PHILOSOPHY

Connecticut Hall, 203.432.1665
http://philosophy.yale.edu
M.A., M.Phil., Ph.D.

Chair
Verity Harte

Director of Graduate Studies
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Associate Professors Daniel Greco, John Pittard

Assistant Professors Robin Dembroff, Lily Hu

FIELDS OF STUDY
The department offers a wide range of courses in various traditions of philosophy, with strengths and a well-established reputation in the history of philosophy, ethics, philosophy of law, epistemology, philosophy of language, and philosophy of religion as well as other central topics.

SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS FOR THE PH.D. DEGREE

1. In the first two years all students must complete a total of twelve term courses. Graduate courses are grouped: (1) metaphysics, theory of knowledge, philosophy of mind, philosophy of language, philosophy of science; (2) ethics, aesthetics, philosophy of religion, political philosophy, philosophy of law, and theory of value; (3) history of philosophy. No more than six of the twelve and no fewer than two courses may be taken in each group. At least one of the twelve courses taken must be logic (unless the logic requirement is satisfied in some other way), and this course does not count toward the required minimum of two within any of the three categories.

2. Two qualifying papers must be submitted, one in the history of philosophy, the other in another distribution area. These papers must be more substantial and professional than an ordinary term paper.

3. Approval of the dissertation prospectus is expected before the end of the sixth term. Upon completion of all predissertation requirements, including the prospectus, students are admitted to candidacy for the Ph.D. Admission to candidacy must take place by the end of the third year of study.

4. Students in Philosophy typically teach in the third, fourth, and sixth years.
5. In addition to the twelve required philosophy courses, before the dissertation defense students must take at least one class that is not listed in philosophy on a subject that is relevant to their research.

6. The dissertation is expected to be submitted in the end of the fifth to sixth year.

CLASSICS AND PHILOSOPHY COMBINED PH.D. PROGRAM

The Classics and Philosophy Program is a combined program, offered by the Departments of Classics and Philosophy at Yale, for students wishing to pursue graduate study in ancient philosophy. Suitably qualified students may apply for entry to the program either through the Classics department for the Classics track or through the Philosophy department for the Philosophy track.

Applicants for the Classics track of the combined program must satisfy the general requirements for admission to the Classics graduate program, in addition to the requirements of the Classics track of the combined program. Details of the Classics track of the program are available online at https://classics.yale.edu/research/ancient-philosophy/classics-and-philosophy-joint-program.

Applicants for the Philosophy track of the combined program must satisfy the general requirements for admission to the Philosophy graduate program, in addition to the requirements of the Philosophy track of the combined program. Details of the Philosophy track of the program are available online at http://philosophy.yale.edu/graduate-program/classics-and-philosophy-program.

The combined program is overseen by an interdepartmental committee currently consisting of Verity Harte, David Charles, and Brad Inwood together with the director of graduate studies (DGS) for Classics and the DGS for Philosophy.

PHILOSOPHY AND PSYCHOLOGY COMBINED PH.D. PROGRAM

The Philosophy and Psychology Program is a combined program, offered by the Departments of Philosophy and Psychology at Yale. Students enrolled in the program complete a series of courses in each discipline as well as an interdisciplinary dissertation that falls at the intersection of the two. On completing these requirements, students are awarded a Ph.D. either in Philosophy and Psychology, or in Psychology and Philosophy.

Students can be admitted into the combined program either through the Psychology department or through the Philosophy department. Students must be accepted into one of these departments (the “home department”) through the standard admissions process, and both departments must then agree to accept the student into the combined program.

Students can be accepted into the combined program either (a) at the time they initially apply for admission to their home department, or (b) after having already competed some course work within the home department. In either case, students must be accepted into the combined program by each department.

Students in the combined program complete two-thirds of the course requirements of each of the two disciplines, then write a qualifying paper and a dissertation that are fully interdisciplinary. For more details about the program requirements, see http://
philosophy.yale.edu/graduate-program/philosophy-and-psychology-combined-phd-program.

MASTER’S DEGREES

M.Phil. See Degree Requirements under Policies and Regulations.

M.A. (en route to the Ph.D.) An M.A. degree is awarded to students after completion of seven term courses with an average grade of High Pass.

Please see the Philosophy website for information on the program: http://philosophy.yale.edu.

COURSES

PHIL 567b, Mathematical Logic I  Sun-Joo Shin
An introduction to the metatheory of first-order logic, up to and including the completeness theorem for the first-order calculus. An introduction to the basic concepts of set theory is included.

PHIL 614a, Mind in Modern Philosophy  Kenneth Winkler and Bridger Ehli
Study and discussion of a range of philosophical problems that arose or intensified in the early modern period and persist in the present day. Among the themes we will consider: dualism; perception; representation (particularly representation of an external world); personal identity. Readings in both early modern and present-day sources.

PHIL 619b, Descartes  Michael Della Rocca
An examination of Descartes as a founder of the modern world picture. Consideration of all his major works.

PHIL 623b, Philosophy of Probability  Alexander Meehan
Probability plays a central role in modern life, and enjoys applications to areas ranging from fundamental physics to individual decision-making and the law. This course has two goals. First, to explore general foundational questions about the nature of probability: what are probabilities? Can they be reduced to frequencies? Do probabilities make sense even if the world is deterministic? Second, to use probabilistic tools to investigate some of the deepest and most pressing questions at the intersection of the above areas: Does evidence from physics show that there are probably many universes? Can probabilities be used to model individual uncertainty, and if so, what are the rational norms governing those uncertainties? Is it possible for an AI-based categorization systems to be minimally fair? Should defendants be convicted based on merely statistical evidence? No prior background in probability is assumed; students are taught the basics of probability theory during the first part of the course.

PHIL 625b, Topics in Epistemology  Keith DeRose and Timothy Williamson
A survey of some recent work in epistemology, with an emphasis on connections between formal approaches to epistemology and traditional epistemological questions. We explore the power and limitations of Bayesian approaches to epistemology; the relationship between credence on the one hand, and belief and knowledge on the other; higher-order knowledge and probability; and other topics.

PHIL 626a, Cognitive Science of Morality  Joshua Knobe
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.

**PHIL 627b, Computability and Logic**  Sun-Joo Shin

A technical exposition of Gödel’s first and second incompleteness theorems and of some of their main consequences in proof theory and model theory, such as Löb’s theorem, Tarski’s undefinability of truth, provability logic, and nonstandard models of arithmetic.

**PHIL 634a, Disagreement and Higher-Order Evidence**  John Pittard

An investigation of the epistemic significance of disagreement, focusing on recent work on this question and on several related issues in the theory of rationality.

**PHIL 637a, Philosophy of Mathematics**  Michael Burton

We take up a time-honored debate between Platonism and anti-Platonism, along with different views of mathematical truth, that is, logicism, formalism, and intuitionism. We read classical papers on the subject. Why do we need the philosophy of mathematics? This question could be answered toward the end of the term.

**PHIL 644a / WGSS 644a, Social Ontology**  Robin Dembroff

Study of conceptual and methodological foundations of social ontology, as well as particular topics within social ontology, such as the nature of gender and race.

**PHIL 655b, 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 bulk of 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).

**PHIL 657b / PLSC 611b, Recent Work on Justice**  Thomas Pogge

In-depth study of one contemporary book, author, or debate in political philosophy, political theory, or normative economics. Depending on student interest, this might be a ground-breaking new book, the life’s work of a prominent author, or an important theme in contemporary political thought.

**PHIL 658a, Morality and Evolution**  Stephen Darwall

Ever since Darwin’s *On the Origin of the Species*, the question of evolutionary theory’s implications for our understanding of morality and of ourselves as moral beings has been pressing. In recent years, several philosophers have argued that evolution undermines the possibility of moral knowledge and, perhaps, there being facts of moral right and wrong. In this course, we investigate evolutionary theory’s implications for morality. We begin with questions about the nature of morality (as we ordinarily understand it) and the fundamentals of evolutionary theory. The focus then shifts to philosophers who have argued for moral skepticism and forms of moral anti-realism on evolutionary grounds. Our third focus is on evolutionary theories that show a deep compatibility between evolution and morality. We finish with a metaethical account of morality that fits with one of these evolutionary theories to see if it provides a plausible way of responding to the evolutionary critique.
PHIL 663a, Varieties of Explanatory Relations  Lily Hu and Issa Kohler-Hausmann
We explore various kinds of relations that figure into different types of explanations and the relata that figure in those explanatory relations. Examples of such explanations include causal explanations, constitutive explanations, functional explanations; examples of such relations include causal relations, grounding relations, supervenience relations; examples of relata in those explanations include events, variables, properties, social kinds. This then sets us up to consider a set of (social) scientific, legal, and normative claims that rely on these explanations, which are the focus of a course in the spring, Explanatory Relations in Normative, Legal, and Empirical Analysis of Discrimination, that follows on these contents. Enrollment in both semesters is strongly encouraged but not required.

PHIL 664a, Justice, Taxes, and Global Financial Integrity  Thomas Pogge
This seminar studies the formulation, interpretation, and enforcement of national and international tax rules from the perspective of national and global economic justice.

PHIL 666a / JDST 648a, German Idealism and Religion  Paul Franks and Robert Stern
The philosophies of Kant and his German Idealist successors address a number of questions in the philosophy of religion, and also presuppose a religious background when addressing questions of general metaphysics, epistemology, and ethics. In this course, we explore the relevant religious context—both in works of Erasmus and Luther and also in the writings of the kabbalists of Safed, Christian kabbalah, and Jakob Boehme. We then read major works by Kant, Hegel, and Schelling against that background. Other authors include Conway, Herrera, Jacobi, Kierkegaard, Lessing, Mendelssohn, and Rosenzweig. Issues considered include freedom of the will and determinism, pantheism and panentheism, infinity and finitude, knowledge and faith, love and law, antinomianism, love of God and love of neighbor. Some prior study of Kant and German Idealism is recommended.

PHIL 705a, First-Year Seminar  Stephen Darwall and Michael Della Rocca
Required of and limited to first-year students in the Philosophy Ph.D. program. Topic varies from year to year. Preparation for graduate work. Reading, writing, and presentation skills.

PHIL 706b, Work in Progress I  Laurie Paul
In consultation with the instructor, each student presents a significant work in progress, e.g., a revised version of an advanced seminar paper or a dissertation chapter. Upon completion of the writing, the student presents the work in a mock colloquium format, including a formal question-and-answer period.

PHIL 715b, Philosophy of Law: Normative Jurisprudence  Gideon Yaffe
This course concerns philosophical topics that arise in connection with particular areas of law. Such topics include the justification of criminal punishment; discrepancy in punishment of attempted and completed crimes; the relevance of ignorance of the law to criminal responsibility; self-defense and other forms of preventive violence; the rationale for double-jeopardy restrictions; the conception of justice of import to tort law; the concepts of causation and intention in tort law; the relationship between promises and contracts; the fundamental rationale for property rights; the grounds for and nature of the individualization of the reasonable person standard; the rationale for variations in standards of proof across areas of law. A selection of such topics are
examined through consideration of both philosophical essays written about them and legal materials that bear on them. PHIL 703 is a companion to this course. The two together comprise a literacy course in the philosophy of law. They can be taken in either order or separately. Neither is a prerequisite for the other, but students seeking a strong background in philosophy of law are encouraged, but not required, to take both. Self-scheduled examination or paper option.

PHIL 710a, Faith and the Will  John Pittard
An investigation of questions concerning the nature of religious faith, the relationship of faith to the will and to desire, and the merits of various prudential, moral, and existential arguments for and against religious faith. Questions to be treated include: Is faith in some sense “meritorious” (to use Aquinas’s language)? Do the commitments of faith essentially involve believing propositions? Can belief be voluntary? Can trust or hope be voluntary? Should we hold religious beliefs to the same epistemic standards that apply to more mundane beliefs? Or should we persist in faith even if these beliefs do not meet conventional rational standards? We explore these questions through writings by Aquinas, Pascal, Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, James, Freud, Wittgenstein, and various contemporary philosophers.

PHIL 736a / CLSS 879a, Stoicism  Brad Inwood
Stoicism was one of the most important philosophical movements in the ancient Graeco-Roman world and has exercised great influence on European philosophy (and culture more generally) since the Renaissance. This course is a high-level introduction to ancient Stoicism, open equally to those who have a reading knowledge of Greek and/or Latin (as relevant) and those who don’t.

PHIL 750a or b, Tutorial  Zoltan Szabo
By arrangement with faculty.

PHIL 761b, Normative, Legal, and Empirical Analyses of Discrimination  Issa Kohler-Hausmann and Lily Hu
This class approaches analyses of discrimination by paying special focus to empirical research that aims to study it. By examining cases where social scientists, computer scientists, courts, and commentators are looking for evidence of discrimination, we look to uncover the account of discrimination that underlies their approach. This course, therefore, takes a different structure than many seminars on discrimination which provide overviews of different philosophical or legal theories of the concept. Instead, we start by looking at on-the-ground debates about detecting discrimination in a number of disciplines including economics, sociology, computer science, and philosophy. Then, we look to back-construct the essential concepts and definitions the scholars implicitly or explicitly invoke. This course follows on from content in a fall semester course, Varieties of Explanatory Relations, and so assumes familiarity with the topics discussed therein. Enrollment in both semesters is strongly encouraged but not required. If you have not taken the fall semester course but are interested in this one, we are happy to discuss any questions you might have.

PHIL 770b / HIST 682b, Mass Incarceration in the Soviet Union and the United States  Timothy Snyder and Jason Stanley
An investigation of the experience and purposes of mass incarceration in the Soviet Union and the United States in the twentieth century. Incarceration is central to the understanding, if not usually to the self-understanding, of a society. It is thus a crucial
aperture into basic questions of values and practices. This course proposes a frontal approach to the subject, by investigating two of the major carceral systems of the twentieth century, the Soviet and the American. Intensive reading includes first-person accounts of the Gulag and American prison as well as scholarly monographs on the causes of mass incarceration in different contexts. Brief account is taken of important comparative cases, such as Nazi Germany and communist China. Guest lectures and guest appearances are an important element of our teaching.

PHIL 775b, Causation  Zoltan Szabo and Laurie Paul
In the first part of the course, we discuss the nature of causation (raising questions such as whether causation is a relation between events, facts, property instances, states of affairs or something else, how causation relates to counterfactual dependence, whether there could be things uncaused, how common causally over-determined effect might be, and applications in law, cognitive science, and artificial intelligence). If there is time, we explore the way the theory of causation interacts with other problems in metaphysics (such as ontological reduction and explanation).

PHIL 790b / CLSS 820b, Plato Sophist  Verity Harte and David Charles
The course reads and discusses the Greek text of Plato's *Sophist*, a work central to Plato's later philosophy and his engagement with Parmenides. Philosophical issues raised by the text include the nature of sophistry and of philosophy, philosophical methodology, being and not-being, language, and the possibility of falsehood in thought and speech. Over the course of the semester, we read the entire dialogue with in-class discussion of focused passages chosen from larger sections of the work on the schedule for the week and selected for detailed in-class discussion. We use the OCT Greek text of Plato's *Sophist*, available in *Platonis Opera I*, edd. E.A. Duke, W.F. Hicken, W.S.M. Nicoll, D.B. Robinson & J.C.G. Strachan. Oxford: OUP 1995, along with other editions and commentary, as well as selections from the extensive secondary literature on the work. Prerequisites: Open to graduate students in Philosophy or Classics who have suitable preparation in Attic Greek (L5 equivalent) and some prior knowledge of ancient philosophy. Any others interested in taking or attending the class must have prior permission to do so from the Instructors. Undergraduates will not normally be admitted.

PHIL 850a or b, Prospectus Tutorial  Zoltan Szabo
Prospectus tutorial for Philosophy Ph.D. students.