

COURSES FOR PHILOSOPHY

Philosophy Courses

PHL500 Proseminar

Hours 3

This course is designed to familiarize incoming graduate students with the expectations and standards of graduate level work in philosophy. The course aims to develop the tools necessary to read, write, and converse about philosophy at the graduate level. In particular, students will learn how to orient themselves on a philosophical question or topic, how to formulate questions and thoughts about new topics, and how to develop and structure those thoughts—both orally and in writing. Students will study and discuss a wide range of papers, drawn from the graduate program's three concentrations: (1) Law, Ethics, and Society, (2) Philosophy, Medicine, and Ethics, and (3) Mind and Brain. Admission into the Philosophy Master's program or permission of the instructor is required.

Prerequisite(s): Admission into the Philosophy Master's program or permission of the instructor is required.

PHL510 Special Topics in Philosophy

Hours 1-3

This course offers advanced, graduate level study of a special philosophical topic that is not part of the Department's regular course offerings. Acceptance into the Philosophy Master's program or permission of the instructor is required.

Prerequisite(s): Acceptance into the Philosophy Master's program or permission of the instructor is required.

PHL522 Neuroethics

Hours 3

Due to advances in psychopharmacology and brain imaging, scenarios resembling those of science fiction may soon be upon us: Medications that enhance memory, cognition, or happiness could be widely available soon, and advances in neuroimaging promise to allow the detection of lying, mental illness, or even level of intelligence. Technologies like these bring a host of ethical questions in their wake, ones concerning privacy, justice, and authenticity to self. Issues such as these are what compose the field of Neuroethics, and will be what students look at in this class. Acceptance into the Philosophy Master's program or permission of the instructor is required.

Prerequisite(s): Acceptance into the Philosophy Master's program or permission of the instructor is required.

PHL540 Seminar on Law

Hours 3

This is a course covering a specialized advanced topic in specific jurisprudence. Specific jurisprudence deals with issues relevant to one area of law or legal system. Example topics are issues in criminal punishment, debates over the proper way to interpret the U.S. Constitution, and the dilemmas of privacy law. The Professor will determine the specific topic each semester the course is offered. Admission into the Philosophy Master's program or permission of the instructor is required.

Prerequisite(s): Admission into the Philosophy Master's program or permission of the instructor is required.

PHL541 Law and Morality

Hours 3

This course explores the philosophical and moral underpinnings of four fundamental areas in the law school curriculum: Contract, Property, Tort, and Criminal Law. If contracts have the same moral relations that we describe as promises in our everyday social relations, how should that fact guide the principles we follow in contract law? Is liability for negligence morally defensible considering that negligence doesn't examine one's intent? Is property simply a system for regulating the control of assets, or do persons have a moral right to have things? Are persons responsible for who they are—personality, values, and beliefs—in a way that morally justifies punishing them for committing offenses? Landmark cases from each area will be examined, focusing upon philosophical analysis and moral evaluation of the law. Admission into the Philosophy Master's program or permission of the instructor is required.

Prerequisite(s): Admission into the Philosophy Master's program or permission of the instructor is required.

PHL542 Ticking Time Bombs: Philosophy and National Security

Hours 3

As the "ticking time bomb" hypothetical typically goes, you are an intelligence agent or law enforcement officer who has detained the one terrorist with knowledge of how to prevent a large-scale attack. One may contort the hypothetical to make it as heart-rending as possible, but the ultimate question is whether you should torture the detainee in such an extreme scenario. These scenarios raise pressing practical and philosophical questions, but they need not be so extreme. This course examines the central legal and philosophical issues relating to national security, including terrorism, torture, the ethics of intelligence, and the balance between security and liberty.

Prerequisite(s): Admission into the Philosophy Master's program or permission of the instructor is required.

PHL544 Constitutionalism and Democracy

Hours 3

This course explores the central philosophical issues raised in constitutional law, including constitutional structure, separation of powers, representation, the rule of law, principles of legislation, and judicial review and interpretation. The course also examines how these issues become manifest in actual cases, in the context of both government powers and civil liberties.

Prerequisite(s): Acceptance into the Philosophy Master's program or permission of the instructor is required.

PHL546 Legal and Philosophical Problems in Policing

Hours 3

This course examines the central philosophical problems that arise within the law of policing. Topics include police authority, legitimacy, and the problem of political obligation; the relationship between police discretion and the rule of law; human dignity and brutality in policing; and special problems in laws governing entrapment, the police's use of informants, the police's use of surveillance and emerging technology—as well as other deceptive and dishonesty tactics.

Prerequisite(s): Acceptance into the Philosophy Master's program or permission of the instructor is required.

PHL548 Philosophy of Law

Hours 3

This course examines the central issues in the philosophy of law, including the relationship between law and morality, the duty to obey the law, and the nature of legal reasoning and judicial decision, as well as cognate topics such as the objectivity of law, free will and responsibility, liberty and its limits, conceptions of the just society, liberalism and illiberalism, and critical theories of society and law. Acceptance into the Philosophy Master's program or permission of the instructor is required.

Prerequisite(s): Acceptance into the Philosophy Master's program or permission of the instructor is required.

PHL560 Philosophy of Mind

Hours 3

What is the relationship between the mental and the physical? That is the central question in the philosophy of mind, and students will approach it from different angles. The course will focus largely on consciousness and its place in nature. Most readings will be from the contemporary literature, but some will be historical.

Prerequisite(s): Acceptance into the Philosophy Master's program or permission of the instructor are required.

PHL562 Neural Basis of Consciousness

Hours 3

Recent years have seen the use of neuroscientific methods to try to understand consciousness, in hopes that this approach succeeds where others have failed. This course surveys and analyzes current neuroscientific and philosophical approaches to studying consciousness, the focus often being on integrating the two. Topics covered this semester include: methods in consciousness research; the prefrontal cortex and consciousness; contemporary theories of consciousness; the role of consciousness in action; the neural and cognitive requirements for consciousness. Acceptance into the Philosophy Master's program or permission of the instructor are required.

Prerequisite(s): Acceptance into the Philosophy Master's program or permission of the instructor are required.

PHL564 Mind, Language and Reality

Hours 3

This course concerns the nature of meaning and its connection to metaphysics and epistemology. Students will study classic works by Gottlob Frege, Bertrand Russell, Saul Kripke, and others. Students will also study more recent work in philosophical semantics and its application to arguments in the philosophy of mind. This course concerns the nature of linguistic reference, meaning, and their connection to metaphysics, epistemology, and the philosophy of mind. Students will also study more recent works by David Chalmers, Amie Thomasson, Jennifer Saul, and others.

PHL586 Philosophy of Science

Hours 3

Science serves an important role in society, from satisfying our interest in the nature of reality to informing technological advancements and public policy. This course will cover some of the main topics in philosophy of science: the demarcation of science and pseudoscience, scientific methods, the nature of evidence, scientific progress, scientific realism and antirealism, and the role of values in science. Acceptance into the Philosophy Master's program or permission of the instructor are required.

Prerequisite(s): Acceptance into the Philosophy Master's program or permission of the instructor are required.

PHL587 Philosophy and Evolution

Hours 3

The "Darwinian Revolution" – the development and acceptance of evolutionary theory - is one of the most significant intellectual events in recent human history. It is significant partly because it has changed the way we understand the world and the processes that operate within it. This ultimately has implications for our conception of human nature and our understanding of human psychological, social, cultural and conceptual processes, as well as knowledge, ethics and the arts. In this class, students will explore the philosophical issues raised by the Darwinian Revolution, including the nature of evidence for and confirmation of that theory, as well as the creationist challenges. Students will also explore the influence of that revolution on subdisciplines in philosophy: evolutionary epistemology, evolutionary ethics and evolutionary aesthetics. Acceptance into the Philosophy Master's program or permission of the instructor are required.

Prerequisite(s): Acceptance into the Philosophy Master's program or permission of the instructor are required.

PHL588 The Philosophy of Mental Health

Hours 3

This course explores the central philosophical issues in the philosophy of mental health, including: the nature of the mental, the ontology and classification of mental disorders, realism vs antirealism about mental disorders, naturalism vs normativism in mental health and social constructionism. This course also examines how these issues impact the diagnosis and treatment of mental disorders. Acceptance into the Philosophy Master's program or permission of the instructor are required.

Prerequisite(s): Acceptance into the Philosophy Master's program or permission of the instructor are required.

PHL590 Capstone

Hours 3

The capstone seminar is the final course in the M.A. sequence. The course, which is writing- and participation-intensive, focuses on specific topics at the intersection of the three graduate concentrations: Law, Ethics, and Society; Philosophy, Medicine, and Ethics; and Mind and Brain. During the first half of the seminar, students will read articles on topics in each of the three concentrations—writing short responses in advance of each class. The second part of the course focuses on the development of a research paper—on a topic in one of the three concentrations—that meets the requirements of a professional journal. Students will present their work-in-progress to their peers, and practice giving and receiving constructive feedback to each other. Acceptance into the Philosophy Master's program or permission of the instructor is required.

Prerequisite(s): Acceptance into the Philosophy Master's program or permission of the instructor is required.

PHL599 Thesis Research

Hours 1-3

This course is for the independent research and writing necessary for the completion of a Master's thesis in Philosophy. It can be repeated for a total of 6 credit hours. Acceptance into the Philosophy Master's program and permission of the instructor are required.

Prerequisite(s): Acceptance into the Philosophy Master's program and permission of the instructor.