

Philosophy Course Offerings

Spring 2010



Course Offerings in Philosophy

SPRING 2010

215 Carson Hall ~ 267-2792

PHIL 100 – Introduction to Philosophy – PI, FC

Dr. Curry **Sec. 1 – 84601** **MWF 11:00-11:50** **Kellas 101**

This course is designed to introduce the student to the study of philosophy through the study of four important philosophers, Socrates (469-399 b.c.e.), Aristotle (384-322 b.c.e.), Rene Descartes (1596-1650) and Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900). Our goal will be to firm up our own conceptions of the methods and nature of philosophical thinking by studying a selection of each of these philosopher's writings. You will be directly introduced to the practice of philosophy by examining some of these philosopher's works and by engaging in philosophical inquiry yourself, in discussion, argumentation and writing. We will explore a number of the traditional questions and problems in philosophy: the basis for morality and moral behavior, the nature and existence of God, the relation between the mind and the body, and the foundations of knowledge, to mention a few.

This course fulfills both the Philosophical Inquiry (PI) and the First Year Critical Thinking (FC) General Education requirements. Both requirements are fairly naturally fulfilled by the course content, although we will focus the first week or so of class on the basic principles of critical thinking by working through the little book *A Rulebook for Arguments*.

PHIL 100 – Introduction to Philosophy – PI

Dr. Di Giovanna **Sec. 2 – 84602** **MWF 1:00-1:50** **Kellas 102**

This is an introductory course in which a variety of philosophical problems and approaches will be presented. We will focus on several major thinkers of perennial importance, namely Plato, Aristotle, Marx and Freud. Emphasis will be placed on a careful and thoughtful reading of a modest quantity of material. Texts include a selection of the *Dialogues of Plato*, the *Nicomachean Ethics* of Aristotle, Marx's *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*, Freud's *Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis*, and *Love and Will*, by Rollo May.

PHIL 100 – Introduction to Philosophy – PI, FC

Dr. Huss **Sec. 3 – 85635** **TUTH 9:30-10:45 am** **Kellas 102**
Sec. 4 – 85322 **TUTH 11:00-12:15 pm** **Kellas 102**

This course is designed to be an overview of some of the major issues in Western analytic philosophy. We will briefly consider some problems that philosophers have solved and some that they continue to try to solve. Our focus will be not so much on the historical figures of philosophy as the philosophical problems themselves. Some of the required readings were written by contemporary philosophers. If you are new to philosophy, my hope is that you will develop a good understanding of the philosophical method as well as an appreciation for *why* philosophers do what they do. Analytic philosophy makes use of rigorous methods in an attempt to solve difficult problems. My guess is that most people will find that method appealing and at least some of the topics we discuss interesting. A few of the issues covered include free will and determinism, the existence of God, skepticism, the mind-body problem, and ethical controversies. By successfully completing this course you will gain an ability to detect and understand arguments and their logical structure, to evaluate arguments, and to create your own arguments. It is expected that your writing skills will improve. This course fulfills both the PI and the FC general education requirements.

PHIL 120 – Introduction to Ethics – PI

Required for Criminal Justice Major

Dr. Tartaglia	Sec. 1 – 85642	MWF 9:00-9:50 am	Kellas 101
	Sec. 2 – 85643	TUTH 9:30-10:45 am	Kellas 101

"It is not a trivial question", Socrates said, "What we are talking about is how one should live." The aim of moral philosophy, and any hopes it may have of being worthy of serious attention, is bound up with the fate of Socrates' question. This course will try to give some idea of the most important developments in moral philosophy, but it will proceed by way of an inquiry into its problems, in those directions, which seem most interesting.

PHIL 210 – Introduction to Symbolic Logic

Cross listed with Math 295

Dr. Huss	Sec. 1 – 86115	TUTH 2:00-3:15 pm	Carson 202
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Arguments are central to intelligent discourse and debate, and this course involves the study of a very important aspect of arguments – their logical structure. An argument with true premises (reasons) isn't worth much unless those premises lead logically to the conclusion. So a good understanding of logic is required for a good understanding of arguments. We will use various methods to analyze logical structure. These methods are very helpful in determining whether a conclusion really follows from a set of premises, whether a set of sentences is consistent, whether a sentence is a tautology, etc. The course is likely to be especially helpful to those students who would like to know how analytic philosophers think. (There is at least some reason to think that analytic philosophers think very well.) We will cover sentential logic, predicate logic, translations between English and the language of logic, truth tables, truth trees, and derivations (proofs). By successfully completing this course you will improve your ability to detect and evaluate arguments.

PHIL 320 – Aesthetics – PI

Required for Dance Major

Dr. DiGiovanna	Sec. 1 – 84603	MWF 11:00-11:50 am	Kellas 102
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This is a course in the philosophy of the fine arts. The following is a sample of the questions that will be raised: What essentially is music? Painting? Poetry? Dance?; Are any characteristics shared by all the fine arts?; What is the relation between art and emotion?; Are there objective criteria for evaluating art or are good and bad in art a matter of subjective taste?; Does music mean anything or represent anything outside of music? As texts we will use Susan Langer's *Feeling and Form* and *Aesthetics Contemporary*, edited by R. Kostelanetz, among other things.

PHIL 323 – Medieval Philosophy – WC

Prerequisite: PHIL 322 or permission of instructor.

Dr. Curry	Sec. 1 – 86117	MWF 1:00-1:50 pm	Carson 216
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This course will trace the development of western philosophy across the period spanning from the life of Augustine (354-430) to the Fourteenth century. This roughly 1000-year period is rich in philosophical material, though that material is often raised in the context of and intensely bound up with theological issues and concerns. We will focus on drawing out the rich philosophical heritage of the period from the works of the major philosophers, including some from the Jewish and Islamic traditions. A significant portion of the course will be devoted to an examination of the works of Augustine and Thomas Aquinas, the two most influential and important philosophers of this period.

PHIL 330 – Environmental Ethics – PI

**Required for Environmental Studies Major
and counts toward Minor.**

Dr. Little Sec. 1 – 84927 TUTH 11:00-12:15 pm Flagg 210

The basic task of *environmental ethics* is to defend a comprehensive and reasoned account of the moral relations between human beings and their natural environment. Thus, a theory of environmental ethics must address these questions: What ethical principles govern human conduct with regard to the environment? To whom or to what do humans have responsibilities and what are these responsibilities? Different theories provide different answers. In this course, we will survey opposing theories and examine their application to controversial issues. Topics include The Religious, Cultural, and Economic Roots of the Ecological Crisis; Biocentrism; Ecocentrism; Deep Ecology; Preservation of Species and Natural Objects; Obligations to Future Generations; Overpopulation; World Hunger; Pollution.

Required Texts: (1) *A Rulebook for Arguments*, 4th ed. by Anthony Weston (Indianapolis/Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company, 2009), (2) *Environmental Ethics: Readings in Theory and Application*, ed. Louis P. Pojman (Thomson/Wadsworth).

PHIL 332 – Philosophy of Law

Counts as requirement for Criminal Justice Major.

Dr. Tartaglia Sec. 1 – 84860 M 4:00-6:30 pm Kellas 101

The philosophy of law is concerned with the formulation of concepts and theories to aid in understanding the nature of law, the sources of its authority, and its role in society. This course consists of a historical survey of the philosophy of law from its foundations in Stoicism up to and including contemporary schools of thought.

PHIL 346 – Existentialism & Phenomenology – WI, PI

Dr. Curry Sec. 1 – 85637 TUTH 11:00-12:15 pm Carson 216

This course is designed to introduce the student to the problems, concerns and methods of the philosophical, cultural and literary movement known as Existentialism. We will approach the subject in a generally historical manner, beginning with some important forerunners of Existentialism and the phenomenological method, proceeding to look briefly at the origins of Phenomenology in the work of Edmund Husserl, and culminating with an in-depth inquiry into the "existential Phenomenology" of Sartre. Each student must be willing to plow through some very difficult, and sometimes lengthy readings, and to bring their own insights to bear on the problems and issues discussed.

PHIL 350 – Philosophy of Science – PI

Prerequisite: two PHIL courses, Science Major or Permission.

Dr. Huss

Sec. 1 – 86119

MW 2:00-3:15 pm

Carson 204

This course covers issues that should be of interest to philosophers and scientists alike. Philosophers can learn from the methodologies of science, and scientists can learn from the methodologies of analytic philosophy. Some of the questions considered include: What is a law of nature? When is a scientific theory confirmed? What is an adequate scientific explanation? What does it mean to say that one thing causes another? Does science progress or does it merely change? If it progresses, how does it progress? Is science more 'objective' than other disciplines? How should we distinguish science from pseudoscience? We will also consider some issues specific to the philosophy of physics – a burgeoning field. By successfully completing this course you will improve your ability to evaluate others' arguments and to create your own. Your writing and speaking skills should improve. You will also learn about contemporary figures and theories in the philosophy of science. This course fulfills the PI general education requirement.

PHIL 382 – Philosophical Ideas/Literature

**Counts toward Women's Studies Minor and
Women's and Gender Studies Major.
Theory requirement.**

Dr. Little

Sec. 1 – 86121

TUTH 2:00-3:15 pm

Carson 203

In this course, we will critically evaluate the arguments offered by traditional and feminist political and ethical theories, and their critics, through the lens of utopian and dystopian literature of the 20th century. Moral theories include Deontology, Utilitarianism, Virtue, and Ethics of Care; political theories include Libertarianism, Liberalism, Liberal Feminism, Social Contractarianism, Marxism and Socialism, Marxist and Socialist Feminism, and Psychoanalytic Feminism. Students will examine the embodiment of these theories in the works of such noted authors as Octavia Butler, Marion Zimmer Bradley, Karen Joy Fowler, Joanna Russ, James Tiptree Jr., and John Varley.

Required Texts: (1) *A Rulebook for Arguments* 4th ed. by Anthony Weston (Indianapolis/Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company, 2009), (2) *Feminist Philosophy and Science Fiction: Utopias and Dystopias*, ed. Judith A. Little (Amherst, New York: Prometheus Books, 2006), (3) *Feminist Thought*, 3rd ed. by Rosemarie Tong (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2009)

PHIL 387 – Selected Philosophers – Quine's Epistemology

Dr. Tartaglia

Sec. 1 – 86123

W 4:00-6:30 pm

Carson 203

Quine is the dominant analytic philosopher of the second half of the 20th Century. During this period a very large portion of analytic philosophy was a reaction to, or development of, Quine's ideas. Though his ideas and arguments shook up the philosophical world as he found it, his ideas are fairly easy to grasp and his arguments are fairly easy to follow. Further, the main thrust of his philosophy is thoroughly convincing.

In 1981, P. F. Strawson, an eminent philosopher himself and often at odds with Quine, wrote: "The elegance, economy, wit and precision of his writing are among the chief glories of modern philosophy. Never have asceticism of method and austerity of vision been so glitteringly displayed By virtue of intellectual power, range and fertility of ideas and brilliance of presentation, Quine is the most distinguished and influential of living philosophers."

No undergraduate interested in analytic philosophy or even remotely considering graduate school in philosophy can afford not to be acquainted with Quine's work, especially his work in epistemology.

PHIL 395 – Wittgenstein and Psychology - HNR

**One Philosophy course. Junior or senior standing.
Cross-listed with PSYC 405 HNR.**

Dr. Tissaw

Sec. HNR – 86436

TUTH 2:00-3:15 pm

Flagg 166

As the only major philosopher to have authored two major and antithetical philosophies, Wittgenstein's intellectual life is divided into two distinct periods representing very different approaches to the relationship between language and the world of objects and psychological phenomena. Some of the mistakes Wittgenstein made during his early 'Tractarian' philosophy, systematically dismantled in his 'later' philosophy, are omnipresent in contemporary mainstream psychology – particularly cognitive science, with its sub-disciplines of artificial intelligence and cognitive neuroscience. The course is divided into the following four parts: The early Wittgenstein and his transitional period; Wittgenstein's method; Major themes in philosophical investigation, and applying Wittgenstein's method to topics in psychology and the Social/Behavioral sciences.

This course introduces students to perhaps the most important 20th century philosopher for the social and behavioral sciences: Ludwig Wittgenstein (1889-1951). Its primary objective is to provide students with basic knowledge of Wittgenstein's life and times, his evolution in thinking and analytical methodology, and the implications of his work for the social and behavioral sciences – psychology in particular. The course begins with a summary of Wittgenstein's life and salient points of his *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, which can be viewed as a precursor to modern cognitive science. Next, we turn to the "whys and wherefores" of Wittgenstein's later philosophical method, the purposes of which contrast in significant respects to his early perspectives on language and perspectives on language implicit in contemporary mainstream psychology. The latter half of the course addresses major themes in Wittgenstein's posthumously published *Philosophical Investigations* (1953), including cognition, language development and use, the emotions, meaning and understanding, perception, private experience, rule-following, voluntary action, and, more broadly, the foundations of certain discursive practices and the production of socio-cultural knowledge.

PHIL 475 – Seminar: Metaphor; Myth; Symbol

Prerequisite: Junior or senior standing and three courses in Philosophy.

Dr. DiGiovanna

Sec. 1 – 85638

MWF 10:00-10:50 am

Kellas 102

This seminar will explore three important topics: metaphor, myth and symbol. We will be exploring the variety of meanings of each of these, important theories concerning each of them and whether and how they are relevant today. Students will be expected to participate actively in a variety of projects including leading class discussions, summarizing class readings and presenting original research.

Philosophy Major

Required Courses:

Logic – One of the following:

- PHIL 110 Introduction to Logic
- PHIL 210 Introduction to Symbolic Logic

3 Credit Hours

Ethics – One of the following:

- PHIL 120 Introduction to Ethics
- PHIL 328 Issues in Ethical Theory

3 Credit Hours

History of Philosophy¹ – Two of the following

- PHIL 322 Ancient Philosophy
- PHIL 323 Medieval Philosophy
- PHIL 324 Modern Philosophy
- PHIL 387 Selected Philosophers
- PHIL 440 20th Century Analytic Philosophy

6 Credit Hours

Other Required Courses – One of the following

- PHIL 454 Theory of Knowledge
- PHIL 465 Metaphysics
- PHIL 380 Philosophy of Mind
- PHIL 350 Philosophy of Science

3 Credit Hours

Electives:

15 Credit Hours

Total Hours:

30 Credit Hours

Notes:

- ♦ Majors must earn a minimum of 2.0/S in all courses counted toward the major.
- ♦ A minimum of 15 semester hours of the major must be taken at the 300-400 level.

¹Selected Philosophers (PHIL 387) or Special Topics in Philosophy (PHIL 395) may be substituted for one of the history courses, when appropriate, as determined by the department.

Philosophy Minor

The Philosophy Minor permits students majoring in other disciplines to

- (1) pursue in a systematic way their personal interests and concerns with philosophical questions, and/or
- (2) deepen their understanding of their discipline in regard to its philosophical foundations, methodologies, and its normative assumptions and implications through an integrated course of study tailored to their major program.

Required Courses:

Introductory Course – One of the following:

3 Credit Hours

- PHIL 100 Introduction to Philosophy
- PHIL 105 Human Nature

Ethics – One of the following:

3 Credit Hours

- PHIL 120 Introduction to Ethics
- PHIL 314 Contemporary Moral Issues
- PHIL 328 Issues in Ethical Theory

History of Philosophy – One of the following:

3 Credit Hours

- PHIL 322 Ancient Philosophy
- PHIL 323 Medieval Philosophy
- PHIL 324 Modern Philosophy
- PHIL 440 20th Century Analytic Philosophy

Electives:

9 Credit Hours

Total Hours:

18 Credit Hours

Notes:

- ♦ Minors must earn a minimum of 2.0/S in all courses counted toward the minor.
- ♦ A minimum of 9 semester hours of the minor must be taken at the 300-400 level.

Philosophy Honors Major

ELIGIBILITY

- ◆ Philosophy Majors with six credit hours in philosophy completed at SUNY Potsdam (or other acceptable institution, to be determined by the faculty)
- ◆ 3.5 cumulative GPA in Philosophy
- ◆ 3.25 cumulative GPA
- ◆ 3.0 minimum grade in all philosophy courses to be applied to major
- ◆ Submit application at least three semesters before graduation

REQUIREMENTS

- ◆ Senior Thesis and Oral Defense
- ◆ Course Distribution Requirements noted below; 3.0 minimum grade required.

Required Courses and Credits:

27 Credit Hours

- PHIL 210 Introduction to Symbolic Logic **OR**
- PHIL 217 Language and Symbolic Logic
(*PHIL 110 Intro Logic is highly recommended*)
- PHIL 322 Ancient Philosophy
- PHIL 324 Modern Philosophy
- PHIL 328 Issues in Ethical Theory
- PHIL 355 Philosophy of Language **OR**
- PHIL 440 20th Century Analytic Philosophy
- PHIL 454 Theory of Knowledge
- PHIL 465 Metaphysics
- PHIL 480 Honors Thesis Research I
- PHIL 481 Honors Thesis Research II
- PHIL 387 Selected Philosophers **OR**
- PHIL 475 Special Topics **OR**
- PHIL 495 Seminar (to be approved by the faculty)

Electives: Three Courses from the following:

9 Credit Hours

- PHIL 320 Aesthetics
- PHIL 323 Medieval Philosophy
- PHIL 350 Philosophy of Science
- PHIL 359 Philosophy of Religion
- PHIL 371 Social and Political Philosophy
- PHIL 380 Philosophy of Mind

Total Hours:

36 Credit Hours

Department of Philosophy

Located in Carson & Morey Hall

Chair:

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