PHILOSOPHY

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FACULTY OF THE DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY


Assistant Professors Daniel Greco, Elizabeth Miller, John Pittard, Bruno Whittle

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 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), 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, 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 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.
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.

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.

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.
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 above for the standard major. No more than one course taken Credit/D/Fail may be counted toward the requirements of the major, with the permission of the director of undergraduate studies.

Students interested in philosophy and psychology should also consider the major in Cognitive Science (http://catalog.yale.edu/ycps/subjects-of-instruction/cognitive-science).

Other majors involving philosophy  Majors in Mathematics and Philosophy (http://catalog.yale.edu/ycps/subjects-of-instruction/mathematics-philosophy) and in Physics and Philosophy (http://catalog.yale.edu/ycps/subjects-of-instruction/physics-philosophy) are also available.

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

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

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

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

Introductory Courses

PHIL 114b, Free Will, God, and Evil  Keith DeRose
An examination of attempts to reconcile the evils of this world with the existence of a perfectly good God, with special attention to proposed solutions to this problem that appeal to human free will in explaining why God allows evil. Discussions of the relation between such appeals to human freedom and other attempts to solve the problem of evil, the special problem posed by truly horrendous evils, the appeal to human freedom to justify doctrines of hell, and the nature of human freedom.  HU

PHIL 115a, First-Order Logic  Bruno Whittle
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  Kenneth Winkler
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 174a, Moral Skepticism  Shelly Kagan
The legitimacy of doubts about morality. Can there really be any objective moral facts? Isn’t morality all a matter of personal opinion or subjective preference, or, alternatively, all socially or culturally relative? If there were moral facts, how could one possibly know anything about them? Can one’s moral views be justified at all? What place can morality possibly have in a scientific world view?  WR, 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

EP&E: Intro Ethics
PHIL 177b / EP&E 494, 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

Intermediate Courses

HISTORY OF PHILOSOPHY

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

* PHIL 217b, Ancient and Modern Accounts of Moral Weakness  David Charles and Evan Rodriguez
Critical examination of approaches to understanding moral weakness, the problem of seeing the better but doing the worse, in ancient and contemporary Western philosophy. Analysis of assumptions that make moral weakness appear problematic; attempts to find the most convincing description of the phenomenon itself. Prerequisite: a course in philosophy.  HU

* PHIL 225b / GMAN 357b / LITR 433b, Nietzsche and His Readers  Paul North
Reading and discussion of Friedrich Nietzsche’s major texts, as well as critiques and interpretations by some of his most influential twentieth-century readers.  HU

METAPHYSICS AND EPISTEMOLOGY

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
Math: Logic/Foundations

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

PHIL 279b, Intentionality  Zoltán Szabó
The philosophical problem of intentionality. The question of nonexistence, i.e., how thought about the nonexistent is possible. Responses to the problem of nonexistence, each of which becomes a distinctive theory of intentionality. The intentionality of specific types of mental states, such as perception, belief, and desire. Whether the contents of mental states depend only on the internal features of the thinker, or also on the thinker’s environment.  HU

PHIL 281b, Infinity  Bruno Whittle
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.  QR, HU

* PHIL 305b / CGSC 313b / PSYC 313b, Philosophy for Psychologists  Joshua Knobe
Introduction to frameworks developed within philosophy that have applications in psychological research. Principal topics include the self, causation, free will, and morality. Recommended preparation: a course in philosophy or psychology.  HU, SO

* PHIL 311a / RLST 303a, 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.  WR, HU

PHIL 312a / PLSC 311a / WGSS 302a, How We Choose, and Choose Well  Hélène Landemore
The study of choice approached through a broad and multifaceted lens, borrowing from disciplines and sources as varied as metaphysics, moral philosophy, political theory, literature, and film, as well as psychology, sociology, anthropology, political science, and economics. Recommended preparation: introductory courses in moral philosophy and economics.  SO
Seminars

HISTORY OF PHILOSOPHY

* PHIL 414b / GMAN 317b / RLST 440b, Martin Heidegger  Noreen Khawaja
A comprehensive introduction to the oeuvre of Martin Heidegger. Key texts from *Being and Time* to the essay on technology, including the "Rectangular Address" of 1933 and writings on poetry, art, and theology. Consideration of Heidegger’s work in systematic and historical terms. Focus on his attempt to use philosophy to incite an "essential transformation in the history of Western spirit" along with its stakes, limitations, and consequences.  HU

* PHIL 415b, Hume  Kenneth Winkler
A study of Hume’s epistemology and metaphysics and his science of human nature. Topics include our knowledge of space and time; inductive reasoning; the nature and representation of causation; the origin and justification of belief in an external world; personal identity; the normative bearing of naturalized epistemology; the explanation and justification of religious belief; and the attractions and limits of skepticism. Readings in Book I of *A Treatise of Human Nature*, *An Enquiry concerning Human Understanding*, and *Dialogues concerning Natural Religion*.  HU

* PHIL 416b, The Philosophy of Spinoza  Michael Della Rocca
An in-depth study of Spinoza’s philosophy. Readings from his *Ethics*, political writings, *Treatise on the Emendation of the Intellect*, letters, and other works. Spinoza’s metaphysics and his views on philosophy of mind, teleology, action, and emotion. Some attention to methods for interpreting works in the history of philosophy.  HU

* PHIL 417b, Critical Theory and the Frankfurt School  Asaf Angermann
Introduction to the thought and writings of the philosophers known as the Frankfurt School, who founded and developed the idea of Critical Theory. The method of Critical Theory as a way of thinking about the complex relations between philosophy and society, culture and politics, and philosophical concepts and social reality. The meaning of concepts such as critique, history, freedom, individuality, emancipation, and aesthetic experience.  HU

* PHIL 419a, Descartes  Karsten Harries
An examination of Descartes as a founder of the modern world picture. Consideration of all his major works. Prerequisites: two courses in philosophy.  HU

* PHIL 422a / CLSS 422a, Plato’s Republic  Verity Harte and Mary Margaret McCabe
Close reading and philosophical analysis of the whole of Plato’s *Republic*. Readings in translation. Prerequisites: PHIL 125 or DRST 003 or equivalent, and one additional philosophy course.  HU

* PHIL 423b / EP&E 488, Aristotle and Virtue Theory  David Charles
Aristotle’s discussion of the virtues, and their role in his ethical theory. Comparison of Aristotle’s view with recent attempts to formulate a virtue-based approach to ethics. Prerequisite: a course in ethics or ancient philosophy.

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.  QR, HU

Math: Logic/Foundations

* PHIL 428b, Propositions, Truth, and Paradox  Bruno Whittle
Semantic paradoxes and the question of how to give adequate accounts of truth and of propositions in light of them. Readings include recent work on languages that contain their own truth predicates and on attempts to give consistent accounts of structured propositions.  HU

* PHIL 440a, Action and Metaphysics  Michael Della Rocca
Central themes in the philosophy of action over the past half-century and their connection to important trends in recent metaphysics. Topics include causal vs. non-causal theories of action, the individuation of actions (and of events), reasons for action, deviant causal chains, and the nature of intention. Exploration of a Parmenidean monism of action. The relation between action and ground, between action and relations, and between action and meaning.  HU

* PHIL 441b, Reductionism  Elizabeth Miller
Exploration of reductive approaches in contemporary metaphysics and philosophy of science. The question of whether there is a deep sense in which all the complexity of reality reduces to some more limited class of fundamental features. Prerequisite: a course in philosophy, or with permission of instructor.  HU
* PHIL 443a, Philosophy of Quantum Mechanics  Shelly Kagan
Examination of philosophical issues as informed by quantum mechanics and evaluation of why that which quantum mechanical formalism tell 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 444b, Philosophy of Wilfrid Sellars  Staff
Introduction to the Sellarsian framework and to Sellars' most important essays. Sellars' reading of the history of philosophy, his approaches to the mind-body problem, his account of knowledge and normativity, and his philosophy of science. Prerequisites: a course in modern European philosophy and a course in metaphysics or epistemology. WR, HU

* PHIL 446b, Philosophy of Language: Situations and Events  Zoltán Szabó
Unification of event semantics and situation semantics. Questions about the underlying metaphysics of the resulting theory. Prerequisites: a course in logic and an advanced course in metaphysics or semantics. HU

* PHIL 447b, Recent Work in Buddhist Philosophy  Staff
Recent interaction between Buddhist and Western philosophy. Treatment of Buddhist philosophy and literature by Western philosophers and by scholars in Buddhist studies. Creative reinterpretation of classical texts; new insights into contemporary problems. Prerequisite: a course in contemporary Western philosophy or a course in Buddhist philosophy. WR, HU

ETHICS AND VALUE THEORY

* 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. WR, 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 463a / EP&E 276a / PLSC 292a, Rethinking Sovereignty, Human Rights, and Globalization  Seyla Benhabib
Discussion of the crises of sovereignty and the end of sovereignty. Postnationalist, cosmopolitan, and neoliberal criticisms of sovereignty. Traditional models of sovereignty compared with cosmopolitan alternatives; implications of these models for the definition and enforcement of rights. Readings include works by Hobbes, Kant, Rousseau, Austin, Schmitt, Kelsen, Habermas, Waldron, Pogge, Sassen, and Aleinikoff. SO

* PHIL 471a / EP&E 485a, Moral Emotions  Stephen Darwall
The role of emotions and attitudes in the moral life and in moral philosophy. The nature of emotions such as shame, guilt, gratitude, love, and respect; related phenomena such as empathy and sympathy. Emotions' relations to fundamental moral concepts, as well as their epistemological role and capacity to ground moral judgments and facts. WR, HU

* PHIL 472a / GMAN 314a / PLSC 309a, Contemporary Critical Theory  Seyla Benhabib
An intensive examination of Hegel's "Philosophy of Right," and its subsequent interpretations by Jürgen Habermas and Axel Honneth. Prerequisite: Directed Studies or two or more advanced courses in modern political philosophy. SO

* PHIL 473b / EP&E 486, Theories of the Good  Shelly Kagan
What features make one outcome intrinsically better or worse than another from the moral point of view? How are judgments of individual well-being to be combined into an overall assessment of an outcome? Is virtue intrinsically valuable, or only instrumentally so? Does the distribution of well-being matter, and if so, what makes an outcome better or worse with regard to equality? What is the significance of people's getting the particular level of well-being that they deserve? Prerequisite: a course in philosophy, or with permission of instructor. 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  Kenneth Winkler
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 20.
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.