

PHILOSOPHY COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

WINTER QUARTER 2025

PHIL 112: Intro Ethics and the Good Life* | MWF 3-3:50 & 4-4:50 | HUM GUR

This course explores two types of issues. We first consider competing answers to two related questions: What makes life go well for us? What makes for a good life? We next ask applied questions in ethics like: Is it wrong to purchase meat? Is it wrong to have an abortion? Is it wrong to immigrate illegally? Is it wrong to procreate? We look at arguments both for and against answers to these questions while aiming to hone our critical thinking skills. (Christian Lee)

***Introductory to Philosophy course**

PHIL 113: Intro Reason and Religion* | MWF 10-10:50 & 11-11:50 | HUM GUR

This class explores philosophical issues concerning religion: what must a being be like to be God? Does God exist? Does our experience warrant belief in God? If God exists and knows every choice that we will make long before we were born, are any of those choices free? Will we continue to exist after we die? (Frances Howard-Snyder)

***Introductory to Philosophy course**

PHIL 114: Intro Knowledge and Reality* | MWF 9-9:50 & 11-11:50 | 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 may include, among others: Is the physical world all there is? Do we have free will? How might we come to know about such things? For that matter, how might we come to know anything at all? This course will equip you to think through such issues for yourself. (Dennis Whitcomb)

***Introductory to Philosophy course**

PHIL 115: Ethics and the Environment | TR 2-3:15 | 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 10-10:50 & 11-11:50 | 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 320: Ethical Theory I | MWF 1-1:50

In this class we will examine several theories that attempt to sum up our moral obligations in a brief, manageable formula. Along the way we will discuss whether doing harm is worse than allowing harm, whether the intentions with which one acts make a moral difference, and whether an act can be wrong even if it harms no one. (Frances Howard-Snyder)

PHIL 350: Political Philosophy | TR 12-1:15

This class explores the nature of the state, and of the institutions and practices of which it is comprised; the basis and scope of political obligation, the proper role of political activity; considerations of concepts of sovereignty, legitimacy, limits of state power, representation, social justice, oppression and the like. (Dennis Whitcomb)

PHIL 367: History of Philosophy: The Empiricists | TR 2-3:15

Are there any innate ideas? Do we possess any substantive knowledge of the world that is not ultimately justified by experience? How do our ideas, the only immediate objects of our awareness, represent their objects in the external world? Learn how Locke answers these questions by articulating, advocating for, and pursuing a particular philosophical method. How powerful is the case for the claim that there are minds and ideas but no material objects? Learn how Berkeley argues for such Idealism by way of an empiricist-inspired metaphysics. (Hud Hudson)

PHIL 430: Metaphysics II | MWF 2-2:50

This is an advanced metaphysics course, and the topic varies from year to year. This year, we'll be exploring several different questions about *free will*. We tend to think of ourselves as free to choose the course of our own lives, but at the same time, we know that we are shaped in many ways by biological, psychological, and physical forces that are beyond our control. Is it possible to reconcile these two thoughts? What would free will even look like? How would it work? And what would it mean for our relationships and our society if we became convinced that it was merely an illusion? (Neal Tognazzini)

QUESTIONS? CONTACT US AT
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