



# Philosophy Course Brochure

Fall 2023

Phil 101 Introduction to Philosophy

Phil 105 Contemporary Moral Issues

Phil 115 Critical Thinking

Phil 120 Symbolic Logic

Phil 155 Environmental Ethics

Phil 170 Biomedical Ethics

Phil 201 History of Ancient Philosophy

Phil 210 Philosophy, Law, & the Arts

Phil 252 Marxism

Phil 282 Philosophy of Music

Phil 330 Philosophy of Mind

PPLW 400 Insanity in Psychiatry, Law, & Ethics

# Phil 101: Introduction to Philosophy

**CRN 11047 | MWF 9:00-9:50 | PROF. TO BE ANNOUNCED**

**NO PREREQUISITE**

This course offers a general introduction to philosophy. The course begins with a careful reading of Plato's dialogue, *Meno*. We then turn to four enduring philosophical issues: (1) Religion: Are there good grounds to think that God does (or does not) exist? If the evidence doesn't decide the case, is it reasonable to believe "based on faith"? (2) Knowledge: What is "knowledge"? Can we know anything with certainty? If we lack certainty, can we still have objective knowledge? (3) Metaphysics of Free Will: If minds are nothing but collections of mindless particles governed by deterministic laws, is free will possible? (4) Equality & Justice: Does wealth inequality violate our principles/ideals of equality and justice? We will explore classic philosophical texts and discuss how philosophical arguments remain relevant today.

# Phil 101: Introduction to Philosophy

**CRN 11121 | MWF 10:00-10:50 | PROF. TO BE ANNOUNCED**

**NO PREREQUISITE**

This course offers a general introduction to philosophy. The course begins with a careful reading of Plato's dialogue, *Meno*. We then turn to four enduring philosophical issues: (1) Religion: Are there good grounds to think that God does (or does not) exist? If the evidence doesn't decide the case, is it reasonable to believe "based on faith"? (2) Knowledge: What is "knowledge"? Can we know anything with certainty? If we lack certainty, can we still have objective knowledge? (3) Metaphysics of Free Will: If minds are nothing but collections of mindless particles governed by deterministic laws, is free will possible? (4) Equality & Justice: Does wealth inequality violate our principles/ideals of equality and justice? We will explore classic philosophical texts and discuss how philosophical arguments remain relevant today.

# Phil 101: Introduction to Philosophy

**CRN 11124 | TR 12:15-1:30 | PROF. DEBORAH BOYLE**

**NO PREREQUISITE**

In this course, we will read selections from some classic Western historical philosophical texts, as well as from some more recent works, and discuss the important issues, questions, and possible answers that they raise. Some questions we might discuss include the following: (1) Is knowledge possible? People typically claim to know all sorts of things; are these knowledge-claims legitimate? How do we acquire knowledge? (2) What, if anything, makes a person the same over time? Is the idea of survival of the self after death philosophically defensible? How do concepts of race and gender shape our own sense of identity? (3) What is it to be conscious? Could machines think and feel? (4) Are there any objective truths about morality? What kinds of actions are morally right, and which are morally wrong? (5) What obligations, if any, do we have to animals? And do we have obligations to obey every law in the society we inhabit? When (if ever) might it be permissible to commit civil disobedience?

# Phil 101: Introduction to Philosophy

**CRN 11557 | MWF 2:00-2:50 | PROF. SCOTT HEMMENWAY**

**NO PREREQUISITE**

This course will introduce you to philosophy by means of a careful study of selections from some of the great philosophers on the theme of the good life. Some of the philosophers we'll read are Plato, Aristotle, Augustine, Descartes, Spinoza, Nietzsche, and Sartre; thus, all of the major periods of Western philosophy will be represented. Some of the many questions we will raise about the good life are What is the good life? Is it completely individual, or can we argue that some lives are better than others? Is morality a necessary part of the good life? Is happiness? Is a relationship with God? Where does reflection figure into the good life?

# Phil 105: Contemporary Moral Issues

**CRN 11226 | TR 9:25-10:40 | PROF. CHRISTIAN COSERU**

**NO PREREQUISITE**

Is abortion morally permissible? Should life be extended beyond its natural span? Is affirmative action an effective way to rectify past injustice? Should sex be enjoyed for its own sake or entail further commitment? Does AG/VR demand a new set of ethical principles? Are Large Language Models (e.g., ChatGPT) a boon or a threat to academic integrity? People have strong, often deeply entrenched, views about how these questions should be answered. Because these are deeply personal issues, it is often difficult to subject them to rational evaluation. This course aims to do just that. Our goal here is threefold: (i) to examine arguments for and against these hot button issues; (ii) to assess those arguments on the basis of their strengths and weaknesses; and (iii) to gain a deep understanding of the theoretical nature of morality.

# Phil 115: Critical Thinking

**CRN 11495 | MWF 11:00-11:50 | PROF. SCOTT HEMMENWAY**

**NO PREREQUISITE**

Being a free human being means being able to think for yourself when you think about what you believe, what is important, what you deem prudent to do, what you understand is moral to do, etc. Some of the tools an independent thinker needs are critical thinking skills, for example, the ability to evaluate somebody else's claims about the world. This course teaches you about some of those skills and gives you practice in evaluating the reasoning of others so that you can come to your own conclusions. These skills should also enable you to present a stronger case to others for what you believe.

# Phil 120: Symbolic Logic

**CRN 10642 & 10643 | MWF 10:00-10:50 & 11:00-11:50**

**PROF. TODD GRANTHAM | NO PREREQUISITE**

We find arguments in many areas of human life: politics, legal reasoning, science, and everyday discussions. In each of these domains, people offer reasons and evidence to support their beliefs. The methods of formal logic have been a valuable tool for assessing arguments for millennia. We will learn how to translate English sentences into contemporary forms of syllogistic, propositional, and predicate logic and to assess the validity of inferences in these languages. Studying this formal system will build abstract reasoning skills, teach you how to recognize and construct valid arguments, and give you a language with which to talk and think about deductive arguments efficiently and effectively.

# Phil 155: Environmental Ethics

**CRN 11808 | MWF 1:00-1:50 | PROF. TO BE ANNOUNCED**

**NO PREREQUISITE**

A study of the philosophical and ethical dimensions of environmental issues, including such topics as the moral status of other species and the nature of human obligations toward the environment.

# Phil 170: Biomedical Ethics

**CRN 13288 | MWF 12:00-12:50 | PROF. TO BE ANNOUNCED**

**NO PREREQUISITE**

Bioethics (or medical ethics) is one of the most significant ways in which we test our shared ethical principles. In this course we study the main approach to medical ethics, principlism. But we also look to the goals of medicine and the professional expectations of clinicians. We will read new research on concepts like informed consent, autonomy, and well-being. We also consider cases that come out of the actual practice of medicine, real-world interactions and tensions. Our topics include the justice of organ donation, vaccine ethics, the treatment of SUD and mental illness, and end-of-life controversies. In class discussion and a final paper, students are expected to develop and defend their own views.

# Phil 170: Biomedical Ethics

**CRN 13289 | TR 10:50-12:05 | PROF. JENNIFER BAKER**

**NO PREREQUISITE**

Bioethics (or medical ethics) is one of the most significant ways in which we test our shared ethical principles. In this course we study the main approach to medical ethics, principlism. But we also look to the goals of medicine and the professional expectations of clinicians. We will read new research on concepts like informed consent, autonomy, and well-being. We also consider cases that come out of the actual practice of medicine, real-world interactions and tensions. Our topics include the justice of organ donation, vaccine ethics, the treatment of SUD and mental illness, and end-of-life controversies. In class discussion and a final paper, students are expected to develop and defend their own views.

# Phil 201: History of Ancient Philosophy

**CRN 10408 | TR 1:40-2:55 | PROF. JENNIFER BAKER**

**PREREQUISITE: 3 HOURS IN PHILOSOPHY OR PERMISSION OF ONE OF THE INSTRUCTORS**

In this course, students will read (in translation) from the works of Plato, Aristotle, Epictetus, Seneca, and Galen. We study the Platonic, Aristotelian, Stoic, and Epicurean accounts of moral psychology, epistemology, ethical theory, politics and justice. We end with Platonic metaphysics. Students are expected to engage with the ideas of ancient philosophers philosophically, identifying flaws and ideas for improvement in arguments we reconstruct.

# Phil 210: Philosophy, Law, & the Arts

**CRN 13290 | TR 1:40-2:55 | PROF. JONATHAN NEUFELD**

**NO PREREQUISITE**

Law and art intersect in myriad ways: in copyright law, land use and historical preservation, tax and tariff law, obscenity law, and direct government funding of art in many different contexts including monuments and memorials. Each of these intersections raise interesting philosophical problems from the metaphysical (how do we know when something is the same again—crucial in copyright? What even IS an NFT? What kind of an object is a work of art?), to the aesthetic (how do we judge whether a work of art is of recognized stature as the Visual Artists Rights Act requires, or whether a particular structure is an eyesore) to the political (is it justified for a government to give money for the development of arts that few of us enjoy; should public space be used for politically repugnant but historically important monuments).

In this course we will explore these questions and more by reading interdisciplinary work in philosophy, law and the arts.

## Phil 252: Marxism

**CRN 13291 | TR 12:15-1:30 | PROF. LARRY KRASNOFF**

**REPEATABLE: MAY BE REPEATED FOR CREDIT WHEN COURSE  
CONTENT VARIES**

A study of the Marxist intellectual tradition, starting with its antecedents, proceeding on to Marx's own writings, and finishing with the work of his successors. Our main task will be to identify the essential theoretical features of Marx's analysis of capitalism, so that we can fairly evaluate its practical value both in its time and in ours.

## Phil 282: Philosophy of Music

**CRN 13292 | TR 9:25-10:40 | PROF. JONATHAN NEUFELD**

**NO PREREQUISITE**

Why do we take music to be so closely tied to the emotions? Can music really "say" things that words can't? What is musical meaning? Does that mean there are things in the world that ordinary language can't capture but that music can? When I'm playing somebody else's music, do I need to play it like they would want it to be played? Is this what "authenticity" means? What does "somebody else's music" even mean? Is music natural or is it something we've made and do? What difference does the answer to this question make? What IS music, at the end of the day? And who is this "we" I keep mentioning? And why are the answers to all of these questions important? In this class, we'll think through these questions and more.

## Phil 330: Philosophy of Mind

**CRN 13293 | TR 10:50-12:05 | PROF. CHRISTIAN COSERU**

**PREREQUISITE: 6 CREDIT HOURS IN PHILOSOPHY**

**EXCLUDING PHIL 120 OR PERMISSION FROM INSTRUCTOR**

Rocks probably don't have minds, but research shows that plants are at least sentient. Do animals have minds? Do computers? In virtue of what does something have a mind? What is the mind? Our main concern in this course is the nature of mind, and the relation between our mind and the physical world. We will reflect on whether having a mind is just a matter of having a brain, on the nature of mental states such as sensations, thoughts, and desires, on the connection between mental states and behavior, and on the nature and character of consciousness.

# PPLW 400: Insanity in Psychiatry, Law, & Ethics

**CRN 13287 | MW 4:00-5:15 | PROF. THOMAS NADELHOFFER  
ONLINE SYNCHRONOUS | PREREQUISITE: DECLARED  
PHILOSOPHY OR POLITICAL SCIENCE MAJOR; INSTRUCTOR  
PERMISSION**

The goal of this course is to take a close look at the history and moral foundations of the legal concept of insanity. We will start with a brief overview of how criminal law is structured and the role that excuses play more generally. We will then discuss several of the different standards that have been developed to define legal insanity in the common law tradition. Along the way we will discuss several landmark court cases from both here and abroad that have helped set the stage for the role insanity presently plays in courtrooms around the world. Having taken a close look at the history and moral and legal foundations of the insanity defense, we will take a look at several famous criminals who used insanity as a defense for their crime and discuss whether or not you think they should have been found guilty (and why or why not). Finally, we will take a look at the nature of psychopathy and the question of whether psychopaths should qualify for the insanity defense. In most jurisdictions, they do not. The question we will explore is whether this is the morally and socially appropriate legal response to psychopathic criminality.



## QUESTIONS? CONTACT US!

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PHILOSOPHY  
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