

# Philosophy & Religious Studies

Course Listings  
Summer & Fall 2016



**UA**  
**LR** | DEPARTMENT OF  
PHILOSOPHY AND  
INTERDISCIPLINARY STUDIES

## Summer 2016 Courses

1<sup>st</sup> Term: May 23 – June 27 • 2<sup>nd</sup> Term: July 5 – Aug 8

### **Ethics and Society – PHIL 2320**

**On Campus: Prof. Robinson – MTWRF 12:00-1:30**  
**multiple sections online (see Schedule of Classes)**  
**1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> term**

### **Introduction to Philosophy – PHIL 1310**

**Prof. Dohmen – WEB (CRN: 31541)**  
**1<sup>st</sup> term**

### **Intro to Critical Thinking – PHIL 1330**

**Prof. Davidson – WEB (CRN: 30327)**  
**2<sup>nd</sup> term**

### **World Religions – RELS 2305**

**Prof. Hale – WEB (CRN: 30062)**  
**2<sup>nd</sup> term**

### **Philosophy and the Arts – PHIL 3372**

**Prof. Davidson – WEB (CRN: 31544)**  
**2<sup>nd</sup> term**

This course investigates influential historical and/or contemporary contributions to aesthetics, philosophy of the arts, and philosophy of arts criticism. Topics may include: the nature of art and beauty; principles of criticism, standards of taste, and uniquely correct interpretations; the nature of an appropriate response to an artwork; the reality of aesthetic properties; and the relations between art, morality, and emotion.

*Summer course offerings may change subject to availability of instructors and expected enrollment; check the Schedule of Classes online or ask your advisor for the most up-to-date information.*

**Introduction to Philosophy — PHIL 1310****Prof. McAuliffe — MWF 11:00-11:50 (CRN: 60416)****WEB (CRN: 60798 | UALR Online: 63478)**

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: 60417)****TR 9:25-10:40**

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.

**Fulfills Core Curriculum requirement: Humanities****World Religions — RELS 2305****Prof. Hale — TR 12:15-1:30 (CRN: 60429)****WEB [Prof. Dahlan-Taylor] — (CRN: 60804 | UALR Online: 63487)**

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.

**Fulfills Core Curriculum requirement: Humanities****Introduction to Logic — PHIL 2350****WEB (CRN: 60803 | UALR Online: 63479)**

An introduction to deductive logic, including translation of sentences into formal systems, immediate inferences, syllogisms, formal fallacies, proofs of validity, and quantification.

**Modern Philosophy — PHIL 3320 (CRN: 60424)****Prof. Thomas — Thursday 6:00-8:40**

Although what counts as Modern Philosophy is disputed, most of those who are typically considered modern philosophers wrote between 1600 and 1800 (or, roughly, from Shakespeare to Beethoven). Conceptually, this era represents the European transition from the Middle Ages (and the dominance of church authority) to an Enlightenment world view that optimistically emphasized reason and individualism; hence Descartes and Kant are often thought of as bookends for the Modern Era. Although we will look briefly at philosophers who set the stage for the modern era as well as those who react to it, the focus of this course will be on early modern philosophy: the rationalists (such as Descartes) and the empiricists (such as Hume).

**Social and Political Philosophy — PHIL 3346 (CRN: 64292)****Prof. McAuliffe — TR 10:50-12:05**

The course will survey a number of different approaches to social and political philosophy. Students will have the opportunity to investigate and consider the role of the government, the engagement of individuals within society, and the relationship between law and politics. Similarly, students will read texts from throughout the history of philosophy in an effort to gain an appreciation of the varieties of theoretical approaches to society and the state.

**Existentialism – PHIL 3370 (CRN: 60426)**

**Prof. Robinson – MW 3:05-4:20**

*"I was born here and I'll die here against my will" – Bob Dylan*

This course seeks to introduce students to the central ideas of existentialism, perhaps the most influential movement in 20<sup>th</sup> century philosophy, by examining the development of existentialist concepts and themes in philosophical texts as well as film and literature. Emerging out of the experience of the Second World War (although the ideas reach much further back), existentialism captured the attention of a generation and became a way of living expressed in art, cinema, literature, fashion and journalism – even certain Parisian nightclubs were known as ‘existentialist’. In philosophy, literature, and film, existentialist ideas problematized our understanding of freedom and responsibility and challenged our attitudes to the meaning of life and death. By focusing on the individual and rejecting the social mores of the crowd, existential thinkers paid special attention to ‘moods’ like nausea, anguish, and anxiety and the ways in which they structure our experience of daily life. Only by embracing these moods, and by refusing any external determination of morality and value, could the individual live a life of authenticity and freedom.

The objective of our course will be to examine the development of these existentialist themes in philosophy, literature, and film to see whether they capture not just the thought of a certain period, but say something of lasting significance about the meaning of life and the human condition.

We will read and discuss texts by (amongst others): Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, Dostoevsky, Sartre, De Beauvoir, and Camus. We will watch sections from and discuss films like: *The Seventh Seal*, *Ikiru*, *Leaving Las Vegas*, *Notes From Underground*, *Fearless*, *American Beauty*, *Groundhog Day* (possibly adding or substituting *Winter Light*, *Hiroshima Mon Amour*, *Lost in Translation*, *Breathless*, *The Thin Red Line*, or *Gravity*).

**Medical Ethics – PHIL 3335**

**Prof. Spino – WEB (CRN: 65106 | UALR Online: 65115)**

This course includes analyses of ethical issues in medicine affecting patients, health-care workers, and the public. Materials will be drawn from medical, legal, philosophical, and psychiatric sources, addressing such issues as euthanasia, abortion, assisted suicide, involuntary commitment, resource distribution, and health insurance.

**Eastern Thought – PHIL 3350 (CRN: 64290)**

**Prof. Norton – TR 1:40-2:55**

This course will explore some of the most significant concepts and problems in the history of “Eastern” cultures (i.e., those that have their roots in ancient India and China). We’ll proceed according to themes such as the nature of reality, selfhood, and ethics, but along the way we’ll also delve deeper into the religious beliefs, histories, and philosophical schools of traditions such as Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism, and Daoism. In addition, we’ll critically interrogate the definitions and boundaries of categories such as “spirituality,” “religion,” and “philosophy” – and particularly “Western” and “Eastern.” The course will finish with a look at some examples of contemporary Asian philosophy.

**Cross-listed as RELS 3350 (CRN: 64298)**

**Religion, Society, and Culture – RELS 4321 (CRN: 64296)**

**Prof. Hale – TR 10:50-12:05**

This course deals with the anthropology of religion, so we will read and discuss material dealing with religion from an anthropological perspective. The articles we read will focus on religion as it is practiced, rather than abstract or idealized ideas about religion. Topics will include myth, ritual, shamanism, altered states of consciousness, healing, witchcraft, and sorcery. The class will be conducted mainly through discussions. Insights from various backgrounds and fields of study are encouraged.

**Cross-listed as ANTH 4321 and SOCI 4321**

## Psychology of Religion — RELS 3363

Prof. Jones — WEB (CRN: 62027 | UALR Online: 64766)

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 19<sup>th</sup> 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.

### Cross-listed as PSYC 3363

*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)

