

# PHIL – PHILOSOPHY

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## PHIL 100

### Introduction to Philosophy: The Examined Life

#### 3 Credits

This course provides an introduction to philosophy through a study of canonical texts pertaining to the topic of the examined life. Course content may include the nature and scope of knowledge, the existence of the self and the concept of the person, the reality of the world that we live in, the good life and the life worth living, or theories of right action. With a particular emphasis on close and careful reading of classic and influential philosophical writings, all students study Plato's *Apology* as well as at least one other significant philosophical work in its entirety.

## PHIL 103

### Asian Philosophies

#### 3 Credits

This course provides an introduction to and survey of Eastern and Asian Philosophies. The course investigates philosophical traditions, including important schools and figures, from the histories of India, China and Japan. This includes a consideration of the Hindu or Brahmanical philosophies of the Vedas and Upanishads, Jainism, Buddhism (including Indian, Chinese and Japanese developments), Confucianism, and Taoism. Topics include the nature of reality, the nature of suffering and desire, the nature of a good life and good government, enlightenment, moral virtues, sageliness, view of Nature, and Eastern conceptions of the self.

## PHIL 125

### Analytical Reasoning

#### 3 Credits

In this course, students use elementary methods and principles for analyzing reasoning as it occurs in everyday contexts. Topics may include informal fallacies, introduction to scientific method, elementary statistical reasoning, elementary sentential logic, as well as the study of argument in contemporary debates about issues of social concern. Note: This Arts course can also be used to satisfy the general science credit requirement of the Bachelor of Science.

## PHIL 200

### Metaphysics

#### 3 Credits

Metaphysics is the area of philosophy that raises and responds to fundamental questions concerning the nature and structure of reality. In this course, students develop an understanding of metaphysical questions and their significance, as well as critically examine the ways philosophers address these questions and the metaphysical issues associated with them. Topics of study may include appearance and reality, the mind-body problem, metaphysical idealism and realism, freedom and determinism, personal identity, time and space, and universals and particulars.

## PHIL 201

### Buddhist Philosophy

#### 3 Credits

This course carries out a sustained investigation of Buddhist philosophy. This investigation considers the historical development of Buddhist philosophical thought, beginning with its origin, development, and expansion in India, through its movement into China and then into Japan. The course considers, with the aim of coming to a philosophical understanding, issues such as Buddhist conceptions of suffering, enlightenment, reality, rationality, self, mind, consciousness, meditation and the ethics of compassion. Comparisons with key philosophers and developments in the history of Western philosophy are also discussed. Particular attention is given to philosophies in the Mahayana Buddhist tradition.

## PHIL 202

### Philosophies of China and Japan

#### 3 Credits

Students study the philosophies of China and Japan, focusing on Confucianism, Taoism, and Chinese and Japanese Buddhism. This involves, primarily, a consideration of historical movements, figures and schools, although some contemporary figures may also be included. The discussion of Confucianism centers on Confucian Social and Moral Philosophy and issues such as the nature of a good life and good government, sageliness, and Confucian moral virtues. The discussion of Taoism centers on Taoist Metaphysics and issues such as the nature and meaning of the Tao, the principle of wu-wei or no action, and the Taoist understanding of a life lived in accordance with Nature. The discussion of Chinese and Japanese Buddhism focuses on Ch'an or Zen Buddhism (these are, respectively, Chinese and Japanese analogues), but Hua Yen or Kegon Buddhism, and Tien Tai or Nichiren Buddhism may be considered. Issues here center on the Buddhist Philosophy of Mind, and include the nature of enlightenment, self, and rationality.

## PHIL 203

### Philosophy of Religion

#### 3 Credits

This course surveys important themes in the philosophy of religion – such as the nature of religious belief, religious truth, religious experience, and religious life – through a close reading of significant texts from key figures in the history of philosophy of religion. Specific issues may include conceptions of God, suffering, sin, faith and reason, religious uses of language, and mystical experience. Students can only receive credit for one of PHIL 203 and PHIL 357.

## PHIL 204

### Philosophical Writing and Analysis

#### 3 Credits

This writing-focused seminar introduces students to the forms and methods of philosophy through the close reading and study of a selection of philosophical works. Particular emphasis is put on the analysis and composition of philosophical ideas, and students are expected to participate in discussion and writing activities as well as submit a final writing portfolio in place of a final exam. Course readings deal with a variety of styles in philosophical writing, which may include treatise, essay, dialogue, aphorism, confession, correspondence, literature, or film. *Prerequisite: A minimum grade of C- in any 3-credit PHIL (p. 1) or HUMN (<https://calendar.macewan.ca/course-descriptions/humn/>) course.*

**PHIL 205****Philosophy of Mind****3 Credits**

This course examines basic questions concerning the nature of mind, theories that try to explain the relation of mind and brain, and the issues that these theories raise. The topics of discussion may include Cartesian Dualism, materialism, behaviourism, identity theory, functionalism, qualia, intentionality, artificial intelligence, self and consciousness.

**PHIL 210****Symbolic Logic****3 Credits**

This course is an introduction to modern symbolic logic, including the basic concepts of justification, argument, deduction, validity and soundness; translation of ordinary language into symbolic form; using sentential and predicate designators, carrying out truth functional analyses for validity and invalidity, testing sets for consistency, using rules of inference and equivalence to prove validity of arguments, and using methods of conditional and indirect proof in sentential and quantified forms. Note: Credit can only be obtained in one of PHIL 210 or PHIL 120. Note: This Arts course can also be used to satisfy the general science credit requirement of the Bachelor of Science.

**PHIL 215****Epistemology****3 Credits**

Students study central topics in the theory of knowledge such as truth and rationality, skepticism and the limits of knowledge, self-knowledge and personal identity, relativism and the objectivity of knowledge, and the role of perception, memory and reason as sources of knowledge.

**PHIL 220****Symbolic Logic II****3 Credits**

This course is an intensive study of predicate logic with identity. Topics include translation of ordinary language into symbolic form, semantics, tree tests for consistency and validity, derivations in natural deduction systems, mathematical induction, and soundness and completeness. Topics may also include theories of definite descriptions, elementary modal logic and formal axiomatic systems. Note: This Arts course can also be used to satisfy the general science credit requirement of the Bachelor of Science.

*Prerequisites: Minimum grade of C- in PHIL 210 or equivalent.*

**PHIL 230****Ancient Western Philosophy****3 Credits**

This course provides a survey of ancient philosophy from the Presocratics to the Neoplatonists. Particular emphasis is placed on the works of Plato and Aristotle.

**PHIL 235****Medieval Philosophy****3 Credits**

This course provides a survey of Medieval philosophy from the 4th to the 14th Century C.E. Special attention will be paid to issues that were of philosophical interest to Christian, Jewish, and Muslim medieval philosophers, such as St. Augustine, Moses Maimonides, Ibn Sina, Al-Ghazali, and St. Thomas Aquinas.

**PHIL 240****Descartes to Kant****3 Credits**

This course provides an examination of the history of modern philosophy through a close reading of some of the major rationalist, empiricist, and transcendental idealist contributors of the period such as Descartes, Leibniz, Locke, Berkeley, Hume and Kant.

**PHIL 247****Continental Philosophy: Heidegger to Foucault****3 Credits**

This course provides an introduction to twentieth century continental European philosophy through a close reading of some of the century's major philosophical contributors such as Husserl, Heidegger, Levinas, Derrida, Foucault and Badiou. Specific topics may include: phenomenology, hermeneutics, deconstruction, post-structuralism, and materialist dialectics.

**PHIL 248****American Philosophies****3 Credits**

This course examines the historical development of American philosophy from the 19th century to the present, with a particular emphasis on the transcendentalist (Ralph Waldo Emerson and Henry David Thoreau) and pragmatist (William James, John Dewey, Charles Peirce, Jane Addams, Alain Locke) traditions of the United States. African American, Latin American, Caribbean and Indigenous philosophers may also be examined (figures such as W.E.B. DuBois, Vine Deloria, Jr., and Enrique Dussel) as contributors and respondents to these philosophical movements.

**PHIL 250****Ethics****3 Credits**

This course involves an examination of fundamental questions and theoretical answers in the philosophical discipline of ethics. Through a detailed study of important and influential texts in the philosophy of ethics, students develop the ability to understand and critically assess various philosophical systems of thought concerning moral judgements and ethical obligations.

**PHIL 265****Philosophy of Science****3 Credits**

This course introduces central issues in contemporary philosophy of science. Topics may include theory evaluation, paradigm shifts and theory change, laws of nature, causation and explanation, the rationality of science and its social and historical setting.

**PHIL 270****Social and Political Philosophy****3 Credits**

This course provides an introduction to social and political philosophy. The course poses the following questions: what is the nature of politics; what is the state; what is civil society; what (if any) are citizens' political obligations and rights? Readings are drawn from canonic philosophers such as Plato, Aristotle, Aquinas, Machiavelli, Hobbes, Spinoza, Rousseau, Hegel and Marx.

**PHIL 280****Aesthetics****3 Credits**

Aesthetics is the branch of philosophy that studies art, beauty and taste. This course introduces aesthetics through the study of theories of art, aesthetic experience, aesthetic judgement and the role of art in society. Students read classical and contemporary writings in aesthetics and apply them to concrete examples of various media, including visual art, music and literature.

**PHIL 291****Existentialism****3 Credits**

This course is an introduction to existential philosophy. Through close reading of texts, students study some of the main themes of existential philosophy, such as anxiety, authenticity, bad faith, absurdity, the meaning of human life, and the self as finite and situated self-making. Particular attention is paid to the existential conception of philosophy as a truthful explication of concrete experience rather than the theoretical pursuit of abstract truth. Readings are drawn from the works of major figures in 19th and 20th century existential philosophy, such as Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, Sartre, Camus and Marcel.

**PHIL 301****Comparative Philosophy****3 Credits**

In this topic based course, students study one or more non-Western, particularly Asian, philosophical tradition in comparison with approaches taken in the Western philosophical tradition. Issues for comparison between non-Western and Western philosophies may include methods and aims; the relation between religion and philosophy; views on the nature of reality, truth, the self, morality, justice, suffering, desire, and/or reason.

**PHIL 303****Studies in Philosophy and Religion****3 Credits**

This topics based course focusses on the intersections of philosophy and religion. Topics may concern the religious philosophies expressed in key works of specific figures (e.g., Plato, Kierkegaard, Joseph Pieper, Simone Weil); a study of philosophical religious literature (e.g., Book of Job, Upanishads); or the philosophical investigation of specific religious themes (e.g., the human in relation to the divine, the relation of reason and faith, conceptions of the soul). The specific topic is chosen by the Instructor. Note: Students may take this course up to three times, provided that the topic is different.

*Prerequisites: A minimum grade of C- in 3 credits of 200-level PHIL (p. 1).*

**PHIL 305****Studies in the Self****3 Credits**

In this course, students study the nature of the Self, drawing on one or more philosophical perspectives. The topic(s) of any particular section may vary. Possible topics include personal identity, the reality of the self, the soul, subjectivity, knowledge of self and others, and freedom and the will. Each section of this course requires that students produce a research essay that incorporates scholarly sources other than the course readings. This course may be taken up to three times, provided the course topic is different.

*Prerequisites: Minimum grade of C- in 3 credits of 200-level PHIL (p. 1) courses.*

**PHIL 325****Risk, Choice and Rationality****3 Credits**

This course is a study of the formal theory of rationality, including probability, induction, and elementary decision theory. Rational theories regarding an agent's choice, both individually and in a group, under ignorance or under risk, and when acting competitively or cooperatively, are examined in detail. Note: This Arts course can also be used to satisfy the general science credit requirement of the Bachelor of Science.

**PHIL 330****Plato****3 Credits**

With a view to both theoretical and moral issues, this course engages in a focused study of Plato and his philosophy. Students will engage in close readings of some of Plato's writings and will evaluate secondary literature on Plato. Some consideration may also be given to Academic Platonism and neo-Platonism.

*Prerequisites: Minimum grade of C- in 3 credits of 200-level PHIL (p. 1) courses.*

**PHIL 331****Philosophy of Love****3 Credits**

This course engages in a philosophical investigation of love. Through a study of classic works of philosophy, students examine the experience of love, the meaning of love, the value of love, and philosophy's relationship to love. Special attention will be paid to Plato's theory of love as it is expressed in the Symposium.

*Prerequisites: Minimum grade of C- in 3 credits of 200-level PHIL (p. 1) courses.*

**PHIL 333****Philosophy of Sex and Sexuality****3 Credits**

This course offers a philosophical analysis of human sexuality. On top of providing an overview of human sexuality as it has been treated in classic works of philosophy, it also looks at the treatment of sexuality in contemporary philosophy. Topics may include gender and oppression, the legitimacy of consent, the politics of sexual relations/interactions, sexuality and embodiment, the morality of seduction, genealogy and sexuality, and the character of heteronormativity and 'perversion'.

*Prerequisites: A minimum grade of C- in 3 credits of 200-level PHIL (p. 1) courses.*

**PHIL 341****Continental Rationalism****3 Credits**

This course examines the philosophies of such early modern philosophers as Descartes, Malebranche, Spinoza, and Leibniz. Through a close study of the rigorously systematic metaphysics, epistemology, and natural philosophy of these thinkers, this course traces the significant and renowned movement in the history of philosophy known as "Rationalism".

*Prerequisites: Minimum grade of C- in 3 credits of 200-level PHIL (p. 1) courses.*

**PHIL 342****British Empiricism****3 Credits**

This course examines the philosophies of such early modern philosophers as Locke, Berkeley, and Hume. For their emphasis on sense experience and sensory perception in their respective philosophical systems of thought, these British philosophers are known as members of the prominent and important movement in the history of philosophy referred to as "Empiricism".

*Prerequisites: Minimum grade of C- in 3 credits of 200-level PHIL (p. 1) courses.*

**PHIL 355****Philosophy of the Environment****3 Credits**

This course introduces central issues in the philosophy of the environment. Topics include the meaning of Nature, foundational ethical theories as applied to the environment, animal rights, anthropocentrism, biocentrism, ecocentrism, conservationism, sustainability, deep ecology and social ecology, and the aesthetics of natural environments.

*Prerequisites: Minimum grade of C- in 3 credits in 200-level PHIL (p. 1) courses.*

**PHIL 360****Death and Dying****3 Credits**

This course offers a philosophical examination of the nature and significance of death. This includes detailed analysis and critical discussion of such topics as: what death is, emotional attitudes toward death, the badness of death, the value of life, immortality, personal identity, and suicide.

**PHIL 365****Philosophy of Space and Time****3 Credits**

This course examines the philosophical issues, historical and contemporary, involved in specifying the nature of space and time and how we can know such nature. Topics may include the concept of space in antiquity, the historical debates on the nature of space in the Early Modern period, the so-called Newtonian, Einsteinian and quantum mechanical revolutions, the shape of space-time, and the direction, and alleged paradoxes, of time.

*Prerequisites: Minimum grade of C- in 3 credits of 200-level PHIL (p. 1) courses.*

**PHIL 370****Studies in Political Philosophy****3 Credits**

In this course, students study a topic in political philosophy. The topic for any particular section varies. Possible topics include: liberalism and its critics, the philosophy of power, the nature of law, theories of justice, Plato's Statesman, and Aristotle's Politics. Each section of this course requires that students produce a research essay that incorporates scholarly sources other than the course readings.

*Prerequisites: Minimum grade of C- in 3 credits in 200-level PHIL (p. 1) courses.*

**PHIL 381****Philosophy as Literature****3 Credits**

In this course, students study works of philosophy as pieces of literature. Serving as a practical introduction to an hermeneutical approach to philosophy and to philosophical scholarship, students consider how literary features, which might otherwise appear to be extraneous to philosophical content, affect the philosophical meaning of texts. Each section of this course requires that students produce a research essay that incorporates scholarly sources other than the course readings.

*Prerequisites: Minimum grade of C- in 3 credits of 200-level PHIL (p. 1) courses.*

**PHIL 383****Philosophy of Film****3 Credits**

This course offers a philosophical examination of film. The examination proceeds by viewing particular films and reading philosophical texts devoted to the medium. Topics may include critical analysis of genre, the aesthetics of the moving image, the nature of film narrative or representation, the relation between film and ideology, or a study philosophical themes through film.

*Prerequisites: A minimum grade of C- in 3 credits of 200-level PHIL (p. 1) courses.*

**PHIL 386****Philosophy and Health Care****3 Credits**

This course is an introduction to central issues in bioethics with a specific emphasis on practice of health care. Though students may briefly examine classical moral theories and principles, the bulk of the course examines contemporary discussions and issues in bioethics. The emphasis of the course is on ethical reasoning and moral deliberation involving issues in health care. Topics may include patient autonomy and confidentiality, advanced directives, allocation of medical resources, health care advocacy, integrity, and issues pertaining to disability and end-of-life care. Students may also be introduced to major ethical theories and moral principles. Readings may include case studies, legal cases, scholarly articles and classical sources.

**PHIL 398****Independent Study****3 Credits**

This course permits an intermediate-level student to work with an instructor to explore a specific topic in depth through research or directed reading in primary and secondary sources. The student plans, executes and reports the results of their independent research or study project under the direction of a faculty supervisor. To be granted enrollment in the course, the student must have made prior arrangements with a faculty member willing to supervise his or her project. This course can be taken twice for credit.

**PHIL 401****Senior Seminar****3 Credits**

In this seminar course, students study the nature, methods, and aims of philosophy, make seminar presentations, and write a major research essay. This course is open only to Philosophy majors. Note: Students are advised to enrol in this course in the final winter term of their studies.

*Prerequisites: Successful completion of 30 credits of senior PHIL (p. 1) courses.*

**PHIL 402****Topics in the History of Philosophy****3 Credits**

This seminar course deals with a major figure, issue, or specific period in the history of philosophy. There is a major essay requirement and, in addition to regular seminar participation, students make presentations. The topic of any given section of this course is selected by the instructor. This course may be taken up to three times, provided the course topic is different.

*Prerequisites: A minimum grade of C- in 9 credits of 200- or 300-level PHIL (p. 1), with at least 3 of those credits at the 300-level.*

**PHIL 403****Topics in Moral Philosophy****3 Credits**

In this seminar course, students study a topic in moral philosophy broadly construed. The specific topic of each section focuses on a significant philosopher, theme, or problem in ethical theory, applied ethics, meta-ethics, political philosophy, or social philosophy. There is a major essay requirement and, in addition to regular seminar participation, students make presentations. The topic in any given semester is selected by the instructor. This course may be taken up to three times, provided the course topic is different.

*Prerequisites: A minimum grade of C- in 9 credits of 200- or 300-level PHIL (p. 1), with a least 3 of those credits at the 300-level.*

**PHIL 404****Topics in Asian Philosophy****3 Credits**

Students study a topic in depth within Asian Philosophy. The specific topic focuses on a significant philosopher or philosophers, text, school, theme or issue within one or more of the traditions of Asian Philosophy, including Buddhism, Jainism, Hinduism, Confucianism, and Taoism. There is a major essay requirement and, in addition to regular seminar participation, students make presentations. The topic in any given year is selected by the instructor. This course may be taken up to three times, provided the course topic is different.

*Prerequisites: A minimum grade of C- in 9 credits of 200- or 300-level PHIL (p. 1), with a least 3 of those credits at the 300-level.*

**PHIL 405****Topics in Contemporary Philosophy****3 Credits**

*Prerequisites: A minimum grade of C- in 9 credits of 200- or 300-level PHIL (p. 1), with a least 3 of those credits at the 300-level.*

**PHIL 444****Kant****3 Credits**

In this seminar course, students examine Kant's theoretical philosophy, pay close attention to interpretations of Kant's transcendental idealism of the early critical period, make seminar presentations, and write at least one major essay on a specific topic of their choice.

*Prerequisites: Minimum grade of C- in 6 credits in 200- or 300-level PHIL (p. 1) courses.*

**PHIL 498****Advanced Independent Study****3 Credits**

This course permits a senior-level student to work with an instructor to explore a specific topic in depth through research or directed reading in primary and secondary sources. The student plans, executes and reports the results of their independent research or study project under the direction of a faculty supervisor. To be granted enrollment in the course, the student must have made prior arrangements with a faculty member willing to supervise his or her project. This course can be taken twice for credit.