philosophy

Undergraduate Course Offerings

Spring 2019
Basic Philosophical Questions  This prerequisite to all other philosophy courses gives you an initial understanding of what philosophy is, the range of questions philosophers take up, and how they deal with those questions.

UCOR 132  22 sections

Logic  Valid reasoning, logical fallacies, types of definitions, important informal aspects of arguments in ordinary discourse, and the formal logic of inferences involving simple and compound statements.

PHIL 106  2 sections  Dr Rodemeyer

Philosophical Ethics  Ethics deals with questions like: What is happiness? What are virtue and vice? Can virtue be taught? How do we make decisions regarding good and bad, right and wrong? This course is an opportunity to delve into the ethical ideas that inform our lives, by looking at a selection of classic works from the Western philosophical tradition, including texts by ancient, modern, and contemporary thinkers.

UCOR 151  5 sections

Philosophy of Religion  The course asks such questions as, Does God exist? How can we think of God if God is ineffable? Is God a person? How can God be good if there is so much evil in the world? It includes a comparative approach, trying to identify the characteristics of religion and what all great religions have in common. We will also discuss religious experience, the religious impulse, and the authenticity of the religious dimension to human life. Short select readings from various authors.

faith & reason

PHIL 203  TR 9:25–10:40  Fr. Cronin
Plato  A survey of the dialogues of Plato, attending primarily to their philosophical argumentation, but also to their dramatic composition and historical context.

PHIL 205/303W  TR 12:15–1:30  Dr Miller

Philosophy & Film  This course explores the philosophical implications of elements of film art: What, for example, does film editing tell us about the nature of perception? What do flashbacks say about memory? What do close-ups reveal about emotion? Are there ethical reasons why some images should not be made or shown, or why other images ought to be preserved? We read philosophers, directors, and film critics, and watch clips for all sorts of films.

PHIL 206  TR 9:25–10:40  Dr Lampert

Philosophy of Death & Living  This course explores the issues of mortality and the destruction of the body and mind. How does our understanding of death affect our philosophy of life? How do philosophers describe death, and what does it mean to be alive? We examine these questions through ancient and contemporary readings.

PHIL 220  TR 1:40–2:55  Dr Arenson

Yoga Philosophy & Practice  Is the practice of yoga a form of philosophy? How do Western and Eastern traditions understand and make use of the mind and the body? We will investigate these questions by looking at classical yoga texts and contemporary philosophy of the body, dividing our time equally between classroom discussion and studio practice. No previous experience with yoga is necessary.

global diversity

PHIL 237  TR 9:25–10:40  Dr Harrington
Health Care Ethics  Ethical questions in medical care and research, e.g., doctor–patient relations, informed consent, euthanasia, and the definitions of health, person, and death.

UCOR 254  2 sections

Philosophy and Star Trek  Star Trek has traditionally focused on topics of extreme philosophical interest. We will investigate several in detail: each week, you will watch an episode from one of the television series and read contemporary or historical philosophical texts discussing the issues raised. We will focus primarily on topics in moral philosophy, including social and political philosophy, although we will also consider issues in metaphysics, epistemology, philosophy of mind, and other areas.

PHIL 259  TR 12:15–1:30  Dr Vogelstein

Philosophy of Law  A study of major legal traditions with consideration of such topics as justice, ethics and law, legal reasoning, and philosophical issues in evidence and procedure.

PHIL 260  MWF 1–1:50  Dr Bjalobok

Love and Friendship  A philosophical consideration of love and friendship: the nature of love, its causes, its effects, its many manifestations, the mutual love found in friendship, the kinds of friendship, and the importance of friendship in human life.

PHIL 299  MWF 11–11:50  Dr Bonin

Epistemology  Epistemology is the branch of philosophy that asks questions about human knowledge. These questions, which are the focus of this course, include: How do you know what you know? How do you know that an external world exists? How do you know you're
not dreaming as you read this? What counts as knowledge? This course explores whether you can be sure that you actually know anything.

PHIL 324 TR 12:15–1:30 Dr Arenson

Nietzsche A survey of Nietzsche’s thought, sampling all his major works. Topics will include: Greek tragedy and philosophy; being and becoming; time and eternity; nihilism and meaning; consciousness, rationality, and language; freedom and individuality; joy and resentment; cruelty and psychology; morality and religion; democracy and feminism; sex and marriage; war and slavery.

PHIL 353W/444W TR 9:25–10:40 Dr Miller

Aristotle’s Metaphysics How there can be a science of being as being, what its subject matter is, what Aristotle discloses about it, and the viability of his approach to being.

PHIL 407W R 1:40–4:20 Dr Polansky

St. Thomas Aquinas—The Soul An introduction to Aquinas’ psychology through close reading of the Treatise on Man in his Summa theologiae. Along the way, we will consider his theory of knowledge and the views of his near contemporaries, with whom he is in dialogue.

PHIL 427W MW 3–4:15 Dr Bonin

Special Topics: Gothic Philosophy An approach to medieval philosophy based on structure rather than content. We will look at the comparison, made since the 19th century, between Gothic architecture and scholastic philosophy. Does a common ‘mental habit’ or set of ‘mental tendencies’ shape both the Gothic building and the scholastic text? If so, we can approach medieval philosophy as the cultivation and expression of these habits or tendencies rather than the study of a certain
subject matter (e.g., God, free will). Our core texts will be Ruskin’s ‘The Nature of Gothic,’ Worringer’s *Form in Gothic*, Panofsky’s *Gothic Architecture and Scholasticism*, and essays by the medievalist, socialist, and atheist William Morris (who argued that, ‘in the future, our style of architecture must be Gothic architecture’). Once we have developed the tools to analyze Gothic philosophy, we will apply them to a Gothic text: Dionysius the Areopagite’s *Mystical Theology*, especially in its 13th-century textbook edition and numerous commentaries. By the end of the term, you will be able to give an architectural reading of medieval philosophy, and a philosophical reading of Gothic architecture.

PHIL 496 T 1:40–4:20 Dr Harrington

For many courses, more details will be posted outside of the Department (303 College Hall) and on our web site.

**The Undergraduate Philosophy Society**

Duquesne’s Undergraduate Philosophy Society meets weekly for student-led discussions of texts and ideas. For information about meeting times and events, write to duqphilclub@gmail.com.