

**Philosophy Course Offerings
200-level and above
Fall 2021**

Courses are offered face-to-face unless otherwise noted, but note that course formats are subject to change due to the uncertainty concerning the pandemic.

Philosophy 212: Philosophy of Art
Professor Jeremy Proulx
MW 2:00– 3:15

This course is an introduction both to the philosophical consideration of art and art works and to the philosophical discipline of aesthetics. While we will spend a good deal of time looking at and discussing works of art, this is a course neither in art criticism, nor art appreciation, nor the history of art. We will consider questions like the following. What makes something art? Can a machine be art? How about a great meal? What about a tranquil winter day? Can nature be considered art? Can art be considered a part of nature? Can art be ugly? Does art have to be beautiful? Do the intentions of the artist matter? What is the role of the artist? What constitutes aesthetic creativity? Does the viewer have a role to play in art? Are there collective art works? Do artists have moral responsibilities? Can we even evaluate art in moral terms? Can what we know about an artist or about the artwork affect our judgment of the work itself? Is there any such thing as a ‘work of art, in itself’? Does art have to be expressive of an idea or of anything at all? Is aesthetic experience a special kind of experience? Can we appreciate art rationally?

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.

Philosophy 215: Philosophy of Religion
Professor Jeremy Proulx
MW 12:30 – 1:45

This course is an introduction to the philosophical study of religion. Despite the dominant secularism in our modern democracies, religion continues to be a force that shapes and influences the lives of a growing number of people around the world. The objective of the course is to provide a context for understanding some of the world's major religions from a philosophical perspective. We will spend a good deal of time discussing the role that religion plays in our lives, in society in general, and in forming our moral convictions. How does religion shape our understanding of ourselves, our relationship with other people and with our moral community? How can we facilitate substantial conversation between diverse religious communities? What role does religion play in a modern secular democracy? We will also explore philosophical questions about the nature of religion, God, and of religious experience. How can religion be defined? Is there something essential and common to all religious belief that we can identify as distinct from other kinds of beliefs or convictions? Is it possible, for instance, to 'know' that something like 'God' exists? If so, what kind of knowing is this? If not, what is the experience that is proper to religion? I hope that you leave this class with a deepened understanding of the complexities and varieties of religion as a system of belief and a cultural practice.

PHIL 215 fulfills the General Education requirement for Area IV: Knowledge of the Disciplines in the Humanities.

PHIL 212 fulfills the Knowledge and Reality requirement in the Philosophy Program.

PHIL 220: Ethics
Professor Brian Coffey
Online

This course will introduce students to the philosophical study of Ethics by exploring the tools and techniques of philosophical inquiry, and utilizing those tools to evaluate several important moral theories. Topics for discussion might include: Is anything really right or wrong, or is it all 'subjective'? What is the relation of ethics to law? What is its relation to religion, or society? What, if anything, is truly valuable? Which features matter most when judging the

ethics of a situation? Is there one best moral theory or do several theories reveal important insights into what we ought to do? etc. We will carefully and critically read both classical and contemporary writings in ethics with the goal of not only understanding what others have written before us, but also how we can use their insights to help us deliberate about ethical choices in our own lives. We will not be passively learning about ethics—we will be *putting our ethical expertise into practice*.

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

PHIL 220 also offered T/Th 11:00 – 12:15; instructor TBA

Philosophy 221: Business Ethics Instructors TBA

Online, T/Th 11:00 – 12:15 (Honors), MW 3:30 – 4:15

A consideration of 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. Students will explore the ethical responsibilities of corporations with regard to employees, consumers, and other stakeholders.

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

PHIL 223: Medical Ethics
Professor Brian Coffey
MW 2:00 – 3:15, MW 11:00 – 12:15

We trust doctors, nurses, medical scientists, and other healthcare providers to give us the best care possible when we are sick; in many cases we literally put our lives in their hands. Those working in healthcare thus need to be particularly aware and careful of the various ways they may treat their patients unethically. In this course, students will learn about the philosophical study of ethics, and how to use the tools and methods of philosophy to think critically about contentious moral issues. We will discuss various moral issues raised within the context of the practice of medicine, and rigorously evaluate the reasoning that people have given for the stances they have taken on these issues. Topics for discussion might include: abortion, euthanasia, cloning, stem cell research, genetic selection / eugenics, healthcare allocation when resources are scarce, research involving animal and/or human testing.

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: Medical Ethics
Professor John Ouko
T/Th 2:00 – 3:15; online section

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, 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

Two additional sections of PHIL 223 offered online; instructors TBA

PHIL 224: Ethics and Food
Professor Jill Dieterle
T/Th 9:30 – 10:45

Issues related to food, its production and its distribution have garnered international attention in the last decade. This course is devoted to examining those issues from a philosophical/ethical perspective. We will discuss the industrialization of food production, the effect of agriculture on the environment, alternative food movements, food deserts, and the global problem of food insecurity. We will also examine and critique the idea of “responsible consumption” and whether ethical consumers have the power to transform the food system. Finally, we’ll discuss body image and food.

PHIL 224 fulfills the General Education requirement for Area IV: Knowledge of the Disciplines in the Humanities.

PHIL 224 fulfills the Ethics and Value Theory requirement in the Philosophy Program

PHIL 224 counts as an elective in the Environmental Science and Society program.

PHIL 225: Philosophy & Society
Instructor TBA
MW 2:00 - 3:15

This course engages in critical analysis of our society’s institutions and principles. Major works of political philosophy will be considered in light of their implications for controversies linked to systemic social inequalities, such as affirmative action; freedom of speech, religion, and conscience: protest, violence, and civil disobedience; prisons and law enforcement; access to education; and immigration.

PHIL 225 fulfills the General Education requirement for Area IV: Knowledge of the Disciplines in the Humanities.

PHIL 225 fulfills the Social Justice requirement in the Philosophy Program

PHIL 226: Feminist Theory
Professor Kate Mehuron
Online (2 sections)

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
MW 12:30 – 1:45; MW 11:00 – 12:15

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. In order to carry out this study, we will engage with major philosophical insights that are of interest to human experience generally, and that are also highly relevant to feminist analyses and practices devoted to understanding and transforming situations of oppression for women as well as for other disadvantaged groups. Through studies of work from authors such as Simone de Beauvoir, Iris Marion Young, Angela Davis, Judith Butler, Gloria Anzaldúa, Evelyn Fox Keller, Susan Moller Okin, and

Uma Narayan, we will explore questions concerning i) the specific nature of oppression and possibilities for resistance; ii) the embodied, intersectional, and performative nature of identity; (iii) feminist approaches to science and other forms of collective knowledge; and (iv) challenges and new possibilities that arise in opposing the oppression of women in postcolonial, global contexts.

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 3:30 – 4:45; instructor TBA

PHIL 228: Global Ethics
Professor John Ouko
T/Th 12:30 – 1:45

This course explores major ethical traditions from around the world in their application to particular moral issues like global poverty and international development, global conflict, international surrogacy, global organ trade, global gender justice, and the global environmental crisis, among others.

PHIL 228 fulfills the General Education requirement for either Area IV: Knowledge of the Disciplines in the Humanities or Global Awareness.

PHIL 228 fulfills the Eastern and Global requirement in the Philosophy Program.

PHIL 229: Environmental Ethics
Prof. J. Michael Scoville
T/Th 11:00-12:15

Environmental ethics explores the ethical aspects of the human relationship to nature or the environment. I assume any plausible environmental ethic needs to answer at least two basic questions: What nature or environments matter,

and why? Answering these questions is challenging. This is partly because the nature or environments that matter are multiple and contested. Further, addressing the why question requires us to delve into philosophical debates about what is good/bad, right/wrong, and valuable/disvaluable. How these notions inform practical deliberation is often complex. One of our basic tasks, then, is to study a number of views that help us think clearly about these questions and possible answers to them. The larger project of the class is to articulate an environmental ethic that can guide action and policy, while being sensitive to human motivation and the variety of normative reasons to care about nature or the environment.

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 229 also offered MW 9:30 – 10:45; instructor TBA

PHIL 292: Philosophy of Buddhism
Instructor TBA
MW 11 – 12:15

This course is a survey of the philosophy of the Buddhist tradition, beginning with its origins in India and examining its developments in India and across Asia. Students will be introduced to major issues, figures, and texts of the tradition. Students will also examine enduring issues of social justice in America through the lens of Engaged Buddhism.

PHIL 292 fulfills the General Education requirement for Area IV: Knowledge of the Disciplines in the Humanities.

PHIL 292 fulfills the Eastern and Global requirement in the Philosophy Program.

PHIL 330W: Ancient Philosophy
Professor Kate Mehuron
MW 12:30 – 1:45

This course focuses on the foundations of western philosophical thought provided by Plato and Aristotle. The questions posed by these thinkers are important today: What is the good life? What is the nature of reality? What is the essence of humanity? What is happiness? What are the elements of a just society? We begin with fragments from pre-Socratic philosophers. Mainly, we will study parts of the Platonic dialogues *Apology*, *Crito*, *Meno*, and the *Republic*. For purposes of comparison and interpretation, we will study excerpts from Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*, *De Anima*, *Physics*, and *Metaphysics*. We will consider the key distinction drawn by Plato and Aristotle between rhetoric and philosophical argument; a distinction of special relevance to this writing intensive course. Students will develop skills for interpreting these classical texts, and for identifying, reconstructing, and evaluating their arguments.

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

PHIL 330W counts as a Writing Intensive course.

PHIL 420W/520: Ethical Theory
Professor Michael Scoville
T/Th 2:00 – 3:15

This course will explore the nature of values and valuing, the logic of evaluative attitudes, and the normative reasons agents can have. Specific topics to be discussed will likely include: valuing as a distinctive practical attitude; the role of the emotions in valuing; the objective, subjective, and social aspects of value and valuing; the temporal structure of evaluative attitudes or states (such as regret, resentment, guilt, hope, affirmation, contentment); the connection between valuing and living a meaningful life; different types of normative

reasons (e.g., impersonal or agent-neutral reasons versus agent-relative reasons; moral versus nonmoral reasons) and their relative importance; the case for value pluralism. To better understand these topics, and the complexities they raise, we'll study recent (or relatively recent) scholarship in moral philosophy and value theory, likely focusing on works from Elizabeth Anderson, T. M. Scanlon, Samuel Scheffler, Susan Wolf, R. Jay Wallace, and Cheshire Calhoun.

PHIL 420W fulfills the Ethics and Value Theory requirement in the Philosophy Program.

PHIL 420W counts as a Writing Intensive course.

PHIL 427W/527: Social Epistemology
Professor Jill Dieterle
T/Th 12:30 – 1:45

Traditional theories of knowledge are individualistic in that the focus is how individual epistemic agents can properly use their cognitive devices to come to know things. But knowledge production has social elements. Social epistemology explores how social-epistemic activities or practices impact the epistemic outcomes of particular agents or groups. One of our topics this semester will be the dynamics of testimony. When is testimony trustworthy? What happens when people's testimony is unjustifiably discounted? Other topics we'll explore this semester include trust and trustworthiness (both within and between diverse communities of knowers), peer disagreement (when is it reasonable to revise one's beliefs in the face of disagreement?), and the phenomenon of affected ignorance.

PHIL 427W fulfills the Social Justice requirement in the Philosophy Program.

PHIL 427W counts as a Writing Intensive course.

PHIL/AFC 445: Themes in African and African Diasporic
Philosophies

Professor Toni Pressley-Sanon

W 5:30 – 8:20

Online synchronous with asynchronous elements

This course will introduce students to a sampling of the major thinkers and threads in the tradition of African and African diasporic philosophies from the early twentieth century to the contemporary moment. By the end of the course, students will be able to identify and discuss some of the major fields of black philosophy both on their own terms and in relation to western philosophy. Students will rigorously engage with not only the principles of some of the major fields of black philosophy, but they will “read” various forms of black cultural production to see how these philosophies are applied and worked.

Philosophy 495W/595: Phenomenology

Professor Laura McMahon

MW 3:30 – 4:45

“Phenomenology” names a movement in twentieth-century European Philosophy inaugurated by Edmund Husserl and carried on by Martin Heidegger, Jean-Paul Sartre, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Frantz Fanon, and a large number of contemporary thinkers. It also names a philosophical methodology: the rigorous description of experience as it is actually lived. In this course, we will approach the study of Phenomenology through a focus on the themes of *time*, *history*, and *identity*. Through readings by authors such as Henri Bergson (an important precursor to the phenomenological movement), Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty, Paul Ricoeur, Judith Butler, and Fanon, we will ask questions such as: What is the temporal nature of human experience, and how do common ways of understanding time obscure the experience of time as it is actually lived? How is personal identity not prior to temporal experience, but enacted in and through temporal experience? How is time lived in the body through structures such as habit? What is the inherently historical nature of experience? How do our ways of narrating our personal and collective pasts open up new possibilities for the future?

PHIL 495W fulfills the Knowledge and Reality requirement in the Philosophy Program.

PHIL 495W counts as a Writing Intensive course.
