

AY 2025–2026 Graduate Course Schedule

Department of Philosophy
Loyola University Chicago

AY 25-26 At A Glance

Fall 2025 Graduate Courses	
PHIL 402: Aristotle on Contemplation	Mendelsohn
PHIL 407: Medieval Islamic Philosophy	Mousavian
PHIL 438: Philosophical Hermeneutics	Apostolopoulos
PHIL 478: Research Methods in Social Justice	Gordon
PHIL 480: Social and Political Philosophy: Violence	Oksala
PHIL 490-001: Philosophy of Technology	Dunch
PHIL 490-002: Black Critical Theory: Hartman's <i>Scenes of Subjection</i>	Luzardo

Spring 2026 Graduate Courses	
PHIL 416: The Specter of Skepticism in Early Modern Philosophy	Irwin
PHIL 438: Psychoanalysis and Social Theory	Ewara
PHIL 454: God and the Other	Andrews
PHIL 477: Bioethics and Gender	Parks
PHIL 468: The Moral Emotions	Attie Picker
PHIL 485: International Ethics (hybrid)	Gordon
PHIL 490: Non-Human Animals	Oksala

A Note on Distribution Requirements

Distribution requirements for the PhD, MA,BA/MA, and MA in Social Philosophy are included with the course descriptions below. If your program is not listed in the distribution requirements for a course, the course will typically count as an elective, but students should consult the GPD about possible exceptions. Please consult the [Philosophy Graduate Handbook](#) and/or the [online academic catalog](#) for your degree requirements.

Students who enrolled in the MA in Soc. Phil in F24 or later: The MA in Social Philosophy has 3 tracks: the MA in Social Philosophy non-Jesuit Track, the Jesuit Foundational Track, and the Jesuit Enhanced Track. Distribution requirements for each track are included below. Courses that satisfy a requirement for all three tracks will say “all tracks.” If your track is not listed, the course will typically count as an elective, but students should consult the GPD about possible exceptions. Students should also consult the GPD about courses that contribute to course clusters (non-Jesuit track) and flagged electives (Jesuit Foundational and Enhanced Tracks).

Students who enrolled in the MA in Soc. Phil prior to F24: Please consult the GPD about distribution requirements.

Fall 2025 Course Descriptions

PHIL 402: Aristotle, *Topic: Aristotle on Contemplation*

Professor Joshua Mendelsohn

Time: TBA

Course Description: This course examines Aristotle's idea of contemplation, its relationship to the good life and its centrality in his thinking about knowledge. Students will gain experience interpreting primary texts, engaging with scholarly literature, and bringing these analyses to bear on live philosophical issues in ethics and epistemology.

Distribution Requirements

PhD: Ancient, Metaphysics and Epistemology, Analytic

MA and BA/MA: Ancient, Metaphysics and Epistemology, Analytic

MA in Social Philosophy: Ancient (Jesuit Foundational Track); European History of Philosophy (Jesuit Enhanced Track)

PHIL 407: Medieval Philosophy, *Topic: Medieval Islamic Philosophy*

Professor Seyed Mousavian

Time: TBA

Course Description: This course will offer a study of three main figures in the history of classical Islamic philosophy: Avicenna, Al-Ghazali, and Averroes. Thematically, the course is centered around three philosophically significant, theologically controversial, and historically insightful issues in the Islamic tradition: (Q1) Is the world eternal? (Q2) Does God know particulars? And, (Q3) is the human soul immortal? We will start by reading parts of *The Book of Healing* (by Avicenna), which sets the stage by replying in the affirmative to (Q1) and (Q3), and in the negative to (Q2). We will go through Avicenna's arguments in detail and explore possible ways in which his answers to (Q1)-(Q3) can lead to profound doctrinal disagreements in Islamic theology. Then, we move to *The Incoherence of Philosophers* (by Al-Ghazali), which provides a series of detailed criticisms of Avicenna's position and arguments on (Q1)-(Q3). Al-Ghazali's systematic and principled analysis and rejection of Avicenna's reasoning had a long-lasting effect on the Islamic intellectual tradition. Last but not least, we will study parts of *The Incoherence of the Incoherence* (by Averroes), which critically examines Avicenna's and Al-Ghazali's arguments on (Q1)-(Q3). We will end by assessing Averroes's project, that is to provide a 'truly Aristotelian' reply to the questions under discussion and a new framework for reconsidering the relationship between philosophical reasoning and religious faith.

Distribution Requirements

PhD: Medieval, Metaphysics and Epistemology, Analytic

MA and BA/MA: Medieval, Analytic

MA in Social Philosophy: Medieval (Jesuit Foundational Track); non-European (all tracks)

PHIL 438 Topics in Continental Philosophy: Philosophical Hermeneutics

Prof. Dimitris Apostolopoulos

Time: TBA

Course Description: This seminar focuses on the tradition of modern philosophical hermeneutics that emerged in the late 18th and 19th centuries. We will familiarize ourselves with attempts to systematize hermeneutical methods and concepts, and will evaluate various philosophical accounts of the logic, conditions, and scope of interpretation, with special attention to the linguistic, epistemic, perceptual, and metaphysical dimensions of interpretation. We will also consider questions pertaining to the objectivity, truth, and limits of interpretation, and will end with a look at contemporary attempts to apply hermeneutical arguments, concepts, and methods to social and political issues. Authors to be studied include Herder, Schleiermacher, Nietzsche, Dilthey, Heidegger, Gadamer, Ricoeur, and Foucault.

Distribution Requirements:

PhD: Continental

MA and BA/MA: Continental

MA in Social Philosophy: Contemporary/Critical Perspectives (Jesuit Foundational and Enhanced tracks)

PHIL 478: Research Methods in Social Justice

Prof. Joy Gordon

Time: TBA

Course Description: Is it ethical to use drones in warfare? What are the causes of homelessness? What are the specific ways migration impacts women? Who is morally responsible for the acts of a government? This course looks at several different methodological approaches to social justice issues: broad ethical frameworks; specific ethical issues, such as volition and duress; quantitative analysis; US law; and international human rights law. Students are asked to pick a subject area that they will follow throughout the semester, such as racial discrimination, incarceration, or refugees. Focusing on various aspects of their topic area, students will do targeted literature reviews and write several short analytic papers, utilizing each of the methodologies that are covered in the course.

Distribution Requirements

PhD: Ethics/Social and Political

MA in Social Philosophy: Ethics/Social and Political (all tracks)

PHIL 480: Social and Political Philosophy, *Topic: Violence*

Prof. Johanna Oksala

Time: TBA

Course Description: The problem of violence forms an essential starting point of political philosophy: it is the problem that political order is, in different forms and according to different thinkers, understood to address. Whether this means forming a social contract to move from the

state of primordial war to an ordered society or accepting violence as the irreducible essence of the political, violence is understood as the pivotal problem of politics.

In this course we will study seminal texts in the tradition of Continental political philosophy addressing the problem of violence starting from Georges Sorel's *Reflections on Violence* (1908) and ending with Judith Butler's *The Force of Non-Violence* (2020). Other important thinkers include Benjamin, Schmitt, Fanon, Sartre, Arendt, Foucault, and Agamben. Through this literature, we will chart three different strands in political thought regarding the problem of violence: a strand that grants violence a constitutive or even invigorating role in politics, a realist strand that argues that we must accept the ineliminability of violence from the political domain and reflect honestly on its consequences, and, finally, a strand that attempts to develop a critique of violence, even in the face of the unprecedented violence of the 20th century.

The course is intended for both students who are new to the topic, as well as for those already familiar with the work of some of the thinkers studied in it. It aims to offer a thorough and historically contextualized understanding of one of the central issues in Continental political philosophy, as well as to give students the ability to apply the different theoretical frameworks discussed in the course to their own analyses of contemporary forms of violence.

Distribution Requirements

PhD: Continental, Ethics/Social and Political

MA and BA/MA: Continental

MA in Social Philosophy: Contemporary/Critical Perspectives (Jesuit Foundational and Enhanced Tracks), Ethics/Social and Political (all tracks), PHIL 480 requirement (all tracks)

PHIL 490-001: Current Philosophical Issues, *Topic: Philosophy of Technology*

Prof. Matt Dunch

Time: TBA

Course Description: The seminar pursues two broad questions. What is computation? And, based on what it is, how should human beings understand their interactions with it? The seminar will be broken into three parts. Section one tracks the emergence of computation from prior discussions in logic, notably in the work of Alan Turing, Alonso Church, Kurt Gödel, John Von Neumann, Ludwig Wittgenstein, and related secondary literature. Section two explores phenomenological approaches to technology including Martin Heidegger, Hubert Dreyfus, Don Ihde, John Searle, Andy Clark, Alva Noë, Shannon Vallor, and related secondary literature. Section three considers philosophical responses to AI and language learning models. Given the fast-evolving technology and related philosophical discussion, this section will be finalized in the week prior to the seminar and subject to revision as required.

Distribution Requirements:

PhD: Ethics/Social and Political, Analytic

MA and BA/MA: Ethics/Social and Political, Analytic

MA in Social Philosophy: Ethics/Social and Political (all tracks); Contemporary/Critical Perspectives (Jesuit Foundational and Enhanced tracks)

PHIL 490-002: Current Philosophical Issues, *Topic: Black Critical Theory: Hartman's Scenes of Subjection*

Prof. Jesús Luzardo

Time: TBA

Course Description: This graduate seminar will introduce students to contemporary discourses and debates in Black Studies (and more specifically the area which is increasingly referred to as Black Critical Theory) through a close reading of Saidiya Hartman's groundbreaking 1997 text, *Scenes of Subjection*. Through this close reading, we will explore key concepts and relationships such as slavery, Blackness, fungibility, capitalism, pleasure, sexuality, temporality, debt, recognition, and the State. We will dedicate two class sessions to each chapter of the text: one week to discuss Hartman's text in detail, and another to discuss it in relation to the broader texts and thinkers which Hartman is in dialogue with as well as more recent scholarship building upon Hartman's work. Such thinkers include Du Bois, Foucault, Spillers, Jameson, Arendt, Moten, Wilderson, among others.

Distribution Requirements

PhD: Continental, Ethics/Social and Political

MA and BA/MA: Continental

MA in Social Philosophy: Contemporary/Critical Perspectives (Jesuit Foundational and Enhanced Tracks), Ethics/Social and Political (all tracks), non-European tradition (all tracks)

Spring 2026 Course Descriptions

PHIL 416: 17th and 18th Century Philosophy, *Topic: The Specter of Skepticism in Early Modern Philosophy*

Prof. Kristen Irwin

Time: Tu 10:00–12:30

Course Description: This course uses the lens of skepticism as a way to highlight the epistemological, metaphysical, and moral concerns of philosophers in Western Europe during the 17th and 18th centuries. We will consider how the threat of skepticism shapes both the form and the content of the philosophical concerns of this period. We will examine texts by Descartes, Spinoza, Locke, Conway, Cavendish, Leibniz, Berkeley, Hume, Shepherd, and the "First Critique" Kant.

Distribution Requirements

PhD: Modern, Metaphysics and Epistemology

MA and BA/MA: Modern

MA in Social Philosophy: Modern (Jesuit Foundational Track), European History of Philosophy (Jesuit Enhanced Track)

PHIL 438: Psychoanalysis and Social Theory

Prof. Eyo Ewara

Time: W 4:15–6:45

Course Description: Despite its violent rejection by much of contemporary psychology and philosophy, psychoanalysis has been deeply influential for 20th and 21st century thought. References to the unconscious, the ego, the id, repression, foreclosure, trauma, the symbolic order, the real, attachment theory and other key psychoanalytic concepts shaped and still shape both philosophical and popular conceptions of the self and of society. This course will introduce students to psychoanalysis and, particularly, its relationship to social theorizing. We will explore some of psychoanalysis' key claims, explore its violent rejection by some philosophers and psychologists, and ask why it has been and continues to be so alluring to those wanting to account for, diagnose, and perhaps *cure*, both society and the subjects who make it up. We will read works by psychoanalytic figures like Freud, Lacan, and Klein and also engage with social theorists who draw on and contest psychoanalysis in continental philosophy, queer theory, feminist philosophy, and philosophies of race.

Distribution Requirements:

PhD: Continental, Ethics/Social and Political

MA and BA/MA: Continental, Ethics/Social and Political

MA in Social Philosophy: Contemporary/Critical Perspectives (Jesuit Foundational and Enhanced Tracks), Ethics/Social and Political Philosophy (all tracks)

PHIL 454: Philosophy of Religion, *Topic: God and the Other*

Prof. Michael Andrews

Time: Tu 2:30–5:00

Course Description: This course engages several philosophical themes regarding “God and the Other,” a pivotal topic in contemporary phenomenology, Catholic Intellectual Thought, and philosophy of religion. Some of the principal tensions that we will explore include:

- ethics and metaphysics as first philosophy;
- immanence and transcendence as the manifestation of the sacred;
- alterity and intersubjectivity in terms of givenness and embodiment;
- ethical and political implications of deconstruction concerning race, gender, violence, and excess; and
- the non-traceability of the gift and the non-phenomenality of the (w)Holy Other in post-modern thought.

We will explore these issues thematically and historically by drawing upon influences and critiques of Søren Kierkegaard, Edmund Husserl, Martin Heidegger, Luce Irigaray, Jacques Derrida, Emmanuel Levinas, Jean-Luc Marion, and Gianni Vattimo. Some additional background material will include Plato and the early Greek tragic poets; medieval apophatic philosophers (St. Augustine and Meister Eckhart); the re-emergence of tragic literature in nineteenth century Romanticism (Hölderlin, Schelling); and the rejection of modernism by post-modern Catholic

philosophers engaging in “weak theology” and “radical orthodoxy.” Readings will be drawn from primary texts.

Distribution Requirements

PhD: Continental, Ethics/Social and Political

MA and BA/MA: Continental, Ethics/Social and Political

MA in Social Philosophy: Contemporary/Critical Perspectives/European History of Philosophy (Jesuit Foundational and Enhanced Tracks), Ethics/Social and Political (all tracks)

PHIL 468: Topics in Ethics: The Moral Emotions

Prof. Mario Attie Picker

Time: Th 10:00–12:30

Course Description: The course will explore the role of emotions in moral life. The course will investigate the nature of emotions such as shame, grief, love, envy, and forgiveness, their relation to moral concepts, as well as their epistemological capacity to ground moral judgments.

Distribution Requirements

PhD: Analytic, Ethics/Social Political

MA and BA/MA: Analytic

MA in Social Philosophy: Contemporary/Critical Perspectives (Jesuit Foundational and Enhanced Tracks), Ethics/Social and Political (all tracks)

PHIL 477: Social Health Care Ethics, *Topic: Bioethics and Gender*

Prof. Jennifer Parks

Time: Th 2:30–5:00

Course Description: This course will explore some contemporary ethical and social policy questions concerning bioethics, bodies, and reproduction. Feminist and queer perspectives on these issues will be addressed to challenge the prevailing liberal approaches to reproduction and assisted reproduction. Possible topics include the following:

- How do feminist and queer approaches to bioethics differ from standard liberal accounts?
- Can there be an obligation to procreate? Or not to procreate?
- Is Julian Savulescu right in claiming that human beings have a duty of “procreative beneficence”? What might this mean for the disabled community?
- To what extent should people be held responsible for their gametes and their reproductive behaviors?
- How should the categories of “mother,” “father,” and “parent” be applied with the rise of trans pregnancy and queer family formations?
- What is the moral status of commercial surrogacy as it has unfolded in the global marketplace?
- Would ectogenesis (gestation in an artificial uterus) be good or bad for women?
- Should access to and insurance coverage for uterus transplants be extended to trans women?

Distribution Requirements:

PhD: Ethics/Social and Political

MA in Social Philosophy: Ethics/Social Political (all tracks)

PHIL 485: International Ethics (hybrid)

Prof. Joy Gordon

Time: M 4:15–6:45

Course Description: This course is intended to give students an overview of the theoretical frameworks for thinking about ethical questions within the international arena, as well as some of the critical issues in this field. Some would argue that ethics are simply irrelevant in international affairs—that states and non-state actors simply pursue their interests, and that’s all that can be expected of them. This seminar will look at the history as well as emerging issues in areas such as Just War doctrine, global governance, gender and feminist critiques of international law, collective responsibility, human rights, migration, and economic sanctions.

Distribution Requirements:

PhD: Ethics/Social and Political, Analytic

MA and BA/MA: Analytic

MA in Social Philosophy: Contemporary/Critical Perspectives (Jesuit Foundational and Enhanced Tracks), Ethics/Social and Political (all tracks).

PHIL 490: Current Philosophical Issues, *Topic: Non-Human Animals*

Prof. Johanna Oksala

Time: M 11:30–2:00

Course Description: A mounting number of studies in ethology and comparative psychology suggest that many animal species are endowed with at least rudimentary forms of what philosophers have traditionally understood to be uniquely human characteristics: numerical cognition, rationality, morality, language, dreams, and even a concept of death. These findings profoundly challenge not only our philosophical understanding of non-human animals, but of ourselves.

The course examines this “animal turn” in philosophy – the growing interest in the metaphysical, ethical, and political status of nonhuman animals. Usually, this turn is associated with the work of prominent male philosophers, such as Jacques Derrida’s exploration of “the animal” and Peter Singer’s utilitarian ethics of animal liberation. We will study their seminal texts, but we will also question this narrow and male-centered trajectory by highlighting the significant contributions of ecofeminist thinkers, such as Carol J. Adams and Val Plumwood. We will also pay particular attention to phenomenological approaches to animal cognition and experience.

The aim of the course is to challenge students to consider how the study of non-human animals might transfigure many of the key assumptions in metaphysics, ethics, political philosophy, phenomenology, and feminist philosophy.

Distribution Requirements

PhD: Metaphysics and Epistemology, Ethics/Social and Political, Continental
MA and BA/MA: Continental
MA in Social Philosophy: Contemporary/Critical Perspectives (Jesuit Foundational and Enhanced Tracks), Ethics/Social and Political (all tracks); meets PHIL 480 requirement (all tracks)