

Φ The Department of Philosophy

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

FALL 2017 COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

◇

INTRODUCTION TO PHILOSOPHY

◇

PHL 100.001 & 009 – DR. H. SCOTT HESTEVOLD

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

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 nonphysical 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

Requirements (tentative): Four multiple-choice/short-answer examinations.

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

PHL 100.002 & 003 – DR. BENJAMIN KOZUCH

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

Course Description: The discipline of philosophy aims to answer the hard questions: Does God exist? Could there be an afterlife? Is there such a thing as objective right and wrong? Does a mechanistic physics allow for free will? These are questions that philosophers have toiled for hundreds of years trying to answer. This course surveys the fruits of their labor, looking at and evaluating the more notable answers offered to these questions. The goal of the course is to help the student form well-founded opinions as to how these questions should be answered.

Prerequisites: None.

Requirements: Attendance, discussion, four multiple choice exams.

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

PHL 100.005 & 008 – DR. TIMOTHY BUTZER

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

Course Description: In this course, you will learn about what philosophy is and how philosophers apply the tools of logic and reason to philosophical problems. We will explore a variety of issues, including (but not limited to) the question of God's existence, the relationship between mind and body, and skepticism about the external world.

Prerequisites: None.

Course Requirements (tentative): Careful reading, attendance, participation, pop quizzes, and four exams (quizzes and exams are true/false, multiple choice).

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

PHL 100.006 – DR. TORIN ALTER

Not open to anyone who has taken PHL 191 (Honors Introduction to Philosophy), and open only to freshmen and sophomores.

Course Description: In this course, you will learn about what philosophy is and how philosophers apply the tools of logic and reason to

Continued on next page →

philosophical problems. You will explore a variety of issues, including (but not limited to) the question of God’s existence, the relationship between mind and body, and the nature of right and wrong.

Prerequisites: None.

Requirements (tentative): Careful reading, attendance, participation, pop quizzes, and four exams (quizzes and exams are true/false, multiple choice).

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

PHL 100.007 – TBA

Not open to anyone who has taken PHL 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.

Tentative Course Requirements: TBA

Prerequisites: None

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

PHL 100.900 & 990 – DR. TORIN ALTER

Not open to anyone who has taken 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.

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

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

◇ CRITICAL THINKING ◇

PHL 104.002 – DR. ADAM ARICO

Course Description: Thinking critically does not come naturally to most of us; in fact, it is often contrary to our natural inclinations. In this course, we begin by looking at how human cognition typically operates, and why our psychology can often interfere with rational, critical thought. We will explore the basic features of human learning, memory, and reasoning, including common predispositions that often lead us to draw faulty conclusions, to arrive at mistaken judgments, and to make bad decisions.

Having identified some of the obstacles to and difficulties in behaving rationally and thinking critically, we will move on to the larger goal of the course: to better understand the structure of arguments and know how to critically assess them. This portion of the course will cover both inductive and deductive reasoning, as well as basic features of arguments, and will instruct you in identifying major fallacies, including ad hominem arguments, straw man arguments, appeal to irrelevant reasons, false dilemmas, etc. (see schedule for class meetings for more topics to be covered). Acquiring these skills will help you both better assess others’ arguments and better construct your own.

Prerequisites: None

Requirements (tentative): (a) three in-class exams; (b) homework and writing assignments (d) a course participation grade.

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

*This course is included in the **Philosophy and Medicine** Specializations, and it fulfills requirements for the **Jurisprudence** Specialized Minor.*

◇ HONORS DEDUCTIVE LOGIC ◇

PHL 106.001 – DR. CHASE WRENN

Course Description: What is the difference between a good argument and a bad one? This course focuses on tools developed by philosophers and mathematicians for answering that question. In it, you will learn to use analytical methods such as the construction of proofs and countermodels to evaluate arguments. Along the way, you will explore and analyze influential arguments from the history of philosophy, including some concerning questions of value, ethics, and aesthetics.

Philosophical arguments examined in this course may include Aquinas’s arguments for the existence of God, Parmenidean arguments that change is impossible, Berkeley’s argument for idealism, Descartes’ *Cogito* argument, John Stuart Mill’s “proof” of Utilitarianism, Kant’s argument for the Categorical Imperative, Singer’s argument for animal rights, the Stoics’ argument that death is not to be feared, and more.

The formal tools used in this class include the notation of sentential and predicate logic (with identity), truth tables, a natural deduction proof system, and the use of semantic countermodels.

Prerequisite: C- or better in MATH 100, or equivalent. Admission to UA Honors or a 28 ACT.

Requirements: This course is self-paced, but regular class attendance is required until you have completed all the course work. The course is divided into seven modules, and students grades are determined primarily by how many modules they master by the end of the term.

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

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

◇ INTRODUCTION TO DEDUCTIVE LOGIC ◇

PHL 195.001 – DR. CHASE WRENN

Course Description: What is the difference between a good argument and a bad one? This course focuses on tools developed by philosophers and mathematicians for answering that question. In it, you will learn to use analytical methods such as the construction of proofs and countermodels to evaluate arguments. Along the way, you will explore and analyze influential arguments from the history of philosophy, including some concerning questions of value, ethics, and aesthetics.

Philosophical arguments examined in this course may include Aquinas’s arguments for the existence of God, Parmenidean arguments that change is impossible, Berkeley’s argument for idealism, Descartes’ *Cogito* argument, John Stuart Mill’s “proof” of Utilitarianism, Kant’s argument for the Categorical Imperative, Singer’s argument for animal rights, the Stoics’ argument that death is not to be feared, and more.

The formal tools used in this class include the notation of sentential and predicate logic, truth tables, a natural deduction proofsystem, and the use of semantic countermodels.

Prerequisite: C- or better in MATH 100, or equivalent.

Requirements: This course is self-paced, but regular class attendance is required until you have completed all the course work. The course is divided into six modules, and students grades are determined primarily by how many modules they master by the end of the term.

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

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

ANCIENT PHILOSOPHY

PHL 211.001 – DR. S. SETH BORDNER

Course Description: This course will focus on the major themes of ancient Greek philosophy, from the earliest pre-Socratic philosophers, through Plato and Aristotle, to the later Epicureans, Stoics, and Skeptics. We will proceed chronologically and pay special attention to the systematic connections between metaphysics, epistemology, and ethics in each school of thought, as well as the development of later views in light of criticisms of earlier ones. The aim of this course is to provide students a reasonably comprehensive introduction to the main areas of Western analytic philosophy through an examination of some of the earliest systematic philosophies.

Prerequisites: None

Requirements: There will be three exams throughout the course; two mid-term exams and one final exam. In addition, there will be periodic, unannounced quizzes given in class to test your comprehension of the readings. These quizzes will be graded on a High Pass/Low Pass/Fail scale.

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

HONORS INTRODUCTION TO ETHICS

PHL 221.001 – DR. STUART RACHELS

Open to Honors students only. Not open to anyone who has taken PHL 292 (Introduction to Ethics).

Course Description: This course will focus on a dozen or so matters of personal and social importance. Topics include abortion, pornography, famine relief, affirmative action, gay rights, and the death penalty. We'll concentrate on the reasons that bear on these issues. Our approach to these issues will serve as a model for critical thinking in general.

Prerequisites: None.

Requirements: Grades will be based on four exams. Attendance will be taken each class, and an attendance policy will be enforced.

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

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

MEDICAL ETHICS

PHL 223.001 – 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* (Oxford University Press, 2013).

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

Prerequisites: None

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 included in the **Philosophy and Medicine** Specialization.*

◇ POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY ◇

PHL 230.001 – 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

Requirements (tentative): Exams and class participation

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

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

◇ PHILOSOPHY AND THE LAW ◇

PHL 240.001 – 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

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

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

◇ MIND AND NATURE ◇

PHL 260.001 – 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 of how these two approaches have recently become entwined in present-day studies of consciousness.

Prerequisites: None

Requirements: TBA

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

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

AESTHETICS

PHL 291.001 – TBA

Course Description: The arts are important to us. We listen to music, watch movies, see plays, attend dance concerts and go to art museums. But unless some controversy about art engages us, we rarely think about the nature of art. In this course, we will be introduced to some of the most fundamental concerns about art: What is distinctive, if anything, about the experience of artworks? Why do we identify anything as a work of art? How do we, or should we interpret an artwork? On what grounds can we criticize an artwork?

Prerequisites: None

Requirements: Four exams. Attendance and participation in discussion will be expected.

Core Curriculum: This course carries an **FA** (Fine Arts) designation.

INTRODUCTION TO ETHICS

PHL 292.001 – DR. S. SETH BORDNER

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

Course Description: This course is designed to give the students a broad introduction to the field of philosophical ethics. The primary aim is to acquaint students with the basic subject matter of ethics as it is studied within philosophy, a few central authorities and positions, and a feel for how philosophers engage with contemporary ethical issues in light of some of the historical influences on the discipline. We will read a variety of texts ranging from historical works on ethics generally to contemporary works focusing on specific moral issues. The hope is that students will develop an understanding and appreciation of how different ethical theories apply to particular cases, and how they might begin to engage in genuine ethical debates.

Prerequisites: None

Requirements: There will be three exams throughout the course; two mid-term exams and one final exam. In addition, there will be periodic, unannounced quizzes given in class to test your comprehension of the readings. These quizzes will be graded on a High Pass/Low Pass/Fail scale.

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

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

PHL 292.002 – DR. TIMOTHY BUTZER

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

Course Description: We care not only about how the world actually is, but how it *ought to be*. We think it is wrong when someone kills, assaults or otherwise harms another without sufficient cause. We think highly of selfless acts that benefit others. In other words, we care about the *moral status* of our actions. Ethics, or moral philosophy, is the study of morality. Of primary importance in ethics is the question of what makes an act right or wrong. It is this question that will be the focus of this introductory course. We will survey some of the most influential theories of what makes an action morally right or wrong: utilitarianism, deontological ethics, and virtue ethics. In addition, we will also explore whether there are objective moral facts, whether actions are only moral/immoral relative to a culture, the role of religion in morality, and difficult moral issues surrounding world hunger and abortion.

Prerequisites: None

Requirements: TBA

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

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

PHL 292.004 – 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.

Prerequisites: None

Requirements: TBA

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

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

PHL 292.007 & 008 – 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

Requirements: 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.*



LAW AND MORALITY



PHL 341.001 – DR. KENNETH EHRENBERG

Course Description: This course will cover a number of debates on the relationship between law and morality, including questions like whether an unjust law can still be legally valid, whether an inherently evil political system can still have a legal system, and whether the law is simply a system of rules or what (if any) role there is for principles. We will be writing two philosophical papers based on primary source material, mostly from mid to late 20th century analytic legal philosophy. Writing proficiency within this discipline is required for a passing grade in this course.

Prerequisites: One prior PHL class with a B or better.

Requirements: TBA

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

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



PHILOSOPHY ISSUES - INTERNATIONAL LAW



PHL 343.001 – DR. REKHA NATH

Course Description: This course explores philosophical issues that arise with respect to the international law. Some of these are conceptual. For instance, what qualifies as ‘international law’ and in virtue of what characteristics? International laws, norms, and rule-mediated practices are different in character from the laws that govern our lives within the state. Who makes international laws, and who enforces them? A host of normative issues arise with respect to international law too. What if anything gives international legal bodies like the United Nations, the International Criminal Court, and the Appellate Body of the World Trade Organization rightful authority over those who are taken to be bound by their rules? In cases of conflict, do the laws of states trump international laws or vice-versa? We will consider some of the ethical issues surrounding international laws, treaties, and conventions concerning some of the following issues: human rights; war, humanitarian intervention and the use of violence more broadly; trade and economic globalization; the environment and the use of natural resources; immigration and refugees; and intellectual property. Writing proficiency within this discipline is required for a passing grade in this course.

Prerequisites: You are required to have taken at least two philosophy classes prior to this one, including one at the 200-level or above; or instructor's permission.

Requirements: 2 papers, final exam, and class participation

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

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



PHILOSOPHY OF MIND



PHL 360.001 – DR. TORIN ALTER

Course Description: What is the relationship between the mental and the physical? That is the central question in the philosophy of mind, and we will approach it from different angles. We will focus largely on consciousness and its place in nature. Most readings will be from the contemporary literature but some will be historical.

Prerequisites: Two philosophy courses or instructor’s permission. (PHL 260 Mind and Nature is recommended but not required.)

Requirements (tentative): Two five-to-ten page papers, at least one additional short writing assignment, regular reading quizzes, and a final.

Core Curriculum: This course carries a **W** designation, and so writing proficiency within the discipline of philosophy is required for a passing grade in this course.



PHILOSOPHY OF SCIENCE



PHL 386.001 – DR. RICHARD RICHARDS

Course Description: In this course we will be introduced to some of the basic issues in philosophy of science: What distinguishes science from pseudo-science? Is there a scientific method? If so, what is that method? What constitutes a scientific explanation? How are theory and observation related? How do hypotheses get confirmed? How do values function in science? What constitutes scientific progress? We will then apply the philosophical principles to actual scientific debates: the use of alternative medicines, the acceptance of “the fat hypothesis” and evidence relative to climate change hypotheses.

Prerequisites: None

Requirements: Two midterm exams and a final; attendance and class participation expected.
