



## PHI 101 - Basic Issues in Philosophy

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

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 224 – Meaning and Religious Belief

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 238 - Rights and Wrongs

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.