

# PHILOSOPHY

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The aim of the Philosophy Department is to engage students in disciplined and imaginative thinking about philosophical issues. Philosophical questions fall primarily into four groups: questions about the nature of reality (metaphysics), about reasoning and inference (logic), about knowledge (epistemology), and about values and society, including moral values (ethics) and aesthetic values. These questions, which arise naturally in the course of a liberal education, are not only fascinating in their own right, they also touch on issues central to understanding and improving human life in our own society and in the world. Because they involve complex and controversial issues, there are no easy answers. Yet it matters greatly which answers are accepted, and it is therefore important to engage in discussion with others who face these questions and to seek to learn from the philosophers of the past and present.

Engaging in philosophy develops skills in careful and fair-minded interpretation, creative but rigorous argumentation, and perceptive, wise evaluation of complex issues. These valuable abilities are applicable to any subject matter and in any human context and are useful for negotiating the ambiguities of today's career paths.

Students can find philosophy courses that satisfy each of the six categories of core general education requirements. Also, a significant number of the courses that satisfy the EIN requirement are taught by philosophers. On the department's website, the department provides for each term a prospectus that describes the special focus for each course and section.

## Overview of the Major

A major in philosophy is highly recommended not only for those who wish to pursue graduate study in philosophy but also as preparation for other careers that require the ability to think in a creative and disciplined manner about questions that are new or whose method of solution is debated, including careers in law, theology, business, management, medicine, journalism, politics, and education.

Philosophy majors are encouraged to participate in the student-run Philosophy Forum, to attend special lectures and events sponsored by the department, to explore study abroad programs, and to participate in departmental social events.

## Intended Learning Outcomes for the Major (<http://wp.stolaf.edu/curriculum-committee/philosophy-major-ilos>)

## Distinction

See Academic Honors (<http://catalog.stolaf.edu/archive/2016-2017/academic-regulations-procedures/academic-honors/#distinction>)

Departmental distinction in philosophy is awarded by a vote of the department to those graduating students whose discourse, both oral and written, exhibits such philosophical virtues as clarity, coherence, and sensitivity to the full range of relevant considerations, fair-mindedness, rigor, and creativity. Candidates submit a portfolio of

papers by April 15 to the department chair. Additional information about applying for distinction is available on the department's website.

## Special Resources

The Howard and Edna Hong Kierkegaard Library at St. Olaf is an internationally acclaimed center for the study of Søren Kierkegaard, the 19th-century Danish philosopher who is widely recognized as the father of existentialism. Every year, researchers from around the world come to the library to participate in its visiting fellows program. It is an invaluable resource for students, too. A number of philosophy students have worked in the library, and seniors and recent undergraduates have participated in the library's fellowship program for young scholars. The library also sponsors *The Reed*, an undergraduate journal of existential thought.

The Eunice Belgum Memorial Lectures are delivered annually by leading philosophers from around the world. Recent lecturers include Barbara Herman, Elliot Sober, Thomas Carson, Rachel Cohon, Lynne Baker, Dan Robinson, and Eleonore Stump.

John Cooper was the lecturer for 2015-16.

## Requirements

A major in philosophy may be attained by completing the requirements for either a regular major or a contract major. Most philosophy courses simultaneously count toward the major and toward one or more general education requirements. Because the philosophy major can be tailored to the needs and goals of individual students, all philosophy majors are encouraged to work closely with an advisor in the philosophy department.

## Regular Major

Nine courses in philosophy, including:<sup>3</sup> 9.00

PHIL 235	Ancient Greek Philosophy
PHIL 236	History of Modern Philosophy
PHIL 240	Formal Logic
Three Level III seminar courses <sup>1,2</sup>	

<sup>1</sup> Level III seminar courses may not be taken S/U

<sup>2</sup> **Policy Concerning PHIL 398 Independent Research (IR)** (Adopted 2/12/08)

In special circumstances, an IR course may be substituted for a level III seminar. The circumstances are as follows:

1. the IR must have a special relevance to the student's program of study in the major or contract major, serving as a capstone experience;
2. by November 1 of the senior year, the student must present a petition to the chair of the philosophy department before registering for spring courses. The petition should include a rationale explaining the special relevance of the project to his or her major. The chair has full authority to grant or decline the petition;
3. no more than one IR course, which must be taken graded, can be used to fulfill the requirement; the other level III course(s) must be seminar courses.

<sup>3</sup> Students who complete the Great Conversation receive credit for one elective philosophy course toward the major.

These specifications seek to first assure a major's grasp of the history and methods of philosophy and then to provide practice in advanced philosophical inquiry.

## Contract Major

A contract major involves a contract drawn up between the student and the Department of Philosophy. The contract combines the following:

Seven courses in philosophy, including:	7.00
PHIL 235 Ancient Greek Philosophy	
PHIL 236 History of Modern Philosophy	
Two level III seminar courses in philosophy <sup>1,2</sup>	
PHIL 240 Formal Logic (or a non-credit-bearing logic project)	
Three level II or III courses in another department chosen to complement the work in philosophy	3.00
Total Credits	10

<sup>1</sup> The two level III seminar courses in philosophy may not be taken S/U

<sup>2</sup> **Policy Concerning PHIL 398 Independent Research (IR)** (Adopted 2/12/08)

In special circumstances, an IR course may be substituted for a level III seminar. The circumstances are as follows:

1. the IR must have a special relevance to the student's program of study in the major or contract major, serving as a capstone experience;
2. by November 1 of the senior year, the student must present a petition to the chair of the philosophy department before registering for spring courses. The petition should include a rationale explaining the special relevance of the project to his or her major. The chair has full authority to grant or decline the petition;
3. no more than one IR course, which must be taken graded, can be used to fulfill the requirement; the other level III course(s) must be seminar courses.

## Categories

These requirements give students a great deal of leeway to pursue their own interests. Those who wish to develop a balanced understanding of philosophy should take a number of courses in each of the following categories:

### History of Philosophy

PHIL 118 The Making of the Modern Mind

PHIL 233 Kierkegaard and Existentialism

PHIL 235 Ancient Greek Philosophy

PHIL 236 History of Modern Philosophy

PHIL 374 Seminar in the History of Philosophy

AS/PH 251

### Metaphysics and Epistemology

PHIL 246 Space and Time

PHIL 240 Formal Logic

PHIL 241 Philosophical Theology

PHIL 244 Philosophy of Science

PHIL 246 Space and Time

PHIL 371 Seminar in Epistemology

PHIL 372 Seminar in Metaphysics

## Ethics and Value Theory

PHIL 119 Moral Psychology

PHIL 120 Philosophy in Literature

PHIL 147 Death and the Meaning of Life

PHIL 243 Aesthetics

PHIL 245 Philosophy and Feminism

PHIL 250 Biomedical Ethics

PHIL 252 Ethics and the Good Life

PHIL 254 Law, Politics, and Morality

PHIL 255 Race and Social Justice

PHIL 257 Environmental Ethics

PHIL 259 Global Health Ethics

PHIL 260 Kant's Moral Theory in Literature and Film

PHIL 261 Freud and the Study of Human Behavior

PHIL 373 Seminar in Ethics and Theory of Value

Categories for PHIL 375 Seminar in Advanced Topical Studies and PHIL 399 Senior Seminar vary year by year. It is also possible to specialize in one of these areas, but students are strongly encouraged to take at least one, and preferably two, courses in each of the areas outside their specialization.

Students who complete the Great Conversation receive credit for one elective philosophy course toward the major.

## Courses

### PHIL 118: *The Making of the Modern Mind*

This course examines historically significant conceptions of reality and knowledge focusing on philosophy's contributions to Western culture. Major philosophers from ancient, medieval, and modern Western philosophy are introduced and assessed for their contributions to our understanding of the universe, human nature, and values. Some sections offer a survey of Western philosophy; others stress intensive study of central figures and works. Consult departmental prospectus for details. Open to first-year students and sophomores only. Offered each semester.

### PHIL 119: *Moral Psychology*

This seminar provides an introduction to philosophy that compares psychological and philosophical approaches to moral behavior and character. The course examines the nature of those states of mind that are thought to constitute moral (or evil) character and produce moral (or evil) actions, relationships, and societies. States considered may include humility, self-respect, beneficence, compassion, caring, anger, forgiveness, courage, and truthfulness. Open to first-year students and sophomores only. Offered annually.

**PHIL 120: *Philosophy in Literature***

Literature provides rich resources for thinking through central philosophical questions, including the metaphysics and ethics of freedom; the problem of evil; the role of character in choice and action; the nature of morality; rebellion and human solidarity; God's existence and relation to the world; and the nature of truth. Designed primarily for first-year students, this course explores philosophical ideas in literary works of several different genres by studying plot, character, point-of-view, imagery, and symbolism. Offered during Interim.

**PHIL 127: *Zen and the Art of Judo***

Judo is an Olympic sport and martial art widely known for its dynamic throws, slick submissions, and grueling conditioning. However, the founder of judo also intended it to be a system of moral education rooted in the philosophical traditions of Japan. In this course students learn the physical aspects of judo through intensive practice and the philosophical aspects of judo through studying Zen Buddhism and the writings of judo's founder, Jigoro Kano. Offered during Interim. Counts toward Asian studies major and concentration.

**PHIL 147: *Death and the Meaning of Life***

This course introduces philosophical ideas and methods through reading, discussing, and writing about basic questions that arise when we reflect on the human condition. What is meant by "meaning" when one asks whether (a person's) life has meaning? How do our beliefs about human nature, religion and morality affect how we ask or answer the question? How does our mortality affect our living? Classical and contemporary writings -- philosophical and autobiographical -- are used. Offered during Interim.

**PHIL 231: *Philosophy of Mind***

Is there anything about the human mind that cannot in principle be understood scientifically? Are we just complex physical machines? This course looks at recent attempts to answer such questions. Students examine the philosophical foundations of various approaches to the study of the mind and consider the possible moral and social implications of these approaches with respect to questions of free will, personal identity, and our responsibility for our actions. Offered annually. Counts toward neuroscience concentration.

**PHIL 233: *Kierkegaard and Existentialism***

An introduction to Kierkegaard's work and to existentialism, this course emphasizes the aesthetic, ethical, and religious "stages on life's way." Existential questions concerning the meaning of human existence, passion and faith, freedom and choice, despair, and the absurd are examined. Offered annually. Counts toward Nordic studies concentration.

**PHIL 235: *Ancient Greek Philosophy***

This course surveys the origins and development of ancient Greek philosophy from the Presocratics in the 6th century BCE through Plato and Aristotle in the 4th century BCE. Students read and analyze primary texts in translation in order to examine the historical foundations of philosophical issues in cosmogony, natural philosophy, metaphysics, epistemology, logic, psychology, and ethics. As time permits, the course may include writings from one or more of the Hellenistic schools of Epicureans, Stoics, and Skeptics. Offered annually. Counts toward ancient studies major.

**Prerequisite:** one course in philosophy or permission of instructor.

**PHIL 236: *History of Modern Philosophy***

This course examines the development of Western philosophy in the 17th and 18th centuries. Students explore the historical foundations of central issues in metaphysics and epistemology in the works of such thinkers as Descartes, Pascal, Hobbes, Spinoza, Leibniz, Locke, Berkeley, Hume, and Kant. Topics may include conceptions of God, freedom, knowledge and skepticism, the nature of ideas, and the foundations of modern science. Offered annually.

**Prerequisite:** one course in philosophy or permission of instructor.

**PHIL 240: *Formal Logic***

Formal systems of logic attempt to make principles of good reasoning explicit. This course introduces two such systems of logic: propositional and predicate calculus. Students learn to use formal techniques to analyze arguments and explore philosophical issues related to meta-theory, including consistency and completeness, the paradoxes of material implication, ontological commitment, and the interpretation of quantifiers. Offered annually. Counts toward linguistic studies concentration.

**PHIL 241: *Philosophical Theology***

This course is a philosophical inquiry into the core commitments of Christian theism in the context of other world religions and naturalism. Central themes include beliefs about the existence and nature of God, the doctrines of the trinity and incarnation, redemption and ritual, human free will and responsibility, revelation and reason, religious experience, the problem of evil, different views of life after death, miracles and historical inquiry, and religious pluralism. Offered annually.

**Prerequisite:** BTS-B.

**PHIL 243: *Aesthetics***

A philosophical inquiry into beauty and art. Students investigate the relationship between beauty, goodness, and truth, and examine different accounts of art, its value, meaning, and the standards by which it should be judged. Themes include the nature of creativity, censorship, and the significance -- cultural, moral, and religious -- of art. Counts toward art history major. Offered annually.

**PHIL 244: *Philosophy of Science***

Using examples from the natural sciences, this course examines fundamental concepts of science, including scientific method, the nature of scientific theories and hypotheses, objectivity in data collection and analysis, the use of technology in making observations, confirmation versus falsification, and explanation versus prediction. To illustrate why non-scientists need to understand scientific practice the course also considers controversies such as global warming and intelligent design. Offered annually. Counts toward neuroscience concentration.

**PHIL 245: *Philosophy and Feminism***

Students examine feminist critiques of aspects of contemporary culture that shape women's lives, such as conventional morality, science, education, art, medicine, law, religion, and marriage. Students critically examine philosophical views that underlie these institutions, including views of human nature, gender, rationality, knowledge, morality, justice, and the value of autonomy. Alternative feminist views that promote feminist aims are explored and evaluated. Offered periodically. Counts toward women's and gender studies major and concentration.

**PHIL 246: *Space and Time***

An exploration of problems about the nature of space and time that are of common interest to philosophers and scientists: Do space and time have boundaries? Are space and time independent of minds and bodies? How are space and time conceived in classical vs. relativistic physics? What is the geometry of space? Is time travel possible? What is God's relation to space and time? Offered during Interim.

**PHIL 247: *Selected Topics in Philosophy***

Discussion of philosophical topics of general interest and concern. Topics vary from year to year, and include an introduction to theory of knowledge, philosophy of language, medieval philosophy, American philosophy, and twentieth-century Continental philosophy. Offered periodically.

**PHIL 250: *Biomedical Ethics***

This course clarifies central concepts and distinctions developed in the literature of moral philosophy and applications of those concepts and distinctions to concrete moral problems that arise in the practice of medicine. Issues may include euthanasia, abortion, medical paternalism, allocation of scarce medical resources, culturally sensitive medical care, pandemics, and conflicts of loyalty in managed care. Readings are drawn from both philosophical and medical discussions. Offered annually. Counts toward neuroscience concentration.

**Prerequisite:** completion of BTS-T or permission of instructor.

**PHIL 251: *Asian Philosophy, Science, Ethics, and Religion***

This course surveys the influential philosophical traditions of India and China. Students explore the major traditions including Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, Confucianism, and Taoism and consider other traditions with which they have interacted. Where appropriate, comparisons are drawn to Western philosophical traditions. Offered periodically. Modern science raises important challenges for ethics and religion. Some are theoretical: can evolutionary and cognitive science be fully accommodated by religious persons and moral realists? Are the arguments for God's existence helped or hurt by modern science? Scientific developments also give rise to practical challenges for ethics. Should we radically enhance human nature? Does neuroscience show that we can't be morally responsible? Should we worry about global catastrophes? Students explore these or related questions. Offered annually. Counts toward neuroscience concentration.

**Prerequisite:** completion of BTS-T or permission of instructor.

**PHIL 252: *Ethics and the Good Life***

This course examines the main Western ethical theories and their application to contemporary moral concerns. Theoretical issues may include rights, duties, virtue, hedonism, egoism, the relation between ethics and theology, the fact-value distinction, relativism, and pluralism. Students discuss current topics such as global economic justice, euthanasia, the death penalty, animal rights, censorship, racism, privacy rights versus public safety, reproductive ethics, and environmental ethics. Offered annually. Counts toward management studies concentration.

**Prerequisite:** completion of BTS-T or permission of instructor.

**PHIL 253: *Democracy: Rule of the Ignorant?***

It is a platitude that democracy is a triumph of liberal civilization. Yet critics have charged that democratic citizens are ignorant and ill equipped to understand complex policy issues. This course explores the moral justifications for democracy in light of major objections and investigates whether there is something genuinely virtuous about the kind of society it sustains. Students discuss sources in political philosophy, economics, and political science. Offered periodically.

**Prerequisite:** BTS-T or permission of instructor.

**PHIL 254: *Law, Politics, and Morality***

This course considers the relationships between moral principles, law, and the practice of governments. Topics may include the "Just War" debate, censorship, property rights and distributive justice, natural law, political liberalism and its critics, whether governments should act in accordance with specific moral principles or remain neutral, the tensions between individual rights and the good of the community, and the role of religion in public life. Offered annually.

**Prerequisite:** completion of BTS-T or permission of instructor.

**PHIL 255: *Race and Social Justice***

This course analyzes issues concerning race and social justice from the perspective of normative ethical frameworks and various theories of value. Students investigate, interpret, and critique both intellectual foundations and reasons for endorsement of the various approaches to study in race and social justice. Students pay critical attention to how the black intellectual tradition understands the meanings and moral implications of such ideas. Offered periodically during Interim. Counts toward race and ethnic studies major and concentration.

**Prerequisite:** BTS-T or permission of instructor.

**PHIL 257: *Environmental Ethics***

Valuing nature raises significant philosophical and ethical issues. This course considers the nature of animal life, the character and control of pollution, the conflict between preservationism and conservationism, corporate and governmental responsibility for the eco-crisis, the use of economic categories to assess wilderness areas and endangered species, the conflict between eco-holism and individualism, and the philosophy of wilderness management. Offered annually. Counts toward environmental studies major (all emphases) and concentration and management studies concentration.

**Prerequisite:** completion of BTS-T or permission of instructor.

**PHIL 259: *Global Health Ethics***

This seminar seeks a culturally respectful ethical framework for developing health policies for the increasingly interdependent world, a world of widening disparities in wealth and health. In relation to issues of health, how might relationships between individuals, institutions, and nations be structured to reduce injustice and improve prospects for well-being, peace, and security? How might different cultural, political, and industrial conditions around the world affect western conceptions of bioethics? Offered periodically. Counts toward philosophy major.

**Prerequisite:** BTS-T or permission of instructor.

**PHIL 260: *Kant's Moral Theory in Literature and Film***

Students study the moral theory of Immanuel Kant by reading his texts and understanding the expression of their ideas in literature and film. They also clarify Kant's moral theory through comparison of his theory to other moral theories, especially utilitarianism and virtue theory. The overall purpose of the course is to help students to understand and apply moral theories generally, and Kant's theory in particular, to moral situations. Offered periodically. Counts toward film studies and German studies concentrations.

**Prerequisite:** completion of BTS-T or permission of instructor.

**PHIL 261: *Freud and the Study of Human Behavior***

Students examine Freud's thesis that our thoughts and actions spring from the darkness of our unconscious. Because Freud based his theory on a small sample of case studies, the course scrutinizes this qualitative data and discusses the role of case studies in the study of human behavior. Students evaluate the criteria for a scientific theory of human behavior and consider whether Freud's theory meets them. Offered during Interim. Counts toward German studies concentration.



**PHIL 278: Moral Theory**

An advanced introduction to moral philosophy emphasizing normative theories, the foundations of morality (metaethics), and moral reasoning. Normative theories (e.g. virtue ethics, deontological ethics, theological ethics, and utilitarianism) explore the nature of the good and the difference between right and wrong. Metaethics concerns the origins and objectivity of moral judgments, studying moral relativism, moral subjectivism, divine command theory, and ideal observer theories. Students explore moral reasoning in theory and practice using contemporary moral issues as examples. Offered periodically.

**Prerequisites:** one course in philosophy and completion of BTS-T or permission of instructor.

**PHIL 294: Academic Internship****PHIL 298: Independent Study****PHIL 371: Seminar in Epistemology**

Students explore contemporary approaches to classical issues in theory of knowledge which include the nature and limits of knowledge; theories of justification; conceptions of truth; relativism and skepticism; and the standards of knowledge in the sciences, mathematics, history, ethics and religion. Specific issues discussed vary year to year. May be repeated if topic is different. Offered alternate years.

**Prerequisites:** two courses in philosophy, one of which must be either PHIL 235 or PHIL 236 or permission of the department chair.

**PHIL 372: Seminar in Metaphysics**

Students investigate contemporary approaches to classical issues in metaphysics, which include the mind-body problem; personal identity and immortality; space and time; causality; and realism, anti-realism, and truth. Specific issues discussed vary from year to year. May be repeated if topic is different. Offered alternate years.

**Prerequisites:** two courses in philosophy, one of which must be either PHIL 235 or PHIL 236 or permission of the department chair.

**PHIL 373: Seminar in Ethics and Theory of Value**

Students examine contemporary approaches to classical issues in ethics and theory of value: the nature of moral judgments; theories of moral obligation and value; the concept of moral responsibility; and the relation of morality to science, religion, and law. May be repeated if topic is different.

**Prerequisites:** two courses in philosophy, one of which must be either PHIL 235 or PHIL 236 or permission of the department chair; completion of BTS-T or permission of instructor.

**PHIL 374: Seminar in the History of Philosophy**

Students consider a selected figure or movement from the history of philosophy. May be repeated if topic is different. May count toward ancient studies and medieval studies majors.

**Prerequisites:** two courses in philosophy, one of which must be either PHIL 235 or PHIL 236 or permission of the department chair.

**PHIL 375: Seminar in Advanced Topical Studies**

Students participate in intensive discussion of a philosophical topic selected from areas such as philosophy of religion, philosophy of science, philosophy of language, philosophy of logic, aesthetics, social and political philosophy, and feminism, with emphasis on contemporary approaches. May be repeated if topic is different.

**Prerequisite:** two courses in philosophy, one of which must be either PHIL 235 or PHIL 236 or permission of the department chair.

**PHIL 394: Academic Internship****PHIL 396: Directed Undergraduate Research**

This course provides a comprehensive research opportunity, including an introduction to relevant background material, technical instruction, identification of a meaningful project, and data collection. The topic is determined by the faculty member in charge of the course and may relate to his/her research interests. Offered based on department decision. May be offered as a 1.00 credit course or .50 credit course.

**Prerequisite:** determined by individual instructor.

**PHIL 398: Independent Research**

**Prerequisite:** one level III course in philosophy.

**PHIL 399: Senior Seminar**

Intended as a capstone course for the major, the seminar studies a selected topic, figure, or movement in philosophy, with emphasis on independent research and student presentations. Consult department's prospectus for details. May be repeated if topic is different. Offered annually.

**Prerequisite:** upper-level philosophy major or consent of instructor.

## Related Interdisciplinary Courses

WRIT 111 First-Year Writing

First-year writing courses are sometimes taught by philosophers. Consult the WRIT 111 First-Year Writing prospectus for details.

**GCON 310: Ethical Issues & Normative Perspectives: Great Conversation Continued**

This course examines ethical issues from perspectives that are contemporary expressions of or reactions to classic normative traditions covered in the two-year sequence of the Great Conversation program. Included among these are one or more contemporary representatives of the Christian theological tradition. Among the possible ethical issues considered are political morality, sexuality, gender, matters of life and death (war, euthanasia, abortion), economic justice, and environmental responsibility. Offered alternate years.

**Prerequisites:** completion of GCON 218 and BTS-T, or permission of the instructor.

## Faculty

**Chair, 2016-2017****Charles Taliaferro**

Professor of Philosophy  
philosophy of religion; ethics; philosophy of mind; aesthetics

**Arthur J. Cunningham**

Associate Professor of Philosophy  
philosophy of physics; philosophy of science; science and religion

**Laura Engel**

Instructor in Philosophy

**Michael A. Fuerstein (on leave)**

Associate Professor of Philosophy  
social and political philosophy; social epistemology; American pragmatism

**Karen L. Gervais**

Adjunct Professor of Philosophy  
bioethics; philosophy of law; social and political philosophy; feminist philosophy; public health ethics

**Jeanine Grenberg**

Professor of Philosophy  
ethics; Kant; history of modern philosophy

**Gordon D. Marino**

Professor of Philosophy  
Kierkegaard; Freud; ethics; history of philosophy; philosophy of religion

**Jason T. Marsh**

Assistant Professor of Philosophy  
bioethics; ethical theory and applied ethics; religion and cognitive science

**Danny Munoz-Hutchinson** (on leave)

Associate Professor of Philosophy  
ancient philosophy; philosophy in late antiquity; philosophy of mind; Zen Buddhism

**Anthony J. Rudd**

Associate Professor of Philosophy  
epistemology; philosophy of mind; Wittgenstein; Kierkegaard; existentialism

**Edmund N. Santurri**

Professor of Religion and Philosophy  
ethics; philosophical theology

**Corliss G. Swain** (on leave)

Professor of Philosophy  
Hume; philosophy of mind; metaphysics; feminism; history of modern philosophy

**Kathryn R. Swanson**

Visiting Assistant Professor of Philosophy  
philosophy of law, political philosophy, feminist legal theory