

Philosophy Courses – Spring 2023

PH 101 Introduction to Philosophy

3 Cr.

This course introduces students to the study and the practice of philosophy. Through the analysis of historical and contemporary texts, class discussions and lectures students gain an understanding of philosophy both as a discipline and as a way of asking – and attempting to answer – fundamental questions about ourselves and the world. The emphasis is both on learning about philosophy and on doing philosophy.

*Open to first- and second-year students or by permission of instructor.
Fulfills Humanities and Humanistic Inquiry requirements.*

PH 101-001 T/TH 8:10 – 9:30

L. Jorgensen

PH 101-002 T/TH 11:10 – 12:30

L. Jorgensen

PH 101-003 T/TH 12:40 – 2:00

D. Coren

PH 110W: Political Philosophy- an Introduction

4 Cr.

Course Theme: Liberalism and Its Alternatives.

Twenty years ago, there were no serious challengers to liberal democracy and to capitalism. Today, many have begun championing alternatives to both. By examining the critiques of liberalism and the free market offered by Socialism, Anarchism, Fascism and Populism as well as Liberalism's responses to these challengers, we gain insight into the range and desirability of each form of political organization.

Fulfills humanities requirement and the expository writing requirement (AEW).

M 9:05 – 10:00

T/TH 9:40 – 11:00

W. Lewis

PH 204: Modern Philosophy from Descartes to Kant

4 Cr.

An introduction to major thinkers and themes of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Europe. The dynamics of the Scientific Revolution - the collection of new discoveries and inventions and the evolving experimental methods in the early modern period - led philosophers to a profound reappraisal of fundamental issues such as the sources and limits of knowledge, the relation between mind and body, theories of human freedom and personal identity, and the apparently competing desires to explain the surrounding world in both natural and religious terms. Students will investigate how these philosophical developments led to distinctively modern ways of thinking about nature and the self. Primary documents will be read throughout.

Fulfills humanistic inquiry requirement.

T/TH 2:10 – 3:30

M 1:25 – 2:20

L. Jorgensen

PH 207: Introduction to Logic

4 Cr.

An introduction to the basic concepts and methods of modern symbolic logic, with a focus on their application to proper reasoning. Students learn how to represent sentences in logical notation, to reconstruct arguments in that notation, to assess arguments for validity and soundness, and to prove conclusions from premises using a system of natural deduction. Students also learn to recognize common argument forms and common mistakes in reasoning (fallacies), are introduced to philosophical issues related to logic, and learn how symbolic logic is the basis for the digital computer.

Fulfills QR2 requirement (except for class of 2024 and beyond)

W/F 12:20 – 2:10

P. Murray

PH 218 Identity, Knowledge & Ignorance

3 Cr.

An examination of the ways in which we are affected by, and participate in, systems of injustice, epistemic and otherwise, with a focus on the contemporary US. Epistemic injustice and epistemic violence involve giving diminished credibility to those we have biases against, and undermining people's ability to think clearly, share information, and even to assess their own abilities. Epistemic injustice hinders the development of a just society in the dimensions of race, class, ability, gender, sexuality, etc.; and it fosters injustice in these dimensions. It is particularly pernicious because it damages our most intimate capacities of thinking and feeling – it distorts our understanding of the world while simultaneously concealing its own operation. In so doing, it enables the belief that society is just and that our actions, policies, and systems treat others fairly. Our readings describe such knowing and unknowing in the contemporary US in the theoretical terms of epistemology and critical race theory. Such discussions of epistemic injustice thus help us understand how unjust social systems are composed of individuals who may even believe they are acting fairly, justly, or well, they also help us understand how we as individuals can participate in creating better ones.

Fulfills Bridge Experience Content/Theory.

M/W 2:30 – 3:50

S. Blake

PH 219 Identity, Knowledge & Ignorance Practicum

1 Cr.

This practicum may be taken only by students also enrolled in the main section of the “Identity, Knowledge, and Ignorance” (PH 218) course. That course provides an examination of the ways in which we are affected by, and participate in, systems of injustice, epistemic and otherwise, with a focus on the contemporary US. This practicum requires students to become more expert in conducting dialogues about identity, race, and injustice, as they affect our daily lives and in communicating their observations on these topics to a wider audience through practices of conversation and public writing.

Fulfills Bridge Experience Practicum.

W 12:20 – 1:15

S. Blake

PH 230D-001 Comparative Ethics: Buddhism & Ancient Greece**4 Cr.**

This course introduces students to ancient accounts of happiness with a particular focus on (1) Classical Buddhist accounts in Ancient India and (2) Aristotelian and Stoic accounts in Ancient Greece. Particular attention will be paid to the connections between happiness, the self, and desire. To clarify those connections, we will focus on two thinkers and traditions: first, Shantideva and the Madhyamaka school of Buddhism; and, second, Aristotle and the Aristotelian tradition.

Fulfills Global Cultural Perspectives; Humanities and Humanistic Inquiry requirements.

T/TH 9:10 – 11:00

D. Coren

PH 230D-002 Law, Property, (In)Humanity**4 Cr.**

A study of the law from legal, philosophical, and human rights points of view. The focus will be on the philosophical conceptions of personhood and property that have been at the basis of property law for 300 years and that shape disadvantageously and in a material manner contemporary community of color. Special attention is given to how American treaty and property law has been used as an instrument of disenfranchisement and oppression of the Native American and African American communities. The challenge that modern property law makes for environmental activism is also considered.

Fulfills Bridge Experience; Humanities and Humanistic Inquiry requirements. Flexible 4th credit hour

T/TH 12:40 – 2:00

R. Lilly

PH 327 Great Philosophers - Nietzsche**4 Cr.**

Fulfills Humanistic Inquiry requirement.

Prerequisites: One course in Philosophy or permission of the instructor

T/TH 3:40 – 5:30

R. Lilly

PH 330D-001 Daoism**4 Cr.**

This course will examine early texts in Daoism, including the Zhuangzi and Dao De Jing. The course will provide an overview of philosophical thinking in the period of these texts, focusing on ethics and political philosophy. In addition to an in-depth study of primary texts, students will choose particular aspects of the history of Daoism to examine more extensively through secondary literature; these aspects may include religious Daoism or even early Chinese Buddhism.

Fulfills Humanistic Inquiry requirement.

Prerequisites: One course in Philosophy or permission of the instructor

M/W 4:00 – 5:50

S. Blake

PH 330D-002 Responsibility: Buddhist & Aristotelian Perspectives**4 Cr.**

Backward-looking blame is as ineffective as blaming plants - so goes one version of a Classical Buddhist account of responsibility. On this view, all responsibility should be forward-looking, based only on goals of reconciliation, reform, improvement, and understanding. Desert-based anger is always misplaced. Consider a different perspective: backward-looking blame and desert-based anger are inappropriate only when they are excessive or deficient; there is an appropriate amount of anger in response to wrongdoings. So goes the Aristotelian view. This course has two aims: First, enable students to gain clear and detailed understandings of the Buddhist view and the Aristotelian view; and, second, give students the tools and creative space to write a focused argumentative paper supporting their own opinion on this fundamental issue.

Fulfills Global Cultural Perspectives and Humanistic Inquiry requirements.

Prerequisites: One course in Philosophy or permission of the instructor

W/F 10:10 – 12:00

D. Coren

PH 375: Senior Seminar**4 Cr.**

A capstone course in which students develop a portfolio of representative work in philosophy. Students will compile at least three research papers from previous course work, which will form the basis of their senior portfolio. The development of the portfolio will have at least three stages: (1) a re-envisioning and significant revision of a previous research paper, including doing further research into scholarly literature on the topic and with an opportunity to explore interdisciplinary connections; (2) the redevelopment of that paper into a short presentation; and (3) a reflection exercise in which students synthesize their work in the major, considering the ways their interests have developed over the course of their time at Skidmore and the ways in which these might inform their future endeavors. Open to senior Philosophy majors.

Prerequisites: philosophy major or permission of instructor.

Sec. 001 T/TH 12:40-2:00

W. Lewis

Sec. 002 T/TH 12:40-2:00

P. Murray