

Philosophy

Humanities Division

The great philosophers seek to answer the most basic questions about the world and our place in it. Can we distinguish between what is real and what is unreal? What is freedom? What is knowledge? What is understanding? What is wisdom? What are the roles of reason, perception, intuition and emotion in shaping our relations with the world and with each other? What does it mean to be human? What does it mean to be non-human? What is life? What is the value of art? What are we to think about religion?

Many philosophical questions are inescapable. How is one to live one's life? What are good and bad, right and wrong, virtue and vice? How do we acquire obligations? How are we to make moral decisions? In every life, such questions arise, and everyone assumes one answer or another. To attempt to articulate your answer and to search for better answers is to become a philosopher.

Original works of the great classical and contemporary philosophers from different traditions are used in all courses. Texts are analyzed critically in order to understand what is being said and judge their merit. In class discussion and in written work, we raise questions, develop additional ideas, and construct new arguments. Classes in philosophy are generally small and usually emphasize discussion and dialogue. Students are encouraged to engage in critical thought and to come to their own conclusions.

The Curriculum

Nearly all courses are designed to be of interest and accessible to both majors and non-majors. Regardless of background, students should normally take the introductory course, PHIL 100, before they take any other philosophy course at Kenyon. Each member of the philosophy faculty offers a section of the introductory course. This course serves as an introduction to the subject through the reading of original works by major philosophers. We emphasize classroom discussion, focusing on interpretation of the texts and consideration of the philosophical issues raised by them. We assign several short papers and we give a final examination. Other courses especially recommended for first-year students are PHIL 105 and 115.

Courses that may be taken without prerequisites are:

- PHIL 105 Introduction to Logic
- PHIL 110 Introduction to Ethics
- PHIL 115 Practical Issues in Ethics
- PHIL 190 The Anthropocene as a Philosophical Problem
- PHIL 200 Ancient Philosophy

- PHIL 208 Contemporary Political Philosophy
- PHIL 210 Modern Philosophy
- PHIL 212 Early Chinese Philosophy
- PHIL 225 Existentialism
- PHIL 235 Philosophy of Law
- PHIL 240 Philosophy of Religion
- PHIL 270 Political Philosophy
- PHIL 275 Moral Psychology

Intermediate-level courses include:

- PHIL 201 Symbolic Logic
- PHIL 245 Philosophy of Natural Science
- PHIL 270 Political Philosophy
- PHIL 291 Special Topic

More advanced courses include:

- PHIL 310 Heidegger's Ontology
- PHIL 340 Sartre and Merleau-Ponty
- PHIL 345 Kant

Although the following seminars are primarily for majors, they may be of interest to other advanced students as well:

- PHIL 400 Ethics Seminar
- PHIL 405 Epistemology Seminar
- PHIL 410 Metaphysics Seminar

Requirements for the Major

Students have to take at least 9 philosophy courses to complete the Philosophy major.

(1) Majors must take both:

- PHIL 200 Ancient Philosophy
- PHIL 210 Modern Philosophy

(2) Students must take on Logic course:

- PHIL 105 Introduction to Logic OR
- PHIL 201 Symbolic Logic

(3) To meet the distribution requirement within the philosophy major, the major must take one course from at least 4 out of the following 5 divisions:

- Ethics
- Epistemology
- Metaphysics
- Great Thinkers
- Philosophical Schools and periods

(4) Majors must take one 400-level seminar. This course can count toward the above distribution requirement:

- PHIL 400 Ethics Seminar
- PHIL 405 Epistemology Seminar
- PHIL 410 Metaphysics Seminar

(5) At least one elective within the department. This includes any of the above courses, but also "Introduction to Philosophy," special topics courses and an Individual Study.

(6) Majors must complete the Senior Capstone.

Course Planning Tips

PHIL 100 is normally the first course majors take, but it is not mandatory.

The following courses should normally be taken as early as possible:

- PHIL 105 Introduction to Logic OR PHIL 201 Symbolic Logic
- PHIL 110 Introduction to Ethics
- PHIL 200 Ancient Philosophy
- PHIL 210 Modern Philosophy

The following advanced seminars should normally begin no earlier than the second semester of the junior year:

- PHIL 400 Ethics Seminar
- PHIL 405 Epistemology Seminar
- PHIL 410 Metaphysics Seminar

Students who expect to do graduate work in philosophy are strongly encouraged to take PHIL 201.

Senior Capstone (Non-Honors or Honors)

The Senior Capstone consists of a comprehensive essay examination with questions drawn from ancient philosophy, modern philosophy and one of the core-area advanced seminars of the student's choice.

Honors

Central to the Honors Program is a series of two related courses culminating in a thesis at the end of the senior year. The first, PHIL 497, enables the student to pursue the search for and development of a suitable topic. By the second semester of the senior year, the student should have the background necessary for writing an honors thesis in PHIL 498. Students interested in the Honors Program should submit a written request to the chair of the department before the second semester of their junior year.

In the second semester of their junior year, honors candidates submit a thesis proposal for approval. Upon departmental approval, honors candidates will register for two 0.25 unit courses to be taken senior year, PHIL 497 (fall) and PHIL 498 (spring). Honors candidates write complete drafts of their theses in PHIL 497 and refine and defend their theses in PHIL 498.

Course Requirements for Honors

Honor candidates are required to take the following:

(1) Honor candidates must complete:

- PHIL 200 Ancient Philosophy
- PHIL 210 Modern Philosophy
- PHIL 201 Symbolic Logic
- PHIL 400 Ethics Seminar
- PHIL 405 Epistemology Seminar
- PHIL 410 Metaphysics Seminar

(2) At least one course from the Great Thinkers category.

(3) At least one course from Philosophical Schools and Period category.

(4) At least one elective courses from the above distribution lists. The can include Introduction to Philosophy, Special Topics courses and an Individual Study.

(5) Honor candidates must take in their senior year:

- PHIL 497 Senior Honors (fall semester)
- PHIL 498 Senior Honors (spring semester)

(6) Honor candidates must successfully complete an Honor's Thesis and pass the Oral Examination.

Honors Thesis and Oral Examination

Upon completion of the thesis, the honors candidate will stand for an oral examination on the thesis, conducted by an outside examiner and the candidate's thesis advisor, in the presence of the entire department.

Divisional Approval

The candidate must meet the requirements of the College and of the Humanities Division for admission to and retention in the Honors Program.

Requirements for the Minor

The minor in philosophy consists of five courses in the department. Students are allowed to take any five philosophy courses to complete the minor, with the only stipulation being that no more than two of these courses can be 100-level courses.

Graduate School Considerations

Philosophy majors interested in attending graduate school are strongly encouraged to select PHIL 201 to satisfy the logic requirement, and to select PHIL 400, 405 and 410 to satisfy the core-area course requirements. Such students also should consult with a faculty member as early as possible.

Off-Campus Studies

Philosophy majors who wish to do so are generally able to participate in off-campus study programs, particularly if they begin their major programs as sophomores.

Transfer Credit Policy

Students who want to transfer credit to count towards the major or minor in the philosophy department must petition the department with a copy of the syllabus of the course. The department will decide on a case-by-case basis whether transfer credit will be counted towards the major or minor.

Courses in Philosophy

Introduction to Philosophy

PHIL 100 CREDITS: 0.5

The primary aim of this course is to acquaint the student with the spirit, methods and problems of philosophy. Students will explore the range of issues in which philosophical inquiry is possible and to which it is relevant. Major works of important philosophers, both ancient and modern, will be used to introduce topics in metaphysics, theory of knowledge, ethics and other traditional areas of philosophical concern. No prerequisite. Offered every semester.

Introduction to Logic

PHIL 105 CREDITS: 0.5

This course is an examination of the informal reasoning used in everyday life as well as in academic contexts. We will aim to both describe and understand that reasoning, on the one hand, and improve our competence in reasoning, on the other. We will explore the nature of explanation and causation, and we will discuss ways of articulating our reasoning patterns that make their nature clear. Thus we aim both to improve critical thinking and reading skills, and to understand in a deeper way the role that those skills play in human life. This counts towards the logic requirement for the major and minor. No prerequisite. Offered every year.

Introduction to Ethics

PHIL 110 CREDITS: 0.5

The central question in ethics is "How should I live my life?" This course explores this question by examining major ethical traditions such as honor ethics, Stoicism, Aristotelian virtue ethics, sentimentalism, utilitarianism, Kant's practical philosophy, Nietzsche's critique of morality, Buddhist ethics and feminist ethics. The emphasis is on classical texts, as well as their connections with our contemporary life. This course is suitable for first-year students. This counts toward the ethics requirement for the major. No prerequisite. Offered every year.

Practical Issues in Ethics

PHIL 115 CREDITS: 0.5

This course examines moral issues we encounter in our private, as well as public, lives from a philosophical point of view. We discuss various ethical approaches such as Kantianism, utilitarianism and value pluralism through analyzing issues such as abortion, capital punishment, euthanasia, the moral status of nonhuman animals, the environment, climate change, war, world poverty, inequality and the ecology of rural life. There is a strong emphasis on discussion and we use diverse methods such as Brandeis Brief and moral heuristics. This course is suitable for first-year students. This counts toward the ethics requirement for the major. No prerequisite. Offered every year.

The Anthropocene as a Philosophical Problem

PHIL 190 CREDITS: 0.5

This course is a philosophical introduction to the environmental humanities, taking the concept of the Anthropocene as our point of departure. We are especially interested in critical examinations of the following concepts and topics: the meanings of *ahumana* and *anaturea*, Big History, religion in human evolution, global environmental history, how humans are connected to nature and nonhuman animals, the pastoral ideal and technology, rituals and place, ecology and production of space, environmental justice and the environmentalism of the poor. We also explore how traditional disciplines in the humanities, especially philosophy and religion, might be rethought in light of these new intellectual developments. Scholars we read include Hannah Arendt, Robert Bellah, Rachel Carson, William Cronon, Cora Diamond, Ian Hacking, Donna Haraway, David Harvey, Martin Heidegger, Carolyn Merchant, Ramachandra Guha, A.N. Whitehead and Ludwig Wittgenstein, as well as thinkers from Chinese philosophical tradition. ENVS 112 is recommended. This counts toward the metaphysics requirement for the major. No prerequisite.

Ancient Philosophy

PHIL 200 CREDITS: 0.5

Ancient Greek philosophy is not only the basis of the Western and the Arabic philosophical traditions, it is central for understanding Western culture in general, including literature, science, religion, or values. In this course, we examine some of the seminal texts of Greek philosophy, focusing on the work of Socrates, Plato and Aristotle. But we also examine the work of the pre-Socratics (such as Heraclitus, Zeno and Democritus) and the Sophists (such as Protagoras

and Gorgias). PHIL 100 is recommended. This is required for the major. No prerequisite. Offered every year.

Symbolic Logic

PHIL 201 CREDITS: 0.5

There are many different ways to get someone to do what you want. These include threatening violence, lying, conditioning, bribery, begging and providing an argument. An "argument" (in logic) is an appeal to evidence in the support of a conclusion. (It should not be confused with the ordinary usage of the term "argument," which means quarrel.) An argument — unlike the other methods of persuasion — is an appeal to what is rational in the person to whom one is speaking. It is the only method that respects the other person's ability to think. An argument does this in two ways. First, an argument is an attempt to show that the evidence supports the conclusion. Second, an argument is the only method that invites the other person to assess whether the evidence in fact does support the conclusion. An argument invites a conversation. Logic is the study of what makes some arguments successful and some not. We will develop a procedure for assessing whether an argument is good (i.e., valid). We will examine the uses and the limits of this method. This counts toward the logic requirement for the major and minor. No prerequisite. Offered every year.

Faith and Reason: Medieval Philosophy

PHIL 205 CREDITS: 0.5

Philosophically speaking, the period between the 11th and 16th centuries was a remarkably fertile one that both warrants and rewards close study. In this course we will examine some of the major thinkers and themes from the Jewish, Muslim and Christian medieval traditions, with an emphasis on understanding how the medieval synthesized the wisdom of the ancients of Aristotle with their dominant religious concerns. Particular attention is paid to the major epistemological and metaphysical topics pursued during this period. This counts toward the philosophical schools and periods requirement for the major. No prerequisite. Offered every third year.

Contemporary Political Philosophy

PHIL 208 CREDITS: 0.5

This course is a study of major works in political philosophy since about 1950. Topics will include: the nature and legitimacy of modern political institutions; modern forms of power, oppression and alienation; and the often-conflicting demands of liberty, equality, rights and recognition. We will explore these topics through the writings of Oakeshott, Rawls, Nozick, Taylor, Geuss, Habermas and Foucault. This counts toward the ethics requirement for the major. No prerequisite. Offered every third year.

Feminist Philosophy

PHIL 209 CREDITS: 0.5

This course will offer a first introduction to feminist philosophy. As such, the course will first offer a brief introduction to the disciplines of feminist theory and philosophy in general, but will then focus on three specific areas. Specifically, the course will emphasize: 1) feminist metaphysics (i.e., how gender might relate to one's essence, and thus to questions of endurance through chance, etc.), 2) feminist epistemology (i.e., ways in which gender may influence how the world is known) and 3) feminist ethics (i.e., how gender can and perhaps should inform ethical theory). The course will focus on significant primary texts from authors who work within feminist philosophy. These works will be read towards the goal of determining how traditional philosophical questions are informed and enriched when they are considered in light of a Feminist philosophical approach. This counts toward the philosophical schools and periods requirement for the major. No prerequisite.

Modern Philosophy

PHIL 210 CREDITS: 0.5

This course examines 17th- through 18th-century philosophy. Major figures to be studied include Descartes, Spinoza, Leibniz, Locke, Berkeley, Hume and Kant. We will stress metaphysical and epistemological issues throughout. It wouldn't be unfair to say that Descartes sets the agenda by creating a certain conception of the mind and the nature of knowledge, while each of the subsequent figures works out various implications of that conception. As such, the course content takes something of a narrative form, where we start with a certain optimism about knowledge and work our way into a deepening skepticism, only to be rescued at the end (by a rescuer whose price may not be worth paying). PHIL 200 is recommended but any previous philosophy course is acceptable. This course is required for the major. No prerequisite. Offered every year.

Early Chinese Philosophy

PHIL 212 CREDITS: 0.5

This course is a survey of early Chinese philosophy (in translation). We focus on the major thinkers of the classical period of Chinese philosophy (550–221 BC), such as Confucius, Mozi, Mencius, Laozi, Zhuangzi, Xunzi and Han Feizi. The emphasis is on ethics, moral psychology and political philosophy. This counts toward the philosophical schools and periods requirement for the major. PHIL 100 is recommended. No prerequisite. Offered every other year.

German Idealism

PHIL 214 CREDITS: 0.5

In this course we will study the major philosophers of post-Kantian German Idealism: Schiller, Hölderlin, Jacobi, Fichte, Schelling and Hegel. Our emphasis will be on Fichte and Hegel. Questions addressed will include the following: In what way are the philosophical systems of the

German Idealists systems of freedom? How do the theories of freedom developed by the German Idealists relate to their accounts of the mind? How do the German Idealists understand the development or the history of the mind (both in the individual and in human kind)? What is the idealism in German Idealism? This counts toward the philosophical schools and periods requirement for the major. PHIL 210 recommended. No prerequisite. Offered every other year.

Nineteenth-Century Philosophy

PHIL 215 CREDITS: 0.5

This course traces the development of philosophy from Hegel to Nietzsche. The philosophers we will discuss ask the following main questions: given Kant's critique of metaphysics, can we still aspire to knowledge of the Absolute, and if so, by what method? What is the relation between appearance and reality (the thing in itself)? How does philosophy relate to religion and art? In the study of philosophy, to what extent do we have to take into account the history of philosophy? The readings will be from Hegel's "Phenomenology of Spirit" and his "Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion," Feuerbach's "Essence of Christianity," Schopenhauer's "World as Will and Representation," and Nietzsche's "Birth of Tragedy" and "Genealogy of Morals." PHIL 200 or 210 recommended. This counts toward the philosophical schools and periods requirement for the major. No prerequisite.

Classical Pragmatism

PHIL 220 CREDITS: 0.5

Pragmatism is the only major philosophical tradition on the world stage originating in the United States. And it is the only tradition of philosophy since Kant that is respected and taken seriously in both the Anglo-American philosophical tradition and the continental philosophical tradition. Many movements claim their origins in American pragmatism — these include verificationism, Husserlian phenomenology, Quinean naturalism, and some trends in postmodernism, cybernetics, vagueness logic, semiotics, the dominant trend in American educational philosophy, Italian fascism, American experimental psychology and Gandhi's philosophy of nonviolence. We will examine that tradition by reading the major works of Peirce, James, Dewey and their critics. This counts toward the philosophical schools and periods requirement for the major. No prerequisite. Offered every third year.

Existentialism

PHIL 225 CREDITS: 0.5

Existentialism is one of the most influential philosophical movements in modern culture. Unlike other recent philosophies, its impact extends far beyond the cloistered walls of academia into literature (Beckett, Kafka, Ionesco), art (Giacometti, Bacon, Dadaism), theology (Tillich, Rahner, Buber) and psychology. Existentialism is at once an expression of humanity's continual struggle with the perennial problems of philosophy (knowledge, truth, meaning, value) and a particularly modern response to the social and spiritual conditions of our times (alienation, anomie, meaninglessness). In this course we will study existentialism in its complete form as a cultural

and philosophical movement. After uncovering the historical context from which this movement emerged, we will view the "existential" paintings of de Chirico and Munch; read the fiction of Kafka, Dostoevsky, Tolstoy and Beckett; and closely study the thought of Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, Heidegger and Sartre. Among the topics we shall examine are alienation, authenticity, self-knowledge, belief in God, the nature of value and the meaning of life. This counts toward the philosophical schools and periods requirement for the major. PHIL 100 or RLST 101 is recommended. No prerequisite. Offered every year.

Philosophy of Law

PHIL 235 CREDITS: 0.5

This course examines fundamental philosophical issues related to law. Some of the questions include: What kind of thing is a law? Is it possible to know with certainty what the law is in advance? Where does law get its authority from? What kind of authority does the legal system have? Can there be immoral laws? Can there be unenforced laws? Can there be contradictory laws in a single legal system? What is a legal right? Is objectivity in judging a case really possible? Is it desirable? Does law by its very nature favor politically powerful groups over weak ones? We will examine these and related questions by studying five influential traditions of legal philosophy (also known as Jurisprudence): Natural Law Theory, Legal Positivism, Legal Realism, Judicial Process Theory and Critical Legal Theory. This counts toward the ethics requirement for the major. No prerequisite.

Philosophy of Religion

PHIL 240 CREDITS: 0.5

This course presents an inquiry into the nature of claims associated with religious traditions and the validity, if any, of such claims in the contemporary context. Topics to be studied include modern critiques of religious claims, proofs and practices as irrational and/or related to oppression; the classical "proofs" of the existence of God; the relation between religion and science, including questions about the nature of religious language and how religious claims might be verified; the religious (and secular) understanding of suffering, death, and evil; the possibility of justifying religious claims on the basis of religious experiences; and the question of how religious claims might be understood as valid, given the differing claims of different religions. This counts toward the metaphysical requirement for the major. No prerequisite. Offered every other year.

Philosophy of Natural Science

PHIL 245 CREDITS: 0.5

One of the greatest human achievements is scientific knowledge. But what is scientific knowledge? Is it different from other kinds of knowledge? Should we take scientific claims as literally true or as useful fictions? What status should we accord scientific work? We will examine the answers to these questions offered by the Logical Positivists, the Popperians, Kuhn, Quine, Lakatos and Boyd. On the way, we will consider the issues surrounding induction,

explanation, theoretical entities, laws, observation, reductionism and so on. No formal background in the natural sciences is assumed. This counts toward the epistemology requirement for the major. No prerequisite. Offered every third year.

Existential Themes in Film, Art and Literature

PHIL 250 CREDITS: 0.5

This course is a seminar focused on salient existential themes as explored in film, art and literature. This is not a course in the philosophy of film, art and literature, but rather a course in which we try to philosophize through the viewing of films and works of art, and through reading and discussing works of literature. Works of art are capable of conveying aspects of issues that discursive texts cannot, especially intimate human issues. The course will center on fundamental and perennial existential human concerns that have been explored throughout history but especially in the last two centuries: alienation, the "death of God" / the absence of God, nihilism and the threat of "meaninglessness," the quest for authenticity in mass society, the prospects of love and hope in the modern world. We will view films directed by Charlie Chaplin, Godfrey Reggio, Louis Malle, Werner Herzog, Terry Gilliam, Martin Scorsese, Ingmar Bergman, Sidney Lumet, Akira Kurosawa, Mia Hansen-Love and others.

No quizzes or exams, but students are required to attend every class, do the assigned reading required for class and actively participate in class discussion. With permission, and only under extraordinary circumstances, a student may miss one class. Students who miss a class without permission or miss more than one class, will be penalized on their final grade.

This is a discussion-intensive course that will encourage you to formulate and share your views about the matters under discussion. I am hoping that we will be able to create a relaxed but serious convivial atmosphere in which we explore together important life issues through the stimulation of works of art.

Philosophy of Language

PHIL 255 CREDITS: 0.5

Language plays a central role in our life. But how does language work? For instance, how does communication take place in our everyday life? How should we interpret literary or religious texts? What is the relationship between language, thought and the world? How do we "do things with words"? We examine these issues through the writings of Frege, Russell, Wittgenstein, Quine, Davidson, Austin, Grice, Lewis and Brandom. This counts toward the metaphysics requirement for the major. Offered occasionally.

Philosophy of Mind and Brain

PHIL 260 CREDITS: 0.5

Mentality is not like much else in the universe. Mentality (or mind) is quite peculiar. The human brain (unlike other physical things) has the power to think. We have thoughts. Yet what are thoughts? Thoughts don't seem to be physical. For instance, unlike physical objects, thoughts don't have any weight. One does not gain weight by having new thoughts or lose weight by

forgetting them. Unlike physical objects, thoughts have no shape. The thought of a circle is not circular. Yet thoughts have power. When we explain human behavior, we do so by saying that the person has certain thoughts; i.e., they have certain beliefs and certain desires. Those beliefs and desires (those thoughts) caused the person to act the way he did. The view that there are thoughts, that thoughts are in minds, that thoughts cause behavior, is the ordinary everyday view of the world. It is called folk psychology (i.e., the psychology of ordinary folk). Folk psychology seems obviously true. But is it true? And if it is true, can we describe it in a clear way? Does contemporary research in psychology support or undermine folk psychology? We will see that what seems so obvious is in fact quite controversial. Many psychologists and philosophers think something is wrong with folk psychology. We will examine some of those debates. This counts toward the metaphysics requirement for the major. No prerequisite. Offered every third year.

Philosophy of Perception

PHIL 262 CREDITS: 0.5

We all depend on perception to live our lives. It is so much part of our lives that it is taken for granted and seems not worth noticing. Yet perception is not well understood. When one examines the differences in perception among humans, what one takes for granted becomes problematic. When one includes animal perception and robotic perception, perception becomes mysterious. We will examine various ways of understanding perception: biological, computational, ecological, cultural and rational. In so doing, we hope to gain some insight into a process that makes up much of our lives and provides the basis for much of what we know. This counts toward the epistemology requirement for the major. Prerequisite: sophomore standing. Offered every third year.

Mind, Perception and Film

PHIL 263 CREDITS: 0.5

This is not a course on film history, film theory or aesthetics. Nor is this a course using film to illustrate philosophical ideas. Rather this course treats film as a phenomenon in its own right. Film has its own properties. Those properties are in some ways similar and in some ways dissimilar from human experience. For instance, film has its own temporal and spatial structure. That temporal-spatial structure is seemingly quite different from the temporal-spatial structure of how we ordinarily experience the world. Yet humans can easily understand film and be moved by film. Film is both of this world and otherworldly. We will explore a broad range of questions on the nature of film and what the magic of film teaches us about who we are. This counts toward the epistemology requirement for the major. No prerequisite. Offered occasionally.

Political Philosophy

PHIL 270 CREDITS: 0.5

In this course we will study the history of political philosophy (with a focus on the period from about 1600 to about 1850). The course will address the following questions: What is the origin

of civil society and government? What role does consent play in establishing government? Are there any natural rights, or do rights depend on the conventions of civil society? Does the civil law depend on the natural law? What is the relation between the constraints of law and liberty? Are there economic preconditions for liberty? Our readings will be mostly from Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau, Hume, Kant, Hegel and Marx. This counts toward the ethics requirement for the major. No prerequisite. Offered every other year.

Moral Psychology

PHIL 275 CREDITS: 0.5

This course examines concepts and issues at the intersection between moral philosophy and psychology or theory of human nature. We discuss philosophical ideas regarding the nature of action, agency, practical reasoning, moral heuristics and moral freedom. We examine these issues through the writings of Aristotle, Spinoza, Nietzsche, Murdoch, Frankfurt, as well as novels by Jane Austen and Tolstoy. This counts toward the ethics requirement for the major. No prerequisite. Offered occasionally.

Nietzsche's Philosophy

PHIL 300 CREDITS: 0.5

Nietzsche is a disturbing presence in the modern world. In a series of beautifully written books that are at once profound, elusive, enigmatic and shocking, Nietzsche does nothing less than challenge our most precious and fundamental beliefs: the idea of truth, the existence of God, the objectivity of moral values and the intrinsic value of the human being. As a critic of both the Western metaphysical tradition and the Judeo-Christian religion, Nietzsche may well be the most controversial thinker in the entire history of philosophy. In this seminar we will submit some of Nietzsche's most important books to a close, critical reading in an effort to come to terms, so far as this is possible, with his mature thought. We will examine his most famous yet perplexing views — the death of God, will to power, the Übermensch, nihilism, perspectivism, the eternal recurrence — as they are developed in "Untimely Meditations," "Twilight of Idols," "Genealogy of Morals," "Beyond Good and Evil," and selections from "Will to Power." This counts toward the great thinkers requirement for the major. Prerequisite: one philosophy course or permission of the instructor. Offered every third year.

Kierkegaard on Being Human

PHIL 305 CREDITS: 0.5

Often regarded as the originator of existential inquiry, Søren Kierkegaard (1813–1855) wrote captivating poetic and philosophical literature concerning human existence. Taking the human hunger for meaning as his point of departure, Kierkegaard examined the rational and emotional depths of human life in its aesthetic, moral, and religious modes of expression. In this course we will read a large part of what Kierkegaard called "my authorship" in order to understand his way of doing philosophy and to examine his portrayal of the spiritual landscape. Kierkegaard's probings into the value dimensions of life — for example, happiness, pleasure, boredom,

despair, choice, duty, commitment, anxiety, guilt, remorse, hope, faith, love — encourage his readers to think about their own lives and their relations with others. In examining Kierkegaard's ideas, therefore, the student should expect to be challenged personally as well as intellectually. This counts toward the great thinkers requirement for the major. Prerequisite: one philosophy course or permission of instructor. Offered every third year.

Zen Buddhist Philosophy: The Kyoto School

PHIL 320 CREDITS: 0.5

Japan was closed off to the West for 200 years until Commodore Perry arrived in the bay of Tokyo with his smoke-spewing "black ships" and convinced the Tokugawa government to trade with the West. In less than 50 years, Japan transformed itself from a feudal society into a thoroughly modern one and is now a leading world power. But for all of its modernity, Japan remains largely inscrutable to Western eyes and its philosophy even more so. Western categories do not seem to apply very easily to Japanese culture. The distinction between religion and philosophy, for instance, is not as clearly demarcated in Japan as it is in the West. It is only recently, within the last 60 years, that Western philosophers have taken a serious interest in Japanese thought, and this is mostly due to the efforts that Japanese thinkers themselves have made to communicate with the West, especially the philosophers associated with the so-called "Kyoto School." The Kyoto School of Japanese philosophy gives the West a way into the East like none other. They thrust Japanese philosophical and religious thought onto the world stage, revealing an East Asian perspective to the outside world, as well as to the Japanese themselves. They self-consciously attempted to articulate the distinctiveness of the Japanese mind-set in particular, and the Eastern way of thinking generally. The Kyoto School is distinguished for being open to dialogue with European thought, especially continental philosophy (Husserl, Heidegger, Kierkegaard, Hegel, Dostoyevsky, Tolstoy), and for philosophizing from a Buddhist perspective (most from Zen, some from Shin or Pure Land perspectives). This course is an exploration of several key philosophical issues and concepts in the contexts of several key members of the Kyoto School. Some of the themes we will explore are: knowledge and rationality alternative understandings of what is real and the question of cultural relativism mind and self-hood concepts of the good human responsibility, and the relationship between philosophy, religion and science. We will study the work of Nishida Kitar (1870–1945), Nishitani Keiji (1900–1990), Ueda Shizuteru (1926–present), as well as that of Suzuki Teitar Daisetz (1894–1966) and Abe Masao (1915– 2006), two philosophers associated but not formally connected to the Kyoto School. In order to gain access to and truly appreciate the nature of Japanese philosophy and the unique contribution that Kyoto School philosophy has made, we will begin the course by exploring Japanese history and culture and then turn to a consideration of some of the Western philosophers that members of the Kyoto school have found profitable for establishing a cross-cultural dialogue. Recommended for students with a background in philosophy, religious studies or Asian studies or with permission of the instructor. This counts toward the philosophical schools and periods requirement for the major.

Sartre and Merleau-Ponty

PHIL 340 CREDITS: 0.5

The two most important philosophers in post-World War II France were Jean-Paul Sartre and Maurice Merleau-Ponty. They initiated a debate that was and still is immensely influential both in and out of academia. Sartre worked out the implications of a consciousness-centered methodological individualism. The result was a new analysis of human freedom that equated freedom with "consciousness-raising." This had a tremendous influence on the political left, feminist thought, existentialism, postmodernism and many forms of psychotherapy. Merleau-Ponty challenged Sartre's mind's-eye view with a brain-body's eye view of human behavior. Such a view replaced consciousness as guiding human behavior with an account of how any embodied functional system can self-adapt to its environment. Merleau-Ponty's account was not limited to human behavior but was generalizable to a range of self-maintaining systems. Merleau-Ponty explored this primarily in terms of the psychology of perception, in neuroscience and in an analysis of film as a psychological phenomenon. This counts toward the great thinkers requirement for the major. Prerequisite: one philosophy course or permission of instructor.

Kant's Theoretical Philosophy

PHIL 345 CREDITS: 0.5

In this course, we will study Kant's major work in theoretical philosophy, the "Critique of Pure Reason." We shall examine how Kant establishes that our empirical knowledge has conditions (a priori intuitions and a priori concepts) which cannot be derived from experience, and that these conditions of our empirical knowledge are also the conditions of our having any experience at all. We will pay particular attention to the way in which the "Critique of Pure Reason" revolutionizes the reflection on knowledge found in the work of Kant's rationalist, empiricist and skeptical predecessors. PHIL 210 is recommended. This counts toward the great thinkers requirement for the major. No prerequisite. Offered every other year.

Kant's Practical Philosophy

PHIL 348 CREDITS: 0.5

This course is a comprehensive study of Kant's practical philosophy. For Kant the subject matter of practical philosophy is freedom. Kant asks: Under what conditions can we be free? We will examine Kant's claims that freedom is realized in morality and in law-governed political society, and that freedom must be autonomy. We shall also pay attention to Kant's accounts of moral religion and of human history as the development of freedom. The readings will be from the "Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals," the "Critique of Practical Reason," the "Metaphysics of Morals," the "Religion within the Limits of Reason Alone," the essays on history and the lectures on pedagogy. This counts toward the great thinkers requirement for the major. No prerequisite. Offered every other year.

Neurophilosophy of Consciousness

PHIL 395D CREDITS: 0.5

In the last 20 or so years, a formal collaboration has developed between the disciplines of neuroscience and philosophy. The interaction has led to dramatic changes in both disciplines. It turned out that philosophers have made a number of assumptions that do not withstand empirical scrutiny given the new experimental techniques of neuroscience. And it turned out that neuroscientists through this collaboration were able to identify conceptual errors in their discipline. The success of this interaction has led to a new thinking, particularly, in the study of consciousness. In this course, we will be examining this collaborative literature. We will be reading only primary sources. Students will be expected to participate in the current debate. Students must have a major background in either philosophy or neuroscience. This course is the same as NEUR 395D. This course must be taken as PHIL 395D to count towards the humanities requirement. This counts toward the metaphysics requirement for the major. Prerequisite: junior standing and permission of instructor.

Ethics Seminar

PHIL 400 CREDITS: 0.5

This seminar examines important topics in normative ethics as well as meta-ethics; it emphasizes 20th-century philosophers. We discuss contemporary normative ethical theories such as ethical naturalism (Foot and Thompson), Neo-Kantianism (Korsgaard), agent-based virtue ethics (Zagzebski and Slote), utilitarianism (Smart and Singer) and critique of modern moral philosophy (Anscombe, MacIntyre, Taylor and Williams). We also discuss meta-ethical issues such as moral realism, relativism, the sources of normativity, the concept of virtue and the possibility of moral understanding. This counts toward the ethics requirement for the major. Prerequisite: philosophy major and junior standing or permission of the instructor. Offered in a three-year rotation with PHIL 405 and 410.

Epistemology Seminar

PHIL 405 CREDITS: 0.5

This is an advanced course on the central debates in epistemology: internalism versus externalism, foundationalism versus coherentism, naturalism versus antinaturalism. We examine these issues through the writings of Quine, Rorty, Putnam, Stroud, Dretske, Wittgenstein and others. This counts toward the epistemology requirement for the major. Prerequisite: philosophy major and junior standing or permission of instructor. Offered in a three-year rotation with PHIL 400 and 410.

Metaphysics Seminar

PHIL 410 CREDITS: 0.5

The content of this course varies but includes such topics as the nature and scope of reality, causality, space, time, existence, free will, necessity, and the relations of logic and language to

the world. Traditional topics such as the problems of substance and of universals may be discussed. Much of the reading will be from contemporary sources. This counts toward the metaphysics requirement for the major. Prerequisite: junior standing and philosophy major or permission of instructor. Offered in a three-year rotation with PHIL 400 and PHIL 405.

Individual Study

PHIL 493 CREDITS: 0.25 - 0.5

Individual studies are offered to those students who are highly motivated in a specific area of inquiry and who are judged responsible and capable enough to work independently. Such courses might be research oriented, but more usually are readings-oriented, allowing students to delve in greater depth into topics that interest them or which overlap or supplement other courses of the philosophy department. Students must seek permission of the instructor and department chair before enrolling. They are urged to do this in the semester prior to the one in which they hope to be enrolled. Individual study is at the discretion of the instructor, and schedules may limit such an addition. An individual study cannot duplicate a course or area being concurrently offered. Exceptions to this rule are at the discretion of the instructor and chair. Individual study is usually considered an advanced course. Required work should be viewed as on a par with a seminar or a 300- or 400-level course. The instructor and student(s) should establish and agree upon the extent and nature of the work expected. The work may take one of the following forms: several short papers, one long paper, one in-depth project, a lengthy general outline and annotated bibliography, public presentation(s), etc. An individual study can apply to the major or to the minor with permission of the department. Individual studies may be taken for either 0.25 or 0.50 credits. This decision must be agreed upon with the instructor. The student(s) and instructor will meet on a regular basis. The frequency of contact hours is to be determined by the instructor in consultation with the student. Because students must enroll for individual studies by the end of the seventh class day of each semester, they should begin discussion of the proposed individual study preferably the semester before, so that there is time to devise the proposal and seek departmental approval before the established deadline.

Senior Honors

PHIL 497 CREDITS: 0.25

Candidates for honors work in philosophy do extensive, independent research with an adviser from the department. This research culminates in a major essay (around 50 pages) that they defend to an outside examiner during the spring semester of their senior year. Honors projects take more than a year to complete, so anyone wishing to pursue honors in philosophy, must begin the process during their junior year. To pursue honors, students must submit a request during the fall of their junior year, and then submit a thesis proposal for departmental approval during the spring of their junior year. Upon departmental approval, honors candidates will register for two 0.25 unit courses to be taken during their senior year, PHIL 497 (fall) and PHIL 498 (spring). In PHIL 497, students do the substantial portion of their writing and research. In PHIL 498, students complete their research projects, and then defend their work to an outside

examiner. As philosophy honors projects are very demanding, only philosophy majors with a 3.5 average in philosophy and a 3.33 overall GPA are eligible to submit proposals. Permissions of instructor and department chair required.

Senior Honors

PHIL 498 CREDITS: 0.25

Prerequisite: permission of instructor and department chair.