

## Fall 2012 Department of Philosophy Undergraduate Course Descriptions

<http://www.philosophy.buffalo.edu/courses>

[http://myub.buffalo.edu/course/public/scripts/crs\\_sched.cgi?switch=showcourses&semester=fall  
&division=UGRD&dept=PHI](http://myub.buffalo.edu/course/public/scripts/crs_sched.cgi?switch=showcourses&semester=fall&division=UGRD&dept=PHI)

**PHI 101**     *Introduction to Philosophy*     [Cho, K.](#)

MWF, 9:00-9:50 am, 14 Knox, [17187](#)

Lasting and recurrent questions of life and knowledge belong to any introductory study of philosophy. Our course will cover such basic issues that are considered universal and common to people, both in the East and West: pursuit of knowledge of reality, of the nature of things, of virtue and happiness and the meaning of human being.

But in this semester, encouraged by the positive responses to recent East-West comparative studies, we shall bring more substantial materials from the Western source, which bolster the argument that indeed there is much more to learn from the world view held in Asian tradition. At least we know now that the platform upon which East-West comparison has been carried out in the past has been deplorably one-sided and inadequate. Not only biology, ecology, environmental philosophy of Asia could serve as autonomous and rich resources of ideas. Philosophy as such may eventually benefit from a living dialogue if Reason can be assumed as open-ended, as "transversal" or "multiversal," rather than being an ultimately mono-cultural property.

Texts: 1. Plato, Republic

2. Callicot and Aimes, eds., Nature in Asian Traditions of Thought,  
SUNY Press (paperback)

**PHI 101**     *Introduction to Philosophy*     [Yu, J](#)

Tuesday/Thursday, 9:30-10:50 am, 101 Baldy, [22567](#)

This course will introduce students to some of the main branches of philosophy through examining a number of key and traditional philosophical problems associated with each of these areas. To list some of them: What is philosophy? How can we know anything? What is Real? Does God exist? Who am I? Does science explain everything? Do we have free will? What ought we do? What do a right and a wrong mean? What is the meaning of life?, and many others. In addition to the Western traditions, the course will also introduce several major non-Western philosophical schools,

Readings will be assigned from the work of great philosophers who have made various significant responses to these and other problems. The focus will be on the arguments for and against every concept and idea discussed. By following the development of a philosophical position, students are encouraged to critically assess the positions for themselves. The course is intended to train and develop the analytical capacities of the students. Moreover, philosophy is not just about how to think clearly. It is about how to live. All the issues discussed are behind how we should lead our lives. The course is also aimed to provide the students with a framework to examine the basis on which ones life should get along.

Text: *Introducing Philosophy*, 10th edition, by Solomon/Higgins/Martin, Oxford, 2012

**PHI 101**      *Introduction to Philosophy*      [Millar, B](#)

MWF, 11:00-11:50 am, 205 NSC, [19472](#)

This course provides an overview of the central branches of philosophy, including metaphysics, epistemology, and ethics. We will read a variety of classical and contemporary authors covering issues such as the compatibility of free will and determinism, the relation between mind and body, the nature and extent of knowledge, and the foundations of morality.

**PHI 101**      *Introduction to Philosophy*      Krgovic, J

MWF, 10:00-10:50 am, 322 Clemens, [24124](#)

**PHI 107**      *Introduction to Ethics*      [Korsmeyer, CW](#)

MWF, 11:00-11:50 am, 101 Baldy, [20804](#)

What does it mean to be a good person? How should we make moral decisions? Are there rules to follow in order to do right? What are our responsibilities to ourselves and others? Do we have moral responsibilities to the nonhuman world? What is the relation between goodness and happiness? These are just a few of the questions addressed by moral philosophers. This course will introduce students to several influential approaches to ethics, drawing from historical and contemporary philosophers and applying their ideas to practical situations that arise in our own lives.

**PHI 107 STF**      *Ethics*      [Millar, B](#)

Tu/Th 9:30-10:50 am, 6 Clemens, [13325](#)

This course provides an overview of some of the central questions in ethics. We will read a variety of classical and contemporary authors while exploring questions such as: What makes

actions morally right? What is it about human beings, if anything, that makes them morally responsible for their actions? And, are there objective moral facts?

**PHI 107 TA1**    *Ethics*    Li, W

MWF, 8:00-8:50 am, 4 Clemens, [22021](#)

**PHI 115**            *Critical Thinking*            [Beebe, I](#)

Tuesday, 6:00-8:40 pm, 110 Knox, [12644](#)

This course will focus upon developing students' critical thinking skills through careful analysis, reasoned inference and thoughtful evaluation of contemporary culture and ideas. Students will learn how to clarify ideas, analyze arguments, and evaluate inductive, deductive, comparative, ideological and empirical reasoning.

**PHI 115 STF**

**Critical Thinking**

**Staff**

**PHI 129**            *Philosophical Puzzles & Paradoxes*            [Dipert, R.](#)

Tuesday/Thursdays, 11:00-12:20 pm, 17 Clemens, [23889](#)

This is an introduction to philosophy, so no previous philosophy courses are required. There are two standard ways to organize an introductory philosophy course. One approach is historical, often using selections from major philosophers, such as starting with Plato and Aristotle, and then going up to Modern philosophers or even currently-living ones. The more usual approach is topical: you focus on several major topics in philosophy, such as: What reasons are there to believe God exists, or doesn't? (Philosophy of Religion) How do we determine what is morally right—or if there is anything that is morally right? (Ethics) What really, ultimately exists and how can we know? Minds? Matter? Souls? Energy? (Metaphysics). This course will approach philosophical issues in a third way: we will look at philosophical issues by looking at philosophical puzzles and paradoxes. Aristotle believed that philosophy begins in wonder, and many philosophers have approached philosophy from some puzzle or paradox. Here are some examples: can God create a stone he cannot lift? Can he intentionally forget or ignore a truth about the world he created? And what is truth? Consider this sentence: "This sentence is false." Now is this sentence true or false? The famous puzzles, paradoxes and problems of philosophy range over almost the whole of its history and occur in almost every area of philosophical investigation. We will begin by asking some of the most famous of these, and then attempt to solve, resolve, or dissolve them using clear thinking about big issues (which is a good definition of philosophy).

Likely textbook: Robert Martin, *There Are Two Errors in the  
the Title of This Book, Revised and Expanded:  
A Sourcebook of Philosophical Puzzles, Paradoxes and Problems*

**PHI 221**      *Science and Religion*      Beebe, J

Wednesday, 6:00-8:40 pm, 107 Talbert, 23881

This course will cover a variety of issues concerning the relation between science and religion. We will begin by considering some general questions about whether and how scientific truths can conflict with religious truths. The second part of the course will cover issues surrounding the Big Bang, the large-scale structure of the cosmos and what philosophers and other religious thinkers have had to say about the beginning, age and size of the universe. The third part of the course will consider the current controversy between evolutionary theorists and “intelligent design” theorists (i.e., those who claim that organisms and their parts were originally designed by an intelligent being and did not arise through evolution). In addition to the philosophical aspects of this controversy, we will also consider some of the sticky public policy issues it raises. The final part of the course will consider some recently developed theories in the cognitive sciences (e.g., neuroscience, cognitive psychology) that offer explanations of the nature, function and pervasiveness of religious belief.

**PHI 236**      *Business Ethics*      Baumer,WH

Tuesday/Thursday, 12:30-1:50 pm, 118 Baldy, 17962

This course addresses central issues and problems in business ethics, including basic approaches to ethics, ethical and cultural relativism, corporations and moral agency, classical and contemporary views of the free market system [capitalism], employee rights, equal opportunity and affirmative action, environmental issues, advertising, and corporate governance. No previous study of ethics or business is presupposed. Essays and case studies in the course text present and discuss these issues. Course sessions combine lectures and discussion.

Course text: Tom L. Beauchamp, Norman E. Bowie and Denis G. Arnold, eds., *Ethical Theory and Business*, 8th edition, Pearson Prentice Hall, Upper Saddle River, NJ, ©2009

Course requirements: attendance, three one-hour essay exams, each addressing one segment of the course, and a research essay.

**PHI 315**      *Symbolic Logic*      Braun, D.

MWF, 11:00-11:50 am, 4 Knox, [20931](#)

This course will be dedicated to learning symbolic techniques for evaluating the validity of arguments. We will create a symbolic language and learn to translate ordinary English sentences into it. We will then apply precise formal techniques for determining whether symbolic arguments are valid. No pre-requisites.

**PHI 315**      *Symbolic Logic*      [Kearns, J](#)

Tuesday/Thursday, 9:30-10:50 am, 17 Clemens, [22025](#)

In this course, we develop two logical theories to investigate 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 investigate a deductive system for constructing arguments and proofs which employ sentences in the logical language, and will gain proficiency in constructing such arguments.

**PHI 321**      *Philosophy of Sciences*      [Kearns, J](#)

Tuesday/Thursday, 12:30-1:50 pm, 4 Clemens [22026](#)

The course will explore some different views about the status of science and scientific knowledge. Does science deliver the truth about the world and the things in it, or does it have the more limited goal of making sense of what we encounter, and providing a successful, coherent explanatory account? We will consider the views of David Hume, Karl Popper, Thomas Kuhn, and some more contemporary writers.

**PHI 328**      *Philosophy of Language*      [Braun, D.](#)

MWF, 1:00-1:50 pm, 14 Knox, [17859](#)

Words and sentences in English and other languages are meaningful. Therefore, all of these expressions have meanings. But what are meanings? What are the meanings of 'Barack Obama', 'dog', 'red', 'waves', 'marry', and 'the'? How are meaning, reference, thought, communication, and truth related? We will begin this course by considering several theories about the nature of meaning and reference, including the theories of Gottlob Frege, Bertrand Russell, and Saul Kripke. We will then discuss theories of communication and speech acts, including those of J. L. Austin and H.P. Grice. If time permits, we will end with a discussion of

metaphor and some applications of philosophy of language to ethics and the law. Pre-requisite: One prior course in philosophy, preferably in analytic philosophy. However, this will be an advanced course in philosophy, and it will be very helpful to have taken several prior courses in analytic philosophy. I will use some symbolic logic, which I will explain as fully as possible in the time we have, but you may find this course easier if you have taken a course in symbolic logic.

**PHI 337 FIF**            *Soc & Eth Values in Med*    Smith, S.L

Tu/Th, 12:30-1:50 pm, 454 Fronczak, [22029](#)

Examines current ethical positions and their application to ethical and social questions in medicine.

**PHI 337 FIF**            *Soc & Eth Values in Med*    Smith, S.L

**MWF 11:00-11:50 am , 110 Baldy, [22031](#)**

Examines current ethical positions and their application to ethical and social questions in medicine.

**PHI 337 D**            *Soc & Eth Values in Med*    **Dryden, L.**

MWF, 1:00-1:50 pm , 17 Clemens, [16192](#)

Examines current ethical positions and their application to ethical and social questions in medicine.

**PHI 337 TA1**            *Soc & Eth Values in Med*    Nolan, C.A

Tu/Th, 8:00-9:20 am, 4 Clemens [20562](#)

Examines current ethical positions and their application to ethical and social questions in medicine.

**PHI 337 TA2**            *Soc & Eth Val (Nursing Students: South Campus)*    Otto, J.M

Tu/Th, 8:00-9:20 am, 205 Diefendorf Hall, (South Campus) [21525](#)

Examines current ethical positions and their application to ethical and social questions in medicine.

**PHI 337 TA4**      *Soc & Eth Values in Med*      Koch, P M

MWF, 9:00-9:50 am, 6 Clemens, [22030](#)

Examines current ethical positions and their application to ethical and social questions in medicine.

**PHI 337 TA5**      *Soc & Eth Values in Med*      Sackris, D.C

MWF, 8:00-8:50 am, 322 Clemens, [24419](#)

Examines current ethical positions and their application to ethical and social questions in medicine.

**PHI 356**      *Philosophy of Literature*      [Gracia, J](#)

Wednesday, 3:00-5:40 pm, 6 Clemens, [23883](#)

Although everyone has at some point in his or her life read works of literature, philosophy, religion, and science, very few of us have stopped to think what characterizes them or considered the problems that come up when one tries to do it. This course is intended to explore some of the many problems that arise in the context of literature in particular. Here are a few pertinent questions: What is the nature of literature and how does it differ, if at all, from philosophy, art, religion, and science. Why is */Madame Bovary/* considered a literary work, but Descartes's */Meditations/*, */Deuteronomy/*, and the texts students are using to learn chemistry at UB, are not? What is the difference between a work and a text? Is there a difference between */Hamlet /*and the English text of that work? Indeed, when */Hamlet /is* translated into Spanish is the result the same as Shakespeare's work? Who is the author of a work of literature or of philosophy, and what is its role? Does a work exist in the mind, on paper, or elsewhere? Is the copy of */Hamlet /I* own the same as */Hamlet? /Are* works universal or individual? How is meaning related to a work? And where is the meaning of a work to be found: in the mind of the author, in the mind of the audience, in the text, or somewhere else? What is the relation of an audience to a work or a text? A good section of the course will deal with the interpretation of literature. We will discuss questions such as: What is an interpretation? When is an interpretation legitimate and when is it not? Are there definitive interpretations? What is the role of an interpreter? Where do interpretations exist: in texts, in thoughts, or elsewhere? Apart from discussions by various philosophers who have dealt with these issues, I propose to read 12 stories by Jorge Luis Borges and their interpretations, both philosophical and artistic. This

should keep the discussion related to concrete literary examples. The course will meet once a week and three essay, in-class examinations will be required. In addition, students will be asked to write a short report on a discussion that will take place on Sept 28 by two invited speakers. A make up for one examination – missed or failed – will be allowed. The first day the class will meet is September 5, rather than August 29. A make up for the missed class will be scheduled later. Detailed information about all aspects of the course will be posted on UBLearns.

**PHI 356**      *Emotion Theory*      Korsmeyer, CW

MWF, 1:00-1:50 pm, 110 Baldy, 23894

What is an emotion? How do emotions relate to beliefs (that a food is taboo, for example); to physical reactions (rapid pulse); to moral character (capacity for sympathy); to relationships with others (family ties); to responses to art (enjoyment of horror films)? Do emotions vary with cultures, or are there universal human responses? Do nonhuman animals also have emotions like ours? These and other questions are addressed by the branch of philosophy known as emotion theory. This course will examine several contemporary philosophical approaches to emotions, referring from time to time to relevant philosophers of the past, and also to findings from the sciences that illuminate our affective lives.

**PHI 370**      *Early Modern Philosophy*      Lewis, Powell

Tuesday/Thursday, 9:30- 10:50 am, 220 NSC, 24187

**PHI 388**      *20C Philosophy*      Cho, K.

MWF, 11:00-11:50 am, 14 Knox, 12500

Contemporary European Philosophy is marked by large mutations and metamorphoses. It is easy to lose the sense of bearing and see the disconnected, aimless wandering of minds in an age of deconstruction. However, the proximity of philosophy to literature, art, history and history of ideas, politics and humanities as a whole has its redeeming virtue. It is not just "intellectuals" portraying themselves and the world objectively in abstract, objective situations, but rather like a youthful curiosity personified, untrained in technical, academic jargon, who plunged into an existential adventure, and now tries to confide to his equally inexperienced roommate his personal tribulations and concerns. That philosophy once began, in the ancient world, with the sense of "wonder," retains today its validity, although its accompanying sentiment is mixed more with "irony."

Text: Jenny Teichmann and Graham White, ed., *An Introduction to Modern European Philosophy*, St. Martins Press, NY, 1995



**PHI 398 SMI** *Spec Topics: Intro to Ontology* Smith, Barry

Monday, 4:00-6:00pm, 106 Jacobos

This course is an introduction to the Protégé 2000 ontology editor, details of which can be found here: <http://protege.stanford.edu/>. It will begin with a brief introduction to ontology building, and to the use and importance of ontologies, with examples from medicine and defense. This will be followed by an introduction to the Web Ontology Language (OWL). The bulk of the course will consist of an interactive introduction to the use of Protégé 2000 in building an ontology. No background in the use of computer languages and programming is presupposed. All sessions will be highly interactive

The initial meeting of this class will take place on the weekend of August 11-12, 2012.

Further details will be available on the course wiki at

[http://ncorwiki.buffalo.edu/index.php/Introduction\\_to\\_Prot%C3%A9g%C3%A9](http://ncorwiki.buffalo.edu/index.php/Introduction_to_Prot%C3%A9g%C3%A9)

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**PHI 420/520** *Topics Philosophy of Science* [Bittner](#)

Wednesday, 3:00-4:50 pm, 114 Baldy , [23884](#)

The aim of this course is to provide an introduction to modern physics from a philosophical perspective. The course is designed for advanced undergraduate students and graduate students in Philosophy. It is intended to be self-contained but basic knowledge about Newtonian mechanics, calculus, and vector spaces is required. Grading will be based on in-class participation, a presentation, and a term paper.

The first part of the course will start with a brief overview of modern classical mechanics. The discussion will focus on the notion of phase spaces and the nature of laws of physics. This will provide the basis for a rough introduction to quantum mechanics and the theory of relativity. The discussion of quantum mechanics will focus on three aspects: (a) some key experiments (e.g., the two-slit experiment); (b) key concepts such as the uncertainty principle, the superposition of quantum states, and quantum entanglement; and (c) some basic aspects of the mathematics that is used to formulate quantum mechanics. If time permits, we will also look into some attempts to integrate the theories of quantum mechanics and relativity into a single, unified theory.

In the second part of the course we will go through some of the philosophically interesting implications of modern physics including the various interpretations of quantum mechanics, questions of determinism and the nature of vagueness that arise from quantum mechanics, and the mereology of relativistic spacetime.

**PHI 438/637** **Topics in Ethics** [Shockley](#)

Tuesday/Thursday, 11:00-12:20 pm, 141 Park, [23886](#)

One of the most significant philosophers writing today is Derek Parfit. The focus of this course is his recent *On What Matters*. In this course we will consider, as background, the chief families of normative ethical theories, Consequentialism, Deontology, and Virtue Ethics. We shall ask how best to formulate these theories, and examine arguments for and against them. We will begin by working through the now classic exchange between J. J. Smart, defending utilitarianism, and Bernard Williams, arguing against it. We will then read through a more recent exchange between Marcia Baron, who advances a neo-Kantian position, Philip Pettit, who advances a consequentialist position not restricted to traditional hedonistic utilitarianism, and Michael Slote, who advances a Humean version of virtue ethics. In the last half of the course, we will work our way through Parfit's new, groundbreaking book, and examine his take on a wide range of issues in ethical theory.

**PHI 454**      *Chinese Philosophy: Daoism*      [Yu, J](#)

Tuesday/Thursday, 12:30-1:50 pm, 17 Clemens, [23898](#)

This course is a critical examination of the two central Daoist classics: Laozi's *Daodejing*, and Zhuangzi. We'll read these texts carefully, together with ancient and modern commentaries, understand the main points of Daoism, and their bearings on contemporary philosophy and life

Texts:

P. J. Ivanhoe, *The Daodejing of Laozi*, Hackett, 2003

B. Ziporyn, *Zhuangzi: The Essential Writings, with Selections from traditional Commentaries*, Hackett, 2009

**PHI 490**      *Intro To Wittgenstein*      [Dipert, R.](#)

Tuesday/Thursday, 2:00-3:20 pm, 127 Baldy, [23890](#)

The philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein (1889-1951) is one of only a few good candidates for being "the greatest philosopher since 1900" or even "one of the greatest philosophers ever." His philosophy is usually divided into two periods: Early Wittgenstein, which is dominated by his *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, and Later Wittgenstein. The Early Wittgenstein is mainly devoted to a metaphysics that was strongly influenced by symbolic logic, and is sometimes called Logical Atomism. The Later Wittgenstein is dominated by his *Philosophical Investigations*, a work which was not even published in his lifetime, and is difficult to characterize. It is a novel approach to philosophy in more than one sense. He believed that many philosophical problems

could be dissolved or solved by careful attention to ordinary language, and the way we use language. It is also novel in the way he wrote philosophy: a series of epigrams that consist in a few sentences or a paragraph devoted to one issue or point. These are highly polished, involving a subtle approach to a problem, often being humorous or startling.

Despite the seemingly simplicity of passages in his later works, this is not an introductory course: you should be a junior or senior who has taken at least three courses in philosophy. Especially useful would be courses in philosophy of language and logic.

The likely texts are the *Philosophical Investigations*, *Zettel* and possibly *On Certainty*. There will also be secondary works.

**PHI 498 BEE**

**Undergrad Research Activity**  
Requires Permission of Instructor

**Beebe, James**

The Experimental Epistemology Research Group at UB (<http://eerg.buffalo.edu/>) is a team of faculty, graduate students and undergraduates who seek to illuminate traditional and contemporary debates within philosophy by using the experimental methods of the cognitive and social sciences. The primary focus of our research is to illuminate the nature of epistemic cognition—i.e., how people think about knowledge, evidence and justified belief.

Undergraduates majoring in philosophy, psychology or cognitive science can apply to join EERG as a research assistant by sending an email explaining their interest to Prof. James Beebe ([jbeebe2@buffalo.edu](mailto:jbeebe2@buffalo.edu)). Responsibilities of research assistants include participation in research group meetings, data collection, data entry and background research on current research projects.

### **Individual Tutorial Course Sections with Philosophy Department Faculty**

**Requires Permission of Instructor**

**Meeting Days/Times Arranged with Professors**

**PHI 401 Honors Tutorial**

**PHI 499 Undergraduate Tutorial**

