

Department of Philosophy

Spring 2026

PHI 1000, 001-033, DL1 and HON Knowledge, Reality, Self

Please see Master Schedule for specific times.

Philosophical responses to the questions of how we can know, what is real, and what is the nature of human existence that explore the dialogue between Catholic, Christian, secular and skeptical perspectives on these questions.

PHI 2010-001 Logic & Critical Thinking

Instructor: **Dr. Andrew R. Platt**

M W F 10:40-11:30 am

The study of logic and critical thinking. Topics include: argument identification and analysis; formal and informal logic; fallacies; inductive argument; the role of argumentative structures in various philosophical traditions.

PHI 2020-001 Symbolic Logic

Instructor: **Dr. Justin Humphreys**

T R 1:00 - 2:15 pm

Symbolic logic applies formal methods to the study of reasoning. The first, longer half of this course introduces students to classical sentential and predicate logic. We will translate statements in English into symbolic notation, and construct formal derivations in that notation – developing skills in evaluating the validity of reasoning in any discipline. The second, shorter half of the course considers a selection of advanced topics in symbolic logic, for instance, the theory of computation, nonclassical logics in which truth comes in degrees, challenges to classical logic emerging from quantum mechanics, modal and tense logic, arguments for determinism, proofs for the existence of God, second-order logic, and paradoxes. While an openness to learning and applying formal methods is essential for this course, we presuppose no prior experience with philosophy or any advanced knowledge of mathematics.

PHI 2115-001 & 002 Ethics for Healthcare Prof

Instructor: **Dr. Peter Koch**

T R 10:00-11:15 am & 11:30 am – 12:45 pm

This course explores contemporary ethical issues in medicine and health care through case analysis, academic research, and class discussion. Students will develop the philosophical tools and sensitivities needed to assess and resolve complex ethical situations, with a particular focus on those situations that are commonly encountered by clinicians and researchers throughout their careers. While this course is primarily designed for future clinicians, other interested students are welcome to participate as well.

PHI 2115-003 Ethics for Healthcare ProfInstructor: **Dr. Stephen Napier**

T R 1:00 – 2:15 pm

The purpose of this course is to help students become more effective in dealing with ethical questions in professional nursing, medical practice, and research. The animating center of the course is the theme of loving the human person(s). Imagine a wheel with the axle representing the theme of loving patients. Each of the issues we will be discussing, whether it is abortion, euthanasia, research on human subjects etc., represent the perimeter of the wheel. Each “spoke” is a way of seeing how to love patients better – we will be examining different aspects of the same axle. With each issue, we ask the more general question what does loving the human person look like for the terminally ill person, or a research subject or etc. The entire course will be traveling along the perimeter of the wheel with love for the human person as its center. We will look and see exactly what respecting human lives looks like in different circumstances and conditions. Arguments on both sides of each issue will be examined carefully and due weight given to a variety of informed opinions.

PHI 2115-004, 005 Ethics for Healthcare Prof Instructor: **Dr. Sarah-Vaughan Brakman**

T R 2:30 – 3:45 pm & 4:00 – 5:15 pm

This course will expose us to contemporary philosophical problems in medicine and health care. Through reading, critical reflection and classroom dialogue you will learn to see yourself as part of a society that must take responsibility for its goals and uses of power concerning issues of life and death. This course is geared toward future clinicians as well as those with an academic and/or personal interest in the challenges posed by contemporary health care practices. We will learn the philosophical basis from which to address and to discuss moral problems, the conceptual terrain of current debates in bioethics including the seminal cases that shaped bioethical discourse, and a method for case analysis. When relevant, we will explore the differences in approach to medical ethics between the philosophical and the theological. Topics include: cultural competency, genetic testing, human experimentation, organ transplantation, physician-patient relationship, physician-nurse relationship, informed consent, end of life challenges, assisted-suicide, new reproductive technologies, and neuroethics.

PHI 2121-001 Environmental EthicsInstructor: **Dr. Claryn Spies**

T R 2:30-3:45 pm

How should we understand our relationship to the Earth? What kinds of considerations should we make when using natural resources? What are our individual and collective responsibilities toward the natural world, and toward the many others—human and nonhuman, past, present, and future—who depend on it? If we wish to act ethically with respect to the environment, what actions should we take?

In this course, we will explore what it means to behave ethically with respect to the environment, with particular attention to the ways in which our actions and inactions impact the natural world that supports and sustains us. We will survey and critically evaluate a wide range of theoretical approaches and practical responses to environmental ethics, from

Descartes to the present day. Topics covered will include anthropocentrism and factory farming, environmental racism, ecofeminism, climate change, and greenwashing. Throughout the semester, we will look to literature, film, and political activism as resources for imagining and enacting a more sustainable and just relationship with the Earth.

PHI 2180-001 Computer Ethics

Instructor: **Dr. Tibor Solymosi**

M W 3:20 –4:35 pm

Advances in digital computing have led to paradigmatic shifts in knowledge production, industry, and global politics. Today, computing infrastructures connect all aspects of society. Their effects demand ethical scrutiny, but the fast pace of innovation tends to confound this pursuit. The aim of PHI2180 is to orient students to the study of computer ethics, a well-established and continually evolving academic field. We draw richly from the discipline of philosophy, indicating where theoretical inquiry clarifies the moral complexities of today's leading applications. Our materials are not strictly limited to philosophy, however: we also read texts and engage with new media from such fields as critical data studies, information theory, and computer science.

"Ethical Issues in Computer Science" emphasizes the durability and reliability of philosophical reasoning as a guide for technological decision making. Our premise is that a substantial foundation in ethical theory outlasts cycles of tech development. By the end of the course, students will be prepared to evaluate the ethics of new innovations for years to come.

PHI 2400-001 Social & Political Philosophy

instructor: **Dr. Sally Scholz**

M W F 10:40-11:30 am

In Social and Political Philosophy, we will examine some of the most salient ideas impacting social and political life today. In addition to looking at three influential theories of justice, we will examine what happens when justice is denied. To focus our exploration, we will look at theories of civil and uncivil disobedience, the right to free expression, the ethics of protest, the right to revolt, and the meaning or nature of freedom. We will strive to create a cooperative learning environment where curiosity, productive and collaborative disagreement, and intellectual risk-taking are celebrated.

PHI 2410-001 Philosophy of Sex and Love

Instructor: **Dr. Ashley Lamarre**

T R 11:30 am – 12:45 pm

In this class, we will examine philosophical conceptions of love, sex, gender, and sexuality. We will explore these major themes through the works of canonical philosophers such as Plato on love, Aristotle on friendship, Simone de Beauvoir on sex and gender, and Michel Foucault on sexuality. We will also encounter these major themes in the works of contemporary philosophers across various fields, including ethics, critical philosophy of race, feminist philosophy, and political philosophy. Special topics featured in this study will include

marriage, monogamy, polyamory, consent, sex work, racialized desire, pleasure, and technology.

PHI 2450-001 Catholic Social Thought

Instructor: **Dr. Sally Scholz**

M W 8:00-9:15 am

This course examines the papal encyclicals that constitute Catholic Social Teaching. As we read this rich body of work, we will focus our attention on the themes of dignity of the human person, human rights, solidarity, and subsidiarity. The encyclicals address challenges to modern life and topics pertinent to living in society such as workers' rights, environmental stewardship, poverty and economic development, gender roles in the family, racism, and immigrant justice. Our aim is to create a cooperative community in which we explore pressing contemporary issues illuminated by the social teachings of the Church.

PHI 2750-001 Philosophy of Art (embedded course)

PHI 2751-001 Global Topics Abroad

Instructor: **Dr. Lisa Dolling**

T R 10:00-11:15 am

The objective of this course is to provide students with a deep understanding of the ways philosophers throughout the ages have examined ideals of creativity, art, and the experience of beauty. Special attention will be given to the ways that art and beauty affect and inform our spiritual lives, taking into account both religious and non-religious works alike.

Unique to this course will be the opportunity to experience in person some of the very works we will be studying in the classroom during a trip to Belgium at the end of the semester.

During our study, some of the questions we will address include:

- *What is a work of art? Are there specific criteria that one should use to identify a work of art? If so, are they the same regardless of time period, culture, or medium?*
- *What is an "aesthetic experience?" How might it differ from "ordinary" experience?*
- *Does a work of art always have a meaning attached to it? Must the meaning of a work be the same as the artist's intention?*
- *What is the role of "beauty" in a work of art? Is there a standard of beauty that is the same for everyone? Are there objective standards of "taste?"*
- *How does art relate to the ethical and/or political spheres? Is censorship of works of art ever warranted or justified?*

This is an Embedded course. As such, all students enrolled in the course will be required to participate in the trip to Belgium at the end of the spring '26 semester. There are additional travel fees of \$1800 associated with this course, with financial aid available to students who qualify. **Students must also enroll in PHI 2751 (1-credit Global Topics Abroad) to go along with this course. Class contingent on meeting minimum enrollment**

PHI 2930-001 Indian PhilosophyInstructor: **Dr. Davey Tomlinson**

T R 2:30 – 3:45 pm

This course will introduce students to different traditions of classical Indian philosophy through an exploration of the themes of the Self, consciousness, transformative experience, and the imagination. To explore these themes, we will read primary texts in translation beside contemporary work in philosophy of mind and cognitive science. We'll come to understand different positions on the nature of consciousness and its relation to the Self; enactivist theories of the construction of selfhood; debates about the power of the imagination to bring about transformative experiences; and contemporary panpsychist views that everything—even matter itself—is conscious. The course assumes no previous knowledge of Indian philosophy.

PHI 2990-001 & 002 TOP: Yoga and PhilosophyInstructor: **Prof. Amy Nobles Dolan**

T R 8:30 - 9:45 & 10:00 - 11:15 am

This course will introduce yoga's ten fundamental tenets for living a good life as taught in *The Yoga Sutras of Patanjali*. We will read a broad selection of literature on the topics of non-violence, truthfulness, non-stealing, moderation, non-possessiveness, purity, contentment, self-discipline, self-study and surrender to a higher power. In each class we will practice about 30 minutes of yoga, as a yoga mat is a powerful laboratory on which we can begin to explore these concepts. Students will be challenged to apply our theoretical discussions and reading to incidental and significant moments in their own lives in 6 written reflections.

PHI 3050-001 Kant & 19th Century PhilosophyInstructor: **Dr. Omar Quiñonez**

MW 3:20-4:35 pm

This class surveys the period in Western philosophy stretching from the late 1700's to the end of the 1800's. These roughly 100 years of philosophy grappled with profound changes to European life, including liberal revolutions, industrialization, and secularization. Philosophy responded to these challenges by placing the question of "self-understanding" front and center. Throughout the semester, we will explore different angles to this question, most of which are still pertinent today, including the nature of human experience, the meaning of "self-realization" and "recognition," the problem of "alienation" in modern capitalist society, as well as the task of living life "authentically." We will read excerpts from Immanuel Kant, G. W. F. Hegel, Karl Marx, Søren Kierkegaard, and Friedrich Nietzsche to discuss why and how getting the question of what it means to be "us" right became philosophy's answer to modernity.

PHI 3100-001 Augustine and AntiquityInstructor: **Dr. Terence Sweeney**

T R 11:30 am - 12:45 pm

Who am I? Who are you? And who are we? Our engagement with Augustine will center itself on these three fundamental questions regarding self, divinity, and community. These questions shaped much of Augustine's life and philosophy. Committed to the *amor sapientia* (the love of wisdom), Augustine searched within and above, through faith and

through reason, to understand ourselves, our God, and our community. We will follow his path in understanding these three interrelated searches while considering how his answers differed and related to the intellectual world around him.

As we engage these questions through texts like the *Confessions*, *On the Trinity*, *The City of God*, and various sermons—we will consider how each question interpenetrates the other such that there can be no understanding of self without God, of God without self, and of either without community. As we aim to understand these things, we'll examine topics such as memory, time, the will, the Trinity, and Augustinian political theory.

PHI 3160-001 History of Islamic Philosophy

Instructor: **Dr. Rebecca Makas**

M W 1:55-3:10 pm

History of Islamic Philosophy offers an overview of a chronically understudied subject in philosophy curricula, Islamic philosophy, using an underemployed methodology in the field: considering how gender affects our understanding of the self, God, and the world. Muslim philosophers are often credited with the preservation of Greek philosophy through a robust translation movement of Greek into Arabic and, later, Arabic into Latin. Although this movement was of vital importance in the history of philosophy, until recently, Islamic philosophy was often left out of “standard” philosophy courses. This class will introduce students to the seminal figures of Islamic philosophy, including Ibn Sīnā (Lt. Avicenna), critiques of Aristotelian rationalist philosophy by the prominent mystical philosopher Al-Ghazālī, a defense of rationalism and commentaries on Greek philosophy by Ibn Rushd (Lt. Averroes), as well as mystical philosophy in the Islamic East. However, rather than presenting this history as neutral with regards to gender, our lectures and discussions of primary sources will be informed by the recent call by Zahra Ayubi to “deuniversalize” the male subject (2020). Using Ayubi, and others, students will explore how using gender as a lens of analysis enriches their understanding of classical Islamic philosophy.

PHI 4140-001 Philosophy of Contemporary Music

Instructor: **Dr. John Carvalho**

T R 4:00-5:15 pm

What is music and how can a philosophical study of contemporary or “pop” music help us to capture not just what music is but how music means? This course aims to answer these questions. “What is music?” asks us to define or clarify what we mean when we call something music. Alternatively, “What is music?” asks us to say how music came to be what we call “music.” We will answer the first question with an account of what emerges in the course of making music. We will answer the second question with a genealogy of Western music from its earliest expressions to contemporary pop music and beyond.

To say how music means, we will study the music itself, the sequence of tones that carry the melody, supply the harmony and establish the rhythm or keep time. While people generally find meaning in the lyrics sung with that music, we will explore how the music makes meaning apart from the poetry or when there are no lyrics involved.

We will attempt to answer these questions by listening closely to the noise in rock and rap (or hip hop), the transgender politics of pop, for the ways Black lives matter in jazz, to the nomadism in DJ music and by listening to the body as the medium for making and finding meaning in music. Our listening will be guided by reading texts inspired by the writings of Friedrich Nietzsche, Theodor Adorno, Judith Butler, Gilles Deleuze and Maurice Merleau-Ponty.

PHI 4610-001 Philosophy of Mind

Instructor: **Dr. Georg Theiner**

T R 11:30 am -12:45 pm

The goal of this course is to relate contemporary debates in philosophy of mind and cognitive science to our self-conception as human beings. The course is divided into four modules. In the first module, centered around the mind-body problem, we survey competing accounts of the relationship between mind, matter, and consciousness. Along the way, we take seriously the idea that mind and cognition are not essentially tied to the biological brain. In the second module, we examine the puzzling implications of panpsychism – the philosophical view that consciousness (in varying forms and degrees) is a fundamental and ubiquitous feature of the universe. In the third module, we revisit the nature-nurture debate in the light of how culture and experience shape the human mind. In the fourth module, we work through the emerging vision of the embodied brain as a mind-making and world-shaping prediction engine.

PHI 5000-001 SEM:Digital Selves and Other Selves: Rethinking Identity Through Cinema

M W 3:20 – 4:35 pm

Instructor: **Dr. Surti Singh**

In our digital age, we produce and encounter virtual selves in social media, algorithms construct and circulate our identities, and our memories are archived in external devices. We now live in an era that is reshaping what philosophers call the *ontology* of our personal identity—how the self is constituted and maintained over time, and ultimately, how we think about what it means to be human. The desires, hopes, fears, and anxieties produced by these changes are vividly mirrored by films of the past two decades, many of which focus on fractured subjectivities, nostalgia, memory loss, dream worlds and the human/machine interface. Starting with Christopher Nolan's 2000 film *Memento*, we will explore themes of identity, memory, time, and experience as they have been visualized in cinema, and the related questions of responsibility, freedom, happiness, and justice. Readings will be drawn from a variety of philosophical and film theory sources, and students can expect to view films such as *The Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind*, *Her*, *Blade Runner 2049*, and *Past Lives*. We will also watch some relevant episodes of *Black Mirror*.