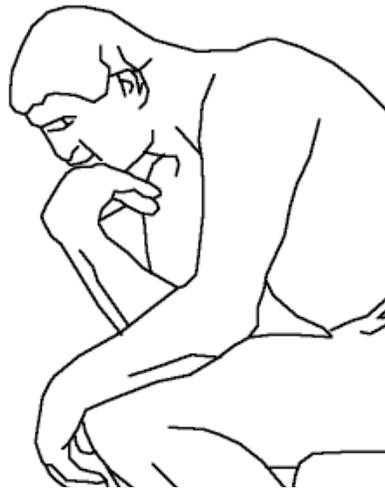


# Philosophy & Religious Studies

Course Listings  
Fall 2014



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

## 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)

**Introduction to Philosophy — PHIL 1310****Prof. Norton — MWF 10:00-10:50 (CRN: 60509)****Prof. Fishel — WEB (CRN: 61013)**

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: 60510)****Prof. Green — 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.

**Introduction to Logic — PHIL 2350 (CRN: 61018)****Prof. Fishel — WEB**

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

**Ethics and Society — PHIL 2320****multiple sections, 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.

**Modern Philosophy — PHIL 3320 (CRN: 60517)****Prof. Green — TR 12:15-1:30**

This course will examine the writings of early modern philosophers (including Descartes, Locke, Berkeley, Hume, and Kant) and their influence on nineteenth century philosophers (including Hegel, Marx, and Kierkegaard).

**Philosophy and the Arts — PHIL 3372 (CRN: 60520)****Prof. Merrick — W 6:00-8:40**

The aims of this class are to introduce to you and explain some of the most important works in the history of aesthetics; to situate these works in their philosophical contexts; to situate them with respect to current debates; and to consider some of the ways in which these theories may be used to inform your own understanding of the nature and value of art. Towards these ends, in this course we will attempt to answer a set of philosophical questions about art. In the first part of this course we will focus on philosophical questions concerning the value of art. For instance, is art valuable because it provides us with insights? Put another way, does art help us by faithfully mirroring reality or by creating useful illusions? What is the relationship between art and imitation? In Part II of the course, we will attempt to determine how we recognize a piece of art. That is, must art be beautiful? Does art differ from craft? In Part III, we will focus on the nature of aesthetic judgment. Accordingly, we will ask: how do we evaluate art? Is there some objective standard of taste or is taste relative? Is art universal or the same across cultures? In Part IV, we will investigate the nature of interpretation by asking: is there one privileged, or correct, interpretation for a work of art? Are some interpretations more legitimate than others? In the final part of the course, we will examine art's larger social context asking, primarily, about the relationship of moral value and aesthetic value. That is, does art have an ethical dimension? Are aesthetic judgments different from moral judgments? Should art ever be censored?

**Foucault — PHIL 4380 (CRN: 60521)**

**Prof. Green — TR 3:05-4:20**

This course will be a close examination of Foucault's major works and themes developed within those works. As one of the most important intellectual figures of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Foucault gave compelling analyses of oppression and of the relationships between power and systems of knowledge. We will discuss and investigate several of Foucault's key themes: power, truth, and subjectivity in an effort to better understand the ways in which subjects are produced through discourses of freedom, discipline, autonomy, and docility.

**Philosophy of Religion**

**PHIL 3360 (CRN: 60518) / RELS 3360 (CRN: 60524)**

**Prof. Norton — MW 3:05-4:20**

As a discipline, what is usually called "philosophy of religion" is concerned with topics such as the existence and nature of God, the immortality of the soul, and the rational justification of these and other religious beliefs. However, we can also understand philosophy of religion to have the nature of religion itself as topic. What makes something a "religion"? Certain kinds of beliefs or practices? What distinguishes the religious from the ethical, political, or aesthetic? In this class, we will cover both of these forms of philosophy of religion – though we will focus more on the second. After spending a couple of weeks looking at traditional arguments and counter-arguments concerning the existence and nature of God, we'll explore a wide variety of perspectives on what religion is and how it works. Our readings will include selections from or about Kant, Schleiermacher, Kierkegaard, Dewey, and Derrida (among others), on topics including faith, ritual, morality, and salvation.

**Existentialism — PHIL 3370 (CRN: 60519)**

**Prof. Robinson — TR 10:50-12:05**

*"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*).

**World Religions — RELS 2305****Prof. Hale — TR 10:50-12:05 (CRN: 60522)****Prof. Franks — WEB (CRN: 61019)**

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.

**Psychology of Religion — RELS 3363 (CRN: 62421)****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 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.

**Reading Sacred Texts: the Hebrew Scriptures****RELS 3333 (CRN: 60523)****Prof. Levy — MW 1:40-2:55**

This course will be a fun, yet thorough, romp through the three major parts of the Hebrew Scriptures (which some folks call the "Old Testament"). We will ferret out major sections of the three major components of said Scripture: Torah, Prophets, and Writings, and we will focus on understanding what makes these sections, books and passages so holy or sacred. We will also look at some specific texts which various clergy deem sacred for them—and see which ones are repeated most often and why these texts are considered so sacred to these clergy. Finally, we will see what texts are sacred to the members of the class and what makes them sacred as well.

**Buddhism — RELS 4385 (CRN: 60525)****Prof. Hale — TR 9:25-10:40**

Buddhism began as a religion that had very little to do with any gods, and the ultimate goal was attained through one's own effort. But as it grew it developed in many different ways. Tantric Buddhism developed an enormous pantheon of male and female deities. Pure Land Buddhism stressed appealing to the grace of a Buddha to bring people to a sort of paradise after death. In this course, we will be looking at the different forms of Buddhism and trying to see how they could all have developed from the Buddha's original teachings.