LIBERAL ARTS AND SCIENCES

Philosophy

Fall 2024 Courses

PHIL 100: Introduction to Philosophy

This course will provide a general introduction to some of the central problems in philosophy. For example, what do we know, and how do we know it? Does a supremely perfect being exist? Do we have free will? What is the nature of morality? Readings from classic and contemporary sources. *Gen. Ed.: Individual & Society*

Prof. Georgette Sinkler | MW 10–10:50AM
Discussion Sections: F 9AM, 10AM

PHIL 100: Introduction to Philosophy—Philosophy and the Environment

Human beings are both a product of and a dominant influence on the physical and biological world we live in. What can we learn about ourselves by understanding our relation to the rest of our world? What implications does this relationship have for how human societies should be organized? Should human beings care about the earth itself and the non-human life on it? We'll discuss topics like global warming, human-caused mass extinction, and the role of disease in human biological and cultural evolution. *Gen. Ed.: Individual & Society*

Instructor TBD | Online ASYNCH
Discussion Sections: T 4PM, W 4PM, R 7PM, F 1PM

PHIL 101: Critical Thinking

Practical course designed to improve student reasoning skills useful for life, college coursework, and explicitly tested on standardized tests like MCAT, GRE, LSAT. Emphasis is on developing skill at evaluating, formulating and presenting arguments. *Gen. Ed.: Individual & Society*

Prof. John Whipple | MW 11–11:50AM
Discussion Sections: F 10AM, 11AM
Instructor TBD | Online ASYNCH
Discussion Sections: T 4PM, W 4PM, R 7PM, F 1PM

PHIL 102: Introductory Logic

What do designing an electrical circuit, solving a Sudoku puzzle, and writing a computer program have in common? They all use logic for information encoding and extraction. In this course, we will study the principles of propositional and first order logic to understand the concept of logical consequence and become better reasoners. *Gen. Ed.: Natural World (No Lab). Satisfies LAS Quantitative Reasoning requirement*

Prof. Justin Vlasits | MW 12–12:50PM
Discussion Sections: F 11AM, 12PM, 1PM

PHIL 104: What is Democracy?

Is the US a democracy? That depends on what a democracy is. In this class, we will try to figure that out, looking at various answers to 3 key questions: What does it mean for "the people" to "rule"? Who are "the people"? How do they rule? Students will also learn the core building blocks for doing philosophy: identifying, understanding and evaluating claims, concepts and arguments. The class equips students to think well about US politics, government and our role as citizens. *Gen. Ed. Individual and Society or Understanding US Society*

Prof. Anthony Laden | MW 1–1:50PM
Discussion Sections: F 12PM, 1PM

PHIL 107: What is Art?

If you place a toilet in a museum, does that make it art? And who cares—why does it matter whether something is art or not? More generally: what is art, and why do we care about it (if we do)? In this course we will explore these questions and bring the answers we come up with to bear on our experience of actual works of art in Chicago. *Gen. Ed.: Creative Arts*

Prof. Samuel Fleischacker | MW 10–10:50 AM
Discussion Sections: F 2PM, 3PM

PHIL 113: Philosophy in the Information Age

Introduction to philosophy through an exploration of the ethical, epistemological, and metaphysical implications of and questions arising from the use of digital technology. Examples may be taken from Big Data, social media and autonomous technology. *Gen. Ed.: Individual & Society*

Instructor TBD | MW 12–12:50PM
Discussion Sections: F 2PM, 3PM

PHIL 115: Death

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 others' deaths? How should the knowledge that I will die affect how I live? *Gen. Ed.: Individual & Society*

Instructor TBD | MW 10–10:50AM
Discussion Sections: F 10AM, 11AM, 12PM

PHIL 116: Biomedical Ethics

Moral issues as they arise in medical contexts, including such topics as abortion, euthanasia, paternalism, allocation of medical resources, and psychiatric issues.

Instructor TBD | TR 8–9:15AM

PHIL 201: Theory of Knowledge

Basic issues concerning knowledge, such as knowledge of the external world, other minds, scientific laws, and necessary truths. Emphasis varies from term to term.

Instructor TBD | TR 2–3:15PM

PHIL 202: Philosophy of Psychology

Almost everyone agrees that we have minds and bodies. What's less clear is exactly how our minds and bodies are related. Is there 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'll look at a range of answers to questions about the relation between mind and body. We'll then ask whether and how the nature of conscious experience should impact our answers to questions about the relationship between our minds and our bodies.

Prof. David Hilbert | MW 9–9:50AM
Discussion Sections F 8AM, 9AM

PHIL 203: Metaphysics

Philosophical issues concerning free will, causation, action, mind and body, identity over time, God, universals and particulars. Emphasis varies from term to term.

Instructor TBD | TR 3:30–4:45PM

PHIL 204: Intro to the Philosophy of Science

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?

Prof. Nick Huggett | TR 11–11:50AM
Discussion Sections: F 8AM, 9AM

PHIL 206: Intro to the Philosophy of Language

We all know that language is not always used simply to tell the truth. But what's the difference between lying, misleading and simply 'bullshitting'? How do these relate to persuasion and propaganda? We'll read a wide range of texts in the philosophy of language to help us understand how language functions as a medium of meaning, and how it can be used to inform, communicate, implicate, manipulate, silence, etc.

Prof. Rachel Goodman | TR 12:30–1:45PM

PHIL 210: Symbolic Logic

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.

Prof. Nick Huggett | Online ASYNCH Lecture
Discussion Section | R 2–3:15PM (IN PERSON)

PHIL 227: Phenomenology and Existentialism

Phenomenology and existentialism are overlapping philosophical traditions that seek to illuminate the nature of existence, experience and meaning: what it is to be alive, to be human, to think and feel, to be conscious, to be free, and to exist in the world. We'll approach these themes through the lens of "the Other": What does it mean to share a world with others? How do our freedom and individuality depend on others? When and how does the process of "othering" manifest in social domination? We'll engage with works of literature and film as well as original philosophical texts.

Instructor Michael Guidot | MW 3–4:15PM

PHIL 230: Philosophy of Race and Racism

Race-related ideas seem to be at the heart of many discussions in today's society about personal identity, culture, knowledge, and ethics. In this class, we will confront these ideas head on using the methods and tools of philosophy. We'll ask questions like: what is race and how is it connected to ethnicity? What is racism? How do race and racism affect my life, affect society? How do different races experience or perceive racism, if at all? We will also evaluate the answers that various philosophers have given to these questions.

Instructor Ray Maung | TR 4:30–5:45PM

PHIL 230: Ethics of Computing and AI

Identification and analysis of ethical challenges specific to computing and artificial intelligence as well as the implications of such technology for important moral concepts such as agency, responsibility, and privacy.

Instructor TBD | MW 9:30–10:45AM

PHIL 300: Fundamentals of Philosophical Discourse

Writing philosophy papers (and anything else) can be enjoyable if you know what you are doing. This course focuses on the activity of writing—presenting ideas clearly—rather than the surface mechanics of grammar and paragraph construction. It is writing intensive, with almost weekly writing assignments. Students will write a new philosophy paper that explores ideas from work in one of their previous courses, and so this course is best taken AFTER you have already completed a 200 level non-logic philosophy class where you have written a paper that is more than a couple of pages long.

Prof. Anthony Laden | MW 9:30–10:45AM

Prerequisites:

202 & 204: One non-logic course in philosophy; or junior or senior standing in the physical, biological, or social sciences; or consent of the instructor

All other 200-level courses: One non-logic course in philosophy; or consent of the instructor

300: Philosophy major/minor & at least one non-logic 200-level PHIL course; or consent of the instructor

400-level courses: One 200-level course in philosophy; or consent of the instructor

Questions? Contact:

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LAS Philosophy Advisor
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PHIL 402: Mind, Reason, and Consciousness

Many have thought that being minded involves representing the world, being rational and being conscious. In this class, we look at some central ways that philosophers have understood these aspects of mentality, how they fit into the natural world, and the relationships between them. For example, we will ask: are all minds rational? Are all minds conscious? To what extent are our abilities to reason and represent innate? Is our conscious nature compatible with, and/or explained by, our physical nature?

Prof. Rachel Goodman | R 3:30–6PM

PHIL 423: Descartes' *Meditations*

Descartes' metaphysics and epistemology have been enormously influential. Nearly all philosophy students read selections from Descartes' *Meditations on First Philosophy*, but few attain an accurate understanding of what he is attempting to accomplish in this famous text. We will aim to develop a deeper, more nuanced, and more historically situated understanding of Descartes' metaphysics and epistemology. Some guiding questions we will consider: does Descartes commit the fallacy of circular reasoning in his attempt to defeat skepticism? How does Descartes conceive of mind, body, and mind-body union and interaction? What role do rhetorical strategies play in the *Meditations*? In what sense is Descartes committed to the radical (and seemingly implausible) doctrine of the creation of the eternal truths?

Prof. John Whipple | MW 9:30–10:45AM

PHIL 432: Consequentialism and its Critics

Do the ends always justify the means? Can the prospect of a good outcome (e.g. saving the lives of many) justify, or even require, doing something we'd otherwise consider unethical (e.g. killing an innocent person)? Yes, according to some philosophers ("consequentialists"). We'll consider some varieties of, and objections to, consequentialism in order to determine whether it is an acceptable ethical theory.

Prof. Will Small | T 3:30–6PM