

Philosophy

Philosophy, broadly defined, is the systematic inquiry into some of the fundamental questions of human existence. In this sense, the study of philosophy has always been an essential ingredient of a liberal education.

Philosophy is inherently interdisciplinary. Its focus on the development of the abilities to reflect, analyze, and think critically enables students to understand and correlate all the insights garnered from other disciplines.

Philosophy emphasizes questions of meaning, from linguistic expressions to life itself, and calls for justification of claims to knowledge from any source.

The primary goals of the program are to contribute significantly to the liberal arts education of university students, to prepare students for advanced study in their chosen field, and to help students in their future professional activities by acquainting them with applied philosophy.

- Major in Philosophy (<http://catalog.neiu.edu/arts-sciences/philosophy/philosophy/>)
- Minor in Philosophy (<http://catalog.neiu.edu/arts-sciences/philosophy/minor-philosophy/>)

Scott W. Hegerty, Associate Professor of Economics, Chair
 John Casey, Ph.D., Professor, Program Coordinator, Advisor
 Daniel Milsky, Ph.D., Associate Professor, Advisor
 Stacey Goguen, Ph.D., Associate Professor, Advisor

Affiliate Faculty:

Sophia Mihic, Ph.D., Professor of Political Science

PHIL-101. Argument And Reasoning. 3 Hours.

This course teaches the skills necessary to make and evaluate arguments. We cover how arguments are structured and properly used in reasoning, persuasion, deliberation, and inquiry. Students will learn how to distinguish good arguments from bad, to identify common fallacies of argumentation, and to avoid cognitive biases in reasoning.

PHIL-102. Introduction To Philosophy. 3 Hours.

Introduction to the main problems of philosophy, i.e. knowledge, reality, morality, religion and art.

PHIL-201. Logic I. 3 Hours.

Introductory course in symbolic logic, dealing with propositional calculus, quantification theory and the logic of relations and classes.

PHIL-213. Ethics. 3 Hours.

Introduction to some of the main problems of ethics, including the nature of morality, the meaning of ethical terms, standards for evaluating choices and actions, and the major ideas of important moral philosophers.

PHIL-215. Business Ethics. 3 Hours.

Philosophical introduction to the ethical content of some of the current problems confronting the business community, such as the social responsibility of business, poverty and equal rights, the ethical implications of ecology, advertising and consumerism.

PHIL-218. Philosophy Of Sex. 3 Hours.

In this course we will look at a wide range of philosophical topics related to human sexuality-perversion, prostitution gender roles, and sex roles. Along the way will examine the role of power and coercion in sex and we will examine some of the psycho-social implications of sexual violence. The course will have a decidedly normative bent insofar as our analysis and discussion will be conducted through the lens of ethics.

PHIL-250. Ethics In Science And Research. 3 Hours.

In this course, students will investigate how ethical issues and values (such as safety, autonomy, well-being, and justice) play a role in contemporary and historical case studies in the sciences. They will develop a skill set for asking ethical questions in the sciences and evaluating different ethical theories and philosophical concepts, giving them a foundation for thinking about responsibility and objectivity in scientific research and public policy. Topics may include: safety concerns with new technology; privacy, rights, and autonomy in genetic engineering; public policy concerning under-studied health conditions; and which communities of inquiry should be recognized or categorized as science.

PHIL-251. Philosophy Of Art. 3 Hours.

An examination of art and aesthetic experience, including personal, social and political significance. Issues explored may include artistic concepts pertaining to form and content, representation and expression, meaning and truth critical interpretation and evaluation.

PHIL-300. History Of Ancient Philosophy. 3 Hours.

This course introduces some of the major thinkers and themes of Ancient Western Philosophy. It will focus in particular on the work of Plato, Aristotle, and the Hellenists.

PHIL-301. History Of Medieval Philosophy. 3 Hours.

Critical survey of the development of philosophy in the West from the rise of Christendom to the dawn of the Renaissance.

PHIL-302. History Of Modern Philosophy. 3 Hours.

A critical survey of the development of philosophy in the West in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

PHIL-303. Logic II. 3 Hours.

Study of the theory and development of axiomatic systems, including the problems of definability, completeness and consistency.

Prerequisite: PHIL-201 with a minimum grade of D.

PHIL-305. Comparative Religion. 3 Hours.

A comparative study of the epistemological, metaphysical, and ethical beliefs and practices of a range of world religions including Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism, Taoism, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam.

PHIL-311. Writing Intensive Program: Reasoning In Writing. 3 Hours.

This is a workshop and discussion-based course that teaches students techniques for reading, writing, and researching philosophy, which form a foundation set of skills for other philosophy courses. Students will learn how to identify an author's philosophical project, how to motivate an introduction, how to assess their own arguments in writing, how to practice philosophical charity, how to further an academic conversation in the service of a real-world issue, and how to engage with multiple sources and authors.

Prerequisite: ENGL-101 with a minimum grade of C.

PHIL-313. Ethical Theory. 3 Hours.

Study of theories about the meaning and justification of moral judgements: good and bad, right and wrong, human rights, justice, punishment, freedom and responsibility, self-interest, the common good, pleasure and happiness, religion and morality, relativism, subjectivism and scepticism.

PHIL-315. Medical Ethics. 3 Hours.

This course will focus on the ethical dilemmas both doctors and patients confront as practitioners and patients in medicine. We will pay careful attention to the issues of paternalism, voluntary informed consent and personhood and apply these ideas to actual cases.

Prerequisite: PHIL-213 with a minimum grade of C.

PHIL-316. Ethics Bowl. 1 Hour.

Ethics Bowl provides students with a unique opportunity to apply moral argumentation to real world cases. The Intercollegiate Ethics Bowl combines the excitement a competitive tournament with a valuable educational experience. Students will examine a series of case studies from a number of practical contexts, including engineering, law, medicine, personal relationships, school, and politics, both nationally and internationally. During the semester students will research and prepare these cases for competition. All students in the course will practice and present on cases, but students may decide if they wish to compete in the actual Ethics Bowl competition in November.

PHIL-332. Contemporary Philosophy. 3 Hours.

Critical survey of the salient schools of contemporary philosophy, notably idealism, pragmatism, logical positivism, analytic philosophy, phenomenology and existentialism.

PHIL-333. American Philosophy. 3 Hours.

Intensive study of the trends prevalent in the modern American philosophical scene, notably pragmatism, idealism, naturalism, positivism, philosophical analysis and phenomenology.

PHIL-335. Analytic Philosophy. 3 Hours.

Critical survey of the development of analytic philosophy in the twentieth century.

PHIL-337. Existentialism. 3 Hours.

Intensive study of selected works of existentialist thinkers such as Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, Sartre and Camus.

PHIL-339. Post Modernism. 3 Hours.

This course will examine the rise of modernity as an "age of unrest", and therein delineating the confrontation between contemporary philosophy and the current epoch. To this end, we will assess the precise ways in which modernity has cast itself forward as a historical and epistemological rupture of devastating proportions, one that irrevocably alters our understanding of knowledge, society, power, technology, language, and the question of human experience.

PHIL-341. Metaphysics. 3 Hours.

Systematic analysis of some of the main problems of metaphysics, such as existence, substance and attribute, change and permanence, essence and accident, universals and particulars, mind and body, identity, individuation and causality.

PHIL-344. Buddhism. 3 Hours.

The course will begin with an analysis of Buddhism's origins within Hinduism and the early development of its religious beliefs and philosophical concepts in India. It will continue with an in depth look at its spread throughout Asia and the transformation of its core beliefs and concepts within the main traditions of Theravada, Mahayana, and the Vajrayana. The course will include a study of current global trends, such as the rise of political and social engagement and the impact of Buddhism on western philosophical traditions including existentialism and phenomenology.

PHIL-345. Social And Political Philosophy. 3 Hours.

Systematic investigation of some of the salient issues currently discussed by social and political philosophers, such as the nature and origin of the state, political obligation, justice, human rights, authority, liberty and evaluation of social and political institutions.

PHIL-346. 19th Century Continental Philosophy. 3 Hours.

This course focuses on the development of German Idealism and its relation to Continental Philosophy. Thematically the class will cover topics such as freedom, epistemology, aesthetics, philosophy of history, and politics in the work of Kant, Fichte, Schelling, Hegel, and Marx.

PHIL-347. Phenomenology And Hermeneutics. 3 Hours.

This class introduces students to the basic methods, themes, and critiques advanced in the philosophical movements known as phenomenology and hermeneutics. This class will survey three types of phenomenology: transcendental phenomenology, genetic phenomenology, and hermeneutical phenomenology. We will explore the intersections between these types of phenomenology and the analysis of time, embodiment, culture, art, and politics.

PHIL-348. Computer Ethics And Public Policy. 3 Hours.

This course discusses ethical and social issues related to the development and use of computer technology. The course provides students with historical and philosophical context to understand the evolution of ethics and its intersection with the use of technology as well as an examination of major ethical issues currently affecting the use of computer technology. Topics involve ethics, public policy, privacy, responsibility and the law.

PHIL-349. The Political Thought Of Karl Marx. 3 Hours.

In this course, we investigate the work of Karl Marx on politics, political economy, and society. Our primary aims will be to read Marx on his own terms, to address impediments to reading his work such as the failures of state socialism and the American reception of Marx during the Cold War, and to consider the effects of his work across academic disciplines. Specific course topics may include Marx on questions of identity and prejudice, the persistence of inequality, and his influence in the humanities and the social sciences.

PHIL-350. Philosophy Of Art. 3 Hours.

This course examines philosophical issues that arise concerning the creation, interpretation and viewing of art, primarily though not exclusively in the western art tradition. Topics to be discussed include: what is the "aesthetic," and who is the best judge of it? Is good art beautiful? Should art be viewed dis-interestedly? What is it to get at the meaning of a work of art? How does new technology affect the meaning and experience of art? We will also examine the role of aesthetics in other fields of philosophy, especially in environmental ethics.

PHIL-353. Feminism And The Philosophy Of Science. 3 Hours.

Analytic examination of the concept of femininity as found in the biological and social sciences in order to facilitate discussion of the nature of objectivity and scientific investigation.

PHIL-362. Philosophy Of Law. 3 Hours.

In this course, we will engage in an examination of law and legal systems, as well as of the ideas, ideologies, and principles that are at the core of the establishment and interpretation of law. The pervasive presence of law in our lives should encourage us not only to understand it, but to scrutinize its foundations and presuppositions. Toward this end, we will pay special attention to three aspects of philosophy of law: analytic jurisprudence, normative jurisprudence, and critical law theory.

PHIL-364. Critical Race Theory. 3 Hours.

This course begins with the recognition that racism is prevalent in the United States. Critical Race Theorists confront the historical centrality of white supremacy and the complicity of the law in upholding, indeed constructing, racism. Following the challenge to ahistoricism and acontextualism embedded in standard legal practice brought by Critical Legal Theorists, Critical Race Theorists address racism as embedded in U.S. legal structure. We will examine the law's role in the construction and maintenance of social domination and subordination in order to understand and articulate a critical race theoretical approach to the intersections of race, gender, class and the law.

PHIL-365. Environmental Ethics. 3 Hours.

How ought we behave towards nature and what are the implications of human interaction with ecosystems? We will pay special attention to the value of restored nature and whether it is a form of human domination or whether restoration is a legitimate endeavor to be pursued out of moral obligation. We will integrate actual cases into the class in order to flesh out the policy implications of our philosophical commitments.

PHIL-366. Feminist Ethics. 3 Hours.

What is feminism? What is Feminist Ethics? How do feminists differ in their ways of thinking about the good life and acting in the world than a non-feminist? Why do they differ in their understanding of these issues? How should we live our lives in a way that reflects feminist values? These are just some of the questions we will explore in this class. Specifically, we will explore the key concepts of different types of feminist ethics and the ways to apply it to our everyday lives.

PHIL-367. Postcolonialism. 3 Hours.

In this course we will move toward not a postcolonialism that transcends colonialism, but thinking with those who work toward a practice of decolonial thinking. While there have been many empires which have plundered pre-existing cultures and civilizations, modern colonialism did more than extract tribute, goods and wealth from conquered countries. It restructured economies, societies, languages, histories. Thus, while political colonialism is over in many locales, economic and cultural colonialism reverberate within both former colonies and colonizing countries. Postcolonial theorists write from the margins of and in resistance to reverberating colonial cultural productions.

PHIL-370. Re-Thinking Race And Gender. 3 Hours.

We start with historical narrative, re-thinking how we learn to practice race and gender from within the larger systems of white supremacy and patriarchy. The course explores models for disrupting systemic patterns, and ways to turn rethinking into everyday action. The aim throughout is to interrogate structures and relations of race and gender, and how they get naturalized. Designed and cross-listed for advanced undergraduates, graduates, and teachers. When taught as a Summer Institute, course runs for eight days over three weeks. Required: Junior/Senior or Graduate status, or instructor consent. Prereqs: ENGL-101 with a grade of "C" or above.

Prerequisite: ENGL-101 with a minimum grade of C.

PHIL-371. Theory Of Knowledge. 3 Hours.

Systematic inquiry into the nature of knowledge, with a consideration of such topics as ways of knowing, perception, memory, personal identity, and other minds.

PHIL-373. Feminist Philosophy. 3 Hours.

Analytic investigation of the latest feminist theory in order to study the development of feminism.

PHIL-374. Philosophy Of Sex. 3 Hours.

Students will examine philosophical topics related to human sexuality, such as the metaphysics of sex acts; political philosophy of sexual coercion and violence; ethical issues of sex work; and analysis of different types of sexual and romantic relationships, such as monogamy and polyamory.

Prerequisite: and.

PHIL-375. Philosophy Of Science. 3 Hours.

Examination of some of the main problems currently discussed by philosophers of science, such as the methodology and foundations of empirical science, the meaning and verification of scientific statements, theories, laws, hypotheses and explanations.

PHIL-376. Philosophy Of Disability: Society And Self. 3 Hours.

In this course, students will explore philosophical issues regarding society, the self, and the human body (including brain) through the lens of disability. All humans have variance in their bodies, abilities, and thinking, but many social institutions, spaces, and norms do not cater to and value those variances equally (ableism). How does ableism influence ideas about fairness, the good life, and what it means to be human? What insights arise when we consider variance and change core aspects of human life? What tools does disability studies offer everyone, and what new questions, problems, and reflections come to light when we use them?.

PHIL-380. Happiness. 3 Hours.

Achieving happiness is one of life's most valuable goals and one of the goals of this class. This class will examine the psychological factors that influence happiness and the diverse philosophical arguments for the value of happiness. Students will engage in projects designed to implement psychological research with the goal of maximizing their happiness.

Prerequisite: (100 - 399 or 100A - 399Z).

PHIL-381. Independent Study In Philosophy. 3 Hours.

Readings, discussions, and reports on a special topic with faculty supervision. Normally open to majors in their junior or senior year.

PHIL-384. Philosophy Of Religion. 3 Hours.

This course examines questions concerning the existence, nature and evidence for the primary and fundamental objects of religious belief. Topics may include the following: 1) Can we demonstrate God's existence? 2) Is faith irrational? 3) Can we know anything about God? 4) Is the existence of evil evidence against the existence of God? 5) Is religion necessary for morality?.

PHIL-385. Philosophy Of Mind. 3 Hours.

This course examines the central issues and debates in philosophy of mind from both historical and contemporary perspectives. Topics covered may include theories of the mind's relation to the body (dualism, monism, functionalism, behaviorism, identity theory, eliminative materialism), theories of mental content, free will, personal identity and first-person experience, among others.

PHIL-387. The Political Thought Of Hannah Arendt. 3 Hours.

This course investigates the work of Hannah Arendt on politics, society and political action. Our primary questions will be: what does political action require and what can it accomplish? Specific course topics may include civil disobedience, the relationship between history and political theory, the meanings of power and violence, colonialism, totalitarian rule during the Third Reich and the Soviet era, and racial prejudice as a political tool.

PHIL-388. Philosophy Of Language. 3 Hours.

This course focuses on language use and begins with theoretical challenges from both the analytic (Wittgenstein) and continental (Derrida) traditions in philosophy to idealized theories of language, particularly the reference theory of language <the idea that words are mere labels for things> as well as the idea that language is a pure and formal unity. We will explore strategies of using language to construct consensus through both syntax and semantics, generating commitment to particular and tacit understandings. We will also work on theories of metaphor and performatives to become skilled in articulating practical complexities of language use.

PHIL-389. Inter-Disciplined Foucault. 3 Hours.

This course explores Michel Foucault's theories of language, truth, knowledge, and power across academic disciplines. Topics covered will include his work in the philosophy of inquiry, and his studies of prisons, sexuality, the legal order, art, and literary representation.

PHIL-390. Classical Political Theory. 3 Hours.

This course studies the political thought of Socrates, Plato and Aristotle in the broad historical and cultural context of the classical era. Readings may include literary works and histories from Greek, Roman, Biblical and Chinese sources. We will attend carefully to the distinctiveness of ancient texts and historical experiences with the goal of considering how classical formulations of enduring concepts and themes inform and contrast with contemporary ethical and political practices.

PHIL-391. Modern Political Theory. 3 Hours.

This course studies the development of modern political philosophy and practice. We will address the emergence of modern humanism and republican self-rule, analyze obligation and the rule of law in the contract tradition, and examine ongoing conflicts between authority and freedom and power and equality in the 19th, 20th and 21st centuries. Readings may include works by Hegel, Hobbes, Machiavelli, Marx, J.S. Mill, Nietzsche, Rousseau, Wollstonecraft, and American literary perspectives on the problem of race and racism in democratic politics.

PHIL-393. Seminar In Ethics. 3 Hours.

This course involves an intensive study of a topic or philosopher important to the field of ethics. Students should be prepared to engage in critical analysis of current research in the field and be prepared to present a research paper at the end of the course.

Prerequisite: (PHIL-100 - 399 or PHIL-100A - 399Z or ZPHI-100 - 399 or ZPHI-100A - 399Z).

PHIL-394. Seminar In Epistemology. 3 Hours.

This course involves an intensive study of a topic or philosopher central to the subfield of Epistemology. Students should be prepared to engage in critical analysis of current research in the field and be prepared to present a research paper at the end of the course.

Prerequisite: (PHIL-100 - 399 or PHIL-100A - 399Z or ZPHI-100 - 399 or ZPHI-100A - 399Z).

PHIL-395. Seminar In Metaphysics. 3 Hours.

This course involves an intensive study of a topic or philosopher central to the subfield of Metaphysics. Students should be prepared to engage in critical analysis of current research in the field and be prepared to present a research paper at the end of the course.

Prerequisite: (PHIL-100 - 399 or PHIL-100A - 399Z or ZPHI-100 - 399 or ZPHI-100A - 399Z).

PHIL-396. Seminar In The History Of Philosophy. 3 Hours.

This course involves an intensive study of a topic or philosopher central to the field of the History of Philosophy. Students should be prepared to engage in critical analysis of current research in the field and be prepared to present a research paper at the end of the course.

PHIL-397. Seminar In Social And Political Philosophy. 3 Hours.

This course is an intensive study of a topic or philosopher central to the field of social and political philosophy. Students should be prepared to engage in critical analysis of primary sources and current research in the field. Students should also be prepared to present a research paper at the end of the course.

Prerequisite: (PHIL-100 - 399 or PHIL-100A - 399Z or ZPHI-100 - 399 or ZPHI-100A - 399Z).