

# Department of Philosophy

## Course Descriptions

### Spring 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	
George Trey	11:00-12:15 MW; 3:00-4:15 MW	
Megan Zwart	9:30-10:45 TR; 11:00-12:15	

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>4 credits</b>
Patricia Sayre	1:00-1:50 MWF & 2:00-2:50 W	

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 230</b>	<b>Socrates to Scholasticism</b>	<b>3 credits</b>	<b>Michael Waddell</b>
<b>9:30-10:45 TR</b>			

Is there such a thing as the soul? Is the soul immortal? Do only humans have souls or do animals have them too? What about plants? Or the universe itself? In this course, we will explore these and other questions about the soul as they are developed in the writings of great philosophers from ancient Greece and the Christian Middle Ages (including Plato, Aristotle, Plotinus, St. Augustine, and St. Thomas Aquinas). Class meetings will be comprised primarily of discussion with occasional lectures mixed in to offer clarification of important concepts. Students will be evaluated on class participation, two shorter writing assignments, one longer writing assignment, and two exams. The class is intended primarily for those either pursuing or contemplating a philosophy major/minor, though all students interested in great texts and important ideas are most welcome.

**PHIL 243**                      **Intro to Feminist Philosophy**                      **3 credits**                      **Adrienne Lyles-Chockley**  
**11:00-11:50 MWF**

This course is an inquiry into the meaning of gender and its philosophical implications. Questions of identity, knowledge, ethics, race, and global responsibility will be considered both from historical and contemporary perspectives. Feminism is both an intellectual commitment and a social and political movement that seeks justice for women. We will be studying feminism from a theoretical background and examine the philosophical and intellectual commitments that underlie feminist projects. The first part of the course centers around what feminist theory is. The course will then move into investigating theories of gender differences and ways of conceiving female (and male) identity. We will then examine feminist critiques of moral, social and political philosophy. Throughout the course, we will examine how feminist philosophy and inquiry is motivated by the quest for social justice.

**PHIL 245**                      **Non-Western Philosophy**                      **3 credits**                      **Patricia Sayre**  
**6:30-7:45 MW**

In this course we will sample a variety of texts from non-western traditions with an eye to contrasting the ideas and approaches with western thought. We will begin by considering the animistic outlooks of many oral cultures and consider their relevance to environmental issues raised by western ways of viewing the natural world. We will then move from oral to literate cultures, reading a key text from each of various eastern traditions: Indian, Chinese, and Japanese. We will conclude with a look at some recent work in African philosophy. Because in the traditions we will be studying the western distinction between theory and practice is not nearly as sharp, this course will have an experiential aspect not typical of most philosophy course—when reading about yoga, for example, we will try to actually do some, and when reading about Japanese aesthetics, we will actually try to do some art. *A course that is a natural complement to coursework in intercultural studies, anthropology, and comparative religion—but is for anyone interested in expanding her horizons!*

**PHIL 247.01, 02**                      **Philosophy of Religion**                      **3 credits**                      **Michael Waddell**  
**12:30-1:45 TR**                      ***Reason, Faith, and the Search for Meaning***  
**2:00-3:15 TR**

This course will examine several problems that have vexed the Jewish and Christian religions, considering these problems from *philosophical* perspectives (i.e., perspectives that begin from reason rather than faith). We will focus on three questions in particular: What, if anything, can we know about God? What is the relationship between faith and reason? And if God is all good, all knowing, and all powerful, then why does evil exist? Popular films will be used to spark discussion and introduce classical readings about these questions. ***Note: this course can be taken to satisfy the philosophy general education requirement in the Sophia program (in lieu of Philosophy 110). No prerequisites are required.***

**PHIL 254**                      **Social Justice**                      **3 credits**                      **Megan Zwart**  
**12:30-1:45 TR**

Eating is very important to all of us. We spend lots of our time, money and energy purchasing, preparing and consuming food. But despite the important role food plays in our lives, we often fail to notice that each food choice we make is part of a larger web of social, political and economic systems which often degrade the natural world and disadvantage the vulnerable. In this course in applied social philosophy, we will use the lens of food to consider the broad philosophical question: ‘how can these systems use and distribute natural and human resources justly, both locally and globally.’ In answering this question, we will pay special attention to the hidden costs of the food we eat daily, particularly focusing on the costs to our natural environment and those who are disadvantaged. Since philosophy can prepare us to harmonize our most deeply held beliefs with our actions, this course aims to help the student understand



**Advising: Spring 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**  
Room 160 Spes Unica  
Ph: 284-4547  
Email: gtrey

**Patricia Sayre**  
Room 161 Spes Unica  
Ph: 284-4538  
Email: psayre

**Michael Waddell**  
Room 157 Spes Unica  
Ph: 284-4169  
Email: mwaddell

**Megan Zwart**  
Room 158 Spes Unica  
Ph: 284-4503  
Email: mzwart