

PHILOSOPHY CLASSES, SPRING 2025

PHIL 1000: Introduction to Philosophy (BHU) (Ashfield MWF 9:30; Barrientos T/Th 10:30): An introduction to the biggest questions of philosophy. What is real? What do we know? What is justice? What are our obligations? Does God exist?

PHIL 1120: Social Ethics (BHU) (Robison MWF 10:30 & 11:30): Conversation in a democracy involves listening carefully to, fairly evaluating, and critically engaging with arguments made by others. This class provides practice in the skill of democratic conversation as we discuss contemporary ethical conflicts together.

PHIL 2200: Deductive Logic (QI) (Huenemann T/Th 12:00): We will learn methods to determine whether a claim follows from some given information, including syllogistic logic, propositional logic, truth tables, and predicate logic. We will also explore the role logic plays in philosophical arguments and problems.

PHIL 2400: Ethics (BHU) (Otteson T/Th 9:00 & 12:00): How should we live our lives? How should we treat other people? What makes an action good, bad, right or wrong? And what makes a person virtuous or vicious? We'll explore these questions and others through the lenses of virtue ethics, duty-based ethics, and utilitarianism, covering foundational figures, like Aristotle, Immanuel Kant, and John Stuart Mill, as well contemporary exponents and critics of these views.

PHIL 302: Survey of Modern Philosophy (CI) (Barrientos T/Th 1:30): This course offers a survey of major figures in modern philosophy (approx. 16th-19th centuries), a period marked by foundational and revolutionary developments in metaphysics and epistemology. We will explore these through the writings of René Descartes, Benedict de Spinoza, Margaret Cavendish, Anne Conway, G.W. Leibniz, John Locke, George Berkeley, David Hume, and Mary Shepherd. Topics will include, but are not limited to, the nature of reality, the relationship between mind and body, the limits of human knowledge, and the existence of God.

PHIL 3500: Healthcare Ethics (DHA) (Ashfield MWF 12:30-1:20): In this course, we'll focus on ethical issues in healthcare, including fundamental principles (such as autonomy and informed consent), ethical issues at the beginning and end of life, the nature of health and wellbeing, and the ethics of healthcare resource allocation. If you want to go into a health-related career, these issues will clearly be important for you to think about. However, regardless of your career, these issues eventually become important to most everyone, because just about all of us end up having to make many decisions related to our healthcare or that of our dependents throughout our lives.

PHIL 3540: Ethics Bowl (Robison and Ashfield W 4:30) - either for students who competed in fall 2024 and qualified for the National Intercollegiate Ethics Bowl, or for students competing in the Bioethics Bowl; if you are interested, please see either of the instructors for details.

PHIL 3550: Philosophy in the Public Square: Getting What We Deserve (Robison, MWF 1:30-2:20): Many human institutions and practices rely on commonly held beliefs about what a person deserves. This is so even though many of us have not spent time carefully reflecting on what it is for a person to deserve something. This class will take up that question. We'll consider different accounts of what it means to have earned something. We'll explore ideas related to what it is to be owed an apology or to be deserving of forgiveness. We'll discuss what factors might make a person the appropriate target of anger or even rage. We'll spend a significant portion of the course exploring theories of punishment with a particular emphasis on the notion of retribution.

PHIL 3710: Philosophies of East Asia (Barrientos T/Th 12:00) - This course is a survey of major traditions within East Asian philosophy, focusing on Confucianism, Taoism, Buddhism, and Zen Buddhism. We will explore the core teachings, values, and practices of each tradition, seeking to understand and appreciate their unique approaches to ethics, personal development, and the nature of reality. In addition to philosophical study, we will also learn and practice various forms of meditation central to these traditions, developing firsthand insight into the contemplative aspects of East Asian thought.

PHIL 4310: Philosophy of Science (DHA) (Huenemann T/Th 3:00) - Study of different views of the nature of science: the classical traditions of Hempel and Popper, Kuhn's view of scientific revolutions, and Feyerabend's anarchism. Topics include truth, explanation, falsification and confirmation, and the growth of scientific knowledge.

PHIL 4500: Virtue Ethics (DHA) (Ashfield MWF 10:30) - This course undertakes an advanced, systematic study of the foundations, major positions, problems, and concepts in ethical theory, as represented in classical and contemporary works. It may include Virtue Ethics, but also other theoretical approaches to ethics.

PHIL 4900: Seminar - Philosophy of Mathematics (Gentry W 2:30-5:00): This course is going to look at philosophical and theoretical foundations of mathematics. We will ask questions like: Are numbers real? What is mathematical truth? How does mathematics represent the world around us? What kinds of properties do numbers and mathematical representations have? What can our formal systems prove about themselves? The course will not require prior competency in philosophy or mathematics and will invite students to participate by choosing the particular questions and topics they want to study for the semester.

PHIL 4910: Readings and Research - by arrangement with individual instructors. Majors who have completed more than half of their coursework and would like to study a topic more deeply are welcome to meet with instructors to see if a readings & research course can be scheduled, subject to faculty availability.

PHIL 4990: Capstone seminar (Huenemann T 4:30-5:20): This course is required for philosophy majors near the completion of the degree. Students will reflect on their philosophical education and begin to prepare for what comes next.

PHIL 5400: Philosophy and Emerging Technology (DHA) (Otteson T/Th 1:30) - This course introduces students to key ethical frameworks and concepts applied to questions of emerging technology, both by considering macro-level questions of technology and its impact on human flourishing as well as applied tech ethics case studies.