

**DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY
UNDERGRADUATE COURSE DESCRIPTIONS**

Spring Semester January 24 – May 7, 2024

PHI 101 DUN Introduction to Philosophy

Dr. Stewart Duncan

M W F, 2:00 PM – 2:50 PM

Class #: 24182

The catalog says that this course “Examines general topics in various areas of philosophy showing different sides of issues; develops critical thought and philosophical method.” This semester, we’ll do that by looking at three areas in philosophy. In the first section of the course, we’ll look at questions in the philosophy of religion. In the second, we’ll look at questions about meaning, value, and the self. And in the third, we’ll think about political philosophy by looking at a famous work from that field’s history, Thomas Hobbes’ Leviathan.

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

PHI 101 LAW Introduction to Philosophy

Dr. James Lawler

T Th, 11:00 AM – 12:20 PM

Class #: 19535

The course will provide a general description of the basic philosophies of different major civilizations evolving in world history. The historical background to the development of world philosophies will provide context for the understanding of distinctly philosophical development.

The major philosophies of India and China, the philosophies of the East, provide philosophical reflective meanings that are continuous with the animistic background of the earliest peoples, while the philosophies of the West, beginning with Greek philosophy, break from such animistic unity with the surrounding world.

The course first examines the major philosophical concepts of the ancient civilizations of China, India, and Greece in the context of distinctive historical characteristics of these three

civilizations. The course concludes with the development of the early philosophies of Western Europe-as both a development and transformation of ancient Greek philosophy under the impulse of the new sciences and new forms of economic life of the modern era.

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

PHI 101 POW Introduction to Philosophy

Dr. Lewis Powell

M W F, 10:00 AM – 10:50 AM

Class #: 19536

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 105 DON Contemporary Moral Problems

Dr. Maureen Donnelly

M W F, 12:00 PM – 12:50 PM

Class #: 19537

In this course, students will acquire basic ethical concepts and apply them to critical moral issues of our time. We will consider a variety of positions on issues such as social justice, the environment, and our duties to help those in need. Emphasis will be placed on understanding and appreciating, though not necessarily agreeing with, multiple points of view.

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

PHI 107 DON Introduction to Ethics

Dr. Maureen Donnelly

M W F, 2:00 PM – 2:50 PM

Class #: 17984

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 the most important ethics theories and to practice applying these theories to real moral dilemmas. Grades will be based on homework, tests, and an in-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 #: 23308

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 BIT Critical Thinking

Dr. Thomas Bittner

T Th, 9:30 AM – 10:50 AM

Class #: 21802

Examines techniques of problem solving, decision making, and evaluating pros and cons of an issue; organizing data; forming strategies and giving reasons; perceptual, cultural, emotional, intellectual, and expressive blocks to thinking; and simple inductive reasoning and statistical fallacies. Students will also learn the basics of inductive, deductive, categorical, and propositional logic.

PHI 234 LON Environmental Ethics

Dr. Duane Long

ONLINE

Class #: 20060

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 LON1 Medical Ethics: Social & Ethical Values in Medicine

Dr. Duane Long

ONLINE

Class #: 19540

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 237 LON2 Medical Ethics: Social & Ethical Values in Medicine

Dr. Duane Long

T Th, 9:30 AM – 10:50 AM

Class #: 17189

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 250 VIN The Meaning of Life

Dr. Sarah Vincent

T Th, 9:30 AM – 10:50 AM

Class #: 20793

What is the meaning of life? Is there any real point in anything we do? Are we just thrown into the world and forced to make our way through until, eventually, we die? This course will confront such questions. In doing so, we will consider various views about what might give life meaning, as well as discuss related topics like the nature of personal happiness, our obligations to others (especially future generations), and whether death is bad for us. Readings will be heavily interdisciplinary – including philosophical, psychological, and literary texts.

PHI 301 BEV Writing Arguments

Dr. John Beverley

M W F, 10:00 AM – 10:50 AM

Class #: 23316

This course will cover all the crucial skills for writing a sophisticated philosophy paper, ranging from deciding on a topic to doing a literature review to organizing an argumentative structure to integrating sources and proper citation and bibliographic information. The course will be writing intensive, but crucial for anyone wishing to develop their philosophical writing and valuable to anyone in the humanities or intending to enter a field where clear written communication is of value.

PHI 333 BEE Epistemology

Dr. James Beebe

M W, 3:30 PM – 4:50 PM

Class #: 20713

Epistemology is the field of philosophy dedicated to examining the nature and limits of knowledge and rationally justified belief. In this course, we will consider the following questions:

- Do we really know what we think we know? If so, how?
- Is reality knowable? If so, to what degree?
- What's the difference between knowledge and belief?
- Is there a difference between knowledge and true belief? If so, what is it?
- What makes some beliefs more rationally justified than others?
- Under what circumstances are we justified in believing what other people tell us?
- If people who are just as well-informed as we are disagree with us, should that affect our own beliefs? If so, how?

This course will be an active introduction to epistemology, meaning that you will be doing – and not just reading about other people doing – epistemology from Week 1. You don't need to have read about epistemology before doing the epistemological tasks that will be assigned.

PHI 342 OPE Political Philosophy

Dr. Alexandra Oprea

T Th, 9:30 AM – 10:50 AM

Class #: 18772

This course explores some of the central ideas and debates in politics, including claims regarding the nature of rights, legitimacy, freedom, justice, democracy, power, and the state. The first half of the course considers these questions historically. The second half turns towards contemporary questions regarding justice and democracy.

Each week, students are expected to read the assigned primary sources carefully, identify the core arguments, and critically engage with them as normative claims. In other words, students are expected to begin by reconstructing the arguments as made in the original text and then proceed to ask whether the arguments are sound and compelling (both in their original context and today).

PATHWAYS: PHI 342 Political Philosophy satisfies the following pathway: Justice.

PHI 343 OPR Global Justice

Dr. Alexandra Oprea

T Th, 12:30 PM – 1:50 PM

Class #: 23317

Around 767 million people (or about 10.7% of the global population) live in extreme poverty. These people frequently lack effective access to proper nutrition, adequate shelter, safe drinking water, and sanitation. As a result, they also bear the greatest burdens of famine and epidemic disease, and they also frequently face social and political conditions of unrest and systematic oppression.

In this course, we will pursue the questions of what, if anything, we in technologically and economically developed nations owe to the global poor. We will therefore focus considerable attention on competing theories of global justice, as well as the interrelationships between poverty, health, and human rights. We will critically examine different strategies for international development that emphasize one or more of these three things, and we will consider how information about their complex interactions should be factored into the development process.

PHI 345 VIN Aesthetics and the Philosophy of Art

Dr. Sarah Vincent

M W F, 9:00 AM – 9:50 AM

Class #: 19542

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 political or ethical value? Throughout this course, we'll consider questions like these, bringing historical philosophical figures as well as more contemporary philosophical theories into conversation with various artworks, as we explore the themes of censorship, taste, beauty, community, appreciation, expertise, interpretation, morality, and artification.

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

PHI 347 VIN Gender and Philosophy

Dr. Sarah Vincent

M W F, 1:00 PM – 1:50 PM

Class #: 21801

How has gender discrimination impacted the academic discipline of philosophy? In what ways are women challenging the philosophical canon? What can philosophy tell us about the causes of and solutions to the oppression of women? In what ways does that

oppression intersect with race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, nationality, and socioeconomic status? In what ways does socialization shape concepts like 'masculinity'? Does patriarchy hurt men too? This course will engage questions like these. All are welcome. Let's work together to explore how academic philosophy has improved on this front, how it can continue to improve, and how it may be able to provide avenues of resistance to gender prejudice beyond the academy.

PHI 350 SCH Philosophy of Political Economy

Dr. Alexander Schaefer

T Th, 11:00 AM – 12:20 PM

Class #: 23318

There appears to be a close connection between economic performance and political institutions. Are there certain political systems that are inherently more friendly to economic growth? If so, what makes them so? In this course, we will draw on classic and contemporary texts in order to understand enduring debates about which political institutions are best for securing peace, prosperity, and justice. Along the way, we will encounter arguments from Adam Smith, Karl Marx, and John Stuart Mill, paying special attention to their deep disagreements about the nature of the capitalist system. We will also study the *socialist calculation debate*, in which some of the 20th century's most illustrious economists squared off against one another to debate the feasibility and desirability of socialism. By the end of the course, students will have a subtle understanding of the main arguments for and against capitalist and socialist political structures. Equipped with this understanding, they will be invited to imagine alternatives that secure the benefits of both systems, while avoiding their key failings.

PHI 354 STE Chinese Philosophy

Dr. Daniel Stephens

M W F, 12:00 PM – 12:50 PM

Class #: 23800

In Chinese Philosophy, we will explore how one of the world's most fascinating and influential philosophical conversations unfolded during ancient China's Warring States period. You will learn how rival thinkers from the Confucian, Mohist, Daoist, and Legalist schools developed increasingly sophisticated philosophical views as they argued over how to deal with the intense social and political turmoil that characterized their era. Our discussions of these views will lead us through numerous areas of philosophy, including normative ethics, political philosophy, moral psychology, metaethics, epistemology, philosophy of language, and metaphysics.

PHI 356 DUN Early Modern Social Political Philosophy

Dr. Stewart Duncan

M W F, 2:00 PM – 2:50 PM

Class #: 23319

Early Modern Social Political is a class in the history of moral and political philosophy. We'll look at the work of philosophers from the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries, and see them discuss a range of themes: the nature of laws, the origin and justification of government, the relation between politics and religion, toleration, the moral role of emotions, imperial conquest, and the rights of women.

PHI 370 DUN Early Modern Philosophy

Dr. Stewart Duncan

M W F, 11:00 AM – 11:50 AM

Class #: 23309

In Early Modern Philosophy, we'll look at the views of philosophers from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. We'll focus on their views about the sorts of things there are in the world – Are there only bodies? Are there immaterial souls? Are there maybe only immaterial souls? Does God exist? Does maybe only God exist? Along the way, we'll also think about these philosophers' views about knowledge, the physical sciences and morality.

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

PHI 380 LAW Nineteenth Century Philosophy

Dr. James Lawler

T Th, 2:00 PM – 3:20 PM

Class #: 19541

In his systematic philosophical works, Kant attempts to resolve the contradictions in early modern philosophy between materialist empiricism and idealist rationalism. In his conception of appearance and reality, Kant seeks to reconcile the antinomies of matter and spirit, determinism and free will, self-interest and morality, secular science, and a religion indicated by reason itself.

If Kant's philosophy culminated one stage in the history of Western philosophy that began with Descartes, it started a second stage, in which Kant's ideas were put to the test in various ways. Hegel, followed by Marx, argues that an expanded conception of reason can resolve the oppositions generated by Kant's abstract conceptual analysis. More impressed by Kant's stress on the limits of reason, Nietzsche argues that ultimate reality can be accessed self-overcoming, which he calls the super-human. William James takes Kant's limits of reason as a basis for an alternative to materialist science that justifies belief in human immortality.

Such philosophical perspectives were generally linked to the central questions of social life. Kant establishes moral limits to the freedom of the market of Adam Smith's laissez-faire capitalism. Hegel provides grounds for what is now called welfare-state capitalism. Marx argues that human freedom and democracy require the egalitarian economics of socialism. By contrast Nietzsche draws from the Darwinian struggle for survival grounds for transcending humanity itself, for the creation of the Superhuman. William James returns to Kant in his essay for a pragmatic spiritualism as an alternative to materialism.

PATHWAYS: PHI 380 Nineteenth Century Philosophy satisfies the following pathway: Humanity.

PHI 398 BRU Philosophy of Biology

Dr. Justin Bruner

T Th, 11:00 AM – 12:20 PM

Class #: 23315

Recent breakthroughs in evolutionary biology, conservation science, and medicine play a huge role in society and public policy and have impacted the lives of billions. This course will focus on the philosophical foundations of these and related subjects. Topics we will cover include: conceptual issues in evolutionary theory; the possibility of cooperation, justice, and fairness in a Darwinian world; rivalrous conceptions of health and disease; and the value of biodiversity.

PHI 454 STE Chinese Philosophy

Dr. Daniel Stephens

M W F, 12:00 PM – 12:50 PM

Class #: 23313

In Chinese Philosophy, we will explore how one of the world's most fascinating and influential philosophical conversations unfolded during ancient China's Warring States period. You will learn how rival thinkers from the Confucian, Mohist, Daoist, and Legalist schools developed increasingly sophisticated philosophical views as they argued over how to deal with the intense social and political turmoil that characterized their era. Our discussions of these views will lead us through numerous areas of philosophy, including normative ethics, political philosophy, moral psychology, metaethics, epistemology, philosophy of language, and metaphysics.

PHI 485 GRA Integrating PPE

Dr. David Gray

M W F, 11:00 AM – 11:50 AM

Class #: 20609

This course will explore advanced issues at the intersection of philosophy, political science and economics. Each discipline explores complex social problems with its own toolkit, and with its own set of questions. The goal of this course will be to integrate these different approaches into a richer lens on how we can confront complex social issues.

Pre-requisite: PHI 185

PHI 489 SCH Ethics and Social Norms**Dr. Alexander Schaefer**

Th, 1:00 PM – 3:40 PM

Class #: 23314

Ever wonder why you briefly hold hands with strangers when you first meet them? Or why “close talkers” make you feel weird? In PHI 489, we will study these behaviors, along with many others, in a quest to understand the nature of *social norms*. Norms are patterns of behavior, often supported by moralistic attitudes and punishment mechanisms, that establish mutual expectations. The first part of this course draws on work by scholars like Chrisina Bicchieri in order to develop a precise definition of “social norm,” along with a classification of different types of norms. In the second part of the course, we will study how norms emerge through cultural evolutionary processes. Part three of the course explores how we can measure, evaluate, and modify norms. In the final part of the course, we will study how norms interact with other social and political institutions. Does economic development require social norms? Can democracy function without norms of citizenship and civic duty? Can environmental problems be addressed, in part or whole, by cultivating the right sorts of norms? Come think about these questions – and many others – in PHI 489.

Undergraduate Tutorial Sections:

PHI 498 Philosophy Undergraduate Tutorials

PHI 499 Philosophy Undergraduate Tutorials

Meeting days and times as arranged with professors.