

### **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 112 - Language, Logic and Math**

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**

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 204 - Philosophy Of Mind**

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

### **PHI 224 - Meaning & 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 232 - Introduction To Ethics**

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

### **PHI 234 - Business Ethics**

Current business practices raise interesting questions of ethics and especially of justice. We will read a mix of philosophical works on the nature of justice and historical and journalistic works on business and business behavior, and we'll see how much or how little justice we find in the prevailing and accepted business practices of our own time, and we'll think about what justice really requires from businessmen and businesswomen and whether there are any plausible alternatives to the status quo that would afford greater justice.

### **PHI 236 - Values and the Environment**

Philosophical examination of selected moral and social issues involving humans, nonhumans, and the environment, e.g., animal rights, resource distribution, environmental racism. From a philosophical perspective, fundamental value questions about the environment fit within two broad areas identified by the following two questions: (1) What is a suitable ethic to define the relationships between humans and the nonhuman environment? and given this ethical framework, (2) What are the implications for ethical relationships among humans? Addressing the first question requires that students investigate three fundamental questions: what does it mean to have moral standing, who/what has moral standing, and are traditional moral theories (designed to prescribe how humans should interact with each other) sufficient or applicable to explain human and nonhuman interactions? Under question 2 fall a variety of issues such as: environmental racism, equity in distribution of resources, permanent sovereignty over natural resources and other property rights issues, and obligations to future generations. In considering any of these issues, students would examine standard moral positions. After becoming familiar with these basics, students would be asked to reconsider an appropriate response to the issues at hand in light of alternative environmental ethics explored in response to question 1. This helps students recognize the significant differences in practice of adopting alternative environmental ethics - a major step toward determining the best environmental ethic to adopt.

### **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.

## **PHI 240 - Political Philosophy**

In this course, we shall first lay a firm foundation by providing an overview of the historical roots and philosophical foundations of democracy. Throughout the course, we shall pair theory and practice. During this part of the course, we shall examine Pericles and the Athenian assembly, Locke and the English Parliament, Rousseau and Geneva city-state, Madison and the United States Constitution, Marx and soviets. Students will take an examination on the foundational material.

Then, we shall turn our attention to contemporary theories and problems. In particular, we shall explore democracy and its relation to: liberalism, capitalism, Marxism, socialism, feminism, and environmentalism. Students will write critical analyses of contemporary writings covering these topics.

Students will also have hands-on experiences with problems of democratic governance. We shall use the classroom as a vehicle for simulating different democratic procedures, such as proportional representation and consensus. Most of our time during this part of the course will be devoted to designing and implementing a scaled-down version of the national caucus. Students will choose a controversial issue, select a sample population, conduct pre and post deliberative opinion polls, and moderate discussions among participants. Finally, we shall develop projects to compare and contrast democracy and rights in Canada, Mexico, Japan, and Nigeria.

In the remaining part of the course, we shall analyze democracy's relationship to the judiciary. How can we justify granting considerable power to a judiciary in a democracy? Students will be using the Internet to participate in the exciting attempts at constitution building taking place in eastern Europe and throughout the world. Students will choose at least two constitutions and compare them, especially with respect to the role given to the judiciary.

## **PHI 246 - Feminist Philosophies**

This course is an introduction to feminist scholarship in philosophy. Philosophy has provided some vital tools for scrutinizing social beliefs about gender relations, race, class, sex, sexuality, epistemic credibility, justice, politics, and even rationality! As a research program feminist philosophy has a number of distinct projects including (1) uncovering the gendered, raced, Western/colonial, heteronormative, or able-bodied presuppositions and biases of the Western academic philosophical canon; (2) raising new questions from the standpoint of marginalized groups; and (3) transforming the discipline by introducing new approaches to traditional questions in ethics, politics, metaphysics and epistemology.

The course is aimed at two basic student populations: philosophy students with little or no exposure to feminism and gender studies, and women's and gender studies students who with limited exposure to philosophy. Feminist Philosophies introduces all students to some of the basic concepts grounding many discussions in the discipline. We will explore key theoretical concepts and philosophical arguments that feminists have developed in response to the forms of oppression that are the subject of feminist scholarship and that animate feminist activism. In particular the course will focus on four thematic clusters including: oppression, privilege and resistance; sex/gender identity; embodiment; and questions of social justice. Special attention will be paid to women of color's contributions to these debates.

### **PHI 251 - Visions of the Self**

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 254 - Ancient Philosophy**

This course introduces students to Ancient Greek and Roman Philosophy, focusing on reality, knowledge, the self, and the good life.

### **PHI 330 – Taking Responsibility While Avoiding Blame**

In this course, we’re going to explore current debates about the nature and scope of moral responsibility. What is moral responsibility? Is it the same as legal responsibility or personal responsibility, or is it somehow different? What does it mean to hold someone morally responsible? Does it mean we want to see them punished? Does it mean we want to have a moral conversation with them? Or does it mean something else entirely? Is holding someone responsible the same as blaming them? And when is blame justified anyway? Is it justified if we feel a certain way, or is there more to it than that? Is it reasonable to refuse to blame anyone for what they’ve done, no matter how awful it is? And if it turns out that no one is truly blameworthy, how can we take responsibility for our actions and our lives, while avoiding blame? These are just some of the fascinating questions we’ll explore together. Along the way, we’ll also consider important questions about the nature of free will, the justification of punishment, and the moral status of reactive attitudes like resentment, anger, and shame. It’s also worth noting that we’ll examine non-

western views about freedom and responsibility in the course, including Buddhist and Confucian perspectives.

**PHI 350.13 – Hume’s Philosophical Legacy**

A close examination of book 1 of Hume’s seminal *A Treatise of Human Nature*, “Of Miracles,” and *The Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion*, along with an examination of the continuing philosophical significance of some of Hume’s ideas. The *Treatise* is regarded as one of the most important philosophical works in human history, and is one of the high points of empiricist philosophy in the modern period. We will discuss some important competing interpretations of Hume’s work (e.g., Hume the skeptic vs. Hume the naturalist). While the emphasis will be primarily on understanding Hume’s work, if students are interested, we might dip into some more recent literatures showing the influence of Hume on contemporary philosophy. This course will be run as a seminar.