PHILOSOPHY (PHIL)

* PHIL 022b, Philosophy of Masculinities  Robin Dembroff
What is masculinity? What relationships does it bear to femininity, misogyny, and homophobia? To race? To biological sex? This course examines these and other questions related to masculinity from a philosophical perspective. The course develops students’ understanding of masculinity as a cultural product that changes across context and time. It pays particular attention to the ways that masculinity is socially policed and reinforced, rather than a “natural” expression of male sex. Through combinations of academic and popular texts, students critically examine language surrounding masculinity (e.g., “real man”, “bromance”), interlocking relationships between masculinity and other social features, such as race/ethnicity and class, social mechanisms that reproduce masculine norms (e.g., misogyny), and forces that challenge these norms (e.g., trans and queer identifications). From this groundwork, students consider the influence of masculinity on main fields of philosophy, such as epistemology, philosophy of science, ethics, and metaphysics, as well as the prospects for non-hierarchical, non-“toxic” forms of masculinity. Enrollment limited to first-year students.  HU

* PHIL 050a, Philosophy, Race, and Racism  Robert Gooding-Williams
What is a race, and what is like to have a racial identity? Is racism best conceptualized as a form of flawed belief, as a moral vice, as a social practice, or in terms of notions like “racial oppression” and “white supremacy”? In addressing these questions, we survey and attempt to think along with—analytically, critically, and never dogmatically—the writings of some of the best philosophers who have attempted to answer them. These include W.E.B. DuBois, Jean-Paul Sartre, Frantz Fanon, Michel Foucault, and several contemporary philosophers. Enrollment is limited to first-year students.  HU

* PHIL 100a / CLCV 121a / EALL 150a / EAST 307a, Writing Philosophy: Weakness of Will in Ancient China, Greece, and Today  James Brown-Kinsella
“Grant me chastity and strength of will—but not yet!” In this infamous prayer, Augustine wrestles with a perennial problem for human agency: the apparent gap between knowing that we should do something and actually wanting to do it. How wide is the gap? How can we bridge it? How pervasive is the problem? This course introduces first-year students to writing in the discipline of philosophy by tracing the contours of these questions and exploring their answers in ancient China, ancient Greece, and modern analytic philosophy. We begin by considering the traditional account of weakness of will as akrasia (i.e., doing what one knows one shouldn’t do) and explaining how such a gap in our agency is or isn’t possible. Next, we consider an alternative account, that of acedia (i.e., not doing what one knows one should do), and assess strategies for helping an agent bridge this kind of gap. Finally, we reassess the phenomenon of weakness of will in light of arguments that position it in a broader context, approach it from a new perspective, or try to rewrite our understanding of the phenomenon altogether.  WR, HU

PHIL 105b / WGSS 105b, Strong Men, Fascism, and Patriarchy  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 125a / CLCV 125a, Introduction to Ancient Philosophy  Staff
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  o Course cr

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  o Course cr

PHIL 174a, Moral Skepticism  Staff
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? HU  o Course cr

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 192b / RLST 107b, Metaphysics and Modernity  Nancy Levene
This course surveys concepts and controversies in and among select works of philosophy, theology, and literature. The focus is twofold: on reading works in view of their own principles, thus on questions of truth and interpretation, and on histories of the ideas, thus on questions of origin, change, and story. What and when is metaphysics? What and when is modernity? 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 219a / ANTH 237a / GMAN 233a / HUMS 225a / LITR 242a, Karl Marx’s Capital  Staff
A careful reading of Karl Marx’s classic critique of capitalism, Capital volume 1, a work of philosophy, political economy, and critical social theory that has had a significant global readership for over 150 years. Selected readings also from Capital volumes 2 and 3. HU  o Course cr

PHIL 222a, Moral Emotions, Especially Attitudes of the Heart  Stephen Darwall
A close study of the role of emotions and attitudes in the moral life and in moral philosophy, with special attention to the attitudes involved in heartfelt connection and personal relationship. The course investigates the nature of emotions such as shame, guilt, gratitude, love, and respect, as well as such related phenomena as empathy and sympathy. It considers their relation to
fundamental moral concepts, as well as their epistemological role and capacity to
ground moral judgments and facts.  

**PHIL 256a / RLST 402a, The Philosophy of Religion** Staff
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.  

**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.  

**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 271b / LING 271b, 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 272b, Philosophy of Mind** Laurie Paul
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.  

**PHIL 276a / CGSC 276a, Metaphysics** Staff
Examination of some fundamental aspects of reality. Topics include time, persistence,
modality, causation, and existence.  

**PHIL 281a, Infinity** Staff
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.  

**PHIL 300a, Sartre and De Beauvoir** Stephen Darwall and Jacob McNulty
This course examines writings from two of the most important French philosophers
of the 20th century, Jean-Paul Sartre and Simone de Beauvoir. We begin with a
popular statement of the existentialist outlook, “existentialism is a humanism.”
We then consider the methodological underpinnings of this new philosophical
approach by examining Sartre’s response Husserlian phenomenology, and the notion
of intentionality that lies at its center. The bulk of the course is devoted to a reading
of Sartre’s master-work, *Being and Nothingness*. Themes we consider include realism
and idealism; the difference between the “for itself” and “in-itself”; bad faith; “the
look” and intersubjectivity; love; embodiment; sadism and masochism; freedom,
responsibility, choice; the notion of a fundamental project and the desire to be God. In
the remainder of the course, we consider Beauvoir’s moral philosophy, as set forth in
an early essay and in her masterwork *The Ethics of Ambiguity* (traditionally, this work
has been overshadowed by her *Second Sex*). Here, we devote attention to the idea of an
existentialist ethics, and the demanding ideals of freedom and authenticity that are at
its center. We also consider Beauvoir’s perspectives on patriarchy, racism, colonialism,
and war. Throughout the course, we give ourselves the option of consulting secondary readings by Anglophone philosophers writing in the existentialist tradition, e.g. Moran, Dover and Gingrich, and others. However, the emphasis is on the primary texts. At least one prior course in philosophy, preferably in ethics and political philosophy or history of philosophy.  

* PHIL 307a, Hegel  
Jacob McNulty

Hegel is among the most important and influential figures in the history of Western philosophy. This course aims to provide a broad overview of his thought. We begin with selections from Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit*, intended as an introduction to his system. We also consider his mature system itself, starting with his main work of theoretical philosophy, *The Science of Logic* and extending to his main work of practical (moral and political) philosophy, the *Philosophy of Right*. Time permitting, we consider other appendages of the system as well, like the philosophy of history, aesthetics, and philosophy of religion. Topics to be addressed across these areas include idealism, monism, historicism, the “sociality of reason,” self-consciousness, negation and negativity, mutual recognition, Spirit, Hegel’s critique of Kant’s theoretical and practical philosophies, the fate of metaphysics, and, finally, the relationships between art, religion, and philosophy. At least one prior course in philosophy, preferably on the history of philosophy (for example, Kant).  

* PHIL 323b, The Frankfurt School  
Jacob McNulty

The Frankfurt School of Critical Theory was (is) a group of eclectic interdisciplinary Marxist philosophers and social scientists, active from the 1920s to the present. Most were German Jews born around the turn of the 20th century. The Frankfurt school were a group of thinkers in almost perpetual exile. Simultaneously critical of American capitalism and of Soviet Communism, they were expelled from their native Germany in the wake of Hitler’s rise to power. They also often lacked any intellectual safe haven, finding themselves at odds much philosophical and social-scientific orthodoxy (positivism, neo-Kantianism, “value-free” social science etc.). The critical theorists of the Frankfurt School sought to re-actualize ideas from the philosophical tradition, especially from Kant and Hegel, in order to address the complex realities of modern society: mass culture; fascism, totalitarianism and authoritarianism; world war; imperialism; secularization; irrationality, sexuality and aggression; and so on. This class looks at critical theory from a philosophical perspective, focusing on its claim to fuse traditional philosophy and radical social science. At least one prior course in philosophy, preferably in Kant or political philosophy.  

* PHIL 340a, The Social and Political Philosophy of W.E.B. Du Bois  
Robert Gooding-Williams

We examine three of Du Bois’s books—The Souls of Black Folk (1903), Darkwater (1920), and Black Reconstruction (1935)—with some attention to a fourth, Dusk of Dawn (1940). We also give attention to some of Du Bois’s essays. Through close readings of these writings, we consider Du Bois’s evolving conceptualization of the “Negro Problem” from the perspective of his philosophy of the human sciences, his political thought, and his aesthetics. Some background in philosophy, political theory, and/or African American Studies is preferred.
**PHIL 351a / CLCV 351a, Ancient Philosophy of Language**  Verity Harte and Zoltan Szabo

A seminar on central texts on topics in philosophy of language in the Greco-Roman philosophical tradition. The seminar does not attempt a full survey of the tradition on these topics, but select texts and topics of special interest, including exploring points of comparison and contrast with contemporary discussions in philosophy of language. Topics to be covered include: linguistic categories, the nature of grammar, origins of language, naming, and meaning. 1 prior course in the history of ancient Greco-Roman philosophy and at least 1 additional prior course in philosophy.  

HU

**PHIL 373a, Weakness of Will**  Michael Della Rocca

An examination of the apparent phenomenon of weakness of will or akritic action whereby one knowingly (in some sense of "knowingly") acts contrary to one's better (in some sense of "better") judgment. Attention to the metaphysical underpinnings of akritic action that seem to make such action possible. Discussion of the connection between weak-willed action and other forms of apparent irrationality, and exploration of the implications of akrasia for moral philosophy. Attention both to historical and recent and contemporary including Plato, Aristotle, Augustine, Spinoza, Leibniz, Anscombe, Davidson, Korsgaard, Bratman, Holton, Buss, Schapiro, and others. At least two courses in philosophy.  

HU

**PHIL 385a / ENGL 289a / HUMS 388a / LITR 389a / RLST 380a, The Force of Life**  Nancy Levene

The point of departure for this course is a line from James Baldwin in _The Fire Next Time_: “To be sensual, I think, is to respect and rejoice in the force of life, of life itself, and to be present in all that one does, from the effort of loving to the breaking of bread.” We study four authors—Virginia Woolf, Franz Kafka, Baldwin, and Jacques Derrida—in light of the values Baldwin expresses and their challenges. Our work between philosophy and fiction involves striving to read each text according to the ideas it itself advances, as well as reading for connections and cross-pollinations.  

WR, HU

**PHIL 390a, Sidgwick’s Methods of Ethics**  Shelly Kagan

Henry Sidgwick's _The Methods of Ethics_ is one of the greatest works of moral philosophy of the 19th century. A systematic and extremely careful study of three basic approaches to ethics—egoism, utilitarianism, and intuitionism (roughly, commonsense deontological morality)—the _Methods_ is a masterpiece that is widely praised (at least, by philosophers!) but much less frequently read, since it is a long and demanding book. We devote the semester to studying it. Prerequisite: a previous class in moral philosophy.  

HU

**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.  

½ Course cr

**PHIL 412b / GMAN 211b / HUMS 314b / LITR 441b, Marx, Nietzsche, Freud**  Austen Hinkley

The course is designed as an introduction to the thought of these three towering figures in the German-language intellectual tradition and to their contributions to our attempts to understand the human mind and society. We read seminal essays as well as (excerpts from) longer works, including Marx's _Capital_, Nietzsche's _Genealogy of Morality_ and
Thus Spake Zarathustra, and Freud's Interpretation of Dreams. But we also look at what came before and after these thinkers, considering—among others—Kant, Ludwig Feuerbach, Melanie Klein, Adorno, and Foucault; and we think about the relevance of Marx, Nietzsche, and Freud for the understanding of our own times.  HU

* PHIL 425b, Topics in Epistemology  Keith DeRose and Timothy Williamson
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 431a / RLST 429a, Phenomenology  Noreen Khawaja
In-depth introduction to phenomenology as a theory of what is and as a method for studying it. Key figures in the history of phenomenology, emphasizing connections to social theory, aesthetics, and religion. Readings from Merleau-Ponty, Heidegger, Fanon, Husserl, Ahmed, Barad, and others.  HU

* PHIL 437b, 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 445b / LING 376b, Implicature and Pragmatic Theory  Laurence Horn
This seminar explores theoretical and experimental approaches to conversational implicature, focusing on scalar implicature (whose 50th anniversary falls in 2022). We examine the role that pragmatic inference plays in the determination of what is said and of the delineation of at-issue and non-at-issue content within neo-Gricean pragmatics and competing theories. Readings, presentations, and discussion draw on the available evidence from linguistic diagnostics, corpora, and especially a range of experimental studies on the acquisition, processing, and diversity of scalar implicature, negative strengthening, and exhaustivity in focus constructions. In particular, we review current work on the effects of discourse context, politeness and "face" considerations, and lexical semantics in constraining when and how pragmatic inferences are— and aren't— drawn. Another focus is on the explosion of recent work re-examining the role played by scalar implicature and other factors in the universal resistance to the lexicalization of concepts corresponding to *nall (= ‘not all’), *nand (= ‘or not’), and *noth (= ‘not both’) vis-à-vis none, nor, neither. We also consider the application of the what is said/what is implicated distinction to the characterization of lying vs. misleading in and out of the courtroom. Time and interest permitting, we also touch on recent developments in rational speech act theory and intention- vs. commitment-based approaches to assertion and implicature. Our goal in this seminar is to explore the landscape of
scalar implicature, and conversational implicature more generally, and to develop the empirical tools for investigating this landscape. Prerequisite: At least one course in semantics, pragmatics, or philosophy of language; or permission of instructor.  SO RP

* 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 452b, History of Early Modern Ethics  Stephen Darwall
An examination of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century ethical philosophy, including Hobbes, Hutcheson, Hume, Butler, Rousseau, Kant, Smith, and Bentham.  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 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 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.