virtue theoris. Skill associated with analytical reading and writing are emphasized.

PHI 238 Rights and Wrongs [OC-DKCC/H]

This is a course in *applied* ethics. That means we emphasize the application over the interpretation, defense, and criticism of ethical principles. We are thus freed up to consider more complicated ethical issues than usual, more complicated situations to which ethical principles apply. In this course we concentrate on ethical issues concerning social or distributive justice (as opposed to criminal or retributive justice). These are issues concerning the justice of our basic institutions and practices--the state, the law, and the economy. We will focus on economic institutions: so-called "free" markets, free trade, corporate capitalism. And on the mainstream media--television, newspapers, and magazines. Each of these institutions, or their current practice, raises serious questions about the justice of our society.

PHI 251 Visions of the Self [OC-KD/H]

Human beings have an insatiable desire to understand the universe around them. Yet what is the nature of the cognitive agent who is capable of these inquiries? For thousands of years poets, philosophers, and theologians have drawn on the introspective data of experience in order to understand the nature of "self". In the Modern period, we know there are rich and complex mechanisms lying well below the surface which introspection reveals. Thus the study of the self has emerged as a major enterprise incorporating a huge variety of data, data drawn from both the "inside" – what it "feels like" to be a person–, and the "outside" – from external points of view such as those characterizing the social and physical sciences. This course is an in-depth study of philosophical issues surrounding these various modes of inquiry. We will draw upon philosophically relevant data arising in fields as diverse as cognitive, experimental, and clinical psychology, literature, psychiatric medicine, neurophysiology, computer science and artificial intelligence, and philosophy itself. This inquiry will confront students with puzzling questions that have wide-ranging practical implications, both personally and socially, including: What is the Mind? Is it a kind of mental stuff, is it physical or is it fundamentally computer software? What is the proper theory of "personal Identity"? What makes the 80 year-old woman "the same person" as the three year old toddler? What is the philosophical significance (ethical, metaphysical, etc.) of certain mental and physical disorders (e.g. multiple personality, dementia, body-alienation, commissurotomy)? What properties must something possess to be a "person"? Could a machine or an animal or an alien be a person? Are "persons" self-contained, atomistic agents or does the integration of the self so depend on connections to other selves that the drawing of boundaries between selves becomes problematic? To what extent do the various conceptions of the self lead to different accounts of our moral and social responsibility to ourselves and others?

PHI 253 Philosophy and Behavioral Science

The course examines philosophical issues in the philosophy of mind, philosophical psychology, and artificial intelligence. We study a wide range of issues as these arise in the intellectual thought of philosophers and psychologists. Central figures are Descartes, William James, Freud, B. F. Skinner, Jean Piaget, Lawrence Kohlberg, Carol Gilligan and Daniel Dennett.

Broadly philosophical topics include the mind-body problem, the nature of consciousness, rationality, determinism and freewill, and self-knowledge. Philosophical psychology includes questions about the explanatory status of psychoanalysis, the concept of the "operant" in behaviorism, Kohlberg's "thesis of moral development", Gilligan's critique of Kohlberg, and the like. It also includes the fundamental dispute over the "scientific" standing of psychology, including the contrast between experimental and clinical studies. Later in the course, we turn to some basic ideas behind "artificial intelligence" projects and important philosophical objections to artificial intelligence. The course may further involve some writings of feminist philosophers who concentrate on questions either in philosophical psychology or in the theory of the self.

Graded work consists of a series of argumentative essays and papers. Attendance and participation are assumed in a philosophy class. The reading is fascinating, but difficult.

PHI 255 Modern Philosophy

In this course we will examine the origins and development of the three major movements that dominate modern philosophy in the 17th and 18th centuries--rationalism, empiricism, and Kant's transcendental philosophy. We will look at the intellectual and cultural backgrounds of these movements, for instance the way in which the growth of modern science influenced the developments of these philosophical traditions. Our chief focus, though, will be on the philosophical systems themselves, and the answers they give to a range of questions in metaphysics and epistemology. We shall be subjecting the arguments of such major modern philosophers as Descartes, Hume, and Kant to intensive analysis and criticism. Out of this should emerge a clearer understanding of the philosophical underpinnings of our modern view of what the world is like and how we come to know anything about it.

PHI 263 Theory of Knowledge

What are the limits of human knowledge? What is knowledge? Under what conditions is it rational for a person to believe that a proposition is true? This course is a historical introduction to contemporary epistemology (theory of knowledge). Topics discussed in this course will include: skepticism and various reactions to skeptical problems, the Gettier problem and the analysis of knowledge, the structure of justified belief (foundationalism vs. coherentism), internalism and externalism about justification, and issues concerning the a priori/a posteriori knowledge distinction.

PHI 270 Existentialism

Existential wellness means taking hold of your individual existence by exercising radical human freedom. Existential wellness is supported by recognizing the limits of rationalist and universalizing thought while not falling prey to the abyss of nihilism:

Oppose Hegelian idealism. Existentialists oppose G.W.F. Hegel, who argues that reality is the product of universal Reason, inevitably achieving the ideal State via synthesis of contradictions. Existentialists also object to naïve positivism and unrestrained rationalism.

Assert the primacy of the individual. Søren Kierkegaard asserts that being a single individual is "the most terrifying thing . . . [and] the greatest." Discover the centrality of the existing individual and see truth as subjectivity.

Create values to avoid nihilism. "God is dead! And we have killed him!" cries Nietzsche. In the face of declining Western values, create new values to prepare the way for a higher humanity.

Question the meaning of Being. It is everywhere, Heidegger says, yet Being is elusive. Via phenomenology and the hermeneutic circle, discover the primordial horizon of Being disclosed in human Dasein.

Exercise radical freedom. Sartre argues that consciousness is a nothingness, and thus radically free. Acknowledge the anguish of responsibility and cease fleeing freedom in bad faith.