

The Department of Philosophy
Fall 2022 Course Descriptions
336 ten Hoor Hall • 205-348-5942 • philosophy.ua.edu

INTRODUCTION TO PHILOSOPHY

PHL 100

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

- **(FA) PHL 100.001 – MWF 10:00am-10:50am, Dr. Mark Pickering**
- (FA) PHL 100.002 – MWF 11:00am-11:50am, Dr. Mark Pickering**
- (FA) PHL 100.003 – MWF 3:00pm-3:50pm, Dr. Stephen Davey**
- (FA) PHL 100.005 – MWF 1:00pm-1:50pm, Dr. Mark Pickering**
- (FA) PHL 100.006 – TR 9:30am-10:45am, Dr. Torin Alter**
- (FA) PHL 100.008 – TR 12:30pm-1:45pm, Eric Solis**
- (FA) PHL 100.009 – TR 3:30pm-4:45pm, Eric Solis**

PHL 100.001, 100.002 & 100.005 Course Description: We will examine historical and contemporary arguments intended to answer questions like the following. Can God's existence be proven or disproven? Does all knowledge come through the senses? Can machines think? Does personal identity persist through change? Can you have free will if determinism is true? What is the supreme principle of ethics?

PHL 100.003 Course Description: Philosophers get excited about things they don't understand. This provides a lot of material, as there are puzzles and unanswered questions concerning most every facet of our lives. In this class, students will be introduced to a variety of questions that have received great attention from philosophers, and to some of the most influential historical and contemporary attempts to answer them. They will learn to analyze philosophical theories and arguments, and to construct their own answers to these difficult questions with a measure of creativity and rigor. Topics will include puzzles and paradoxes, the existence of God, what exists and what doesn't, personal identity and free will, skepticism, the nature of knowledge, consciousness, perception, the good life, contemporary moral controversies, and the meaning of life.

PHL 100.006 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.

PHL 100.008 & 100.009 Course Description: Philosophy is often described as a question-driven or problem-driven discipline. And appropriately so, since philosophical inquiry often involves asking difficult questions, and formulating complex problems. But philosophers don't ask questions and formulate problems just for their own sake. They do this in hopes of finding answers and solutions. This course is an introduction to philosophy. Hence, in this course, we will be taking a close look at some of the most significant philosophical questions and problems that have arisen throughout the course of history. We will also examine some of the most important solutions to the problems, and answers to the questions. We will talk about the existence or nonexistence of God, knowledge and reality, free will, the nature of morality, and

personal identity. This course requires no prior courses in philosophy, and should be of equal interest to students who intend to pursue other majors.

Prerequisites: None

Requirements (tentative): Varies from section to section; contact instructor for details.

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

PHL 100.901(D) – Dr. Torin Alter

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

- **(IN) PHL 100.901 – ONLINE (Distance Learning)**

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 – Dr. Adam Arico

- **(FA) PHL 104.001 – TR 12:30pm-1:45pm**
- **(FA) PHL 104.004 – TR 2:00pm-3:15pm**

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.

HONORS PHILOSOPHICAL INTRODUCTION TO DEDUCTIVE LOGIC

PHL 106.001 – Dr. Chase Wrenn

- (FA) PHL 106.001 – MWF 10:00am-10:50am, 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: Class attendance, discussion participation, up to seven tests. Course is self-paced and your grade is based largely on how many of the tests you pass by the end of the term.

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

PHILOSOPHICAL INTRODUCTION TO DEDUCTIVE LOGIC

PHL 195 – Dr. Chase Wrenn

- (FA) PHL 195.001 – MWF 10:00am-10:50am, 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: Class attendance, discussion participation, up to six tests. Course is self-paced and your grade is based largely on how many of the tests you pass by the end of the term.

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

PHL 195.900(D)/901(M) – Dr. Chase Wrenn

- (IN) PHL 195.900 – ONLINE (MAIN CAMPUS), Dr. Chase Wrenn
(IN) PHL 195.901 – ONLINE (DISTANCE LEARNING), 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 proof system, and the use of semantic countermodels.

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

Requirements: Class attendance, discussion participation, up to six tests. Course is self-paced and your grade is based largely on how many of the tests you pass by the end of the term.

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

ANCIENT PHILOSOPHY

PHL 211 – Eric Solis

- (FA) PHL 211.001 – TR 11:00am-12:15pm, Eric Solis

Course Description: This course provides an introduction to some of the most important philosophical ideas, texts, and figures of Ancient Greece and Rome. We will read and discuss a selection of philosophical masterpieces, many of which are literary masterpieces as well, and have exercised an unparalleled influence on the subsequent course of Western Philosophy. Authors to be discussed may include Plato, Aristotle, the Epicureans, Stoics, and Sceptics, as well as some earlier pre-Socratic thinkers. We will be considering the views of these authors on a number of issues, many of which continue to be influential today. These may include their views on ethics, politics, psychology, epistemology, physics, metaphysics, rhetoric, and philosophical method. This course requires no prior courses in philosophy, and should be of equal interest to students who intend to pursue other majors.

Prerequisites: None

Requirements:

Core Curriculum: This course carries an *HU* designation

EARLY MODERN PHILOSOPHY

PHL 212 – Dr. Seth Bordner

- (FA) PHL 212.001 – TR 9:30am-10:45am, Dr. 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.

Prerequisites: None

Requirements: There will be three exams throughout the course; two mid-term exams and one final exam

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

MEDICAL ETHICS

PHL 223.001 – Dr. Stuart Rachels

- (FA) PHL 223.001 – MWF 11:00am-11:50am, 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 (4th ed.)* (Oxford University Press, 2020).

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.

PHL 223.002 & 003 – Dr. Jennifer Gleason

- (FA) MWF 12:00pm-12:50pm – Dr. Jennifer Gleason
- (FA) MWF 3:00pm-3:50pm – Dr. Jennifer Gleason

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

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

PHL 223.901(M)/902(D) – Dr. Adam Arico (online)

- (IN) PHL 223.901 – ONLINE (MAIN CAMPUS)
(IN) PHL 223.902 – ONLINE (DISTANCE LEARNING)

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

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

POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY

PHL 230 – Dr. Rekha Nath

- (FA) PHL 230.001 – TR 9:30am-10:45am, Dr. Rekha Nath
(FA) PHL 230.002 – TR 11:00am-12:15pm, Dr. Rekha Nath

Course Description: This course serves as an introduction to central debates in political philosophy. The major questions we explore are the following: How can the coercive authority the government exercises over its citizens be justified? What does justice require in our society today? What role do democracy, freedom, rights and equality play in our understanding of a just society? Through the study of both historical and contemporary texts, we investigate these topics. We also consider how these issues bear upon debates in the contemporary American context concerning the following: restrictions on free speech, participation in the democratic process, homelessness, education and socioeconomic inequality.

Prerequisites: None

Requirements (tentative): Exams and homework

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

PHILOSOPHY AND THE LAW

PHL 240.001 – Dr. Luke Hunt

- (FA) TR 9:30am-10:45am, Dr. Luke Hunt

Course Description: Should laws about sex and pornography be based on social conventions regarding what is offensive? Are emotions reliable guides for human behavior and what the law should be? This course examines the nature of the law and its relation to morality, with a special emphasis on whether emotions

such as shame and disgust should be the basis for criminalization and punishment. The course draws upon a rich variety of philosophical, psychological, and historical references—from Aristotle to Freud—and on legal examples as diverse as the trials of Oscar Wilde, the Martha Stewart insider trading case, and recent controversies about free speech on campus.

Prerequisites: None

Requirements: Tentative

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

PHILOSOPHY OF SPORT

PHL 256 – Dr. Jennifer Gleason

- **(FA) PHL 256.001 – MWF 2:00pm-2:50pm, Dr. Jennifer Gleason**
- **(FA) PHL 256.002 – MWF 11:00am-11:50am, Dr. Jennifer Gleason**

Course Description: This course is a survey of topics in the philosophy of sport. We will examine questions like: what is a sport? Are dance competitions or gymnastics examples of sports? Can esports be sports? We will also look at issues relating to ethics that crop up in philosophical discussions of sports: does one still count as playing the game while deliberately cheating? What, if anything, is wrong with athletes using PEDs in competitive sports? Should the use of performance-enhancing drugs be prohibited in sports? We will be reading and discussing philosophical arguments on these and other topics in the philosophy of sport.

Prerequisites: None

Requirements (tentative): Exams and class participation

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

MIND AND NATURE

PHL 260 – Dr. Benjamin Kozuch

- **(FA) PHL 260.001 – MWF 9:00am-9:50am, 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.

PHILOSOPHY, PSYCHOLOGY AND NEUROSCIENCE

PHL 261 – Dr. Benjamin Kozuch

- (FA) MWF 11:00am-11:50am, Dr. Benjamin Kozuch

Course Description: While philosophy has traditionally been done from the armchair, our large and growing body of scientific knowledge has made this approach less tenable. More to the point, recent results in psychology and neuroscience have relevance to perennial topics in philosophy such as free will, rationality, ethics, and religion. As well, the philosophical knowledge accumulated over aeons on these topics continue to inform psychological and neuroscientific research into these areas. This class surveys the give and take between these fields that has occurred over the last few decades, with a keen eye to seeing how the cognitive sciences have helped further the debate over some of these often ancient philosophical issues.

Prerequisites: None

Requirements: TBA

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

INTRODUCTION TO ETHICS

PHL 292

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

- (FA) PHL 292.001 – TR 8:00am-9:15am, Dr. Holly Kantin
(FA) PHL 292.002 – TR 9:30am-10:45am, Dr. Holly Kantin
(FA) PHL 292.003 – TR 11:00am-12:15pm, Dr. Seth Bordner
(FA) PHL 292.004 – MWF 11:00am-11:50am, Dr. Stephen Davey
(FA) PHL 292.005 – MWF 10:00am-10:50am, Dr. Stuart Rachels
(FA) PHL 292.008 – MWF 12:00pm-12:50pm, Dr. Stephen Davey
(FA) PHL 292.009 – MWF 2:00pm-2:50pm, Dr. Stephen Davey

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.*

MIND, LANGUAGE AND REALITY

PHL 362 – Dr. Torin Alter

- **(FA) TR 12:30pm-1:45pm, Dr. Torin Alter**

Course Description: This course concerns the nature of linguistic reference, meaning, and their connection to metaphysics, epistemology, and the philosophy of mind. We will study classic works by Gottlob Frege, Bertrand Russell, Saul Kripke, and others. We will also study more recent works by David Chalmers, Amie Thomasson, Jennifer Saul, and others.

Prerequisites: Philosophical Introduction to Deductive logic (PHL 195 or 106 or equivalent) and one other philosophy course, or instructor's permission.

Core Curriculum: This course carries a *W* designation. Writing proficiency in philosophy is required for a passing grade in this course.

Requirements (tentative): two five-to-ten page papers

PHILOSOPHY OF SCIENCE

PHL 386 – Dr. Adrian Erasmus

- **(FA) TR 9:30am-10:45am, Dr. Adrian Erasmus**

Course Description: This course introduces students to some fundamental questions in philosophy of science: What distinguishes science from pseudo-science? Is there a distinct scientific method? If so, what is that method? What constitutes a scientific explanation? How are theory and observation related? How do hypotheses get confirmed? What constitutes scientific progress? Are the entities posited by scientific theories real? What is the role of values in science?

Prerequisites: None

Requirements: Tentative

ART AND HUMAN NATURE

PHL 388 – Dr. Richard Richards

- (FA) TR 2:00pm-3:15pm, Dr. Richard Richards

Course Description: The arts are seemingly found in all human cultures. Every society seems to have some kind of music, song, dance, storytelling, theatre, decoration and visual art. Why is this so? Is art deeply embedded in what we might call “human nature”? Philosophers have long thought about the arts in terms of human nature. More recently, there are proposals that we can think about the arts “naturalistically” in terms of what the biological and human sciences tell us about human nature, and the human tendencies to make and appreciate art of all kinds. This naturalistic turn requires philosophical thinking first about how we should conceive art; second, how we can interpret and evaluate art, and third, how art functions in a variety of cultural and environmental contexts. We will be looking first at some classical theories of art and human nature, then at some naturalistic/scientific theories of art – all in the context of the traditional debates about the interpretation, evaluation and definition of art. Writing proficiency within this discipline is required for a passing grade in this course.

Prerequisites: None

Requirements: TBA

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

NEUROETHICS

PHL 422 – Dr. Benjamin Kozuch

- (FA) MWF 1:00pm-1:50pm, Dr. Benjamin Kozuch

Course Description: Due to advances in psychopharmacology and brain imaging, scenarios resembling those of science fiction may soon be upon us: Medications that enhance our memory, cognition, or happiness could be widely available in the near future, and advances in neuroimaging promise to allow the detection of lying, mental illness, or even level of intelligence. Technologies like these bring a host of ethical questions in their wake, ones pertaining to privacy, justice, and authenticity to self. Issues such as these are what compose the field of Neuroethics, and will be what we look at in this class.

Prerequisites: At least two prior philosophy courses, though the instructor waives this requirement under certain circumstances.

Requirements: Tentative

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

SEMINAR ON LAW: JUSTIFICATION OF CRIMINAL PUNISHMENT

PHL 440 – Dr. Mark Pickering

- (FA) MWF 2:00pm-3:15pm, Dr. Mark Pickering

Course Description: Is criminal punishment justified? If so, how? We will consider historical and contemporary arguments as well as retributivist, consequentialist, and mixed arguments.

Prerequisites: None

Requirements: Writing proficiency

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

SPECIAL TOPICS IN PHILOSOPHY (WRITING INTENSIVE): TICKING TIME BOMBS

PHL 442 – Dr. Luke Hunt

- (FA) TR 11:00am-12:15pm, Dr. Luke Hunt

Course Description: As the “ticking time bomb” hypothetical typically goes, you are an intelligence agent or law enforcement officer who has detained the one terrorist with knowledge of how to prevent a large-scale attack. One may contort the hypothetical to make it as heart-rending as possible, but the ultimate question is whether you should torture the detainee in such an extreme scenario. These scenarios raise pressing practical and philosophical questions, but they need not be so extreme. This course examines the central legal and philosophical issues relating to national security, including terrorism, torture, the ethics of intelligence, the national security uses and risks of artificial intelligence, and the balance between security and liberty.

Prerequisites: None

Requirements: Writing proficiency

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