UIC PHILOSOPHY DEPARTMENT

SPRING 2021 COURSE BROCHURE

All courses to be held online!

LIBERAL ARTS AND SCIENCES
Philosophy

Question? Need advice about courses?
Contact:

-Your favorite instructor

-Director of Undergraduate Studies Professor John Whipple jwhipple@uic.edu

-Departmental Advisor Albert Hernandez ahern093@uic.edu

PHIL 101 Critical Thinking (SYNCH)
Critical thinking will enable you to better understand, evaluate, and defend the beliefs that make up your worldview, as well as the competing beliefs offered by others. We will learn how to analyze, evaluate and criticize arguments. We will then apply these skills to various forms of reasoning offered in academic and non-academic contexts. These are the skills you need to do well in college and to ace tests like the MCAT and the GRE. *(Gen. Ed.: This course satisfies the Individual and Society requirement.)*
Professor John Whipple | MW 11-11:50 AM; F 10 or 11

PHIL 102 Introductory Logic (ASYNCH LEC & SYNCH DIS)
Information is all around you. It is stored in books, on computers, in the rings of a tree, in your brain. Logic is the study of the most basic property of information: that you can put pieces of information together to make a new piece of information. This process is called inference and it is at the heart of what it means to be a thinker. In logic, we study inference by establishing precise rules for what makes a good inference. In this course you will learn principles of inference that will be useful to you in any activity that requires thought. You will improve your ability to make and evaluate arguments, and you will gain a greater appreciation for precision in language. *(Gen. Ed.: Natural World - No Lab course; also fulfills LAS Quantitative Reasoning requirement.)*
*Professor Aidan Gray | ASYNCH Lectures and SYNCH Discussion Sections on Fridays at 10, 11, 12, or 1
*Professor Alessandro Moscaritolo | ASYNCH LEC & DIS

PHIL 103 Introduction to Ethics (SYNCH)
Pop culture is influential within our society and lives. It can connect people in fan communities, open doors of understanding between different groups of people, and inspire social change. It can also go wrong, deepening ideological and political divides, reinforcing negative stereotypes, and stunting critical awareness and self-evaluation. We will investigate how popular media predict, reflect, and inspire people and society, and how it can affect the ways we understand ourselves, by exploring issues of representation, morality, and social justice in pop culture. *(Gen. Ed.: This course satisfies the Individual and Society requirement.)*
Professor Bailey Szustak | MWF 2-2:50 PM

PHIL 109 Who Am I? (SYNCH)
Who am I? What does it mean to be human? How am I different from other humans? What is the source of my identity, and is it something I can control? These questions are addressed through philosophical texts from Plato to the present. *(Gen Ed: This course fulfills the Individual and Society requirement.)*
Professor Will Small | MW 10-10:50 AM; F 11, 12, 1, or 2

PHIL 115 Philosophy of Death (ASYNCH LEC & SYNCH DIS)
There are few certainties in life, but one of them is that it ends. You, and everyone you have ever met, will one day die. What does this mean for us? In this course, we take a philosophical approach to death. We ask questions like: Is immortality possible? Would immortality be desirable? How should I feel about my own death? How should I feel about the death of other people? How should the knowledge that I will die affect how I live? *(Gen Ed: This course fulfills the Individual and Society requirement.)*
Professor Aidan Gray | ASYNCH Lectures and SYNCH Discussion Sections on Fridays 10, 11, 1, or 2

PHIL 116 Biomedical Ethics (ASYNCH LEC & DIS)
Moral issues as they arise in medical contexts, including such topics as abortion, euthanasia, paternalism, allocation of medical resources, and psychiatric issues.
Professor Maria Mejia | ASYNCH Lectures and Discussion Sections

PHIL 201 Theory of Knowledge (SYNCH)
How do we know what we know? What does it take for a belief to constitute knowledge? How are claims to knowledge justified? We will look at various answers to these questions in both historical and contemporary contexts. *Prerequisite(s): One non-logic course in philosophy; or the consent of the instructor.*
Professor Eric MacTaggart | MWF 10-10:50 AM

PHIL 202 Philosophy of Psychology (ASYNCH LECTURE)
Almost everyone agrees that we have minds and we have bodies. What's less clear is exactly how our minds and bodies are related. Is there really just one thing with two ways of describing it? Or, are there two different things that may or may not interact with each other? In this course, we will look at a range of answers to questions about the relation between mind and body. We will then ask whether and how the nature of conscious experience should impact our answers to these questions. Finally, we will ask: how can we explain the fact that our minds represent the world around us? How do our answers to questions about the relationship between mind and body constrain this explanation? *Prerequisite(s): One non-logic course in philosophy; or junior/senior standing in physical, biological, or social sciences; or consent of the instructor.*
Professor Rachel Goodman | ASYNCH Lectures and SYNCH Discussion Sections on F 8 or 9

PHIL 203 Metaphysics (SYNCH)
Metaphysics is the study of the most fundamental questions about the way things are. We will investigate issues of possibility, necessity, essence, and possible worlds. We ask questions like: Is it possible for a mathematical truth to be false? Could I have been a Penguin? What are the essential properties of ordinary individuals such as people, cats, trees, and tables? *Prerequisite: One non-logic course in philosophy or consent of the instructor.*
Professor Kay Cho | TR 3:30-4:45 PM

PHIL 204 Introduction to the Philosophy of Science (SYNCH)
Science is our best source of knowledge of the world and how it works, but what is the nature of that knowledge and its reliability? We will address questions like: What is science? What is the scientific method? How reliable is the knowledge granted by science? How do fallible, sometimes irrational scientists generate reliable knowledge? *Prerequisite(s): One non-logic course in philosophy; or junior or senior standing in the physical, biological, or social sciences; or consent of instructor.*
Professor Areins Pelayo | MW 8-9:15 AM

PHIL 210 Symbolic Logic (SYNCH)
The focus of this course will be first-order quantification theory. We will begin by reviewing truth-functional logic, treating it in a somewhat more abstract and rigorous way than in PHIL 102. We will then introduce quantifiers and their use to symbolize English sentences. We will set up a natural deduction system for first-order logic and consider meta-theoretical questions that arise about such a system—in particular, its soundness and completeness. *Prerequisite: PHIL 102 or consent of instructor. (Gen. Ed.: Natural World - No Lab course.)*
Professor Cody Hatfield-Myers | MWF 4-4:50 PM

PHIL 224 History of Modern Philosophy II: Kant and His Predecessors (SYNCH)
This course introduces students to the philosophy of Immanuel Kant and to his radical thesis that experience is partly manufactured by the human mind. Students will read primary texts from Hume, Leibniz, and Kant. We will be looking at commonalities and differences between these thinkers on topics such as knowledge, substance, and causation, as well as related topics. *Prerequisite(s): One non-logic course in philosophy; or consent of the instructor.*
Professor Daniel Sutherland | TR 12:30-1:45 PM

PHIL 230 Topics in Ethics and Political Philosophy (SYNCH)
Humans are both a product of and a dominant influence on the physical and biological world we live in. Should we as human beings care about the earth itself and the non-human life on it, and why? What kinds of moral responsibilities do we have toward other living organisms and toward the planet itself? How do these responsibilities interact with the moral obligations we have towards other humans? This course will develop your writing and critical thinking skills through philosophical engagement in these and related questions. We will discuss topics like human-caused climate change, conservation, animal rights, the ethics of use and consumption, environmental justice, and environmental activism. *Prerequisite(s): One non-logic course in philosophy; or consent of the instructor.*
Professor Taylor Kloha | MWF 9-9:50 AM

PHIL 299 Seminar (SYNCH)
This course will serve as an overview of Classical Chinese philosophy from the Hundred Schools of Thought and Warring States periods. We will start with Confucianism, reading Confucius, Mencius, and Xunzi, and then move on to various reactions to Confucianism, such as Mohism and Taoism. Some of the broader questions that will animate the course include: What are the challenges of interpreting ancient Chinese thought today, especially from the “Western” perspective ? How similar or different is Chinese philosophy in aim, subject matter, and methods from ancient and contemporary “Western” philosophy? Can we be in genuine dialogue with thinkers from other historical periods, despite our massive spatial, temporal, and cultural distance? *Recommended background: one non-logic course in philosophy.*
Professor Jake Spinella | MW 4:30-5:45 PM

PHIL 300 Fundamentals of Philosophical Discourse (SYNCH)
Writing is fun! It is enjoyable to express interesting ideas clearly. The problem for most of us is that we can’t express ourselves as effectively as we’d like, so that writing becomes a source of frustration. This course will help you to become a clear, precise, and more confident writer. *Prerequisite(s): Major in philosophy; junior standing or above or departmental approval.*
Professor Georgette Sinkler | TR 12:30-1:45 PM

PHIL 401 Theory of Knowledge (SYNCH)
This course will focus on a priori knowledge. A priori knowledge is knowledge whose justification does not depend on particular sense experiences. Since before Plato, some philosophers have believed that we can know truths, even substantive truths about the world, simply by reflecting or reasoning. Candidates for a priori knowledge have included mathematics, logic, ethics, and some metaphysics. But what are its properties? Is it possible to have any a priori knowledge at all, and if so, what kind of knowledge? We will explore these issues from both a historical and contemporary perspective. *Prerequisite: One non-logic 200-level course; or consent of the instructor.*
Professor Daniel Sutherland | R 3:30-6 PM

PHIL 406 Theory of Reference (SYNCH)
The branch of philosophy of language known as 'theory of reference' addresses questions about the way that language refers to things in the world. In this course on the theory of reference, we will ask how different kinds of expressions (for example, names, descriptions, natural kind terms) pick out their objects, and what kind of meaning they have. Our discussion of these questions will begin with foundational texts of the late 19th century and early 20th century, and end with contemporary discussions of issues such as the nature of first-person reference, and role of internal states and external contextual factors in determining the meaning and reference of our terms. *Prerequisite(s): PHIL 102 and one non-logic 200-level course in philosophy; or consent of the instructor.*
Professor Rachel Goodman | T 3:30-6 PM

PHIL 410 Introduction to Formal Logic (SYNCH)
This course will teach formal methods and concepts for use in philosophy including set theory, probability theory, computability, and issues of soundness and completeness in logic & arithmetic. *Prerequisite: PHIL 210 or consent of the instructor.*
Professor TBD | TR 9:30-10:45 PM

PHIL 423 Studies in Early Modern Philosophy (SYNCH)
The course will be focused on exploration of the philosophical systems of Margaret Cavendish and George Berkeley. Both Cavendish and Berkeley deal with a wide range of questions but both focused much of their work on responding to the 17th century revolution in philosophy and science that focused on explaining natural phenomena in terms of underlying physical mechanisms. Both were also outsiders to the main philosophical community of their time, Cavendish as a woman and Berkeley as Irish, and both rejected central parts of the mechanistic philosophy. Cavendish and Berkeley did not overlap, Berkeley was born a decade after Cavendish’s death, and it’s unlikely that Berkeley was influenced by Cavendish. What they have in common is an intense engagement with the central claims of the mechanical philosophy and the development of interesting and original (and very different) responses to it. *Prerequisite: One non-logic 200-level course; or consent of the instructor.*
Professor David Hilbert | MW 9:30-10:45 PM

PHIL 433 Topics in Social/Political Philosophy (SYNCH)
Can hip hop be a form of protest? Should we speak up about injustice even if it won't cause change? Do victims have a duty to resist their own oppression? In this course we will consider these and other questions as we undertake a philosophical analysis of oppression, resistance, and social change. *Prerequisite: One non-logic 200-level course; or consent of the instructor.*
Professor Annette Martin | TR 2-3:15 PM

Philosophy Department Spotlight

Professor Annette Martin

Bridge to Faculty Postdoctoral Associate to teach PHIL 433 in Spring 2021

Professor Martín does research at the intersections of social philosophy, epistemology, and the philosophy of race and gender, with a special interest in the social processes that sustain oppression. Originally from Southern California, she completed her BA in philosophy and mathematics at Carleton College and her PhD at New York University. She is excited to be working with students at UIC.