

# Φ The Department of Philosophy

336 ten Hoor Hall • 348-5942 • philosophy.ua.edu

## SPRING 2017 COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

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**PHL 100.001 & 002**

**INTRODUCTION TO PHILOSOPHY**

**INSTRUCTOR:**

**DR. TIMOTHY BUTZER**

*Not open to anyone who has taken PHL 106 or PHL 191 (Honors Introduction to Philosophy).*

**Course Description:** This course is an introduction to philosophy. In order to introduce you to this discipline and its methodology, we will focus on four questions: Does God exist? What are minds and how do they relate to bodies? Can we know anything about the world outside of my mind? What does it take for a person to survive over time? The purpose of the course is, in part, to get acquainted with different positions on these issues and some of the central arguments used to support these positions, but even more importantly it is to introduce students into what taking a philosophical approach to a question amounts to, and the point and value of doing so.

**Prerequisites:** None

**Tentative Course Requirements:** Four exams

**Core Curriculum:** This course carries an *HU* designation.

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**PHL 100.003, 004, & 005**

**INTRODUCTION TO PHILOSOPHY**

**INSTRUCTOR:**

**DR. JUSTIN KLOCKSIEG**

*Not open to anyone who has taken PHL 106 or 191 (Honors Introduction to Philosophy).*

**Course Description:** This course provides an introduction to philosophy by way of a discussion of three central philosophical problems—the problem of free will and determinism; the problem of the existence and nature of God; and the “mind-body problem”. Along the way, other important topics in philosophy will be discussed.

In each case, the focus is on careful formulation of doctrines and arguments. The goals are (i) to understand the doctrines and arguments; (ii) to develop the ability to evaluate the doctrines and arguments; and (iii) to begin to develop the ability to extract well-formulated, interesting arguments from philosophical texts.

**Prerequisites:** None.

**Core Curriculum:** This course carries an *HU* designation.

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**PHL 100.006**

**INTRODUCTION TO PHILOSOPHY**

**INSTRUCTOR:**

**DR. H. SCOTT HESTEVOLD**

*Not open to anyone who has taken PHL 106 or PHL 191 (Honors Introduction to Philosophy).*

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**Course Description:** The course offers an introduction to philosophical methodology by way of studying several classic philosophical problems. The problems to be studied will likely include the following: (1) Should we be anarchists? Or is there justification for government rule? If so, what type of government is justified? (2) Are there objective facts about right and wrong, or is the moral status of homosexuality or abortion merely a matter of opinion? If there are objective moral facts, then what makes right actions *right* and wrong actions *wrong*? (3) Do you have free will, or are your actions all causally determined by your genetic predisposition, biochemistry, and various environmental stimuli? (4) What sort of conscious being *are* you? Are you a non-physical substance that inhabits your body? Are you instead identical with your brain? (5) Is there compelling evidence that God exists? Or, does the existence of evil imply that God does *not* exist?

**Prerequisites:** None

**Tentative Course Requirements:** (a) Four multiple-choice/short-answer examinations. Involvement in the course – attendance, optional homework assignments, participation – will likely count toward extra credit.

**Core Curriculum:** This course carries an *HU* designation.

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**PHL 100.900 & 990**  
**INSTRUCTOR:**

**INTRODUCTION TO PHILOSOPHY - ONLINE**  
**DR. TORIN ALTER**

*Not open to anyone who has taken PHL 106 or PHL 191 (Honors Introduction to Philosophy).*

**Course Description:** This course introduces students to the basic concepts, methods, and problems of philosophy. Students will learn about philosophical approaches to issues such as the existence or nonexistence of God, the relationship between the mind and body, the freedom of the will, and the nature of right and wrong.

**Prerequisites:** None

**Course Requirements:** Seven module exams, comprehensive final. All work done on-line.

**Core Curriculum:** This course carries an *HU* designation.

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**PHL 104.001**  
**INSTRUCTOR:**

**CRITICAL THINKING**  
**DR. ADAM ARICO**

**Course Description:** Deciding what to believe is never as easy as it first seems. The number of relevant factors may make choosing well seem almost impossible. This course helps to develop the skills needed to examine critically and systematically everything from the claims of science to claims in the political arena.

This course aims to make students aware of their own psychological hurdles to proper reasoning, as well as to hone critical thinking skills generally, paying special attention to identifying and avoiding common psychological biases and logical fallacies. Along the way, we will be considering scientific reasoning, thinking about moral issues, and arguments as they occur in everyday life.

**Prerequisites:** None

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**Course Requirements:** (a) three in-class exams (plus an optional Final Exam); (b) regular (roughly weekly) quizzes; and (c) homework and in-class writing assignments.

**Core Curriculum:** This course carries an *HU* designation.

*This course is included in the **Philosophy and Medicine** specialization and meets requirements for the **Jurisprudence Specialized Minor**.*

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**PHL 106.001**  
**INSTRUCTOR:**

**HONORS INTRODUCTION TO DEDUCTIVE LOGIC**  
**DR. TORIN ALTER**

*Open to Honors students only. Not open to anyone who has taken PHL 195 (Introduction to Deductive Logic).*

**Course Description:** What is the difference between a good argument and a bad one? This course examines some of the formal techniques developed by philosophers and mathematicians to answer that question. It will also cover more advanced topics (but not meta-logic). It is a self-paced course using both computer-aided learning techniques and one-on-one guidance from the instructor and the teaching assistants.

**Prerequisites:** Admission to UA Honors or 28 ACT, and a C or better in Math 100 or the equivalent.

**Course Requirements:** Attendance is mandatory, but students take tests when they feel they have mastered the material the tests cover. Final grades are determined by the number of tests passed and the number of test attempts made.

**Core Curriculum:** None

*This course is included in the **Mind - Brain** concentration and meets requirements for the **Jurisprudence Specialized Major and Minor**.*

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**PHL 195.001**  
**INSTRUCTOR:**

**INTRODUCTION TO DEDUCTIVE LOGIC**  
**DR. TORIN ALTER**

*Not open to anyone who has taken PHL 106 (Honors Introduction to Logic).*

**Course Description:** What is the difference between a good argument and a bad one? This course examines some of the formal techniques developed by philosophers and mathematicians to answer that question. It is a self-paced course using both computer-aided learning techniques and one-on-one guidance from the instructor and the teaching assistants.

**Prerequisites:** A grade of C or above in Math 100 or equivalent.

**Course Requirements:** Attendance is mandatory, but students take tests when they feel they have mastered the material the tests cover. Final grades are determined by the number of tests passed and the number of test attempts made.

**Core Curriculum:** None

*This course is included in the **Mind - Brain** concentration and meets requirements for the **Jurisprudence Specialized Major and Minor**.*

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**PHL 212.001**  
**INSTRUCTOR:**

**EARLY MODERN PHILOSOPHY**  
**DR. S. SETH BORDNER**

**Course Description:** This course will look at the main figures and intellectual developments of the early Modern period of philosophy. We will proceed chronologically, starting with Descartes's seminal *Meditations on First Philosophy* and tracing two very different branches of influence from there to what are often called the Rationalist and Empiricist schools. Other figures of note will be Locke, Leibniz, Berkeley, Hume, and Kant.

**Course Requirements:** three exams, in-class quizzes

**Prerequisites:** None, but one philosophy course at the 100-level is recommended.

**Core Curriculum:** This course carries an *HU* designation.

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**PHL 223.001**  
**INSTRUCTOR:**

**MEDICAL ETHICS**  
**DR. STUART RACHELS**

**Course Description:** This course is an introduction to some of the ethical issues involved in medicine. Topics include: physician-assisted dying; the allocation of organs and other scarce resources; abortion; stem cell research; and patient autonomy. Our main text will be Lewis Vaughn, *Bioethics: Principles, Issues, and Cases*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (Oxford University Press, 2016).

**Schedule:** This is a large lecture course that meets three days per week.

**Prerequisites:** None

**Course Requirements:** There will be three exams. Students will be required to attend every class meeting.

**Core Curriculum:** This course carries an *HU* designation.

*This course is required for the **Philosophy and Medicine** specialization.*

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**PHL 223.900**  
**INSTRUCTOR:**

**MEDICAL ETHICS - ONLINE**  
**DR. JUSTIN KLOCKSIEG**

**Course Description:** This class provides an introduction to the philosophical study of applied ethics by way of a discussion of topics related to the practice of medical and biological science. Topics of discussion will include abortion, stem cell research, cloning, the allocation of scarce or limited resources, animal experimentation, and patient autonomy, among others. Along the way, other important topics in moral philosophy will be discussed.

**Prerequisites:** None

**Course Requirements:** There will be five exams.

**Core Curriculum:** This course carries an *HU* designation.

*This course is required for the **Philosophy and Medicine** specialization.*

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**PHL 230.001**  
**INSTRUCTOR:**

**POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY**  
**DR. REKHA NATH**

**Course description:** What does justice require in our society today? With a focus on contemporary social and political issues, we seek to answer this question by looking at different dimensions of justice. We start out by examining the problem of political authority: What, if anything, can give the government legitimate authority over citizens? We then consider how the ideals of democracy, freedom, rights, and equality inform our understanding of a just society.

**Prerequisites:** None

**Tentative course requirements:** Exams and class participation

**Core Curriculum:** This course carries an *HU* designation.

*This course is included in the **Jurisprudence** and **Philosophy and Medicine** specializations.*

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**PHL 234.001**  
**INSTRUCTOR:**

**SOCIAL PHILOSOPHY**  
**DR. REKHA NATH**

**Course description:** The government intrudes in the lives of citizens in many ways, and some of these intrusions seem legitimate while others do not. We will consider some of the following issues concerning the legitimacy of government interference. Should citizens have an unrestricted right to bear arms, or are some gun control policies imposed by society justified? Should society ban or heavily regulate the use of drugs and other addictive substances? Should consenting adults be permitted to freely enter into prostitution and commercial surrogacy arrangements? What role if any should the government play in defining who may legally marry whom? A different topic we will investigate is whether citizens, in virtue of participating in social practices, incur obligations that go above and beyond that which is legally required of them. In particular, we will consider what responsibilities individuals might have concerning what they eat and how they affect the natural environment. In addressing a range of controversial social and political issues, our focus in this course is normative. Through the careful consideration of different philosophical frameworks, our aim is to make progress in arriving at well-reasoned positions about how our society ought to be organized as well as what it means for individuals to live ethical lives.

**Prerequisites:** None. This course is not open to students who have taken PHL 222

**Tentative course requirements:** Exams and class participation

**Core Curriculum:** This course carries an *HU* designation.

*This course is included in the **Jurisprudence** and **Philosophy and Medicine** specializations.*

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**PHL 240.001:**  
**INSTRUCTOR:**

**PHILOSOPHY AND THE LAW**  
**DR. KENNETH EHRENBERG**

**Course Description:** This course is a survey of major issues in the philosophy of law including the main theories of general jurisprudence, the relation of legal obligation to moral obligation, the nature and limits of legal responsibility, adjudication and legal reasoning, constitutions, and issues in legal interpretation.

**Prerequisites:** None

**Tentative Course Requirements:** Participation, reading quizzes, two examinations

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**Core Curriculum:** This course carries an *HU* designation.

*This course is included in the **Jurisprudence** Specialization.*

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**PHL 241.001: PHIL. ISSUES IN CRIMINAL LAW**  
**INSTRUCTOR: DR. KENNETH EHRENBERG**

**Course Description:** This course is a survey of major issues in the philosophy of criminal law including the nature and elements of crime, the value of criminal law as a part of a legal system, affirmative defenses and the distinction between excuses and justifications, moral luck and the problem of punishing attempts, and theories of punishment.

**Prerequisites:** None

**Tentative Course Requirements:** Participation, reading quizzes, two examinations

**Core Curriculum:** This course carries an *HU* designation.

*This course is included in the **Jurisprudence** Specialization.*

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**PHL 256.001 PHILOSOPHY OF SPORT**  
**INSTRUCTOR: DR. S. SETH BORDNER**

**Course Description:** Sports command more of our attention (and money) than almost any other part of our culture, except for maybe religion. Sports are important to our culture, and interesting to watch. They're also interesting to think about. This course provides an introduction to the burgeoning field of Philosophy of Sport. We will look at the nature of sports (and games more generally), sportsmanship and fairness, the role of officials, gender equity, racism, and issues surrounding the use of performance-enhancing drugs. This course is reading intensive. Prior exposure to philosophy is welcome but not required.

**Prerequisites:** None

**Course Requirements:** three exams, 3-5 short writing assignments

**Core Curriculum:** This course carries an *HU* designation.

*This course is included in the **Jurisprudence** specialization.*

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**PHL 260.001 MIND AND NATURE**  
**INSTRUCTOR: DR. BENJAMIN KOZUCH**

**Course Description:** Though studied for millennia, consciousness remains a mystery. In this course, we take a critical look at philosophical and scientific attempts to account for the mind and consciousness, giving an emphasis to cognitive neuroscientific approaches. Among the topics covered are the mind-body problem, consciousness research in psychology, and contemporary theories of consciousness. The course starts by tracing the arc of both philosophical and scientific approaches to studying the mind, and culminates with an examination

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of how these two approaches have recently become entwined in present-day studies of consciousness.

**Prerequisites:** None

**Tentative Course Requirements:** Careful reading, attendance, discussion questions and participation, four T/F, multiple choice, short extended-answer exams.

**Core Curriculum:** This course carries an *HU* designation.

*This course is part of the **Mind - Brain** concentration and **Philosophy and Medicine** specializations.*

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**PHL 264.001**

**INTRODUCTION TO METAPHYSICS**

**INSTRUCTOR:**

**DR. H. SCOTT HESTEVOLD**

**Course Description:** The course offers students an introduction to traditional problems of metaphysics, providing students guidance in developing their own reasoned views regarding these problems. Topics will likely include the following: (1) Do objects and persons persist through time? Is the antique chair at Monticello the *same* chair in which Jefferson sat? Are *you* the *same* person to whom your mother gave birth on your birthday? (2) Is fatalism true? Is it true that whatever will be *must* be? *Must* you do what you do, or do you act freely? And what would acting freely involve? (3) How fast does time flow? Do you grow older with the inexorable flow of time? Or, are you "frozen" four-dimensionally across space-time? Is time-travel possible? (4) Why is there something rather than Nothing? (5) *Are* there facts about right and wrong in the same way that there are facts about an atom's nucleus? One cannot see or touch rightness or wrongness; so, if moral facts exist, what are such moral facts *about*? (6) What evidence is there for "New Age metaphysics" -- views involving ESP, astrology, and near-death experiences?

**Prerequisites:** None

**Course Requirements:** (a) Four multiple-choice/short-answer examinations. (b) Course involvement – attendance, optional homework, participation – will likely count toward extra credit. The final examination will *not* be cumulative.

**Core Curriculum:** This course carries an *HU* designation.

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**PHL 292.001 & 002**

**INTRODUCTION TO ETHICS**

**INSTRUCTOR:**

**DR. HOLLY KANTIN**

*Not open to anyone who has taken PHL 221 (Honors Introduction to Ethics).*

**Course Description:** The purpose of this course is to provide students with a general introduction to philosophical ethics. Students will become familiar with the main issues in ethical theory and learn how different theoretical approaches bear on specific ethical controversies. In the first few sections of the course we will discuss varying answers to the following theoretical questions: Are there moral facts and if so, what grounds these facts? How should we understand and respond to moral disagreements? What makes an action right or wrong? What does it mean to live well and have a good life? In the final section of the course we will discuss several specific ethical controversies including the debate over capital punishment and the ethics of euthanasia and physician-assisted suicide.

**Tentative Course Requirements:** TBA

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**Prerequisites:** None

**Core Curriculum:** This course carries an *HU* designation.

*This course is included in the **Jurisprudence** and **Philosophy and Medicine** specializations.*

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**PHL 292.003 & 004**

**INTRODUCTION TO ETHICS**

**INSTRUCTOR:**

**DR. ADAM ARICO**

*Not open to anyone who has taken PHL 221 (Honors Introduction to Ethics).*

**Course Description:** What is the nature of ‘right’ and ‘wrong’, ‘good’ and ‘bad’? What are the principles or guidelines for behaving morally? What sort of life should live, and what sort of person should I be? How do I figure out what to do and which action is morally correct? Introduction to Ethics engages with all of these questions, and surveys the various ways that influential philosophers have attempted to answer those questions.

The course will introduce students to the fundamental concepts of ethics, as well as the major ethical theories. The course begins by discussing basic metaethical questions about moral realism, moral relativism, and moral skepticism, as well as the relationship (or lack thereof) between religion and morality. In the second portion of the course, students are introduced to the historically-significant ethical theories: Virtue Ethics, Deontology, and Consequentialism. The third portion of the course expounds on the implications of those ethical theories for various contemporary ethical issues—including abortion, animal rights, capital punishment, etc.

**Prerequisites:** None

**Course Requirements:** TBA

Attendance and participation are not required but are **strongly encouraged**. There will usually be a group work/discussion period during each class. There will be three in-class exams; one (optional) final exam; quizzes; and writing assignments.

**Core Curriculum:** This course carries an *HU* designation.

*This course is included in the **Jurisprudence** and **Philosophy and Medicine** specializations.*

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**PHL 349.001:**

**LEGAL REASONING**

**INSTRUCTOR:**

**DR. KENNETH EHRENBERG**

**Course description:** This course will prepare you for law school by covering the various methods of reasoning and argumentation that are tested on the LSAT, developed in law school, and used by lawyers and judges. It will also cover philosophical issues relating to rule following, interpretation, and using authorities.

**Prerequisites:** a B in at least one other PHL class.

**Tentative course requirements:** a research presentation and paper.

**Core Curriculum:** None

*This course is included in the **Jurisprudence** specialization.*

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**PHL 391.001:**  
**INSTRUCTOR:**

**HISTORY OF PHIL: Plato's Republic**  
**DR. S. SETH BORDNER**

**Course Description:** Plato's Republic is a masterwork and arguably the single most influential book in the history of philosophy. It lays out Plato's views on epistemology, metaphysics, ethics, politics, and education. This seminar will conduct a close reading of the entirety of the Republic, along with competing secondary interpretations. Students will each be tasked with leading at least one class meeting's discussion and writing one long or two short research papers.

**Prerequisites:** PHL 211 or any two other PHL classes

**Course Requirements:** In-class presentations and either one 10-page paper or two 5-page papers; attendance and regular class participation required

**Core Curriculum:** None.

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**PHL 392.001: SPECIAL TOPICS (WRITING): PHILOSOPHY OF MENTAL HEALTH**  
**INSTRUCTOR:**

**DR. HOLLY KANTIN**

**Course description:** In this course we will take a look at a variety of philosophical questions concerning mental health, mental illness, and how we should think about mental health in the context of medical practice more generally. Topics covered may include: Ontology and classification: What makes an illness *mental* as opposed to physical? When does a mental problem qualify as pathological (and so, get classified as an "illness?") and what are the implications of classifying something as an illness with respect to how we think about and treat it? Research on mental illness: What special challenges arise in studying mental illness? Agency, autonomy, and identity: When is mental illness autonomy subverting in the sense of undermining a person's ability to make informed, voluntary decisions? Moral responsibility: When are people with mental illnesses responsible for symptomatic behavior? Stigma and mental illness: In what ways are mental illnesses stigmatized and why are mental illnesses stigmatized more than physical illnesses?

**Prerequisites:** None.

**Course Requirements:** None.

**Core Curriculum:** This course carries a *W* designation.

*This course is included in the **Jurisprudence** and **Philosophy and Medicine** specializations as well as the **Mind-Brain concentration**.*

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**PHL 392.002:**  
**INSTRUCTOR:**

**SPECIAL TOPICS (WRITING): PERCEIVING AND KNOWING**  
**DR. TIMOTHY BUTZER**

**Course description:** Can we trust our senses? This is one of the most ancient and enduring questions in philosophy. In ordinary life, our senses are often taken to be above reproach. If you *see* something with your own

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two eyes, this is often taken to be the best possible evidence that you are correct in your beliefs. And yet our senses sometimes deceive us. They are subject to various illusions, processing errors and mistakes. They can be influenced by fear, anxiety, hope, and irrational beliefs. Furthermore, there are deep and venerable challenges from various *skeptics* which seem to indicate that the evidence of our senses cannot supply us with knowledge. In this course we will confront these ancient challenges to the trustworthiness of our senses. In attempting to meet these challenges we will take lessons from failed theories of the past and look to new approaches both in philosophy and in the science of perceptual psychology.

**Prerequisites:** At least one previous philosophy class. Recommended: At least one non-introductory philosophy course.

**Course Requirements:** There will be at least one in-class presentation as well as an 8-10 page term paper for this course.

**Core Curriculum:** This course carries a *W* designation.

*This course is included in the **Jurisprudence** specialization as well as the **Mind-Brain** concentration.*

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**PHL 489.001: PHILOSOPHY OF MEDICINE**  
**INSTRUCTOR: DR. RICHARD RICHARDS**

**Course description:** It is difficult to overstate the significance of medicine, in that it affects each of us from birth through death; or the complexity of medicine, in that it involves scientific, conceptual, economic, ethical and philosophical issues. We will here look at three of these issues from a philosophical standpoint: 1) the ways that we conceptualize health and disease; 2) the patterns of reasoning associated with medical thinking; 3) the challenge posed by evolution to how we think about medicine, health and disease. Writing proficiency within this discipline is required for a passing grade in this course.

**Prerequisites:** None.

**Course Requirements:** None.

**Core Curriculum:** This course carries a *W* designation.

*This course is part of the **Philosophy and Medicine** specialization.*

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