

Philosophy

Philip A. Gauss Professor McKay, Professor Maultsby.

The program in philosophy provides an encounter with the major concepts of Western thought in both historical and contemporary perspectives. Eastern ideas and attitudes are related at crucial points of intersection.

For a minor in philosophy, the student must complete PH 210 and 15 additional credits in philosophy, all with a grade of "C" or better.

Courses

PH 210. Foundations of Western Thought I: The Ancient World. 3 Credits.

The first in a four-semester sequence which enables students to enter the "great conversation" of western civilization, debating ultimate or philosophical questions about science, religion, self-awareness, ethics and politics. This course examines themes in the thought of Plato, Aristotle and the Stoic, Epicurean and neo Platonist philosophers of the ancient world. Offered fall semester of even-numbered years.

PH 230. Logic. 3 Credits.

A study of the principles of valid reasoning and argument: how to analyze arguments, detect fallacies, apply logical rules, prove and refute conclusions from given premises. Both syllogistic methods of argument and modern systems of symbolic inference are studied.

PH 303. Survey of Ethics. 3 Credits.

An introduction to critical thinking about the fundamental principles on which moral judgments and ethical conduct are based. This course will survey the major historical and contemporary positions.

PH 305. Foundations of Western Thought II: The Middle Ages. 3 Credits.

This course considers the synthesis of Christianity with classical pagan philosophy achieved by St. Augustine and St. Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274). What became of the ancients' ideal of human knowledge (of the universe, the soul, the divine, and the political community) in an age during which philosophy became the "handmaid of theology"? What were the underpinnings of the "natural law" conception of moral and political philosophy? How did this medieval synthesis break down on the scientific side with Galileo's challenge to Aristotelian physics and astronomy, and on the moral and political side with Machiavelli's portrayal of a Renaissance prince? Offered spring semester of odd-numbered years.

PH 306. Foundations of Western Thought III: 17th & 18th Centuries. 3 Credits.

This course follows the development of the European philosophical tradition through the age of religious upheaval, secular enlightenment, scientific and democratic revolutions. Included is a discussion of Post-Aristotelian physical science -- especially the concepts of space, time, motion and causation -- from Galileo through Descartes to Newton and a consideration of the foundation of modern moral and political philosophy by Hobbes and its continuation through Locke, Hume, Rousseau and Kant. Includes Kant's Copernican Revolution in moral philosophy and philosophical theology. The Enlightenment ideal. Offered fall semester of odd-numbered years.

PH 307. Foundations of Western Thought IV: 19th and 20th Centuries. 3 Credits.

This course follows themes discussed in Foundations of Western Thought I, II and III into the contemporary period. Works by Hegel, Kierkegaard, Marx, Mill, Nietzsche, Jaspers, Heidegger, Sartre, Russell, Weil and Arendt. Offered spring semester of even numbered years.

PH 322. Business Ethics. 3 Credits.

This course considers a range of ethical issues arising in the business world which are of common public concern. It is intended to provide a working knowledge of the concepts, theories and types of argument characteristic of ethics in general and an appreciation of how they relate to a market environment. The rights and responsibilities of businesses, managers and employees to each other, to stockholders and to society at large are examined in such contexts as marketing, accounting and auditing, job security, pensions and health care, working conditions, affirmative action, product liability and safety, executive compensation and governance, globalization and the natural environment.

PH 323. Environmental Ethics. 3 Credits.

An introduction to ethical issues concerning the human and non-human environment. The course provides a working knowledge of the concepts, theories, and types of argument characteristic of ethics in general. It analyzes and debates a selection of such topics as: ethical implications of continued economic and population growth; designing the infrastructure and architecture of human communities for optimal integration into the natural environment; sustainable agriculture and wilderness management; biodiversity and endangered species; pollution, waste disposal and climate change. Mainstream philosophical approaches will be compared with radical perspectives such as deep ecology and eco-feminism; and responses to ecological hazards ranging from free market strategies, through government regulation, local economic and ecological initiatives, to civil disobedience and eco-sabotage, may be examined.

PH 324. Criminal Justice Ethics. 3 Credits.

This course provides a short introduction to general ethics (about 1/3 of the semester) with applications to practices and problems in the criminal justice field. Its focus is less on specific rules of ethical conduct for criminal justice professionals than on their interface with issues of common public concern. We will debate the legitimate functions and limitations of the criminal law, as well as a selection of moral problems in policing, judicial processing and corrections. In addition, a number of recent high-profile Supreme and Appeals Court cases in the areas of civil rights and civil liberties will be analyzed. The emphasis will be on developing discussion skills and familiarity with essential patterns of legal and moral reasoning.

PH 340. Philosophy of Non-Violence. 3 Credits.

A study of permissible uses of force by individuals and nations. Topics include the theory of the just war, pacifism and non-resistance, conscientious objection, civil disobedience, and the moral problem of nuclear armaments.

PH 350. Medical Ethics. 3 Credits.

This course examines general ethics and professional ethics; patient rights and professional responsibilities; terminating and prolonging life; allocating scarce medical resources; human experimentation and informed consent; genetic intervention; and other issues.

PH 360. Philosophy of Science. 3 Credits.

A course examining the basic principles of scientific reasoning, questions concerning scientific progress and scientific revolutions and ethical issues in the technological application of scientific discoveries. Case studies are drawn both from the history of science and from contemporary controversies. Prerequisites: sophomore standing or above and one course in laboratory science.

PH 400. Reading and Research. 3 Credits.

An inquiry into the pertinent literature and source materials of a specific area concerned with a special project to be agreed upon by instructor and student. Prerequisite: consent of instructor involved.