

The College of Charleston

Department of Philosophy

Spring 2006 Courses (updated 10/26/05)

PHILOSOPHY

All philosophy courses except 215 and 216 satisfy the Humanities requirement. Two logic courses, 215 and 216, can be used to satisfy the Math/Logic requirement. Many philosophy courses (e.g., business ethics, philosophy of law) complement other major programs. For those with a sustained interest in philosophy there are both a *major* and a *minor* in philosophy.

REQUIREMENTS FOR THE MAJOR IN PHILOSOPHY: 30 semester hours in philosophy which must include 215 or 216; 220; 230; and 450. Of the remaining 18 hours of electives in philosophy, at least 12 hours must be taken in courses at or above the 200 level, with at least six of these at or above the 300 level.

REQUIREMENTS FOR THE MINOR IN PHILOSOPHY: 18 semester hours in philosophy which must include 101 or 102; 215 or 216; and 220, 230, 306, 307, or 310. Two of the remaining courses must be at or above the 200 level.

Philosophy Course Offerings

PHIL 101.002	Intro to Phil: Beliefs & Values	Hettinger	09:00-09:50	MWF	ECTR 111
PHIL 101.003	Intro to Phil: Beliefs & Values	Hettinger	10:00-10:50	MWF	ECTR 111
PHIL 101.004	Intro to Phil: Beliefs & Values	Perlmutter	12:15-01:30	TR	BELL 400
PHIL 101.005	Intro to Phil: Beliefs & Values	Hough	01:40-02:55	TR	ECTR 116
PHIL 102.001	Intro to Phil: Knowledge & Reality	Grantham	01:00-01:50	MWF	ECTR 111
PHIL 102.002	Intro to Phil: Knowledge & Reality	Grantham	02:00-02:50	MWF	ECTR 111
PHIL 115.001	Critical Thinking	Williams	12:15-01:30	TR	MYBK 206
PHIL 115.002	Critical Thinking	Williams	01:40-02:55	TR	MYBK 206
PHIL 155.001	Environmental Ethics	Baker	10:50-12:05	TR	ECTR 111
PHIL 155.002	Environmental Ethics	Baker	12:15-01:30	TR	ECTR 111
PHIL 160.001	Ethics and Sports	Krasnoff	09:00-09:50	MWF	ECTR 101
PHIL 160.002	Ethics and Sports	Krasnoff	10:00-10:50	MWF	ECTR 101
PHIL 198.001	ST: Thinking Differently: Phil of Asia	Coseru	12:00-12:50	MWF	BELL 400
PHIL 198.002	ST: Thinking Differently: Phil of Asia	Coseru	01:00-01:50	MWF	BELL 400
PHIL 204.001	Minds & Machines	Schonbein	01:00-01:50	MWF	ECTR 219
PHIL 215.001	Symbolic Logic I	Schonbein	10:00-10:50	MWF	MYBK 206
PHIL 215.002	Symbolic Logic I	Schonbein	11:00-11:50	MWF	MYBK 206
PHIL 216.001	Symbolic Logic II	Lesses	11:00-11:50	MWF	ECTR 111
PHIL 230.001	History of Modern Philosophy	Boyle	12:15-01:30	TR	ECTR 219
PHIL 240.001	Jewish Philosophy	Perlmutter	09:25-10:40	TR	JWST Library
PHIL 255.090	Philosophy of Religion	Coseru	04:00-05:15	MW	ECTR 111
PHIL 280.001	Aesthetics	Hettinger	12:00-12:50	MWF	ECTR 111
PHIL 285.001	Philosophical issues in Literature	Hough	10:50-12:05	TR	ECTR 219
PHIL 298.001	Moral Psychology	Williams	09:25-10:40	TR	ECTR 111
PHIL 305.001	Kant	Krasnoff	01:40-02:55	TR	ECTR 111
PHIL 325.001	Theory of Knowledge	Grantham	09:00-09:50	MWF	ECTR 219
PHIL 450.001	Senior Seminar: Virtue Ethics	Baker	02:00-03:15	MW	MYBK 206

Philosophy Course Descriptions

PHIL 101: Introduction to Philosophy: Beliefs and Values

Prof. Hettinger

Section 002 (MWF 09:00-09:50)

Section 003 (MWF 10:00-10:50)

NO PREREQUISITES

This course will introduce you to philosophy through an examination of some issues in ethical, social, political, and religious philosophy. The focus is on ethics. Topics in ethics include sexual morality, world hunger, sexual equality, the treatment of animals, ethical relativism, and the justification of punishment. Topics in social and political philosophy include the limits of governmental authority over the individual and the idea that government is based on a social contract. Questions in the philosophy of religion include: Does God exist? Can one prove or disprove that God exists? Can the world contain both God and evil? Is religious faith rational? Does morality depend on religion?

Requirements: Midterm exam, final exam, reading quizzes, oral presentation, and term paper

PHIL 101: Introduction to Philosophy: Beliefs and Values

Prof. Perlmutter

Section 004 (TR 12:15-01:30)

NO PREREQUISITES

This is an introductory philosophy course whose focus is ethics and the philosophy of religion. The course will be divided into two altogether distinct parts. The first will deal with ethical issues, the second with philosophical issues concerning religion. The topics we will discuss include nature and objectivity of morality; issues in practical ethics, like abortion and affirmative action; the reasonability of religious belief; and the relationship between religion and a meaningful life. Students will be required to write two four-page papers and take two hourly examinations.

PHIL 101: Introduction to Philosophy: Beliefs and Values

Prof. Hough

Section 005 (TR 01:40-02:55)

NO PREREQUISITES

The model of the self at work in an ethical theory is crucial: our beliefs about the human constitution necessarily shape our sense of what is good for us (indeed, the realization, actualization or fulfillment of our 'nature' is usually the aim of an ethical account). Do human creatures have immortal souls, or souls of a very different sort? Are we essentially rational? Political? Products of our culture, or beings already equipped with knowledge in our souls? In order to answer these questions, we will read two ancient and influential accounts of human nature, Plato and Aristotle. These models from 4th Century B.C.E. Greece have in many ways governed our Western thinking about being human, and about what the best kind of life for a human truly is.

PHIL 102: Introduction to Philosophy: Knowledge & Reality

Prof. Grantham

Section 001 (MWF 01:00-01:50)

Section 002 (MWF 02:00-02:50)

NO PREREQUISITES

This course provides a general introduction to philosophy by exploring several of the most perplexing and enduring problems in philosophy. We begin by reflecting on the nature of knowledge: Can we be certain of anything? Is reason or observation more important for gaining knowledge? Is scientific knowledge especially well-confirmed? We then focus on questions about the nature of minds. Can we know that other people or animals are conscious? How? Are mental states simply complex physical states? If minds are nothing but collections of mindless particles governed by deterministic laws, then (how) is free will possible? Finally, we will (more briefly) discuss the relationship between the scientific and religious world views: Are they compatible or incompatible? Is it reasonable to accept the existence of God "on faith"?

PHIL 115: Critical Thinking

Prof. Williams

Section 001 (TR 12:15-01:30)

Section 002 (TR 01:40-02:55)

NO PREREQUISITES

Philosophy is more than mental gymnastics; it is a practice that teaches the art and skill of critical thinking. Imagine if you were charged for a crime that you didn't commit. Wouldn't you hope that each member of the jury that decides your fate possesses the requisite ability to recognize the relevant questions, to identify and analyze the quality of arguments, and to make correct inferences? These are skills all of us need in order to be good citizens but also to make informed decisions in other areas of life. This class will explore the rules and principles of critical reasoning and logic. We will learn to examine and evaluate ideas, develop arguments, and recognize fallacies in order to cultivate the skills necessary for developing sound beliefs.

PHIL 155: Environmental Ethics

Prof. Baker

Section 001 (TR 10:50-12:05)

Section 002 (TR 12:15-1:30)

NO PREREQUISITES

In this course you will become comfortable and familiar with the questions being addressed by environmental ethicists. The questions they try to answer, sound, at first, rather abstract. What sort of value should be accorded the natural environment? How should we understand ourselves in relation to our environment? What do we owe the environment? But the debates over these issues are lively, and whether we realize it or not, we already act in accordance to some of the answers to these questions (and not to others.) In this class, we will consider carefully, like philosophers, whether we are valuing the environment properly, whether we understand our place in nature rightly, and whether we are doing what we ought for the preservation of the environment. Along the way we will develop analytical skills that should be useful beyond the topic of environmental ethics.

There are two general goals for students in this course.

The first is for philosophy to be shown in its best light: as something useful; as our means of coming to understand issues that are too complex to be obvious.

The second goal is for students to become not just good students of philosophy—but philosophers themselves. Students will become capable of critically engaging what has been written on these topics and will be able to defend their own account of what it is to be ethical in regard to the environment.

Text: Environmental Ethics: What Really Works, What Really Matters, edited by David Schmidtz and Elizabeth Willott, Oxford University Press, 2002; available in the bookstore.

PHIL 160: Ethics and Sports

Prof. Krasnoff

Section 001 (MWF 09:00-09:50)

Section 002 (MWF 10:00-10:50)

NO PREREQUISITES

A study of ethical issues arising in the context of sports. We will consider some of the following questions: What is a sport, and why do we play or watch sports? How might sports be socially valuable, and how might they be socially harmful? What constitutes cheating? Is it wrong to use performance-enhancing drugs? What sorts of violence are acceptable in sports? Should college athletes be paid? What do gender and racial equality require in athletics? The class will require a significant online writing component, in addition to readings and in-class tests.

PHIL 198: ST: Thinking Differently: Philosophies of Asia

Prof. Coseru

Section 001 (MWF 12:00-12:50)

Section 002 (MWF 01:00-01:50)

NO PREREQUISITES

A survey of the background, schools, and philosophies of classical India and China and of the major schools of Buddhist thought in India, China, and Japan. In this course we examine some basic texts and traditions in Asian thought, covering only the major traditions: Classical Confucianism, Daoism, the orthodox schools of Indian philosophy (Samkhya, Yoga, Vaisheshika, Nyaya, Mimamsa, and Vedanta) and the Buddhist schools of Madhyamaka and Yogacara. Emphasis will be on how major Asian philosophers have thought about fundamental philosophical issues: What can we know? What is real? How should we live? We will examine how philosophers of different traditions answered these questions, focusing on their analyses and arguments. The course aims to provide students with more than a superficial exposure to the philosophical sophistication of Asian thought and make them sensitive to the common assumptions and misconceptions that often compromise the teaching of Asian philosophies in Western universities.

PHIL 204: Minds & Machines

Prof. Schonbein

Section 001 (MWF 01:00-01:50)

NO PREREQUISITES

Computers have been referred to as 'electronic brains' or 'electronic minds.' But what exactly does this mean? Can computers think, have emotions, be genuinely creative, or feel pain? Similarly, are human beings simply complex computing machines – or is there something more?

To what degree can cognitive science tell us how to build a better robot, or robotics inform us about the nature of human intelligence? In this course we will consider these and related questions from a philosophical perspective, drawing on historical and contemporary writings from philosophy, artificial intelligence, and cognitive science.

PHIL 215: Symbolic Logic I

Prof. Schonbein

Section 001 (MWF 10:00-10:50)

Section 002 (MWF 11:00-11:50)

NO PREREQUISITES

NOTE: This course does not count toward the humanities requirement. It does count toward the minimum degree requirement in mathematics and logic.

This class is an introduction to the formal methods of deductive reasoning. We explore the logical structure of language, and develop a system of logic to capture that structure. We use this system of logic to distinguish between effective and problematic deductive reasoning, and to explore other related topics.

PHIL 216: Symbolic Logic II

Prof. Lesses

Section 001 (MWF 11:00-11:50)

PREREQUISITE: *PHIL 215 or permission of instructor*

NOTE: This course does not count toward the humanities requirement. It does count toward the minimum degree requirement in mathematics and logic.

This course is a sequel to PHIL 215 and covers what is called "predicate logic." The subject of PHIL 215 is propositional logic in which a simple statement is the smallest unit of analysis for the translation of English into symbolic language and for the construction of symbolic arguments. In PHIL 216, we will also examine the internal structure of simple statements in order to develop the symbolic language necessary to symbolize statements in terms of their subjects and predicates. We will then introduce procedures that will enable us to construct proofs using this new formal language. If time permits, we will consider some topics in metatheory, which is the branch of logic concerned with the features of logical systems themselves, and philosophical logic, which utilizes the formal tools and methods of symbolic logic in order to shed light upon questions of philosophical inquiry.

PHIL 230: History of Modern Philosophy

Prof. Boyle

Section 001 (TR 12:15-01:30)

PREREQUISITE: *Three semester hours in Philosophy or permission of instructor*

The early modern period (the 17th and 18th centuries) saw the rise of modern science, when medieval and Aristotelian conceptions of knowledge, nature, and our place in the world began to be rejected. In this course we will read, discuss, and critically evaluate the works of philosophers such as Descartes, Spinoza, Locke, Berkeley, Hume, and Kant, important thinkers from the early modern era who sought to find new understandings of the world, our place in it, and our knowledge of it. Some of the issues we will focus on are: whether there is any innate knowledge, or whether all knowledge derives from experience; proofs for the existence of God; what kinds of substances exist in the universe (are there such things as souls?); and whether or not humans have free will.

PHIL 240: Jewish Philosophy

Prof. Perlmutter

Section 001 (TR 09:25-10:40)

NO PREREQUISITES

This course will introduce students to philosophical themes that arise within the Jewish tradition. The course will begin with biblical texts that address issues such as the reason for suffering, the meaning of life, and the covenant between God and the Hebrews. There will be a brief discussion of medieval Jewish creeds. Finally, the course will consider the writings of important thinkers of the past hundred years and their reflections on the impact of modernity and the Holocaust or Judaism. The course assumes no background in Jewish thought.

PHIL 255: Philosophy of Religion

Prof. Coseru

Section 090 (MW 04:00-05:15)

NO PREREQUISITES

This course surveys philosophical issues concerning the interpretation of sacred texts and rituals. It also aims to examine religious modes of being and thinking and the recent phenomenon of inter-religious dialogue. It is divided in five sections: 1) sacred and profane space and the origins of religious experience; 2) mysticism, faith, and rationality; 3) religious ethics and the question of afterlife; 4) feminist interpretations of religious texts; and 5) globalization, ecology, and religious pluralism. The course also surveys some major philosophical controversies in the Judaeo-Christian-Islamic tradition, and several major dilemmas in Buddhism, Hinduism, and Daoism. The goal of the course is to enable students acquire the knowledge and critical skills needed to formulate well-reasoned responses to the problems raised in the course.

PHIL 280: Aesthetics

Prof. Hettinger

Section 001 (MWF 12:00-12:50)

NO PREREQUISITES

This course is an introductory, philosophical examination of the nature of aesthetic value and appreciation, in both art and nature. Questions include: What is the nature of art? Is it representation, the expression of emotion, or something else entirely? What role, if any, should the intention of the artist play in the evaluation and appreciation of a work of art? Can we distinguish between good and bad art or is value of art in the eye of the beholder? What is the nature of aesthetic value? Is the aesthetic value of something equivalent to the aesthetic gratification it does (or doesn't) stimulate in humans? What relationships are there between aesthetic and moral values? Can aesthetic values trump moral values? Is it ever appropriate to morally evaluate art? Should art be publicly funded? Should it ever be censored?

Concerning the aesthetic appreciation of nature we will ask: How does this differ, if at all, from the aesthetic appreciation of art? Is all of nature beautiful in its own way or is some of it awkward, repulsive, or ugly—as are, arguably, some works of art. Can humans improve on the beauty of nature or does any human interference decrease nature's aesthetic value? Is there a correct aesthetic appreciation of nature? Is scientific knowledge of nature important to its proper aesthetic appreciation?

Course requirements: midterm, final, term paper, class participation (including a presentation of your paper topic to the class), and attendance.

PHIL 285: Philosophical Issues in Literature

Prof. Hough

Section 001 (TR 10:50-12:05)

NO PREREQUISITES

Do our lives 'mean' anything? Is human life part of a grand cosmic scheme, or is it a meaningless series of actions and accidents? Is the cosmos moral and just? Can a life that ends in calamity be redeemed? What is redemption?

We will think about these questions by reading tragedies, both ancient and modern. We will then consider these works through the eyes of three great commentators on tragedy: Aristotle, Nietzsche and Hegel.

PHIL 298: ST: Moral Psychology

Prof. Williams

Section 001 (TR 09:25-10:40)

NO PREREQUISITES

Moral psychology can be described as the part of ethics that overlaps with philosophy of mind, where assorted psychological issues help to illuminate underlying beliefs about morality and moral agency. The very difference between those who are morally culpable and those who are not depends on rather entrenched assumptions about consciousness, cognition, and mental health. The course will begin with a *naturalized* approach to ethics and moral agency. For example, we will consider how moral development and cognition have been explored in psychology, how traitology and attribution theory come to bear on virtue theory, and the role and importance of the moral emotions. This approach will lead in to an exploration of issues of identity, community, commitment and integrity, character, temperament, reason, emotions, and the social virtues. Linking each of these issues and concepts is the tripartite association between moral agency and responsibility, moral motivation, and moral cognition.

PHIL 305: Kant

Prof. Krasnoff

Section 001 (TR 01:40-02:45)

PREREQUISITE: *Six semester hours in Philosophy (other than 215 or 216) or permission of the instructor.*

Intensive study in Kant's critical philosophy. We will pay special attention to Kant's novel defense of reason against skeptical challenges arising from the nature of modernity. About half the class will be devoted to the *Critique of Pure Reason*, and the other half to Kant's ethical and political writings.

PHIL 325: Theory of Knowledge

Prof. Grantham

Section 001 (MWF 09:00-09:50)

PREREQUISITE: *Six semester hours in Philosophy (other than 215 or 216) or permission of the instructor.*

This course surveys the main problems and positions in epistemology (theory of knowledge), focusing particularly on 20th century developments. Topics will include: The nature of knowledge (e.g., What is knowledge? What is the difference between knowledge and wisdom?), skepticism (e.g., do we have any reliable or certain knowledge? Is induction a reliable or justifiable way to gain knowledge?), justification (does knowledge have a firm and enduring "foundation," or is justification always contextual?) and perception (Is perception reliable? Is perception influenced by theory or theory-neutral?). We will also discuss "naturalized epistemology" – the view that philosophical questions about knowledge can be informed and/or answered by scientific study. Ideally, students should have either taken PHIL 102 or PHIL 230 prior to taking this course.

PHIL 450: Senior Seminar: Operationalizing Virtue Ethics

Prof. Baker

Section 001 (MW 02:00-03:15)

PREREQUISITE: *Junior or senior philosophy major with*

*At least nine previous semester hours in philosophy
(other than 215 or 216), one of which must be a 300-level course,
or permission of the instructor.*

In this seminar we will be looking contrasting the claims of a virtue ethic to the methods of research in moral psychology. We will become familiar with (a.) current practices in moral psychology (b.) a contemporary virtue ethic and (c.) empirically based criticisms of virtue ethics. And each student will design her own research proposal, in an effort to make virtue ethics empirically testable.