

# PHILOSOPHY

The 18th century philosopher Immanuel Kant once suggested three questions for philosophy, "What can I know?" "What must I do?" and "What may I hope?" Philosophers argue over many things, among them what questions we ought to pose, and that suggests a further question, "What should we ask?" The ancient Athenian philosopher Socrates lived by asking questions, so he exemplified this questioning spirit. Socrates told the Athenians that the unexamined life was not worth living, suggesting that we should examine life and ourselves, not just the world before us. And philosophers after him have often thought that a desire to know, a desire for answers to our questions, was tied to the development of character.

The Philosophy Department engages students in their own pursuit of such questions. They read historical and contemporary philosophy to see the questions asked by others and to help them to develop and ponder their own questions in preparation for a life of critical reflection and thoughtfulness. Such a life can be led along many career paths. Philosophy majors have gone on to law school and other professional schools, have gone into business and public service, and have gone on to graduate school in philosophy.

There are few prerequisites on our courses, but initial digits will suggest something about their level. All courses in the 100s are appropriate introductions to philosophy. Students with interests in a particular area (e.g., the philosophy of race, the philosophy of law, the philosophy of science, philosophy and literature) might begin with a 200-level course in that area. Most students in 300-level courses will have had previous courses in philosophy. The senior seminar is required of majors but open to others.

## Student Learning Goals

Is able to recognize the names of and discuss the views of and relations among at least some significant figures in the history of philosophy

Understands and is able to talk about the views of a philosopher in some depth outside the context of the history of philosophy

Is acquainted with some contemporary figures or styles of philosophical work

Has a basic ability to give an account of what is said and of the author's reasons for saying it as well as to pose and suggest answers to questions of interpretation

Is ready to discuss ideas without recourse to examples; is able to formulate and develop new concepts

Is disposed to offer and ask for reasons for assertions; can assess the overall strengths of a statement of reasons as well as identify and describe gaps and weak points in argument

Is able to articulate objections to his own positions

Considers possible ethical, social, and political implications of arguments not directly addressing those issues, and considers how experiences of those from historically marginalized groups might lead to different interpretations of an argument

Can locate philosophical issues in non-philosophical contexts, and applies philosophical thinking to conceptual difficulties in ordinary life

and also in contexts where there are existing disciplined patterns of thinking.

## Requirements for the Major

Students majoring or minoring in philosophy are encouraged (but not required) to take PHI 240 and 242 in their sophomore year as this will establish a foundation for further coursework.

Code	Title	Credits
<b>Ancient &amp; Early Modern Philosophy</b>		
PHI-240	Ancient Philosophy	1
PHI-242	Foundations of Modern Philosophy	1
<b>Logic</b>		
PHI-270	Elementary Symbolic Logic	1
<b>Continental Tradition</b>		
PHI-345	Continental Philosophy	1
<b>Ethics, Social or Political Philosophy</b>		
Select at least one credit from the following work in ethics, social, or political philosophy:		1
PHI-110	Philosophical Ethics	
PHI-213	Philosophy of Law	
PHI-215	Environmental Philosophy	
PHI-216	Philosophy of Gender	
PHI-217	Philosophy of Race	
PHI-218	Philosophy of Commerce	
PHI-219	Topics in Ethics & Social Philosophy	
PHI-319	Seminar in Ethics & Social Phil	
<b>Epistemology, Metaphysics, &amp; Related Areas</b>		
Select one from the following:		1
PHI-269	Topics in Metaphysics and Epistemology	
PHI-272	Philosophy of Science	
PHI-279	Topics Logic & Philosophy of Science	
PHI-346	Analytic Philosophy	
PHI-369	Seminar in Metaphysics & Epistemology	
PHI-379	Seminar in Logic & Philosophy of Science	
<b>Philosophy Electives</b>		<b>2</b>
Students must complete at least one 300 level course in addition to 345.		
<b>Senior Seminar</b>		
PHI-449	Senior Seminar	1
<b>Total Credits</b>		<b>9</b>

## Comprehensive Examinations

Students write for two days, three hours each day. The department has usually invited majors to submit a list of four books from a number of periods in the history of philosophy to serve as the basis for the questions on the first day. Second day questions usually explore broad philosophical issues, with students free to draw on any material in answering them. The department's goal is to give students the chance to tie their major together, reflect on this part of their education, and demonstrate their strengths in the field.

## Requirements for the Minor

Code	Title	Credits
<b>Ancient &amp; Early Modern Philosophy</b>		
PHI-240	Ancient Philosophy	1
PHI-242	Foundations of Modern Philosophy	1
<b>Ethics, Social or Political Philosophy</b>		
Select at least one credit from the following:		1
PHI-110	Philosophical Ethics	
PHI-213	Philosophy of Law	
PHI-215	Environmental Philosophy	
PHI-216	Philosophy of Gender	
PHI-217	Philosophy of Race	
PHI-218	Philosophy of Commerce	
PHI-219	Topics in Ethics & Social Philosophy	
PHI-319	Seminar in Ethics & Social Phil	
<b>Electives</b>		
At least one credit from courses in philosophy with a number of 300 or above		1
Philosophy Elective		1
<b>Total Credits</b>		<b>5</b>

### PHI-104 Introduction to Philosophy: Nature

This course will serve as an introduction to philosophy by examining the ways philosophers have used nature historically to justify the social order: by identifying essences that prescribe roles, legitimating social hierarchy by dividing the world between what is closer to nature and what overcomes or surpasses nature, distinguishing between good and natural actions and bad and unnatural ones, and distinguishing between culture and the material of culture. This course will examine the philosophical positions behind these claims and critiques of these positions. The course will take up the example of gender at various places across the semester to think about the implications of various conceptions of nature in the history of philosophy. Students are discouraged from taking more than one course numbered 109 or below.

**Prerequisites:** none

**Credit:** 1

**Equated Courses:** GEN-104

### PHI-105 Intro to Philosophy: Videogames

This course serves as an introduction to philosophy by means of thinking about videogames. In part, this means that thinking about videogames sheds light on venerable philosophical questions concerning, for example, free will, moral responsibility, and our knowledge of reality. In addition, videogames raise challenging new questions about the nature of art and its place in our lives. For example: Can a videogame be a work of art? Is it immoral to play videogames with violent or misogynist content? Can playing videogames be an important part of a good life? In this course, we tackle these questions by studying some important works of classical and contemporary philosophers, and playing a number of recent games from a philosophically engaged perspective. This course counts toward the Film Studies Minor. Students are discouraged from taking more than one course numbered 109 or below.

**Prerequisites:** none

**Credit:** 1

**Distribution:** History/Philosophy/Religion

### PHI-106 Intro to Philosophy: Humans & Robots

This course will serve as an introduction to philosophy by thinking about robots and artificial intelligence as threats to or enhancers of human existence. The course will draw on the history of philosophy in conversation with existing, planned and imagined technology of robots in news stories, film, and television to ask: What does it mean to be human? Have technological advances in robots and algorithms have made it impossible for us to distinguish between the human and non-human? Is there a distinctly human sense of language? What might it mean to consider new leaps in machine learning in terms of self-consciousness? How much of a human can be replaced by biomedical technology and still remain (the same) human? Students are discouraged from taking more than one course numbered 109 or below.

**Prerequisites:** none

**Credit:** 1

**Distribution:** History/Philosophy/Religion

### PHI-109 Introduction to Philosophy

A course in some selected philosophical topic or range of topics designed to provide an example of philosophical reflection and inquiry. Not open to junior or senior majors without permission of the instructor.

**Prerequisites:** none

**Credits:** 0.5-1

**Distribution:** History/Philosophy/Religion

### PHI-110 Philosophical Ethics

Thought about what is good, what is right, and what ought to be done pervades our lives. Philosophy can contribute to this thought by providing ways of organizing it and reflecting on it critically-which is done in this course using both historical and contemporary sources.

**Prerequisites:** none

**Credit:** 1

**Distribution:** History/Philosophy/Religion

### PHI-124 Philosophy and Film

This course uses film to investigate a variety of philosophical issues-issues in such areas as ethics, the theory of knowledge, or existentialism, specific issues such as free will, human responsibility, or human subjectivity, or issues concerning such topics as dystopian futures. The course may also explore philosophical questions about film. Students will typically be expected to watch one film that will be the focus of the class discussion each week and additional films on their own that are related to the theme of the week. The final project may be a paper or perhaps a student-produced film that uses film to investigate a philosophical issue.

**Prerequisites:** none

**Credit:** 1

**Distribution:** History/Philosophy/Religion

### PHI-144 Intro to Existentialism

An introduction to some of the primary texts in philosophy of human existence of the 19th and 20th centuries, including works of fiction, philosophy, and psychology from such writers as Kierkegaard, Dostoyevski, Nietzsche, Camus, Sartre, de Beauvoir, and Jaspers.

**Prerequisites:** none

**Credit:** 1

**Distribution:** History/Philosophy/Religion

### PHI-187 Independent Study

Individual research projects. The manner of study will be determined by the student in consultation with the instructor. Students must receive written approval of their project proposal from a department Chair before registering for the course.

**Prerequisites:** none

**Credits:** 0.5-1

**PHI-188 Independent Study**

Individual research projects. The manner of study will be determined by the student in consultation with the instructor. Students must receive written approval of their project proposal from a department Chair before registering for the course.

**Prerequisites:** none

**Credits:** 0.5-1

**PHI-213 Philosophy of Law**

An introduction to philosophical issues concerning the analysis of legal concepts and the moral justification of the law. Typical issues include the nature of law and its relation to morality, issues of moral justification arising in specific branches of the law (e.g., criminal, tort, or contract law), and the nature and justification of international law.

**Prerequisites:** none

**Credits:** 0.5-1

**Equated Courses:** PPE-213

**PHI-215 Environmental Philosophy**

Environmental philosophy explores the relationship between human beings and the natural world. It raises questions about the meaning of nature, the place of human dwelling within nature, the moral status of nonhuman animals and ecosystems, human responsibility for environmental challenges such as pollution, climate change, and species extinction, and environmental and intergenerational justice. This course raises such questions from multiple perspectives that may include conventional approaches in environmental ethics like utilitarianism and deontology as well as ecofeminism, deep ecology, and political ecology.

**Prerequisites:** none

**Credit:** 1

**Distribution:** History/Philosophy/Religion,

**Equated Courses:** PPE-215

**PHI-216 Philosophy of Gender**

This course examines theories of the meaning of gender, sex, and sexuality. It considers what the source of gender inequality is in society and what is required for achieving gender equality. Topics could include cultural difference in the meaning and operations of gender, how gender influences our concept of knowledge, and the role of gender in moral theory. Meets the Diversity Requirement for the PPE major.

**Prerequisites:** none

**Credit:** 1

**Distribution:** History/Philosophy/Religion

**Equated Courses:** PPE-216

**PHI-217 Philosophy of Race**

This course covers the history of the development of the concept of race, the metaphysical framework for thinking about the "reality" of race, the various ways to consider the meaning of race, and the relation between the meaning of race and the experience of racism. Questions about how difference and equality function in the law and the application of the law, concepts of white privilege and community investment in racial distinctions, intersectional analyses that think race together with gender, class and sexuality and the concept of race in colonial and post-colonial settings are likely topics. Meets the Diversity Requirement for the PPE major.

**Prerequisites:** none

**Credit:** 1

**Distribution:** History/Philosophy/Religion

**Equated Courses:** PPE-217

**PHI-218 Philosophy of Commerce**

This course will consider broadly how concerns for the oikos, the household, the root of our word economics, serve, support and potentially undermine our efforts to live well. The concepts of property, markets, labor, corporations, collective and individual responsibility, economic vs. political freedom, wealth, debt, and value will be subjected to philosophical scrutiny. Philosophical investigation of these ideas will be joined to broad philosophical questions, including but not limited to: their treatment in the history of philosophy, the role of these concerns in the good life, the development of markets in the context of the emergence of modern subjectivity, the relation of desire and its production to the need for markets, and the account of what it means to be human that these concepts assume or encourage. The goal of this course is for students to have a robust understanding of the historical and contemporary arguments, assumptions and views these economic concepts presuppose about what it means to be human. Application of these considerations to contemporary debates in public life will be encouraged.

**Prerequisites:** none

**Credit:** 1

**Distribution:** History/Philosophy/Religion

**Equated Courses:** PPE-218

**PHI-219 Topics in Ethics & Social Philosophy**

Seminar discussion of a topic or area in ethical theory, applied ethics, or social and political philosophy. Refer to the Course Descriptions document on the Registrar's webpage for topics and descriptions of current offerings.

**Prerequisites:** none

**Credits:** 0.5-1

**PHI-220 Aesthetics**

A survey of work in the philosophy of art both prior to and during the 20th century. Topics considered include the concept of art and a work of art, the relation between art and truth, the objectivity of aesthetic evaluation, the nature of representation, and issues concerning meaning and interpretation.

**Prerequisites:** none

**Credit:** 1

**Distribution:** History/Philosophy/Religion, Literature/Fine Arts

**PHI-240 Ancient Philosophy**

A survey of Ancient Greek philosophy, including Pre-Socratics, Plato, and Aristotle; Hellenistic philosophy may also be included. This course focuses on acquiring and improving abilities in philosophical reading, thinking, and expression. Students will be asked to consider the questions and problems raised by ancient thinkers on the basis of close textual analysis and to see how these questions and problems remain relevant through lectures and discussion. Topics include nature, human knowledge, the good, and ultimate being. This course is offered in the fall semester.

**Prerequisites:** none

**Credit:** 1

**Distribution:** History/Philosophy/Religion, Literature/Fine Arts

**Equated Courses:** CLA-240

**PHI-242 Foundations of Modern Philosophy**

Readings and discussion of the classical modern philosophers of the 17th and 18th centuries, focusing on questions such as scientific method and the possibility of knowledge, the nature of reality, ethics and the relation of the individual to society, and the existence of God. Readings from among Descartes, Spinoza, Leibniz, Hobbes, Locke, Berkeley, Hume, Kant, and Rousseau. This course is offered in the spring semester.

**Prerequisites:** none

**Credit:** 1

**Distribution:** History/Philosophy/Religion

**PHI-249 Topics in the History of Philosophy**

Seminar discussion of a historical period, figure or topic. Please refer to the Registrar's page for course description.

**Prerequisites:** none

**Credits:** 0.5-1

**Distribution:** History/Philosophy/Religion

**PHI-269 Topics in Metaphysics and Epistemology**

Seminar discussion of a topic or area in metaphysics or the theory of knowledge. Refer to the Course Descriptions document on the Registrar's webpage for topics and descriptions of current offerings.

**Prerequisites:** none

**Credits:** 0.5-1

**Distribution:** History/Philosophy/Religion

**PHI-270 Elementary Symbolic Logic**

An introduction to the principles of deductive logic for connectives ("and," "not," "or," "if") and quantifiers ("all," "some"). Attention is given to the logical structure of English sentences and its representation in symbolic notation and to formal proofs establishing the logical properties and relations of sentences.

**Prerequisites:** none

**Credit:** 1

**Distribution:** History/Philosophy/Religion, Quantitative Literacy

**PHI-272 Philosophy of Science**

An introduction to philosophical issues concerning the logical structure and historical development of natural science. Among the general issues considered will be the relations among theory, observation, and experiment; the reality of theoretical entities; and the significance of scientific revolutions. Some attention is usually given also to philosophical issues regarding specific sciences, principally biology and physics.

**Prerequisites:** none

**Credit:** 1

**Distribution:** History/Philosophy/Religion

**PHI-279 Topics Logic & Philosophy of Science**

Additional topics in formal or informal logic or the philosophical study of science and its historical development. Refer to the Course Descriptions document on the Registrar's webpage for topics and descriptions of current offerings.

**Prerequisites:** none

**Credits:** 0.5-1

**PHI-287 Independent Study**

Individual research projects. The manner of study will be determined by the student in consultation with the instructor. Students must receive written approval of their project proposal from a department Chair before registering for the course.

**Prerequisites:** none

**Credits:** 0.5-1

**PHI-288 Independent Study**

Individual research projects. The manner of study will be determined by the student in consultation with the instructor. Students must receive written approval of their project proposal from a department Chair before registering for the course.

**Prerequisites:** none

**Credits:** 0.5-1

**PHI-299 Special Topics in Philosophy**

Refer to the Course Descriptions document on the Registrar's webpage for topics and descriptions of current offerings.

**Prerequisites:** none

**Credits:** 0.5-1

**PHI-319 Seminar in Ethics & Social Phil**

Seminar discussion at a more advanced level of a topic or area in ethical theory, applied ethics, or social and political philosophy.

**Prerequisites:** none

**Credits:** 0.5-1

**PHI-345 Continental Philosophy**

Seminar discussion of major themes or figures in the Continental tradition from the 19th century to the present, which may include work in phenomenology and existentialism, Marxism and critical theory, poststructuralism, and feminism. Readings may be drawn from Hegel, Marx, Nietzsche, Heidegger, Habermas, Sartre, Beauvoir, Foucault, Derrida, or others. This course is offered in the fall semester.

**Prerequisites:** PHI-240 (or taken concurrently), and PHI-242

**Credits:** 0.5-1

**PHI-346 Analytic Philosophy**

Seminar discussion of major themes or figures in the Analytic tradition.

**Prerequisites:** none

**Credits:** 0.5-1

**PHI-349 Seminar in the History of Philosophy**

Seminar discussion at a more advanced level of a historical period, figure, or topic.

**Prerequisites:** none

**Credits:** 0.5-1

**PHI-369 Seminar in Metaphysics & Epistemology**

Seminar discussion at a more advanced level of a topic or area in metaphysics or the theory of knowledge.

**Prerequisites:** none

**Credits:** 0.5-1

**PHI-379 Seminar in Logic & Philosophy of Science**

Additional topics in formal or informal logic or the philosophical study of science and its historical development offered at a more advanced level.

**Prerequisites:** none

**Credits:** 0.5-1

**PHI-387 Independent Study**

Individual research projects. The manner of study will be determined by the student in consultation with the instructor. Students must receive written approval of their project proposal from a department Chair before registering for the course.

**Prerequisites:** none

**Credits:** 0.5-1

**PHI-388 Independent Study**

Individual research projects. The manner of study will be determined by the student in consultation with the instructor. Students must receive written approval of their project proposal from a department Chair before registering for the course.

**Prerequisites:** none

**Credits:** 0.5-1

**PHI-399 Proseminar**

An advanced course in some selected philosophical topic.

**Prerequisites:** none

**Credits:** 0.5-1

**PHI-449 Senior Seminar**

A detailed study of a major philosopher or philosophical topic. Required of majors and open to other students. Normally taken in the senior year. This course is offered in the fall semester.

**Prerequisites:** none

**Credit:** 1

**PHI-487 Independent Study**

Individual research projects. The manner of study will be determined by the student in consultation with the instructor. Students must receive written approval of their project proposal from a department Chair before registering for the course.

**Prerequisites:** none

**Credits:** 0.5-1

**PHI-488 Independent Study**

Individual research projects. The manner of study will be determined by the student in consultation with the instructor. Students must receive written approval of their project proposal from a department Chair before registering for the course.

**Prerequisites:** none

**Credits:** 0.5-1

## Philosophy Faculty

Matthew Carlson (chair)

Jeffrey Dwight Gower

Jorge Alfredo Montiel

Dana Lauren Rognlie

Adriel M. Trott, *Sabbatical*