

DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY – Generic Course Descriptions

PHI 500 The Philosophy of Plato

The course is a study of the development of Plato's thought and an examination of the validity of his major contributions in the areas of metaphysics, epistemology, cosmology, and ethics.

PHI 501 The Philosophy of Aristotle

The course is an historical and critical study of the major concepts of the metaphysics, theory of knowledge, and ethics of Aristotle. Particular attention is given to the *Metaphysics*, to parts of the *Physics*, *Categories*, *Posterior Analytics*, and the *de Anima*, and to the *Nicomachean Ethics*.

PHI 502 The Philosophy of Kant

Selected works of Kant are read, analyzed, and discussed.

PHI 503 Plato's Political Philosophy (Half-term)

The seminar is devoted to the study of Plato's "Laws" and to a critical examination of the growing literature on the subject.

PHI 506 Topics in Medieval Philosophy

The course is an intensive examination of selected developments in medieval philosophical thought. Topics may range from the detailed examination of a single text or the work of a single philosopher to the consideration of various medieval approaches to a significant philosophical problem. Among the areas that may be considered are medieval logic and semantics, universals, individuation and the plurality of forms, abstractive and intuitive knowledge, theories of human nature, and natural theology.

PHI 508 (OTO; FALL 2019) Recent and Contemporary Philosophy (Half-term)

Course topics vary from year to year.

PHI 510 German Philosophy since Kant

Course topics vary from year to year.

PHI 511 Pre-Kantian Rationalism

The course focuses on reading and discussion of the works of one or more of the major rationalist philosophers of the early modern period. Normally the course focuses on the writings of Descartes, Spinoza, and/or Leibniz.

PHI 513 Topics in Recent and Contemporary Philosophy

The course gives an intensive analysis of the major movements in philosophy in recent decades.

PHI 514 Recent and Contemporary Philosophy

Seminar will review developments in the semantics of natural language since 1975.

PHI 515 Special Topics in the History of Philosophy

The course is an intensive study of selected philosophers or philosophical movements in the history of ancient philosophy.

PHI 516 Special Topics in the History of Philosophy

An intensive study of selected philosophers or philosophical movements in the history of early modern philosophy.

PHI 518 (OTO; SUMMER 2016) Ethical Rationalism vs. Ethical Sentimentalism

Ethical Rationalism vs. Ethical Sentimentalism – a two-part graduate course taught at Humboldt University and Princeton University.

PHI 519 Normative Ethics

This graduate ethics course examines some ethical questions and the relevance of psychological studies to those questions.

PHI 520 Logic

The course is a study of selected topics in logic.

PHI 523 Problems of Philosophy

A systematic examination of selected philosophical problems.

PHI 524 Systematic Ethics

The course gives an analysis of theories of the nature and foundations of morality.

PHI 525 Ethics

An introduction to the philosophical understanding and analysis of particular moral issues.

PHI 527 Philosophy of the Social Sciences

A presentation and discussion of key concepts and foundational issues in the cognitive and social sciences. The distinction between two types of representations, descriptions and interpretations, is explored. The ontology of culture; varieties of inferences, concepts, and beliefs; relevance and communication; and the epidemiology of representations are studied.

PHI 530 Philosophy of Art

The course gives a systematic examination of philosophical problems related to art criticism.

PHI 531 Philosophy of Science

The course is a study of selected problems concerning the structure, methods, and presuppositions of the natural and the social sciences.

PHI 532 Philosophical Problems in Logic

The course is an intensive study of selected problems in logical theory. In various years, topics include foundations of intuitionist theory, set theory, modal logic, or formal semantics.

PHI 533 Decision Theory

Several accounts of individual and group decision making and of preference, utility, and probability are examined.

PHI 534 Philosophy of Language

The course covers traditional philosophic issues concerning language, including meaning, reference, and analyticity. Particular attention is given to attempts to view these problems as amenable to solution by the methods of empirical linguistics.

PHI 535 Philosophy of Mind

The course gives an analysis of psychological concepts and of philosophical problems in which they play a part.

PHI 536 Philosophy of Mathematics

The course is a study of selected philosophic issues in mathematics: truth and proof, the relation of mathematics to logic, constructivity, the traditional viewpoints of formalism, intuitionism, and logicism.

PHI 537 (OTO; FALL 2019) Philosophical Problems in Logic (Half-term)

Course topics vary from year to year.

PHI 538 The Philosophy of Physics

A discussion of philosophic problems suggested by theories of physics, such as the logical status of Newton's laws; the nature of theories of space and time; the foundations of special and general relativity theory; and problems of quantum theory, including causal versus statistical laws, complementarity, correspondence, and measurement in quantum mechanics.

PHI 539 Theory of Knowledge

The course is a critical study of the nature of knowledge.

PHI 540 Metaphysics

An intensive study of concepts such as causality, being, time, and appearance and reality.

PHI 550 First-Year Philosophy Graduate Student Seminar

A seminar for first-year graduate students in philosophy. Issues discussed will vary from year to year.

PHI 551 (OTO, SUMMER 2018-2019-2020) Practical Normativity

This is a three-part graduate course taught by Thomas Schmidt (Humboldt University, Berlin) & Michael Smith (Princeton University). Taught in 3 successive summers, this covers problems in the area of practical normativity, including but not limited to, questions about the nature of reasons; how we distinguish between moral & non-moral reasons; how conflicts between moral & non-moral reasons are to be adjudicated; about the nature & scope of requirements of rationality; and about the relationship between requirements of rationality & reasons. Participation by application.

PHI 590 Extramural Teaching Internship

Students will teach a semester-long undergraduate course in Philosophy at an institution other than Princeton University. Objectives and content of the course will be determined by the student's advisor, in consultation with the host. The student enrolled in the course will submit monthly progress reports that will include the syllabus of the course taught, a description of the subject matter covered, of teaching methods employed, and of examinations conducted. The student will also submit any course evaluations they may receive from the host institution.

PHI 599 Dissertation Seminar

Students will make presentations of work in progress, discuss each other's work, and share common pedagogical problems and solutions.

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PHI cross-listed courses (with courses from other departments):**POL 507 (Cross-listed with PHI 507) Plato's Republic Books 8 and 9 (Half-Term)**

We will conduct a close reading of Plato's Republic Books 8 and 9, together with scholarship on these books, the dialogue, and related topics. These books treat the decline of the ideal constitution into a sequence of four other constitutions – timocracy, oligarchy, democracy, and tyranny – each with a corresponding individual figure. They include discussions of historical change as shaped by factors including the role of political office, and the relationship between psychological and political formations. While the Greek text may be referenced in discussion, knowledge of classical Greek is not required for enrollment.

HUM 586 (Cross-listed with PHI 512) Hobbes and Milton: The Commonwealth, the Person and the Nature of Language

Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679) is considered the greatest English thinker ever likely to be; John Milton (1608-74) the greatest English non-dramatic poet, and theorist of domestic and civil liberty. Both key in the English Revolution, they have continued to exert major international influence. Through analysis of major works and some secondary commentary, we will consider their sharp contrasts (on authority, sovereignty, law, epistemology, poetics) and disarming similarities (the Bible, 'new science', superstition, matter, mortalism, rhetoric and logic), with some comparison of contemporaries such as Descartes, Spinoza and Margaret Cavendish.

CHV 523 (Cross-listed with PHI 517) Consequentialism

A graduate seminar on consequentialism. See the syllabus for a provisional list of topics to be discussed.

CHV 528 (Cross-listed with PHI 521) Bioethics

We will discuss a range of topics in bioethics, including: human enhancement, whether by genetic selection, genetic modification or pharmaceutical means; markets for organs and for reproductive surrogacy; life and death issues, including end-of-life decisions for neonates; whether global population growth is a problem, and if so, what ethical course of action is open to us; and global health priorities. In all of these cases, we will ask what practices are justifiable, and what public policy ought to be.

CLA 526 (Cross-listed with PHI 522) Pre-Socratic Philosophy

The seminar aims at exploring both the evidence and the conceptual tools on the basis of which we read the so-called 'Presocratic philosophers.' How can we analyze philosophy in the making, before it became a discipline in its own right? We shall consider a large sample of primary texts and sources related to prominent early thinkers, such as Heraclitus, Parmenides, and Empedocles, and discuss them in the light of specialized scholarship; but we shall also try to find our way among a variety of theoretical approaches (philosophical, historiographical, etc.).

POL 563 (Cross-listed with PHI 526) Philosophy of Law

A systematic study of the salient features of legal systems, standards of legal reasoning, and the relation between law and morals.

POL 518 (Cross-listed with PHI 529) Political Philosophy

Selected issues or theories of common interest to students in the Department of Politics and in the Department of Philosophy. The course is taught by members of the faculties of the two departments under the auspices of the Program in Political Philosophy.

CHV 525 (Cross-listed with PHI 557) On What Matters: Reading Parfit

Derek Parfit's *On What Matters* is a lengthy, densely argued, and immensely ambitious work, which seeks to show that the most plausible versions of Kantianism, Contractualism, and Consequentialism all converge on a single normative theory which is therefore the best justified moral theory. We shall go through this book, scrutinize its arguments, and ask if it achieves its goals.

HUM 582 (Cross-listed with PHI 581) Observing the World

In this seminar we will consider the different modalities of observation in the pre- and early modern world, including artistic, literary, philosophical, and scientific. A central problem will be the ways in which the world was transformed into concrete representations through language, visual art, and mathematics.

HOS 591 (Cross-listed with PHI 591) The Scientific Revolution

This course explores problems in the Scientific Revolution of the 16th and 17th centuries, including both the development of scientific thought and practice and the changing role of science in the surrounding culture.