

Philosophy & Religious Studies

Course Listings
Summer & Fall 2015



UA
LR | DEPARTMENT OF
PHILOSOPHY AND
INTERDISCIPLINARY STUDIES

Summer 2015 Courses

[Summer II: May 26-June 29 | Summer IV: July 6-Aug. 7]

Ethics and Society – PHIL 2320

Prof. Robinson – MTWRF 12:00-1:30

multiple sections online (see Schedule of Classes)

Summer II & IV

Introduction to Philosophy – PHIL 1310

Prof. Green – WEB (CRN: 30380)

Summer IV

Introduction to Logic – PHIL 2350

Prof. Thomas – WEB (CRN: 31328)

Summer II

World Religions – RELS 2305

Summer II: Prof. Hale – WEB (CRN: 30378)

Summer IV: Prof. Norton – WEB (CRN: 30064)

Religious Pluralism – PHIL/RELS 4380

Prof. Norton – WEB (CRNs: 31329/31330)

Summer IV

This course will explore a variety of philosophical and theological responses to the fact of religious diversity. It will focus on the issues that diversity raises for the status of beliefs: when different people have conflicting religious beliefs, how can we decide who – if anyone – is right? Faced with significant diversity, is it rational to hold beliefs at all? It will also focus on questions raised by dissimilar, and sometimes morally conflicting, religious practices. Lastly, but most importantly, it will explore the ethics of interreligious encounter and dialogue.

Introduction to Philosophy — PHIL 1310**Prof. Green — TR 12:15-1:30 (CRN: 60464)****Prof. Green — WEB (CRN: 60941)**

This course is a survey of basic themes in philosophy, addressing such fundamental concerns as the nature of morality and beauty, the relation of mind and body, and the existence of free will, through discussion and analysis of readings.

Introduction to Critical Thinking — PHIL 1330 (CRN: 60465)**Prof. Merrick — MW 3:05-4:20**

An introduction to reasoning skills. This course focuses on the recognition of informal fallacies and the nature, use, and evaluation of arguments, as well as the basic characteristics of inductive and deductive arguments.

Ethics and Society — PHIL 2320**multiple sections on campus and online,
see Schedule of Classes**

This course features a study of selected texts reflecting a variety of ethical systems—with at least one major text from each of four historical periods (antiquity, medieval, early modern, and contemporary). Ethical theories examined will include: deontology, utilitarianism, and virtue theory.

World Religions — RELS 2305**Prof. Hale — TR 10:50-12:05 (CRN: 60477)****WEB [instructor TBD] — (CRN: 60947)**

This course examines the global patterns of contemporary world religions as symbol systems and expressions of discrete, coherent world views. It focuses on the particular histories, practices, and beliefs of the major world religions.

Reading Sacred Texts: New Testament — RELS 3333**Prof. Hale — TR 12:15-1:30 (CRN: 60478)**

In this course we will look at the books of the New Testament from a historical point of view. We will explore who wrote them, when they were written, and what they can tell us about the beginning of the Christian religion. We will read and discuss all the books of the New Testament. We will also use an introductory textbook to help us understand these writings and some of the techniques scholars use to better understand them.

Psychology of Religion — RELS 3363 (CRN: 62283)**Prof. Jones — WEB**

Religion has a major role in the development of societies throughout human civilization and cultures. Historically, a variety of attempts have been made to understand religious belief, experiences, cultures, meaning systems, practices, and other facets of this phenomenon. Understanding religious behavior and experience has long been an interest in psychological research dating back to the first persons recognized as “psychologists” in the late 19th century. Religion, however, has proven to be a difficult area for traditional scientific approaches and research given the seemingly unique place and scope that it has in our lives. In order to develop a more robust understanding of religion, this course will seek to examine various psychological perspectives on religion with particular focus on the varieties of religious experience, the nature of religious belief, psychological interpretations of religious experiences and practices, a brief survey of the findings of neuroscience with regards to religious phenomena, and the role of religion via its intersection and application in counseling.

Environmental Philosophy — PHIL 3375 (CRN: 63548)

Prof. Robinson — TR 3:05-4:20

“This new rupture with nature is different in scope and kind from salmon tins in an English stream. We have changed the atmosphere and thus we are changing the weather. By changing the weather, we make every spot on earth man-made and artificial.”

—B. McKibben, *The End of Nature*

According to some scientists and philosophers we have now entered the ‘Anthropocene’, a period in which humans have not only negatively impacted the climate and species diversity but the very geology of the planet. Humans are now influencing every aspect of the earth on scales that are unprecedented. This course will introduce students to environmental philosophy by giving them an opportunity to think critically and creatively about various philosophical accounts of ‘value’ in the context of the Anthropocene. In the first half of the course we will address questions like: What is valuable? Where does value come from? Do humans create value? Is value inherently anthropocentric? Are values ‘objectively’ present in the universe? Is value conferred by the presence of certain attributes or qualities (reason, sentience, being alive, diversity, balance, etc.)? In the second half of the course we will reflect on how these accounts of value bear on specific controversies and how we might live our lives accordingly. We will examine how these dimensions are linked and integrated in some of the most difficult moral issues that face us today including population, food, climate change, pollution and the loss of species life.

Contemporary Philosophy — PHIL 3322 (CRN: 63544)

Prof. Norton — MW 3:05-4:20

One possible place to mark the beginning of the “contemporary” era of Western philosophy is after Nietzsche, in the wake of whose work the so-called “end of metaphysics” comes into full view. Many important philosophical movements have emerged since then – too many to cover well in one semester. In this course, then, we will specifically examine a few of the major themes in twentieth (and twenty-first) century philosophy within the context of (1) early analytic philosophy and (2) phenomenology: logic and language (focusing especially on both the earlier and later work of Wittgenstein), the fundamental structures of consciousness and existence (Husserl and Heidegger), perception and embodiment (Merleau-Ponty), and being with others (Stein and Levinas). We will also consider more recent critical readings of these traditions, particularly those that emphasize ethical and political concerns.

Medical Ethics — PHIL 3335 (CRN: 63545)

Prof. Merrick — MW 1:40-2:55

Medical Ethics traditionally explores a wide variety of issues that arise in the medical setting (i.e., euthanasia and physician assisted suicide, patients’ rights and informed consent, as well as the allocation of scarce medical resources). However, with the advent of new technologies, new ethical problems and issues have arisen. Accordingly, after discussing some traditional issues in medical ethics we will turn our attention to the commodification of the human body. We will ask whether the buying and selling of human reproductive materials, commercial surrogacy, or the selling of kidneys for transplantations is ethical. Finally, we will discuss whether there should be limits on human enhancement and question whether certain technologies might undermine human dignity.

Feminist Theory — PHIL 4333 (CRN: 63546)
Prof. Green — TR 1:40-2:55

This course will study major issues in feminist theory, including historical and contemporary debates, and seeks a broad understanding of the development of various strands of feminist thought and the resulting range of interpretive possibilities. It will include explorations of feminist perspectives on epistemology, metaphysics, social and political theory, and ethics, as well as race, class, sexuality, and nationality.

[Graduate section: PHIL 5333 — CRN: 63547]

Modern Political Theory — PHIL 4360 (CRN: 63529)
Prof. Rice — TR 9:25-10:40

This course will study political theory from Edmund Burke to the present, with emphasis on the more recent political theories and systems of democracy, communism, and socialism.

[Same as POLS 4390]

*3000- and 4000-level PHIL courses generally have
PHIL 1310, PHIL 2320, or instructor consent as their prerequisite*

*Students enrolling in 1000- or 2000-level PHIL or RELS courses are advised
to have completed (or be concurrently enrolled in) RHET 1311*

Why Should I Study Philosophy?

“Philosophy classes taught me something applicable to any and every job: clarity of thought. Name me one aspect of your life that doesn’t benefit from being able to think something through clearly.

Because it delivers real skills, philosophy doesn’t go out of fashion the way the trendy subjects do.”

(“Be Employable, Study Philosophy,” *Salon.com*)

“In the US, where the number of philosophy graduates increased by 5% a year during the 1990s, only a very few go on to become philosophers. Their employability is impressive by any standard. ...

Philosophy is the ultimate transferable work skill.”

(“Philosophy: A Quintessential Modern Discipline,” *London Times*)

“Philosophy is to be studied, not for the sake of any definite answers to its questions since no definite answers can, as a rule, be known to be true, but rather for the sake of the questions themselves; because these questions enlarge our conception of what is possible, enrich our intellectual imagination and diminish the dogmatic assurance which closes the mind against speculation; but above all because, **through the greatness of the universe which philosophy contemplates, the mind also is rendered great, and becomes capable of that union with the universe which constitutes its highest good.**”

(“The Problems of Philosophy,” Bertrand Russell)