PHILOSOPHY (PHIL)

* PHIL 088a, The Philosophy of Transformative Experience  Laurie Paul
Going to college, fighting in a war, having a baby, being spiritually reborn, betraying your lover, emigrating to a new country— all of these are experiences that can transform you. By transforming you, they change you, and in the process, they can restructure the nature and meaning of your life. Exploring the epistemic structure of transformation can help us to understand the special and distinctive ways that new experiences can form and change us, and how this relates to how we make life choices, both big and small. This course explores the philosophical concept of transformative experience, focusing on the many ways this concept fits with contemporary philosophical issues in epistemology and metaphysics. We also explore connections to current research in psychology, cognitive science, and behavioral economics on empathy, morality, choice, and the self, in conjunction with discussions of the way that many real world experiences can be transformative. Enrollment limited to first-year students. Preregistration required; see under First-Year Seminar Program.  HU

* PHIL 091a, Philosophy of Games  Mark Maxwell
In this class, we critically discuss a variety of puzzles that arise when thinking about games. Just what are games, anyway? And, how can thinking in terms of games help us understand the world? The notion of ‘game’ is a topic of interest in its own right, but games can also serve as a model and metaphor for other parts of the world, including life as a whole and the exploration of other philosophical debates. As such, the study of games serves as an entry point to a number of topics of potential interest, rather than just an in-depth study of one topic. Enrollment limited to first-year students. Preregistration required; see under First-Year Seminar Program.  HU

PHIL 105b, Strong Men: Ties Between Patriarchy and Fascism  Robin Dembroff and Jason Stanley
Fascist and patriarchal politics are intertwined. Why? In this course, we examine systems of gender inequality and far right nationalism from a philosophical perspective in order to more fully understand the intimate connections between them.  HU

PHIL 115a, First-Order Logic  Alexander Meehan
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 119b / EALL 219b / EAST 229b / HUMS 214b / RLST 171b, Introduction to Chinese Philosophy  Eric Greene and Lucas Bender
This course represents an introduction to the most important philosophical thinkers and texts in Chinese history, ranging from roughly 500 BC-1500 AD. Topics include ethics, political philosophy, epistemology, and ontology. We discuss the basic works of Confucian and Daoist philosophers during the Warring States and early imperial eras, the continuation of these traditions in early medieval “dark learning,” Buddhist philosophy (in its original Indian context, the early period of its spread to China, and in mature Chinese Buddhist schools such as Chan/Zen), and Neo-Confucian philosophy. The course emphasizes readings in the original texts of the thinkers and traditions in question (all in English translation). No knowledge of Chinese or previous contact with Chinese philosophy required.  HU

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.  WR, 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

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

PHIL 176a, Death  Shelly Kagan
There is one thing I can be sure of: I am going to die. But what am I to make of that fact? An examination of a number of issues that arise once we begin to reflect on our mortality. Consideration of the possibility that death may not actually be the end. Are we, in some sense, immortal? Would immortality be desirable? An attempt to get a clearer notion of what it is to die. And, finally, an evaluation of different attitudes to death. Is death an evil? Is suicide morally permissible? Is it rational? In short: how should the knowledge that I am going to die affect the way I live my life? Authors include Fischer, Perry, Plato, and Tolstoy.  HU

PHIL 182b / CGSC 282b / PSYC 182b, 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

PHIL 200a / CLCV 261a, Plato  Staff
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.  HU
PHIL 204b / GMAN 381b, Kant's Critique of Pure Reason  Paul Franks
An examination of the metaphysical and epistemological doctrines of Kant’s Critique of Pure Reason. Prerequisite: PHIL 126 or DRST 004.

HU

* PHIL 206a / RLST 210a, Nietzsche, Religion, History  Nancy Levene
An exploration of Nietzsche's concepts of religion and history and of his thinking in a broad historical arc up to the present. Course material includes texts by Nietzsche and selections from philosophies, theologies, and works of art that invite dialogue with his ideas.
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  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.
HU

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

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.
HU

PHIL 276a / PHIL 310, Metaphysics  Robin Dembroff
Examination of some fundamental aspects of reality. Topics include time, persistence, modality, causation, and existence.
HU

PHIL 280b / CGSC 275b / LING 275b, Pragmatics  Laurence Horn
Speakers often mean things they don’t say, but how does a hearer figure out what the speaker meant? Which sentences are designed to change the world rather than just to represent it? How are sentences used to mean different things in different contexts? Pragmatics explores the relations between what is said and what is meant, focusing on how speech acts and the principles of “street logic”—presuppositions and implicatures—help speakers and hearers shape the landscape of a conversation. No formal prerequisites, but some familiarity with linguistics or philosophy of language will help on some of the readings.
HU

PHIL 290a / EVST 219a, Philosophical Environmental Ethics  Stephen Latham
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 316b, Aristotle's Ethics and Its Neo-Aristotelian Revival  David Charles
The aim of the lecture series is to examine Aristotle's ethical theory, its aims, assumptions and discussions of particular issues, and to compare it with recent attempts to revive aspects of his account as part of a distinctive virtue-based approach to ethics. The goal of the seminar is to answer the following questions: did Aristotle develop a distinctive account approach to ethical issues and, if so, how is it best understood? Is it best expressed in the terms suggested by contemporary virtue-based theorists who see their work as a reformulation of certain basic aspects of his account. In addressing the second question we consider the neo-Aristotelian accounts developed and criticised by Philippa Foot, Rosalind Hursthouse, Bernard Williams, Michael Thomson and Terrence Irwin (amongst others). The course is aimed at advanced undergraduates (seniors and juniors) in philosophy or classics. Priority will be given to these students for enrollment if necessary. Knowledge of Greek is not required.

* PHIL 344a / WGSS 348a, Feminist Ethics  Moya Mapps
In this course, we explore questions at the intersection of moral philosophy and feminist philosophy. Is there a distinctively feminine way to approach moral reasoning? If so, should we resist this feminine moral orientation as patriarchal, overly demanding, or otherwise oppressive? Or should we embrace it? This writing-intensive course is designed to strengthen writing skills. We also discuss meta-philosophical questions about the methods of mainstream moral philosophy, and about the analytic philosophy paper as a genre of writing. Prerequisite: At least one essay-based philosophy course. (Ideally in moral philosophy, feminist philosophy, or a related subject.)
WR, HU

* PHIL 361a / ENGL 248a / HSHM 476a / HUMS 430a / LITR 483a, Thought Experiments: Connecting Literature, Philosophy and the Natural Sciences  Paul Grimstad
The course looks closely at the intersection of literature, philosophy and natural science through the lens of the thought experiment. Do thought experiments yield new knowledge about the world? What role does narrative or scene setting play in thought experiments? Can works of literary fiction or films function as thought experiments? Readings take up topics such as personal identity, artificial intelligence, meaning and intentionality, free will, time travel, the riddle of induction, “trolley problems” in ethics and the hard problem of consciousness. Authors may include Mary Shelley, Plato, Albert Einstein, Franz Kafka, H.G. Wells, Rene Descartes, Kazuo Ishiguro,
Rivka Galchen, Alan Turing, Hilary Putnam, as well as films (The Imitation Game) and television shows (Black Mirror). Students should have taken at least one course involving close analysis of works of literature or philosophy. **WR, HU**

* **PHIL 395a / CGSC 395a, Junior Colloquium in Cognitive Science** Staff
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. **½ Course cr**

* **PHIL 401a, Skepticism: Historical and Recent** Michael Della Rocca
An examination of the various styles of skeptical arguments and of responses to skepticism in the early modern period (17th and 18th centuries). Some attention also to comparisons between skepticism in this period and skepticism in contemporary philosophy, in ancient philosophy and in non-Western thought. Figures to be discussed include: Descartes, Spinoza, Leibniz, Astell, Hume, Sextus Empiricus, Zhuangzi, Nagarjuna. Prerequisites: At least two courses in philosophy, including PHIL 126 or Directed Studies or the equivalent. **HU**

* **PHIL 405b, Ethics of the Internet: Data, Algorithms, and Society** Joanna Blake-Turner
It is often said that the internet is just a tool. Like any other tool, its ethical impact (the argument goes) can be either positive or negative. What matters is how we use it. However, the internet is a tool whose functioning, unlike a hammer or screwdriver, is largely opaque to the average user. How do its algorithms work? What is the basis of the results that come up with a Google search or when there is a match on a dating app? Who knows personal search information and what are they using that information for? In this class, we examine the features distinctive of online environments—including algorithms, machine learning, behavioral data collection, and social media—in order to examine how they shape the moral landscape. Topics covered include: algorithmic bias, surveillance capitalism, fake news, echo chambers, cancel culture, and the right to be forgotten. **WR, HU**

* **PHIL 417b, Animal Ethics Today** Jennifer Daigle
This course is designed to encourage grappling with some of the central questions in today’s animal ethics literature, as well as with several prominent approaches to them. Among these questions are more fundamental ones concerning how to even approach questions surrounding the moral significance of the other animals and our treatment of them, as well as more derivative questions concerning particular practices. Included among these questions are: Do animals have moral status (indeed, is this even an illuminating question to ask)? If so, is it in virtue of their possession of certain properties or something else entirely? Supposing animals do count morally, do humans still count more? What role, if any, should considerations of human happiness, virtue, and relationships with animals play in our moral theorizing? Do (some of) the other animals have a right to life? A right to flourish? Is it morally permissible to keep pets, or should we work toward a future without domesticated animals? And what, if anything, does addressing the situation of non-human animals have to do with addressing other social justice issues? We explore these questions through a variety of ethical frameworks, including utilitarian, deontological, and virtue-ethic ones. Prerequisites: One or two philosophy courses preferred or permission of instructor. **WR, HU**

* **PHIL 424a / GMAN 382a / JDST 217a, Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit** Paul Franks and Hugo Havranek
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 425b, Topics in Epistemology** Keith DeRose
Survey of recent work in epistemology, with an emphasis on connections between formal approaches to epistemology and traditional epistemological questions. Bayesian approaches and their limitations; the relationship of credence to belief and knowledge; higher-order knowledge and probability. Prerequisite: A course in epistemology, or with permission of instructor. **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. **QR, HU**

* **PHIL 428b, Ancient Moral Psychology** David Charles
The aim of the seminar is to examine Aristotle’s discussion of the psychology of ethical virtue and of ethical failing, as exemplified by acrasia and various forms of vice, and to compare it with later discussions of similar topics, some ancient and some contemporary. The goal of the seminar is to answer the following two questions: did Aristotle develop a distinctive account of ethical motivation which resists analysis into two distinct, independently defined, components (such as reason or intellect and desire)? If so: does it withstand criticism from writers who analyse ethical motivation in terms of reason and/or desire (as two independently defined components)? In addressing the second question we shall consider criticisms of, and alternatives to, Aristotle’s account as developed in some Stoic sources, by David Hume and by some contemporary writers (such as John McDowell and Christine Korsgaard). The course is aimed at graduates and advanced undergraduates (seniors and juniors) in philosophy or classics. Priority will be given to these students for enrollment if necessary. Auditors are allowed subject to enrollment and with the permission of the instructor. Auditors will be expected to attend all classes, complete all reading assignments and participate in class discussion, but not to complete writing assignments. Knowledge of Greek is not required. **HU**
* PHIL 429a / RLST 430a / SAST 470a, Indian Philosophy in Sanskrit Literature  
Alessandar 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 Upanishads, Mahabharata, Ramayana, Bhagavata Purana, Bhagavad-gita, and Yogacara; 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.  
HU

* PHIL 432a / ER&M 279a / HIST 295a / HUMS 286a, Mass Incarceration in the Soviet Union and the United States  
Timothy Snyder and Jason Stanley

The Franke Seminar. 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.  
HU

* PHIL 436a / PLSC 329a, Democracy, Science, and Climate Justice  
Helene Landemore-Jelaca

Why is democracy, the most common regime form around the world, so slow in handling the vital threat of climate change? What role do scientists play and should play in a democracy? How should we approach the question of climate and environmental justice both at the local level, where climate change and pollution have a differential impact on different socio-economic and racialized communities, and at the global level, where the countries and people most affected by climate change have the least say and the biggest culprits few incentives to change their ways? This course aims to explore the intersection of democratic theory, science, and climate and environmental justice from the perspective of an empirically-informed political philosophy.  
SO

* 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  
HU

* 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.  
HU

* PHIL 441b, Philosophy of Simone de Beauvoir  
Manon Garcia

Simone de Beauvoir's The Second Sex is a benchmark feminist text. But its philosophical claims and her other philosophical works were overshadowed for much of her life for personal and professional reasons. For much of the twentieth century she was seen as derivative of her companion, Jean-Paul Sartre, and her work was given partial and problematic English translations that obscured their original richness. The recent publication in English of Beauvoir's student diaries and philosophical works has shown Beauvoir's work in new light. Through a thorough reading of Beauvoir's philosophical works and a selection of her feminist and literary works, this seminar is an in-depth, systematic study of her philosophy, and establishes her contributions to post-Kantian continental philosophy as well as to feminist philosophy.  
HU

* PHIL 450a / EP&E 478a, The Problem of Evil  
Keith DeRose and Miroslav Volf

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 453b, Good and Will  
Michael Della Rocca

An exploration of the nature of moral reasons, the sources of normativity, the nature of good, and of related topics in philosophy of action. Focus on the (alleged) distinction between theoretical and practical reason, the (again alleged) distinction between world-mind and mind-world directions of fit, the (again alleged) distinction between internal and external reasons, and theories of good. Authors to be covered include: Anscombe, Murdoch, Foot, Adams, Nagel, Michael Thompson, Strawson, Korsgaard, and Williams. Prerequisites: At least two courses in philosophy.  
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: a course in moral philosophy.  
HU
* PHIL 459a, Philosophy of Citizenship  Jeremy Lent
For many of us, citizenship seems to amount to little more than voting and paying taxes. Our identities as family members, friends, classmates, colleagues, and so on are often far more salient than our identities as members of political units. But citizenship presents many significant philosophical questions and problems. In this course, we read and assess some of the most interesting arguments about what morality requires, permits, and forbids us to do as citizens. The questions we explore include: whether there is a moral duty to obey the law; how morality bears on voting, paying taxes, and philanthropy; whether patriotism is a virtue; and whether it is morally permissible or perhaps even obligatory to ignore politics. Overall, we seek to decide if citizenship is a more consequential component of our identities than we often imagine. Prerequisite: A course in either political philosophy or ethics.  HU

* PHIL 461a, Art and Morality  Mario Attie Picker
How do art and morality relate to each other? This course is an extended exploration of this question. We begin by asking whether morality plays (or should play) a role in our engagement with and evaluation of art. Are works of art susceptible to ethical assessment? And if they are, what is the relationship between their moral merits and their aesthetic ones? Is immoral art bad art? Or can a work be better by virtue of its immorality? We then reverse the equation and ask whether art plays (or should play) a role in our ethical lives. Can art communicate moral truths? Are there insights that only art can reveal (or that it is best positioned to reveal)? Or is knowledge simply irrelevant when it comes to art? Moving beyond knowledge, we ask the more general question of whether art is good for us. Can it make us better persons? Can it make us worse persons? Does it simply reflect (or distort) the world? Or can it change it? Finally, we ask if there is an intrinsic relation between the good and the beautiful. Is virtue beautiful? Is vice ugly? Prerequisite: A previous course in philosophy. WR, HU

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 *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. 

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* PHIL 465b / EP&E 480b, 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. HU

* PHIL 468a, Metaethics  Stephen Darwall
A study of moral theorizing and moral discourse. The linguistic role of words like good, bad, right, and wrong; whether propositions that use these terms can be true or false. What ethical claims mean, if anything, and what kinds of reasoning or evidence might justify such claims. 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 *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 480a, Tutorial  Paul Franks
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, The Senior Essay  Paul Franks
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 493b / ANTH 428b / RLST 428b, 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, ethnography, 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, anthropology, psychology, fiction, and film.