

Department of Philosophy

Fall 2025

PHI 1000, 001-039, DL1 and HON Knowledge, Reality, Self

Please see Master Schedule for specific times.

Philosophical responses to the questions of how we can know, what is real, and what is the nature of human existence that explore the dialogue between Catholic, Christian, secular and skeptical perspectives on these questions.

PHI 2020-001 Symbolic Logic

Instructor: **Dr. Justin Humphreys**

M W 3:20 - 4:35 pm

Symbolic logic applies formal methods to the study of reasoning. The first, longer half of this course introduces students to classical sentential and predicate logic. We will translate statements in English into symbolic notation, and construct formal derivations in that notation – developing skills in evaluating the validity of reasoning in any discipline. The second, shorter half of the course considers a selection of advanced topics in symbolic logic, for instance, the theory of computation, nonclassical logics in which truth comes in degrees, challenges to classical logic emerging from quantum mechanics, modal and tense logic, arguments for determinism, proofs for the existence of God, second-order logic, and paradoxes. While an openness to learning and applying formal methods is essential for this course, we presuppose no prior experience with philosophy or any advanced knowledge of mathematics.

PHI 2115-001 Ethics for Healthcare Prof

Instructor: **Dr. Stephen Napier**

T R 10:00 – 11:15 am

The purpose of this course is to help students become more effective in dealing with ethical questions in professional nursing, medical practice, and research. The animating center of the course is the theme of loving the human person(s). Imagine a wheel with the axle representing the theme of loving patients. Each of the issues we will be discussing, whether it is abortion, euthanasia, research on human subjects etc., represent the perimeter of the wheel. Each “spoke” is a way of seeing how to love patients better – we will be examining different aspects of the same axle. With each issue, we ask the more general question what does loving the human person look like for the terminally ill person, or a research subject or etc. The entire course will be traveling along the perimeter of the wheel with love for the human person as its center. We will look and see exactly what respecting human lives looks like in different circumstances and conditions. Arguments on both sides of each issue will be examined carefully and due weight given to a variety of informed opinions.

PHI 2115-002 Ethics for Healthcare ProfInstructor: **Dr. Peter Koch**

T R 10:00-11:15 am

This course explores contemporary ethical issues in medicine and health care through case analysis, academic research, and class discussion. Students will develop the philosophical tools and sensitivities needed to assess and resolve complex ethical situations, with a particular focus on those situations that are commonly encountered by clinicians and researchers throughout their careers. While this course is primarily designed for future clinicians, other interested students are welcome to participate as well.

PHI 2115-003, 005 Ethics for Healthcare ProfInstructor: **Dr. Stephen J. Bujno**

T R 1:00 - 2:15 & 4:00 – 5:15 pm

This course serves both as an introduction to philosophical ethics and its application to clinical case studies. Though primarily intended for future medical professionals, students in other disciplines will find the course thought-provoking. While developing skills in logic and critical thought, the student should expect to consider various applications for the ethics of care and wellness. Those will include medical consent and privacy, maternal/fetal care and end of life/futility, testing and research, mental health and disability, access and allocation, along with emergent bioethical topics. Fundamental questions of life will also be addressed, such as what it means to be ethical and what constitutes personhood. An underlying ethos of the course is to align professional medical care with respect and dignity for the patient as a person.

PHI 2115-004 Ethics for Healthcare ProfInstructor: **Dr. Sarah-Vaughan Brakman**

T R 2:30 – 3:45 pm

This course will expose us to contemporary philosophical problems in medicine and health care. Through reading, critical reflection and classroom dialogue you will learn to see yourself as part of a society that must take responsibility for its goals and uses of power concerning issues of life and death. This course is geared toward future clinicians as well as those with an academic and/or personal interest in the challenges posed by contemporary health care practices. We will learn the philosophical basis from which to address and to discuss moral problems, the conceptual terrain of current debates in bioethics including the seminal cases that shaped bioethical discourse, and a method for case analysis. When relevant, we will explore the differences in approach to medical ethics between the philosophical and the theological. Topics include: cultural competency, genetic testing, human experimentation, organ transplantation, physician-patient relationship, physician-nurse relationship, informed consent, end of life challenges, assisted-suicide, new reproductive technologies, and neuroethics.

PHI 2117-H01 HON: The Good DoctorInstructor: **Dr. Stephen Napier**

T R 11:30-12:45 p.m.

Medicine is an art as well as a science. The science is learned through study but the art must be learned through practice. What are fundamental components of the art? What are the

habits of reasoning that lead to good diagnoses? What are the virtues of the good doctor and what does it take to become one? This course will focus on the culture of medicine, becoming acculturated as a doctor, and analysis of what dispositional attitudes are necessary for the moral practice of medicine. The course will draw on resources from philosophy of medicine and moral theory, as well as sociological data and theory, along with first person medical narratives to explore the themes of the course.

PHI 2121-001, 002 Environmental Ethics

Instructor: **Dr. Tibor Solymosi**

MW 1:55-3:10 & 3:20-4:35 pm

Flooding. Fires. Extreme Temperatures. Extreme storms. Famine. Disease. Such catastrophes are ever more present in our lives. How are we to live in a world more precarious than in our cultural memory, if not the history of human civilization? What is the relationship between an environment and an *ethos*, a way of life? How do our individual and cultural habits affect our habitats? What does it mean to be human and to live well in a world on fire or under water? What do we owe each other, our descendants, our ancestors? Who constitutes this “we” in the first place—is it just Americans, Westerners, humans in general, other species, some ecosystems but not others, or Life as a whole? Can our technology save “us” or is technology as much of a threat to human as it is to non-human life?

In this course, we will explore these and similar questions. Drawing on work in the philosophy of nature, the philosophy of technology, social and political philosophy as well as ethics, we explore the relationship between human nature and non-human nature through the lens of existential risk, specifically climate change and its relation to disease, nuclear energy and weapons, and artificial intelligence. Central to this exploration are two key concepts, *environment*—What is it? What is its range or its scope? Who or what is environed?—and *ethics*, especially in relation to an environment. No background in philosophy, science, technology, or ethics is presumed.

PHI 2180-001 & 002 Computer Ethics

Instructor: **Dr. Tibor Solymosi**

MWF 10:40 –11:30 am & 11:45 am - 12:35 pm

Advances in digital computing have led to paradigmatic shifts in knowledge production, industry, and global politics. Today, computing infrastructures connect all aspects of society. Their effects demand ethical scrutiny, but the fast pace of innovation tends to confound this pursuit. The aim of PHI2180 is to orient students to the study of computer ethics, a well-established and continually evolving academic field. We draw richly from the discipline of philosophy, indicating where theoretical inquiry clarifies the moral complexities of today’s leading applications. Our materials are not strictly limited to philosophy, however: we also read texts and engage with new media from such fields as critical data studies, information theory, and computer science.

"Ethical Issues in Computer Science" emphasizes the durability and reliability of philosophical reasoning as a guide for technological decision making. Our premise is that a substantial foundation in ethical theory outlasts cycles of tech development. By the end of the course, students will be prepared to evaluate the ethics of new innovations for years to come.

PHI 2420-001 Philosophy of WomenInstructor: **Dr. Martina Ferrari**

M W 3:20-4:35 pm

This course introduces some key concepts, ideas, and frameworks commonly used in feminist philosophy. The course begins with the difficult question of the place of women in the history of philosophy, and the invitation to readers of philosophy to adopt the particular disposition of “reading like a woman.” The second part of this course ventures where the history of philosophy has not dared: searching for an answer to Beauvoir’s question, “What is a Woman?” Here, we read Simone de Beauvoir, Iris Marion Young, and Judith Butler. In the third part, this continued examination of the question shows how differences in race, class, and sexual orientation defy efforts to assert a single story of women, thereby revealing the dilemma at the heart of Beauvoir’s question. In this context, we learn about intersectionality and intersectional feminism via the works for Brittney Cooper, Kimberlee Crenshaw, and Angela Davis. The fourth unit tackles the questions, what is gender? And what is sexual orientation? We read essays by María Lugones, Talia Mae Bettcher, Leanne Simpson, Michael Kimmel, and Robin Dembroff. After engaging the discipline-shaping work of Kristie Dotson and Nancy Tuana on epistemic oppression, we conclude the course by considering the difference between carceral and abolitionist feminism. Amia Srinivasan’s work will help us make sense of this distinction. Throughout the term, we will grapple with broad philosophical questions such as: What does it mean to do philosophy as a woman and/or feminist? What can philosophy do for feminism and vice versa? What is the relation between feminist theory and praxis? Ideally, students will come out of this course with a strong background in feminist philosophy and a nuanced understanding of what it has to offer.

PHI 2940-001 Indian & Tibetan Buddhist PhilInstructor: **Dr. Davey Tomlinson**

T R 4:00 - 5:15 pm

This course will introduce students to major trends in Buddhist philosophy, with a focus on the foundational Indian tradition and its interpretation in Tibet. Buddhists argue that there is no self. We’ll try to understand how and why. As we consider different arguments for selflessness, we will also explore the idea’s implications for ethics, epistemology, metaphysics, and philosophy of mind. What does selflessness imply about consciousness, knowledge, and the very concept of existence? How do we come to realize, not just theoretically but also practically, that there is no self? How should this realization reshape our lives? As we consider these questions, we will discover great diversity within the Buddhist tradition on fundamental ideas about the relationship between language and reality, the role of logic on the path to enlightenment, and the nature and purpose of meditation. Throughout, our focus will be on primary texts in translation, as well as some of the latest philosophical engagements with these texts.

PHI: 2990-001 SEM: Philosophies of the Global South

M W 3:20-4:35 pm

Instructor: **Dr. Gabriel Rockhill**

This course examines the deep and rich traditions of philosophy in the Global South with a particular focus on anti-racism, as well as the struggle for women’s liberation and environmental sustainability. The primary objective is to expose students to diverse perspectives that are often marginalized or excluded from the standard histories of philosophy in the West, which tend to be dominated by white, male European thinkers.

Since the Global South has been disproportionately affected by climate change, whose negative consequences have particularly impacted racialized groups and women, a resolutely international perspective is necessary to adequately address issues like racism, gender oppression and environmental degradation. A large portion of the course will therefore uplift the voices of intellectuals from the Global South working on anti-racism, including various forms of solidarity and allyship to combat racism. This will require, moreover, that we work across multiple different disciplines, exploring in particular the connections between philosophy, the humanities and the social sciences.

This class will be highly topical and intersect in numerous ways with important issues in current events, thereby fostering an environment of trans-cultural learning in which students are educated as citizens of the world. Our driving questions will be ones like the following: What is meant by an emergent multipolar world, and how does this relate to liberation and environmental struggles? How do non-capitalist countries approach the question of climate change, and how does this relate to capitalist countries? What resources are there in the philosophies of the Global South for advocating for a less racist—as well as a less misogynist and more sustainable world—world?

PHI 2990-002 & 003 TOP: Yoga and Philosophy Instructor: **Prof. Amy Nobles Dolan**

T R 8:30 - 9:45 & 10:00 - 11:15 am

This course will introduce yoga's ten fundamental tenets for living a good life as taught in *The Yoga Sutras of Patanjali*. We will read a broad selection of literature on the topics of non-violence, truthfulness, non-stealing, moderation, non-possessiveness, purity, contentment, self-discipline, self-study and surrender to a higher power. In each class we will practice about 30 minutes of yoga, as a yoga mat is a powerful laboratory on which we can begin to explore these concepts. Students will be challenged to apply our theoretical discussions and reading to incidental and significant moments in their own lives in 6 written reflections.

PHI 3000-001 Contemporary Political Theory

Instructor: **Dr. Julie Klein**

M W 4:45-6:00 pm

Philosophy 3000 focuses on the skills needed to develop, manage, and complete independent research projects. We'll work in contemporary political philosophy this semester and examine such core issues as governance, national and global citizenship, power, authority, legitimacy, justice, rights and obligations. . In the first part of the course, we'll consider three recent books:

- Wendy Brown, *Nihilistic Times: Thinking with Max Weber* (Harvard 2023)
- Marina Garces, *New Radical Enlightenment: Philosophy for a Common World* (Verso 2024)
- Yuval Levin, *American Covenant: How the Constitution Unified Our Nation and Could Again* (Basic Books 2024)

Despite their philosophical differences, each author thinks we are living in a time of urgency and crisis—e.g., climate crisis, challenges to democratic governance, crises of confidence and trust in science, doubts about institutions—and each proposes a response. We'll read them to generate questions for research.

In the second part of the course, each student will generate a research topic and guiding question. To learn the craft of good research and writing, we will meet with Falvey's research librarians, seek advice from faculty in Philosophy and other Departments, learn how to assess what we read and discern where further investigation is needed, and learn ways of keeping ourselves on track in complex projects. Each week, we'll mix formal training with work-in-progress presentations for group feedback. Each student will produce an essay that could be submitted to the annual Greater Philadelphia Philosophy Consortium Undergraduate Conference and/or for publication in a relevant journal. We'll celebrate the end of the semester with a mini-conference for ourselves.

PHI 3020-001 History of Ancient Philosophy

Instructor: **Dr. Justin Humphreys**

M W 1:55 - 3:10 pm

This course introduces students to major themes in ancient western philosophy, including the distinction between art and nature, the problem of the infinite, and the relationship between being and change. The course will have a special focus on the concepts of nature, cause, and order. Our goal will be to understand the theories of the major thinkers in the ancient Greek tradition, including the pre-Socratics, Plato, and Aristotle. We will be especially interested in asking why they held their views and how they argued for them. However, since in interpreting ancient philosophical texts requires philosophical thinking, this course also presents an opportunity to reflect on the nature of philosophy itself.

PHI 3030-001 History of Medieval Philosophy

Instructor: **Dr. Stephen Napier**

T R 2:30 - 3:45 pm

Philosophy 3030 surveys medieval philosophy in the Christian, Islamic, and Jewish traditions. We shall consider each tradition on its own terms and also study the ways texts and issues cross traditions. All of the texts we shall study exhibit the encounter of monotheism and revelation with the corpus of Greek and Roman philosophy and science. We will pay special attention to relationship of philosophical speculation and revealed teachings by studying three major themes: the interpretation of texts, the nature of the human soul and its perfection, and arguments for the existence of God.

PHI 3720-001 Marx & Marxism

Instructor: **Dr. Farshid Baghai**

T R 1:00 - 2:15 pm

In this course, we study the social-political philosophies of Karl Marx and a number of thinkers in the Marxist tradition. In the first part of the course, we focus on some of the key elements of Marx's thought: his materialist conception of history and his accounts of the capitalist mode of production, exploitation, and class struggle. The second part of the course examines a number of ways in which Marx's thought was taken up and developed in the 20th

century. The last part of the course explores a case for an anti-capitalist and democratic-socialist transformation of society in the 21st century.

This course has been designated as a Peace & Justice (PJ) attributed course, which means that it includes significant engagement with peace and/or social justice issues.

PHI 4150-001 Philosophy & Film

Instructor: **Dr. Lisa Dolling**

W 6:15-8:55 pm

This course is intended as an in-depth exploration of traditional philosophical questions as they are presented in and through the medium of film. Topics examined will include: truth vs. relativism; free will vs. determinism; justice and moral luck; law and morality; crime and punishment; human perfectibility; personal identity; meaningfulness, nihilism, and absurdity—just to name a few. Special attention will be given to considering the ways the vehicle of film might differ from more traditional methods, such as the philosophical treatise or essay, when it comes to presenting some of these themes. After taking the course students should have a more acute awareness of the ubiquity of philosophical questions and topics, as well as a more refined appreciation for films as a mode of philosophical inquiry.

PHI 4825-001 Existentialism

Instructor: **Dr. Delia Popa**

T R 11:30 am – 12:45 pm

In this course, we will examine the broad history of existentialism, from Kierkegaard and Nietzsche to Freud, Heidegger, and Sartre, from Dostoyevsky and Chestov to Miguel de Unamuno and Maria Zambrano. We will also pay attention to the way in which the philosophical themes of existentialism are uniquely expressed in literary texts, artistic works, and cinematography. The concepts of force, drive, and sense will help us rethink our ideas of freedom and responsibility, opening them up to empathy and compassion. Moreover, this course will invite you to reflect on grounding features of the human condition, such as finitude, facticity, faith, and tragedy. This course is the place where you can ask the most general questions about our mode of existence in this world, with a focus on the deep aspirations and the audacious vocations that shape our humanity, as it faces its intrinsic finitude, its social inscription, and its ambiguous desires.

PHI 5000-001 SEM: Anarchy, Authority & the Law

Instructor: **Dr. Peter Koch**

T R 1:00 – 2:15 pm

This course explores the basic tenets of philosophical anarchism – that is, skepticism about the authority of the State – and introduces students to the rich tradition of questions and criticisms motivated by anarchism. These questions include: How does philosophical anarchism differ from political anarchism? Why ought subjects obey the law, if at all? What are the purposes and justifications of legitimate governments? How might we differentiate between various kinds of authority? What is the relationship between moral autonomy and the authority of the State? Students will engage with ancient, modern, and contemporary thinkers and texts in navigating the conversation that surrounds such question