PHILOSOPHY (PH)

PH 0101 Introduction to Philosophy

3 Credits

This course is a topical introduction to philosophy. The aim of the course is to introduce students to the vocation of wonder and questioning by engaging students in discussions about some of the basic questions of philosophy. Students will read texts from historical and contemporary writers, and will be asked to develop their own skills of thinking, reading, and writing critically.

PH 0200 Ancient Philosophy

3 Credits

Prerequisite: PH 0101.

In this course we will investigate how the earliest practitioners of Western philosophy conceived of their own activity. The word philosophy' stems from two ancient Greek words and means, literally, 'love of wisdom.' A lover of wisdom is one who pursues wisdom rather than possesses it; consequently, we can think of ancient philosophers as founding a history of inquiry into questions whose relevance for human beings ensures their persistence, questions like: What is the nature of the universe? What can be known? and What in any given situation is the right thing to do?

PH 0201 Medieval and Renaissance Philosophy

3 Credits

Prerequisite: PH 0101.

This course will examine texts from representative thinkers from Augustine of Hippo in the period of the post-Constantinian Empire to Thomas More in the Renaissance, all sharing the new conception of philosophy. For Christians, as well as for Muslims and Jews, the enterprise of philosophy took on new motivation — the understanding of one's faith — and addressed new problems, not considered by the ancient Greeks and Romans.

PH 0202 Modern Philosophy

3 Credits

Prerequisite: PH 0101.

In light of the development and success of the new mechanistic science in the 17th and 18th centuries philosophers began to reexamine such fundamental philosophical topics as the nature of the human mind, the relationship between the mind and body, the source and scope of human knowledge, the existence of a divine being, and the source and nature of morality. In this course we will trace the development of philosophical thought in the writings of modern philosophers such as Bacon, Descartes, Spinoza, Leibniz, Locke, Berkeley Hume, Reid, and Kant.

PH 0203 19th Century Philosophy

3 Credits

Prerequisite: PH 0101.

This course examines the representative philosophers of the 19th century, notably Kant, Fichte, Schelling, Hegel, Schleiermacher, Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, Kierkegaard, and Marx.

PH 0204 20th Century Philosophy

3 Credits

Prerequisite: PH 0101.

This course presents a coherent picture of the main currents of contemporary philosophy in the Western and the non-Western tradition: phenomenology and existentialism, pragmatism and analytic philosophy, Marxism and dialectic materialism, and philosophy of history and culture.

PH 0205 Ancient Medicine and Philosophy

3 Credits

Attributes: HSTE Health Studies: Traditions, Delivery, and Ethics

Prerequisite: PH 0101.

The various methods for investigating the human body have been subject to foundational questions of scientific investigation, religious sanction, social condemnation and philosophical impasse. In this class, we will look at the way in which Ancient Greek medical practitioners and philosophers took up these investigations, negotiated problems of method, and profoundly influenced the ways we talk about, think about and treat the body today.

PH 0206 Philosophical Perspectives on Women in Classical

Literature 3 Credits
Attributes: WSGF Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies: Gender Focused

Prerequisite: PH 0101.

Ancient Greek and Latin literature presented its audience with a cast of characters who continue to enjoy social, political and cultural currency. Antigone and Oedipus, Helen and Paris, Cassandra and Prometheus have all had a hand in shaping western thought about the natures of beauty and freedom, the limits of human knowledge, and the role of law. In this course we will focus specifically upon the literary characterizations of women found throughout the ancient Greek and Latin worlds.

PH 0209 Existentialism

Attributes: FREN French Course Taught in English

Prerequisite: PH 0101.

The word existentialism describes a particular attitude toward the creation of meaning out of an inherently meaningless existence. Despite the diversity within the tradition, the existentialists of the 19th and 20th century often address questions pertaining to human freedom and responsibility, values and nihilism, anguish and affirmation, authenticity, and the absurd. This course traces how existentialism has answered these questions. In so doing, students are encouraged to rethink the foundation of their own existence and personal values, while understanding the implications of Dostoyevsky's "If God is dead, then everything is permitted" and Sartre's "Man is condemned to be free."

PH 0210 Phenomenology

3 Credits

3 Credits

Attributes: CAOT Catholic Studies: Non-Religious Studies

Prerequisite: PH 0101.

This course introduces students to phenomenology. Considered by many to be the most important theoretical movement of the 20th-Century, phenomenology is both a philosophical tradition and a method. From its founder Edmund Husserl to authors like Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty, Sartre, Derrida, and Levinas, to more recent voices in broader gender and race discussions, phenomenology still has significant influence today in existentialism, hermeneutics, and deconstruction. Students will engage in questions such as these: What is phenomenology? How is it practiced? What distinguishes this method from other approaches? What are its key contributions?

PH 0215 Philosophy of Science

3 Credits

Prerequisite: PH 0101.

Science and philosophy have always proceeded hand in hand, with the major figures in Western science being heavily influenced by the philosophy of their times and the major figures in Western philosophy heavily influenced by the science of their times. In this course we will explore the interconnections between philosophy and science. In doing so we will find some of the most deep, difficult, and fundamental questions there are, but with the "lens of science," so to speak, focusing these questions more sharply than they are often otherwise focused.

PH 0216 Philosophy and Biology of Evolutionary Theory 3 Credits Prerequisite: PH 0101.

This course explores the question of evolutionary theory from the perspectives of philosophy and biology. From the biological perspective, the course focuses on genetics, adaptive evolution, neutral evolution, the genetic impact of selection on populations, the origin and maintenance of genetic variation, the importance of development in evolution, the expression of variation, and coevolution. From the philosophical perspective, the course focuses on evolution as theory and ideology, the critique of the adaptationist program, evolution and contingency, typological versus population thinking, and the developmental systems critique.

PH 0217 Logic 3 Credits

Prerequisite: PH 0101.

This course provides a basic acquaintance with prevailing systems and methods of logic, notably traditional (Aristotelian) and modern (standard mathematical) logics.

PH 0218 Philosophy and Biochemistry of Food and Eating Practices

Prerequisite: PH 0101.

An essential and necessary component of our daily lives, food offers itself as one of the most interesting topics of cultural and scientific discussion. This course is designed to analyze food and eating practices from the twofold perspective of philosophy and biochemistry. The intersections of philosophy and biochemistry will be highlighted in topics such as "Food as Art" (juxtaposing the aesthetic and biomolecular properties of food) and "Food in Culture" (contrasting how societies prepare and eat food with the nutrition and technology of food science). To accomplish our learning goals and spur lively discussions, we will combine a lecture with activities such as trips to farms, museums, American "terroirs", quest lectures, and in-class laboratory activities.

PH 0220 Philosophy of Religion

3 Credits

3 Credits

Attributes: CAOT Catholic Studies: Non-Religious Studies Prerequisite: PH 0101.

This course inquires into the nature of religion in general from the philosophical point of view. That is, it employs the tools of critical analysis and evaluation without a predisposition to defend or reject the claims of any particular religion.

PH 0221 The Question of Religion

3 Credits

Attributes: CARS Catholic Studies: Religious Studies

Prerequisite: PH 0101.

Nineteenth- and 20th-century continental philosophy calls into question the traditional understanding of religion, God, transcendence, incarnation, sacrifice, responsibility, evil, and ritual. This course explores the transformation of the traditional understanding of these ideas in the wake of thinkers such as Hegel, Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, Heidegger, Bataille, Lacan, Levinas, Girard, Nancy, Derrida, and Marion.

PH 0222 Evil 3 Credits

Prerequisite: PH 0101.

This course explores the problem of evil from the perspectives of theology and philosophy. The course considers God and evil, classical theodicies (reasonable justifications of God before the prevalence of evil), modern philosophical accounts of evil, social evil, and the possibility of belief in the face of evil. Within the context of these subjects, the course addresses the following questions: What is evil? What are the roots of evil? What effect does an individual's understanding of evil have on his or her understanding of the human being, of God, and of religion? What is our responsibility in the face of evil?

PH 0223 The Problem of God

3 Credits

Attributes: CAOT Catholic Studies: Non-Religious Studies

Prerequisite: PH 0101.

This course studies the problem of the existence of God, including the metaphysical and epistemological issues entailed therein, as developed by such thinkers as Augustine, Anselm, Aquinas, Descartes, Hume, Spinoza, Kant, and Hartshorne.

PH 0230 Philosophy of Self and Subjectivity

3 Credits

Prerequisite: PH 0101.

In 446 BCE the Greek poet Pindar, crafted this line: "What is someone? What is someone not? A person is the dream of a shadow." What does it mean to be a self or a subject? While most people would claim to know themselves, it is not always entirely clear what a 'self' is. This course examines the development and parameters of the self and subjectivity through the lens of major philosophical figures. First using a historical approach, then applying methods from contemporary schools of thought, the course investigates the self as both an anchor of security and source of complexity.

PH 0240 Introduction to Asian Philosophies

3 Credits

Attributes: WDIV World Diversity

Prerequisite: PH 0101.

This course provides a philosophical overview of the major philosophical traditions that originate in Indian and China, including significant philosophical responses and contributions to them from throughout greater Asia. These traditions include, but are not limited to, Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism, and Daoism. Emphasis is given to philosophical exegesis of texts and practices; some comparison with Western traditions may also be included.

PH 0241 Confucianism

3 Credits

Attributes: WDIV World Diversity

Prerequisite: PH 0101.

Confucianism is a reflective tradition that for over 2500 years has shaped social norms and moral values in East Asia. It underlies traditional political theory and religious practice and remains the template for social interactions. In this course we examine the Confucian tradition through its major figures and primary texts, from the Analects of Confucius (551-479 BCE) to the writings of contemporary Confucians. Emphasis is given to drawing out the philosophical content of Confucian thought by engaging both traditional commentaries and recent philosophical interpretations. We also assess the appropriateness of regarding certain practices and institutions as Confucian.

PH 0242 Philosophical Daoism and Zen Buddhism

3 Credits

Attributes: WDIV World Diversity

Prerequisite: PH 0101.

This course explores writings and philosophical influences of Daoism and Zen Buddhism in East Asia and in the West. The key philosophical themes covered are the related ideas of non-action (wuwei) and emptymind (mushin). Emphasis is given to philosophical exegesis of these themes and their potential application to ideals of personal, moral, and professional integrity. The course includes reading and discussion of historical and contemporary texts. It may also involve exploratory, reflective engagement in Dao and Zen associated activities such as breathing meditation, T'ai Chiexercises, brush-calligraphy, haiku composition, or archery.

PH 0250 Ethical Theory

3 Credits

Prerequisite: PH 0101.

This course presents an in depth examination of how moral judgments are justified. The history of philosophy has led to a number of different theoretical frameworks that seek to set out methods for moral justification. We examine several of these methods and reflect upon how they support and/or contradict each other and what is at stake when moral systems conflict. In addition to examining the writings of philosophers such as Plato, Aristotle, Hobbes, Kant, Nietzsche, Mill, and Rawls, students will be asked to consider how these theoretical frameworks apply in actual cases.

PH 0251 Ethical Theories in America

3 Credits

Attributes: ASPH American Studies: Philosophy, ASUP American Studies Upper Level

Prerequisite: PH 0101.

This course examines the growth and development of ethical theory in America. America's first philosophers, Jonathan Edwards, Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Jefferson, et al, distinguished their philosophies in terms of religious, political, and social values. This ethical stance became a tradition in America. The course examines this tradition in the writings of representative American philosophers.

PH 0260 Social and Political Philosophy

3 Credits

3 Credits

Attributes: BSAH Black Studies: Arts and Humanities, BSFC Black Studies Focus Course, PJST Peace and Justice Studies

Prerequisite: PH 0101.

This course analyzes the writings of leading social and political thinkers, with special consideration of the movements of protest and dissent.

PH 0263 The Concept of Human Rights

Prerequisite: PH 0101.

Bosnia, Somalia, Guatemala, the Holocaust: The notion of human rights and accusations of human rights violations are a constant presence in our political environment and in the formulation of U.S. foreign policy. This course follows the emergence of this concept from the political and ethical thought of the Greeks, to the Enlightenment, to the explicit formulation of "human rights" in the 20th century as a guiding principle of international relations.

PH 0264 Philosophy of Law

3 Credits

Prerequisite: PH 0101.

This course examines the major questions of legal philosophy, the nature of legal rights and legal duties, the definition of law, and the grounds of legal authority.

PH 0265 Philosophy and Economic Anthropology

3 Credits

Attributes: PMMP Philosophy Major: Major Philosopher

Prerequisite: PH 0101.

This course examines the economy from philosophical and anthropological perspectives. We will investigate why people produce and exchange things, why they seek to amass things in some circumstances and give them away in others, and how our modern understandings of value, debt, and rationality emerged.

PH 0270 Aesthetics 3 Credits

Prerequisite: PH 0101.

The course examines aesthetic experience and concepts like imitation, expression, and psychic distance; considers the relationships among the various arts; and explores the role of art in life.

PH 0271 Philosophy of Tragedy

3 Credits

Prerequisite: PH 0101.

This course explores various works on tragedy by, for example, Plato, Aristotle, Hegel, Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, Freud, Heidegger, Lacan, Derrida, and Irigaray, which are read alongside various tragedies such as Sophocles' Oedipus the King and Antigone, and Shakespeare's Hamlet.

PH 0272 Philosophy of Film

3 Credits

Prerequisite: PH 0101.

Philosophy of film is one of the leading branches of philosophical aesthetics. While informed by and partly related to disciplines such as film studies, film theory, and film criticism, philosophy of film privileges a cognitive approach to the interpretation and study of film, an approach according to which film might be seen as doing philosophy per se, thus providing an original contribution to the overall philosophical panorama. The course begins with a critical overview of the most significant ontologies of film. Such a discussion is then followed, in the second and third units, by the exploration of issues pertaining to both the tradition of film studies and to the aforementioned cognitivist tradition. Among the issues considered, specific attention is given to the question of narrative, to emotions and film, and to the relation between fiction and nonfiction. A last unit will instead open the discussion to the relation between film and television and, more speculatively, to the future of film in the age of digital technologies.

PH 0281 Philosophies of Love and Sex

3 Credits

Attributes: WSGF Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies: Gender Focused **Prerequisite:** PH 0101.

This course examines some of the major trends within traditional and feminist philosophies of love and sex. Possible topics include the nature of erotic love, the construction of sexual activity, and the social/political reality of pornography and prostitution.

PH 0282 Violence and the Sacred

3 Credits

Attributes: PJST Peace and Justice Studies, WSGF Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies: Gender Focused

Prerequisite: PH 0101.

Is religion essentially violent? How have religious principles been used to justify abuse? Who suffers the physical and spiritual effects of this hostility? What actions might we take in response to such suffering? This course examines the intersection of violence and the sacred, especially as it has emerged and been confronted within the Catholic/Christian tradition. Attention is paid to the works of both traditional and feminist philosophers. Possible topics include: child abuse, domestic violence, and racial violence.

PH 0283 Philosophy and Pornography

3 Credits

Prerequisite: PH 0101.

This course examines some of the major trends within traditional and feminist philosophies of pornography. Possible topics include the nature of pornography, the relationship between pornography and the construction of sexual desire, and the social/political consequences of pornography in our communities. Students must be at least 18 years of age.

PH 0299 Special Topics (Shell)

3 Credits

Prerequisite: PH 0101.

This course explores a specific topic in the discipline of philosophy, in an effort to deepen students' vocations of incessant questioning not only by exploring a specific thinker, question, or historical period, but also by further developing their own thinking, reading, and critical writing skills.

PH 0300 Plato 3 Credits

Prerequisites: Two courses in Philosophy.

This course covers central ontological and epistemological themes in selected early, middle, and late Platonic dialogues, paying particular attention to Plato's inclination to identify virtue with knowledge.

PH 0301 Aristotle 3 Credits

Prerequisites: Two courses in Philosophy.

This course introduces Aristotle through a selection of his works, exploring their relation to other works, their place in the scheme of the sciences, and thoroughly investigating their subject matter.

3 Credits PH 0304 Aguinas

Attributes: ISIF Italian Studies: Italy-Focused Prerequisites: Two courses in Philosophy.

This course focuses on Aquinas's most mature work, Summa Theologiae. This work exemplifies the Christian intellectual reaction to Islamic Aristotelianism, while at the same time bearing witness to Thomas's belief in the unity of truth. The course examines and analyzes such questions as the existence and intelligibility of God, the nature and powers of the human composite, human destiny, the human act, good and evil, providence and freedom, natural law, and the virtues.

PH 0307 Descartes 3 Credits

Attributes: FREN French Course Taught in English Prerequisites: Two courses in Philosophy.

Three years after he finished college, Descartes got stuck in a snowstorm on his way to fight in a war. Alone in his room, he reflected on his education, coming to believe that many of the things he had been taught in college were pretty dubious. He also realized that he had believed many things all his life without giving thought to his reasons for believing them. He decided the best thing he could do was rid himself of all his old beliefs and then, relying only on his own mind, replace them with only those beliefs for which he could find good reasons. This course discusses the development and results of Descartes' search for truth.

3 Credits PH 0309 Leibniz

Prerequisites: Two courses in Philosophy.

Can everything in the world be rationally explained? Even the existence of the world itself? G.W. Leibniz (1646-1716) thought so. Together with his understanding of the nature of truth, this led him to some startling conclusions, such as nothing causally interacts with anything else, everything internally reflects everything else, and even though evil exists this is the best of all possible worlds. In this course we examine these conclusions as well as Leibniz's theories about such puzzling topics as the nature of the mind, body, God, freedom, and space.

PH 0310 Hume 3 Credits

Prerequisites: Two courses in Philosophy.

This course offers an in-depth understanding of the philosophy of David Hume. Hume, one of the most interesting (and influential) of the 18thcentury philosophers, made major contributions to our understanding of causation, morality, and the mind, to name just a few. Hume began with principles that seemed quite plausible but, taking these ideas to their logical conclusions, arrived at a philosophy that is, to say the least, surprising.

PH 0311 Kant 3 Credits

Prerequisites: Two courses in Philosophy.

Almost everyone recognizes that through experience the human mind is shaped by the world. Immanuel Kant, however, argued for the revolutionary claim that the world is shaped by the human mind. In developing this position Kant was led to formulate a radical view concerning the nature of space and time. It also led him to draw striking conclusions about our knowledge of ourselves, objects, causation, God, freedom, and immortality - conclusions that changed philosophy forever. In this class we will study Kant's revolution in philosophy.

PH 0312 Hegel 3 Credits

Prerequisites: Two courses in Philosophy.

The philosophy of G.W.F. Hegel, the most famous of the German idealists, directly spawned the philosophy of Karl Marx. Hegel is considered the father of existentialism and influenced contemporary schools of critical theory, continental philosophy, and post-structuralism. This course focuses on Hegel's most famous work, Phenomenology of Spirit. Students learn the mechanics of dialectical reasoning by examining Hegel's reflections upon time and space, perception, scientific reasoning, the concepts of life and death, the master-slave dialectic, and selfconsciousness. The course works through this text in detail, and pays particularly close attention to how Hegel interprets the philosophy of Immanuel Kant.

PH 0314 Nietzsche 3 Credits

Prerequisites: Two courses in Philosophy.

This course deals with the thought of one of the leading philosophical figures of the 19th century, Friedrich Nietzsche. In terms of both style and content, Nietzsche was an innovator who called into question the traditional notions of science, systematic knowledge, ethics, and culture as such. The task of the course is to examine several themes central to Nietzsche's work, among them the will to power, the perspectival approach to truth, the concept of genealogy, the revaluation of values, eternal recurrence, and the death of God.

PH 0316 Bergson 3 Credits

Attributes: FREN French Course Taught in English

Prerequisites: Two courses in Philosophy.

This course explores the work of Henri Bergson (1859-1941). The course primarily takes the form of a close reading of Time and Free Will (1889), Matter and Memory (1911), and The Two Sources of Morality and Religion (1932). The course will also explore the influence of Bergson's work on contemporary philosophy, psychology, science, and religion.

PH 0317 Heidegger 3 Credits

Prerequisites: Two courses in Philosophy.

This course explores the work of Martin Heidegger (1889-1976), one of the most influential philosophers of the 20th century. It primarily takes the form of a close reading of Being and Time (1927) and The Origin of the Work of Art (1936). The course hinges on Derrida's reading of Heidegger's existential analysis of death.

PH 0320 Metaphysics 3 Credits

Attributes: CAOT Catholic Studies: Non-Religious Studies

Prerequisites: Two previous courses in Philosophy.

This course concerns itself with being and our knowledge of being, developing in student minds an operative habit of viewing reality in its ultimate context.

PH 0321 Knowledge

3 Credits

Prerequisites: Two courses in Philosophy.

The focus of this course is to examine the fundamental questions concerning human knowledge. For example: What is knowledge? Can I know anything? Do I know something because I can trace it back to some indubitable foundation or because it fits together with everything else like a piece of a jigsaw puzzle? Can I have knowledge without being able to say how I know it? Do men and women know things in different ways? Is knowledge something I can gain on my own or is knowledge essentially a social activity?

PH 0323 Philosophy of Mind

3 Credits

Prerequisites: Two courses in Philosophy.

This course acquaints students with the most recent philosophical theories on the workings of the mind. Although it emphasizes philosophical theories of the mind, it also pays close attention to the philosophical implications of recent research in sciences such as psychology and neuroscience. This is an exciting topic; join us on this quest to address the Delphic dictum: Know Thyself!

PH 0331 Philosophy of Language

3 Credits

Prerequisites: Two courses in Philosophy.

This course introduces the student to the philosophy of language: its themes, complexities and problems. Employing a historical approach, the course surveys key philosophers who investigate the meaning, source and structure of language. Typically their primary question investigates various ways that the human person, while immersed within a context, understands language. After a brief investigation of ancient and medieval thinkers, the course focuses on a number of modern and contemporary figures who represent the mainstream discussion of the philosophy of language, including representatives of both analytic and continental traditions.

PH 0340 Critical Theory

3 Credits

Prerequisite: PH 0101.

This course examines the 20th century philosophical movement of cultural critique arising out of the association of German Jewish scholars known as the Frankfurt School. Central problems within this movement include the persistence of violence within human reason, the various forms and forces of ideology, the relation of political activity to artistic activity, the proper undertaking of immanent social critique, and the possibility of freedom in societies that are increasingly authoritarian. Representative thinkers within this field include Theodor Adorno, Max Horkheimer, Herbert Marcuse, Erich Fromm, and Walter Benjamin. Previously PH 0212.

PH 0350 Advanced Topics in Ethics

3 Credits

Prerequisites: Two courses in Philosophy.

This course examines questions pertaining to the status and content of morality, such as the following. Are there universal moral truths, and what makes them true? Is morality objective, or is it constructed by communities or individuals? What makes an action right or wrong? What reasons do we have to be moral? This course examines competing answers to such questions and considers philosophical defenses of them.

PH 0360 Critical Race Theory

3 Credits

Attributes: BSAH Black Studies: Arts and Humanities, BSFC Black Studies Focus Course, PJST Peace and Justice Studies, UDIV U.S. Diversity

Prerequisites: Two courses in Philosophy.

Although race can be considered as one of several physical features of an individual, this course will investigate the recent research and literature in the field of Critical Race Theory that critiques this purely biological conception. For the purpose of understanding how race functions in our socio-political world, this body of work treats the concept as a social construction, drawing heavily on the phenomenological and existential traditions. Pertinent themes like lived experience, authenticity, and racial privilege will be explored using key texts (by Jean-Paul Sartre, Franz Fanon, Lewis Gordon, and Robert Bernasconi, to name a few).

PH 0370 Philosophy of Literature

3 Credits

Prerequisites: Two courses in Philosophy.

This course examines the philosophy "of" literature (the general nature of poetry and prose) and philosophy "in" literature (specific works that harbor philosophical ideas).

PH 0398 Independent Study

1-3 Credits

Upon request and by agreement with an individual professor in the department, a student may conduct a one-semester independent study on a specific philosophical topic. Prerequisite: two previous courses in Philosophy

PH 0399 Capstone Experience

3 Credits

Prerequisites: Two courses in Philosophy.

This course is the culminating experience in a student's study of philosophy at Fairfield University. Students will be asked to reflect on their philosophical writings and activities over the course of their study, to synthesize and expand a selection of these, to critically and collegially engage with other students for the mutual improvement of their philosophical projects, and to prepare for a philosophical life after graduation regardless of their career choices. Enrollment by permission only.