

Philosophy Graduate Course Offerings Winter 2025

PHIL 592: Symbolic Logic
Professor Jill Dieterle
T/Th 12:30 – 1:45

Rene Descartes walks into a bar and orders a drink. When he finishes his drink, the bartender asks him if he would like another. Descartes replies, “No, I think not,” and disappears in a puff of logic.

The Descartes joke is actually an example of a formal fallacy: denying the antecedent. In PHIL 418, we’ll learn how to formalize arguments and show the ways in which they go wrong (or right!). We’ll begin with propositional logic and progress to predicate logic with identity. We’ll discuss soundness and completeness – what those properties are and why they might be important.

Some highlights of the course: Classical logic makes a number of assumptions. For example, it is assumed that every declarative sentence has a determinate truth value and that logical operators work much like English connectives. We’ll question those assumptions. Classical logic also has some rather counterintuitive results. For example, it turns out to be logically true that there is at least one thing in the world. Of course, no one will deny that there is at least one thing in the world, but (speaking philosophically), should that be a *logical* truth? We’ll look at logical systems that don’t have that result.

Over the course of the semester, we’ll also spend some time talking about expressive completeness, the differences between semantic consequence and deductive consequence, decision procedures, and lots of other fun and interesting topics!!

****If you plan to go on to a Ph.D. program in philosophy, we strongly recommend that you take this class.****

PHIL 592 will count as a course in the Methods Division of the Philosophy M.A. Program; see Professor Phillips to add it to your program of study

PHIL 548: Environmental Values, Justice, and Policy
Professor Michael Scoville
T/Th 2:00 – 3:15

In this course, we'll study philosophical perspectives on value and social justice and their relevance for environmental action and policy. Specific topics to be discussed include: the plurality of values relevant to supporting and motivating environmental concern; the practice of deliberative democracy and its prospects for addressing social and environmental injustice; normative perspectives on how to integrate global poverty-alleviation and human development goals with environmental protection; the normative bases of global climate policy; and policy instruments for mitigating climate change. We'll study a range of texts by contemporary authors, including John Rawls, Martha Nussbaum, Elizabeth Anderson, and Darrel Moellendorf.

PHIL 548 counts as a course in the Social Justice Division of the Philosophy M.A. Program.

PHIL 580: Philosophy of the Life Sciences
Professor John Koolage
T/Th 11:00 – 12:15

In this iteration of Philosophy of Science, we cover three areas of contemporary general and feminist philosophy of science. We will begin with a section on scientific reasoning. While we will cover some of the common inference patterns, we will lean into a recent dispute about social procedural objectivity and pluralism, with a particular focus on the epistemic responsibility for inclusion. In the second section of the class, we will look at philosophy of archeology. Archeological spaces, like museums and dig sites, offer interesting epistemic spaces. A recent anthology by Chapman and Wylie provides a wide range of engagements with this science. For the final section, we take a look at cognitive science in relation to non-human animals. Kristin Andrews book regarding the study of animal minds offers some excellent questions about how the study of animal minds has changed dramatically over the last century, including non-human animals as co-investigators, the prohibition on assigning human like cognition to non-human animals wherever possible, and

anthropofabulation. It also provides a mirror on how we study human cognition. Should be a fun ride!

PHIL 580 counts as a course in the Methods Division of the Philosophy M.A. Program.
