PHILOSOPHY

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

Chair
Verity Harte

Director of Graduate Studies
Zoltán Szabó (C301, 203.432.1669, zoltan.szabo@yale.edu)


Assistant Professors Robin Dembroff, Daniel Greco, Elizabeth Miller, John Pittard

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 towards 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 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 567a, 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 602a / CPLT 699a / GMAN 603a, Heidegger’s Being and Time Martin Hägglund
A systematic, chapter-by-chapter study of Heidegger’s Being and Time, arguably the most important work of philosophy of the twentieth century. All the major themes of the book are addressed in detail, with a particular emphasis on care, time, death, and the meaning of being.

PHIL 603a / JDST 860a / RLST 880a, Spinoza and the God of the Bible Nancy Levene
This course considers Spinoza’s metaphysics and social and political thought in light of a family of problems named religion: the concept of God; the relations among politics, divine law, and their institutions; the value of Judaism and Christianity; and the interpretation of the Bible. We read from Spinoza’s principal works as well as from the Bible and a few other thinkers, medieval and modern, in conceptual proximity to Spinoza.

PHIL 604b, Leibniz Michael Della Rocca
A close examination of Leibniz’s vast, intricate, and still poorly understood philosophical system. Topics to be explored include substance, necessity, freedom, psychology, teleology, and the problem of evil. Attention to relevant philosophical and theological antecedents, including Spinoza, Descartes, Suarez, Aquinas, and Aristotle. Attention also to Leibniz’s relevance to contemporary philosophy.

PHIL 626b, 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 637b, Philosophy of Mathematics Sun-Joo Shin
Metaphysical and epistemological issues raised by mathematics. Questions concerning the notion of a set; whether one can quantify over absolutely everything; whether there are really infinite sets of different sizes; the significance of Gödel’s incompleteness theorems; arguments designed to show that certain mathematical terms are referentially indeterminate.

PHIL 638a, Philosophy of Logic Sun-Joo Shin
Exploration of valid reasoning, mainly in the context of propositional and predicate logic. Topics include the well-known debate on the justification of modus ponens; Tarski’s analysis of logical consequence; and the relatively recent and provocative claim (made by Etchemendy) that Tarski’s analysis of logical consequence fails in capturing ordinary and intuitive concept of logical consequence.

PHIL 641b, Reductionism Elizabeth Miller
An exploration of some reductive approaches in contemporary metaphysics and philosophy of science and some challenges to the reductive project. Is there a deep sense in which all the complexity of reality reduces to some more limited class of fundamental features?

PHIL 643a, Philosophy of Quantum Mechanics Elizabeth Miller
An examination of a wide range of philosophical issues as informed by quantum mechanics. Evaluation of different, and controversial, interpretations of quantum mechanics and their distinct ontologies. Subtopics include the measurement problem, nonlocality and holism, wave function realism, and the relationship between physics and metaphysics.
PHIL 650a, The Problem of Evil  Keith DeRose
The evils of our world can seem to present strong reasons for disbelieving in the existence of God. This course examines the main forms that this problem for theism takes, and some of the proposed ways of solving, or at least mitigating, the problem.

PHIL 655a, 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 664b, 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 665a, Recent Work in Ethical Theory  Stephen Darwall
A study of recently published works on ethics and its foundations. Issues include the grounds of normativity and rightness, and the role of the virtues.

PHIL 674a / PLSC 580a, Borders, Culture, and Citizenship  Seyla Benhabib
The contemporary refugee crisis in Europe and elsewhere; new patterns of migration, increasing demands for multicultural rights on the part of Muslim minorities in the West, and transnational effects of globalization faced by contemporary societies. This course examines these issues in a multidisciplinary perspective in the light of political theories of citizenship and migration, and laws concerning refugees and migrants in Europe and the United States.

PHIL 677a / WGSS 677a, Feminist Philosophy: Theories of Sex, Gender, and Sexual Orientation  Robin Dembroff
This course surveys several feminist frameworks for thinking about sex, gender, and sexual orientation. We consider questions such as: Is there a tenable distinction between sex and gender? Between gender and sexual orientation? What does it mean to say that gender is a social construction, or that sexual orientation is innate? What is the place of politics in gender and sexual identities? How do these identities—and especially resistant or transgressive identities—impact the creation and revision of social categories?

PHIL 679b, Contemporary Deontology  Shelly Kagan
Most people are intuitively drawn to deontological moral theories rather than consequentialist ones (roughly, to theories that give priority to moral factors other than simply the potential goodness of results). In this course we read and evaluate three major contemporary works exploring this deontological perspective in a systematic way: Judith Thomson's The Realm of Rights, T.M. Scanlon's What We Owe to Each Other, and (parts of) F.M. Kamm's Intricate Ethics. Our goal throughout is to investigate the complications involved in moving beyond the initial pull toward deontology to spelling out such a deontological theory in fuller detail (whether at the normative or at the foundational level).

PHIL 683b, Wittgenstein  Kenneth Winkler
Study and discussion of Wittgenstein’s Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus, Philosophical Investigations, and On Certainty, with some attention to their background in writings by Frege, Russell, and Moore. Consideration of Wittgenstein’s influence on more recent philosophers, among them Iris Murdoch, Elizabeth Anscombe, Saul Kripke, and Cora Diamond. Prerequisite: permission of the instructor.

PHIL 686a, Kant’s Critique of Judgment  Thomas Khurana
In-depth study of Kant’s third and final critique, one of the major works of modern philosophy, containing both the foundation of modern aesthetics and a critical reformulation of natural teleology. Discussions address both parts and their enigmatic unity; highlight the relation of nature and freedom, mechanism and teleology, theoretical and practical cognition at the heart of the book; and include post-Kantian thought (German Idealism, twentieth-century continental philosophy) that only became possible through Kant’s third critique. Prerequisite: some familiarity with Kant’s critical project.

PHIL 688a, Meaning, Paradox, and Methodology  Michael Della Rocca
An exploration of the inadequacies of a vast swath of theories of meaning (or content or aboutness) in contemporary and recent philosophy. The initial focus is on the challenges raised by the Kripke-Wittgenstein paradox with regard to meaning. We discuss the metaphysical underpinnings of this paradox as they are to be found in Bradley’s paradox concerning relations, in Parmenides’s arguments for a strict monism, and in Lewis Carroll’s paradox concerning logical inference or modus ponens. We consider responses to Kripke-Wittgenstein, Bradley, Parmenides, and Carroll—all of which fail, of course. Throughout, there is attention to methodological presuppositions in metaphysics that prevent philosophers from appreciating the force of these paradoxes, and we take up the potentially pernicious political implications of these presuppositions. Prerequisite: two courses in philosophy.

PHIL 700a, Kant’s Philosophy of Religion  John Hare
This course looks at Kant’s writings in the philosophy of religion and moral theology from the Critique of Pure Reason to the Conflict of the Faculties.

PHIL 705a, First-Year Seminar  Keith DeRose
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 719a, 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 be otherwise 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 727b, The Practical and the Theoretical  Jason Stanley and Timothy Williamson
In this seminar, we look at some facets of the distinction between practical and theoretical knowledge. Is theoretical knowledge separate from action? Is practical knowledge rooted in habit, rather than theory? We draw on sources both ancient and contemporary in addressing these questions.

PHIL 728b, Kierkegaard’s Philosophy of Religion  John Hare
The course explores a number of texts by Kierkegaard, most of them pseudonymous, but also Works of Love, written under his own name. A focus is on what Kierkegaard intends us to think about the three stages of life: the aesthetic, the ethical, and the religious. No background in philosophy required; some acquaintance with Kant and Hegel helpful.

PHIL 731b, Theological Predications and Divine Attributes  John Pittard
An exploration of philosophical debates concerning the nature of theological language and the nature of God. Topics include theories of analogical predication, divine simplicity, God’s relation to time, divine impassibility, the nature of God’s love, divine freedom, the compatibility of foreknowledge and human freedom, and theories of providence.

PHIL 734a / GMAN 651a / PLSC 583a, Contemporary Critical Theory  Seyla Benhabib
An examination of the themes of statelessness, migration, and exile in the works of Arendt, Benjamin, Adorno, Shklar, and Berlin.

PHIL 741a / CLSS 886a, What Is Aristotelian Hylomorphism?  David Charles
The aim of the seminar is to examine to what extent Aristotle’s version of hylomorphism as applied to psychological phenomena (such as the emotions, desire, perception, and thought) was modified and criticized by later philosophers. We assess the hypothesis that Aristotle’s discussion of these issues was substantially modified by later philosophers and commentators in such a way as to set up (1) contemporary versions of hylomorphism and (2) the mind/body problem as formulated by Descartes.

PHIL 746b / CLSS 887b, Plato’s Theaetetus  Brad Inwood
Cicero’s most important and influential work on moral philosophy is the dialogue On Moral Ends (De finibus bonorum et malorum). Written within the general framework of eudaimonism, the dialogue expounds on and criticizes the ethical theory of three contemporary schools: Epicurean, Stoic, and Peripatetic. On Moral Ends presents important debates in ethics, gives us extensive evidence for Hellenistic philosophy in general, and has significant influence on moral theory in the early modern period. We read the entire dialogue, with more emphasis on the Stoic (books 3–4) and Peripatetic (book 5) debates than on the Epicurean (books 1–2). In class we work predominantly from the translation by Raphael Woolf, but Latin readers are expected to read key parts of the dialogue in Latin as well; there will be a separate meeting for discussion of issues that arise from the Latin text. Prerequisite: graduate enrollment in Philosophy or Classics, or permission of the instructor.

PHIL 748b / CLSS 865b, Plato’s Theaetetus  Verity Harte and David Charles
The class reads and discusses the Greek text of Plato’s Theaetetus, a central work of Plato’s philosophy and an important work in the history of philosophy. Focused on the nature of knowledge, the dialogue is notable for a series of arguments involving central notions of Plato’s philosophy: knowledge, definition, perception, false judgment. The class is a core course for the combined Ph.D. program in Classics and Philosophy. The course is open to all graduate students in Philosophy or Classics who have suitable preparation in Attic Greek and some prior knowledge of ancient philosophy. Others interested in taking or attending the class must have prior permission of the instructors. Undergraduates are not normally admitted.

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

PHIL 755a / GLBL 785, Conservatism: Seminar  Samuel Moyn, Scott Shapiro, and Ross Douthat
This seminar examines conservatism’s origins as a body of theory; turns to the trajectory of American conservatism since World War II, focusing on both intellectual history and popular mobilization; and concludes with a survey of versions of conservatism prominent in contemporary legal scholarship.