



Texas State University  
Philosophy  
Undergraduate  
Course Descriptions  
Fall 2017

Philosophy Department  
Texas State University  
Comal 102  
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San Marcos, TX 78666  
Phone: 512-2452285  
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**History of Philosophy Before 1600**

**PHIL 2311 CRN# 10944**

**TR 9:30 – 10:50**

**DERR 227**

Instructor: Alejandro Barcenas, Ph.D

Description: This class is a survey of the main philosophers and schools from the Early Greek, Roman, Medieval and Renaissance periods.

Required Texts:

- Reeve, C. D. C. and Patrick Lee Miller, ed. Introductory Readings in Ancient Greek And Roman Philosophy. Indianapolis: Hackett, 2007. ISBN 978-0872208315.

- Forrest E. Baird, ed. Medieval and Renaissance Philosophy. Boston: Prentice Hall, 2011. ISBN 978-0205783908.

**History of Philosophy Since 1600**

**PHIL 2312 CRN# 20104**

**MW 2 – 3:20**

**CMAL 114**

Instructor: Paul Wilson

Description: Modern philosophical thought through the 19th century. (MC) (WI)

**Elementary Logic**

**PHIL 2330 CRN# 10947**

**MWF 9 – 9:50**

**CMAL 201**

Instructor: Peter Hutcheson, Ph.D.

Description: Elementary Logic is a study of the standards for evaluating arguments, both deductive and inductive.

Required Texts: Hurley, A CONCISE INTRODUCTION TO LOGIC

**Elementary Logic**  
**PHIL 2330 CRN# 15196**  
**MWF 10 – 10:50**  
**CMAL 201**

Instructor: Peter Hutcheson, Ph.D.

Description: Elementary Logic is a study of the standards for evaluating arguments, both deductive and inductive.

Required Texts: Hurley, A CONCISE INTRODUCTION TO LOGIC

**Elementary Logic**  
**PHIL 2330 CRN# 10948**  
**MW 3:30 – 4:50 p.m.**  
**CENT 100**

Instructor: Eli Kanon, Ph.D.

Description: A study of the nature and forms of correct reasoning, both deductive and inductive. Particular emphasis will be placed upon categorical syllogisms, propositional logic and natural deduction.

**Existentialism and Phenomenology**  
**PHIL 3316 CRN# 15801**  
**TR 11 – 12:20 p.m.**  
**DERR 241**

Instructor: Matt Bower, Ph.D.

Description: The course gives an overview of existentialism and phenomenology, two important and related intellectual currents in 19th and 20th century philosophy. The course covers early existentialists, like Kierkegaard and Nietzsche, early phenomenologists, like Husserl and Heidegger, and mid-20th century existential phenomenologists, like Sartre and Merleau-Ponty. Topics dealt with in the course include the nature of the mind, emotions, embodiment, interpersonal experience, and philosophy itself.

Required Texts: None

**Reason, God, and Nature**  
**PHIL 3318 CRN# 19460**  
**MW 12:30 – 1:50 p.m.**  
**ELA 220**

Instructor: Eli Kanon, Ph.D.

Description: This course offers an analysis of the concept of God, terms predicated on God, and theological propositions. In particular the objections to the Existence of God will be investigated and a possible solution of God as a Social Construct will be investigated. This course attempts to determine the nature of religious utterances in comparison with those of everyday life, scientific discovery, morality, and imaginative expression.

**Ethics**  
**PHIL 3320 CRN# 13647**  
**TR 2-3:20 p.m.**  
**DERR 111**

Instructor: Lijun Yuan, Ph.D.

Description: This course is an upper level course in general ethics. We will examine many of the major issues and questions that philosophers have raised in the past 2500 years. We will be exploring the questions: what does it mean to say that an action is right or wrong, moral or immoral? How should I decide how to act? What goals should I strive to pursue? What kind of person do I want to be?

In order to answer these questions, we will be reading classic and contemporary works from philosophers: five from the classical and medieval eras, viz. Plato, Aristotle, Epictetus, Augustine, and Aquinas; seven from the modern world, viz. Hobbes, Hume, Kant, Bentham, Mill, Marx, and Nietzsche; eight from the 20th century, viz. Ross, Hare, Sartre, Rawls, Nagel, Harman, Foot, and Baier. We will also read a bit ancient Chinese philosophers at the end, viz. Confucius and Confucianism.

Required Texts: Ethics, Edited by Johnson and Reath, 11th ed. (Boston, MA: Wadsworth 2012)

**Contemporary Moral Problems**  
**PHIL 3321 CRN# 19461**  
**MW 3:30 – 4:50**  
**CMAL 201**

Instructor: Keisha Ray, Ph.D.

Description: In this upper level philosophy course, students will analyze and evaluate texts that cover topics such as how race and gender operate in power structures, biomedical enhancement, drug regulation, feminism, sexual violence, animal ethics, issues in the LGBTQ community, medical racism, health disparities in health care systems, and other issues in contemporary ethics. Through these readings we will also discuss applicable moral theories. Students will be expected to have a basic level of argumentative and writing skills. These skills will be used to extensively discuss and write about the readings. A series of formal and informal assignments, such as short writing assignments, discussion groups, and class discussions will be used to hone and display these skills. An emphasis will also be placed on students' abilities to participate in moral reasoning and moral decision-making.

**Professional Ethics**  
**PHIL 3322 CRN# 18382**  
**Online Course**

Instructor: Robert O'Connor, Ph.D.

Description: Ethics is the branch of philosophy that addresses issues of right and wrong, good and bad, and virtues and vices. In this class, we will address perplexing ethical issues affecting professional life, especially the moral responsibilities and virtues of professionals in a broad range of fields. This class will begin by introducing students to the leading ethical theories in the western tradition, including utilitarianism, Kantianism, and virtue ethics. Then we will apply these theories of moral agency to your responsibilities and rights as a professional in general and as a member of your profession. Besides the common issues that all professionals face, you will face certain special issues in relation to your work. The same basic principles apply, but the cases we will study should help you see with greater clarity how they do.

Traditionally, professional ethics focused on a few professions, especially engineering, health care, law. Today, not only has it expanded into many other fields, such as business, counseling, and journalism, but also most companies have ethics policies covering such topics as sexual harassment, discrimination, confidentiality, and informed consent. We will cover many of these fields and topics. Finally, although we will focus on professional ethics, the concepts that we learn apply to your personal life as a moral agent.

Required Texts: Ethics for the Professions, by Rowan and Zinach (Wadsworth Cengage)  
ISBN: 978-0-15-506-999-2

**Professional Ethics**  
**PHIL 3322.80 CRN# 15046**  
**Online Course**

**\* OWL students given registration priority**

Instructor: Robert O'Connor, Ph.D.

Description: Ethics is the branch of philosophy that addresses issues of right and wrong, good and bad, and virtues and vices. In this class, we will address perplexing ethical issues affecting professional life, especially the moral responsibilities and virtues of professionals in a broad range of fields. This class will begin by introducing students to the leading ethical theories in the western tradition, including utilitarianism, Kantianism, and virtue ethics. Then we will apply these theories of moral agency to your responsibilities and rights as a professional in general and as a member of your profession. Besides the common issues that all professionals face, you will face certain special issues in relation to your work. The same basic principles apply, but the cases we will study should help you see with greater clarity how they do.

Traditionally, professional ethics focused on a few professions, especially engineering, health care, law. Today, not only has it expanded into many other fields, such as business, counseling, and journalism, but also most companies have ethics policies covering such topics as sexual harassment, discrimination, confidentiality, and informed consent. We will cover many of these fields and topics. Finally, although we will focus on professional ethics, the concepts that we learn apply to your personal life as a moral agent.

Required Texts: Ethics for the Professions, by Rowan and Zinach (Wadsworth Cengage)  
ISBN: 978-0-15-506-999-2

**Professional Ethics**  
**PHIL 3322 CRN# 17414**  
**MWF 10 – 10:50 a.m.**  
**DERR 241**

Instructor: Craig Hanks, Ph.D.

Description: Study of major topics in business and professional ethics, including what a profession is, whether it differs from business, and what is involved with the moral education, social responsibilities, and ethical standards of professionals and business people.

Prerequisite: Three hours of lower division philosophy, PHIL 3301, or consent of the instructor. (Capstone) (WI).

**Environmental Ethics**  
**PHIL 3323 CRN# 19462**  
**TR 2- 3:20 p.m.**  
**CMAL 116**

Instructor: Vincent Luizzi, Ph.D.

Description: Conceptions of the environment, its preservation and restoration, our ethical obligations to it, and their connection with living ethically.

Required Texts: None

**Meaning of Life**  
**PHIL 3324 CRN# 19463**  
**MW 12:30- 1:50 p.m.**  
**DERR 111**

Instructor: Binita Metha, Ph.D.

Description: This course will examine the fundamental question: what constitutes human flourishing. We will study the problem of human well-being from a diverse set of perspectives such as ancient Greek, religious-mystical, psychoanalytic, and existentialist. These frameworks also present differing views about the nature of human consciousness. We will investigate whether a genuinely meaningful life entails a particular type of conception about human self. Lastly, we will consider how an awareness of death could contribute to finding greater meaning in life.

Required Texts: All required readings will be posted on TRACS

**Philosophy of Sex & Love**  
**PHIL 3325 CRN# 19465**  
**TR 2- 3:20 p.m.**  
**CMAL 103**

Instructor: Audrey McKinney, Ph.D.

Description: We shall explore the concepts of love and sexuality through the writings of classical, modern and contemporary philosophers. Special attention will be paid to the implications each theory has for understanding the nature of the self, the self's relation to others, and the human quest for a flourishing life.

We will spend the first six weeks of the course dipping into Plato's Symposium, a work that manages to set the stage for almost any topic related to sexuality and romantic love. The latter part of the course will be constructed in collaboration with the members of the class.

**Philosophy & Sport**  
**PHIL 3326 CRN# 14476**  
**MW 2- 3:20 p.m.**  
**NUEC 270**

Instructor: Eric Gilbertson, Ph.D.

Description: There are few aspects of contemporary sport that do not raise serious ethical questions. Scandal and controversy in sport abound, and they force us to confront a range of fundamental issues about the nature of sport and its proper role in our lives. Consider, for instance, recent international sporting events which have raised issues of doping and performance enhancement, identity and authenticity, gender, and disability. Sport also raises metaphysical and epistemological issues, and these interact in interesting ways with the ethical issues. The nature and significance of play and games, the role of technology in sport, the relationship between sport and self-knowledge, the value of dangerous sport, and the relationship between sport and death are all of great interest in this regard, and contemporary sport is helpful in that it often presents more traditional philosophical problems in a new light. In this course, we'll investigate a wide range of topics in the philosophy of sport, all of which will take us into other areas of philosophy. We'll draw on basic ethical theory and logic and critical thinking as we consider various concrete cases in contemporary sport and as we analyze and evaluate arguments in current philosophical debates.

Required Texts: McNamee (ed.), *The Ethics of Sports: A Reader*  
ISBN-13: 978-0415478618

**Philosophy of Law**  
**PHIL 3331 CRN# 17415**  
**MW 5- 6:20 p.m.**  
**DERR 111**

Instructor: Burkay Ozturk, Ph.D.

Description: What is the nature of law? How is it related to morality, legal theory and interpretation? What is the source of obligation to obey the law, and the justification for punishing those who don't? In this course, we will study examples from the American and British legal and constitutional traditions to look for answers to these questions.

Required Texts: *Law's Empire* by Ronald Dworkin (ISBN: 978-0674518360)

**Social and Political Philosophy**  
**PHIL 3332 CRN# 19466**  
**TR 3:30-4:50 p.m.**  
**CMAL 201**

Instructor: Vaughn Baltzly, Ph.D.

Description: We will examine some of the principal issues in political philosophy, focusing on the justification of the state's coercive power, the extent of legitimate state authority, and the nature of the central political values of equality and liberty. Along the way, we shall study historical figures (most prominently, but not exclusively, Thomas Hobbes) and some more contemporary thinkers (most prominently, but not exclusively, John Rawls and Robert Nozick).

Required Texts: tentatively: John Rawls, *Justice as Fairness: A Restatement* (2001); Robert Nozick, *Anarchy, State, and Utopia* (1974); G.A. Cohen, *Why Not Socialism?* (2009); Jason Brennan, *Why Not Capitalism?* (2015).

**Social & Political Philosophy**  
**PHIL 3332.03 CRN# 20127**  
**MW 12:30 – 1:50 p.m.**  
**DERR 227**

Instructor: Ivan Marquez, Ph.D.

Description: We live in an epoch of changes or in a change of epoch. This is a time of crisis: crises of institutions, practices, and concepts, and of legitimation. This course will examine some of the main phenomena, ideas, and ideals of contemporary society -- liberalism, neoliberalism, democracy, conservatism, modernity, and post-modernity -- and the field of political epistemology, in order to get a sense of where we are and where we could go.

Required Texts:

1. Gray, John. 2003. *Liberalism*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
2. Harvey, David. 2011. *A brief history of neoliberalism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
3. Dunn, John. 2014. *Breaking democracy's spell*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
4. Scruton, Roger. 2015. *How to Be a Conservative*. Bloomsbury USA.
5. Lyotard, Jean-François. 2006. *The postmodern condition: a report on knowledge*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
6. Latour, Bruno. 2006. *We have never been modern*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
7. Habermas, Jürgen. 2007. *The postnational constellation: political essays*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
8. Medina, Jose. 2013. *The epistemology of resistance: Gender and racial oppression, epistemic injustice and resistant imaginations*. New York: Oxford University Press.

**Philosophy & Literature**  
**PHIL 3351 CRN# 17417**  
**TR 5 – 6:20**  
**CMAL 201**

Instructor: Amelie Benedikt, Ph.D

Description: We will look at a range of answers to the following questions: When does reading begin? What counts as reading? How does reading work? Who is a reader? What is a text? Can language convey literal truth? Can truth be conveyed through metaphor? Can philosophy be literature? Can literature be philosophy? What is the role of fiction in philosophy? What temporal assumptions does literature make? What metaphysical assumptions does literature make? What is literature? Who is an author? How is literary authority undermined? What is the value of literary heroes? Can literature make us more virtuous?

**Applied Philosophy**  
**PHIL 4301 CRN# 10987**  
**TR 9:30-10:50 a.m.**  
**CMAL 201**

Instructor: Lijun Yuan, Ph.D.

Description: We will examine many of the major issues and questions that philosophers have raised in the past 2500 years. We will be exploring on questions of human nature, the nature of the Self, the nature of justice and goodness, and various ethical issues through the contemporary debates. We will read and assess classical and contemporary ethical theories regarding how to live a good life, but we will do so through applying them in contemporary moral controversies, such as, abortion, euthanasia, affirmative action, capital punishment, torture, same-sex marriage, drugs, pornography, immigration, humanitarian intervention, and world hunger, etc. We will also focus on a selective reading on a comparison of justice and care. We will assess and evaluate arguments from different approaches in dealing with contemporary ethical issues.

Required Texts: Andrew I. Cohen and Christopher Heath Wellman, Ed. Contemporary Debates in Applied Ethics, 2th ed. (Boston, MA: Wiley Blackwell 2014)

**Dialogue**  
**PHIL 4302 CRN# 10984**  
**TR 12:30 – 1:50 p.m.**  
**CMAL 116**

Instructor: Jo Ann Carson, Ph.D.

Description: Dialogue is a collaborative course that is a part of the Philosophy Dialogue Series. The class will explore dialogical and dialectical reasoning, with emphasis on both philosophical conversation and philosophical writing. Each student will research and conduct at least one dialogue and will contribute to others through discussion. There are three parts to the course: Part I: Background of dialogical and dialectical reasoning in philosophy; Part II: Open dialogues led by members of the class; Part III: Paper writing.

Required Texts: Readings posted on TRACS

Format: Interactive discussion

Evaluation: 30% Dialogue; 30% Quizzes; 30% Papers; 10% Class Participation

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**Philosophy of Education**  
**PHIL 4351 CRN# 10988**  
**TR 9:30 – 10:50 a.m.**  
**CMAL 116**

Instructor: Jo Ann Carson, Ph.D.

Description: In this course we will examine the nature, goals, and methods of education, with particular emphasis on the dynamics of learning and teaching. Although the primary focus will be on philosophical problems and themes that have influenced educational theory and practice, we will take an interdisciplinary approach, and will explore issues involving cognitive and developmental psychology, educational ethics, sociology, language acquisition, and social-political theory.

**Philosophical Theory of Science**  
**PHIL 4355 CRN# 19467**  
**TR 3:30 – 4:50 p.m.**  
**ED 3068**

Instructor: Jonathan Surovell, Ph.D.

Description: We will survey several questions in general philosophy of science, such as: how do observations confirm or disconfirm scientific theories? What is an observation? Does science progress? Do scientific theories aim to be true or merely useful? We will conclude with brief examinations of some special topics in philosophy of biology (what are species? Is Darwinism relevant to morality?) and philosophy of physics (is spacetime relational or substantive? Do quantum mechanics undermine everyday beliefs?).

Required Texts: Theory and Reality: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Science by Peter Godfrey-Smith.

## **Philosophy of the Human Sciences**

**PHIL 4361B CRN#20191**

**MW 11 – 12:20 p.m.**

**ASBN 407**

Instructor: Isaac Wiegman, Ph.D.

Description: This course applies philosophical methods and critical thinking skills to questions about the justification of theories and concepts in the human sciences. This includes traditional questions in philosophy of science that are applied to concerns specifically within the human sciences, such as the following: What makes a theory a scientific one? What is the relationship between theory and evidence? For instance, what about Marx's dialectical materialism or Freud's theory of psychoanalysis? Are these scientific theories? How could sociological or psychological data support these theories or falsify them? How are theories justified? Do theories refer to mind independent objects and properties? Does science carve nature at its joints? If concepts of race and gender do not carve humanity at its biological joints, then are they real in any interesting sense? If not, how is it that they have such powerful effects in peoples' lives? Race and gender are often said to be socially constructed? What does this mean? Can scientists develop naturalistic theories that explain the structure and effects of these concepts or kinds? How is knowledge organized in the human sciences? Is it organized into general laws of social organization or into piecemeal facts about specific cultures? Is there such a thing as human nature? Is the concept of human nature consistent with the diversity and variation we see among humans? How can scientific knowledge accommodate this variation? Can there be any unified understanding of humanity?

Required Texts: *Arguing about Human Nature* (Downes and Machery, eds.)

**19<sup>th</sup> Century Philosophy**  
**PHIL 4362B CRN# 20173**  
**MW 2 -3:20 p.m.**  
**DERR 111**

Instructor: Nevitt Reesor, Ph.D

Description: Much of early 19th-century philosophy can be characterized as various interpretations and developments of Kantian transcendental idealism. This includes German thinkers such as Fichte, Schelling, and Hegel as well as certain British idealists. Much of later 19th-century philosophy was a reaction against the German idealists and their efforts to construct all-encompassing systematic theories of everything. These later thinkers include Schopenhauer, Kierkegaard, and Nietzsche. In between these two movements Marx and Engels rejected Hegel's idealism, while adapting elements of his system to their own purposes. In America during this period, William James and others developed philosophical pragmatism.

We will begin with a very brief review of Descartes' rationalism and Hume's empiricism, followed by a review of Kant's transcendental idealism. We will then consider the above-mentioned movements in more-or-less historical order. Given the complexity of the material, it is doubtful we will be able to consider every philosopher listed, but we will try to understand essential representative arguments. I'm hoping we can study at least Kant, Fichte, Hegel, Marx/Engels, Kierkegaard, and Nietzsche.

Required Text: *The Nineteenth Century Philosophy Reader*, ed. Benjamin D. Crowe, pub. Routledge 2016, ISBN 978-0-415-83479-7, \$53 new from pub.  
<https://www.routledge.com/The-Nineteenth-Century-Philosophy-Reader/Crowe/p/book/9780415834797>

Recommended Text: *Kant's Theory of Knowledge*, Justus Hartnack, trans. M. Holmes Hartshorne, pub. Hackett 2001, ISBN 978-0-87220-506-2, \$15 new from pub.  
<https://www.hackettpublishing.com/kant-s-theory-of-knowledge>

Additional Resources: Alkek Library has numerous ebook secondary sources on this material. I will provide links to some of them on TRACS.

Format: lecture and discussion

Evaluation: weekly 1-page take-home essays, 3 longer take-home essays, 2 in-class exams, discussion participation. Graduate students will have additional assignments, yet to be determined. (One possibility I'm considering would require each graduate student to write a number of substantive blog posts throughout the semester on a primary source by one of the authors from this historical period. This would be similar to Dr. McKinney's approach.)

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