

# PHILOSOPHY (PHIL)

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## **PHIL 3000 Plato's Metaphysics (4 Credits)**

A systematic study of Plato's Middle and Late Period Dialogues that focuses on his arguments for the existence of abstract objects and the development of Plato's theory of Forms. Prerequisite: At least Junior standing or permission of instructor.

## **PHIL 3003 Plato's Theory of Knowledge (4 Credits)**

A systematic investigation of Plato's treatments of knowledge throughout the dialogues with a focus on the theory of recollection, Forms as objects of knowledge, the relationship between the Forms and perceptual experience, and the challenges posed by notions of true and false belief. Prerequisites: At least Junior standing or permission of instructor.

## **PHIL 3005 Cosmopolitics (4 Credits)**

This class will be a close reading of Plato's dialogue Timaeus, with a special focus on the cosmological, theological, and political dimensions of the text.

## **PHIL 3010 Great Thinkers: Aristotle (4 Credits)**

A study of Aristotle's central theories and doctrines. Prerequisite: junior standing or instructor's permission.

## **PHIL 3011 Great Thinkers: Virginia Woolf (4 Credits)**

In this course we will read Virginia Woolf as a philosopher. We will discuss her philosophy of nature, knowledge, art, politics, science, sensation, gender, and materialism throughout her fiction and non-fiction writings.

## **PHIL 3023 Great Thinkers: Maimonides: Politics, Prophecy and Providence (4 Credits)**

Using "The Guide for the Perplexed" as our central text, we explore the complex philosophical ideas of Moses Maimonides (1135-1204), one of the central figures in medieval philosophy and Jewish thought. Our study includes analyses of his ideas on principles of faith, human perfection, intellectual vs. "imaginational" approaches to truth, pedagogy and politics, reasons for the commandments, the nature of God and divine will, the limits of human knowledge, the mechanics of prophecy, and the parameters and implications of providence. Cross listed with RLGS 3023 and JUST 3023. Prerequisite: junior standing or instructor's permission.

## **PHIL 3024 Maimonides: Greek, Islamic, and Christian Encounters (4 Credits)**

Using the "Guide of the Perplexed" as our central text, we explore the complex philosophical ideas of Moses Maimonides (1135-1204), a central figure in the history of philosophy and in the history of Jewish thought. In this course, we examine in depth the relationship between Maimonides' core ideas and various Greek, Muslim and Christian thinkers, including: Aristotle, Plotinus, al-Farabi, Avicenna (Ibn Sina), al-Ghazali, Averroes (Ibn Rushd), and Aquinas. Topics to be explored include: what is "metaphysics?"; God's unity and essence as existence itself; the mystery of knowing and not knowing God (including a consideration of God's ways as well as "negative theology"--viz. the extent to which we do not know God); God as pure intellect; the nature of the cosmos and the "separate intellects"; creation vs. eternity vs. emanation: philosophical and religious perspectives on the origins of the universe and implications for "living in the world with/out God." In our study, we will also address the methodological implications of cross-religious and cross-language analyses, and how to spot and address (in your own work and in the work of others) tacit cultural biases at play in the interpretive process. Cross listed with JUST 3024 and RLGS 3024. Prerequisite: Junior standing or instructor's permission.

## **PHIL 3026 Levinas and the Political (4 Credits)**

Emmanuel Levinas (1906-1995), famous for his arresting insight of "ethics as first philosophy," is a key figure in the histories of phenomenology, metaphysics, and theology. In this class, we examine the implications of Levinas' thought for politics and the political through close readings of his insights on peace, proximity, and justice in such works as "Reflections on the Philosophy of Hitlerism" (1934), Totality and Infinity (1961), Otherwise Than Being or Beyond Essence (1974), and "Peace and Proximity" (1995) in dialogue with key companion works in political thought and political theology, including Benjamin on Divine Violence, Butler on postmodern politics, Connolly on agonism, Critchley on anarchism, Marxist intersections, and Derrida and other "Jewish theologies" of messianistic impossibility. Themes addressed include: Justice; Covenant; Law; the grounding and paradox (or betrayal) of politics-with-ethics; phenomenologies of hospitalities and strangers, friends and enemies; liberalism, socialisms, fascisms; revolutions and anarchies; agonisms v. antagonisms; impossibility; messianisms without Messiahs; logics of works v. logics of grace; on the role of love v. justice; anarchic grounds; temporalities of covenant and justice; fraternity; forgiveness and its limits; "the 3rd"; rational peace, peace between the wars, and impossible peace. This course is cross-listed: PHIL and JUST. Pre-reqs: This course is open to juniors and seniors except by special permission of the instructor.

## **PHIL 3050 Great Thinkers: Hume (4 Credits)**

A detailed study of Hume's "radical" empiricism and its impact on contemporary analytic philosophy. Prerequisite: junior standing or instructor's permission.

## **PHIL 3061 Kant's Ethics/Aesthetics/Politics (4 Credits)**

A study of Kant's "value theory" and its historical significance. Prerequisite: junior standing or instructor's permission.

## **PHIL 3062 Kant's Epistemology and Logic (4 Credits)**

A study of Kant's theory of knowledge, logic and related issues. Prerequisite: junior standing or instructor's permission.

## **PHIL 3063 Kant on Religion (4 Credits)**

A study of Immanuel Kant's major writings on religion and their subsequent influence on theology and the philosophy of religion. Prerequisite: junior standing or instructor's permission. Cross-listed with RLGS 3456.

**PHIL 3070 Great Thinkers: Hegel (4 Credits)**

Hegel's "Phenomenology," later system and place in the history of modern philosophy. Prerequisite: junior standing or instructor's permission.

**PHIL 3075 Marxism (4 Credits)**

This course is a survey in the theoretical and political work influenced by the writings of 19th century philosopher and economist, Karl Marx. The course covers both the historical traditions in Marxism in the 19th, 20th, and 21st century as well as the geographical traditions of these time periods in France, Germany, England, Italy, Russia, China, and America. It is not necessary that students have a prior background in Marx's work, but it is highly recommended. Cross listed with ECON 3075.

**PHIL 3090 Great Thinkers: Heidegger (4 Credits)**

Study of "Being and Time" and related essays by a major 20th-century philosopher. Prerequisite: junior standing or instructor's permission.

**PHIL 3092 Great Thinkers: The Later Heidegger (4 Credits)**

Study of the works of Heidegger after 1930. Prerequisite: junior standing or instructor's permission.

**PHIL 3100 Great Thinkers: Wittgenstein (4 Credits)**

The course introduces students to Ludwig Wittgenstein's two masterworks, the *Tractatus* (1922) and *Philosophical Investigations* (1953), both of which provide fresh, often counterintuitive and conflicting, insights into topics ranging from logic and language to ethics, religion, art and culture. The course explores how the end of the Austro-Hungarian Empire and the pressures of an incipient modernity impacted the style, direction and substance of Wittgenstein's thought, developments that had profound existential and spiritual import for him as he wrestled with the many contradictions of his life and thought. The course concludes with a consideration of the relationship between Wittgenstein's later philosophy and the existential-phenomenology of Martin Heidegger, both of whom insist upon humanity's radical finitude and the pre-ontological understanding (forms of life) that always already conditions and guides our questions about reason, truth, beauty and meaning.

**PHIL 3101 Great Thinkers: Kierkegaard (4 Credits)**

Each year, the philosophy department offers at least two courses in great thinkers. Specific figures may vary from year to year. Cross-listed with RLGS 3102. Prerequisite: 10 hours of Philosophy at the 2000 level or permission of instructor.

**PHIL 3120 Metaphysics (4 Credits)**

In the course of this study, we will cover a broad range of philosophical topics falling within metaphysics, philosophy of language, philosophy of science, and epistemology. Prerequisite: junior standing or instructor's permission.

**PHIL 3130 Knowledge Problems (4 Credits)**

Problems in the foundations and justifications of claims to knowledge. Prerequisite: junior standing or instructor's permission.

**PHIL 3146 Great Thinkers: Levinas (4 Credits)**

Emmanuel Levinas (1906-1995), famous for his arresting and original idea of "ethics as first philosophy," is an important figure in the histories of phenomenology, metaphysics, and theology. In this course, we set out to explore Levinas' insights on ethics, alterity, and infinity, including the connection of his ideas to Plato, Descartes, Kant, and Husserl, as well as his critical responses to Heidegger and his positive contributions to Derrida. In this course, we work through Levinas' two major works, *Ethics and Infinity* and *Otherwise Than Being or Beyond Essence*, as well as a number of shorter writings—including material from his Talmudic commentaries. Themes to be covered include: Being, Goodness, Risk, Ethics, Alterity, Transcendence, Law, Judaism, Gift, Forgiveness, Politics, Theology, and Justice. This course is cross-listed with JUST 3146.

**PHIL 3152 Philosophy Meets Mysticism: A Greek, Jewish and Islamic Neoplatonic Journey (4 Credits)**

Neoplatonism is a unique genre—somewhere between philosophy and mysticism. In this course, we investigate some of the leading themes of Neoplatonism, tracing the Greek ideas of Plotinus (the third century "father of Neoplatonism") into later Jewish and Islamic textual traditions. As part of our journey, we will investigate a host of philosophical writings, including the *Theology of Aristotle* and the *Liber de Causis*, as well as works by Plato, Plotinus, Proclus, Ibn Tufayl, Acemenna, Isaac Israeli, Solomon Ibn Gabirol, and Abraham Ibn Ezra. Themes to be covered include emanation and creation, apophatic discourse, divine desire, the theological significance of imagination, inward reflection and the call to virtue. Prerequisite: junior standing or instructor's permission. Cross listed with JUST 3152.

**PHIL 3175 Morality and the Law (4 Credits)**

A systematic study of various elements of the relation between law and morality. Are we obligated to obey every law the government enacts? Why? If we do have an obligation to obey the law, are civil disobedients like Martin Luther King, Jr. justified in disobeying the law? Are immoral laws, laws at all, or must a law connect with some higher moral truth to have any authority? To what extent is it morally permissible for the law to restrict our personal freedoms? To what extent is it morally permissible for the law to enforce morality in general? If it is not permissible for the law to enforce morality, do we incur any obligation to obey the law? Prerequisite: junior standing or instructor's permission.

**PHIL 3178 Metaethics (4 Credits)**

This course systematically and critically examines the metaphysical, semantic, and epistemic issues central to the study of metaethics. Do moral properties exist? If so, how are they related to natural properties? Do moral properties exist independent of human agency, or do we construct morality? If moral properties exist, how can we come to have justified belief about them? Is it possible to know that a moral belief is true? Doesn't the phenomenon of widespread, intractable disagreement about moral matters establish that there are no objective moral truths? Is the process of gaining scientific knowledge really that different from the process of gaining moral knowledge? Prerequisite: junior standing or instructor's permission.

**PHIL 3179 Virtue Ethics (4 Credits)**

Virtue ethics purportedly provides a distinct approach to moral deliberation, moral reasoning, moral decision-making, and moral justification. This course is a systematic study of the nature of virtue ethics, the nature of a virtue, and the alleged superiority of virtue ethics over its more familiar consequentialist and deontological alternatives. We also study various responses to the following questions: Have moral psychologists generated any valuable studies on the nature of virtue? What virtues ought we to endorse? At least Junior standing required or permission of the instructor.

**PHIL 3185 Philosophy of Action and Agency (4 Credits)**

Wittgenstein once asked, "What is left over if I subtract the fact that my arm goes up from the fact that I raise my arm?" Understanding the difference between mere happening and an intentional action became central to the philosophical investigation of action and agency in the 20th century. In this course we examine this distinction and why it should matter to us. Our topics include intentional action, the causal theory of action, the metaphysics of action, agent causation, basic action, acting and trying to act, intentions, weakness of will, strength of will, and mental action. Requires junior standing or permission of instructor.

**PHIL 3201 Wittgenstein, Quine, & Kripke on Necessity and a Priori Knowledge (4 Credits)**

A study of Wittgenstein, Quine, and Kripke on the nature of necessity, a priori knowledge and their relation to understanding philosophy. Prerequisite: junior standing or instructor's permission.

**PHIL 3210 Philosophy of Movement (4 Credits)**

Everything is in motion. Yet, philosophers have consistently considered motion to be a derivative or secondary form of being. Why? What are the political and metaphysical consequences of marginalizing motion in the history of philosophy? The aim of this class is to read the history of philosophy with a unique focus on the status of movement and motion from the ancient to contemporary period.

**PHIL 3211 Contemporary Pol Philosophy (4 Credits)**

This class focuses primarily on the philosophical problems generated by thinking about political authority and justice. We discuss the nature of political authority, justice, rights, equality and the role of property in a modern state.

**PHIL 3215 Modern Jewish Philosophy (4 Credits)**

Prerequisite: junior standing or instructor's permission. Cross listed with JUST 3215.

**PHIL 3333 Logic, Language, and Metaphysics (4 Credits)**

This course provides a systematic exploration of the foundations of contemporary philosophy—namely, logic and language—and their metaphysical implications. The class can be divided in three broad modules. Our starting point is the collapse of Kant's system due to staggering discoveries in physics and geometry. Next, we shall discuss the subsequent development of mathematical logic and the philosophy of language in the work of Frege, Russell, Tarski, and Gödel. The last portion is devoted to philosophical applications of these logical results in the field of metaphysics. Specifically, we shall explore the work of Carnap, Quine, and Kripke. Junior or senior standing required (or instructor permission).

**PHIL 3445 Cultural Theory and Critique (4 Credits)**

This course will provide an overview of the major theories of culture and cultural critique, as well as a consideration of some of the major controversies and recent developments in this field. It will proceed roughly chronologically, beginning with liberal humanist critique and continuing with hermeneutics, materialist and Marxist critique, psychoanalysis, the Frankfurt School, structuralism, post-structuralism, and contemporary British cultural studies. It will also consider more recent developments, such as feminist critique, GLBT critique, and postcolonialism. While the approach will be mainly philosophical, implications for other areas such as literature, art, emergent media, religion, and politics will also figure in the discussions, so it is appropriate for students in many fields, not just philosophy. Prerequisite: Junior standing or permission of the instructor. Note that this course will serve as a foundational offering for students interested in participating in the Critical Theory specialization.

**PHIL 3446 Philosophy in the American Tradition (4 Credits)**

The course introduces students to the thought of the three premier American Transcendentalist writers: Ralph Waldo Emerson, Margaret Fuller, and Henry David Thoreau. These three writers—by turns friends, rivals, neighbors, and even housemates in nearby Concord, Massachusetts—created what Emerson called "a poetry and philosophy of insight and not of tradition" and laid the foundations for American philosophy and literature as we know it today. They also led the first countercultural movement in American history, advocating causes as varied as environmentalism, abolitionism, women's rights, and the "higher law" of the individual conscience in an age of unbridled capitalism and populism. We will consider the Transcendentalists as both writers and reformers, examining their calls for a uniquely American literature and their romantic sacralization of nature as well as their deep commitment to reform and their engagement with the turbulent politics of their time. In the final weeks of the course, we will explore the Transcendentalists' profound influence on American cultural history, ranging from their contemporaries (Frederick Douglass, Walt Whitman, Emily Dickinson, and Nathaniel Hawthorne) to ours (Marilynne Robinson, Terrence Malick, and W. S. Merwin).

**PHIL 3448 Theory of the Subject: From Hegel to Žižek (4 Credits)**

The great French philosopher Michel Foucault in his Collège de France lectures in the early 1980s characterized the theory of the subject as the very key to the development both of Western philosophy and Western thinking in general. This course will explore Foucault's thesis with reference to different theoretical models of subjectivity and "subjectification" (as Jacques Lacan calls it). It will do so through close readings of selections from the works of G.W.F. Hegel, Søren Kierkegaard, Lacan, Alain Badiou, and Slavoj Žižek as well as select portions of Foucault's 1981-82 lectures entitled *The Hermeneutics of the Subject*. This course is cross-listed with RLGS 3448.

**PHIL 3450 Phenomenology and Theology (4 Credits)**

Cross listed with RLGS 3455. Prerequisite: junior standing or instructor's permission.

**PHIL 3460 Nietzsche & the Death of God (4 Credits)**

This course involves an intensive reading and discussion of Friedrich Nietzsche's 'Thus Spake Zarathustra,' together with relevant associated materials, especially 'The Gay Science.' Prerequisite: junior standing or instructor's permission. Cross listed with RLGS 3460.

**PHIL 3465 Derrida and Postmodernism (4 Credits)**

Cross listed with RLGS 3465. Prerequisite: junior standing or instructor's permission.

**PHIL 3466 Contemporary Continental Philosophy (4 Credits)**

A critical study of current trends in European philosophy, focusing on such thinkers as Deleuze, Badiou, Zizek, Meillassoux, or Laruelle. Prerequisite: junior standing or instructor's permission.

**PHIL 3610 Advanced Topics in Philosophy, Psychology, and Cognitive Science (4 Credits)**

This course provides an advanced survey of conceptual and methodological issues that lie at the intersection of philosophy, psychology, and cognitive science. More specifically, our main goal is to engage in a critical discussion of how the study of the mind requires an interdisciplinary approach that integrates empirical findings with conceptual and philosophical theorizing. Cross listed with PSYC 3610. Prerequisites: PSYC 1001 and junior standing (or instructor approval).

**PHIL 3611 The Boundaries of Scientific Knowledge: A Philosophical Exploration (4 Credits)**

Despite its staggering successes, public trust in science is disquietingly low. What has gone wrong? Why is a substantive portion of the population unwilling to trust the advice of specialists? A central problem lies in the tendency of scientists, philosophers, and various pundits to hype, bloat, and overemphasize the promises and results of scientific research. This leads to scientism, broadly conceived as the imperialist tendency to reduce all knowledge to scientific knowledge. But what exactly is scientism? Despite the pejorative connotation of the term, is it an intellectual sin or a virtue? The aim of this course is to map the terrain, exploring various dimensions of scientism, and how it affects the public dimensions of scientific research and its relation to the humanities, religion, and other domains of knowledge, culture, and society.

**PHIL 3612 AI and Robotics (4 Credits)**

In this interdisciplinary seminar we will discuss foundational issues regarding artificially intelligent systems. We will seek to understand how recent advances in AI research bear on our understanding of the nature of the mind, intelligence, agency, rationality, and consciousness. We will also discuss how philosophical advances can advance empirical progress. Additionally, we will discuss some barriers to progress that these technologies might pose. In particular, we will be focused on three groups of questions: 1. What special opportunities and challenges are presented by deep neural net and deep learning technology regarding building and understanding artificially minded intelligent agents? 2. What is the role of the body and environment in producing intelligence? 3. Deep neural net algorithms are already commonly used to predict recidivism rates, diagnose illnesses, and make advertising more effective. In what ways might such algorithms be approaching human or animal intelligence, or shed light on such intelligence? In what ways might human and animal intelligence be importantly different? In what ways might contemporary intelligence research perpetuate injustice and oppression? This seminar is designed to be interdisciplinary, and I welcome students working in philosophy, robotics/AI, and cognitive science who want to work hard and dig deeper. There are no strict prerequisites, but some background knowledge in relevant disciplines will be highly useful.

**PHIL 3618 Philosophy of Biology (4 Credits)**

A survey of conceptual issues that lie at the intersection of biology and philosophy: the central concepts of evolutionary theory (such as natural selection, fitness, adaptation and function), the relation of biology to other "lower" sciences (can it be reduced to physics and chemistry?), whether there are genuine scientific laws in biology, and the relation between biology and other fields like cognitive science and ethics. At least Junior standing required.

**PHIL 3620 Philosophical Perspectives on Economics and Social Sciences (4 Credits)**

This course provides an advanced survey of conceptual and methodological issues that lie at the intersection of philosophy, economics, and the social sciences. More specifically, the main goal is to engage in a critical discussion of how sciences such as psychology, sociology, and neuroscience can challenge and modify the foundations and methodology of economic theories. The course is structured around three broad modules. After a brief introduction, we begin by discussing the emergence of rational choice theory which constitutes the foundation of classical and neoclassical economics and present some paradoxical implications of expected utility theory. The second module focuses on the relationship between economics and psychology. More specifically, we examine the emergence of behavioral economics, the study of the social, cognitive, and emotional factors on the economic decisions of individuals and institutions and their consequences for market prices, returns, and resource allocation. Finally, the third module focuses on the implications of neuroscience on decision making. We discuss some recent developments in neuroeconomics, a field of study emerged over the last few decades which seeks to ground economic theory in the study of neural mechanisms which are expressed mathematically and make behavioral predictions.

**PHIL 3699 Proseminar in Philosophy (4 Credits)**

Philosophy is a diverse discipline with various subfields, most of which are becoming increasingly specialized and methodologically autonomous. Specialization is often (rightly) perceived as an indicator of disciplinary progress and intellectual development. However, it is important that students of philosophy pursue breadth as well as depth. The goal of this course is to provide an overview of a series of seminal texts in philosophy, from a variety of subfields, epochs, and traditions. Each weekly meeting is devoted to the presentation, analysis, and discussion of a text that any student of philosophy should read at some point in her or his career. Requires junior standing or instructor's permission.

**PHIL 3700 Topics in Philosophy (1-4 Credits)**

Prerequisite: junior standing or instructor's permission.

**PHIL 3701 Topics in Philosophy (1-4 Credits)**

Prerequisite: junior standing or instructor's permission.

**PHIL 3702 Topics in Philosophy (1-4 Credits)**

Prerequisite: 10 hours of Philosophy at 2000 level or permission of instructor.

**PHIL 3703 Topics in Philosophy (1-4 Credits)**

Prerequisite: 10 hours of Philosophy at 2000 level or permission of instructor.

**PHIL 3704 Topics in Philosophy (1-4 Credits)**

Prerequisite: 10 hours of Philosophy at 2000 level or permission of instructor.

**PHIL 3991 Independent Study (1-8 Credits)**

**PHIL 4991 Independent Study (1-10 Credits)**

**PHIL 4995 Independent Research (1-10 Credits)**

**PHIL 5300 Philosophy Colloquium (4 Credits)**

**PHIL 5400 Cultural Theory Colloquium (1-5 Credits)**