

Summer 2018 Philosophy Course Descriptions

Featured Undergraduate Courses

(For a full list of undergraduate course offerings,
please see the course schedule at my.emich.edu.)

PHIL 100: Introduction to Philosophy **Professor Brian Coffey** **Online section**

This course will introduce students to the study of Philosophy by exploring the tools and techniques of philosophical inquiry, and utilizing those tools to evaluate answers to the ‘big’ philosophical questions. Topics for discussion might include: What do we know, and how do we know it? Do we have free will? Does God exist? What is the relation of our minds and bodies? How ought we to live? What if anything, is ‘the meaning of life’? Our discussion of these issues will be inspired and informed by both classical and contemporary writings that we will read carefully and critically. We will not be passively learning about philosophy—we will be *doing philosophy*.

**PHIL 100 fulfills the General Education requirement for Knowledge of the
Disciplines in the Humanities.**

PHIL 100: Introduction to Philosophy **Professor Jeremy Proulx** **Online section**

This course is a historical introduction to some major philosophical themes and thinkers. Through a reading of primary sources we will consider questions of the nature of truth, knowledge, reality, responsibility, human nature, and the meaning of human existence. The objective of the course is to furnish you with the basic philosophical-historical contexts in which the discipline of philosophy has developed and thrived. We will explore the ways in which the concerns and issues that dominated a particular period in history gave momentum to the thought of some of history’s most celebrated philosophical luminaries. Readings are selected from thinkers like Parmenides, Plato, Aristotle, Mengzi, Xunzi, Epictetus, Anselm, Aquinas, Hobbes, Kant, Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, Bergson, and James. Rather than focusing on mastery of the course content, the emphasis in the course will be on meaningful engagement with the texts and guided discussion between students.

PHIL 100 fulfills the General Education requirement for Knowledge of the Disciplines in the Humanities.

PHIL 110: Philosophies of Life
Professor Jeremy Proulx
Online section

In this course we will explore different philosophical accounts of life, meaning in life, and the value of life. What does it mean to be alive? Can a machine be alive? Is life inherently meaningful or is the constitution of meaning in life up to us? What is the value of life, for humans and more generally? How do we find meaning in life? Can the value of life even be responsibly assessed, especially by the living? To address questions like this, we will read selections from thinkers like Aristotle, Epictetus, Nietzsche, and Camus. We will also consider more recent philosophical debates about meaning in life found in thinkers like Nagel, Blackburn, and Quinn. Rather than focusing on mastery of the course content, the emphasis in the course will be on meaningful engagement with the texts and guided discussion between students.

PHIL 110 fulfills the General Education requirement for Knowledge of the Disciplines in the Humanities.

PHIL 220: Ethics
Professor Brian Coffey
Online section

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 Knowledge of the Disciplines in the Humanities, as well as the Values requirement in the Philosophy Program.

PHIL 221: Business Ethics
Professor Jill Dieterle
Online section

This course deals with the interaction between ethics and business. What is the role of morality in the context of business? Should the only objective of businesses be to make money while staying within the law? Should corporations have rights? What rights and obligations should employees have? What ethical issues have arisen due to globalization? We will examine these and other questions in PHIL 221 Business Ethics.

PHIL 221 fulfills the General Education requirement for Knowledge of the Disciplines in the Humanities, as well as the Values requirement in the Philosophy Program.

PHIL 223 Medical Ethics
Professor Jill Dieterle
Online section

This course is an examination of ethical issues in medicine and health care. For example: The Religious Freedom Restoration Act is a pending piece of legislation in Michigan. If it were passed and Governor Snyder signed it, it would, among other things, allow health care providers, hospitals, medical centers, and insurers to deny service based on religious or moral objections. Here's a description of the bill from Wikipedia: "...the **Religious Freedom Restoration Act**...[would allow] for the refusal of service, the denial of employment and of housing, and other actions that act against a citizen's rights *if a person claims that working with or for that citizen would violate their religious freedom*" (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Michigan_Religious_Freedom_Restoration_Act). Opponents of the bill argue that if it were to become law, it would significantly undermine patient autonomy in the state. How do we assess this bill? Whose rights are at stake? How do we balance those rights?

In PHIL 223 Medical Ethics, we'll talk about how patient autonomy and provider rights of conscience interact. We'll also talk about the just allocation of scarce medical resources, the ethical status of surrogate motherhood and in vitro fertilization, and whether having children, in and of itself, could be immoral. We'll end the semester with a discussion of end of life care and physician assisted suicide.

PHIL 223 fulfills the General Education requirement for Knowledge of the Disciplines in the Humanities, as well as the Values requirement in the Philosophy Program.

PHIL 226: Feminist Theory
Professor Kate Mehuron
Online 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 mix of women's literature, feminist theoretical sources, and contemporary case studies of feminist activism to explore these questions.

PHIL 226 fulfills the General Education requirements for Global Awareness and Knowledge of the Disciplines in the Humanities, as well as the Eastern/Global requirement in the Philosophy Program.
