Philosophy

Ahrens, Bates, Carrell, Jenkins, Johnson, Rosenthal, Shen.

Major: Philosophy courses – 224 and 225; Philosophy Seminars 1 and 2 (301, 401); 457 or 471 (culminating experience); any four other philosophy courses above the 100 level. Comprehensive evaluation, with grade of C or better. Total of 8 major courses.

In exceptional cases (e.g., fall study abroad, late declaration of the major, unavoidable conflict with requirements of a second major), a philosophy major may petition the department to fulfill the relevant requirement (either Phi 301 or Phi 401) by successfully completing a Directed Study (Phi 307, .5 unit) which, as far as possible, has objectives and methods in common with the missed seminar. Completion must be not later than the following Winter Term.

Minor: Philosophy courses – any five, not including 100-level courses. Recommended: 224 and 225. Total of 5 minor courses.

Phi 160. Special Topics.
Phi 161. Philosophy and the Human Condition. Central issues in philosophy will be raised by asking what is a human being? What does it mean to be human? Various answers to these questions and the philosophical frameworks that support them will be examined. In combination with ThS 161, satisfies the Examined Life LADR. Not open to students who have credit in 100-level philosophy courses. Must be completed by the end of the sophomore year.

Phi 162. Philosophy and the Arts. Central issues in philosophy will be raised by examining various works of art such as literature, music, drama, film, sculpture, or painting. Various specific framings of and answers to the issues that the work of art offer will be evaluated. In combination with ThS 162, satisfies the Examined Life LADR. Not open to students who have credit in 100-level philosophy courses. Must be completed by the end of the sophomore year.

Phi 163. Philosophical Issues and Classic Texts. Study of central issues in philosophy through an examination of classic philosophical texts such as Plato’s Symposium, Aristotle’s Nicomachean Ethics, and Kant’s Critique of Pure Reason. An examination of these texts will allow students to study and to analyze several clearly developed and well-known philosophical perspectives. In combination with ThS 163, satisfies the Examined Life LADR. Not open to students who have credit in 100-level philosophy courses. Must be completed by the end of the sophomore year.

Phi 164. Philosophical Perspectives on Nature. Study of central issues in philosophy through an examination of various concepts of nature, such as those found in Bacon, Thoreau, and Homes Ralston. Each concept of nature says something different not just about the natural world, but also about what it means to be human, and what our relationship with and responsibility for the natural world should be. In combination with ThS 164, satisfies the Examined Life LADR. Not open to students who have credit in 100-level philosophy courses. Must be completed by the end of the sophomore year.

Phi 165. Philosophy and Ethics. Focuses on topics and texts of ethics and raises questions everyone struggles with throughout life. What is the good life? What does it mean to be a good person? How do we know what the good is? What is the nature of the good? In combination with ThS 165, satisfies the Examined Life LADR. Not open to students who have credit in 100-level philosophy courses. Must be completed by the end of the sophomore year.
Phi 167. Foundational Issues in Philosophy. Addresses some of the fundamental issues in philosophy. Students critically reflect on various metaphysical, epistemological, and ethical positions and identify the one they find most reasonable. At the end of the course, they will bring together their positions and construct a coherent philosophical position. In combination with ThS 167, satisfies the Examined Life LADR. Not open to students who have credit in 100-level philosophy courses. Must be completed by the end of the sophomore year.

Phi 211. Philosophy of Woman. Introduction to feminism and survey of concepts of woman/human in Western philosophy. Examines classic and contemporary texts to understand current theories and practices in various areas. Offered alternate years.

Phi 221. Philosophy of Religion. Analysis of basic concepts and beliefs of Biblical religion and in the empirical study of all religions (e.g., myth, the sacred, ritual). Offered alternate years.

Phi 222. Classical Indian Philosophy. An examination of Indian Hindu and Buddhist philosophy, dealing with topics in ontology, the nature of self, ethics, and epistemology. Satisfies Other Cultures LADR.


Phi 225. Classical Greek Philosophy. An overview of Western philosophy from the presocratics through the Hellenistic era. Focus on close reading of major texts.


Phi 228. Roman Philosophy. A survey of the important philosophical ideas of the late Roman republic and the early empire. Readings include texts from Lucretius, Seneca, and Cicero. Spring Term, ordinarily with two weeks in Italy. Prerequisite: Permission of instructor.

Phi 232. Existentialism. Explores such topics as freedom, descriptive metaphysics, man in the world, and man and God in writers from Kierkegaard to Sartre. Offered alternate years.

Phi 233. Philosophy of Art. Analysis of basic concepts and beliefs in talk about the arts (history, theory, criticism), including a history of Western aesthetics. Individual projects. Offered alternate years.

Phi 234. Rational Choices. A course in making rational decisions, comprising the study of decision theory, game theory and social choice theory. A survey of basic principles and their application. Satisfies Abstraction and Formal Reasoning LADR.

Phi 235. Concepts of Love. History and interpretation of changing ideas of love (ethical, religious, romantic, etc.) from Plato to Freud. Interdisciplinary and cross-cultural approach. Offered alternate years.

Phi 236. Contemporary Political Thought. An examination of major political theorists of the recent past. Identical to PlS 236.

Phi 237. Ethics: Theory and Practice. An exploration of major issues in ethical theory and primary texts. Includes a focus on at least one area of applied ethics (e.g. social justice or environmental ethics.)

Phi 240. Philosophy and the Martial Arts. An exploration of the significance of Asian philosophical concepts for the theory and practice of various martial arts and related disciplines. There will be a significant physical component. Spring term. Prerequisite: Permission of instructor. Satisfies Other Cultures LADR.

Phi 242. Taoism and Cooking. A combination of a study of Taoistic principles with the practice of Chinese cooking. An initial examination of Taoism as a philosophy. A later application to healthy cooking and eating based on Taoist philosophy. Satisfies Other Cultures LADR. Spring Term.
Phi 244. Taoism and Zen Buddhism. A study of Taoism and Zen Buddhism. Principal focus on Lao Tzu, Chuang Tzu, the Koans and Suzuki. Some attention given to the historical development of Zen Buddhism out of Chinese Chan and Taoism. Lectures, readings in original texts, classroom discussion, videos and films. Satisfies Other Cultures LADR.

Phi 260. Special Topics.

Phi 301. Philosophy Seminar I. A forum in which philosophy students sharpen skills in research, writing, and dialogues, begin to integrate philosophical studies, and do preliminary work for the senior year. Offered Fall Term concurrent with Phi 401. Prerequisite: philosophy major or minor. .50 unit.

Phi 307. Directed Study. .50 unit.

Phi 320. Concepts of Nature. Approach to environmental philosophy via a global study of major concepts of the human/nature relationship. Includes view of non-Western and traditional cultures. Concludes with in-depth study of some contemporary views and an individual project. Offered alternate years.

Phi 321. Formal Logic. A course in formal logic with emphasis on translations, formal semantics and derivations for first-order logic through multiple quantification and identity. Satisfies the Abstraction and Formal Reasoning LADR. Prerequisite: Sophomore standing or above.

Phi 322. Classical Chinese Philosophy. A survey of Classical Chinese philosophy, including Confucius, Lao-tzu, Chuang-tzu, Mo-tzu, Mencius, and the Legalists, as well as a detailed examination of the *I-Ching*. Satisfies Other Cultures LADR.

Phi 324. Twentieth-Century Philosophy. Philosophical developments in the 20th century, including pragmatism, linguistic analysis, and existentialism. Offered alternate years.

Phi 331. Philosophy of Law. Introduction to central philosophical issues connected with law; the nature and purpose of law; concepts such as property, liability, harm, and rights; interpretation of constitutions and statutes. Examines philosophical texts and judicial opinions.

Phi 333. Philosophy of Science. Major themes in scientific methodology, including intensive investigation of scientific explanation, concept formation, theory construction and confirmation. Offered alternate years.

Phi 334. Philosophy of Mind. A course in philosophy of mind, focusing on philosophical problems connected to the nature of mentality. An overview of central issues in recent philosophy of mind and an in-depth treatment of a special topic. Topics alternate in different years. May be repeated for credit.

Phi 335. Epistemology. A course in the theory of knowledge, treating the nature, value and limits of human knowledge. An overview of central issues in recent epistemology and an in-depth treatment of a special topic. Topics alternate in different years. May be repeated for credit.

Phi 337. Utopias and Intentional Communities. History and theory of intentional communities: includes field-study of monasteries, Amish, and several communes. Offered Spring Term.

Phi 338. The History of Political Thought. An examination of representative political theorists from Plato to Marx. Identical to PlS 235. Prerequisite: PlS 115, 117, 118, or 161.

Phi 357. Internship. Off-campus supervised experience in philosophy.

Phi 360. Special Topics.

Phi 370. Directed Study.

Phi 401. Philosophy Seminar II. Preliminary work for the independent study. Examines the nature, structure, and limits of philosophy and its relations with other aspects of culture. Offered Fall Term concurrent with Phi 301. Prerequisite: Phi major. .50 unit.

Phi 457. Internship.
Phi 465. Capstone Seminar. Course content will reflect the topic for the annual Capstone. Open to all juniors and seniors and may be repeated once for credit. Students may enroll in only one Capstone seminar in a given term.

Phi 471. Independent Study. Prerequisite: Consent of instructor.