

Spring 2013
Department of Philosophy
Undergraduate Course Descriptions
<http://www.philosophy.buffalo.edu/courses>

PHI 101 CHO Intro to Philosophy Cho, K
M W F, 9:00-9:50 AM, NSC 218 #14880

We attempt to balance between classical issues recurring throughout the ages and our uniquely modern problems. In this global age, we also must keep our eyes open to different views, values and approaches in other traditions, in Continental Europe and Asia, for example. That is why philosophy must occupy a central place in our general education. Such broader outlook and openness, however, is not something in which you lose yourself. To the contrary, finding oneself in this broadened perspective with reason and conviction should be the aim of studying philosophy.

Text: *Introducing Philosophy*, by Robert Solomon, 9th & 10th edition, Oxford University Press

PHI 101 PWL Intro to Philosophy Powell, L
T TH, 9:30-10:50 AM, Knox 104 #22855

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.

PHI 101 TA Intro to Philosophy Brown, C
M W F, 8:00-8:50 AM, Talbert 115 #16751

The principle goal of this course is to introduce students to many of the historically important philosophical questions, issues and positions in order to familiarize them with the field and to sharpen their critical thinking skills. We will examine a number of philosophical texts in an effort to critically analyze the argument or arguments contained therein. The texts for this course will be from primary sources, i.e. not textbook summaries, and most of them will be from the contemporary period. The planned theme of the course will be ‘What is the proper method and goal of philosophical inquiry?’, but this may evolve as the course progresses. Texts: available online for free

PHI 107 TA1 Ethics
MWF, 9:00-9:50 AM, Clemens 17 #22856

Ray, P

Ethics is an introductory course in philosophical ethics. The principal focus is to develop an understanding of the major theories and concepts in the history of western moral philosophy.

PHI 107 DON Ethics
T TH, 12:30-1:50 PM, Clemens 19 #14607

Gifford, M

PHI 107 TA Ethics
M W F, 11:00-11:50 AM, Knox 109 #16752

Li, W

PHI 115 BIT Critical Thinking
T TH, 11:00AM - 12:20 PM, Fillmore 322 #11271

Bittner, T

Critical Thinking is an introduction to the basic concepts of deductive logic, especially the 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.

Our textbook is one of the most widely used and "standard" introductions to the subject: Patrick Hurley's A Concise Introduction to Logic (latest edition) electronic version. The electronic version of the book will allow you to do the homework online with immediate feedback and to use the supporting material on the text website.

PHI 115 TA Critical Thinking
MW F, 10:00-10:50 AM, Clemens 19 #22857

Lavine, M

The principal aim of a course on critical thinking is to make its students better at discerning the value of the information, assertions, and arguments they are presented with in all parts of their lives; to help teach how to sift out the good from the bad. Sometimes this involves seeing connections where we are naturally inclined to see differences. Sometimes this involves making distinctions where we would tend to reflexively assume similarities. In other cases, this may require us to explicitly construct an argument (either in total or just in detail) left implicit by our conversation partners. Even when our conversation partner has given us all of the premises used to make their conclusion (i.e. reasons for their belief), the principles of good critical thinking will call for us to evaluate the success of the chain of reasoning given to us underlying the path from reasons to belief. Each of these is a skill we will be trying to hone during the course of the semester. This course can benefit individuals specializing in any field to help them reason more clearly and consistently in their area of specialization. This course may also be helpful for anyone preparing to take a standardized test such as the GRE.

PHI 154 TA Asian Wisdom
M W F, 11:00-11:50 AM, Frnczk 454 #23324

Poenicke, P

This course focuses on the rich, complex traditions that have fashioned the Eastern Asian intellectual milieu, primarily authors and sources associated with Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism, and Daoism. As in other introductory philosophy courses, students will be trained in the essential skills of philosophical craft—writing, arguing, and reading—while discussing problems in metaphysics, ethics, social-political theory, philosophy of language, logic, and aesthetics, amongst many fields of contemporary philosophy. Many Western philosophers balk at the idea that contemporary Anglo-American philosophy is contiguous with, or can be informed by, Eastern schools and thinkers who had significantly dissimilar religious and cultural commitments and played a minor role in shaping philosophy as it is dominantly practiced today. Such a worry is significant and one of the main questions in the course: why should students take Eastern thinkers seriously as philosophers or producing works of philosophical importance, and not simply as gurus of profound pseudo-philosophy?

The course will provide students with a sense of what makes these various strains of thought exceptional and worthy of philosophical study, invaluable additions to contemporary Western philosophy. To do so, students will be exposed to comparisons between Eastern and Western philosophy, to the history of these traditions in East Asia, their evolution and confluence, and to contemporary work that is inspired by these Asian thinkers and works.

PHI 212 TA Intro: Philosophy of Religion
T TH, 11:00-12-20 PM, Clemens 04 #22858

Nolan, C

This course will introduce students to major questions in the philosophy of religion and familiarize them with classic and contemporary responses to these questions, using excerpts from primary texts. Arguments for and against God's existence will be discussed, as well as the attributes of God and certain key religious doctrines.

PHI 215 DIP Intro to Deductive Logic
T TH, 9:30-10-50 AM, O'Brian 209 #23325

Dipert, R

This is a course on (mainly) symbolic deductive logic that covers primarily Aristotelian logic and propositional logic. Deductive logic generally is the study of arguments which purport to establish their conclusions with certainty, not probability. Aristotelian logic is the deductive logic of categorical sentences of the form “Some X’s are Y’s,” “All X’s are Y’s,” and “No X’s are Y’s.” Propositional Logic is the deductive logic of sentences containing “and”, “or,” “not” and “if...then...” In both cases we will develop skills in translating English sentences into symbolic forms, giving deductions (“proofs”) of conclusions from premises, and semantic theories of when arguments are valid (a dossier theory and Venn diagrams for Aristotelian logic, truth tables for propositional logic). The end of the course will discuss the place of deductive logic in theories of “forward reasoning” (what interesting conclusions follow from a set of premises), and deductive logic’s relationship to abductive and inductive logics. In inductive logic we will look at simpler

theorems of probability, the application of Mill's methods, and the most basic uses of Bayes' Theorem and curve fitting. The course will be supported by various computer tools.

PHI 217 BAU **Professional Ethics** **Baumer, W**
T TH, 12:30-1:50 PM, Clemens 17 #15414

This course introduces central ethical issues and problems of various professions, e.g., business, engineering, government, health care, law, and the sciences. The course uses case studies and essays presenting and discussing these issues. Course sessions combine lectures and discussion. Course requirements include three exams and a research essay. The goals of the course are to provide basic knowledge of approaches to ethics and to common ethical issues in professional activities, and ability to analyze and address these issues.

The course text is *Ethical Issues in Professional Life*, edited by Joan C. Callahan, Oxford U. Press, New York, ©1988 [paperbound].

PHI 298 COH **Modern Jewish Thought** **Cohen, R**
T TH, 12:30-1:50 PM, Center for the Arts 144 #22859

Modern Jewish thought, like all modern thought, is initiated in response to and challenged by modern science. We begin with Baruch Spinoza's rationalist attack on traditional religion - and rabbinic Judaism in particular - in the *Theological-Political Treatise* (1670), and then turn to Moses Mendelssohn's important work *Jerusalem* (1783), which is an Enlightenment defense of Judaism in critical response to modern science and to Spinoza. We then turn to selected writings of the four greatest figures of more recent Jewish philosophy: the great "Kantian" Hermann Cohen (1842-1918); the great philosopher of dialogue, Martin Buber (1878-1965); the great "returnee" to Judaism, Franz Rosenzweig (1886-1929); and the great ethical philosopher of the face-to-face, Emmanuel Levinas (1906-1995).

PHI 315 DIP **Symbolic Logic** **Dipert, R**
T TH, 12:30-1:50 PM, Clemens 06 #22860

This course will assume knowledge of propositional logic, including truth tables and some deductive theory—although the industrious undergraduate or graduate student will be given an opportunity to bring themselves up to speed in the first 2 weeks. After a sketch of propositional logic, its properties (consistency, completeness, decidability) and philosophical issues, we will discuss various alternative methods—tableau, trees, Wang's algorithm, and Resolution—for determining the validity of propositional arguments. Characteristics of Natural Deduction and axiomatic formulations of propositional logic will be rapidly presented and discussed. The end goal is to prepare the student later in the year to use various software tools, such as Prover 9. One day will also be spent on an advanced perspective on Aristotelian logic (a subset of First Order Logic with only 1-place relations)—natural deduction systems, models, and so on. The bulk of the course will be devoted to studying the First-Order Predicate logic (FOPL or FOL), sometimes called “Quantificational Logic”—translating into it and deductions in it. The course will end with

a survey of other kinds of logic: many-valued logics, and modal logics including epistemic and deontic logics. The course will be supported by various computer tools.

PHI 315 KEA

Symbolic Logic

Kearns, J

M W F, 10:00-10:50 AM, Talbert 107 #15175

In this course, we develop two logical theories which deal with the two fundamental languages of modern logic, the propositional language whose logical expressions are symbolic connectives, and the quantificational language of first-order logic with identity.

In developing each theory, we will consider the truth conditions of sentences in the language, and develop techniques for determining when statements imply other statements, and when statements are incompatible. For the propositional language, these techniques involve truth-tables. For each theory, we will employ a deductive system for constructing arguments and proofs with sentences in the logical language, and will gain proficiency in constructing such arguments.

PHI 320 MIL

Philosophy of Mind

Millar, B

M W F, 10:00-10:50 AM, Knox 04 #22861

This course will survey some of the most fundamental questions concerning the nature of the mind and its relation to the physical world. Is the mind an immaterial substance, separate from the material body, as Descartes believed? If so, how can the mind causally interact with the material body? Or, is the mind wholly material, as most contemporary philosophers maintain? If so, are mental states identical to brain states, or do brain states merely “realize” mental states in some manner? Can any materialist theory adequately explain such a puzzling mental phenomenon as consciousness?

PHI 334 SHO

Environmental Ethics

Shockley, K

M W, 11:00-12:20 PM, NSC 215 #23326

Environmental ethics is an area of study that examines how humans ought to relate to and interact with their environment as individuals, through organizations, and as a species. This course is designed to provide a comprehensive overview of the key philosophical issues and arguments within this growing field. It will be of particular value not only to Philosophy majors and those concentrating in environmentally oriented disciplines, but also to those with a keen interest in humankind’s complicated relationship with our natural environment.

In this course we will consider the nature of this relationship, humankind’s responsibilities to and regarding that environment, the kinds of actions prescribed by those responsibilities, and possible justifications for those responsibilities. In particular, we will examine the merits of considering our responsibilities to the environment from an entirely human-centered standpoint, possible alternatives to this approach, and various ways these options might be applied to actual environmental problems. To engage in this examination adequately we will need to consider both theoretical issues underlying various approaches to the environment and the various ways those approaches have been put into practice.

PHI 337 D #18939 Social & Ethical Values in Medicine
M W F, 4:00-4:50 PM, Baldy 108 #18939

Dryden, L

PHI 337 HER Social & Ethical Values in Medicine
T TH, 11:00-12:20 PM, Cooke 121 #11266

Hershenov, D

The course will examine current bioethical controversies surrounding abortion, euthanasia and physician-assisted suicide, advanced directives, informed consent, embryonic stem cell research, the definition and criterion of death, increasing the supply of organs for transplant, commercial surrogate motherhood, and human cloning. The course is designed to not just help future doctors and nurses morally navigate themselves around their job but to enable students as 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 contemporary bioethical controversies. The readings are chosen to provide opposing positions. Each topic covered will have a second author arguing against the position defended in the first reading, usually commenting on the very author and essay just read. 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 philosophical essays. The course will involve reading and analyzing articles by Judith Thomson and Don Marquis on abortion, Leon Kass, David Velleman and Frances Kamm on euthanasia and physician-assisted suicide, Alan Shewmon and Jeff McMahan on death, David Shoemaker and Rose Koch on embryonic stem cell research, Elizabeth Anderson and Richard Arneson on Commercial Surrogacy, Leon Kass and David Hershenov on human cloning, Jim Delaney and Robert Veatch and Michael Gill on organ transplants, James Childress and Veatch on informed consent, Rebecca Dresser and Ronald Dworkin on advance directives. All the readings will be placed on the library electronic course reserve so students will not have to buy any texts or course readers.

PHI 337 TA1 Social & Ethical Values in Medicine
M W F, 9:00-9:50, DFN 04 South Campus #15685 (closed for nursing students)

Otto, J

PHI 337 TA2 Social & Ethical Values in Medicine
M W F, 9:00-9:50 AM, Frnczk 454 #11270 (closed for nursing students)

Sackris, D

PHI 337 TA3 Social & Ethical Values in Medicine
T TH, 11:00-12:20 PM, Clemens 17 #11272

Koch, P

