

2015-2016 Philosophy Courses

PHIL 100/100D Introduction to Philosophy, LE (3)

Introduction to the methods and goals of philosophical inquiry. Approaches may include examining some of the principal themes, works, figures, or topics in the Western philosophical tradition and/or philosophical examination of contemporary issues. Questions emphasize issues such as truth, value, human nature, knowledge, decision making, justice, and rationality. Students learn to refine and justify their own positions orally and in writing. Some sections are offered as part of a Learning Community or as a Diversity section.

PHIL 102 Critical Thinking, LE (4)

Teaches the skills involved in clear thinking and intelligent reading applicable to all studies. Includes identification of fallacies in argumentation, a short treatment of deductive logic, and exercises in textual interpretation necessary for approaching the diverse genre of an educated person. An emphasis is placed on sound decision-making in life. This course is a prerequisite for all upper division philosophy courses.

PHIL 201 History of Philosophy I (4)

A treatment of ancient and medieval philosophy. Prerequisite: PHIL 102. Taught as a sequence in alternate years.

PHIL 202 History of Philosophy II (4)

A treatment of modern and contemporary philosophy. Prerequisite: PHIL 102. Taught as a sequence in alternate years.

PHIL 206/206D Introduction to Ethics, LE (3)

Moral philosophy from ancient to recent times. Explores problems involving value judgments, personal freedom and moral responsibility, and the application of philosophy to personal decision making and to current issues in such areas as law, business, and biomedicine. Students learn to refine and justify their own views orally and in writing. Some sections are offered as part of a Learning Community or as a Diversity section.

PHIL 300 Special Topics in Philosophy (1-4)

Significant philosophical topics or themes are explored in certain sub-disciplines of philosophy. Examples of such courses are: The Ethics of Violence, Philosophy of Language, Advanced Topics in Logic, Existentialism and Phenomenology, Aesthetics, Philosophy of Literature. Prerequisite: PHIL 102. May be taken more than once for credit.

PHIL 302 Great Philosophers (4)

A concentrated study of one or two related philosophers and the major themes of their important works. Prerequisite: PHIL 102.

PHIL 303 Formal Logic (4)

Introduction to modern sentential and predicate logic. The nature of deductive and inductive argument, truth, validity and soundness, and the relationship between formal expression and natural language, with an emphasis on the application of formal logic to the analysis of arguments in ordinary language. Prerequisite: PHIL 102.

PHIL 307 Environmental Ethics (4)

An examination of moral issues resulting from human use of the natural environment. Focuses on future responsibility as it results from action in the present, an examination of traditional secular and religious conceptions of morality which may have contributed to the "environmental crisis," and a consideration of alternative views such as zoocentrism, biocentrism, ecocentrism, ecofeminism, the "land ethic," and ecojustice. Prerequisite: PHIL 102.

PHIL 311 Philosophy of Religion (4)

Philosophical issues in religion, including the nature of God, religious belief, the problem of evil, the prospect of immortality, and religious experience and its interpretation. Particular attention paid to the relationship between science on the one hand and monotheistic religions and theologies on the other. Prerequisite: PHIL 102. Same as REL 311.

PHIL 312 Applied Ethics (4)

Analysis of specific contemporary issues via amoral lens. In some cases the course will focus on a specific field such as medicine, business, or sexual ethics; in other cases the course will focus on a range of fields or issues. Depending on the focus, this course may be taken more than once for credit. Prerequisites: PHIL 100 or PHIL 102.

PHIL 330 Gender, Power, and Identity (4)

Examines feminist theory, feminist criticism or feminist approaches to philosophical inquiry.

PHIL 350 Epistemology/Metaphysics (4)

Close study of fundamental issues in Epistemology, including knowledge as justified true belief and Gettier counterexamples; evidentialism and foundationalism in response to Gettier; and classical and contemporary conceptions of Skepticism. Close study of fundamental issues in Metaphysics, including ontology and language; realism, truth and the practice of science; and 19th and 20th century rejections of traditional Metaphysics. Prerequisites: PHIL 100 or PHIL 102. Recommended: PHIL 303.

PHIL 365 Economic Justice (4)

The importance of economic justice stems from the scarcity of resources: how should society allocate resources to achieve the social good? Invariably, questions of justice involve tradeoffs between fairness and efficiency. Such questions are inextricably related to religion, class, gender, poverty, ethnicity, sexual orientation, and so on. The course examines the concept of justice from the points of view of pre-market economies, classical liberalism, neo-classical economics, heterodox economics, Kenneth Arrow, John Rawls, Amartya Sen, among others. Prerequisites: ECON 105 or 253 or 263, or consent of instructor. Same as ECON/JUST 365.

PHIL 370 Philosophy and the Arts (4)

Explores the interplay between Philosophy and various forms of art. Thematic variations include: Philosophy and Literature; Philosophy and Film; Philosophy and the Visual Arts; and Philosophy and Music. Prerequisite: PHIL 100 or 102.

PHIL 390 Thesis Research Preseminar in Philosophy (4)

A required seminar for senior philosophy majors, focusing on research, analysis, and writing techniques aimed at a particular topic or question in philosophy, in preparation for the production of a senior thesis in PHIL 490. Prerequisite: Philosophy major or consent of instructor. Majors and minors should take this class during the fall semester of their senior year. Same as REL 490 or PHIL 490 for Religion and Philosophy minors (PHIL 390 results in a thesis paper of 25–30 pages for Philosophy or Religion minors only). Prerequisite: Students must have senior standing or must have fulfilled all program requirements and have instructor approval.

PHIL 401 Directed Studies (1–4)

A tutorial-based course used only for student-initiated proposals for intensive individual study of topics not otherwise offered in the Philosophy Program. Prerequisite: consent of instructor and school dean.

PHIL 440 Internship (1–8)

Offers students the opportunity to integrate classroom knowledge with practical experience. Prerequisites: junior or senior standing (for transfer students, at least 15 hours completed at Westminster or permission of instructor), minimum 2.5 GPA, and consent of program director and Career Center internship coordinator.

PHIL 490 Research Seminar in Philosophy (4)

A required seminar for Philosophy majors, continuing the work begun in PHIL 390. Students produce a substantial piece of original scholarship in Philosophy. Philosophy majors should take this class during the spring semester of their senior year. Same as REL 490. Prerequisite: PHIL 390; students must have senior standing or must have fulfilled all program requirements and have instructor approval.