

UNIVERSITY OF KENTUCKY PHILOSOPHY

COURSE OFFERINGS SPRING 2024

PHI 100 001-007, 009 Introduction to Philosophy: Knowledge and Reality-

An introduction to philosophical studies with emphasis on issues of knowing, reality and meaning related to human existence. **This course fulfills the UK Core Requirement: [Intellectual Inquiry in the Humanities](#).**

PHI 120 001-004, 007-008, 201 Introduction to Logic-

This course will provide an introduction to several topics related to logic and critical thinking. We will discuss the kind of mindset that makes a person better at evaluating their own beliefs, and a range of more specific topics related to this ideal, including the nature of entailment, evidence, different kinds of generalizations, the nature of causation, and the notion of “echo chambers”. Credit is not given to students who already have credit for PHI 320. **This class satisfies the UK Core: Quantitative Foundations requirement. This class satisfies the Logic requirement for philosophy minors.**

PHI 130 002-005 Introduction to Philosophy: Morality and Society-

An introduction to philosophical studies with emphasis on a critical study of principles of moral action and social and political values. **This course fulfills the UK General Education Requirement: Community, Culture and Citizenship in the USA.**

PHI 135-001 The Ethics of a Human Life- Chambers TR 11:00-12:15PM

Ethical questions arise at every stage of a human life, from before a person is born until after she dies. This course will explore the ethical questions that arise at familiar stages of a person's life: her conception, childhood, adulthood, death, and what happens after death. We will consider some surprising ways philosophers have tried to answer these questions, and we will think about how the arguments they make can help us better understand the ethical shape of a human life as a whole. **This course fulfills the UK Core Requirement: [Intellectual Inquiry in the Humanities](#).**

PHI 193 - Circus and Philosophy- Wallace TR 2:00-3:15PM

How is juggling like being a good person? What does the trapeze have to do with truth? What does the circus have to do with the self? This course uses circus as a springboard for philosophical inquiry. Students will be learning specific circus skills, such as aerial arts, juggling, and acro-balancing, in tandem with learning how to participate in philosophical discussions in metaphysics, epistemology, aesthetics, ethics, and more. Don't know how to juggle? Don't know who Aristotle is or what he said? No worries. No background in either circus or philosophy is required. A sense of wonder, a healthy curiosity about the world, and an appetite for adventure are strongly recommended **This course fulfills the UK Core Requirement: Intellectual Inquiry in Arts and Creativity.**

PHI 205 001-003 Food Ethics-

An examination of philosophical issues about food, including whether taste is subjective or objective, why different foods are acceptable to eat in some cultures but not in others, the moral permissibility of eating animals and animal by-products, and the impact of food production on the environment.

You are what you eat, or so the saying goes. Implicitly, then, food consumption and food habits express values. This course aims to give students an understanding of the ethics of our acts of eating as well as an understanding of the nature and structure of the food systems which condition these actions. Most significantly, we seek in this class to understand how our individual food choices define us as responsible members of local communities existing in broader national and global contexts. By the end of the semester, students will be able to explain how to evaluate ethically individual food choices and actions and analyze moral, social, and, even, political concerns which govern our food practices. Food ethics, thus, lays a foundation for effective and responsible participation in a diverse society by preparing students to make informed choices in the complex or unpredictable cultural contexts that can arise in U.S. communities. **This course fulfills the UK General Education Requirement: Community, Culture and Citizenship in the USA.**

PHI 260-001 History of Philosophy I: From Greek Beginnings to the Middle Ages – Bradshaw TR 11:00-12:15PM

This course is a survey of leading thinkers and ideas in western philosophy from the early Greeks to the Middle Ages. Although we will read broadly across a wide range of authors, the lion's share of attention will be devoted to Plato and Aristotle, whose work was foundational for the entire period and continues to be important today. We will also devote

several weeks at the end of the semester to the conflict between pagan and Christian thought and the transition from ancient to medieval philosophy. **This course fulfills the UK Core Requirement: [Intellectual Inquiry in the Humanities](#).**

PHI 270-001 History of Philosophy II: Renaissance to the Present- Sares TR 2:00-3:15PM

This course is a historical introduction to the Western philosophical tradition of the 17th and 18th centuries, focusing on the metaphysical and epistemological doctrines of four of its major thinkers: Descartes, Spinoza, Hume, and Kant. During the semester, we will examine the major theoretical texts of these thinkers, examining how they understand the fundamental structures of all reality and how—or whether—we can come to know them **This course fulfills the UK Core Requirement: [Intellectual Inquiry in the Humanities](#).**

PHI 305-001-003, 201 Health Care Ethics-

A consideration of the ethical issues and difficult choices generated or made acute by advances in biology, technology, and medicine. Typical issues include: informed consent, healer-patient relationships, truth telling, confidentiality, problem of birth defects, abortion, placebos and health, allocation of scarce medical resources, genetic research and experimentation, cost containment in health care, accountability of health care professionals, care of the dying, and death.

PHI 305--004 Health Care Ethics- Bursten TR 9:30-10:45

In the Old Testament, the Book of Ecclesiastes tells us that everything that happens, happens in its own time: a time to be born, a time to die. A time to kill, a time to heal. A time to keep silence, a time to speak. This advice, handed down from a traditional source of moral authority, suggests a contextual response to ethical questions, such as "Is it ever alright to kill someone for medical reasons?" "Do healthcare providers ever have an obligation to share a patient's secrets with their family members or authorities?" and "Is it ever alright to violate someone's religious beliefs if you believe that in doing so, you are saving their life?" We turn to a wide variety of sources of moral authority to answer these sorts of questions, from religious texts to the laws of a country, the rules of a hospital, and the values of an individual or family. These moral compasses that we use greatly influence the ways that we think about people's rights when it comes to health care and biomedical research.

Our aim in this course is to examine the ways that we make decisions about moral and ethical dilemmas in health care, and how these decisions affect health care providers and beneficiaries, as well as their families and the public at large. We will examine cases from a variety of clinical and research settings. By comparing cases of conflict between individual and group rights, provider and patient rights, and intercultural conflicts of values, students will develop basic moral concepts such as what constitutes a right and a moral obligation, analyze the relative importance of values across a variety of cultural and clinical contexts, and formulate a self-reflective picture of their own moral compasses in health care settings. This course has no prerequisites.

PHI 310-001 Philosophy of Human Nature- Sares TR 9:30-10:45AM

This course will develop a phenomenological account of our being-in-the-world. In conversation with the phenomenological tradition from Husserl onward, we will question how our experience in and of the world is constituted. We will cover themes including time, facticity, value, the body, intersubjectivity, birth, and death. **This course fulfills the UK Core Requirement: [Intellectual Inquiry in the Humanities](#).**

PHI 315-001-002 Philosophy and Science Fiction-

An examination of fundamental questions in metaphysics and epistemology through a comparison of works of philosophy and science fiction. Questions will be discussed such as: Can there be time travel? Can computers think? Can there be non-human persons, and if so how would we identify them? Can there be ways of knowing that are radically different from our own, and what might they be like? How much can a person change while remaining the same person. **This course fulfills the UK Core Requirement: Intellectual Inquiry in Arts and Creativity.**

PHI 317-001-002 Existentialist Thought and Literature- Sares TR 3:00-4:45PM

A survey of existentialism as a literary movement as well as a philosophical one, with emphasis upon their intersection and interaction. The course will trace the emergence of existentialist themes in modern thought and culture, and will analyze and assess the movements' continuing significance.

PHI 320-001 Symbolic Logic I-

A systematic study of sentential logic, elementary quantification, and the logic of identity. The student will acquire specific skills in symbolic methods of analysis which are necessary for further study in logic as well as useful for addressing complex issues in philosophy and other areas.

PHI 330-001- Ethics- Superson TR 12:30-1:45PM

This course is on theoretical, not applied (e.g., medical, business, professional), ethics. It deals with some of the main issues in both normative ethics (ethical theory) and metaethics (abstract issues about ethics). It is designed to give the student the requisite background for advanced study in ethics (i.e., PHI 530). For this purpose, it is aimed at philosophy majors, though students who want to learn more about theoretical ethics may also be interested. We will examine some of the following topics: moral and cultural relativism, subjectivism, the connection between morality and religion, ethical egoism, social contract theory, utilitarianism, Kantian ethics, the ethic of care, virtue ethics, moral nihilism, moral skepticism, moral objectivity, and why be moral.

TEXTS: The Elements of Moral Philosophy, James Rachels/Seventh Edition by Stuart Rachels (McGraw Hill, 2012)

PHI 334-001-002, 201 Business Ethics-

An introduction to moral problems that arise in contemporary business practice and the ethical frameworks proposed to resolve them. Topics will include areas such as truth-

telling and integrity; social responsibility; property rights and their limitations; and justice in personnel and labor practices.

PHI 335-001-002 The Individual and Society -

This course is an intermediate introduction to topics in political philosophy. We will examine the claims that individuals can make on one another in society. We will begin by asking what the foundational values of a well-ordered society are. We will then ask how we should balance conflicts between these values. How, for example, should we adjudicate conflicts between freedom and equality? We will then look at some of the obstacles to

justice involving work, the family, and racial oppression. To address these questions, we will examine both historical and contemporary accounts of justice.

PHI 336-001-002 Environmental Ethics-

In Environmental Ethics, we study the theory of our ethical relation to the nonhuman world, the social and political contexts in which these ethical theories function, and the idea of sustainability. Some basic questions we ask include the following: How does an environmental ethic differ from traditional ethical theories? Do nonhuman animals or ecosystems have moral worth, and if so, how can competing moral claims between distinct moral entities be adjudicated? What is the human place in nature? How ought we to conserve the natural world? What is sustainability, and in what sense is this an ethical theory?

PHI 337-001 Introduction to Legal Philosophy –

A general introduction to basic concepts, institutions, and mechanisms of law. Understanding of the legal system and its methods is promoted through discussion of topics which include: basic legal reasoning, the function of the legal process, fundamental legal concepts and categories (such as property, crime, and contract)..

PHI 340-001 Introduction to Feminisim and Philosophy– Nenadic TR 2:00-3:15PM

This course introduces students to treating feminist topics in a philosophical way. This means examining how experiences, which mainly (though not only) affect women and girls, have compelled us to rethink our understanding of matters such as human nature, freedom, awareness of oppression, and notions of victims and survivors. In doing so, we examine how those experiences have pushed us to come up with new concepts to help us identify and make discrimination, abuses, and inequalities that have long been covered up newly visible. We also explore how these new concepts have spurred changes in law and in society.

To this end, some topics that we may cover include social and political inequalities, sexual harassment, different forms of sexual abuse, pornography, and the #MeToo Movement. This course is interdisciplinary. It combines relevant insights from major works in the history and canon of philosophy and thought, especially social and political philosophy and philosophy of technology, with contemporary writings and real-world platforms and media that have been on the cutting edge of bringing harms to light and, so, are

foundational to *philosophy's* work of questioning and reconceptualizing such experiences. We may also include illuminating frameworks from other disciplines such as psychology and its concepts of narcissistic personality and sociopathy, which aid us in this philosophical end.

PHI 340-002 Introduction to Feminism and Philosophy– Craig MWF 9:00-9:50AM

PHI 343-001 HONORS Asian Philosophy – Sanday TR 9:30-10:45AM

In this seminar course, we will dig into questions of selfhood and community by way of major texts from the Hindu, Buddhist (Pali texts), Confucian, Daoist, and Zen traditions. We will be guided by two main ideas. First, we will pay special attention to the principle of “letting be” (*wu-wei*, lit. “in the absence of/without doing or exertion”) as it crops up with different inflections in these historical contexts, and we will aim to distinguish this from the concept of “work” in the European tradition, including the idea of a “work ethic.” Second, we will examine the power of the unexpected and the unfamiliar. We will be interrogating our own culturally specific assumptions about selfhood, life, and community through weekly writing exercises and intensive in-class discussion. The semester project could be a series of shows proposed to and hopefully aired on student radio station WRFL in which participants in PHI 343H provide live commentary in response to recorded or live interviews with Kentuckians of public or private note, a parent or even the Governor. Alternatively, the semester project could be an exhibit or a Tic-Tok channel of Asian art curated and explained by course participants. Student leaders will drive class discussion and decide the semester project.

Open to Honors Students & PHI majors-minors.

PHI 350-001 Metaphysics and Epistemology - Batty TR 12:30-1:45PM

This is an upper-level undergraduate course in contemporary metaphysics and epistemology.

Metaphysics is the area of philosophy that deals with the question: what is there and what is it like? Our focus will be on the topics of personhood, agency, and the nature of virtual worlds. The questions we will be looking at include:

If everything in the world is determined by previous events, can we say that we ever act freely? If we can't, should this worry us?

- *What is required for the survival of a thing over time? What kinds of things make you the person you are today—i.e., what kind of characteristics constitute your identity at any given time?*
- *What is the status of virtual selves and other objects in virtual reality? Are they real or are they somehow fictions? And what does it even mean to say that they are unreal?*

Epistemology is the area of philosophy that deals with the question: what is the nature of knowledge and reasonable belief? We will concentrate on the topics of skepticism, the nature of knowledge and justification, as well as on normative questions regarding our obligations to others, and ourselves, as knowers. In answering the latter, we will focus on how technology (e.g., virtual reality) aids, or impairs, the satisfaction of those obligations. The questions we will be looking at include:

- *Do we know anything about the external world? How possible is it that we are really living in a simulation?*
- *What is knowledge? What responsibilities do we have to others, in addition to ourselves, as knowers? In what ways can technology (such as virtual reality) extend, or hinder, our knowledge and understanding of others?*
- *Are there rules about how we ought to come to believe things? If so, what are they? What makes it the case that we are justified in having certain beliefs?*

This course is a Graduation Composition and Communication Requirement (GCCR) course in certain programs, and hence is not likely to be eligible for automatic transfer credit to UK.

PHI 380-001 Death, Dying and Quality of Life - 001 Leaman TR 11-12:15PM, 002 TR 9:30-10:45AM

One thing we can be sure of is that we are going to die, and there are various ways to understand this fact. This course will examine a range of issues that arise when we reflect on our mortality. We will consider some of the understandings of death in a variety of religious philosophies both Eastern and Western, including immortality, rebirth, the nature of the soul and so on. What attitude should we adopt to death and how far can it be said to be evil? Are suicide, euthanasia and abortion wrong, and in what circumstances is it acceptable to kill someone? Is there a quality of life so low that it would be better not to be alive, or not to have lived? We shall also examine some of the cultural features of death and dying. The course will be assessed through examination, essay and presentation.

PHI 515-001: Contemporary Philosophy: The Analytic Turn Bursten TR 12:30-1:45PM

Where did modern symbolic logic come from, and what did it have to do with winning World War II? What counts as good philosophical methodology? And can we ever truly understand each other? These questions all underlie the project of analytic philosophy, a philosophical movement that took root in the English-speaking world during the 20th century. The hallmarks of analytic philosophy are logical analysis and the centralization of language as an object of philosophical study, but analytic philosophy has addressed problems in nearly every philosophical sub-discipline, from ethics and feminist theory to the metaphysics of time and the philosophy of art.

What "analysis" consists in, however, is still a matter of some debate. In 1959, Bertrand Russell wrote, "Ever since I abandoned the philosophy of Kant and Hegel, I have sought solutions of philosophical problems by means of analysis; and I remain firmly persuaded, in spite of some modern tendencies to the contrary, that only by analysing is progress possible." The analytic approach to philosophical progress is both a philosophical method and a historical movement with an immense impact on contemporary philosophy, as well as on computer science, linguistics, and public thought. In this historically-oriented class, students will be introduced to the exchanges of ideas that created analytic philosophy and its offshoots, including contemporary logic and the philosophy of science, and they will practice philosophy in the analytic mode.

PHI 320 (Symbolic Logic) or its equivalent is a suggested but not required prerequisite to this class. This class satisfies the Group A Requirement for Philosophy Majors.

This class DOES NOT satisfy the Contemporary Course requirement for Graduate students in Philosophy.

PHI 537-001 Philosophy of Law: Feminism- Nenadic TR 11:00AM-12:00PM

This course centers on feminism's multidisciplinary and philosophical work in uncovering a world of systemic harmful experiences targeting mainly women and girls and on the ways that feminism's new concepts have guided efforts to change law to make it more universally accountable to *all* citizens. Some topics that we may cover are: the development and evolution of sexual harassment law as sex discrimination; a civil rights approach to pornography; prejudices and biases as impediments to prosecuting sexual assault; Title IX and workplace human resources departments; #MeToo and the limits of law; individual high profile sexual assault cases (e.g., Roger Ailes, Bill Cosby, Donald Trump, Harvey Weinstein); misuses of law to cover up sexual harassment and assault; non-disclosure agreements (NDAs); the role of social media; and international perspectives.

Prereq: PHI 130, 330, or 335, or the consent of the instructor.

This class satisfies the Contemporary Course requirement [in Value Theory] for Graduate students in Philosophy.

PHI 545-001: Philosophy of Religion Bradshaw TR 2:00-3:15PM

What does it mean to believe in God? What are the consequences of such belief, both intellectual and practical, and to what problems does it give rise?

The answer to such questions depends in large measure on what one means by God. It also depends on how a given form of belief is embodied in institutions and cultural practices (a “religion”), as well as other factors such as one’s historical situation and individual disposition. To believe in the Christian God is likely to mean something very different for a modern person than it did for a medieval monk, and the same is likely to be true for someone who has come to faith through a personal crisis and someone who received it from a young age through education and upbringing.

The focus of this course will be on different conceptions of God and their intellectual implications, although without losing sight of the practical, historical, and uniquely personal dimensions of belief. The course will have three parts. The first will consist of readings from the sacred writings of the major world religions such as the Bhagavad-Gita, the Legend of the Buddha, the Bible, and the Qu’ran. Our aim will be to understand how God or the supreme reality is presented in each, along with the answer given to various ancillary questions such as the source of evil and the nature of a good human life. The second part of the course will turn to the varying ways God has been conceived within western philosophy, including how and why the predominant or “default” view ultimately shifted from theism to atheism. Readings for this part of the course will be drawn from Plato, St. Anselm of Canterbury, Leibniz, Darwin, and Nietzsche. The third part of the course will consist of writings by contemporary philosophers on various contested issues in the philosophy of religion, such as arguments for the existence of God, the problem of evil, freedom and foreknowledge, and the relationship of God to morality.

Prerequisites: PHI 100, 260, 270 or the consent of the instructor.

This class DOES NOT satisfy the Contemporary Course requirement for Graduate students in Philosophy.

PHI 575-001 Philosophy of Mind Batty TR 9:30-10:45AM

This course is an examination of many of the central issues in the philosophy of mind. Questions we will consider are:

- How does the mind fit into the physical world? What is the relation between the mind and the body? Are minds just brains? Or are they non-physical things?
- Can computers think? Could they ever be conscious? Does the mind stand to the brain as a computer program stands to its hardware?
- I can hope that the Wildcats will win the National Championship and you can believe that they will not. How is it that creatures like us have thoughts that are “about” things and events in the world?
- Can pains, for example, be given a scientific explanation? Or is there something about pains, and other conscious experiences, that a scientific explanation will always miss out on?
- What is the nature of our sensory experiences? Do we have the kind of access to the external world that we think we do—i.e., direct experience?

In examining these questions, we will consider how conceptions of the mind have been influenced by changes in the broader scientific environment. We will see that, despite recent advances in the areas of neuroscience and cognitive science, pressing questions about the mind remain.

This class satisfies the Contemporary Course requirement [in Metaphysics and Epistemology] for Graduate students in Philosophy.

PHI 592-001 Aesthetics Sundell MW 2:00-3:15 PM

In this course, we survey a number of topics of interest to contemporary philosophers working in aesthetics and the philosophy of art. What, if anything, differentiates aesthetic terms and judgements from other types of language and thought? How do we square the personal, subjective nature of aesthetic judgement with our eagerness to debate matters of taste? What role should an author or artist's intentions or context play in our interpretation of an artwork? And finally, what is the role of art in society? Must an artwork be morally good to be aesthetically good?

This class satisfies the Contemporary Course requirement [in Value Theory] for Graduate students in Philosophy.

PHI 630-001 Seminar in Value Theory: Moral Psychology- Superson T 4:00-6:30PM

Immoral Motivation: This is a class on moral motivation, but it will focus specifically on immoral action and explanations for it. What goes wrong when someone acts immorally? Is it a flaw in their reasoning? A lack of certain emotions? A failure to put themselves in the shoes of their victim? A lack of moral knowledge? What should they have known? Is the explanation for immoral behavior the same for the person who acts immorally occasionally as for the downright evil person? What does the answer to these questions tell us about moral epistemology, moral obligations, and ideal moral agency?

Readings will be contemporary journal articles posted on Canvas. The format of the class will be weekly student short paper presentations and discussions on the readings.

This class satisfies the Contemporary Course requirement [in Value Theory] for Graduate students in Philosophy.

PHI 680-001 Special Topics in Philosophy: Words and the Word- Rosemann M 4:00-6:30PM

Since Ferdinand de Saussure, whose Course in General Linguistics has been foundational for modern linguistics and philosophy of language, language has been considered to be composed of signs in which signifier and signified stand in an entirely conventional, arbitrary relationship. Furthermore, Saussure explicitly brackets the question of how such signs can be related to reality: words signify not because of their connection with the world, but because they function in a system of differences. Approached in this manner, language floats “above” reality. There is no way to understand text except through context, so that meaning is forever “deferred”—hence Derrida’s famous *différance*.

But what if the relationship between language and reality were much closer? There is a tradition which claims that reality itself was “spoken” into existence; indeed, that God himself is Word! In this tradition, reality is like a text that can be read: it is the “book of nature,” in which everything is inherently a sign of its Maker. We just need to learn how to read ...

Now it is easy to object that the idea of the creative Word is merely a myth. Maybe it is. Interestingly, however, the Judaeo-Christian idea that language is creative has a parallel in the contemporary theory of performative speech. The founder of that theory, J. L. Austin, composed a famous book under the title, *How To Do Things With Words*. On Austin’s account (an account further developed by John Searle and others, including Judith Butler), words do not just state things, but intervene in the order of reality itself.

In another contemporary tradition of philosophy, Martin Heidegger has spoken of language as the “house of being.” Careful listening to language, especially through etymological analysis, uncovers foundational experiences in which reality has revealed itself. But philosophy may no longer be capable of such listening. For Heidegger, then, the “task of thinking,” after the “end of philosophy,” is poetic. Only the poets now know how to speak.

Open to undergraduates(PHI Majors/Minors) with consent of the instructor.

This class DOES NOT satisfy the Contemporary Course requirement for Graduate students in Philosophy.

PHI 700-001 Seminar in Ancient Philosophy: Platonic Ontology - Sanday R 4:00-6:30PM

This course is a study of the account of being in Parmenides and Plato. The majority of the semester will be devoted to Plato’s radical reappropriation of the Parmenidean insight into being in the *Parmenides*, with substantial reference to the "five of the greatest kinds" section in the *Sophist*. Our study of the core elements of Platonic ontology will include the account of causality, the role of limit in the causal imposition of structure, the fundamental combinations responsible for all determinate intelligibility, and (time permitting) the account of the receptacle in the *Timaeus*. We will also attempt situate our study with reference to the Neoplatonic account of the One and to the Hegelian account of cause, in order to understand Plato in relation to some of his closest companions in thought. As we go, we will attempt to establish for ourselves how evidence is presented in each case, comparing especially the different senses of what shows itself and how in image and argument.

Open to undergraduates(PHI Majors/Minors) with consent of the instructor.

This class DOES NOT satisfy the Contemporary Course requirement for Graduate students in Philosophy.

PHI 742-001 Proseminar in Value Theory W 4:00-6:30PM

1st year graduate course in Value Theory in the ancient, modern, and contemporary periods.