

**DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY
GRADUATE COURSE DESCRIPTIONS**

Spring Semester January 24 – May 7, 2024

[PHI 556 Special Topics: Historical Approaches to Skepticism](#)

Dr. Lewis Powell
Friday, 1:00 PM – 3:40 PM
Class #: 23311

Skepticism has been a major element of philosophy throughout its history. In this course, we will look at several historical skeptical traditions, from Sextus Empiricus and Socrates, to Zhuangzi, to Malebranche and Hume, in order to explore the motivations, methods, arguments, and underpinnings of this key philosophical stance. Time will also be spent on texts responding to these challenges, and with contemporary scholarship on these historical figures.

[PHI 579 Theories of the Open Society](#)

Dr. Ryan Muldoon
Wednesday, 1:00 PM – 3:40 PM
Class #: 21798

In this course, we will examine different approaches to theorizing about liberal societies that are oriented around dynamism and diversity. We will focus on Mill, Popper, Hayek, Appiah and Kukathas as exemplars of this tradition. Our goal is to examine what is required of an *open* society as opposed to a liberal but closed society.

[PHI 579 Comparative Ethics](#)

Dr. Daniel Stephens
Wednesday, 4:00 PM – 6:40 PM
Class #: 21796

In Philosophy 579: Comparative Ethics, we will study various readings in Chinese philosophy with the aim of drawing out views about ethics, politics, and moral psychology that we can fruitfully bring to bear on contemporary discussions. Along the way, we will read some great recent work that exemplifies this constructive engagement with Chinese philosophy. This should all prepare you to write a final paper that utilizes this approach.

[PHI 604 Teaching Philosophy](#)

Dr. David Gray

Tuesday, 1:00 PM – 3:40 PM

Class #: 23312

This will be a course in philosophical pedagogy. Required work may include preparation of syllabi and assignments, practice lectures, and similar exercises intended to prepare students to teach their own courses in philosophy. This course is open only to matriculated graduate students in philosophy.

[PHI 637 Applied Ontology](#)

Dr. John Beverley

Monday, 1:00 PM – 3:40 PM

Class #: 22160

Applied Ontology and Intelligence Analysis is an interdisciplinary endeavor that combines techniques, artifacts, and technologies from the field of applied ontology with the contemporary nuances of intelligence analysis. At its core, this course delves into the philosophical and ontological underpinnings of intelligence paradigms, grappling with quintessential queries about knowledge, truth, ethics, and decision-making within the intelligence sphere. This course anchors applied ontology discussions in the real-world challenges and opportunities of intelligence operations. Throughout the term, students will critically examine a spectrum of topics from the digital battlegrounds of future wars to the ontology of terrorism and the ethical implications of artificial intelligence in espionage. Participants will cultivate competency in evaluating and innovating within the expansive fields of both intelligence analysis and applied ontology.

[PHI 637 Ethics and Social Norms](#)

Dr. Alexander Schaefer

Thursday, 1:00 PM – 3:40 PM

Class #: 23310

Ever wonder why you briefly hold hands with strangers when you first meet them? Or why “close talkers” make you feel weird? In PHI 637, 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 637.

Individual Tutorial Course Sections

See [HUB Registration site](#) for Individual Tutorial Course Sections with Philosophy Department Faculty, to be arranged with permission of instructor:

PHI 599 Graduate Tutorial

PHI 701 Masters Project Guidance Tutorials (Arranged with Professor)

PHI 702 MA Thesis Guidance Tutorials (Arranged with Professor)

PHI 704 Dissertation Guidance Tutorials (Arranged with Professor)