

PHILOSOPHY COURSE OFFERINGS

– FALL 2025 –

200-level Courses (Tier Two)

PHIL 271W Philosophy of Religion (WI) | *Kristen Irwin*
(*Mind and Science; Existence, Meaning, and Culture; Writing Intensive*)

This course will investigate some of the most exciting, cutting-edge questions in philosophy of religion. Traditionally focused on theological topics of concern to the classical Abrahamic religions, philosophy of religion has expanded to issues such as race, gender, and disability; religious trauma; epistemic injustice; the role of the body in religious experience; the status and value of animals in different religions; religion and reproduction; and intersectional theology. Having said that, we will also take up many of the traditional questions in philosophy of religion, such as arguments for and against the existence of a transcendent being; the nature of religious beliefs; religious pluralism and the “common core” hypothesis; the relationship between reason and faith; and the relationship between religion and science.

PHIL 272 Metaphysics | *Joshua Mendelsohn*
(*Mind and Science*)

The goal of metaphysics is to answer fundamental questions about the nature of reality, such as: What, fundamentally, exists? What, for that matter, does it mean for something to exist? Does everything exist in space and time? (If so, where is the number three, and when does the color red exist?) Are some things “more real” than others? If so, what is most real and what makes it that way? What does it take for an object or a person to persist over time? Are there facts that could not be otherwise (for instance, the fact that $2+2=4$)? What causes a fact to be like that?

Philosophers from the ancient world until today have not only pursued the project of answering these questions, they have also persistently challenged the possibility of answering them. Some have worried that when we ask questions like these, we are really just asking questions about our own language or our own thinking, not questions about the fundamental nature of reality like we had hoped. In this course, we will read and discuss both contributions to metaphysics and challenges to it. Readings will be drawn from contemporary and historical authors. The goal of the course is to learn to evaluate the answers offered to some of these questions by philosophers through to the present, and to make up your own mind about whether we can hope to answer them.

PHIL 274 Logic | *Arnold vander Nat*

This course is a detailed study of the methods and principles of correct reasoning, focused on deductive techniques from both traditional logic and modern logic. Central to this study are not only the precise analysis of the logical structure of the sentences that we use in our arguments but also the logical consequences that sentences have. The laws of logic themselves are extensively studied, and they are rigorously applied in the solution of concrete problems of argumentation. This course also studies some common errors in reasoning, known as logical fallacies.

PHIL 277 Aesthetics | *Dimitris Apostolopoulos*
(*Existence, Meaning, and Culture*)

This class introduces students to a selection of core topics in philosophical aesthetics, drawing on a mix of contemporary and historical readings from analytic and continental sources. The class aims to give students an appreciation for the rich variety and complexity of aesthetic experience. In addition to focusing on specific issues pertaining to painting, photography, music, and dance, the following questions, among others, will be of particular interest: What are the distinctive features of the aesthetic? Are there objective or universal standards in aesthetic appreciation? Can aesthetic properties or value be found in nature, everyday practices, or non-aesthetic contexts? To what degree should artistic intention constrain aesthetic appreciation? Is aesthetic experience a distinctive kind, and if so, what distinguishes it from other varieties of experience? Is aesthetic representation permeated by ideological commitments that can support or challenge our institutions, practices, or beliefs? Can science shed light on aesthetic creation or appreciation? How, if at all, does art and aesthetic experience teach us about reality?

PHIL 279 Judgment and Decision-Making | *Marcella Linn*
(*Mind and Science*)

Our everyday conceptions of the way we think, make choices, and act often assume we exercise significant control and awareness. Many philosophical accounts of action and character make similar assumptions. But, current work in social psychology suggests we are prone to many cognitive biases and that our behavior is often influenced by minor situational factors rather than our conscious choices or character. These findings raise important questions pertaining to human agency as well as moral responsibility for action and character.

PHIL 284 Health Care Ethics | *Elizabeth Hoppe*
(*Ethics and Values*)

This ethics course emphasizes the importance of using philosophical tools (concepts, values, theories, forms of argumentation, and so on) that illuminate, analyze, and evaluate the practice and domain of health care. The course aims to enable students to become better moral reasoners; that is, to improve one's ability to recognize, think through, assess, and articulate moral views as well as to understand, contribute to, and critique the views of others. The first part examines some of the key ethical theories that will be applied to the health care industry: Aristotelian ethics, Kantian deontology, and utilitarianism. In part two, we will investigate moral foundations such as moral norms, character, and status. The third and fourth parts address four principles that form a framework for medical ethics: autonomy, nonmaleficence, beneficence, and justice. The required textbook is: *Principles of Biomedical Ethics* by Tom L. Beauchamp and James F. Childress, 7th edition, Oxford University Press.

PHIL 284W Health Care Ethics (WI) | *Jennifer Parks*
(*Ethics and Values; Law, Society, and Social Justice; Writing Intensive*)

Philosophy 284W is designed to provide you with an introduction to the philosophical approach to problems in health care ethics. You will be taught to recognize and critically apply Kant's ethics, utilitarianism, and the four principles of biomedical ethics (justice, autonomy, beneficence, and non-maleficence) with a view to solving moral problems in a rationally defensible manner. We will then consider more recent critical approaches offered by feminist, disability, queer, and Black bioethicists. A number of problematic issues in health care will be addressed relating to beginning of life (abortion, prenatal genetic

testing, assisted reproductive technology, genetic enhancement), and end of life care (medical aid in dying, brain death, how we bury and treat our dead).

PHIL 284 Health Care Ethics | *Joseph Vukov*
(*Ethics and Values*)

This course will introduce students to health care ethics using two primary frameworks: principlism and Catholic bioethics. We will also cover several contemporary issues in health care ethics, focusing especially on issues in new and emerging technologies.

PHIL 287 Environmental Ethics | *TBC*
(*Ethics and Values*)

This course introduces students to ethical reasoning and to various topics in environmental ethics. Topics may include: pollution, animal rights, and natural resources.

PHIL 288W Culture and Civilization: Existentialism (WI) | *Michael Andrews*
(*Ethics and Values; Existence, Meaning, and Culture; Writing Intensive*)

This Writing Intensive PHIL 288 “Culture and Civilization” Philosophy course explores the crisis of “the meaning of meaning” set in context of the eclipse of Western rationalism. Existentialism does not propose a philosophical system in a traditional sense. Although it began as a nineteenth century European reaction against various forms of religious and philosophical Idealism, existentialism erupted in the early and mid-twentieth century as a potent political and social force that arose from the ashes of the First World War and the tragedy of the Jewish Shoah. Existentialist thought draws from an array of inspiration that stretches from Socrates to St. Augustine to St. Thomas Aquinas to Rousseau to Mulla Sadra to phenomenology to post-modernism.

During the semester, we will focus on a series of tensions that characterize human existence: (1) the individuality of experience and the universality of reason; (2) the objectivity of truth and the subjectivity of meaning; (3) human freedom and personal commitment; (4) authenticity and anxiety; (5) finitude and transcendence; (6) faith and despair.

Some of the philosophers and writers we may explore include: Søren Kierkegaard, Fyodor Dostoevsky, Leo Tolstoy, Friedrich Nietzsche, Martin Heidegger, Jean-Paul Sartre, Karl Rahner, Albert Camus, Gabriel Marcel, Simone de Beauvoir, Simone Weil, Hannah Arendt, and Edith Stein.

Our goal is to develop critical thinking and effective writing skills necessary to deepen our own philosophical development with an eye towards self-examination and an appreciation of key insights that existentialist writers raise in response to contemporary attitudes about the body, culture, community, the individual, God, faith, and values.

It is important to note that “Existentialism” is not merely an intellectual phenomenon. In addition to critical readings of key philosophical texts, we will examine existentialist thought as a literary and artistic force that raises critical insights about human being-in-the-world, ethical action, and creative fidelity. Hence, we will explore the development of important themes of existentialist thought through expressive media of music, painting, literature, and film.

PHIL 288 Culture and Civilization: Friendship, Romance, and Technology | *Peter Bergeron*
(*Ethics and Values; Law, Society, and Social Justice*)

We are deeply social creatures. The link between vibrant interpersonal relationships and a rich, flourishing human life was explored by the Greek philosopher Aristotle centuries ago. He claimed that even if we had all the goods that the world could offer, none of us would choose to have those at the expense of having friends. The importance of relationships continues to dominate the research of scholars in many fields. Our culture is profoundly technological. This has been true for decades and is not merely the result of the development of new forms of social media such as the smartphone. This culture shapes us in many ways, including the way we engage relationships with others. The Jesuit scholar John Culkin writes, “We become what we behold. We shape our tools and then our tools shape us.” The effects of these tools on our relationships with others are being widely researched and hotly contested. It is clear that these new tools are shaping us. This course will explore two kinds of relationships, friendship and romantic partnerships, and the ways in which our technological culture both enhances and diminishes our capacity to connect well with others.

PHIL 288E* Culture and Civilization: Philosophy and Biology for the Future | *Joseph Vukov*
(*Ethics and Values; Mind and Science; Engaged Learning*)

The future is a minefield of technological challenges and the moral quagmires that accompany them. The looming specters include: the rise of artificial intelligence, antimicrobial-resistant pathogens, human-driven climate change, genetic engineering, artificial cognitive and moral enhancement, and new methods and technologies in health care. In this course—taught in conjunction with BIOL395—we will tackle problems of the future from both philosophical and biological perspectives, integrating knowledge from both fields, and along the way, reflect on ways to flourish in the future. In PHIL288E, we’ll be paying special attention to the way the Catholic Intellectual Tradition may provide us with distinctive resources. We’ll also be pairing with community partners to bring our work beyond the university community. What’s more: we’ll be framing our units using some of our favorite science fiction texts. *Note that PHIL288E is an engaged learning course and must be taken concurrently with BIOL 395. Contact the instructor (jvukov@luc.edu) to register.

300-level Courses (Upper-Division Courses for Philosophy Majors and Minors)

PHIL 304 History of Ancient Philosophy | *Freya Möbus* (*Ethics and Values; Existence, Meaning, and Culture*)

What does it mean to live well? We are surrounded by plenty of experts for various areas of life: if I want to know how to exercise well, I can turn to a personal trainer. If I am worried about wasting money, I can consult a financial planner. But whom to turn to if I want to learn how to live well and avoid wasting my life? This class introduces students to ancient Greek philosophy by highlighting its practical ambitions. According to our ancient thinkers, many of us live poorly and waste our lives, despite our greatest efforts, because we pursue the wrong goals or pursue them in the wrong way. Philosophy can help, or so they think.

Among the readings are Plato's *Gorgias*, Epictetus' *Encheiridion*, Sextus Empiricus' *Outlines of Scepticism*, Epicurus' *Letter to Menoecus* as well as Cyrenaic and Cynic fragments. After a close reading and careful analysis of these texts, we will put our ancient theories into practice and discuss whether they are still beneficial for us today.

PHIL 308W Islamic Philosophy (WI) | *Seyed Mousavian* (*Existence, Meaning, and Culture; Writing Intensive*)

We will study 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 *Remarks and Admonitions* and *The Book of the Healing* (by Avicenna) which set 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.

PHIL 309W Classical Modern Philosophy | (WI) | *Kristen Irwin* (*Existence, Meaning, and Culture; Writing Intensive*)

Studying the classical modern philosophers doesn't tell the entire story of Western philosophical thought in the 17th & 18th centuries. While we will cover the canonical thinkers in this course primarily via secondary sources, we will spend time in primary texts by noncanonical philosophers, which may include figures such as Elisabeth of Bohemia, Damaris Masham, Mary Astell, Anne Conway, Nicolas Malebranche, Pierre Bayle, Margaret Cavendish, Catherine Trotter Cockburn, and Mary Shepherd.

PHIL 311 Issues in Metaphysics | *Andrew Cutrofello*
(*Mind and Science*)

In Book Alpha of the *Metaphysics*, Aristotle introduces his topic -- "first philosophy" -- by recounting the views of his predecessors. In so doing he illustrates the historicity of metaphysics -- the fact that by rationally reconstructing the history of metaphysics one can make an original contribution to metaphysics itself. In this course we will see how three recent histories of metaphysics accomplish the same feat.

Texts: Aristotle, *Metaphysics Book Alpha* (online); Giorgio Agamben, *First Philosophy, Last Philosophy*; A. W. Moore, *The Evolution of Modern Metaphysics*; Stephen H. Phillips, *Classical Indian Metaphysics*

PHIL 324 Topics in Ethics: Critical Approaches to Bioethics | *Jennifer Parks*
(*Ethics and Values; Law, Society, and Social Justice*)

Bioethics is largely guided by the four principles of biomedical ethics: justice, autonomy, beneficence, nonmaleficence -- and by philosophical theories like Kant's ethics and utilitarianism. These traditional approaches to doing bioethics emphasize values such as objectivity, universality and impartiality. However, some bioethicists have questioned the application of these moral frameworks to address problems in bioethics, noting the way they overlook important issues of race, gender, disability, and LGBTQ+ status. These critics have argued that we need approaches that recognize the body and its relation to the way others view and treat us in health care. From this we have seen the development of critical approaches to bioethics, including Black bioethics, feminist bioethics, disability bioethics, and queer bioethics. This course will consider these bioethical approaches to better understand how they capture concerns about racism, sexism, ableism, and heterosexism in medicine. We will read a variety of articles by bioethicists "at the margins" who raise these critiques with concern for minorities, women, disabled, and queer patients. We will also consider various applications of these critical approaches to bioethics in contexts such as: assisted reproduction, dying and death, genetic testing, abortion, and other concerns.

PHIL 369W Philosophy of Medicine (WI) | *Elizabeth Hoppe*
(*Mind and Science; Writing Intensive*)

This writing intensive course, divided into three parts, investigates the meaning and practice of medicine. It begins with the metaphysical question: What is Medicine? and attempts to answer it by examining medical debates that developed in ancient Greece and continued through the Roman era. This part will cover writings by Plato, Hippocrates, and Galen. The second component concerns human health and suffering. Here we will examine a variety of texts including medieval medical accounts by Ibn Sina (Avicenna) and St. Hildegard von Bingen, followed by mindfulness in medicine which traces its origin to Buddhism, and finally a contemporary account of decolonizing medicine. The third and final part will critically examine current medical practices, beginning with Evidence-Based Medicine and ending with the Cuban healthcare system.

PHIL 389W Contemporary Issues: Critical Philosophy of Race (WI) | *Jacqueline Scott*
(*Ethics and Values; Existence, Meaning, and Culture; Law, Society, and Social Justice; Writing Intensive*)

In this class, we will investigate the social construction of race in the United States, and how these modes of construction have affected social and political rights as well as the existential well-being of members of racially constructed groups. In this course we will examine several contemporary arguments within the field of Critical Philosophy of Race. The three major questions we will consider are:

1. How does race function in our society?
2. What values do and/or should we assign to race in our society?
3. How might we re(conceive) of race to end or reduce racism in our society?

In this course we will use our responses to the above three questions, in order to have more interesting and thoughtful discussions (and policies) about race, and the political and ethical issues it affects.

PHIL 389 Contemporary Issues: Philosophy and Film | *Avery Smith*
(*Existence, Meaning, and Culture*)

Throughout the course we will be looking at demonstrations of the relationship between faith and reason as JP II explores it in his 1998 encyclical *Fides et Ratio* in film. The passages from the encyclical that will inform the greater part of our discussions for the semester are the following: Articles 3, 4, 22 and 25 - 32. These articles will help us to understand how JP II is understanding faith and reason and the relationship between the two in both a Catholic and secular context. Additionally, we will be referring to Paul Ricoeur's works on hermeneutics to guide us in our reflections and interpretations of *Fides et Ratio* and the films.

PHIL 396 Seminar in Medieval Philosophy: Augustine to Aquinas | *Blake Dutton*
(*Ethics and Values; Mind and Science*)

This course examines four seminal figures in medieval Latin philosophy: Augustine (354-430), Anselm (1033-1109), Abelard (1079-1142), and Aquinas (1225-1274). The overarching theme of the seminar is the relation of faith and reason, but we will also explore topics as diverse as God, eternity, time, evil, free will, universals, language, truth, and knowledge. Although our focus will be the philosophical work itself, we will contextualize that work by looking at the intellectual milieu and institutional context in which each of these thinkers wrote. In addition, we will attend to the relation of the medieval Latin philosophical tradition to other philosophical traditions: Greek, Roman, Jewish, and Islamic.

PHIL 399 Capstone Seminar: Gender, Race, and Science | *Katherine Valde*
(*Law, Society, and Social Justice; Mind and Science*)

This course is an examination of issues arising at the intersection of feminist philosophy, philosophy of race, and the history and philosophy of science. The primary goal of this course is to come to a deeper and more critically reflective understanding of both the history of the concepts of race and gender and the various roles that these concepts continue to play in contemporary science.

The first section of the course examines gender and race as scientific categories. We will place these debates in their historical context, as we examine the role that understandings of race and gender played in the development of Western science. Next, we will investigate the relationship between biological determinism and social inequality, particularly in the fields of genetics and health disparities research. How has science, both historically and continually, contributed to social inequality? The course ends with an examination of the relationship among race, gender, and contemporary scientific research. We will consider how our cultural understandings of race and gender help co-construct scientific knowledge.