

Philosophy Courses for Fall 2026

Courses marked with * satisfy general education requirements.

***PHIL 1000: Introduction to Philosophy**

Note that credit will not be given for both this course and PHIL 1001, which is the honors version of this course.

Section 1: MWF 1:30-2:20 Huismann

This course will introduce you to some of the most important questions that philosophers have asked: Does God exist? What can we know? How should I live? You've probably already asked yourself these questions, and tried to answer them. But what makes philosophy special is that it helps us have very high standards for the reasons we give for our answers. Accordingly, our goal in this class will not be focused so much on what philosophers have believed, but rather on developing high philosophical standards for coming up with answers to these questions. This class will not assume any background in philosophy, but it will push you to understand and communicate clearly about challenging material.

Section 2: TTh 10:30-11:50 Blakley

This introduction to philosophy course covers basic logic and critical thinking, epistemology (problem of skepticism, intellectual vices, and echo chambers, conspiracy theory), metaphysics (the mind-body problem, artificial intelligence and consciousness, simulation argument), moral philosophy (the challenges of moral relativism and moral skepticism, deontology, utilitarianism, virtue ethics, care ethics, existentialist ethics), and political philosophy (social contract theory, extremism, propaganda).

Section 3: MWF 2:30-3:20 Wells

This course provides an introduction to philosophy through a survey of a number of figures and themes in western philosophy. We will especially consider the relationships between belief, understanding, reason, and self. Along the way we will ask, for example: What do I believe, what should I believe, and on what grounds? Can the use of reason lead to social and historical progress? Are there boundaries and limits to what we can know? What is the self? If we are free, then are there justifiable limits that can be placed on one's choices and actions by others? Why is democracy something of value to us? Figures we will discuss include (but are not limited to): Plato, Descartes, Hume, Kant, Marx, Nietzsche, Mill.

Section 4: MWF 3:30-4:20 Wells

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self? If we are free, then are there justifiable limits that can be placed on one's choices and actions by others? Why is democracy something of value to us? Figures we will discuss include (but are not limited to): Plato, Descartes, Hume, Kant, Marx, Nietzsche, Mill.

Section 5: MWF 10:30-11:20 Heller

Introduction to philosophical ideas, problems, and methods through a study of major philosophers and the systems of philosophy.

Section 6: MWF 12:30-1:20 Heller

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Section 8: Asynchronous Online Blakley

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PHIL 2010: Symbolic Logic I

Also offered as LING 2010.

Section 1: TTh 10:30-11:50 Roland

Classical propositional and first-order predicate logic; syntax and semantics of formal languages; translation between formal languages and English; formal methods of proof.

***PHIL 2020: Ethics**

Note that credit will not be given for both this course and PHIL 2050, which is the honors version of this course.

Section 1: MWF 9:30-10:20 Wells

In this course we examine major positions in the history of ethical theory, as well as their applications and challenges to them. In the most basic sense, this course asks: What is right? How ought we act? How ought we live? In considering these primary questions, we will ask further: How ought we treat, and what do we owe, each other? Where do these obligations and responsibilities come from, i.e., what are their foundations? Our aim will be not only to understand these questions in theory, but to grapple with how they challenge us to live our lives, give us meaning, and determine what we value. Our task is to consider who we are and who we want to (or, perhaps, who we *ought to*) become. In pursuing this task, we will consider virtue ethics, stoic ethics, Kantian ethics, utilitarianism, and care ethics. We will also consider critiques of morality and issues in applied ethics.

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Section 3: MWF 11:30-12:20 **Wells**

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Section 5: MW 3:30-4:50 **Felty**

This course provides a rigorous introduction to ethics, with a primary focus on metaethics and normative ethical theories. We will explore fundamental questions about the nature of morality: *What does it mean for an action to be right or wrong? Are moral claims "objective" or "subjective"? Can moral judgments be true or false?* These metaethical investigations will set the foundation for evaluating major normative theories, including utilitarianism, deontology, and virtue ethics. Along the way, we will engage critically with historical and contemporary texts, examining how philosophers argue for and against different moral frameworks. We will apply these theories to real-world dilemmas and learn to construct, critique, and refine moral arguments. By the end of the course, students will not only understand key ethical theories but also develop the analytical tools to reflect on their own moral views with greater depth and clarity.

Section 7: Asynchronous Online **Blakley**

Classical and recent theories of obligation and value, including works of philosophers such as Plato, Aristotle, Kant, Hume and Nietzsche; topics including freedom, rights, justification of moral judgments.

Section 9: TTh 9:00-10:20 Blakley

Classical and recent theories of obligation and value, including works of philosophers such as Plato, Aristotle, Kant, Hume and Nietzsche; topics including freedom, rights, justification of moral judgments.

PHIL 2029: Ethics and New Weapons Technologies

Section 1: MWF 12:30-1:20 Ardoline

In this course, we will explore several emerging technologies and the impact they have on the ethics of warfare. We will look at technologies such as drones, augmented reality, and artificial intelligence. Each raises unique ethical questions as they bring deep changes to how wars are fought. We will survey classical texts in philosophy of war (such as Mozi and Clausewitz), just war theory, and contemporary works in the ethics of technology.

PHIL 2033: History of Ancient and Medieval Philosophy

Section 1: MWF 11:30-12:20 Huismann

This course is a survey of ancient and medieval philosophy, one that concerns primarily the writings of Plato and Aristotle, with significant attention to their predecessors and successors (Homer, Thales, Parmenides, Zeno, Atomists, Epicureans, Augustine). The course focuses on issues in ancient logic, science, and ethics. Among the topics to be discussed are the relation between myth and science; what the building blocks of reality are; change and paradoxes associated with it; what counts as knowledge; the role of reasoning in attaining knowledge; the difference between nature and convention, especially in ethical contexts; what happiness is like; whether we should fear death; and the relation between free will and divine foreknowledge.

PHIL 3020: Special Topics: Paranormal Metaphysics

May be taken twice for credit when topics vary.

Section 1: MWF 1:30-2:20 E. Cogburn

Examine the idea of cosmopsychism and cosmic consciousness, which involves the idea that our minds are part of a universal, cosmic mind. Readings will include *In Defence of Cosmopsychism: A Fundamental Approach to the Problem of Consciousness* by Khai Wager.

PHIL 3062: Introduction to Political Philosophy

Section 1: TTh 10:30-11:50 Bacon

This course is an introduction to social and political theory. We live together in a society; how do we decide who is included in a particular society? How do we draft the rules of this society? Is it the job of a political administration to author and administer those rules? Is that

what laws are, and do we need to consent to said laws? Is political government a form of organization that streamlines our lives together? Are there better or worse forms of political or social organization? Do we have a responsibility to participate in politics? How do we decide which actions are ‘political’? What is the purpose of political organization or political actions? What do we owe governance and each other? Does governance have the ‘right’ to be coercive of citizens? What makes a state and its laws legitimate? What does it mean to have political rights? Are these innate or granted, and what does it mean to respect another’s political rights? What is liberty? What is justice? Are citizens equals? On what grounds do some people have power over others? Will spend a fair amount of time on classic texts of contract theory and the critique of contract theory as we think about what makes a state just, and how we imagine the establishment of a state.

PHIL 3090: Friedrich Nietzsche

Section 1: TTh 1:30-2:50

Blakley

This course covers the development of Nietzsche’s philosophy. We will cover substantial excerpts from several of Nietzsche’s major works including *Birth of Tragedy*, *Human, All too Human*, *The Gay Science*, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, *Beyond Good and Evil*, *On the Genealogy of Morals*, *Twilight of the Idols*, and *Antichrist*. We will discuss the main “doctrines” central to Nietzsche’s thought including the Apollonian/Dionysian duality, critique of western morality, God’s death, the eternal return, and the Overman. We will also give special attention to Nietzsche’s views on religion with the help of Julian Young’s book, *Nietzsche’s Philosophy of Religion* (2006). This course is conducted in person.

PHIL 4011: Topics in Advanced Logic

Also offered as LING 4011.

Section 1: TTh 3:00-4:20

Roland

This course is an introduction to non-classical logics. In particular, we will familiarize ourselves with propositional modal, tense, intuitionistic, and many-valued logics. All of these logics have applications in philosophy, mathematics, linguistics, or computer science. We may consider connections of these logics to some philosophical questions as we go along, but our main concern will be with their technical features. Our goal will be to understand the syntax and semantics of the aforementioned logics, including proof systems for each of them. Time permitting we will consider soundness and completeness results for modal and intuitionistic logics as well as an interpretability result or two. Prerequisite: PHIL 2010 or permission of instructor. Textbook: Priest, *An Introduction to Non-Classical Logic*, 2nd edition, Cambridge University Press (2008)

PHIL 4786: Selected Topics: Ethics Bowl

May be taken twice for credit when topics vary.

Section 1: F 4:30-7:20

Kelley

Ethics Bowl is a team-based activity in which undergraduate students compete to enhance our collective understanding of an ethical issue. Team members train by studying a set of cases in advance. In a typical match, a moderator poses a question to which the presenting team gives a detailed answer. The commentating team then responds with questions and criticisms, and the presenting team follows up with a reply. Finally, the presenting team takes questions from a panel of judges. Teams are evaluated based on the clarity of their presentation, the degree to which they clearly identify and thoroughly discuss the central moral dimensions of the case, and whether they properly consider objections that would loom large in the reasoning of individuals who disagree with the team's position. This course serves as the institutional mechanism by which members of the Cecil L. Eubanks Ethics Bowl Team receive credit for the academic work they undertake to prepare for competition. More generally, the course is designed to build transferable skills in moral reasoning, teamwork, and public speaking that will serve students well beyond the classroom. Permission of instructor required.

PHIL 4943: Problems in Ethical Theory: Effective Altruism

May be taken for a max. of 6 sem. hrs. of credit when topics vary.

Section 1: MWF 1:30-2:20

J. Cogburn

This course examines effective altruism as one of the most influential recent developments in contemporary ethical theory. We will study arguments for using evidence, quantification, and cost-effectiveness to guide charitable giving, career choice, and moral obligation, and then consider major criticisms of effective altruism concerning value, measurement, political judgment, disability, animal ethics, and the social meaning of moral life. Topics may include utilitarianism, beneficence, moral demandingness, philanthropy, and global poverty. Required texts: William MacAskill, *Doing Good Better*; Carol J. Adams, Alice Cary, and Lori Gruen, eds., *The Good It Promises, the Harm It Does: Critical Essays on Effective Altruism*.

PHIL 4945: Problems in Political Philosophy

Prereq.: PHIL 1000 or PHIL 2020 or PHIL 3052 or equivalent.

Section 1: T 4:30-7:20

Goldgaber

"If you kill, you must die." So Immanuel Kant famously writes in his *Philosophy of Right*. Why is punishment—in this case, capital punishment—a categorical imperative? Is punishment a necessary correlate to the law? Who has the right to punish and how has the State acquired a "monopoly" on punishment? What moral and political doctrines justify punishment, and have these justifications changed over time? How can we account for the rising severity and

rate of *carceral* punishment in the 20th and 21st century? Can we—ought we—imagine a future without punishment? We will ask these questions and more as we work through classic and contemporary literature related to punishment. We will track the conceptual entailments between liberty, rights, guilt, and punishment and see why justifying punishment has become an urgent political problem.

PHIL 4948: Phenomenology

Section 1: TTh 1:30-2:50

Bacon

Phenomenology is the philosophical study of phenomena as they manifest in lived experience, the study of consciousness in terms of the way we perceive and understand the material and manifest world, and the meaning direct objects have for subjective experience. Put otherwise, phenomenology is the study of the lived experience of the world. In this class, we will spend roughly half the course on classic phenomenology, reading authors such as Husserl, Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty, and Bergson. In the second half, we will look at contemporary texts of critical phenomenology. This class will pay special attention to the body and the lived experience of embodiment and the way in which we understand this (and fail to) philosophically. While this may seem abstract and needlessly obtuse (and indeed some of the texts will seem this way as well), this course is meant to be an engaging and curious interrogation of what it feels like to live a human life and the multifaceted registers of our engagement in a complex, variegated, and lush lifeworld.

PHIL 4952: Modality

Section 1: MW 3:30-4:50

Ardoline

The philosophy of modality asks questions about the nature of possibility, impossibility, actuality, and necessity, about what distinguishes between essential and accidental properties (if such a distinction is possible), as well as about how we could have knowledge of non-actual things or events. While the topic dates back to at least Aristotle's *Metaphysics* and is a central concern of the European and Arabic traditions, it takes on a new shape and importance in the 20th-Century Analytic tradition.

In this course, we will briefly explore the history of modality through three foundational figures: Aristotle, Ibn Sina, and David Hume. We will then look to early debates in the Analytic tradition over whether modality is an acceptable topic of philosophical investigation, or a conceptual confusion. This is followed by the rehabilitation of metaphysics that in many ways is focused on questions of modality, and how the formal results of Ruth Barcan Marcus and Saul Kripke made this rehabilitation possible by providing well-behaved syntax and semantics for modal logics. We will then turn to contemporary issues in modality such as modal epistemology, modality without possible worlds, and hyperintensionality and impossible worlds. Finally, we will look at several recent works in the Continental tradition which engage with many of these same issues but come to

radically different conclusions about the nature and knowability of impossibility, contingency, and necessity.

PHIL 7930: Value Theory

Section 1: Th 4:30-7:20

Kelley

What is of ultimate benefit and harm to beings like us? What is it for a life to go well for the person who lives it? Is it always good for you to get what you want? Could something be good for you in the most basic and fundamental way even if you were not at all interested in it? Is a life that starts out poorly but gets better over time better than one that starts out well but gets progressively worse? These are some of the central questions of *well-being*—or *quality of life* or *welfare*—that we will investigate in this course. We will also study closely related topics concerning the nature of pleasure and the meaning of life, depending on student interest. Our main aim will be to use the philosophical method to understand and evaluate the main theories on this cluster of topics and for each student to formulate and defend their own views on the subject matter.