PHILOSOPHY

Fall 2023 Upper Level Courses

(Upper level PHIL courses have no mandatory prerequisites, but 3 hours of lower level PHIL is recommended)

PHIL 3320: Modern Philosophy
The Modern Era is typically taken to be between 1600 and 1800 (from Shakespeare to Beethoven), and marked by the development of empirical science and the rejection of religious scholasticism. The focus of this course will be on early modern philosophy: primarily the rationalists (such as Descartes) and the empiricists (such as Hume), but we will also spend some time looking at the philosophers who set the stage for the Modern era, coeval philosophical developments outside of Europe, and how the problems raised by the Modern philosophers shaped later philosophical approaches.
Prof. Thomas – Online, no virtual meetings

PHIL 3370: Existentialism
This course seeks to introduce students to the central ideas of existentialism—perhaps the most influential movement in 20th century philosophy—by examining the development of existentialist concepts and themes in philosophical texts as well as film and literature. Existentialism captured the attention of a generation and became a way of living expressed in art, cinema, literature, fashion and journalism. 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. The objective of the course will be to examine the development of 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.
Prof. Robinson – Mon/Wed 1:40-2:55

PHIL 4380-01: Queer Theory
This course will philosophically explore what the term queer could mean. By engaging some of this interdisciplinary field’s most fundamental and most recent texts, we will understand how queer theorists critique heteronormativity, binary gender, and identity categories. We will think critically about how sexuality affects and is affected by race, gender, ability, culture, and class. We will also reflect on theory in general: what it is, what it is for, and what its relationship is or should be to political action. The complex set of themes, methods, and ideas that constitute Queer Theory can deepen an appreciation for multiplicity, including the multiplicity in our communities, in our lives, and in ourselves.
Prof. McAuliffe – Tues/Thur 1:40-2:55
Counts toward Gender Studies minor
Graduate section: PHIL 5380-01

PHIL 3386: Ethics Bowl
This course is an upper-level applied ethics course taught with a focus on specific case studies created for the regional Ethics Bowl competition. Students will have the opportunity to engage with ethical problems on a wide range of topics (past examples include student loan forgiveness, gun control, environmental policy, COVID-19 care, etc.). Work on the case studies will allow students to improve not only their research and writing abilities, but their communication and teamwork skills as well.
Much of the course will involve structured, in-class debate. While the course will prepare students for the Ethics Bowl competition, participation in the Ethics Bowl Team club is not required ... but it is encouraged!
Prof. Norton – Meeting times tbd

For more information: philosophy@ualr.edu
PHIL 2320: Ethics & Society
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. Ethical theories examined may include: deontology, utilitarianism, and virtue theory.
Online, no virtual meetings
Prof. Robinson – 1st 5-week term
Prof. Thomas – 2nd 5-week term
Core Curriculum: Humanities

PHIL 4333: Feminist Theory
In this course we will think critically and deeply about how gender works. As we explore the normative aspects of gender we will consult the work of feminists of color, queer feminists, and trans feminists, as the history of feminist thought teaches us that it is crucial to centralize the experiences of those most marginalized by the power dynamics we explore. We will also think carefully about theory in general: what it is, how best to read it, what it is for, and what its relationship is or should be to political action. The complex set of themes, methods, and ideas that constitute Feminist Theory can help each of us deepen our understanding of how history and power impact our society, our communities, and ourselves.
Online, no virtual meetings
Prof. McAuliffe – 1st 5-week term
Counts toward Gender Studies minor

RELS 2305: World Religions
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 major world religions such as Hinduism, Buddhism, Daoism, Confucianism, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam.
Online, no virtual meetings
Prof. Hale – 2nd 5-week term
Core Curriculum: Humanities

PHIL 2350: Intro to Logic
Logic clarifies our patterns of reasoning without being distracted by superfluous arguments (logical fallacies). Just as learning the patterns of computation in mathematics allows us to do problems of addition and subtraction that go beyond the number of our fingers and toes, so too the rules of logic allow us to solve problems that are too complex for us to simply recognize the answer. In this course, we will look at both formal and informal logic. We will also cover the ways in which the study of logic can serve as preparation for the LSAT test.
Online, no virtual meetings
Prof. Thomas – 2nd 5-week term

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