PHILOSOPHY

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The Philosophy major prepares students to reflect critically and creatively on questions concerning the nature of things, the scope and limits of human understanding, and the principles of value and right action. The aim of the major is to address these questions wherever they arise, whether in the philosophical tradition, in other disciplines and practices, or in everyday life. Our courses are designed to encourage depth in thinking, rigor in argument, clarity in writing and speaking, and the widest possible view of whatever subject matter we take up.

COURSES FOR NONMAJORS AND MAJORS

Introductory philosophy courses, numbered 100 through 199, are open to all students and have no prerequisites.

COURSE NUMBERING

Courses numbered 100 through 199 are introductory 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 and 481 through 485 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.

PREREQUISITES

Standard major Prerequisite to the standard major are two introductory or intermediate philosophy courses.

Psychology track Prerequisite to the major in the psychology track are two courses in philosophy or psychology.

REQUIREMENTS OF THE MAJOR

The standard major 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, 481–485), 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 (DRST 003, 004), 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 (either or both of which can be counted toward one of the group requirements) 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. In addition, students may petition to have a course count toward a group other than the one under which it is listed in this bulletin, though the presumption will be against such petitions.
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.

The Psychology track The psychology track is designed for students interested in both philosophy and 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, as 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 below.
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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. This applies to both the standard and the psychology tracks.

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.

ADVISING

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.

Other majors involving philosophy  Majors in Mathematics and Philosophy and in Physics and Philosophy are also available. Students interested in philosophy and psychology should also consider the major in Cognitive Science.

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
Specific courses required  Standard track – PHIL 125 and 126, or DRST 003 and 004; Psychology track – PSYC 110 or equivalent
Distribution of courses  Standard track – 3 courses in hist of phil (incl PHIL 125 and 126, or DRST 003 and 004), 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
Senior requirement  Both tracks – a third sem in phil, or a one- or two-term independent project (PHIL 490, 491)

FACULTY OF THE DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY


Assist Prof  Robin Dembroff, Daniel Greco, Christopher Lebron, Elizabeth Miller, John Pittard

Introductory Courses

PHIL 115a, First-Order Logic  Kenneth Winkler
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.  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

ETHICS AND VALUE THEORY

PHIL 175a, 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 176b, 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 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

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 203a / EALL 212a, Ancient Chinese Thought  Michael Hunter
An introduction to the foundational works of ancient Chinese thought from the ruling ideologies of the earliest historical dynasties, through the Warring States masters, to the Qin and Han empires. Topics include Confucianism and Daoism, the role of the intellectual in ancient Chinese society, and the nature and performance of wisdom.  HU

PHIL 204a / GMAN 381a, 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 205a / EALL 213a / HUMS 292a / RLST 211a, Philosophy, Religion, and Literature in Medieval China  Lucas Bender
Exploration of the rich intellectual landscape of the Chinese middle ages, introducing students to seminal works of Chinese civilization and to the history of their debate and interpretation in the first millennium. No previous knowledge of China is assumed. Instead, the course serves as a focused introduction to Chinese philosophy, religion, and literature.  HU

PHIL 214b, The Philosophies of Hegel and Schelling  Paul Franks
The competing versions of absolute idealism developed by Hegel and Schelling in the early 1800s. The relationships between philosophy and a history that culminates in modernity, and between philosophy and religion; the possibility of absolute knowledge and systematicity; the role of kabbalah in philosophy.  HU

PHIL 205a / AMST 260a, American Philosophy  Kenneth Winkler
A survey of American philosophy from colonial times to the middle of the twentieth century. Topics include European justifications of colonization and conquest; the spiritualist metaphysics of George Berkeley and Jonathan Edwards; slavery and abolition; and transcendentalism (Emerson, Thoreau). Particular attention to classical pragmatism, with readings in Peirce, James, Dewey, and their critics. Some discussion of recent reinterpretations of pragmatism by such writers as Quine, Richard Rorty, and Cornel West.  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

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

* PHIL 272a, Philosophy of Mind  Zoltán Szabó
A survey of contemporary issues in the philosophy of mind, including arguments for and against materialism and accounts of intentional states, qualitative states, and mental causation.  HU

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

PHIL 277b, Frege and Analytic Philosophy  Jason Stanley
Gottlob Frege's view of arithmetic as an abstract reality no less real than the ordinary objects of sight and touch. His attempt to place arithmetic on an absolutely firm foundation, and wider views of meaning and representation that emerged from the attempt. Frege's contributions to logicism, analytic philosophy, and the notation for quantification and variables; his influence on the emerging discipline
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of logic and on later study of the meaning properties of natural languages. Prerequisite: PHIL 115 or equivalent, or with permission of instructor. HU

* PHIL 352a / CGSC 313a / PSYC 313a, 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

ETHICS AND VALUE THEORY

* PHIL 323a / EP&E 264a / GMAN 318a / PLSC 323a, Exile, Statelessness, Migration  Seyla Benhabib
An interdisciplinary examination of exile, statelessness, and migration. Consideration of the meaning of exile as opposed to migration or banishment; whether a stateless person is also in exile, how the theme of exile is rooted in the Jewish condition of “Galut;” and how these conditions throw light on democratic societies. Authors include Hannah Arendt, Judith Shklar, Judith Butler, and contemporary authors such as Linda Zerilli and Bonnie Honig. Prerequisites: strong background in political philosophy, 19th or 20th century intellectual history, literary studies, or permission of the instructor. HU, SO

PHIL 326a / RLST 402a, The Philosophy of Religion  John Pittard
The relation between religion and ethics, traditional arguments for the existence of God, religious experience, the problem of evil, miracles, immortality, science and religion, and faith and reason. HU

PHIL 334a / PLSC 281a / RLST 273a, Ethical and Social Issues in Bioethics  Stephen Latham
A selective survey of issues in biomedical ethics. Comparison of different points of view about biomedical issues, including religious vs. secular and liberal vs. conservative. Special attention to issues in research and at the beginning and end of life. SO

Seminars

HISTORY OF PHILOSOPHY

PHIL 402a / GMAN 227a / HUMS 330a / LITR 330a, Heidegger’s Being and Time  Martin Hägglund
Systematic, chapter by chapter study of Heidegger’s Being and Time, arguably the most important work of philosophy in the twentieth-century. All major themes addressed in detail, with particular emphasis on care, time, death, and the meaning of being. HU

PHIL 410b / EALL 308b / HUMS 308b, Sages of the Ancient World  Michael Hunter
Comparative survey of ancient discourses about wisdom from China, India, the Near East, Egypt, Greece, and Rome. Topics include teaching, scheming, and dying. HU

* PHIL 412a / GMAN 211a / HUMS 314a / LITR 441a, Marx, Nietzsche, Freud  Rüdiger Campe
The revolutionary ways in which Marx, Nietzsche, and Freud redefined the ends of freedom. Key works of the three authors on agency in politics, economics, epistemology, social life, and sexuality. Agency as individual or collective, as autonomous or heteronomous, and as a case of liberation or subversion. Additional readings from Kant, Hegel, Kierkegaard, and Weber. HU

* PHIL 415b, Hume and Reid  Kenneth Winkler
Study and discussion of the epistemology and metaphysics of David Hume and Thomas Reid, with some consideration of their present-day significance. Topics include the nature of representation; space and time; causation and induction; skepticism and justification; personal identity; liberty and necessity; and the overall shape of a science of human nature. Readings in Hume’s Treatise of Human Nature and his Enquiry concerning Human Understanding, and in Reid’s Inquiry concerning the Human Mind and his Essays on the Intellectual Powers of Man. Prerequisite: At least one prior course in philosophy. HU

* PHIL 417a / CLCV 483b, Plato’s Metaphysics  Verity Harte
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  Michael Della Rocca
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 483b / CLCV 483b, Plato’s Metaphysics  Verity Harte
A broad look at central topics in Plato’s metaphysics followed by in-depth study of the conception of reality underlying the classificatory method at work in his Sophist, Statesman, and Philebus. Prerequisite: Previous study of ancient philosophy, Plato’s philosophy, or permission of the instructor. HU

* PHIL 484b, 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
METAPHYSICS AND EPistemology

* 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 430a, Social Epistemology  Daniel Greco
Survey of recent work in social epistemology, the branch of philosophy that concerns the social dimensions of knowledge. Topics to be addressed include the epistemic significance of disagreement, judgment aggregation, and how various social institutions look when viewed through an epistemological lens (e.g., epistemic arguments for democracy, error-minimization arguments for trial-by-jury). Prerequisites: Two prior courses in philosophy and instructor's permission.  HU

* PHIL 434b, Disagreement and Higher-Order Evidence  John Pittard
Investigation of the epistemic significance of disagreement. Whether one can reasonably maintain confident belief in the face of disagreement with apparently qualified thinkers; recent responses to that question from conciliationists and anticonciliationists. Related issues in the theory of rationality.  HU

* PHIL 438a, 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 logic 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. Prerequisite: PHIL 267 or permission of the instructor.  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 444b, Social Ontology  Robin Dembroff
Study of conceptual and methodological foundations of social ontology, as well as particular topics within social ontology, such as the nature of gender and race. Prerequisites: at least one, but preferably two philosophy courses.  HU

ETHICS AND VALUE THEORY

* PHIL 450a / EP&E 478a, 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 451b / AFAM 404b / WGSS 456, Epistemic Oppression  Kristie Dotson
Feminists of color have grappled with knowledge-related problems for centuries, but because of differing metaphilosophical and background assumptions, their insights concerning epistemic oppression can be difficult for typical philosophy and academic audiences to identify and understand. This course equips students with the ability to detect and comprehend women of color feminist epistemological projects for more comprehensive ways of understanding epistemic oppression.  HU

* PHIL 454a / EP&E 479a, The Moral Theories of Moore and Ross  Shelly Kagan
An examination of two of the most important works of moral philosophy of the twentieth century, Principia Ethica by G. E. Moore and The Right and the Good by W. D. Ross.  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 457b / PLSC 338b, The Ethics of Climate Change  Alexandre Gajevic Sayegh
The response of the United States to global climate change and questions of climate justice. The importance of bridging the gap between theories of climate justice and real world climate policy. Topics include the effort to fairly mitigate and adapt to climate change; the
responsibility to act upon climate change by countries and individuals; and how economics, environmental, and social sciences should contribute to the conceptualization of action-guiding moral and political theories. SO

* 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

Tutorial and Senior Essay Courses

* PHIL 480a or b, 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 490a and PHIL 491b, 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.

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. 