PHILOSOPHY

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FACULTY OF THE DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY


Assistant Professors Daniel Greco, Christopher Lebron, Elizabeth Miller, John Pittard

Philosophy courses numbered 100 through 199 are introductory. They are open to all students and have no prerequisites. Courses numbered 200 through 399 are intermediate. Some have prerequisites; others do not, and may be taken as a student’s first course in philosophy, though such a student should consult the instructor first. In general, it is a good idea to take a broadly based course in any area of philosophy before taking a specialized course.

Courses numbered 400 through 479 and 481 through 485 are seminars. These advanced courses are intended primarily for juniors and seniors, though other students may be admitted with the instructor’s permission. Undergraduates should be sure they have enough background to take such a course, including previous work in the same area of philosophy. Students with questions should consult the instructor.

The standard major Prerequisite to the Philosophy major are two introductory or intermediate philosophy courses. The major requires twelve courses (including the prerequisites and the senior requirement) that collectively expose students to a wide range of philosophy and philosophers. The Philosophy curriculum is divided into three broad groups: history of philosophy (PHIL 125–174, 200–264, 400–424, 481–485), metaphysics and epistemology (PHIL 265–319, 425–449), and ethics and value theory (PHIL 175–199, 320–399, 450–479). In history of philosophy, majors are required to take (a) either PHIL 125 and 126 or both terms of Directed Studies (DRST 003, 004), and (b) an additional, third course in history of philosophy. Majors are encouraged to take PHIL 125 and 126 as early as possible; these courses may be taken in either order. Majors must complete two courses in metaphysics and epistemology, two courses in ethics and value theory, and a course in logic (such as PHIL 115), the last preferably by the fall of their junior year. Majors must also take two seminars (either or both of which can be counted toward one of the group requirements) and satisfy the senior requirement as described below.

All courses in Philosophy count toward the twelve-course requirement. With approval from the director of undergraduate studies, courses offered by other departments may be counted toward the major requirements, though no more than two such courses will normally be allowed.

Specific regulations for the group requirements are as follows:

1. Some introductory courses do not count toward any group requirement. Other courses count toward a group requirement unless they are otherwise designated.
2. Courses automatically count toward the group under which they are listed in this bulletin. In rare cases, a course will be designated as counting toward a second group, although no single course can be counted by the same student toward two group requirements. In addition, students may petition to have a course count toward a group other than the one under which it is listed in this bulletin, though the presumption will be against such petitions.
3. Courses taken in other departments and applied to the major will not normally count toward a group requirement. Students may petition for credit toward a group requirement, though the presumption will be against such petitions.

Psychology track The psychology track is designed for students interested in both philosophy and psychology. Prerequisite to the major in the psychology track are two courses in philosophy or psychology. Majors in the track must take seven courses in philosophy and five in psychology, for a total of twelve, including the prerequisites and senior requirement. The seven philosophy courses must include (a) two courses in the history of philosophy, usually PHIL 125 and 126 or DRST 003 and 004, (b) a course in logic, such as PHIL 115, preferably by the fall of the junior year, (c) two seminars, one of which may be in the Psychology department, with the approval of the director of undergraduate studies, and (d) at least two courses at the intermediate or advanced level that bear on the intersection of philosophy and psychology, at least one of which must be a philosophy seminar. Courses satisfying (d) must be approved by the director of undergraduate studies. The five psychology courses must include PSYC 110 or its equivalent. Each major must also satisfy the senior requirement as described below.

The senior requirement The senior requirement is normally satisfied by completing a third philosophy seminar. Students taking a seminar to satisfy the senior requirement are expected to produce work superior in argument and articulation to that of a standard seminar paper. To this end, students taking a seminar for the senior requirement must satisfy additional requirements that are delineated in the syllabus or during the first class session, and that may include (a) additional readings, (b) submission of a complete draft of the final paper by the eighth week of the term that will then be significantly revised, and (c) one-on-one or small-group meetings with the instructor to discuss class material, the additional readings, and drafts in preparation.
In special cases, students may meet the senior requirement through either a one-term or a two-term independent project supervised by an instructor (PHIL 490, 491). Students must petition to fulfill the senior requirement through an independent project, and approval is not guaranteed. Applicants must submit a proposal to the director of undergraduate studies, in consultation with an appropriate supervisor, by the end of the term prior to beginning the independent study.

Each major should, by October 1 of the junior year, secure the agreement of a member of the Philosophy department to serve as adviser for the year. The adviser aids the student in choosing courses and in planning for the senior year. All senior majors must have their schedules signed by the director of undergraduate studies.

Credit/D/Fail No more than one course taken Credit/D/Fail may be counted toward the major, with the permission of the director of undergraduate studies. This applies to both the standard and the psychology tracks.


**REQUIREMENTS OF THE MAJOR**

**Prerequisites**
- **Standard track** – any 2 intro or intermediate phil courses; **Psychology track** – any 2 courses in phil or psych

**Number of courses**
- Both tracks – 12 term courses, incl prereqs and senior req

**Specific courses required**
- **Standard track** – PHIL 125 and 126, or DRST 003 and 004; **Psychology track** – PSYC 110 or equivalent

**Distribution of courses**
- **Standard track** – 3 courses in hist of phil (incl DRST 003 and 004, or PHIL 125 and 126), 2 in metaphysics and epistemology, 2 in ethics and value theory, and 1 in logic; 2 phil sems; **Psychology track** – 7 courses in phil, as specified; 5 courses in psych

**Senior requirement** Both tracks – a third sem in phil, or a one- or two-term independent project (PHIL 490, 491)

**Introductory Courses**

PHIL 115a, First-Order Logic  Elizabeth Miller
An introduction to formal logic. Study of the formal deductive systems and semantics for both propositional and predicate logic. Some discussion of metatheory.  QR

**HISTORY OF PHILOSOPHY**

PHIL 125a / CLCV 125a, Introduction to Ancient Philosophy  Brad Inwood
An introduction to ancient philosophy, beginning with the earliest pre-Socratics, concentrating on Plato and Aristotle, and including a brief foray into Hellenistic philosophy. Intended to be taken in conjunction with PHIL 126.  HU

PHIL 126b, Introduction to Modern Philosophy from Descartes to Kant  Michael Della Rocca
An introduction to major figures in the history of modern philosophy, with critical reading of works by Descartes, Malabranche, Spinoza, Leibniz, Locke, Berkeley, Hume, and Kant. Intended to be taken in conjunction with PHIL 125, although PHIL 125 is not a prerequisite.  HU

**ETHICS AND VALUE THEORY**

PHIL 175b, Introduction to Ethics  Shelly Kagan
What makes one act right and another wrong? What am I morally required to do for others? What is the basis of morality? These are some of the questions raised in moral philosophy. Examination of two of the most important answers, the theories of Mill and Kant, with brief consideration of the views of Hume and Hobs. Discussion of the question: Why be moral?  HU  

EPE: Intro Ethics

PHIL 177b / AFAM 198b / CGSC 277b / EP&E 494b, Propaganda, Ideology, and Democracy  Jason Stanley
Historical, philosophical, psychological, and linguistic introduction to the issues and challenges that propaganda raises for liberal democracy. How propaganda can work to undermine democracy; ways in which schools and the press are implicated; the use of propaganda by social movements to address democracy’s deficiencies; the legitimacy of propaganda in cases of political crisis.  HU

PHIL 178a, Introduction to Political Philosophy  Thomas Pogge
A survey of social and political theory, beginning with Plato and continuing through modern philosophers such as Rawls, Nozick, and Cohen. Emphasis on tracing the development of political ideas; challenges to political theories.  HU

PHIL 180b / PLSC 191b, Ethics and International Affairs  Thomas Pogge
Moral reflection taken beyond state boundaries. Traditional questions about state conduct and international relations as well as more recent questions about intergovernmental agencies, nongovernmental organizations, and the design of global institutional arrangements.  HU
PHIL 182a / CGSC 282a / PSYC 182a, Perspectives on Human Nature  Joshua Knobe
Comparison of philosophical and psychological perspectives on human nature. Nietzsche on morality, paired with contemporary work on the psychology of moral judgment; Marx on religion, paired with systematic research on the science of religious belief; Schopenhauer paired with social psychology on happiness.  

* PHIL 190b / AFAM 211b / PLSC 330b, Morality and Black Literature  Christopher Lebron
Conceptual and philosophical connections between black literature and moral philosophy. Ways in which both sets of studies inform each other for the purposes of theorizing social justice.  

Intermediate Courses

HISTORY OF PHILOSOPHY

PHIL 200b / CLCV 261b, Plato  Verity Harte
Focus on the central philosophical themes in the work of Plato and on methodology for studying Plato. Some prior philosophical study of Plato is recommended, such as PHIL/CLCV 125 or DRST 003.  

* PHIL 201a / RLST 314a, Kierkegaard  Staff
Study of select works of Søren Kierkegaard, with focus on his conceptions of faith, despair, history, and love. No prerequisites.  

* PHIL 202b / RLST 277b, Existentialism  Noreen Khawaja
Introduction to key problems in European existentialism. The development of the tradition from its roots in romantic theories of individual autonomy; the sweeping culture critiques of Sartre and Marcuse; the adoption and transformation of religious ideas. Readings from Rousseau, Kierkegaard, Gide, Lukács, Nietzsche, Heidegger, and de Beauvoir.  

PHIL 261a / GMAN 213a, Realism, Idealism, and Romanticism  Paul Franks
Investigation of the possibility of individual agency and absolute reason in modernity. Introduction to figures from classical German philosophy such as Kant, Goethe, Mendelssohn, Jacobi, Fichte, Schelling, Schlegel, and Hegel. Themes include realism, idealism, romanticism, skepticism, nihilism, freedom, individuality, systematicity, and romantic irony.  

METAPHYSICS AND EPISTEMOLOGY

PHIL 267b, Mathematical Logic  Sun-Joo Shin
An introduction to the metatheory of first-order logic, up to and including the completeness theorem for the first-order calculus. Introduction to the basic concepts of set theory. Prerequisite: PHIL 115 or permission of instructor.  

Math: Logic/Foundations

PHIL 269b, The Philosophy of Science  Daniel Greco
Central questions about the nature of scientific theory and practice. Factors that make a discipline a science; how and why scientific theories change over time; interpreting probabilistic claims in science; whether simpler theories are more likely to be true; the laws of nature; whether physics has a special status compared to other sciences; the legitimacy of adaptationist thinking in evolutionary biology.  

PHIL 270b, Epistemology  Keith DeRose
Introduction to current topics in the theory of knowledge. The analysis of knowledge, justified belief, rationality, certainty, and evidence.  

* PHIL 274a / GMAN 254a / JDST 355a / RLST 249a, Jewish Philosophy  Paul Franks
Introduction to Jewish philosophy, including classical rationalism of Maimonides, classical kabbalah, and Franz Rosenzweig’s inheritance of both traditions. Critical examination of concepts arising in and from Jewish life and experience, in a way that illuminates universal problems of leading a meaningful human life in a multicultural and increasingly globalized world. No previous knowledge of Judaism is required.  

PHIL 281a, Infinity  Zoltán Szabó
The idea of infinity. Traditional and contemporary versions of the paradoxes of space, time, and motion, as well as the paradoxes of classes, chances, and truth. Some elementary arithmetic, geometry, probability theory, and set theory.  

* PHIL 311b / RLST 303b, The End of Metaphysics  Nancy Levene
Exploration of the end, or aim, of metaphysics in light of the supposition that it is at an end. Readings from classics and critics in the history of philosophy and religion.  

ETHICS AND VALUE THEORY

PHIL 320a / ARCH 322a, Philosophy of Architecture  Karsten Harries
Perspectives on the questions of architectural aesthetics, language, space, and ethics from the position of contemporary phenomenology.  

* PHIL 321a / HUMS 311a / PLSC 285a, Political Theology  Steven Smith
Discussion of political theology as the foundation of political authority. The question of whether authority derives from reason or revelation, or from secular or religious sources. Examination of the dialectic of secularization and religious belief in some of the writings of Hobbes, Spinoza, Rousseau, Kant, Maistre, Schmitt, and Strauss. a course in political philosophy or intellectual history.  

HU
* PHIL 322a / JDST 216a, Intersubjectivity and Dialogue  Asaf Angermann
Study of the multiple philosophical perspectives on the problem of intersubjectivity in twentieth century philosophy, including the phenomenological method in continental philosophy, the problem of other minds in analytic philosophy, and the dialogical principle in modern Jewish thought. Permission of the instructor is required.  HU

* PHIL 325b / AFAM 301a / PLSC 334a, The Making of Black Lives Matter  Christopher Lebron
Intellectual history and philosophical underpinnings of black political and social thought relevant to the Black Lives Matter social movement. The works of black writers; the role of love in social justice; how artistic movements impact critical black thought; sexuality, gender, and invisibility; and whether the role of leaders is still relevant in black politics and movements.  HU

PHIL 326a / RLST 402a, The Philosophy of Religion  John Hare
The relation between religion and ethics, traditional arguments for the existence of God, religious experience, the problem of evil, miracles, immortality, science and religion, and faith and reason.  HU

* PHIL 330b / AFAM 300b / PLSC 337b, Afrofuturism  Christopher Lebron
Survey of Afrofuturism from political and philosophical perspectives, with investigation of alternative forms of narrative and social critique to bear on contemporary questions of race, imagination, and social justice. How black writers, thinkers, and musicians have turned to speculative genres to observe American history and politics as well as urgent moral dilemmas.  SO

Seminars

HISTORY OF PHILOSOPHY

* PHIL 407b / CLCV 420b, The Central Books of Aristotle’s Metaphysics  David Charles
Examination of Aristotle’s Metaphysics. Discussion of substance and essence in the central books, Z, H, and Θ and assessment of recent attempts to interpret his account. Prerequisite: previous study of ancient philosophy and permission of the instructor.  HU

* PHIL 409b / CLCV 409b, Plato’s Philebus  Verity Harte
Discussion of Plato’s Philebus (in translation), the late work in which he examines the competing claims of pleasure and reason to be the basis of human happiness and in which he provides a portrait of the best human life. One course in ancient philosophy and at least one additional philosophy course. Preference given to senior majors in Philosophy and Classics.  HU

* PHIL 410b / EALL 308b, Sages of the Ancient World  Michael Hunter
Comparative survey of ancient discourses about wisdom from China, India, the Near East, Egypt, Greece, and Rome. Topics include teaching, scheming, and dying.  HU

* PHIL 424b / GMAN 382b / JDST 217b, Hegel’s Phenomenology of Spirit  Paul Franks
A close reading of sections of one of the major works in post-Kantian philosophy. Themes include varieties of scepticism and responses to scepticism; the relationship of epistemology to questions concerning structures of social practices of reasoning; the historical character of reason; the relationship between natural processes and social developments; the intersubjectivity of consciousness; and the possibility of a philosophical critique of culture. Attention paid both to commentaries that focus on historical development and to approaches that view historical narratives as allegories whose deeper meaning may be formulated as a logical or semantic theory. Two previous philosophy courses, including some exposure to Kant and German Idealism, through either DRST 004 or PHIL 126 or PHIL 214 or PHIL 261. Students are particularly encouraged but not required to take PHIL 261 before taking this course.  HU

* PHIL 481b, Reconsidering Early Modern Rationalism  Michael Della Rocca and Julia Borcherding
Reexamination of early modern rationalism and the narrative underlying it. Focus on both canonical and non-canonical figures who seem to bear marks of rationalist thinkers, such as René Descartes, Baruch Spinoza, G.W.F. Leibniz, Anne Conway, and Émilie du Châtelet. Attention to the apparent clash between rationalism and empiricism and to related methodological issues. Prerequisite: at least two previous courses in philosophy.  HU

METAPHYSICS AND EPISTEMOLOGY

Introduction to the emerging field of moral cognition. Focus on questions about the philosophical significance of psychological findings. Topics include the role of emotion in moral judgment; the significance of character traits in virtue ethics and personality psychology; the reliability of intuitions and the psychological processes that underlie them.  HU

* PHIL 427b, Computability and Logic  Sun-Joo Shin
A technical exposition of Gödel’s first and second incompleteness theorems and of some of their consequences in proof theory and model theory, such as Löb’s theorem, Tarski’s undefinability of truth, provability logic, and nonstandard models of arithmetic. Prerequisite: PHIL 267 or permission of instructor.  QP, HU
Math: Logic/Foundations

* PHIL 442a, Language and Power  Jason Stanley
Investigation into the way language shapes our social world, drawing on readings from feminist theory, critical race theory, formal semantics and pragmatics, political psychology, and European history. One philosophy course; a basic course in logic would be helpful.  HU
* PHIL 443b, Philosophy of Quantum Mechanics  Elizabeth Miller
Examination of philosophical issues as informed by quantum mechanics and evaluation of why that which quantum mechanical formalism tells us about the world remains controversial. Topics include the measurement problem, superposition, non-locality, the wave function, configuration space, probability, and compatibility with relativity.

* PHIL 448b, Moral and Epistemic Dilemmas  Daniel Greco
A close study of recent work on both moral and epistemic dilemmas. Discussion of both the particular cases alleged to give rise to dilemmas, as well as more general theoretical considerations that have been adduced for and against recognizing a category of dilemmas in normative theorizing. Emphasis will be placed on drawing connections between the two literatures. One course in either ethics or epistemology.  HU

* PHIL 449a, Personal Identity  Kenneth Winkler
Study and discussion of the nature of persons, their unity, and the conditions of their identity over time. Readings in classical and contemporary sources, including Locke, Hume, Shaftesbury, Butler, Reid, Bernard Williams, Derek Parfit, Charles Taylor, Sally Haslanger, David Lewis, and Mark Johnston. Consideration of the metaphysics of kinds; social construction; philosophical methodology; and the bearing of ethics on metaphysics. Previous PHIL course or permission of the instructor.  HU

ETHICS AND VALUE THEORY

* PHIL 452a, History of Early Modern Ethics  Stephen Darwall
An examination of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century ethical philosophy, including Hobbes, Hutcheson, Hume, Butler, Rousseau, Kant, Smith, and Bentham.  HU

* PHIL 455b / EP&E 334b, Normative Ethics  Shelly Kagan
A systematic examination of normative ethics, the part of moral philosophy that attempts to articulate and defend the basic principles of morality. The course surveys and explores some of the main normative factors relevant in determining the moral status of a given act or policy (features that help make a given act right or wrong). Brief consideration of some of the main views about the foundations of normative ethics (the ultimate basis or ground for the various moral principles). Prerequisite: One course in semantics or pragmatics, or permission of instructor.  SO RP

In-depth study of one contemporary book, author, or debate in political philosophy, political theory, or normative economics. Focus varies from year to year based on student interest and may include a ground-breaking new book, the life’s work of a prominent author, or an important theme in contemporary political thought.  HU

* PHIL 462b / EP&E 255b / PLSC 306b, Sovereignty  Andrew March
The history of the concept of sovereignty, including current debates over its meaning in political philosophy, international relations, and jurisprudence. Discussion of how these debates relate to both historical and contemporary political problems.  SO

* PHIL 464a / PLSC 291a, Justice, Taxes, and Global Financial Integrity  Thomas Pogge
Study of the formulation, interpretation, and enforcement of national and international tax rules from the perspective of national and global economic justice. Previous courses in one or two of the following: law, economics, political science, or political philosophy.  HU

* PHIL 467b / PLSC 338b, The Ethics of Climate Change  Alexandre Gajevic Sayegh
The response of the United States to global climate change and questions of climate justice. The importance of bridging the gap between theories of climate justice and real world climate policy. Topics include the effort to fairly mitigate and adapt to climate change; the responsibility to act upon climate change by countries and individuals; and how economics, environmental, and social sciences should contribute to the conceptualization of action-guiding moral and political theories.  SO

PHIL 474a / PLSC 326a, Borders, Culture, and Citizenship  Seyla Benhabib
The contemporary refugee crisis in Europe and elsewhere; new patterns of migration; increasing demands for multicultural rights of Muslim minorities in the West; and transnational effects of globalization faced by modern societies. Examination of these issues in a multidisciplinary perspective in light of political theories of citizenship and migration, as well as laws concerning refugees and migrants in Europe and the United States.  SO

* PHIL 475b / ARCH 433b, The Bavarian Rococo Church  Karsten Harries
A case study, exploring the relationship of architecture, reason, and the sacred. Focus will be on the epochal threshold that both separates and joins the theatrical culture of the Baroque from our modern world-picture.  HU

* PHIL 482b / GMAN 315b / HUMS 243b / LITR 431b, Systems and Their Theory  Henry Sussman
Conceptual systems that have, since the outset of modernity, furnished a format and platform for rigorous thinking at the same time that they have imposed on language the attributes of self-reflexivity, consistency, repetition, purity, and dependability. Texts by Kant, Hegel, Bergson, Kafka, Proust, and Borges.  HU
Tutorial and Senior Essay Courses

* PHIL 480a or b, Tutorial  Kenneth Winkler
A reading course supervised by a member of the department and satisfying the following conditions: (1) the work of the course must not be possible in an already existing course; (2) the course must involve a substantial amount of writing, i.e., a term essay or a series of short essays; (3) the student must meet with the instructor regularly, normally for at least an hour a week; (4) the proposed course of study must be approved by both the director of undergraduate studies and the instructor.

* PHIL 490a and PHIL 491b, The Senior Essay  Staff
The essay, written under the supervision of a member of the department, should be a substantial paper; a suggested length is between 8,000 and 12,000 words for one-term projects, and between 12,500 and 15,000 words for two-term projects. Students completing a one-term project should enroll in either 490 in the fall or 491 in the spring. Students completing a two-term project should enroll in both 490 and 491. The deadline for senior essays completed in the fall is December 5; the deadline for both one- and two-term senior essays completed in the spring is April 21.

GRADUATE, DIVINITY, AND LAW SCHOOL COURSES THAT COUNT TOWARD THE MAJOR
Some Graduate, Divinity, and Law School courses are open to qualified undergraduates with permission of the instructor and the director of graduate studies or the dean or registrar of the Divinity or the Law School. (See "Courses in the Yale Graduate and Professional Schools" in section K of the Academic Regulations.) With permission of the director of undergraduate studies, relevant Graduate, Divinity, and Law School courses may count toward the major. Course descriptions appear in the Graduate, Divinity, and Law School bulletins.