

PHILOSOPHY

The study of philosophy is an attempt to understand the world in as unified and general a way as possible. Philosophers want to know what there is, how it works, how we know, how we should live, what is good, what is immoral, whether or not there is a God, and many other things—and, especially, how all these things fit together. One reason the study of philosophy is useful is that the methodology of philosophy—careful reasoning, precise application of logic, and thorough analysis of concepts—is applicable to any subject matter whatsoever.

The philosophy major may be earned in one of three ways: (1) the traditional major surveys core areas of critical reasoning and logic, ethics and value theory, metaphysics and epistemology, (2) the major with a concentration in the philosophy of brains, minds, and machines focuses on questions at the intersection of philosophy, psychology, neuroscience, computer science and artificial intelligence, and (3) the major with a concentration in ethics, law, and social/political philosophy centers on questions regarding the basis and nature of morality, the foundations of the law and the goals of criminal justice, our obligations with respect to the environment, and the like. The philosophy minor offers options for electives suited to nearly any companion major. The interdisciplinary ethics minor enhances and complements most other degrees.

Other Information

All coursework taken for the philosophy major or minor must be completed with a grade of “C-” or better.

No more than 6 hours counted as credit toward a major or another minor may be counted as credit toward the **ethics** minor.

Residency Requirement

A maximum of three credit hours can be transferred from another university to count towards the philosophy major, unless the chair agrees to additional credit transfer.

Student Groups

Philosophy Club (<https://www.unomaha.edu/college-of-arts-and-sciences/philosophy/student-opportunities/student-organizations.php>)

Contact

205 Arts and Sciences Hall
402.554.2628

Website (<http://www.unomaha.edu/college-of-arts-and-sciences/philosophy/>)

Degrees Offered

- Philosophy, Bachelor of Arts (<http://catalog.unomaha.edu/undergraduate/college-arts-sciences/philosophy/philosophy-ba/>)
- Philosophy, Bachelor of Arts Concentration in the Philosophy of Brains, Minds, and Machines (<http://catalog.unomaha.edu/undergraduate/college-arts-sciences/philosophy/concentration-philosophy-mind-and-brain/>)
- Philosophy, Bachelor of Arts Concentration in Ethics, Law, and Social-Political Philosophy (<http://catalog.unomaha.edu/undergraduate/college-arts-sciences/philosophy/concentration-ethics-law-social-political-philosophy/>)

Writing in the Discipline

All students are required to take a writing in the discipline course within their major. For the philosophy major this is PHIL 3000 or PHIL 4000. Currently PHIL 3000 is generally offered in the spring semester. PHIL 4000 is only offered on rare occasion.

Minors Offered

- Philosophy Minor (<http://catalog.unomaha.edu/undergraduate/college-arts-sciences/philosophy/philosophy-minor/>)
- Ethics Minor (<http://catalog.unomaha.edu/undergraduate/college-arts-sciences/philosophy/ethics-minor/>)

Philosophy builds the core skills that employers most value: critical thinking, creative thinking, and analytic writing. This means that study in Philosophy provides a solid foundation for a career in almost anything that you can imagine.

Just a few examples...

- **Law:** Philosophy majors have among the highest average scores on the Law School Admission Exam (LSAT) and have among the highest acceptance rates to law school.
- **Medicine:** Philosophy and other humanities majors have among the highest average scores on the Medical College Admission Test (MCAT) and among the highest acceptance rates to medical school.
- **Business:** Philosophy majors have among the highest average scores on the Graduate Management Admission Test (GMAT).
- **Graduate School:** Philosophy majors have among the highest average scores on the Graduate Record Examination (GRE) and have the highest average scores on the both the verbal section and the analytic writing section.
- **Technology:** Philosophy majors often go to work in technology related fields such as computer programming and artificial intelligence (AI) where their background in logic and language, as well as ethics, is highly prized. In particular, philosophy courses are a central part of prestigious programs in Artificial Intelligence.
- Public administration and social services
- Criminal Justice
- Education

When the study of Philosophy is paired with other areas of study, the foundation for success is even greater. In short, double-majoring in Philosophy multiplies the skills and knowledge provided by both majors. This is an especially attractive option since a double-major in Philosophy only requires 30 credit hours.

PHIL 1010 INTRODUCTION TO PHILOSOPHY: MEANING OF LIFE (3 credits)

We all find ourselves at one point or another wondering what everything adds up to. This sentiment manifests itself as different questions: 'why are we here?', 'what's my purpose?', 'how can I lead a fulfilling life?', or, perhaps most relevantly, 'what is the meaning of life?'. Now that you're in college, these questions are of the essence. Where will you go from here? Which skills should you develop? Which major should you choose? What should you pursue? Love? Family? Friendship? Education? Career? Fame? Fortune? Religious devotion? Service to others? Fulfillment? Happiness? What does it mean to be happy or fulfilled? In this course, we're going to set all else aside and dedicate real effort to coming to grips with these questions. Our focus will be on developing our ability to think about what we're asking and acquiring the tools necessary to assess the responses on offer.

Distribution: Humanities and Fine Arts General Education course

PHIL 1020 CONTEMPORARY MORAL PROBLEMS (3 credits)

Introduction to the application of basic moral concepts and theories to contemporary moral issues. Discussion topics will vary and may include: distribution of wealth and resources, environmental ethics and sustainability, animal rights, capital punishment, torture, euthanasia, abortion, cloning, genetic engineering, privacy rights, drug laws, marriage and sexuality, gun control, and affirmative action.

Distribution: Humanities and Fine Arts General Education course

PHIL 1030 INTRODUCTION TO PHILOSOPHY: BRAINS, MINDS, AND MACHINES (3 credits)

Introduction to Philosophy: Brains, Minds, and Machines examines central questions in philosophy about the nature of the mind, the self, human rationality, perception/experience, and technology through the lens of work in cognitive science, neuroscience, artificial intelligence, and psychology. Some major topics and questions include: What are minds? Is the human mind a digital computer? Could a machine - e.g., a robot or a computer - be truly intelligent, or have experiences like humans and animals do? How does the brain "represent" its environment? In engaging these questions, the course also introduces students to foundational issues in cognitive science and artificial intelligence including: nativism vs. empiricism, mental representation, classical artificial intelligence vs. neural networks, modularity, evolutionary psychology, embodied cognition, and extended cognition.

Distribution: Humanities and Fine Arts General Education course

PHIL 1040 INTRODUCTION TO PHILOSOPHY: LAW, POLITICS, AND SOCIETY (3 credits)

A first course in philosophy designed to introduce students to the foundational theories and concepts of legal philosophy, ethics, and social/political philosophy. Students engage theories and concepts by exploring how they are relevant to life in contemporary society. Discussion topics may include free speech, immigration, racism, authoritarianism and populism, human rights, and humanitarian intervention.

Distribution: Humanities and Fine Arts General Education course

PHIL 1050 INTRODUCTION TO PHILOSOPHY: PHILOSOPHY, TECHNOLOGY, AND SCIENCE FICTION (3 credits)

This course introduces core philosophical ideas through a selection of accessible science fiction short stories and films. Does a society's technology determine its values and development? Does technology reflect our values or is it neutral? How does the development of new technologies help or harm people? Will ordinary humans be overtaken by artificially intelligent machines? Can an algorithm make ethical decisions? We will be exploring these questions in the philosophy of technology through how technological advances have been presented in science fiction. In addition, we will also be exploring the philosophical issues around how biological systems could be manipulated. What are the prospects and dangers of biohacking? What are the boundaries of what makes us human? How could different life and ecosystems evolve? How would alien life evolve? Finally, the course will ask questions about the boundaries of science. Should scientists refrain from researching certain scientific questions for ethical reasons?

Distribution: Humanities and Fine Arts General Education course

PHIL 1210 CRITICAL REASONING (3 credits)

A study of the principles of correct reasoning: induction, deduction, formal and informal fallacies. Critical reasoning is excellent preparation for the LSAT and the reasoning portions of other examinations for graduate study.

Distribution: Humanities and Fine Arts General Education course

PHIL 1230 LOGICAL REASONING FOR STANDARDIZED GRADUATE EXAMINATIONS (3 credits)

This course offers an intensive, boot-camp training in logical reasoning which emphasizes the specific skills needed to solve the logic problems included on many standardized graduate admissions exams, such as the LSAT (Law School Admission Test), GMAT (Graduate Management Admission Test), and MCAT (Medical College Admission Test). Substantial portions of these exams assess critical reasoning and logical problem solving ability. This course offers a condensed review of logical techniques required to analyze and solve such problems, not only with the goal of improving student performance on exams, but also because examining the underlying structure of these reasoning problems helps to improve logical analysis and evaluation skills across a wide range of other purposes.

PHIL 2010 SYMBOLIC LOGIC (3 credits)

A first course in symbolic logic designed to introduce students to formal systems of sentential logic and predicate logic. The course explores the nature of both syntax (the formal structure of elements of language) and semantics (interpretive relations between language and subject matter including notions such as truth and reference). Students learn how to translate between English and formal languages, how to construct truth-tables and interpretations to test for key semantic properties, and how to construct derivations. In addition, students will consider the nature and relationships between important logical properties and explore foundational issues in logical metatheory. Throughout the course, students will encounter broad philosophical themes such as the purpose of language, constraints on translation, and nature of meaning itself. (The study of logic is also excellent preparation for the LSAT and the reasoning portions of other examinations for graduate study.) (Cross-listed with MEDH 2010).

PHIL 2020 INTRODUCTION TO PHILOSOPHY OF MIND (3 credits)

This course is an introductory overview of fundamental issues in the study of mind, thinking, and consciousness. Students explore these philosophical issues from the perspective of current research in psychology, neuroscience, linguistics and computer science.

PHIL 2030 INTRODUCTION TO ETHICS (3 credits)

A critical study of basic moral concepts and problems contained in ethical theories of important western philosophers: relativism, egoism, happiness, obligation, justice, freedom, conscience, love, religious precepts, moral rules, moral attitudes and moral language.

Distribution: Humanities and Fine Arts General Education course

PHIL 2040 INTRODUCTION TO EAST ASIAN PHILOSOPHY (3 credits)

This course makes a critical and philosophical inquiry into the fundamental questions raised in East Asian Philosophy, typically including a critical evaluation of the traditional theories in Confucianism, Buddhism, and Taoism of China, Korea, and Japan, as well as contemporary responses to those theories, e.g., Kyoto School or Maoism.

Distribution: Global Diversity General Education course and Humanities and Fine Arts General Education course

PHIL 2300 BIOMEDICAL ETHICS (3 credits)

In the rapidly evolving fields of medicine and healthcare, ethical considerations play an ever-increasing role. This course is designed to equip students with the conceptual tools necessary for ethical reasoning and decision-making in medical contexts. This course investigates critical issues such as informed consent, end-of-life decisions, reproductive ethics, genetic testing, and research ethics. Ideal for students thinking about a career in healthcare, philosophy majors, medical humanities majors, or anyone interested in grappling with the complex ethical questions that accompany advancements in biomedical science and healthcare practice. (Cross-listed with MEDH 2300).

PHIL 3000 PHILOSOPHY WRITING SEMINAR (3 credits)

This course focuses on writing instruction, with a particular emphasis on logical argument, editing and revision, and research methods in the discipline of philosophy. It is designed for students who are beginning to take upper-level coursework and is suitable for Philosophy majors, minors, and non-majors, particularly those who seek additional preparation in argument-focused writing.

Prerequisite(s): Composition II or the equivalent, and three hours of Philosophy, are required.

Distribution: Writing in the Discipline Single Course

PHIL 3010 PHILOSOPHY OF JUSTICE (3 credits)

An examination of the concept of justice from Greek moral philosophy to modern moral philosophy with focus on the problems of modern moral philosophy and the application of those ideas in government and society.

Prerequisite(s): Junior or 3 credits in philosophy.

PHIL 3020 THE JUSTIFICATION OF PUNISHMENT (3 credits)

The course examines the major philosophical arguments concerning the conditions under which punishment is justifiable, and provides a background of ethical theory in order to make these arguments comprehensible.

Prerequisite(s): Junior, or 3 credits in philosophy, or 1 course in criminology & criminal justice.

PHIL 3040 PHILOSOPHY OF LAW (3 credits)

An overview of central issues in the philosophy of law, including the nature, source, and legitimacy of law, the relationship between law and morality, competing theories of legal reasoning and interpretation, the sources and structure of rights and responsibilities, and theories of punishment.

Prerequisite(s): Junior standing or 6 hours in Philosophy.

PHIL 3050 ETHICAL THEORY (3 credits)

This course surveys issues and controversies in meta-ethics, that is, in the theoretical understanding of ethics. A central organizing question is whether or not there are objective ethical facts that we use ethical language to report and discuss. If there are ethical facts, what kind of facts are they and how could we know them? There seems to be no scientific experiment or mathematical proof which could demonstrate an ethical claim. If there are no ethical facts, is ethics simply a matter of emotional self-expression, arbitrary cultural norms, or the like? If so, can there be significant ethical truth and substantive ethical knowledge? All in all, students will survey a variety of proposals on the fundamental nature of ethics and develop an understanding of their relative strengths and weaknesses.

Prerequisite(s): PHIL 2030 or 6 hours in philosophy or permission of instructor.

PHIL 3060 VALUES AND VIRTUES (3 credits)

This course explores advanced topics in ethics with particular emphasis on value theory and virtue ethics. Topics to be considered include the meaning and status of value claims, sources of value, intrinsic goods, agent-relative goods, practical reason, moral development, happiness, moral ambiguity, moral luck, the identification of virtues, and relationships of care, trust, and responsibility. This course supports the Ethics and Values concentration in the Master of Arts in Critical and Creative Thinking. (Cross-listed with CACT 8215)

PHIL 3070 LEADERSHIP ETHICS IN PRACTICE (3 credits)

In today's complex and interconnected world, ethical leadership is a necessity. Ethical leaders inspire trust, foster a positive organizational culture, and drive sustainable success. This course aims to equip future leaders with the essential moral knowledge and reasoning skills required to navigate the broad and difficult challenges they will confront. In particular, students will study the philosophical foundations of ethical leadership, examine how these illuminate historical and contemporary cases of leadership success and failure, and apply the lessons to their own experience. In short, this course aims to cultivate the ethical leadership skills that will not only propel careers but will help students meaningfully contribute to a better, more responsible world.

PHIL 3110 HISTORY OF ANCIENT PHILOSOPHY (3 credits)

A survey of the major philosophers and schools of ancient Greece and Rome: pre-Socratics, Plato, Aristotle, Cynics, Epicureans, Stoics, Skeptics, and Neo-Platonists. The original texts examined in this course explore fundamental questions about the purpose of human life and the value of self-examination, the nature of the universe and possibility of knowledge, and the achievement of virtue and human happiness.

PHIL 3130 HISTORY OF MODERN PHILOSOPHY (3 credits)

The Modern Period (roughly 1600 to 1800) was a time of great scientific advancement, political upheaval, and philosophical progress. During this period, philosophers wrestled with fundamental metaphysical questions about the nature of matter, causation, mind, and God, key epistemological questions regarding the nature and grounds of knowledge, and central ethical and political questions about our rights and duties. As such, the philosophical work of this period provides the foundations for contemporary work in epistemology, metaphysics, philosophy of mind, philosophy of science, ethics, and political philosophy. In this course, students will explore the interpretation and implications of work by some of the most influential thinkers of the period such as Descartes, Spinoza, Locke, Leibniz, Berkeley, Hume, Reid, and Kant.

Prerequisite(s): 3 hours in Philosophy or permission of the instructor.

PHIL 3140 NINETEENTH CENTURY PHILOSOPHY (3 credits)

An examination of major views in 19th century philosophy including the development of German idealism, British empiricism, and Marxism. Special attention will be paid to the origins of existentialism, pragmatism, and modern empiricism as reactions to 19th century positions.

Prerequisite(s): Junior or permission of instructor.

PHIL 3150 PHILOSOPHY OF HISTORY (3 credits)

This course is designed to introduce students to the thinkers and issues in the philosophy of history (and historiography). After being coined by Voltaire, the term 'philosophy of history' has taken on different meanings. Prior to the twentieth century, philosophy of history meant speculation over the course and aims of history. It sought to investigate the subject matter of history, that is, the historical process itself. Consequently, philosophers of history aimed at comprehensive views of this process. During the twentieth century, however, philosophy of history became "analytical or critical." The aim of this approach is to question and criticize the ways that historians work, so issues of knowledge and explanation have become very important for the present-day philosopher of history. Although the course takes a thematic approach to the study of the philosophy of history, prominent philosophers who have investigated history will be introduced throughout the course.

Prerequisite(s): Junior or 3 credits in philosophy.

PHIL 3170 ETHICS IN BUSINESS (3 credits)

An application of ethical principles to moral issues arising in business: corporate responsibility and agency, fiduciary duties, discrimination, advertising, whistle-blowing, trade secrets, environmental protection, product safety and liability, employee rights, government regulation, investment and duties to shareholders, commodification and consumerism.

Distribution: Humanities and Fine Arts General Education course

PHIL 3180 ENVIRONMENTAL ETHICS (3 credits)

This course introduces students to the thinkers and issues that make environmental ethics what it is today. It includes the analysis and evaluation, from ethical viewpoints, of such topics as: intrinsic value of animals, plants and ecosystems; animal rights; climate change; conservation and preservation; environmental law and politics; obligations to future generations; sustainability and new technologies; war, immigration, and the environment; human rights and the environment; nature and the built environment; and environmental activism. (Cross-listed with ENVN 3180).

Prerequisite(s): Junior or 3 hours of philosophy.

PHIL 3200 PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGION (3 credits)

What must a being be like to be rightfully called "God"? Why think that such a being exists? Why would such a being allow there to be suffering and evil in the world? Could you ever be justified in believing that a miracle occurred? Are faith and reason compatible? What is the role of religion in morality? Students will consider these BIG questions and the best answers to them.

PHIL 3210 SOCIAL PHILOSOPHY (3 credits)

An examination of the problems and concepts of social and political philosophy.

Prerequisite(s): 3 credits in philosophy or junior or permission of instructor.

PHIL 3220 PHILOSOPHY OF ART (3 credits)

The course is an inquiry into historical and contemporary philosophical perspectives on the making, interpreting and criticizing of works of art, including relations of the arts to other dimensions of cultures. Students will wrestle with foundational questions (e.g., "What is beauty?", "What is art?", "What makes good art good?", "Is there a right way to interpret art?"), consider connections between art and ethics, culture, and politics (e.g., "Can an artwork be both immoral and good?", "Can a particular culture have exclusive rights to an artform?", "How does public art create political communities and divisions?"), explore questions within particular arts (e.g., "Can music represent?", "Why do we respond emotionally to fictions?"), and experience and evaluate art in light of these investigations. (Cross-listed with PHIL 8225)

Prerequisite(s): Junior or 3 credits in philosophy.

PHIL 3230 PHILOSOPHY AND POPULAR MEDIA (3 credits)

This course examines Philosophy in the context of contemporary popular media including graphic novels, interactive art, video games and VR worlds, or other still-emergent formats. The specific forms of popular art or media selected as a focus area during each term may change in successive course offerings, to suit thematic emphases or new developments (e.g. webseries graphic novels, video games and their associated literature, fictional universes shared between comics and film).

PHIL 3260 HISTORY OF AMERICAN PHILOSOPHY: 20TH CENTURY (3 credits)

This course is designed to introduce students to the thinkers and movements in 20th century American thought, particularly pragmatism, idealism, naturalism, new realism, and critical realism. One chief concern is the issue of what constitutes American philosophy. Is there such a thing as "American philosophy"? This course is intended to address this issue. To set the stage for a look at 20th century philosophical thought, students will briefly look at American thought prior to the 20th century: Puritan thought, the American Enlightenment, and Transcendentalism (Emerson and Whitman). Students will then examine the classical American pragmatists (Royce, Peirce, James, and Dewey), as well as contemporary pragmatists (Rorty, Fraser, Putnam, and Hacking). The course will end with a look at naturalism, new and critical realism, and contemporary moral, social, and political philosophy.

Prerequisite(s): Junior or 3 credits in philosophy.

PHIL 3300 EARLY ANALYTIC PHILOSOPHY (3 credits)

This course focuses on the foundations of the Analytic tradition (from 1879 to 1930). During this period, central figures such as Gottlob Frege, Bertrand Russell, G.E. Moore, Ludwig Wittgenstein, and Frank Ramsey aimed to bring clarity and precision to a wide range of philosophical problems by focusing on fundamental issues in the philosophy of logic and the philosophy of language. Understanding the developments of this period is essential to understanding the development of philosophy in the 20th and 21st centuries.

Prerequisite(s): 3 credits in philosophy or permission of instructor.

PHIL 3370 CONCEPTS OF NATURE (3 credits)

An examination of key philosophical conceptions of nature from the Greeks through the 21st century. Topics covered include concepts of time, the cosmos, causation, determinism, natural law, the relationship between God and nature, and the place of humans and animals in nature.

Prerequisite(s): Previous experience in philosophy, especially PHIL 3110, would be helpful.

PHIL 3400 PHILOSOPHY OF NATURAL SCIENCE (3 credits)

An examination of the philosophical problems associated with the methods of the natural sciences, the presuppositions of scientific inquiry, and the nature of scientific laws and theories.

Prerequisite(s): 3 credits in philosophy or permission of instructor.

PHIL 3410 PHILOSOPHY OF SOCIAL SCIENCE (3 credits)

This course introduces students to central philosophical issues that are raised by and within the practice of social science. Some key questions are: In which respects is social science similar to natural science and in which respects is it dissimilar? Does social science aim at forming generalizable explanations, or does it seek to provide humanistic understanding? Can social science be conducted in a purely objective, disinterested way, or does the practice of social science always rely on at least implicit value assumptions? Must responsible researchers interrogate their research for such assumptions, and, if so, what does it take for research to "pass?"

Prerequisite(s): 3 credits in philosophy and junior, or permission of instructor.

PHIL 3430 PHILOSOPHY OF BIOLOGY (3 credits)

Philosophy of Biology will consider foundational conceptual issues in biology like the nature and structure of biological explanation, the possibility of laws in evolutionary theory, the relationship between different causal components of biological processes (genetics and development), the problem of species reality and classification, the explanatory character of ascription of biological function, and the extension of biological explanations to human psychology and culture. It is designed for both the philosopher who can explore central epistemological and metaphysical issues in the context of biological science and for the biologist who wants to explore the conceptual foundations and presuppositions of her science.

Prerequisite(s): 3 hours in philosophy or biology or permission of instructor.

PHIL 3450 PHILOSOPHY OF MEDICINE (3 credits)

This course considers a range of philosophical questions raised by and within the practice of medicine. The course begins with a conceptual investigation of the meaning of "health" from "illness." Is the classification of individuals as healthy or ill an objective, scientific matter? Or is it instead a matter of social and ethical values? What follows from answering this question one way, versus another? This introduction forms the backdrop against which we move on to investigate a range of further topics. Examples of some of the topics that may be covered include: medical and social models of disability; the role morality of doctors and other medical providers; abortion, euthanasia, and conscientious objection in the healthcare professions; health measurement and quality of life; "death panels" and health resource rationing; conditions on appropriately voluntary and informed consent to medical procedures; and the ethics of biomedical research. (Cross-listed with MEDH 3450).

Prerequisite(s): 6 hours of Philosophy OR Sophomore status OR permission of the instructor

PHIL 3480 PHILOSOPHY OF RACE (3 credits)

Where does the concept of race come from? Where did the racial categories on the US census come from? How has the concept of race influenced scientific theories? Do empirical findings of genetic differences between racial groups show that races are biologically real? Why are racial categories used in medicine? Can all health disparities between races be explained by social factors? Is some particular concept of race necessary for political and social opposition to racism? The course will involve reading original articles and book extracts from a range of disciplines, including history, philosophy, and several sciences. These articles will be explained and discussed in class through a philosophical lens. The course aims to provide students with the philosophical tools and concepts to think about race and racism in a nuanced and reflective way.

Prerequisite(s): Sophomore Status OR 6 credit hours Philosophy OR Permission of the Instructor

Distribution: U.S. Diversity General Education course

PHIL 3490 GENDER AND PHILOSOPHY (3 credits)

This course examines philosophical arguments concerning gender and sexual difference, gender issues and women in the history of philosophy, and major views in feminist theory. Using arguments derived from feminist theory, we will undertake a critical inquiry into the ways in which gender, geography, and power inform political institutions and, in particular, medical research and health disparities. Taking the perspective of women's lives from across the globe through case studies, we will interrogate feminist theory in relation to non-US perspectives on gender and sexuality. (Cross-listed with WGST 3490).

Prerequisite(s): Sophomore status OR 6 hours of PHIL OR 6 hours of WGST.

Distribution: Global Diversity General Education course

PHIL 3500 PROBLEMS IN PHILOSOPHY (3 credits)

Seminar on specialized topic in philosophy. (See "Topic" in class search for specification of particular topic.)

Prerequisite(s): Junior or 6 hours in philosophy.

PHIL 3510 PHENOMENOLOGY AND EXISTENTIALISM (3 credits)

A critical examination of phenomenology and existentialism as historical and philosophical movements. Course focus includes such thinkers as Edmund Husserl, Martin Heidegger, Jean-Paul Sartre, and Simone De Beauvoir.

Prerequisite(s): Junior or 3 credits in philosophy or permission of the instructor.

PHIL 3520 HERMENEUTICS IN PHILOSOPHY (3 credits)

Introduction to hermeneutics or the notion of interpretation in certain thinkers and philosophy movements since the late 19thC. Focus includes Nietzsche, pragmatism, Heidegger, Gadamer, Frankfurt School, and Derrida. Course to exclude topics or things covered in PHIL3510.

Prerequisite(s): 3 hours in philosophy, junior, or permission of instructor.

PHIL 3570 UNDERSTANDING SELF-DECEPTION (3 credits)

What is it to deceive yourself? Why do we do it? Is it necessarily a bad thing? This course is designed to introduce students to a variety of problems associated with the issue of self-deception. Students will investigate the nature of self-deception from both philosophical and psychological perspectives. Students will apply foundational theories to explore the ethical implications of self-deception and the relation of self-deception to issues like imposter syndrome and the project of autobiography.

PHIL 3600 EPISTEMOLOGY (3 credits)

The course covers major theories and debates in Epistemology (i.e., the study of evidence, reasons, justification, warrant, knowledge, explanation, and understanding). The course covers both foundational structural debates (e.g., the structure of justification, the analysis for knowledge, the requirements of explanation, and the nature of understanding) and applied issues (e.g., expertise and testimony, peer disagreement, burden of proof, group deliberation and voting, epistemic bubbles and conspiracy theories, and the value of feelings of confidence, surety, and certainty).

Prerequisite(s): 6 hours of philosophy or permission of instructor.

PHIL 3650 PHILOSOPHY OF MIND (3 credits)

A discussion of various accounts of the nature of minds which focuses upon philosophical problems such as whether the mind is identical with the brain, the extent of similarities between human minds and computers, the nature of personal identity and the relationship of mental activity to behavior. (Cross-listed with PHIL 8655, PSYC 3650).

Prerequisite(s): No Prerequisites. Some prior coursework in Philosophy is recommended, but not required.

PHIL 3700 SPACE, TIME, AND REALITY (3 credits)

What is space? Is there more to space than the arrangement of things in it? What is time? Is time travel possible? What is the relation between space and time? This course introduces students to the study of the fundamental nature of reality with a focus on the elusive nature of space and time. The course places emphasis on the challenge of finding metaphysical truths about the world given the epistemic constraints imposed by our observational limits. Some representative views from the history of philosophy will be covered, though special attention will be given to contemporary debate.

Prerequisite(s): 3 hours of philosophy or permission of instructor.

PHIL 3960 READINGS IN PHILOSOPHY (1-3 credits)

Readings in specialized areas or individual problems in philosophy.

Prerequisite(s): Permission of instructor.

PHIL 4000 ADVANCED PHILOSOPHY WRITING SEMINAR (3 credits)

This is the capstone course of the philosophy major, designed to teach students to write at an advanced level. Students will present their own writing and critique the writing of others, under close guidance of the instructor. By the end of the seminar, each student will have produced a "journal-length" (approximately 20 page) paper on a philosophical topic, and gained extensive experience in revising papers and editing the work of others.

Prerequisite(s): Junior standing and 15 hours in philosophy including 9 hours consisting of 3000-level courses, or instructor permission. Not open to non-degree graduate students.

Distribution: Writing in the Discipline Single Course

PHIL 4220 NEUROETHICS (3 credits)

Neuroscience is a burgeoning field that yields new insights into the workings of the human mind and brain. Work in basic neuroscience also yields technological innovations - brain scans, smart pills, brain modification techniques, etc. - that have profound ethical and social implications. In this upper level philosophy course, we will primarily examine the social, legal, medical, and ethical implications of current and emerging neuroscience technologies and research practices. The emerging field of "neuroethics" examines the ethical ramifications of neuroscience using the concepts of normative and applied ethics. The course will discuss the ethics of neuroscientific technologies - e.g., the use of neuroimaging in the clinical and legal contexts - using the major ethical theories (utilitarianism, virtue ethics, deontological ethics) and principles central to biomedical ethics (autonomy, beneficence, justice, non-maleficence, competence, and informed consent).

Prerequisite(s): Prior Philosophy coursework, particularly PHIL 2300, or prior coursework in Neuroscience, is recommended but not required. Sophomore standing or above.

PHIL 4240 PHILOSOPHY OF EMOTION (3 credits)

In this class, we will aim to understand emotions, moods, attitudes, and other affective phenomena from a broad, empirically informed perspective while keeping practical issues in mind. We will ask questions such as: What are emotions, moods, and the rest? How are these various affective phenomena related to one another? How do they provide information about our relationship to the world? Under what conditions are they appropriate or inappropriate? What role do they play in our reasoning and decision-making? What role do they play in our ethical lives? What role do they play in the arts (e.g., music, literature, film)? (Cross-listed with PSYC 4240).

Prerequisite(s): No prerequisites. Some prior philosophical coursework would be useful, but it is not required.

PHIL 4250 LIMITS OF CONSCIOUSNESS (3 credits)

Consciousness is often considered one of the last great mysteries of science. Despite our internal experience of pleasures, sights, sounds, and pains, it is a largely open question why we have these experiences and what makes them happen. This upper level seminar class examines the philosophy, psychology, and neuroscience of consciousness. Topics covered will include neuroscientific theories of consciousness, unconscious perception, the relationship between attention and consciousness, animal consciousness, and detecting consciousness in the persistent vegetative state. (Cross-listed with PHIL 8256, PSYC 8256, PSYC 4250).

Prerequisite(s): PSYC 1010; or 6 hours in Philosophy. Not open to non-degree graduate students.

PHIL 4260 MORAL PSYCHOLOGY (3 credits)

The growing interdisciplinary field of moral psychology studies our moral beliefs and decision-making processes using the tools of anthropology, psychology, philosophy, and neuroscience. Topics in the science of morality will include the moral-conventional distinction (the distinction between moral norms and non-moral norms such as etiquette), the role of reasons vs. emotions in moral judgment, the brain basis of moral decision-making, cultural differences in moral norms, psychopathy, and the development of morality in children. Psychology studies the nature of moral judgment using behavioral tasks. Neuroscience employs techniques such as functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI), transcranial magnetic stimulation (TMS), and other tools for monitoring and manipulating brain processes to study "where" in the brain moral decision making occurs and the nature of these decisions. Throughout the course, we will examine how these empirical findings intersect with the ethical choices that we ought to make. (Cross-listed with PSYC 4260).

Prerequisite(s): No prerequisites. Prior Philosophy coursework is recommended but not required.

PHIL 4610 PHILOSOPHY OF LANGUAGE (3 credits)

This course provides an introduction to the central problems and foundational theories in the philosophy of language. We will investigate central semantic issues concerning the nature of reference, meaning, and truth; examine key pragmatic issues concerning the role of context and the ways in which we use language; and explore expressive and figurative uses of language such as metaphor. Such issues lie at heart of many perennial philosophical puzzles, encompass debates in linguistics and psycholinguistics, and pose challenges to work in Computer Science and, especially, Artificial Intelligence.

Prerequisite(s): 6 hours of Philosophy OR Sophomore status OR Permission of Instructor