

Spring 2021 Electives- Description List

Course: The Challenge of Justice (PHIL116001)

Professor: Joshua Synder or Katherine Jackson-Meyer

Time: TTH 3:00-4:15 or TTH 1:30-2:45

Description: This course satisfies the introductory requirement for students taking the minor in Faith, Peace, and Justice Studies. Other students interested in examining the problems of building a just society are welcome. This course introduces the student to the principal understandings of justice that have developed in the Western philosophical and theological traditions. Care is taken to relate the theories to concrete, practical and political problems, and to develop good reasons for choosing one way of justice rather than another. The relationship of justice to the complementary notion of peace will also be examined. Special attention is paid to the contribution of Catholic theology in the contemporary public conversation about justice and peace. Problems discussed may include human rights, hunger and poverty, and ecological justice. Satisfies Core requirement for Cultural Diversity

Level: Undergrad Elective

Prereqs: none

Coreqs: none

Course: The American Divide: Philosophy of Inequality (PHIL171101)

Professor: Cherie McGill

Time: MWF 1:00-1:50

Description: This is an Enduring Questions course and is open to freshmen only. Concern over inequality in the U.S. has shown itself in movements like Occupy Wall Street, the Fight for a Fifteen Dollar Minimum Wage, and Black Lives Matter. These courses will examine the meaning, causes, and consequences of inequality from the perspectives of Philosophy and Economics. Providing a broad picture of the current state of the U.S. economy, and analyzing the role of economic policy in determining opportunities and outcomes, the courses will prepare students to develop their own views about how past economic choices shaped current economic realities, and how we might create a more equitable future. Satisfies core requirement for Philosophy.

Level: Undergrad Elective

Prereqs: none

Coreqs: none

Course: Animals in the Moral Imagination Beyond Human Just (PHIL1720001)

Professor:

Time: TTH 12:00-1:15 T 6:00-7:50

Description: This is an Enduring Questions course and is open to freshmen only. This course counts toward the Philosophy II Core requirement. This course will provide students with an introduction to the work of philosophy by probing our understanding of the relation between humans and non-humans, and examining the moral implications of that relation. This will involve analyzing how we have imagined our relationship with non-humans in the past (and why), and evaluating human decision-making in relation to animal welfare. Some of the questions that we

will probe throughout the course include: how are the boundaries between humans and animals constructed? Why do they matter? And what values inform them? How does our understanding of non-humans influence our understanding of ourselves? What is the relation between social hierarchies within human society and our understanding of non-humans? Is there a relation between our treatment of animals and our treatment of marginalized groups? In the wake of the ecological crisis, should we recast our relation with animals? And if so, how? How do we change what we value? Is this something that we can voluntarily will? Though we will primarily focus on the ethical and existential dimensions of these questions, we will explore the metaphysical, epistemological, and political dimensions of them as well. Satisfies core requirement for Philosophy

Level: Undergrad Elective

Prereqs: none

Coreqs: none

Course: Philosophical Perspectives on Science II (PHIL215101)

Professor: Marius Stan

Time: TTH 3:00-4:15

Description: Continued Course. Part II. This course is an examination of the scientific enterprise with the tools of modern analytic philosophy. Topics include the structure of a scientific theory, evidence and knowledge in science, the nature of scientific explanations, and the role of values in science. As paradigmatic examples, we will explore major breakthroughs by Archimedes, Newton, Darwin, and Einstein. Open to science and pre-med majors.

Level: Undergrad Elective

Prereqs: none

Coreqs: none

Course: Boston: An Urban Analysis (PHIL221601)

Professor: David Manzo

Time: 3:00-5:30

Description: This course is intended for PULSE students who are willing to investigate, analyze, and understand the history, problems, and prospects of Boston's neighborhoods. With the exception of the fourth session, class meetings in the first half of the semester will meet on campus. Class number four will meet in the Skywalk Observation Deck at the Prudential Center. For the second half of the semester, as snow banks give way to slush and sun and blossoms, we will meet in the South End of Boston for a case study of a most intriguing and changing inner-city neighborhood.

Level: Undergrad Elective

Prereqs: none

Coreqs: none

Course: Mass Incarceration: Philosophical and Theological

Professor: Micah Lott

Time: 3:00-4:15

Description: This course will explore problems of justice in relation to incarceration in the United States with particular attention to attention to race, social class, gender, and immigration status. Students will read authors writing on the philosophy of race, gender, and class in relation to incarceration, the phenomenology of solitary confinement and the concept of "social death," church documents and theological works on incarceration, and works on restorative justice and other models of justice that serves the common good. Catholic Social Justice teachings and discussion will also be a part of the course. The course will also address interconnections between immigration and incarceration. This course will be offered as a PULSE elective, in which students undertake four hours per week of service in the City of Boston at institutions such as Suffolk County Jail and non-profits that provide transitional services for returning residents or formerly incarcerated individuals or that advocate for prison reform. The PULSE office will vet and coordinate students' placements and serve as a liaison with community partners. Satisfies core requirement for Philosophy.

Level: Undergrad Elective

Prereqs: none

Coreqs: none

Course: Telling Truths II: Depth Writing as Service (PHIL226201)

Professor: Alexis Rizzuto

Time: W 3:00-4:45

Description: This PULSE elective will focus on the power of story-telling to achieve justice and social liberation. We will read theoretical and narrative accounts of the role of story, examine the use of story-telling among marginal populations as a means of participating in their own "solutions." We will explore the benefits and liabilities of social media in emerging change movements. Students will engage in story gathering, telling, and analysis, through their PULSE placements and class discussion, producing a collection of original writings.

Level: Undergrad Elective

Prereqs: none

Coreqs: none

Course: Logic (PHIL226401)

Professor: Nicholas Westberg, Michael Pope, or Tyler Viale

Time: MWF 10:00-10:50, MWF 11:00-11:50, or MWF 3:00-3:50

Description: This course will consider the principles of correct reasoning together with their application to concrete cases.

Level: Undergrad Elective

Prereqs: none

Coreqs: none

Course: Philosophy and Theology of Community II (PHIL229201)

Professor: Meghan Sweeney

Time: T 4:30-6:20

Description: This course is a continuation of the themes of Philosophy of Community I which further explores the themes of that course: the nature of community, particularly in the American context; the historical, cultural, political, and religious forces that have shaped American community and the American understanding of community.

Level: Undergrad Elective

Prereqs: none

Coreqs: none

Course: The Vegetative Soul: The Hidden Life of Plants (PHIL244401)

Professor: Holly Vandewall

Time: MWF 2:00-2:50

Description: By weight, more than 80% percent of the living things on the earth are plants, and without them the earth's animals, including humans, would perish within weeks. But philosophy has spent a vanishingly small part of its efforts in considering this form of life, generally relegating plants to the status of minimally alive, but essentially uninteresting. As Michael Pollan notes, "plants are so unlike people that it's very difficult for us to appreciate fully their complexity and sophistication. Yet plants have been evolving much, much longer than we have, have been inventing new strategies for survival and perfecting their designs for so long that to say that one of us is the more 'advanced' really depends on how you define that term, and what 'advances' you value'." This class will consider how humans have historically regarded the plant kingdom, what we can learn from the challenging imaginary exercise of attempting to understand how they live, and how we might reconsider the world if we came to regard the plant kingdom not as passive subjects of human actions, but as powerful and vital actors in their own right.

Level: Undergrad Elective

Prereqs: none

Coreqs: none

Course: Existentialism and Philosophy of Existence: Sartre

Professor: Giampiero Basile

Time: MWF 12:00-12:50

Description: The course focuses on two fundamental questions concerning Existentialism and the Philosophy of Existence. The first question is about the relationship between existence as freedom and transcendence. According to every account of the philosophy of existence, existence is a synonym for freedom. This freedom can be understood, on one side, as an original structure of the human condition and self-determination, so that human being transcends itself through its own project, becoming, by its own decision, what it is not yet. On the other side, human freedom can be conceived as the answer to a call, so that existence does not mean the self-positing of human being, but has its own source in some form of transcendence. The second question concerns the idea of the philosophy of existence as, at the same time, a philosophia perennis and a specific historical event. Throughout the history of philosophy, there have been philosophers who deal with existential questions and criticize a merely speculative idea of existence. Both questions will be treated with reference to Sartre, Heidegger, Hannah Arendt, and Jaspers.

Level: Undergrad Elective

Prereqs: none

Coreqs: none

Course: What is Racism (PHIL334401)

Professor: Jorge Garcie

Time: Online Asynchronous

Description: The course will examine philosophical approaches to the questions: In what does racism consist? What are some of its principal types? What grounds its injustice and connection to a society's common good? Satisfies core requirement for Cultural Diversity.

Level: Undergrad Elective

Prereqs: none

Coreqs: none

Course: Christian Faith/Greek Philosophy (PHIL350001)

Professor: Timothy Muldoon

Time: MWF 10:00-10:50

Description: This course will study the interactions between Christianity and philosophy from the first to the fifth century A.D. On the Greco-Roman side we will study the Stoics, Celsus, Plotinus, Porphyry, and Proclus. On the Christian side we will study Justin Martyr, Tertullian, Clement of Alexandria, Origen, and Augustine of Hippo.

Level: Undergrad Elective

Prereqs: none

Coreqs: none

Course: Hegel, Kierkegaard, Nietzsche: Art, Religion (PHIL421101)

Professor: Vanessa Rumble

Time: TTH 10:30-11:45

Description: In the aftermath of the French Revolution, Hegel, Kierkegaard, and Nietzsche rushed to define the larger significance of the French Revolution, witnessing in so doing to the definitive arrival of modernity in Europe. The philosophers propose three quite compelling presentations of the role of art and religion in the modern world. While Hegel stages a dialectic which calls for the repeated crucifixion and resurrection of reason, Kierkegaard offers a consequential reinterpretation of the notion of original sin as anxiety, and Nietzsche points us "beyond the law." We will look at the development of their thinking through key works, turning ultimately to the critiques offered by Heine, Marx, and Weber.

Level: Undergrad Elective

Prereqs: none

Coreqs: none

Course: Philosophy of Mental Illness (PHIL432001)

Professor: Katherine Harster

Time: TTH 1:30-2:45

Description: This course explores historical and contemporary issues in philosophy and psychiatry. Topics include dimensional versus categorical diagnostic methods, what it is like to live with mental illness, the challenges faced by individuals in recovery, and issues of competence and consent. We will engage these topics through written and verbal discussion as well philosophical, scientific, and narrative literature.

Level: Undergrad Elective

Prereqs: none

Coreqs: none

Course: Epistemology (PHIL438701)

Professor: Richard Atkins

Time: MW 12:00-1:15

Description: Philosophy is full of wonderfully perplexing arguments aimed at undermining our claims to knowledge. Like this one: If I know I have two hands, then I know I'm not just a brain in a vat. But, I don't know I'm not just a brain in a vat. So, I don't know I have two hands. Or this one: A claim is known only if it is justified. Claims cannot rest on themselves for justification, cannot depend on nothing for justification, and cannot be justified by an infinite series of propositions. But as those are the only options, we must not know anything. Or this one: I believe that God exists, but many of my epistemic peers and superiors believe that God does not exist. Therefore, I have a strong countervailing reason to believe God does not exist such that my belief is not justified. This course will examine these and other puzzling arguments about knowledge, justification, and disagreement.

Level: Undergrad Elective

Prereqs: none

Coreqs: none

Course: Does God Exist? (PHIL440301)

Professor: Ronald Tacelli

Time: MW 4:30-5:45

Description: This course aims to be a serious examination, for capable undergraduates, of arguments for and against the existence of God.

Level: Undergrad Elective

Prereqs: none

Coreqs: none

Course: Greek Philosophy (PHIL440501)

Professor: Sarah Byers

Time: MW 1:00-2:15

Description: This course is organized around the central philosophical questions asked and answered by philosophers in the ancient Greek-speaking world. Topics include theories of material bodies, change and time, elemental physics, and entities and their predicates; whether anything immaterial or immutable exists and, if so, its relation to the changing cosmos; the existence and nature of God or gods; the existence and nature of the human soul and its relation to the human body; the criterion of truth and the nature of language; the criterion of ethics; theories of animal and human cognition and motivation. We will consider Plato, Aristotle, and, more briefly, some pre-Socratic and post-Aristotelian authors such as Plutarch, Epictetus, and Plotinus.

Level: Undergrad Elective

Prereqs: none

Coreqs: none

Course: Medieval Philosophy (PHIL440701)

Professor: Peter Kreeft

Time: TTH 12:00-1:15

Description: Far from being monolithic and repetitive, the Middle Ages were a creative period during which multiple solutions were proposed to make sense of the world and of human life. The legacy of Antiquity, the philosophic and scientific knowledge of the time, and religious views were combined in original syntheses. The aim of the course is to provide a precise picture of this diversity, through a study of the main problems that a wide range of authors (Christian thinkers from St. Augustine to Ockham, but also Islamic and Jewish philosophers) faced.

Level: Undergrad Elective

Prereqs: none

Coreqs: none

Course: Nineteenth and Twentieth-Century Philosophy (PHIL440801)

Professor: Elisa Magri

Time: TTH 3:00-4:15

Description: This course will explore the sources of alienation that emerged in the nineteenth century and its impact on the twentieth century. We will start with an overview of the challenges brought about by Kant's philosophy with particular regard to the relation between nature and freedom, before reading and examining Schiller, Hegel, Marx, and Marcuse. Students will become familiar with the project and ideals that shaped Classical German Philosophy and their relevance for twentieth-century social philosophy.

Level: Undergrad Elective

Prereqs: none

Coreqs: none

Course: Freud and Philosophy (PHIL442901)

Professor: Vanessa Rumble

Time: TTH 1:30-2:45

Description: This introductory course for the interdisciplinary minor in psychoanalysis (open to all interested) is designed to acquaint students with the scope and evolution of Freud's thinking and with significant developments in psychoanalysis since his time. Students will study and assess Freud's and Breuer's first formulation of the nature and etiology of hysteria; Freud's groundbreaking work in dream interpretation and the nature of unconscious processes; Freud's attempt to apply his novel theory of unconscious mechanisms to cultural anthropology as well as individual psychology; and the implications of the ongoing revisions in Freud's classification of the drives.

Level: Undergrad Elective

Prereqs: none

Coreqs: none

Course: Greeks and Their Gods (PHIL444501)

Professor: Deborah Dechiara-Quenzer

Time: MW 2:00-3:15

Description: How did the Greeks view their gods? In this course, we will use Greek literature and philosophy to answer that question. We will read some of the more traditional mythological accounts in Greek literature presented in Hesiod's Theogony, Homer's Iliad and Odyssey, Euripides' Bacchae, and Aeschylus' Eumenides. We will then turn to the distinctive philosophical accounts of the gods given by Plato in works such as Republic II, the Myth of the Charioteer in the Phaedrus, the Demiurge in the Timaeus, and by Aristotle on their nature and contemplation in Metaphysics XII and Nicomachean Ethics X.

Level: Undergrad Elective

Prereqs: none

Coreqs: none

Course: Classical Chinese Philosophy (PHIL447601)

Professor: You Jiang

Time: TTH 4:30-5:45

Description: This course is an introduction to Classical Chinese Philosophy and designed to introduce students to the major philosophical schools of classical China, including the Confucian, Mohist, Daoist, and Buddhist schools. Through lectures, discussions, and reading of select primary and secondary sources, we will explore the formulations and subsequent transformations of key beliefs, doctrines, practices, and institutions that characterized specific cultural, educational, spiritual, and philosophical traditions. Satisfies core requirement for Cultural Diversity.

Level: Undergrad Elective

Prereqs: none

Coreqs: none