

# Department of Philosophy

## Course Descriptions

### Fall 2014



## Introductory Courses

Any section of Philosophy 110: Introduction to Philosophy can be taken to fulfill the college core requirement in philosophy. Only one Philosophy 110 course may be taken for college credit.

<b>PHIL 110</b>	<b>Introductory Philosophy Classes</b>	<b>3 credits</b>
Adrienne Lyles-Chockley	10:00-10:50 MWF; 11:00-11:50 MWF	
Kevin McDonnell	11:00-12:15 TR	
Michael Waddell	3:30-4:45 TR	
Megan Zwart	12:30-1:45 TR	
George Trey	11:00-12:15 MW	

Readings and discussions designed to introduce the student to the major areas and problems of philosophy through a study of writings of classical and contemporary thinkers.

<b>PHIL 110W</b>	<b>Introductory Philosophy</b>	<b>3.5 credits</b>
Patricia Sayre	11:00-11:50 MWF <i>also meets</i> 12:00-12:50 W Tandem with ART 211W (72134)	

We live in a world that can dazzle us with beauty but also threaten us with chaos. Even the most orderly of lives can unexpectedly veer out of control, and the most rational of activities take on aspects of madness. How are we to make our way in such a world? Is there some underlying pattern in the mad whirl? Can we find meaning in the mayhem? Questions concerning life's meaning and purpose lie at the heart of all serious philosophical inquiry. In this course we will explore the possibilities for meaning offered by the conceptual frameworks of western philosophy. Whether we are wrestling with Socrates' response to the collapse of Athenian democracy or Descartes' response to the collapse of the medieval worldview, our concern throughout will be to articulate our own responses to the questions that matter most.

## Upper Division Courses

<b>PHIL 220</b>	<b>Introduction to Logic</b>	<b>3 credits</b>	<b>Patricia Sayre</b>
<b>1:00-1:50 MWF</b>			

Logic is the study of the methods and principles used to distinguish good, or correct, reasoning from bad, or fallacious, reasoning. Because its methods and principles can be applied to any subject matter, logic is a tool with practical applications in many other disciplines and has played an important role in the development of Western thought in general. In this course, we study not only logical techniques, but also consider the connections between logic and intellectual history. We begin with a unit on argumentation in ordinary language, move on to consider three systems of deductive logic (categorical, propositional, and predicate logic) and conclude with a brief introduction to some cutting edge issues in contemporary logic. *Essential preparation for anyone considering law school or planning to take the GRE's.*

**PHIL 250**                      **Philosophy and Disabilities**                      **3 credits**                      **Michael Waddell**  
**12:30-1:45 TR**

In this course, we will explore questions raised by the existence of various kinds of disability. What is it like to experience disabilities? How do we understand disabilities? What ethical problems are raised by disabilities, and how do we respond ethically to these problems?

While some members of the class will likely have experienced disability, other members will likely not have experienced it. And, of course, none of us will have experienced all kinds of disability. We will, therefore, begin the semester by exploring various kinds of disability: physical, mobility, sensory, intellectual, developmental, mental, and the like. When possible, we will attempt to understand what it is like to experience these disabilities as well as to gain knowledge about medical or psychological accounts of the conditions that give rise to the disabilities. To achieve this, we will study first person accounts of life with disabilities, including those to be found in novels, in films, and in face-to-face encounters.

After we have broadened and deepened our understanding of the range of human disabilities and what it is like to experience these disabilities, we will enter into the vibrant contemporary debate about how we understand disabilities. Are disabilities primarily biological/psychological realities, or are they created by social structures and practices? If we define disabilities as departures from what is “normal” for human beings, do we inevitably imbue disabilities (and those who possess them) with stigma? Do some disabilities depart so far from what is “normal” for human beings that the creatures whom they befall no longer count as “human beings” or “persons”? Or is life with these disabilities merely another way of being human?

These questions about how we understand disabilities will inevitably lead to discussions of morality, and we will follow these discussions into exploration of both practical ethics (e.g., how should we treat people with disabilities?) and moral theory (e.g., how do disabilities challenge theories about what counts as moral behavior, justice, human goodness or happiness?).

**PHIL 255**                      **Medical Ethics**                      **3 credits**                      **Megan Zwart**  
**2:00-3:15 TR**

In this course we will investigate ethical issues that arise in the health care professions. We will start with basic ethical theories and principles. Then we will move through the life cycle, considering special ethical topics that arise at specific times of life, including beginning of life questions (abortion, reproductive technologies), issues of childhood (seriously ill infants, children and autonomy), issues surrounding aging (care giving, dementia, allocation of resources to elders), issues at the end of life (active and passive euthanasia, palliative care, discontinuing futile care) as well as those issues that arise across the life cycle (allocation of scarce resources, paying for health care). Students will investigate and clarify their own positions on these issues, including the compatibility of these positions with their broader philosophical commitments (i.e. what is a person, what rights do persons have, what constitutes human flourishing etc.). Students will display their knowledge and views through clear, analytical writing, class discussion, informal journals and an exam. This class will also include an experiential learning component, allowing students to engage in hands-on learning through field trips and service learning placements at local healthcare organizations.



**Advising: Fall 2014**

For advising regarding course selection you may consult with any member of the Philosophy faculty, or, if you are working on a major or minor in Philosophy Contact:

**George Trey, Chair**  
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Ph: 284-4547  
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**Patricia Sayre**  
Room 161 Spes Unica  
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Email: psayre

**Michael Waddell**  
Room 157 Spes Unica  
Ph: 284-4169  
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**Megan Zwart**  
Room 158 Spes Unica  
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