

Spring 2011 - CAS Department of Philosophy Undergraduate Courses

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

PHI 101 INTRODUCTION TO PHILOSOPHY - [Prof. Cho](#)

MWF 9:00-9:50 am Baldy 101 [278322](#)

We seek a well integrated introductory philosophy, by which we mean a 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 edition, Oxford University Press.

PHI 101 INTRODUCTION TO PHILOSOPHY - [Prof. McGlone](#)

Tu/Th 14:00-15:20 pm Cooke 121 [498260](#)

This course is an introduction to philosophy, with an emphasis on issues in metaphysics, epistemology, and ethics. We will address a number of important philosophical questions: Are there any good reasons for believing or disbelieving that God exists? To what extent are we justified in believing what we do about the external world? To what extent are we justified in believing what we do about what we have not yet perceived on the basis of what we have? How do our concepts of free action and moral responsibility fit together with a modern, scientific conception of the world? How are the mental features exhibited in the world related to the physical features so exhibited? Under what conditions is an action right or wrong? What is the source of value in the world?

We will study a number of important responses to questions of this sort, reading both historically significant and contemporary sources. At each step, we will focus on formulating and assessing arguments for and against the philosophical positions that support these responses.

PHI 101 INTRODUCTION TO PHILOSOPHY - Staff

Tu/Th 12:30-13:50 NSC 216 [035512](#)

This course is a survey of topics in various areas of philosophy. We will examine arguments on different sides of historically significant philosophical issues; it develops critical thought and argument analysis through reading both historical and contemporary texts. Student will also develop expository and argumentative writing skills.

PHI 107 ETHICS - [Prof. Donnelly](#)

MWF 10:00-10:50 am NSC 218 [488075](#)

Nearly everyone assumes that some human actions are morally good or at least morally permissible, while other human actions are morally wrong. However, there is often considerable and bitter disagreement over the moral worth of particular actions. The primary purpose of this class is to examine different principles which have been advocated for distinguishing between morally acceptable and morally unacceptable actions. Special attention will be paid to principles which are based on substantial philosophical arguments and which purport to be independent of specific cultural practices. We will also consider: i) the extent of a person's responsibility for his or her actions and ii) what reasons can be given for choosing good actions and refraining from bad actions. Students should expect a substantial amount of reading from historical and contemporary sources. Grades will be based on regular class participation and examinations.

PHI 107 ETHICS - [Prof. Korsmeyer](#)

Tu/Th 9:30-10:50 am NSC 210 [437687](#)

What does it mean to be a good person? How should one make moral decisions? What kinds of responsibilities do we have to others and to ourselves? How can we account for the presence of evil in the world? What is the relationship between human happiness and goodness? These are just a few of the questions addressed by philosophers interested in moral philosophy. This course will introduce students to several of the major historical approaches to ethics (including Aristotle, Kant, and John Stuart Mill) and a contemporary analysis of the sources of human evil and of obligations to others. Classes will be conducted through lecture and discussion, and students will be evaluated by their performance on approximately three tests.

PHI 107 ETHICS - Christopher Buckman

MWF 11:00-11:50 am Baldy 101 [322894](#)

This class introduces philosophy concerned with how we ought to live. What makes an action morally right or wrong? How can we become good, both as individuals and as a society? Students will read and discuss historical texts, including works by Aristotle, Immanuel Kant, John Stuart Mill and Friedrich Nietzsche. We will also examine the application of ethical theories in our contemporary world. Grades based on writing, exams and class discussion.

PHI 115 CRITICAL THINKING - Michael Gifford

Tu/Th

8:00-9:20 am

Capen 10

[370574](#)

Critical thinking introduces the student to reasoning in a language-centered context. Students will learn how to identify arguments and distinguish them from other types of discourse. Some topics covered will be: argument structures, abductive reasoning, analogical reasoning, scientific/causal reasoning, probability theory, and statistical reasoning. Students will learn how to identify and avoid informal fallacies and other common mistakes, how to respond to and refute arguments, and how to construct strong arguments of their own. This course will focus on practical reasoning but will also serve as an introduction to formal reasoning systems

PHI 115 CRITICAL THINKING - Deacon Newhouse

Tu/Th

11:00-12:20

Knox 14

[171813](#)

We are each born into a preexisting association of human beings. These associations form the institutions and cultural practices which influence the way we interact with others in the world. It is an inescapable fact that forces of which we have no control play a significant role in forming our character. This fact also points to the plasticity – the ability to be molded – of human beings. The degree of plasticity is much greater in infants and the young and diminishes as one grows older. However, as infants and youth, we are most open and vulnerable to the world and dependent upon prior practices of the society in which we exist. Unfortunately, it seems that this openness and innate inquisitiveness is not cultivated, and our vulnerability is taken advantage of by encouraging passive acceptance of cultural beliefs and mere mechanical routine in practice. This problem is exacerbated in our particular age in which technology creates a more effective means of intrusion and assimilation: we are constantly bombarded by information. Unfortunately, most of us are not taught how to organize, analyze, and evaluate information. Instead, we are taught how to pass a standardized test. The need for critical thinking has never been so important.

The goal of this class is to demonstrate the art of organizing, analyzing, and evaluating information. Some of the topics we will cover will be identifying arguments (and their parts), informal fallacies, basic deductive reasoning, and basic inductive reasoning. Hopefully, you will come away from this course with the basic tools to examine both the beliefs that you have already internalized (and whether or not this is a belief you wish to keep) and the information that is constantly being presented to you. These tools are part of the art of critical thinking which aims at the preservation and cultivation of our innate inquisitiveness that is so important to living an enriched and meaningful life.

PHI 215 INTRODUCTION TO DEDUCTIVE LOGIC - [Prof. Bittner](#)

Tu/Th 12:30-13:50 pm Knox 4 [408706](#)

This course is an introduction to the principles of logic. Students will learn to recognize arguments and to understand their basic elements. Students will also learn to evaluate the validity and soundness of arguments. Other topics include: definitions, formal and informal errors of reasoning, and principles of deductive reasoning.

Required text: Patrick Hurley's *A Concise Introduction to Logic* (latest edition). The textbook comes digitally and with a key which enables the students to use the supporting material on the text website. All homework assignments and the exams are to be delivered electronically through this website.

The course grade will be based on weekly homework assignments and three exams.

PHI 215 INTRODUCTION TO DEDUCTIVE LOGIC - [Randall Diepert](#)

Tu/Th 9:30-10:50 am Capen 10 [101717](#)

This is an introduction to logic. The text will be H. Gensler's *Introduction to Logic* (1st or 2nd edition). Logic is nicely defined by the textbook as the "analysis and appraisal of arguments." Arguments are the basic units of reasoning. The premises of an argument are a set of starting points, and conclusions are the end points of arguments, that are claimed to follow from the truth of the premises.

More precisely, this is a course in deductive logic, and will use some symbols. So it is an introduction to symbolic, deductive logic.

There are several reasons why someone would want to learn logic. First, it helps you to reason better. This itself has several important benefits—such as wisely choosing a career or maximizing your chances of having a happy, fulfilled life. (Establishing this requires an argument of course!) Second, it helps you to offer arguments to others that are more likely to be convincing. This is why logic is an especially valuable skill in law and public affairs, and why the LSAT tests students in logical abilities. Third, it allows you to assess the value of arguments offered by others—and to accept good arguments and reject bad ones. So it helps you from being led astray by bad arguments. Fourth, it is an especially useful skill in philosophy and is a customary requirement for a philosophy major: it helps in producing the careful reasoning that good philosophy requires, and logic also has implications that are themselves of philosophical interest, such as what a "sentence" is and what it means for a sentence to be true. Fifth, it is a discipline in which especially fascinating puzzles can be stated, and so provides some of the most interesting and amusing intellectual challenges. (The humorist writer Lewis Carroll, of *Alice in Wonderland* fame, was a logician, and some logical puzzles are among the best known intellectual problems there are—especially what are called paradoxes.

The course will be made livelier by periodically looking at logical puzzles, some famous, some not. For example, consider this example: "This statement is false." Is it true? Is it false? What

questions can you ask on an island where there are only liars, so that you can take the right path?

Topics will include: Validity, logical form, Aristotelian logic, propositional logic, and a brief survey of some more advanced logics such as logics that deal with time and ethical obligations.

PHI 217 PROFESSIONAL ETHICS - [Prof. Baumer](#)

Tu/Th 12:30-13:50 pm NSC 218 [331975](#)

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 315 SYMBOLIC LOGIC - [Prof. Braun](#)

MWF 13:00-13:50 pm NSC 222 [181633](#)

This course will be dedicated to learning symbolic techniques for evaluating the validity of arguments. We will formulate a symbolic language and learn to translate ordinary English sentences into it. We will then apply precise formal techniques for determining whether the symbolic versions of the arguments are valid. There are no pre-requisites. Requirements: Weekly homework assignments, three midterm examinations, one final examination.

PHI 320 PHILOSOPHY OF MIND - [Prof. McGlone](#)

T 18:00-20:40 pm NSC 218 [179015](#)

This course is an introduction to the philosophy of mind, with an emphasis on contemporary discussion of the relationship between mind and the material world. We will consider a number of different positions concerning this relationship and assess the relative merits of each. In the process, we will address questions such as the following: Are thinking things non-material entities, or is being a thinking thing simply a matter of being a material entity with a certain type of complex organization? If thinking things are non-material entities, how is it possible for them to interact causally with material things such as our bodies, and how is it possible for us to know anything about the mental states of others? If being a thing is simply a matter of being a

material object with a certain degree of complexity, why do mental events such as pains and experiences of colors seem so different in kind from other material events?

Prerequisite: one prior course in philosophy

PHI 329 METAPHYSICS – [Prof. Williams](#)

MWF 11:00-11:50 am NSC 228 [092715](#)

Metaphysics is concerned with the most fundamental categories of existence. These include events, particulars, properties, persons, facts, and so on. The aim of metaphysical investigation is to provide a unified account of how these categories are connected with one another, in order to illuminate the basic structure of our world. Within this enterprise, certain relations and processes are of special importance to the metaphysician, these include: causation, persistence, composition, supervenience, and possibility. In some cases it might be argued that certain categories are empty (there is nothing of that type in our world), or that certain relations can be accounted for in terms of the others (they can be 'reduced'). Other times it might be argued that the categories or relations on offer are inadequate for dealing with the world as we know it, in which case new ones may be introduced.

The best way to approach metaphysics is through the consideration of certain problems; as one begins to think about how best to solve these problems, the connections between the many metaphysical problems become clear. With that in mind, this course will pay close attention to five major metaphysical issues (universals; particulars; time; causation; persistence) but in so doing we are likely to touch on most of the topics that fall within the range of metaphysics.

PHI 334 ENVIRONMENTAL ETHICS – Robert Earle

Tu/Th 12:30-13:50 pm Clemens 19 [094115](#)

Environmental ethics is the subfield of philosophical ethics that considers human moral relationships with the natural world. In this course, students will be introduced to the main issues, some of the history, and the major theories of environmental ethics as it has developed in the West (mostly America) in the latter half of the twentieth century. The course will be of interest not only to Philosophy and Environmental Studies (SSI) majors, but to anyone with an interest in humankind's complicated relationship with our natural environment. We will focus on the questions 1) of whether there is intrinsic value in the natural world, 2) of whether environmental ethics is properly a sui generis ethical relation, and 3) of how eco-cultural relationships ought to be fashioned. These questions will be considered from a number of different environmental perspectives, including: pragmatism, eco-feminism, deep ecology, environmental justice, and pluralism. We will focus on the issues (each troublesome in their own way) of wilderness, ecological restoration, and global climate change. Additionally, in the last third of the course we will consider the aesthetic roots of the foundation of environmental ethics, and whether natural "beauty" can lead the appreciator to a sense of moral "duty".

PHI 337 SOCIAL & ETHICAL VALUES IN MEDICINE - [Prof. Dryden](#)

MWF

1:00-1:50 pm

Baldy 110

[074428](#)

This course will examine a number of important ethical issues that arise in medical and health care practice from a standpoint that employs ethics, the philosophical study of moral choice, as a point of departure. The question whether moral decision is primarily a matter of feeling and emotion or of thinking and reason will be examined. This course will examine how religion influences many people's views on medical ethical issues, and whether moral guidance derived from religion is reliable. There will be significant attention to historically important ethical theories (Natural Law, Utilitarianism, and Immanuel Kant's ethical theory) and how they structure moral choice. The course will examine alternate viewpoints for assessing the moral standing of human life. Attention will be paid to alternative models of the physician-patient relationship and ethical challenges that arise in that context. Issues that arise as a result of technical advances in human reproduction such as in vitro fertilization and pre-implantation genetic testing will be considered. The controversy about stem cell research will be considered. Controversies revolving around treatment of very sick newborn babies will be considered. The role of medical personnel in causing or assisting the death of their patients will be examined.

At the conclusion of this course, students should be able to:

- identify and discuss subjectivism in ethics
- discuss the relation of religion to morality
- explain differences between alternative ethical theories
- apply alternative ethical theories to the resolution of moral problems in medicine
- identify significant alternative viewpoints on when human life begins
- list major elements of the Hippocratic Oath
- identify and evaluate four models of the MD-patient relationship
- explain and evaluate "therapeutic privilege"
- explain why benefiting the patient and respecting patient autonomy are sometimes in tension
- understand advance directives
- identify significant moral and social consequences of advances in reproductive technology
- evaluate arguments for and against stem cell research
- evaluate arguments for and against denying treatment to or intentionally ending the life of newborn babies
- understand the argument for physician assisted suicide and responses to it.

This course will introduce students to basic ethical principles and to the ways that these principles are applied to major problems in contemporary medical ethics. This course is intended for students who do not have a background in philosophy but need or want a knowledge of issues in medical ethics. In addition, this section of this course is intended especially for nursing students. We shall begin with a survey of important contemporary ethical theories. We will then consider ethical principles, which are important for bioethics, such as informed consent, autonomy, and beneficence. Next, we shall apply these principles and theories to specific ethical issues. These may include but are not limited to the following: abortion, stem cell research, genetic engineering, commercial surrogacy, euthanasia, death and dying, and organ procurement. We shall examine opposing positions on each of these issues.

There will also be articles and class sessions devoted to issues related to ethical problems which are important for nurses to understand, and issues regarding what the role of a nurse is.

Upon completion of this course students should have a basic understanding of important ethical principles and issues, an ability to consider and understand the various positions on medical issues, and an ability to clarify their own opinions on these issues.

All readings will be found on the library course reserve. The grade will be based on participation, tests, and a short paper.

PHI 337 SOCIAL & ETHICAL VALUES IN MEDICINE - Potter, J.

MWF 8:00-8:50 am DFN 103 [210504](#)

This course introduces students to current issues of applied ethics that are relevant to the medical profession and nursing in particular. These issues include: abortion, commercial surrogacy, criteria for death, euthanasia, organ procurement, patient care, patient autonomy, and stem cell research. Students taking this course learn to identify the major positions taken on these issues and the merits of some of the most significant arguments offered in their defense. Students also become acquainted with major ethical theories like virtue ethics, deontology, and consequentialism, and metaphysical issues like personal identity and ontology, as these relate to issues in medical ethics. The class sessions will consist in an even balance of lecture and discussion. Upon completion of this course students should have a basic understanding of important ethical principles and issues, and an ability to consider and understand the various positions on medical issues. All assigned reading will be accessible in pdf or via external link at "Course Documents" on UBLearn.

PHI 337 SOCIAL & ETHICAL VALUES IN MEDICINE - Spencer, M.

Tu/Th 11:00-12:20 OBrian 112 [052240](#)

This course will introduce students to basic ethical principles and to the ways that these principles are applied to major problems in contemporary medical ethics. This course is intended for students who do not have a background in philosophy but need or want a knowledge of issues in medical ethics. In addition, this section of this course is intended especially for nursing students. We shall begin with a survey of important contemporary ethical theories. We will then consider ethical principles, which are important for bioethics, such as informed consent, autonomy, and beneficence. Next, we shall apply these principles and theories to specific ethical issues. These may include but are not limited to the following: abortion, stem cell research, genetic engineering, commercial surrogacy, euthanasia, death and dying, and organ procurement. We shall examine opposing positions on each of these issues. There will also be articles and class sessions devoted to issues related to ethical problems which are important for nurses to understand, and issues regarding what the role of a nurse is.

Upon completion of this course students should have a basic understanding of important ethical principles and issues, an ability to consider and understand the various positions on medical issues, and an ability to clarify their own opinions on these issues.

All readings will be found on the library course reserve. The grade will be based on participation, tests, and a short paper.

PHI 337 SOCIAL & ETHICAL VALUES IN MEDICINE - Peter Koch

MWF 9:00-9:50 DFN 103 [095581](#)

This course will examine ethical problems in medicine from a philosophical perspective. Among the issues to be addressed are: abortion, stem cell research, physician-assisted suicide and euthanasia, defining death, organ transplants, human cloning, deceiving patients and informed consent. At the end of the course, students will gain a basic understanding of the rigorous philosophical method that bioethics utilizes and some of the fundamental questions asked by bioethicists.

PHI 337 SOCIAL & ETHICAL VALUES IN MEDICINE - Dobin Choi

TU/TH 11:00-12:20 BALDY 101 [141248](#)

This course will examine current ethical controversies in medicine regarding abortion, euthanasia, informed consent, organ procurement, commercial surrogacy, embryonic stem cell research and so forth. The goal of this course is not only to help future doctors and nurses to set up their moral standings on the ethical issues that they would face in practice, but also to enable students to develop their knowledge and own ethical positions on the important bioethical issues. With careful reading the leading philosophical arguments, we will examine the opposing positions on each of those issues so that students will learn how to defend their own moral standing more effectively as well as to appreciate the consideration of the opposing views. Furthermore, students will also become familiar with general ethical theories as well as basic logic that would help them to construct their own argument on the important issues in their lives. All readings will be distributed via *UBlearns*. The grade will be based on tests, homework and a short paper.

PHI 356 EMOTION THEORY - [Prof. Korsmeyer](#)

Tu/Th 14:00-15:20 pm Talbet 115 [382396](#)

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 360 ANCIENT PHILOSOPHY - [Prof. Yu](#)

Tu/Th 12:30-13:50 pm NSC 205 [221654](#)

This course will cover the development of Greek philosophy from Pre-Socratics, Plato, Aristotle, to the Hellenistic period. Students are expected to learn and understand the basic assumptions, methods, terminologies, and doctrines of Greek philosophy that have so deeply shaped the whole Western culture. Course sessions will combine lectures, presentations, and in-class discussions.

Textbook: Introductory Readings in Ancient Greek and Roman Philosophy, eds. By Reeve and Miller (Hackett, 2006)

PHI 370 EARLY MODERN PHILOSOPHY - [Prof. Cohen](#)

Tu/Th 14:00-15:20 pm NSC 218 [292886](#)

Modern philosophy is for the most part the effort to interpret, situate and recommend the new and powerful rationality of modern science (Copernicus, Newton), as an enlightened and superior worldview to that of revealed religion, i.e., Judaism and Christianity. To understand and assess this movement of thought, we will do close readings of selections from key philosophical texts: *Meditations* by Rene Descartes; *Ethics* and *Theological-Political Treatise* of Benedict Spinoza; *Inquiry Concerning Human Understanding* by David Hume; and *Critique of Pure Reason* by Immanuel Kant.

PHI 391 EXISTENTIALISM & PHENOMENOLOGY - [Prof. Cho](#)

MWF 11:00-11:50 am NSC 210 [000533](#)

The four greatest figures of existential philosophy, Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, Heidegger and Sartre, are still very central for the understanding of our time and the meaning of existence. Our main focus will be on them, though we use some extra handout material to update our discussions. New to our study of existentialism are the unique contributions of Viktor Frankl, Keiji Nishitani and Rainer Maria Rilke, who were unavailable previously in any anthology but are now included in our textbook (2nd ed.). Phenomenology will be discussed in a limited scale to illustrate the methods used mainly by Heidegger and Sartre.

Text: Robert Solomon, ed., Existentialism, 2nd Edition, Modern Library

PHI 489 PROBLEMS IN ONTOLOGY: BASIC FORMAL ONTOLOGY - [Prof. Dipert](#)

Tu/Th 11:00-12:20 pm Park 141 [251025](#)

Undergraduate pre-requisites: junior or senior philosophy major, three or more philosophy courses, and have completed PHI 215 or PHI 315 (logic).

This will be a graduate-level, introductory survey of contemporary ontology. Ontology is the theory of what basic kinds of things exist, and what relationships these kinds have to each other. The notion of a “thing” (entity) is very broad – roughly, whatever we need to suppose exists in order for most sentences we hold to be true to be literally true. One major proposed distinction is between abstract and concrete entities. Conjectured abstract entities include numbers, properties, sets, properties, and natural laws. Among the concrete, physical entities (that nevertheless aren’t material) are events, shadows, holes, surfaces, volumes, locations, and tropes – they *are* in space and/or time. Then there are good old ordinary physical objects like people’s bodies, tables, rocks, and so on. But even some of them aren’t that ordinary: artifacts like tables have purposes (rocks don’t), and peoples’ bodies are organisms, with parts such as the heart that have functions. In the first third of the course we will be reading a broad survey, such as E.J. Lowe’s *Survey of Metaphysics*. In the second third of the course we will read contemporary articles on identity and composition, and on “unusual” entities such as shadows, holes, artifacts, truthmakers, and events. In the last third of the course we will study a product of Buffalo’s own Department, the Basic Formal Ontology (BFO), and its motivations – including criticisms of it and alternative proposals. This will include reading on what a *formal* ontology is, and the role that mereology plays in an ontology of concrete entities.

Individual Course Sections for Philosophy Faculty:

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| PHI 402 | Philosophy Honors Tutorial | (Arranged with Professor) |
| PHI 498 | Undergraduate Research Activity | Prof. Beebe (Arranged times) |
| PHI 499 | Undergraduate Tutorial | (Arranged with Professor) |

