

Philosophy Courses – Spring 2024

PH 101 Introduction to Philosophy

3 Cr.

This course introduces students to the study and the practice of philosophy. Through the analysis of historical and contemporary texts, class discussions and lectures students gain an understanding of philosophy both as a discipline and as a way of asking – and attempting to answer – fundamental questions about ourselves and the world. The emphasis is both on learning about philosophy and on doing philosophy.

Open to first- and second-year students or by permission of instructor.

Fulfills Humanistic Inquiry requirement.

PH 101-001 W/F 8:40 – 10:00

W. Lewis

PH 101-002 W/F 10:10 – 11:30

S. Kizuk

PH 101-003 T/TH 12:40 – 2:00

S. Carli

PH 204 Modern Philosophy from Descartes to Kant

4 Cr.

An introduction to major thinkers and themes of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Europe. The dynamics of the Scientific Revolution - the collection of new discoveries and inventions and the evolving experimental methods in the early modern period - led philosophers to a profound reappraisal of fundamental issues such as the sources and limits of knowledge, the relation between mind and body, theories of human freedom and personal identity, and the apparently competing desires to explain the surrounding world in both natural and religious terms. Students will investigate how these philosophical developments led to distinctively modern ways of thinking about nature and the self. Primary documents will be read throughout.

Fulfills Humanistic Inquiry requirement.

T/TH 2:10 – 3:30

M 1:25 – 2:20

L. Jorgensen

PH 207 Introduction to Logic

4 Cr.

An introduction to the basic concepts and methods of modern symbolic logic, with a focus on their application to proper reasoning. Students learn how to represent sentences in logical notation, to reconstruct arguments in that notation, to assess arguments for validity and soundness, and to prove conclusions from premises using a system of natural deduction. Students also learn to recognize common argument forms and common mistakes in reasoning (fallacies), are introduced to philosophical issues related to logic, and learn how symbolic logic is the basis for the digital computer.

Fulfills philosophy major requirement; satisfies prerequisite for CS 106; counts toward Computer Science

M/W 4:00 – 5:50

P. Murray

PH 230 Philosophy of Social Science**3 Cr.**

This class surveys the recent history of social scientific thought and contemporary judgments about the status of the knowledge that social scientific disciplines produce. We will ask and attempt to answer questions like: "What kind of a fact is a social fact?"; "Does using more math or game theory make a social theory more scientific?"; "Will social science always be biased by the scientist's raced, gendered, or classed position?"; and "Should social science's aim be helping humans be freer and to live better lives?"

Fulfills Humanistic Inquiry requirement. Counts towards Sociology.

W/F 12:20 – 1:40

W. Lewis

PH 230 Ethics**4 Cr.**

A critical examination of the nature and principles of some of the major ethical theories proposed in the history of Western thought. Theories studied will include virtue ethics, the ethics of care, ethical relativism, deontological ethics, moral right and ethics, and utilitarianism. The course will also include some consideration of the application of the theories studied to selected contemporary moral issues, such as intergenerational ethics, environmental ethics, medical ethics, and business ethics. This course includes a fourth flex hour philosophy practicum.

Fulfills Humanistic Inquiry requirement.

T/TH 11:10 – 12:30

R. Lilly

PH 241 Philosophy of Mind**3 Cr.**

We are creatures who are both minded and embodied. In this class, we will explore the relationship between those two facts. We will also compare and contrast the psychological capacities of mature human beings with those of a variety of non-human creatures, both animal and non-animal (e.g., plants and artificially intelligent systems), and so consider the senses in which it may be true that (some) non-human systems also have minds.

Fulfills Humanistic Inquiry requirement.

W/F 10:10 – 11:30

P. Murray

PH 315 Flesh: Thinking (With) Bodies**4 Cr.**

This seminar focuses on the experience and theorization of human embodiment from poly-disciplinary perspectives. Point of departure is Descartes' mind-body dualism that has had a far-reaching influence on the humanities, sciences, and general culture. Students will critically examine this Cartesianism through the study of perception (especially touch), of psychology, of bodies of culture (race and gender), as well as of psychoanalysis and trauma. The body in law and politics, visual and performing arts, sports, and religion are other avenues of possible inquiry.

Prerequisites: One Philosophy course or instructor permission.

Fulfills Humanistic Inquiry requirement.

M/W 2:30 – 4:20

R. Lilly

PH 330 Philosophy of Place

4 Cr.

In this course on the philosophy of place, we will begin in the past to form understandings of what the concept of place could be in both Western and non-Western thought. We will read canonical philosophical figures such as Plato, Descartes, and Locke as well as Indigenous creation myths to open up the concept of place. In our second unit, we will consider more contemporary accounts of place through poetics, emotion, and gender. In our third, and final, unit, we will consider alternative ways of thinking of place from the "underside" of the Western production of place. In this unit, we will read work by Indigenous and Black thinkers, including Taiaiake Alfred, Leanne Betasamosake Simpson, and Tiffany Lethabo King, on the role of place, worldings, and as a material 'space' for resistance to sexism, white supremacy, and colonialism.

Fulfills Humanistic Inquiry requirement.

Prerequisites: One 200-level course in Philosophy or instructor permission.

W/F 12:20 - 2:10

S. Kizuk

PH 330 Nineteenth-Century Philosophy

4 Cr.

By the end of the 18th Century, all but the most reactionary philosophers believed that humans (or at least propertied white men) were equal and that legitimate government rested upon such person's explicit consent. Believing this was one thing but the actual history of revolts on behalf of such egalitarianism and especially the French Revolution when the guillotine enacted "the coldest, shallowest of deaths, with no more significance than cleaving a cabbage" made many rethink these convictions. If monarchy was untenable and democratic self-governance resulted in terror, then where to go? This seminar examines the diverse history of answers to this question and does so by focusing on how 19th century European and American philosophy began with the metaphysical, epistemological, and political problems and methods set for it in the modern period but then radically transformed these problems and their solutions under the pressures of empire, industrialization, urbanization, and scientific progress.

Prerequisites: PH 204 or permission of instructor.

Fulfills Humanistic Inquiry requirement and the 300-level history of philosophy requirement for the major.

T/TH 12:40 - 2:00

W. Lewis

PH 375 Senior Seminar**4 Cr.**

A capstone course in which students develop a portfolio of representative work in philosophy. Students will compile at least three research papers from previous course work, which will form the basis of their senior portfolio. The development of the portfolio will have at least three stages: (1) a re-envisioning and significant revision of a previous research paper, including doing further research into scholarly literature on the topic and with an opportunity to explore interdisciplinary connections; (2) the redevelopment of that paper into a short presentation; and (3) a reflection exercise in which students synthesize their work in the major, considering the ways their interests have developed over the course of their time at Skidmore and the ways in which these might inform their future endeavors. Open to senior Philosophy majors.

Prerequisites: philosophy major or permission of instructor.

Sec. 001 T/TH 3:40-5:30

S. Carli

Sec. 002 T/TH 9:10-11:00

S. Carli