PHILOSOPHY (PHIL)

PHIL 113b / CGSC 186b / RLST 186b / SAST 270b, Fear, Suffering, Anger, Love: Buddhist Philosophy of Mind  Sonam Kachru
This course introduces students to classical Indian Buddhist philosophy of mind and the reasons why Buddhists pursued it—"the reinvention of ourselves," or the pursuit of the transformation of persons from unhealthy to healthy ways of being minded. Class materials are drawn from categories and concerns found in theoretical and practical manuals from roughly the first to the fifth centuries C.E., but the topics are salient, including: What is the difference between mind and consciousness? Is there an unconscious? How does one model mental actions, such as attention or categorization? Are our minds structured by primal fear? Or anger? Do we ever have reason to be angry? What is cognitive control? Why do minds wander? Should mental dynamics be merely observed or attenuated or sculpted in some other way? What, if anything, is peace of mind?  HU

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

PHIL 118a / RLST 127a / SAST 261a, Buddhist Thought: The Foundations  Eric Greene
This class introduces the fundamentals of Buddhist thought, focusing on the foundational doctrinal, philosophical, and ethical ideas that have animated the Buddhist tradition from its earliest days in India 2500 years ago down to the present, in places such as Tibet, China, and Japan. Though there will be occasional discussion of the social and practical contexts of the Buddhist religion, the primary focus of this course lies on how traditional Buddhist thinkers conceptualize the universe, think about the nature of human beings, and propose that people should live their lives. Our main objects of inquiry are therefore the foundational Buddhist ideas, and the classic texts in which those ideas are put forth and defended, that are broadly speaking shared by all traditions of Buddhism. In the later part of the course, we take up some of these issues in the context of specific, regional forms of Buddhism, and watch some films that provide glimpses of Buddhist religious life on the ground.  HU

PHIL 125a / CLCV 125a, Introduction to Ancient Philosophy  Verity Harte
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.  WR, HU

PHIL 126b, Introduction to Modern Philosophy from Descartes to Kant  Keith DeRose
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
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 Hobbes. Discussion of the
question: Why be moral?  HU  o Course cr

PHIL 177b / AFAM 198b / CGSC 277b / EDST 177b / 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  o Course cr

PHIL 179a, Life  Shelly Kagan
Examination of elements that may contribute to a good life, including the question
of which truly have value and why. Factors to consider in choosing a career; the
significance of the decision whether to have children; the value of education; the
importance of love and accomplishment.  HU

PHIL 180a / PLSC 191a, 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.  HU  o Course cr

* PHIL 202a / RLST 277a, Existentialism  Noreen Khawaja
Introduction to key problems in European existentialism. Existentialism considered not
as a unified movement, but as a tradition of interlocking ideas about human freedom
woven through the philosophy, religious thought, art, and political theory of late
modern Europe. Readings from Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, Heti, Lukács, Gide, Heidegger,
Fanon, Sartre, de Beauvoir, Cesaire.  HU

PHIL 204a / GMAN 381a, Kant’s Critique of Pure Reason  Eric Watkins
An examination of the metaphysical and epistemological doctrines of Kant’s Critique of
Pure Reason. Prerequisite: PHIL 126 or DRST 004.  HU

PHIL 267a, 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.  QR

PHIL 269a, The Philosophy of Science  Lily Hu
Central questions about the nature of scientific theory and practice. Factors that make
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 270a, Epistemology  
Keith DeRose  
Introduction to current topics in the theory of knowledge. The analysis of knowledge, justified belief, rationality, certainty, and evidence.  

PHIL 271a / LING 271a, Philosophy of Language  
Jason Stanley  
An introduction to contemporary philosophy of language, organized around four broad topics: meaning, reference, context, and communication. Introduction to the use of logical notation.  

* PHIL 274a / GMAN 254a / JDST 335a / 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 276a / CGSC 276a, Metaphysics  
Laurie Paul  
Examination of some fundamental aspects of reality. Topics include time, persistence, modality, causation, and existence.  

PHIL 290a / EVST 219a, Philosophical Environmental Ethics  
Staff  
This is a philosophical introduction to environmental ethics. The course introduces students to the basic contours of the field and to a small number of special philosophical problems within the field. No philosophical background is required or expected. Readings are posted on Canvas and consist almost entirely of contemporary essays by philosophers and environmentalists.  

PHIL 315a, Truth and Relativism  
Zoltan Szabo  
Recent philosophical work on relativism and the relationship between truth and objectivity. The possibility of objective truth; rational disagreement; relativism and moral and scientific truth; bases for taking a stand on objectivity's limits.  

* PHIL 395a / CGSC 395a, Junior Colloquium in Cognitive Science  
Isaac Davis  
Survey of contemporary issues and current research in cognitive science. By the end of the term, students select a research topic for the senior essay. Enrollment limited to Cognitive Science majors.  

* PHIL 404a, The Philosophy of Leibniz  
Michael Della Rocca  
A close examination of Leibniz's vast, intricate, and still poorly understood philosophical system. Topics include substance, necessity, freedom, psychology, teleology, and the problem of evil. Attention to philosophical and theological antecedents (Spinoza, Descartes, Suarez, Aquinas, Aristotle) and to Leibniz's relevance to contemporary philosophy.  

* PHIL 421b, John Rawls  
Thomas Pogge  
This seminar offers a close study of Rawls's principal writings. It explores how his thinking evolved in communication with contemporary debates in philosophy, political science, law, and economics. And it probes the suitability of his mature conception of justice in regard to the role Rawls intended this conception to play in the 21st century United States. Featuring ample feedback on written and oral work, this seminar is
meant to prepare students for future graduate work at a top institution. Prerequisites:
Two courses with substantial normative content.  

  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 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.  

* PHIL 429b / RLST 430b / SAST 470b, Indian Philosophy in Sanskrit Literature  
  Aleksandar Uskokov
In this course we focus on issues of philosophical significance in Sanskrit literature of “non-standard” philosophical genres, i.e., other than the treatise and the commentary. Specifically we read from canonical Hindu texts such as the Upaniṣads, Mahābhārata, Rāmāyaṇa, Bhāgavata Purāṇa, Bhagavad-gītā, and Yogavāsiṣṭha; the classical genres of drama and praise poetry; and hagiographical literature, all in English translation. Attention is paid not only to substance but also form. The selection of philosophical problems includes philosophy of mind and personal identity; allegory; the ethics of non-violence; philosophy, politics, and religious pluralism; the highest good; theodicy; philosophical debate; etc.  

* PHIL 437a, Philosophy of Mathematics  
  Sun-Joo Shin
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. Students read classical papers on the subject. Why do we need the philosophy of mathematics? This question could be answered toward the end of the semester, hopefully.  

none  

* PHIL 439b, Modal Logic  
  Sun-Joo Shin
Basic philosophical concepts and logical tools underlying different modal systems, mainly focusing on necessity and possibility. Topics include propositional logic and its natural deductive system; modal operators and development of the simplest natural deductive system; extensions of the basic propositional modal system; intensional semantics; a diagrammatic method to check validity or invalidity; and quantified modal logic (QML). These topics lead to interesting philosophical issues and several non-standard logical assumptions. Prerequisite: basic knowledge of deductive systems.  

* PHIL 442b, 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. Prerequisite: one philosophy course; a basic course in logic would be helpful.
* PHIL 450b / EP&E 478b, The Problem of Evil  Keith DeRose
The challenge that evil’s existence in the world poses for belief in a perfectly good and omnipotent God. The main formulations of the problem of evil; proposed ways of solving or mitigating the problem and criticism of those solutions. Skeptical theism, the free-will defense, soul-making theodicies, and doctrines of hell.  HU

* PHIL 455a / EP&E 334a, 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: a course in moral philosophy.  HU

* PHIL 457b / EP&E 235b / PLSC 283b, Recent Work on Justice  Thomas Pogge
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 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 469a / GMAN 288a / HUMS 480a / LITR 482a, The Mortality of the Soul: From Aristotle to Heidegger  Martin Hagglund
This course explores fundamental philosophical questions of the relation between matter and form, life and spirit, necessity and freedom, by proceeding from Aristotle’s analysis of the soul in De Anima and his notion of practical agency in the Nicomachean Ethics. We study Aristotle in conjunction with seminal works by contemporary neo-Aristotelian philosophers (Korsgaard, Nussbaum, Brague, and McDowell). We in turn pursue the implications of Aristotle’s notion of life by engaging with contemporary philosophical discussions of death that take their point of departure in Epicurus (Nagel, Williams, Scheffler). We conclude by analyzing Heidegger’s notion of constitutive mortality, in order to make explicit what is implicit in the form of the soul in Aristotle.  HU

* PHIL 477a, Feminist Philosophy  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?  HU
* PHIL 480a, Tutorial  Daniel Greco
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 484a, Teleology and Mechanism  Paul Franks
Examination of teleology, with special emphasis on Aristotle, Kant, Schelling, and Hegel, as well as recent discussions of invisible hand explanations, which explain the appearance of purposiveness. Additional exploration of conceptions of mechanism, both in the history of modern philosophy and science, and in recent debates about so-called new mechanical philosophy.  HU

* PHIL 490a, The Senior Essay  Daniel Greco
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.

* PHIL 493a / HUMS 397a / RLST 428a, Neighbors and Others  Nancy Levene
This course is an interdisciplinary investigation of concepts and stories of family, community, borders, ethics, love, and antagonism. Otherwise put, it concerns the struggles of life with others – the logic, art, and psychology of those struggles. The starting point is a complex of ideas at the center of religions, which are given to differentiating "us" from "them" while also identifying values such as the love of the neighbor that are to override all differences. But religion is only one avenue into the motif of the neighbor, a fraught term of both proximity and distance, a contested term and practice trailing in its wake lovers, enemies, kin, gods, and strangers. Who is my neighbor? What is this to ask and what does the question ask of us? Course material includes philosophy, literature, psychology, and film.  WR, HU