

**DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY  
UNDERGRADUATE COURSE DESCRIPTIONS**

**Fall Semester August 28 – December 11, 2023**

**PHI 101 PHI Introduction to Philosophy**

**Dr. John Beverley**

ONLINE

Class #: 24421

Philosophy is a broad field of inquiry, encompassing questions about the nature of the world around us, our own natures, our values, and about how we should live our lives. In this course, we will look to historical and contemporary writings on a vast array of issues, including debates in ethics, free will, metaphysics, and epistemology. Our inquiry will span from the extremely practical to the extremely abstract, and students will develop philosophical skills for engaging with these debates.

The course examines general topics in various areas of philosophy showing different sides of issues; develops critical thought and philosophical method.

**PATHWAYS: PHI 101 Introduction to Philosophy satisfies the following pathways:  
Humanity and Global Reflections.**

**PHI 101 POW Introduction to Philosophy**

**Carter Benson**

T Th, 11:00 AM – 12:20 PM

Class #: 15186

Philosophy is a broad field of inquiry, encompassing questions about the nature of the world around us, our own natures, our values, and about how we should live our lives. In this course, we will look to historical and contemporary writings on a vast array of issues, including debates in ethics, free will, metaphysics, and epistemology. Our inquiry will span from the extremely practical to the extremely abstract, and students will develop philosophical skills for engaging with these debates.

The course examines general topics in various areas of philosophy showing different sides of issues; develops critical thought and philosophical method.

**PATHWAYS: PHI 101 Introduction to Philosophy satisfies the following pathways:  
Humanity and Global Reflections.**

**PHI 101 VIN Introduction to Philosophy****Dr. Sarah Vincent**

M W F, 8:00 AM – 8:50 AM

Class #: 23625

Welcome to the wonderful world of philosophy! To get started, we will discuss argumentation, including basic terminology, how to identify arguments, how to assess arguments, and how to construct arguments. With that groundwork in place, we will have the skills to engage philosophical arguments about particular topics of interest. Aside from the work in informal logic we will have already done, this class will introduce three more areas of philosophy: metaphysics, epistemology and ethics. More specifically, our topics in metaphysics will be life and death. Our topics in epistemology will be trust and gaslighting. Our topics in ethics will be racism, sexual consent and coming out.

**PATHWAYS: PHI 101 Introduction to Philosophy satisfies the following pathways: Humanity and Global Reflections.**

**PHI 105 LON Contemporary Moral Problems****Dr. Duane Long**

M W F, 10:00 AM – 10:50 AM

Class #: 19364

The first third of the class will address issues of racial injustice in contemporary America and the ethics of proposed societal responses to historical and present-day racism. The second third of the class will address ethical concerns regarding economic class, including income and wealth inequality, wealth-based political disenfranchisement, and economic exploitation, as well as more and less radical possible responses to economic injustice. The final third of the class will center on the ethics of obeying the law, including whether there is a general obligation to obey the law, and if so, under what circumstances one is justified in breaking the law. We will also consider different kinds of ethically-motivated lawbreaking and the boundaries on what kind of illegal activism can be morally justified.

**PATHWAYS: PHI 105 Contemporary Moral Problems satisfies the following pathways: Health, Humanity, Innovation, and Justice.**

**PHI 107 DON Introduction to Ethics****Dr. Maureen Donnelly**

T Th, 8:00 AM – 9:20 AM

Class #23626

Philosophers have proposed a variety of ethical theories with different kinds of distinctions between right and wrong action or between virtue and vice. The purpose of this course is to survey a selection of some of the most important ethical theories and to practice applying these theories to real moral dilemmas. Grades will be based on homework, tests, and an in-class group project.

**PATHWAYS: PHI 107 Introduction to Ethics satisfies the following pathways:  
Environment, Health, Humanity, and Innovation.**

**PHI 107 GRA Introduction to Ethics**

**Dr. David Gray**

ONLINE

Class #: 19365

Ethics is the branch of philosophy examining the nature of morality, good and evil, and right and wrong action. At bottom, ethics addresses the most practical question: "What ought I do?" As such, this is not some hypothetical concern, but something with which we all continually wrestle, as we go about our day-to-day lives. This suggests that ethics is an inherent and inescapable part of human existence. In this course, we will look at several influential approaches and attempts to answer that practical question of ethics. Throughout, we will discover how these divergent, and often conflicting, approaches frame present-day debates surrounding the opioid crisis, drone attacks, quotas in admissions and hiring, political corruption, world poverty, animal rights, torture, national security, and human rights.

**PATHWAYS: PHI 107 Introduction to Ethics satisfies the following pathways:  
Environment, Health, Humanity, and Innovation.**

**PHI 115 BEE Critical Thinking**

**Dr. James Beebe**

T Th, 12:30 PM – 1:50 PM

Class #: 19384

This is a course on reasoning well-on what it means to reflect carefully about what you should or should not believe in light of your available evidence. You've been reasoning your whole life-sometimes well, sometimes poorly. This class will provide you with exercises that are aimed at refining your reasoning skills. What makes this class different from other classes that sharpen your reasoning skills in some respect is that we will not be solely focusing on reasoning within a particular domain or about a particular set of issues. The goal of this course is to improve reasoning skills that can be applied in any domain. Toward the end of the course, we will focus for a few weeks on the kind of reasoning behind conspiracy theories, but even there our goal will be to reflect upon and hone reasoning skills that are general rather than specific in nature. Some university courses are more content-focused, while others are more skill-focused. A course about art history falls into the former category, while a course about figure drawing falls into the latter. This course has both a content component and a skill component, but the skill component may be larger than you anticipated. This means that you will not merely be asked to sit and think about critical thinking, you will be asked to do a good bit of it.

**PHI 185 MUL Model-Based Reasoning**

**Dr. Ryan Muldoon**

T Th, 11:00 AM – 12:20 PM

Class #: 19385

The world is full of complex problems and messy situations. This complexity makes it very hard for us to think through what is going on and how we might best try and develop solutions to our problems. The best tools we have for thinking through these problems are models. Models allow us to extract a simpler version of our problem from the messiness of the real world, and then test out our ideas to find the best solution. In this course, we will learn about a variety of models that the social sciences use to think about the world, and then examine the philosophical challenges of using models to guide our reasoning. We will learn about when models might help us, and when models might mislead us, and what we can do about it. Students will not only learn about models, but learn to think like a modeler.

**PHI 199 BEE UB Seminar – Science and Religion**

**Dr. Daniel Stephens**

T Th; 3:30 PM – 4:50 PM

Class #: 16509

Two important tasks confront you as a human being. The first is to genuinely understand yourself and the world around you. The second is to find meaning, value, and happiness in the life that you're living. In this course, we will explore scientific and religious approaches to these two tasks and evaluate how helpful these approaches can be.

**PHI 199 BIT UB Seminar – Deductive Logic**

**Dr. Thomas Bittner**

M W F, 9:00 AM – 9:50 AM

Class #: 19367

Thinking well, i.e., *critically*, is a skill that every student needs to acquire. Logic plays an important role in critical thinking and acquiring skills in logical analysis and correct reasoning are mandatory. *Logic*, very generally speaking, is the study of correct reasoning. Typically, it is directed at evaluating reasoning expressed in written arguments. *Deductive* logic concerns itself with those forms of reasoning such that if some thoughts (“premises”) are certain, necessary or can be known, then other thoughts reasoned from them (“conclusions”) are also certain, necessary, or can be known. PHI 199 is an introduction to the basic concepts of *argument* and *validity*. We will also examine some of the techniques that have been advanced for assessing the quality of arguments, including Aristotle’s theory of the syllogism and various techniques that use diagrams.

The three credit UB Seminar is focused on a big idea or challenging issue to engage students with questions of significance in a field of study and, ultimately, to connect their studies with issues of consequence in the wider world. Essential to the UB Curriculum, the Seminar helps students with common learning outcomes focused on fundamental

expectations for critical thinking, ethical reasoning, and oral communication, and learning at a university, all within topic focused subject matter. The Seminars provide students with an early connection to UB faculty and the undergraduate experience at a comprehensive, research university. This course is equivalent to any 199 offered in any subject. This course is a controlled enrollment (impacted) course. Students who have previously attempted the course and received a grade of F or R may not be able to repeat the course during the fall or spring semester.

**Textbook:**

Our textbook is one of the several most widely used and “standard” introductions to the subject:

Patrick Hurley's *A Concise Introduction to Logic* (13<sup>th</sup> edition) **electronic version**.

**PHI 199 DON UB Seminar – Philosophy in Literature**

**Dr. Maureen Donnelly**

T Th, 11:00 AM – 12:20 PM

Class #: 22081

Literary works often deal with philosophical issues such as how we should live, what counts as a good life, and whether (and to what extent) we are free to direct our own lives. In this class, we will consider these sorts of philosophical issues through both philosophical and literary works. Grades will be based on homework assignments, class participation, tests, and a short final paper.

The three credit UB Seminar is focused on a big idea or challenging issue to engage students with questions of significance in a field of study and, ultimately, to connect their studies with issues of consequence in the wider world. Essential to the UB Curriculum, the Seminar helps students with common learning outcomes focused on fundamental expectations for critical thinking, ethical reasoning, and oral communication, and learning at a university, all within topic focused subject matter. The Seminars provide students with an early connection to UB faculty and the undergraduate experience at a comprehensive, research university. This course is equivalent to any 199 offered in any subject. This course is a controlled enrollment (impacted) course. Students who have previously attempted the course and received a grade of F or R may not be able to repeat the course during the fall or spring semester.

**PHI 215 BEV Symbolic Logic**

**Dr. John Beverley**

T Th, 9:00 AM – 10:20 AM

Class #: 18580

This course will help you develop skills of rigorous argumentation and teach you to be a more careful thinker. Broadly, we will cover the basic techniques of symbolic logic. More specifically, we will learn to symbolize ordinary English sentences into a formal language, present arguments based on symbolized sentences, making each step in the reasoning

explicit, test the validity of arguments using truth tables, a natural deduction system, and model theory, and employ automated prover and model-checking software. In constructing and testing arguments, we will note formal and informal fallacies, learning to identify and avoid them. Finally, we will examine the difference between the deductive reasoning of which most of this course is devoted, and other varieties of reasoning which may be more common in day-to-day life.

**PHI 234 LON Environmental Ethics**

**Dr. Duane Long**

ONLINE

Class #: 17859

This class will investigate the philosophical and ethical relation(s) between humans and human interests on the one hand and non-human parts of the natural world on the other.

**PATHWAYS: PHI 234 Environmental Ethics satisfies the following pathways: Environment, Humanity, and Justice.**

**PHI 237 HOV Medical Ethics: Social & Ethical Values in Medicine**

**Dr. David Hershenov**

M W F, 11:00 AM – 11:50 AM

Class #: 16993

The course is designed both to provide moral guidance to future medical professionals as well as to enable citizens to develop informed and reasonable positions on the most important bioethical issues of the day. Students will become familiar with the leading arguments on both sides of the following contemporary bioethical controversies: abortion, euthanasia/physician-assisted suicide, commercial surrogate motherhood, cloning, defining death, organ transplants, conscientious refusal to provide some legal medical procedures, patient autonomy, informed consent, decision-making for the incompetent, and enhancing humans.

The readings will provide arguments for both sides of each issue. Even if students don't switch sides on an issue due to the course readings, lectures, and discussions, the hope is that they will not only be able to give a stronger defense of their own positions but will also come to better appreciate the considerations that favor the opposing side. This might play a small role in making public debate more civil and reasonable.

The methodologies employed in the class should make students more aware of their own basic values, perhaps revealing to them commitments of which they were previously unaware. Students will learn how to construct philosophical arguments and critically read philosophy essays. All the required readings will be made available through UB Learns.

**PATHWAYS: PHI 237 Medical Ethics satisfies the following pathways: Health and Justice.**

**PHI 237 LON Medical Ethics: Social & Ethical Values in Medicine**  
**Dr. Duane Long**  
ONLINE  
Class #: 18576

We will examine major topics in the ethics of medicine/medical treatment at the beginning and end of life.

**PATHWAYS: PHI 237 Medical Ethics satisfies the following pathways: Health and Justice.**

**PHI 252 STE Eastern Philosophy**  
**Dr. Daniel Stephens**  
T Th, 12:30 PM – 1:50 PM  
Class #: 24116

Examines selected views, traditions or issues in Chinese, Japanese, Indian or Southeast Asian philosophies. This course is the same as AS 252 and course repeat rules will apply. Students should consult with their major department regarding any restrictions on their degree requirements.

**PHI 320 VIN Philosophy of Mind**  
**Dr. Sarah Vincent**  
T Th, 11:00 AM – 12:20 PM  
Class #: 23627

How should we understand minds? Are minds and mental states physical or non-physical? Is the mind identical to the brain, or is it somehow more than that? Our consideration of questions like these will be facilitated by discussions of basic problems in the philosophy of mind, such as “the mind-body problem” and “the problem of other minds,” as well as several theories like dualism, behaviorism, materialism, functionalism, connectionism, and embodied cognition. With this foundation in place, we will transition into talking about more specialized areas of philosophy of mind, including the philosophy of psychiatry and the philosophy of animal cognition.

**PHI 323 GRA Decision Theory**  
**Dr. David Gray**  
M W F, 2:00 PM – 2:50 PM  
Class #: 23907

In this course, we will explore formal approaches to individual and group decision making, while assessing their philosophical significance and practical applications. First, we explore rational choice theory by considering the relationship between instrumental rationality and formal utility theory, different conceptions of preference and utility, and objections to the standard assumptions of rational choice. Following that, we have a brief interlude with game theory by addressing the prisoner’s dilemma, Nash equilibrium, and backward

induction. Finally, we connect the formal theory of rational choice to issues in social and political philosophy with a focus on social choice theory and its applications to democracy. Throughout, you will learn basic concepts and techniques essential for approaching and analyzing issues in the interdisciplinary field of philosophy, politics, and economics.

**PHI 341 PHI Social Philosophy**

**Dr. Alexander Schaefer**

M W F, 9:00 AM – 9:50 AM

Class #: 19386

In this course, we investigate how the interplay of individual behaviors, informal norms, and social institutions may contribute to structural injustice. In doing so, we will consider questions, such as: What are social justice and injustice? How does social justice intersect with notions of equality? What does it mean to be equals within society? How might injustice and inequality become imbedded within our basic social structures? Even if we aren't to blame for structural injustice, do we have a responsibility to address it? How can these discussions help us better understand, appraise, and respond to the injustices perpetuated by sexism and racism?

**PATHWAYS: PHI 341 Social Philosophy satisfies the following pathway: Justice.**

**PHI 345 VIN Aesthetics and the Philosophy of Art**

**Dr. Sarah Vincent**

M W F, 9:00 AM – 9:50 AM

Class #: 16512

What makes something 'art'? Is everyone's interpretation of an artwork's meaning equally plausible, or is expertise important? Why do some of us appreciate a particular work of art, but others don't connect to it? Can art have ethical value? Throughout this course, we'll consider questions like these, bringing major philosophical figures as well as more contemporary philosophical theories into conversation with various artworks.

**PATHWAYS: PHI 345 Aesthetics and the Philosophy of Art satisfies the following pathways: Humanity, Innovation, and Global Reflections.**

**PHI 353 GRA Conflict and Dispute Resolution**

**Dr. David Gray**

M W F, 10:00 AM – 10:50 AM

Class #: 20849

Conflict is an intractable feature of life, occurring between family members, friends, coworkers, political organizations, citizens, nations, and even within oneself. As a result, you will often find yourself in situations where achieving your goals and meeting your obligations requires that you are able to secure the legitimate cooperation of others without resorting to force or fraud. Ultimately, it is up to you-and you alone-to negotiate and secure that cooperation in order to do your job, advance your career, and even maintain meaningful personal relationships with your family and friends. Utilizing the latest research

in negotiation and conflict resolution, this course will prepare you for these challenges. In particular, you will learn the fundamentals of conflict resolution, while developing interpersonal techniques and tactics for effectively influencing others, especially in difficult situations involving strong emotions. By the end of the course, you will have more control and confidence for productively approaching interpersonal interactions that may cause stress, anxiety, or frustration.

**PATHWAYS: PHI 353 Conflict and Dispute Resolution satisfies the following pathway: Justice.**

### **PHI 370 POW Early Modern Philosophy**

**Dr. Lewis Powell**

T Th, 9:30 AM – 10:50 AM

Class #: 16994

Reviews the history of metaphysics and epistemology from the Renaissance to Kant.

We're all familiar with the claim that 'appearances can be deceiving,' or that 'things aren't always what they seem.' And we've all had experiences that exemplify those claims as well; we glance quickly from a distance and wind up mistaking a stranger for a close friend, or we get confused by an optical illusion. Since we make our judgments about the way things *are* on the basis of the way things *seem*, it makes sense to ask ourselves how we can tell the cases where appearances are deceiving from the cases where they are not.

What is reality like, and how can we figure that out from the way things seem or appear to be? This question was a major concern for philosophers in the early modern period, and in this course, we will study some of the most important/influential attempts to answer it offered by leading scholars of the day. We will also see how their answers to these questions relate to their views on freedom of the will, ethics, and personal identity.

**PATHWAYS: PHI 370 Early Modern Philosophy satisfies the following pathways: Humanity and Global Reflections.**

### **PHI 388 LAW Twentieth Century Philosophy**

**Dr. James Lawler**

M W F, 11:00 AM – 11:50 AM

Class #: 22088

The history of 20th century philosophy is divided along geographic lines, with Continental Europe on one side, and Great Britain and its colonial offspring, especially the United States, on the other. This course will consider exemplary figures from each side of this divide, based on short articles that explore the relationships between seemingly unlikely pairs. Carnap's early critique of Heidegger brings into perspective the origins of 20th century thought in 19th century precedents, August Comte and Friedrich Nietzsche. Daniel Dennett argues for a phenomenology distinct from that of Edmund Husserl. Considering seemingly opposite positions of Quine and Heidegger on the role of logic in science brings out surprising compatibilities. Opposition to John Searle's defense of the

correspondence theory of truth finds agreement on both sides of the divide on the part of Michel Foucault and Donald Davidson. But apparent compatibilities between Davidson and Hans Gadamer on the interpretation of texts can conceal the recognition of deeper differences. And there is the issue of the evolution of analytic philosophy itself, with the phenomenon of “postanalytical” thinkers such as Richard Rorty.

Through detailed comparisons of exemplary figures the perception of an unbridgeable gulf between two opposing modes of philosophizing will be challenged even as the general outlines of the two orientations are constructively elaborated.

Text for course: C. G. Prado, *A House Divided: Comparing Analytic and Continental Philosophy*, Humanity Books, 2003.

There will be regular quizzes, student oral presentations, and a final essay exam.

Undergraduate Tutorial Sections:

PHI 498 Philosophy Undergraduate Tutorials

PHI 499 Philosophy Undergraduate Tutorials

*Meeting days and times as arranged with professors.*