COURSE OFFERINGS AND DESCRIPTIONS
DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY

FALL 2020

PHI 111 Introduction to Philosophy  1 LEC section and 2 WEB sections
Dr. Frances Bottenberg  MW 3:30 – 4:45 OR WEB: Computer access required

This course aims to introduce you to the discipline of philosophy and to the activity of philosophical reflection, particularly through the exploration of 14 classic “thought experiments” – hypothetical scenarios created to isolate and assess difficult conceptual problems. You will be invited to think philosophically about many far-reaching questions, from how we think about what is real and whether there are any absolute truths to existence, to how we should found our societies and whether we can isolate any universal “rules to live by.” In the process, you will gain skill in analyzing the merits of other people’s arguments and improve your own abilities to think carefully, consistently and creatively about your own reasoning. A wide variety of philosophical authors, ranging from ancient Greek ethicists to contemporary posthumanists, will serve as our guides, alongside contemporary media such as podcasts, video clips and blog posts, which show the ongoing relevance of these matters to our 21st century world.

PHI 111 Introduction to Philosophy  2 LEC sections
Prof. Jeff Kaplan  MWF 10:00 – 10:50 or 11:00 – 11:50

Philosophical questions are among the most fundamental and important questions there are. Here are some of the questions that we will not only discuss but actually try to answer. What can I (or anyone) know? Does God exist? What is the human mind? What is the relation between the mind and the physical world? Is the mind part of the physical world? Is our mental life just another physical processes like digestion? Or is it, rather, that the mind is non-physical in nature and hence that it cannot be accounted for in physical terms? Most people consider questions like these at some point in their lives, but they often stop thinking about them before formulating well-supported answers. The philosopher attempts to support answers to these questions based not on dogma, but on careful argument. Because we will be spending our time analyzing these arguments, this course will improve your ability to understand and formulate arguments.

PHI 111 Introduction to Philosophy  2 WEB sections  WI - Writing Intensive
Prof. Janine Jones  Fully online class – Computer access required

This writing intensive course is designed for students interested in basic issues in philosophy. We begin by examining the value of philosophy itself. The branches of philosophy we focus on are epistemology, ontology, and meaning and representation. The concepts studied in these areas are applied to various philosophical problems, including those that arise for interpretation, binary and hierarchical thinking, sex and gender determination, and stereotyping.
PHI 115  Critical Thinking  2 LEC sections
Prof. Insa Lawler  T Th 9:30 – 10:45 OR 11:00 – 12:15

This course introduces you to fundamental concepts, techniques, and skills conducive to analytic, careful, evidence-based, and fair-minded reasoning. Over the course of the semester, you will gain skills in analyzing the merits and deficits of other people's and your own arguments. You will also improve your ability to reason well and you will learn how to avoid reasoning badly.

PHI 115  Critical Thinking  1 WEB section
Dr. Adam Rosenfeld  Fully online class – Computer access required

Students will develop the skills required to think rationally and for evaluating the quality of arguments in order to determine whether and the extent to which is well supported. They will practice critical evaluation of the arguments of others and be critical of their own thought processes in the construction of their own arguments. They will learn to discriminate between well-reasoned support and bogus reasoning so they are less likely to be fooled by bad arguments and less cynical about the power of public rational discourse.

PHI 119  Introduction to Ethics  1 LEC section and 1 WEB section
Dr. Elliott Goodine  M W 2:00 – 3:15 OR WEB: Computer access required

What is the morally right thing to do? Is there some moral law that applies to everyone, or is morality relative in some way? And what’s so good about morality anyway? In this course, we will study these questions, and traditional attempts to answer them. In addition to studying philosophy, we will also do philosophy. That is, while being informed by the answers and arguments of Plato, Aristotle, Hobbes, Hume, Bentham, Nietzsche, Rawls, Thompson, Foot, Street, and others, we will develop and defend our own answers to these questions. We will be thinking critically and carefully about the nature of right and wrong. This is an introductory level philosophy course. Students do not need any prior experience with philosophy.

PHI 121  Contemporary Moral Problems  3 WEB sections
Dr. Rick Gallimore  Fully online class – Computer access required

This course is a survey of moral issues that face contemporary society. Topics include human enhancement, war, terrorism, advertising ethics, and technological alienation. It will focus on student discussion of these moral questions and analysis of contemporary arguments.

PHI 121  Contemporary Moral Problems  2 WEB sections
Prof. Michael Zimmerman  Fully online class – Computer access required

Readings on and discussion of contemporary moral problems, such as those posed by abortion, homosexuality, prostitution, cloning, war, capital punishment, euthanasia, and the treatment of animals.
PHI 220  Medical Ethics  2 LEC sections
Prof. Derek Skillings  T Th  9:30-10:45 OR 11:00-12:15

This course will introduce students to some of the core ethical concepts relevant to discussions of medical ethics and to apply these concepts to central issues in contemporary medical ethics. Some of these concepts are competence, consent, and confidentiality, and some of the topics we will use these concepts to talk about are euthanasia, abortion, and the use of embryonic stem cells. We will see that even though there is substantial disagreement about some of these “hot button” issues, there is wide agreement among people (including health care professionals) about most of the factors that should be taken into account when dealing with specific cases. We will also see that having a clear view of the core concepts can make it easier to deal with the especially complex ethical issues which are so common in medical settings.

PHI 222  Ethics in the Computer Age  1 WEB section
Chris Metivier  Fully online class – Computer access required

This course is a survey of specific moral problems that arise from the use and integration of computer technology in contemporary life. It will focus on specific problems, identifying stakeholders, and analyzing professional, ethical, legal, security, and social alternatives and consequences, as well as the historical impact of computer technology on individuals, organizations, and society.

PHI 222  Ethics in the Computer Age  2 LEC sections
Falcon Milazzo  M W  2:00 – 3:15 or 3:30 – 4:45

This course is a survey of specific moral problems that arise from the use and integration of computer technology in contemporary life. Many of the problems we face in a world driven by ever more complex technology challenge the parameters of traditional moral thinking. In this course we will look at a number of those challenging moral problems from the perspective of both traditional and contemporary moral theories. Problems include AI, ownership of personal data, DNA ownership and analysis, problems related to security and software development and more.

PHI 251  History of Ancient Philosophy  1 LEC section and 1 WEB section
Dr. Adam Rosenfeld  T Th 2:00 – 3:15 OR WEB: Computer access required

This course surveys the beginnings of philosophy in ancient Greece, studying its gradual development through the Pre-Socratic philosophers, such as Thales, Heraclitus, and Parmenides. This early development culminates in the great philosophical systems of Plato and Aristotle, whose influential ideas will be analyzed and evaluated. The course concludes with the study of the three great systems of the Hellenistic period, Epicureanism, Stoicism, and Skepticism, and with the beginnings of Christian thought.

PHI 301-01  Topics in Philosophy – Analytic Philosophy  1 LEC section
Dr. Rick Gallimore  T Th  3:30 – 4:45

What types of responsibility are there? When does someone have a legitimate excuse for wrongdoing? Does ignorance afford such an excuse? Does compulsion or mental disorder do so? What is the relation between responsibility and control? What is the relation between responsibility and character?
PHI 301-02  Topics in Philosophy – Art and Aesthetics  WEB  Writing Intensive
Prof. Janine Jones  
Fully online class – Computer access required

In this course, we look at philosophical responses to the question "What is Art"?, explore the transformation of the discourse of aesthetics from the 18th c. sense of a "science of the senses" to matters of "taste", and investigate whether the two have wedded, thereby enabling aesthetics to act as media providing public perceptions that intervene in how we navigate our world within and outside of realms normally thought of as constituting domains of art and aesthetics: for example, in realms such as those of race, class, and gender.

PHI 301-03  Topics in Philosophy – Moral Responsibility  WEB
Prof. Michael Zimmerman  
Fully online class – Computer access required

An investigation into the nature of moral responsibility. Questions to be discussed include the following: What types of responsibility are there? When does someone have a legitimate excuse for wrongdoing? Does ignorance afford such an excuse? Does compulsion or mental disorder do so? What is the relation between responsibility and control? What is the relation between responsibility and character?

PHI 301-04  Topics in Philosophy – Philosophy of Humor  WEB
Dr. Eva Kort  
Fully online class – Computer access required

Humor has presented something of a challenge for philosophers; some philosophers, for example, have suggested that humor should be avoided because it is a threat to rational thought! In this course, we will see how philosophers of humor have responded to such challenges, investigate some traditional theories of humor, and explore the contemporary work being developed in humor theory.

PHI 301-05  Topics in Philosophy – Philosophy of Language  WEB
Dr. Eva Kort  
Fully online class – Computer access required

Much of contemporary philosophy is informed by a series of developments in the specific area of philosophy of language. In this course, we will look at how some of the groundbreaking work in philosophy of language has influenced how philosophy is done today. We will consider the substantive shifts in the contexts of what prompted those shifts as well as aim to develop working knowledge of some of the methodological tools offered by philosophers of language.

PHI 310  Introduction to Formal Logic  1 LEC section
Prof. Insa Lawler  
MW 3:30 – 4:45

This course is an introduction to two (families of) formal languages: propositional logic and first-order predicate logic. These languages are used to detect, understand, and evaluate recurring patterns in deductive reasoning. Recognizing and evaluating such patterns is crucial to rational thought and to constructing cogent arguments.
PHI 335-01 Philosophy of Law  1 LEC section
Prof. Jeff Kaplan  M W 2:00 – 3:15

This course is an introduction to the philosophy of law, which, if it were being taught in a law school—and this course is excellent preparation for law school—might also be called “jurisprudence” or “legal theory.” We will discuss the following questions, considering canonical answers to them and developing answers of our own. What is law? What does a society have to have in order to have a legal system? What is important about law? What is the relationship between law and morality? Are immoral laws really laws? When, if ever, is it right to break the law—to practice civil disobedience? The readings for this course include both works of philosophy and landmark U.S. legal cases.

PHI 348 Existentialism & Phenomenology  WEB
Dr. Frances Bottenberg  Fully online class – Computer access required

This course considers the human condition as explored by phenomenological and existentialist philosophers of the 19th and 20th centuries. Themes include the problem of free will, mortality and the meaning of life, the essential structures of conscious experience, and the foundations of self-identity through relations to others bound together in social complexes. Authors include Edmund Husserl, Jean-Paul Sartre, Simone de Beauvoir, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Frantz Fanon, Søren Kierkegaard, Friedrich Nietzsche, Albert Camus, and Hannah Arendt. Some attention will be paid to situate these thinkers within the rich context of 20th century philosophy, taking special note of the influence of existential phenomenology on the Négritude movement and second-wave feminism, two mid-20th century traditions of cultural critique that have greatly impacted the world we live in today.

PHI 351 Major Philosophers (Plato & Aristotle)  1 LEC section
Prof. Adam Rosenfeld  M W 2:00 – 3:15

Plato and Aristotle are, individually, some of the most influential philosophers in the history of the discipline, but beyond this, their close relationship and the subtlety of the difference between their approaches makes studying the two side-by-side an especially rich and fruitful experience. This course will examine the relationship between Plato and Aristotle’s thought concerning metaphysics, epistemology, ethics, logic & philosophical methodology. Through these two thinkers we will examine the nature of "Being," the relationship between "matter" & "form," whether and how we come to know things, and what sorts of obligations we have in our relationships with other people. Readings will include selections from Plato's Meno, Republic, Phaedo, Parmenides, Theaetetus, Sophist, Statesman, & Pheadorus, as well as Aristotle's Prior & Posterior Analytics, Categories, Metaphysics, Physics, On the Soul, Nicomachean Ethics, Politics, & Poetics. Completion of PHI 251 (History of Ancient Philosophy) or some other prior experience with texts by Ancient Greek thinkers recommended.

PHI 359 Philosophy of Religion  1 LEC section
Falcon Milazzo  T Th  2:00 – 3:15

Whether one believes in god or does not, questions regarding the existence, nature, and activity of god are as old as Western civilization. Among the questions we will examine this semester are these: Is belief in god consistent with or a necessary part of being human? Is god a logical necessity that humans need to stand in the face of an overpowering sense of the universe? If in fact god exists, is god knowable? If so, what does that mean and how do we explain philosophically the phenomenon we call religion?
PHI 361 Ethical Issues in Business  LEC & WEB  Computer access required for ALL sections

Mr. Mike Matteson...............LEC:  T Th  2:00 - 3:15 or 3:30 – 4:45
Three WEB sections

Wade Maki......................... One WEB section

Dr. Nick Zavediuk ................ One WEB section

This course begins with a survey of major ethical theories and their application to the international business environment. We will then examine answers to questions such as: What is the purpose of the corporation? What obligations do corporations and business people have? How do we determine responsibility? What information should salespeople provide customers? When is an ad deceptive? When in Rome, shall we always conduct business the Roman way? Additional topics include discrimination in hiring, whistle blowing, workplace privacy, intellectual property, affirmative action, the environment, bribery, ethical challenges of globalization, and social justice. Special focus is given to analyzing real world cases in business ethics in non-western cultures.

PHI 362 Ethical Issues in Entrepreneurship  1 LEC section

Falcon Milazzo           T Th  3:30 – 4:45

This course is modeled on Philosophy 361, Ethical Issues in Business, with the emphasis changing from business in general to the entrepreneurs who are starting businesses across the globe. It has a philosophical and international focus on the developing world. In order for students to understand the ethics of entrepreneurship in developing countries, they first must understand that country’s history, religion, and cultural traditions, including Asia, Africa, and South America.

PHI 401 – Reading Course for Seniors
PHI 402 – Independent Study
PHI 493 – Honors Work
PHI 494 – Capstone Course – SPRING SEMESTER ONLY

Refer to the UNCG Registrar’s Website or Undergraduate Catalog for complete registration information, major/minor requirements, section numbers, prerequisites, etc. If you have specific questions about Philosophy courses, call the Department at 336-334-5059. Courses and scheduled times get revised prior to registration. Always re-check classroom assignments just before classes start.