

PHILOSOPHY COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

FALL QUARTER 2024

PHIL 112: Ethics and the Good Life* | MWF 10-10:50 & 11-11:50 | HUM GUR

Is it wrong to eat meat? Is it wrong to prevent someone from eating meat? Is anything wrong? Are right and wrong just a matter of what society says? In this class, we explore what makes an act wrong, whether there are any true generalities about right and wrong, and whether acts such as abortion, euthanasia and capital punishment are wrong. (Frances Howard-Snyder)

***Introductory to Philosophy course**

PHIL 113: Reason and Religion* | MWF 3-3:50 & 4-4:50 | HUM GUR

This course serves as an introduction to the philosophy of religion in particular and to philosophy and philosophical methodology in general. During the term, we will examine different conceptions of divinity and competing analyses of a variety of divine attributes that appear in those conceptions, we will discuss and critically evaluate several traditional arguments for the non-existence of God, and we will discuss and critically evaluate several traditional arguments for the existence of God. (Hud Hudson)

***Introductory to Philosophy course**

PHIL 114: Knowledge and Reality* | TR 12-1:15 & 2-3:15 | HUM GUR

Philosophy is the attempt to answer, through rational reflection, the most fundamental questions. In this introductory course we will explore issues involving the nature of the world around us and our ability to know what it is really like. Questions addressed will include, among others: Is the physical world all there is? What is it to be a person? What is it to be *you*, the particular person *you* are? How might we come to know about such things? For that matter, how might we come to know anything at all? (Dennis Whitcomb)

***Introductory to Philosophy course**

PHIL 115: Ethics and the Environment | TR 2-3:15 & 4-5:15 | HUM GUR

Our relationship to our environment is morally complex. This course examines a broad range of environmental issues through the lens of moral theory and with special attention to logical argumentation. Primary emphasis is given to how theoretical frameworks in ethics have been applied in substantive thinking about the rightful treatment of animals; biotic communities; species in danger of extinction; and the protection, conservation, and preservation of natural resources. Emphasis may also be given to duties to future generations; antinatalism; civil disobedience and ecoterrorism; and ecological grief. (Christian Lee)

PHIL 120: Critical Thinking | MWF 2-2:50 & 3-3:50 | QSR GUR

We are constantly reasoning about what to do and believe, but we rarely reflect on what reasoning is or how it works. That's what this course is about: the mechanisms that make reasoning work well. If we can understand those, then we'll have a better chance of finding our bearings when reasoning is complicated by things like ignorance, disagreement, and contempt. This quarter we'll unearth and practice the skills and habits of mind that enable us to think carefully and well (Neal Tognazzini)

PHIL 201: Logic I | TR 10-11:15 | QSR GUR

We all know that in order to argue well you have to get the *facts* straight. Less well-known is that in order to argue well you have to get the *reasoning* straight. Not all forms of reasoning are equally good; sometimes the very structure of our reasoning leads us from truth into error. Logic is the formal study of valid (or: truth-preserving) reasoning. By slowing down to think carefully and learning to assess our own patterns of thought as well as the way others reason, we stand to become better thinkers, to develop stronger and more effective arguments, and to cultivate both precision and humility. (Christian Lee)

PHIL 310: Theory of Knowledge I | MW 12-1:15

This course addresses the nature and possibility of knowledge and related states like reasonable belief. Questions addressed will include, among others: What would it take to really know something, instead of merely thinking you know it? Can we ever get real knowledge? If so, then how? If we can't get knowledge, then can we at least come to form rational or reasonable beliefs? And what would those things be? In addressing these questions, we will read selections from a high-quality introductory textbook that gives them a broad overview. Then we will delve deeply into some particular issues. These issues may include (a) whether we can have knowledge about morality, (b) what it takes to have "evidence" for a given theory, and (c) how activities of inquiry should be designed so as to yield knowledge and rational belief. (Dennis Whitcomb)

PHIL 330: Metaphysics I | TR 10-11:15

In this survey course, we'll examine some of our most basic concepts for thinking about the world: space, time, identity, and causation. Among other things, we'll be asking whether space is real, whether time travel is possible, and whether body-swapping stories (such as *Freaky Friday*) make any sense. (Ryan Wasserman)

PHIL 397A: Philosophy and Literature | MWF 9-9:50

This course explores philosophical issues related to literature. Questions addressed may include, among others: What kind of thing is a novel or a short story? What is a fictional character? How should we understand truth in fiction? What puzzles and paradoxes arise as a result of our reactions to literature? What are the potential benefits and harms of reading literature? What is the relation between literature and knowledge? (Francis Howard-Snyder)

PHIL 417: Seminar in Philosophy | TR 2-3:15

Truth is – I haven't yet decided on the content for the Fall 2024 Seminar. I do, however, have it narrowed down to two choices: (i) Philosophical Themes in Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, *Macbeth*, and *Coriolanus*; (ii) The Philosophy of Melancholy. Whichever topic we engage will provide you with an opportunity to put your philosophical skills to the test as we together work through a number of questions and problems in the philosophy of literature, aesthetics, ethics, and metaphysics. Our seminar readings and topics will be challenging, compelling, and entertaining – and (I predict) on topics that you genuinely care about. Really – how could you pass it up? (Hud Hudson)

QUESTIONS? CONTACT US AT
PHILOSOPHY@WWU.EDU