

Philosophy Course Offerings 200-level and above Fall 2024

PHIL 212: Philosophy of Art
Professor Brian Bruya
T/Th 11:00 – 12:15

What is art? What is its role in society? What makes an artist? Is there something that distinguishes artistic process from other kinds of activities? Who determines a "good" piece of art and what are the criteria? When we view and contemplate art, how is that distinct from how we view and contemplate other things in life? What is the difference between an art and a craft? Is there a difference between high art and low art? Is it possible for non-human animals or artificial intelligence to create art? What is the relationship between art and the artificial? Is there such a thing as natural art? Is there a spirituality to art?

In this course, we will explore some of these questions through classic and contemporary writings on art from both Western and non-Western traditions.



PHIL 212 fulfills the General Education requirement for Area IV: Knowledge of the Disciplines in the Humanities.

PHIL 212 fulfills the Ethics and Value Theory requirement in the Philosophy Program

PHIL 216: Philosophy, Technology, and the Digital Life
Professor Jeremy Proulx
MW 11:00 – 12:15

Human life is so embedded in technical culture that it's hard to imagine life without the constant interface with technology. Think about what you've done today. Can you think of a single thing that did not involve interaction with the products of human artifice? If you've never thought about this before, it can be a surprising revelation that everything we do is affected by some form of technological apparatus. And this is nothing new; it has always been this way—whether we're using a microcomputer or a stone tool, the way we interact with our world has always been technological. So, what is technology? To raise such a question is to raise deep philosophical-anthropological questions about the nature of humankind itself. After all, it seems impossible to even imagine human life without technology. Treatment of the nature of technology finds a place in many historical epochs and in many different cultural and philosophical contexts. This course offers a wide range of concepts and methods for thinking about technology, especially its social, ethical, and existential implications. Topics include: the nature of technology and technological development; the nature of tools; the aesthetics of engineering design; human enhancement; artificial intelligence; social media and our digital lives.

PHIL 216 fulfills the General Education requirement for Area IV: Knowledge of the Disciplines in the Humanities.

PHIL 216 fulfills the Ethics and Value Theory requirement in the Philosophy Program

PHIL 220: Ethics
Professor John Ouko
Online Asynchronous

This course introduces students to ethics, which is the philosophical study of morality. We sometimes say that an action is morally right or wrong. In this course we will ask a number of questions about such claims and investigate competing answers. First, we will ask about the status of morality. Do moral values exist? If they do, is morality objective or relative? Second, we will ask what makes actions right or wrong. Is it the consequences of the action? Is it whether or not we have a duty to perform the action? Is it whether or not good

people characteristically perform those actions? Etc. To this end, we will evaluate several important ethical theories to see if there is one best ethical theory or if several ethical theories reveal important insights into what we ought to do, etc. We will also consider how these ethical theories might give us guidance on a number of contemporary moral issues like poverty and hunger, obligations to non-human animals, punishment, and abortion.

PHIL 220 fulfills the General Education requirement for Area IV: Knowledge of the Disciplines in the Humanities.

PHIL 220 fulfills the Ethics and Value Theory requirement in the Philosophy Program

Additional section of PHIL 220 offered T/Th 11:00 – 12:15;
instructor TBA

Philosophy 221: Business Ethics
Professor John Ouko
Online Asynchronous

In this course we consider and reflect on ethical questions regarding business practices in a global environment. Students will be introduced to ethical theory and critical reasoning. They will use these tools to critically examine the market system itself, as well as practices of multinational business. Issues that will be explored include: Responsibilities of corporations with regard to employees and the environment, moral boundaries of markets, marketing ethics, ethical issues in financial services, cross-cultural issues in business ethics, moral obligations of multinational corporations, among others.

PHIL 221 fulfills the General Education requirement for Area IV: Knowledge of the Disciplines in the Humanities.

PHIL 221 fulfills the Ethics and Value Theory requirement in the Philosophy Program

Additional section of PHIL 221 offered MW 2:00 – 3:15; instructor TBA

PHIL 223: Medical Ethics
Professor Jill Dieterle
Online asynchronous

This course is an examination of ethical issues in medicine and health care.

The Supreme Court recently overturned *Roe v. Wade*. As a result, the legal status of abortion is now determined by individual states. We will examine the ethical arguments on both sides of the abortion debate and discuss some of the consequences of legal prohibitions on abortion.

We'll also talk about other topics in medical ethics: pandemic ethics, vaccine refusal, patient autonomy and informed consent, reproductive technology, and genetic screening.

PHIL 223 fulfills the General Education requirement for Area IV: Knowledge of the Disciplines in the Humanities.

PHIL 223 fulfills the Ethics and Value Theory requirement in the Philosophy Program.

PHIL 223 counts as an elective in the Critical Disability Studies minor.

PHIL 223: Medical Ethics
Professor John Ouko
Online Asynchronous
or
MW 12:30 – 1:45

This course examines the relationships between contemporary values in the medical profession and traditional ethical values. Students will investigate various ethical theories and critically examine controversial issues in medicine such as whether physicians should participate in state-ordered executions, physician assisted suicide, prenatal testing and selective abortion, using

preimplantation genetic diagnosis to save a sibling, whether dying babies should be used in experimental medicine (even to help other babies), ethical issues in first-time organ surgeries, et cetera.

PHIL 223 fulfills the General Education requirement for Area IV: Knowledge of the Disciplines in the Humanities.

PHIL 223 fulfills the Ethics and Value Theory requirement in the Philosophy Program

Additional section of PHIL 223 offered T/Th 12:30 – 1:45, T/Th 3:30 – 4:45; Honors section T/Th 9:30 – 10:45; instructors TBA

PHIL 226: Feminist Theory
Professor Kate Mehuron
Online Asynchronous

This course critically evaluates feminist critiques of society and feminist visions of the ideal egalitarian society. Questions examined in this course include: What is a just society? What constitutes equal treatment? What is oppression? How does oppression relate to social equality? How do ethnicity, race, and sexual identities intersect with gender to affect social equality? Are women and men essentially different, or are such differences the result of socialization? What are the major theories, and conceptual differences that inform feminist social change movements? The course will use a variety of feminist philosophical sources to explore these questions.

PHIL 226 fulfills the General Education requirement for either Area IV: Knowledge of the Disciplines in the Humanities or Global Awareness.

PHIL 226 fulfills the Eastern and Global requirement in the Philosophy Program.

PHIL 226: Feminist Theory
Professor Laura McMahon
Honors Section MW 9:30 – 10:45
MW 2:00 – 3:15

This course engages in a philosophical study of the situation of women in the contemporary world—a situation that is in deep and pervasive respects a situation of inequality and oppression. Part One will inquire into the nature of oppression, not only along gendered lines but also along the lines of race, sexual orientation, and class, and how such oppression plays out in diverse areas of contemporary life. Part Two will examine feminist arguments concerning the social construction of gender and sex, inquiring into the manner in which femininity (and also masculinity) are not natural categories but learned patterns of behavior beginning in early childhood. In Part Three of the course, we will turn to a study of the problems facing women in multicultural contexts, inquiring into the interactions between sexism and cultural imperialism and into more just ways in which we might relate to one another in a global context.

PHIL 226 fulfills the General Education requirement for either Area IV: Knowledge of the Disciplines in the Humanities or Global Awareness.

PHIL 226 fulfills the Eastern and Global requirement in the Philosophy Program.

PHIL 226 also offered T/Th 12:30 – 1:45; instructor TBA

PHIL 229: Environmental Ethics
Instructor TBA
T/Th 2:00 – 3:15

Contemporary discussions of environmental ethics are animated by a number of questions. Which aspects of nature (or of particular environments) are important or valuable, and why? How does concern for human beings relate to concern for nature or the environment? What policies do we need to address pressing issues such as climate change or the loss of biodiversity, and what values and

normative principle underlie those policies? How is sustainability best understood and is it a useful goal for collective action and policy? What sorts of character traits, dispositions, and ways of living do we need to cultivate in order to support an environmental ethic in practice? Answers to these questions are multifaceted and contested. We'll study a range of philosophical views that offer insight and practical guidance.

PHIL 229 fulfills the General Education requirement for Area IV: Knowledge of the Disciplines in the Humanities.

PHIL 229 fulfills the Ethics and Value Theory requirement in the Philosophy Program.

PHIL 229 also fulfills a core course requirement in the Environmental Science and Society (ENVI) Program.

PHIL 260: Existentialism
Professor Kate Mehuron
Online asynchronous

Does life have meaning? Can values exist if God does not? This course considers the works of central existentialist figures such as Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, Sartre, and Camus as well as related literary works. It addresses topics involving value, such as authentic existence, freedom, nihilism, meaning, subjectivity, and values. The course is both an introduction to this body of work and an attempt to raise individual awareness of the human condition within which our existence takes place. In the quest to redefine human nature and human freedom, existentialists challenge the authority of religion, conventional and philosophical notions of truth, and the notion of objective morality. We study the social context of these philosophical rebellions and discover the ways that existentialism continues to transform society by its persistent challenge to ideological authority and to mass social movements. Students will learn habits of mind and writing skills that help you to develop and critique philosophical arguments.

PHIL 260 fulfills the General Education requirement for Area IV: Knowledge of the Disciplines in the Humanities.

PHIL 260 fulfills the Ethics and Value Theory requirement in the Philosophy Program.

PHIL 330W: Ancient Philosophy
Professor Kris Phillips
MW 12:30 – 1:45

This course is focused on Greek and early Roman philosophy from antiquity. We will specifically discuss the nature of metaphysics and epistemology and their relation to value, justice, human flourishing, and the pursuit of the good life. We will begin with some of Plato's dialogues which represent the historical Socrates, then move on to Platonic dialogues which use Socrates as a mouthpiece for Plato himself. In doing so, we will attend to the nature and practice of philosophy as a way of life, the role of education in liberating oneself from custom and habit, and the obligations philosophers have to their interlocutors. Following our discussion of Plato, we will turn to Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*, and conclude the course with a discussion of Epicurean and Stoic views on the nature of the life well lived. My hope is that you will leave this class not only with a basis in ancient philosophical thought, but a new understanding of what it means to live philosophically.

PHIL 330W fulfills the History of Western Philosophy requirement in the Philosophy Program.

PHIL 330W counts as a Writing Intensive course.

PHIL 460W/560: Philosophy of Language
Professor Jill Dieterle
T/Th 12:30 – 1:45

When I use a word," Humpty Dumpty said in rather a scornful tone, "it means what I choose it to mean, neither more nor less."

"The question is," said Alice, "whether you CAN make words mean so many different things."

-- Lewis Carroll, *Through the Looking Glass* Chapter 6

This iteration of PHIL 460W will examine how language shapes and is shaped by social and political factors. We'll begin with methodological and foundational issues in the Philosophy of Language. Then we will turn to literature that examines the use of language to harm: racist and sexist

language, pejoratives, microaggressions, and slurs. We'll also talk about the ways in which language is used to propagandize and promote particular ideologies.

PHIL 460W fulfills the Knowledge & Reality requirement in the Philosophy Program. This iteration of the course may also be used to fulfill the Social Justice requirement. If you wish PHIL 460W to fulfill the Social Justice requirement, we will submit a substitution form for you. Please email or speak to Prof. Jill Dieterle.

PHIL 460W counts as a Writing Intensive course.

PHIL 470W/570: Twentieth Century European Philosophy
Professor Laura McMahon
MW 11:00 – 12:15

This course will be devoted to a study of Continental Political Philosophy in the 20th and 21st centuries. With readings from figures such as Jean-Paul Sartre, Simone de Beauvoir, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Theodore Adorno, Herbert Marcuse, Hannah Arendt, Judith Butler, and Wendy Brown, we will think about the inherently political nature of human identity; the multifaceted nature of political oppression; the nature of political ideology; the meaning of fascism; and the nature of democracy.

PHIL 470W fulfills the Knowledge and Reality requirement in the Philosophy Program.

PHIL 470W counts as a Writing Intensive course.

PHIL 494/594: Topics in Chinese Philosophy: *The Dialogues of Confucius*

Professor Brian Bruya
Hyflex* T/Th 3:30 – 4:45

The *Analects* of Confucius, though terse and epigrammatic, is a foundational text of Confucianism, providing us with core philosophical concepts that informed the tradition for centuries, right up to the present day. The *Dialogues of Confucius* is more expansive, purporting to fill in some of the blanks in the *Analects*, giving us a more comprehensive view of the philosophy of Confucius—but it has been suspected of being a forgery and presents problems that extend beyond philosophy to textual history and hermeneutics.

In this course, we will begin with the philosophy of the *Analects* and the *Dao De Jing*. After setting our conceptual and historical foundation, we will give a close reading to the *Dialogues of Confucius*, using a draft manuscript of the first complete English translation. What can the *Dialogues* tell us about Confucian philosophy? In terms of metaphysics, political philosophy, ethics, and psychology, what gaps does it fill and how can it inform future research? This is an exploratory course that will require students to quickly master cross-cultural material and use sophisticated interpretive techniques to access and evaluate it.

Prior exposure to Chinese philosophy is not required.

PHIL 494 fulfills the Eastern and Global requirement in the Philosophy Program.

***A Hyflex class meets in person and online (on Zoom) simultaneously. Students register for the online section or the in-person section.*
