

# Philosophy

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Philosophy is concerned with fundamental questions about the nature of reality; the foundations of science, ethics and art; and the nature and scope of human knowledge. Philosophy is actually the meeting place for all disciplines, for any discipline becomes philosophical once it begins seriously to examine its own methodology and fundamental presuppositions. The study of philosophy is therefore recommended to all students, regardless of their major.

Philosophy involves both systematic forms of inquiry and a prolonged reflection upon its own history. For its majors, minors and all students interested in deepening their liberal arts education, the department offers courses in the history of philosophy that span the entire tradition from the pre-Socratics to the philosophers of our own century. These historical courses are best pursued in conjunction with courses that cover the principal areas of philosophical inquiry (Metaphysics, Ethics, Epistemology, and Aesthetics). Philosophy is much more than the acquisition of a certain kind of knowledge. It is the ability to think reflectively and to raise questions about problems that lie at the root of what might appear self-evident.

Courses exclusively reserved for first-year students are all sections of Introduction to Philosophy (Phil 110). Students are permitted to take only one course at this level.

The department offers both a major and a minor program that combines necessary structure with the freedom to follow an individually oriented course of study.

The minimum requirement for a major is 10 semester courses in philosophy. All majors are required to complete the following courses: 1) *either* Ancient (225) *or* Medieval Philosophy (230); 2) *either* Early Modern (235) *or* Modern Philosophy (241); 3) *either* Ethics (204) *or* Foundations of Ethics (207); 4) *either* Metaphysics (201) *or* Problems in Metaphysics (304); 5) *either* Theory of Knowledge (209), Philosophy of Mind (261), Philosophy of Language (262) *or* Philosophy of Science (271); 6) *either* Symbolic Logic (215) *or* Logic and Language (242).

In addition to these courses, students must take at least two advanced (300-level) seminars. Students are strongly encouraged to satisfy requirements 1) through 6) as early as possible within their program of study.

The minimum requirement for the minor is six semester courses in philosophy. All minors are required to complete the following courses: 1) *either* Ancient, Medieval, Early *or* Modern Philosophy; 2) *either* Metaphysics, Ethics, *or* Foundations of Ethics; 3) at least one advanced 300-level seminar.

As a general rule, majors and minors are urged to build a strong foundation of intermediate courses before progressing to the advanced courses.

In addition to a wide range of regular courses and seminars, the Department offers tutorials and other opportunities for independent study. Accomplished students are urged to complete their studies by writing a fourth-year thesis. The Fourth-Year Thesis in Philosophy comprises a semester-long project of concentrated research geared toward the production of a substantial piece of written work. It provides fourth-year majors with the opportunity to explore a specialized interest they have developed over the course of their studies. The principal arguments and conclusions of this paper will be publicly presented at the end of the semester.

Faculty and students together benefit from regular departmental colloquia and the lively exchanges initiated by the Philosophy Club, which is open to all interested students. In addition, membership in the Holy Cross Chapter of the National Honor Society in Philosophy, Phi Sigma Tau, is available to those who have a strong academic record, participate regularly in philosophical colloquia, and demonstrate a desire and ability to philosophize. Students are encouraged to compete for two essay competitions, the Strain Gold Medal and the Markham Memorial Prize.

## Courses

### *Introductory Courses*

#### **Philosophy 110 — Introduction to Philosophy**

*Fall, spring*

In a certain way, philosophy needs no introduction. Each of us has had moments of wonder: “Why do we exist?” “Why is there so much suffering in the world?” “Why does the world itself exist?” This one-semester course for first-year students helps strengthen that sense of wonder by giving the student insight into what some of the greatest thinkers have had to say about these questions. Readings from Plato, Aristotle, Aquinas, Descartes and Kant. One unit.

### *Intermediate Courses*

#### **Philosophy 201 — Metaphysics**

*Annually*

Aristotle described metaphysics as the “science which takes up the theory of being as being and of what ‘to be’ means taken by itself.” Before and since Aristotle, the meaning and significance of metaphysics has been in dispute. While some thinkers have dismissed metaphysics as meaningless speculation, others have held it to be the center of Western philosophy. Using primary texts of classical and contemporary writers, this course studies the origins of metaphysics in ancient Greece, major developments of metaphysical thinking, and contemporary challenges to metaphysics. One unit.

#### **Philosophy 204 — Ethics**

*Annually*

A study of moral philosophy with a twofold aim: (1) to give students an appreciation of the important historical and theoretical developments in moral philosophy; (2) to help students to think, write and speak clearly about important moral issues of our time. Examines both the thought of important Western philosophers such as Aristotle, Immanuel Kant, and John Stuart Mill, and topics of contemporary concern in personal and social ethics. One unit.

#### **Philosophy 207 — Foundations of Ethics**

*Annually*

Considers various challenges to the claims of morality, and whether and how moral philosophy can meet these challenges. Special topics include: the nature and justification of an ethical life, the limits of practical reasoning, the subjectivity vs. the objectivity of value, relativism, conflicts of obligation, the idea of moral “truth,” and the sources and ultimate value of morality itself. Examines how these issues come to life in classical texts, and how they are treated in recent philosophical literature. The goal is to understand the foundations of morality (if there are any), and to gain insight into what is perhaps the most striking thing about human life—the fact that we have values. One unit.

#### **Philosophy 209 — Theory of Knowledge**

*Annually*

Do you know that you are not a brain in a vat being force-fed experiences by an evil scientist? This course considers Descartes’ skeptical arguments that we can’t really know whether the world is the way it appears to us. These skeptical arguments lead us to consider what knowledge is, whether “knowledge” means the same thing in the philosophy classroom as it means outside it, and what justifies our beliefs. Writings of contemporary analytic philosophers are read and discussed. One unit.

#### **Philosophy 215 — Symbolic Logic**

*Alternate years*

An introductory study of the formal structure of reasoning patterns such as deduction. Includes an introduction to formal languages, sentential calculus, predicate calculus, and an investigation into logic’s value and limits. One unit.

#### **Philosophy 224 — Contemporary Continental Philosophy**

*Alternate years*

Focuses on a theme or question of general scope within continental European philosophy since Nietzsche. Topics may include subjectivity, historical consciousness, technology, and plurality. Philosophical approaches may include phenomenology, hermeneutics, existentialism, psychoanalysis, the Frankfurt School, and post-structuralism. One unit.

**Philosophy 225 — Ancient Philosophy***Annually*

We start by looking at the Presocratics (sixth and fifth centuries B.C.) to witness the emergence of philosophical, scientific, ethical and religious thinking. We will follow the similarities and differences of these Presocratics to trace the kinds of questions they set and the kinds of answers they accept. Addressing many of the same questions bequeathed to them by the Presocratics, the Ancients offered new solutions. We will think with the great thinkers about alternative conceptions of the divine, first principles and causes, form and matter, atoms and the void. Wonder along with Plato, Aristotle, Lucretius and Epictetus about happiness in relation, reason and desire, and our place in society and in the universe. One unit.

**Philosophy 230 — Medieval Philosophy***Annually*

A study of selected medieval thinkers such as Augustine, Boethius, Dionysius, Anselm, Bonaventure, Aquinas, Scotus, and Ockham. The birth of scholasticism, an analysis of this philosophical movement in the 13th century, and its decline are presented. One unit.

**Philosophy 235 — Early Modern Philosophy***Fall*

A study of the origins of modern philosophy: Descartes' turning toward the subject; his attempt at a justified method guided by the ideal of mathematical certainty; his influence on the development of European rationalism, Spinoza, Leibniz. Equal attention will be given to empiricist philosophers such as Bacon, Hobbes, Locke, Berkeley, and Hume and their approaches to philosophy and science. One unit.

**Philosophy 241 — Modern Philosophy***Spring*

A study of the later development of modern philosophy including Kant's new evaluation of metaphysics, epistemology, the nature of the sciences and morality and the idealist thought of Fichte and Hegel. Attention also to the thought of those opposing idealism, especially Marx and Kierkegaard. One unit.

**Philosophy 242 — Logic and Language***Fall*

An introduction to the 20th-century analytic philosophy and philosophy of language, which to a large part is guided by the conviction that traditional philosophical problems are based on linguistic and logical confusions. Familiarizes students with the formal languages of modern sentential and predicate logic, whose development was so important for the philosophical thinking within this tradition. It will reflect on the importance of language for understanding the world and will investigate related semantic concepts such as meaning, reference and truth. One unit.

**Philosophy 243 — American Philosophy***Alternate years*

A survey of the beginnings and development of American philosophic thought from the colonial period to the present. Detailed discussion of the work of Emerson, Peirce, and James and of important movements such as transcendentalism, pragmatism and analytic thought. One unit.

**Philosophy 245 — Phenomenology***Alternate years*

Explores the motivation and the methods of phenomenological philosophy. Focus is on Husserl's development of phenomenology as a "rigorous science," and its critical revision. Topics include the relation of Husserl's "transcendental" project to the classical metaphysical tradition, the distinction between "pure" and "applied" phenomenology, the idea of a phenomenological psychology, and the influence of phenomenology in the philosophy of art. Readings include works by Husserl, Sartre, Merleau-Ponty, and others. One unit.

**Philosophy 246 — Philosophy and Literature***Alternate years*

Explores the relationship between philosophy and literature. Reveals the enormous impact of philosophy on literary texts and tries to show how philosophy is present in all forms of intellectual life. Also tries to take seriously literature's claim to be doing something that philosophy itself cannot do. The authors chosen vary, but include such figures as Shakespeare, Goethe, Nietzsche, Thomas Mann and Proust. One unit.

**Philosophy 247 — Environmental Political Philosophy***Alternate years*

The Western philosophical ethical tradition is anthropocentric, meaning that what is good or right is based upon the wants, needs and interests of humans. From such a perspective, the environment is regarded as a resource to be managed or exploited for the benefit of people. Many contemporary environmental ethicists carry on in this tradition, while others argue for an expanded ethical theory—one that takes into account the intrinsic values of animals, plants, species, ecosystems, and perhaps even the earth as a whole. In this course we will survey these different approaches with an eye to whether or not they are defensible. In doing so, we will consider issues such as animals rights, population control, the rights of future generations and wildlife restoration (e.g., prairies, forests). One unit.

**Philosophy 248 — Existentialism***Alternate years*

Existentialism was a movement in recent (1850-1950) French and German philosophy that heavily influenced subsequent European thought and literature. It saw human beings as free and troubled, lacking guidance from tradition, God, and nature. This course explores existentialism through a reading of its philosophical exponents (Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, Heidegger, Sartre, Tillich) and literary and philosophical authors (Dostoevsky, Camus). Both religious and atheistic existentialism are considered. One unit.

**Philosophy 250 — Medical Ethics***Annually*

Examines topics of current interest in biomedical ethics, and the role moral philosophy plays in public debate about controversial issues. Aim is to help students think, speak, and write clearly about these issues. Discusses moral justification and an overview of several types of ethical theory. Considers such issues as the physician-patient relationship, truth-telling and confidentiality, informed consent, reproductive technologies, abortion, the right to die, euthanasia and assisted suicide, the AIDS epidemic, human genetics, and justice in the distribution of health care. One unit.

**Philosophy 254 — Philosophy East and West***Alternate years*

By exploring Greek texts from the Pre-Socratics to Plato in relationship with the Sanscrit Upanishads, this course attempts to reveal the common metaphysical root of Western and Eastern traditions. Christian and Buddhist texts are also investigated in an attempt to show how the sharp polarity between Eastern and Western thought emerged. One unit.

**Philosophy 256 — Theory of Values***Alternate years*

This course will examine the central questions dealing with the origin, nature, and conflicts of values: How are values created? Are different kinds of values (moral, aesthetic, spiritual, vital, economic, etc.) of the same origin? Do all values exist independently of people's minds? How are values different from facts? How to resolve the conflicts of values? Could there be one objective hierarchy of values, or are values intrinsically subjective? Could our better understanding of values help us in structuring and guiding our lives? One unit.

**Philosophy 260 — Philosophy of Art***Alternate years*

By reflecting on what philosophers have said about art, this course investigates the idea that art itself performs a philosophical, perhaps even a moral, function. Art is supposed by many to have the power to reveal something, and to be in some way "good" for us. In considering whether this is so, we have to confront two basic questions. The first is: Are there any "truths" about art (about what art is, about the purpose of art, about what makes art good or bad, etc.)? The second is: does art really reveal "truths" (What kind of truths? Truths about what? Can these truths be rationally articulated? If not, why should we take art seriously?) We shall concentrate on these, and related questions. Readings from Plato, Kant, Hegel, Nietzsche, Freud, Heidegger, Kandinsky, and Iris Murdoch. One unit.

**Philosophy 261 — Philosophy of Mind***Annually*

Questions concerning the nature of the mind and its relation to the body or questions about the essential capacities of human beings distinguishing them from plants, animals, and machines are raised. Different traditional and contemporary themes about the nature of the mind are discussed critically. Emphasizes topics such as the mind-body problem, the nature of consciousness, the explanation of action, and the problem of intentionality. One unit.

**Philosophy 264 — Philosophy of History***Alternate years*

Focuses on the growth of historical consciousness in the modern epoch, although it may also give attention to such Christian thinkers as Augustine. Emphasizes the contrast between the boldly progressive vision of Hegel, which celebrates scientific culture as the goal of history, and the more traditional vision of Vico (the Italian philosopher), which embodies a cyclical moment and defines historical culture more in terms of poetry than of science. Other authors typically read include Kant, Herder, Burckhardt, Nietzsche, Löwith, and Collingwood. One unit.

**Philosophy 265 — Political Philosophy***Annually*

Political philosophy addresses the questions of how and toward what end ought human beings live together, what a just and good society would be, and what makes power legitimate? These questions are pursued through a reading of the history of Western political thought, including the work of Plato, Aristotle, Machiavelli, Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau, Marx, and J.S. Mill. Recent liberal theory also examined, focusing on the justice of welfare spending and the proper limits on government, using for example the work of John Rawls and Robert Nozick. One unit.

**Philosophy 267 — Contemporary Political Philosophy***Annually*

Examines the nature of liberal democratic politics in its relation to morality. The central question is: what are the rightful limits on and concerns of the government, law, and politics of a “liberal,” that is, free and democratic, society? “Neutralist” liberals argue that maximum individual liberty requires government neutrality toward particular moral ends or notions of the good life. Others, especially “communitarians” and “civic republicans,” fear that neutrality undermines both morality and community, and argue that government must promote both through endorsing some notion of the good life. What is the proper balance of liberty and morality? This question is pursued through the work of a number of important, most recent and American, political theorists. One unit.

**Philosophy 268 — Philosophy of Human Rights***Annually*

This course seeks to understand the concept of human rights and how human rights relate to ethical theories and social justice. Apart from fundamental metaphysical questions concerning the nature of human rights, questions concerning their universality or cultural relativity are also relevant. Comparing the works of non-Western and Western philosophers, we consider if rights are natural, or if they arose from specific historical, political and social circumstances. Such considerations about the justification of human rights direct us to the fundamental philosophical and ethical presuppositions at work in different authors’ approaches to rights. Since human rights are frequently invoked to protect human life and liberty, and to act as standards for adjudicating both national and international policies, a philosophical understanding of this concept, which this course seeks to provide, is essential. One unit.

**Philosophy 269 — Philosophy of Law***Alternate years*

Examines the nature of law and the place of law in human society. Considers the history of rule by law and reflects upon its value. Theories of law and of the relation of law to morality are explored. The course draws upon case histories and jurisprudential readings. It is not an introduction to legal reasoning, but a probe of the philosophical issues that underlie such legal concepts as equality, freedom of speech, evidence, obligation, rights, punishment, and justice. One unit.

**Philosophy 271 — Philosophy of Science***Alternate years*

An examination of the structure, function, value, and limits of science. Topics include the structure of scientific explanation, the role of experimentation, the nature of scientific progress, and the nature of scientific values. This course also investigates whether the activities of science are both rational and ethical. One unit.

**Philosophy 273 — Philosophy of Medicine***Alternate years*

The philosophy of medicine includes the metaphysical, epistemological and methodological aspects of medical practice and medical research. This course explores some of the theoretical and conceptual issues that form the basis for medical knowledge and thus influence the practice of medicine. Topics include the nature of health and disease, normality and pathology, the assumptions and goals of medicine, changes in the theoretical structure of medicine over time, the nature of medical knowledge, and methods of reasoning in medical research and practice. One unit.

**Philosophy 274 — Philosophical Anthropology***Alternate years*

We will explore the philosophy of culture through a reading of 20th-century philosophical and related writings, trying to discern what difference culture makes to our understanding of human beings. That is, what does the recognition that humans are fundamentally cultural beings do to our ethics, politics, and account of human mind and knowing? We will confront problems of cultural relativism, the role of cultural identity in politics, and what some claim is our contemporary “clash of civilizations,” reading, among others, Ernst Cassirer, Ernest Gellner, Johann Huizinga, and Samuel Huntington. One unit.

**Philosophy 277 — Philosophical Perspectives on Women***Alternate years*

Surveys the classic literature of Western philosophical views on women and the feminist response to it. Attention to feminism as a method of analysis as well as to representative issues whose philosophical significance has been identified by feminism, e.g. gender, friendship, dependence. One unit.

**Philosophy 278 — Philosophers on War and Peace***Alternate years*

Explores some major philosophical issues concerning war and peace viewed through the classic writings of Kant, Clausewitz, Lenin, William James, Tolstoy, Gandhi and contemporary authors. Emphasis is on the questions of the possibility of eliminating war, the morality of war both conventional and nuclear, and the moral problems involved in maintaining a policy of nuclear deterrence. One unit.

**Philosophy 282 — Philosophy of Religion***Alternate years*

This course is divided into two parts, both of which confront concepts and names for God with experiences of evil. The first part studies the tradition of theodicy, with attention to Augustine, Boethius, Leibniz and



contemporary liberation theology. The second part looks closely at the experience of extreme evil in genocide. Readings from P. Levi, E. Eiesel, E. Levinas, P. Celan and post-Holocaust “death of God” thinking. One unit.

### **Philosophy 284 — Philosophical Foundations of Catholicism**

*Alternate years*

This course will examine some of the philosophical foundations of Roman Catholicism and, more generally, of Christianity. We will consider the human capacity to know God, the nature of the triune God, and our response to God in Church and Sacraments. Special emphasis will be placed on the philosophical ideas that helped to shape the expression of foundational Christian doctrine. Readings will include selections from Plato, Aristotle, Plotinus, St. Augustine, St. Anselm, St. Thomas Aquinas, and other Patristic authors. One unit.

### **Philosophy 285 — Philosophy of Mythology**

*Alternate years*

Examines both philosophy's ground in mythical thinking and the tension that arises between the two spheres. Themes vary from semester to semester and will generally include, in addition to compendiums of Indian or Greek mythology, such authors as Plato, Vico, Schelling, Hegel, and Goethe. One unit.

### **Philosophy 286 — Classicism in Art and Thought**

*Alternate years*

Enlightenment culture is supposed to have liberated itself from ancient world-views. That is how “modernity” is defined. But it still expresses itself in classical terms. What is the meaning of this? Why do we remain wedded to a way of picturing the world which we claim to have progressed beyond? There are lots of superficial explanations. This course searches for a deeper understanding of what “classicism” is all about, and goes on to explore its recurrent manifestations in Enlightenment art and thought. Themes include order and disorder, freedom and desire, harmony and dissonance, individuality and the whole, unity and disunity, tragedy and reconciliation, nature and reason, and how we picture of ourselves in relation to the broad structure of reality. One unit.

### **Philosophy 287 — The Philosophy of Architecture**

*Alternate years*

More than any other art, architecture shapes our environment and the way we live. This raises serious and difficult questions about what architecture is and does, about the status of architecture as art, about the truths (if any) which it expresses, about the relationship between architectural forms and the character of human life, and about what it means to dwell. Such questions lie at the intersection of art and philosophy. In addition to readings from traditional and contemporary literature in aesthetics and architectural theory, this course reflects on these issues by looking at and responding to architectural examples. It examines the philosophy of architecture by studying architecture philosophically. One unit.

### **Philosophy 288 — Death**

*Alternate years*

Explores the antinomy of reason that is occasioned by the phenomenon of death, i.e. do we or do we not fully “die” when we die?, and the transformative rather than theoretical: how can we ourselves most effectively prepare ourselves for the deaths we will one day encounter? The image of Socrates, who faces his own death with supreme courage, serves as a model for the “philosophical” relationship to death. The readings for this course vary, but typically include Heidegger's Being and Time and Plato's Phaedo. Texts from Eastern Philosophy also play a prominent role. One unit.

### **Philosophy 289 — Ethical Issues in Death and Dying**

*Alternate years*

The ethical problems involved in caring for the terminally ill are among the most controversial issues of our day. This course examines ethical, philosophical, and public policy dimensions of death and dying. Topics include the definition of death, truth-telling with dying patients, suicide, euthanasia, deciding to forgo life-sustaining treatment, decisions on behalf of children and incompetent adults, the debate about futile care, and public policy issues. One unit.

## ***Advanced Courses***

### **Philosophy 301 — Moral Psychology**

*Alternate years*

This course addresses the nature of moral agency and moral reasoning from an interdisciplinary perspective. It will try to develop a philosophically plausible and a psychologically realistic account of human beings who are capable of acting for moral reasons. At the center of the discussion is the following question: How is it possible to conceive of human beings to be motivated by something other than pure self-interest—as moral philosophers constantly assume—if we are also biological organisms, a product of evolution and a process of “survival of the fittest?” Particularly important for our purpose is the question of whether our ability to empathize or sympathize with other people leads to altruistic and moral motivations. Readings will include Aristotle, Hume, Smith, Kant, Schopenhauer, Batson, DeWaal and others. One unit.

### Philosophy 303 — Philosophy of Social Science

*Alternate years*

Is it possible to study and explain human actions and human affairs using the methods of the natural sciences? Or does the study of human beings require its own methodology because human beings have thoughts, a free will, and can behave rationally? This course tries to find an answer to these questions by studying the most prominent responses to the above query provided by philosophers, historians and social scientists. Readings include works by authors such as Weber, Geertz, Hempel, Collingwood, Davidson, Winch, Marx and Habermas. One unit.

### Philosophy 304 — Problems in Metaphysics

*Alternate years*

Contemporary metaphysics addresses questions about the nature of reality such as: What is time? What are we? Is consciousness a physical brain process, or something non-physical? This seminar will take up some of these questions, readings are both historical and contemporary. One unit.

### Philosophy 305 — Science and Values

*Alternate years*

Science is usually seen in contemporary society as a privileged route to knowledge, and as value-neutral in its pursuit of truth. This seminar is intended to stimulate thought about the mutual influence of the natural sciences and human values. It is not a course in "applied ethics" or the ethics of technology. Rather, its goal is to come to a deeper appreciation of the conceptual underpinnings of scientific knowledge and how values are essential elements of these conceptual underpinnings. The seminar will be a study of classic texts and contemporary developments in the philosophy, history, and sociology of natural science. Both theoretical aspects and historical examples of how scientific facts and theories are constructed are discussed. A central theme is the debate about realism vs. constructivism in the philosophy of science. This includes a consideration of objectivity and subjectivity in the realms of both fact and value. Also discussed is the view that science offers the best description of reality and the different types of "scientism," and the overvaluing of science in comparison with other ways of learning about the world. One unit.

### Philosophy 306 — Problems in Moral Philosophy

*Alternate years*

This seminar addresses the relationship between theories of the mind and corresponding political theories. Among the course reading are Plato's Republic, where the association between the structure of the soul and the structure of different cities is explicit, and Aristotle's Nicomachean Ethics, where the study of the soul's structure is functional to the analysis of happiness in the polis. The second part of the seminar addresses two modern paradigms: Hobbes' Leviathan and Rousseau's Second Discourse on the Origin of Inequality. Two radically different theories are discussed which address human nature, the possibility of happiness, and the power of emotions while distinguishing themselves from their ancient models. One unit.

### Philosophy 307 — Metaphysics and Natural Science

*Alternate years*

This is a course naturalistic metaphysics which compares the speculative conceptions of philosophers to recent work in the natural sciences (this semester, physics). Readings of three 19th - and 20th-century "process" philosophers (Schelling, Peirce, Whitehead) who hoped to answer fundamental metaphysical questions from a naturalistic perspective. Each is coupled with a scientist's exposition of relevant parts of contemporary physical theory, particularly, the Big Bang origin of the universe (Weinberg), complex systems (Prigogine), and quantum mechanics (Polkinghorne). Goal is to use the science to educate the philosophy, and the philosophy to educate the science, hence to understand the natural world through a dialogue between the two. One unit.

### Philosophy 308 — Problems in Epistemology

*Alternate years*

Prominent in contemporary theory of knowledge is the attack on "foundationalism," the belief that claims to knowledge can receive ultimate or philosophical justification. Foundationalism has been central to the mainstream of philosophy since Descartes, although arguably it is as old as Plato. Thus "antifoundationalism" is a deep challenge to philosophy. This course examines the antifoundationalist critique, and the attempt to save philosophy from it, focusing primarily on the work of Richard Rorty, Michael Williams, and Hilary Putnam, but with selections from a number of earlier philosophers, including James, Nietzsche, Wittgenstein, Quine, and Heidegger. One unit.

### Philosophy 309 — Approaches to Medical Ethics

*Alternate years*

This course will examine the development and history of some of the most important approaches to medical ethics. It will examine three of the most important theoretical approaches: the principle-based common morality theory of Tom Beauchamp and James Childress; the libertarianism of H. Tristram Engelhardt, Jr.; and the virtue ethics of Edmund Pellegrino and David Thomasma. Many issues of contemporary concern in medical practice and research will be addressed in conjunction with the study of these theories. We will critique the contemporary practice of bioethics. One unit.

**Philosophy 316 — Problems in Aesthetics***Alternate years*

Selected issues or texts in the philosophy of art explored in depth. One unit.

**Philosophy 332 — Problems in Phenomenology***Alternate years*

Selected issues or texts in the Phenomenological good is explored in depth. One unit.

**Philosophy 335 — Philosophical Naturalism***Alternate years*

Philosophical naturalism holds that all reality is in or is continuous with physical nature, hence nothing is supernatural, purely non-physical or “ideal.” This also means the conclusions of natural science are directly relevant to the philosophical investigation of reality (that is, metaphysics). The historical problem for this view is to account for things that appear to be non-physical, like life, consciousness, knowledge, numbers, possibilities, God. This course encounters a variety of recent naturalisms to see whether they can handle these issues, reading John Dewey, W.V.O. Quine, Justus Buchler, Hans Jonas, and Hilary Putnam. One unit.

**Philosophy 340 — Albert Schweitzer – Reverence for Life***Alternate years*

In the course of the semester we will focus on an in-depth examination of Schweitzer’s ethics of reverence for life, as well as on its interconnectedness with the fields as diverse as art and politics. We will critically examine whether Schweitzer’s ethics of reverence for life, as well as his personal example, may serve as our moral guide in the twenty-first century. One unit.

**Philosophy 350 — Pre-Socratic Philosophy***Alternate years*

A study of the origin of Western philosophy and science before Socrates. It investigates the relationship between myth and philosophy, the development of various schools of philosophy (Pythagoreans, Eleatics), and concludes with a discussion of the sophists. Emphasis is placed upon the study of the texts of Pre-Socratic philosophers and the interpretations of modern scholars. One unit.

**Philosophy 354 — Plato***Annually*

“Platonism” has fallen on hard times in the contemporary philosophical marketplace. As a way of thinking about ethical, epistemological, or metaphysical issues, it is seen as an enterprise which is more or less bankrupt. The goal of this seminar is to overcome the modern prejudice against Platonism by rereading Plato, and understanding what he really has to say. Do his works represent a coherent philosophical vision? If so, what does this vision offer us? One unit.

**Philosophy 358 — Aristotle***Annually*

“All human beings by nature desire to understand.” Or so Aristotle claims, in the first sentence of his *Metaphysics*. The goal of this seminar is to understand this claim. What is Aristotle’s conception of (our) “nature,” and how is it related to his conception of reality as a whole? Is our nature most fully realized when our desire (to understand) is most fully satisfied? If so, what does this involve? What does it mean to be fully human? What does Aristotle think we ultimately discover in our attempt to understand the world? We shall pursue these questions, in depth, by exploring the fundamental connections between—and the significant tensions within—Aristotle’s *Metaphysics*, *Physics*, *Ethics* and *Poetics*. Ultimate focus is on Aristotle’s conception of tragedy, and the philosophical implications of the work of two tragic poets (Sophocles and Euripides). Attention is also given to whatever seems to separate Aristotle’s way of thinking and our own. One unit.

**Philosophy 360 — Aristotle and Confucius***Alternate years*

This course undertakes a close comparison of the ethics of Aristotle and Confucius, with attention to their views of the cosmos, the self, and human relationships. We compare the central ethical concepts of the two figures; ask to what extent these concepts and their associated practices are bound by the respective cultures; examine the most primitive assumptions of each author about human beings and our natural and social environments; and investigate to what extent each author’s ethics requires or would be aided by a theoretical “first philosophy.” One unit.

**Philosophy 362 — Augustine***Alternate years*

This seminar introduces the thought of Augustine through study of some main works in relation to key themes in Greek philosophy (chiefly Plotinus) and Christian theology. Augustine’s *Confessions* are generally read, but depending on the topical focus in a given year, this may be followed by study of his *City of God*, *De Trinitate*, or passages from other works. One unit.

**Philosophy 366 — Thomas Aquinas***Alternate years*

A detailed study of selected texts of St. Thomas Aquinas with reference to other significant medieval figures. The focus is on understanding St. Thomas’ thought both as an intellectual achievement in its own right and as part of a continuous tradition of philosophical and theological inquiry. Topics of special interest will include: the existence and nature of God, creation and the nature of reality, human and divine knowledge, as



well as problems in ethics and politics. Late medieval Scholasticism involved a rediscovery of and sustained dialogue with Aristotelian thought. Thus, participants in this course benefit from a prior knowledge of ancient Greek philosophy, although it is not a prerequisite for enrollment. One unit.

**Philosophy 368 — Meister Eckhart**

*Alternate years*

This course typically focuses on Eckhart's sermons (which he composed in German) rather than the more formal philosophical treatises (which he wrote in Latin). It is in the sermons where Eckhart's mysticism is most pronounced. As a result, they serve as an ideal basis for evaluating the relationship between philosophy and mysticism. In addition, the question is raised to what degree Eckhart's thinking reveals the essence, not only of Christianity, but of religion as such. In this regard, Eckhart commentaries from Buddhist and Islamic thinkers may also be considered. One unit.

**Philosophy 370 — Kant**

*Alternate years*

A reading course in the primary sources, concentrating mostly on Kant's Critique of Pure Reason and Critique of Judgment. The reading and discussion focus on Kant's theory of knowledge, as well as his metaphysical, aesthetic, and anthropological views. The approach is both historical and critical. One unit.

**Philosophy 375 — Hegel**

*Alternate years*

An in-depth study of the philosophy of Hegel. This includes a probing and testing of his positions on the nature of reality and his theory of knowledge. Emphasis is on the philosophy of history, the history of philosophy, the state, and religion, and on their contemporary relevance. One unit.

**Philosophy 380 — Nietzsche**

*Alternate years*

Friedrich Nietzsche is one of the archetypal modern masters. His notions of the "death of God," the "will to power," amor fati, the Dionysian and Apollinian, the overman and many others have entered the consciousness of the 20th century. His influence was (and still is) immense. The seminar is an in-depth study of Nietzsche's work. The discussion will be focused on the question of creation and negation, on nihilism and its overcoming, on the sense of morality and the criticism of Christianity. Nietzsche's books used in class are: The Gay Science, Thus Spoke Zarathustra, Beyond Good and Evil, Genealogy of Morals, Twilight of Idols, The Anti-Christ, and Ecce Homo. One unit.

**Philosophy 383 — Heidegger**

*Alternate years*

This course consists of a reading and discussion of some of the major works of Heidegger. Attention is given to his criticism of Western philosophy, his understanding of truth, his teaching on the meaning of being human (Dasein), his pursuit of the question of the meaning of Being, and his critique of technology. One unit.

**Philosophy 391 — Wittgenstein**

*Alternate years*

An intensive reading course focusing on Wittgenstein's early Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus and his late Philosophical Investigations. Topics of special interest include the author's views on philosophy, the constitution of linguistic meaning, truth, and the problem of solipsism. The course also tries to evaluate Wittgenstein's contribution to and relevance for contemporary philosophy. One unit.

**Philosophy 400 — Tutorials**

*Fall, spring*

Independent study of various topics of special interest to individual students and faculty directors. Normally, tutorials will only be offered for topics that are not covered by regularly offered courses. One unit.

**Philosophy 497 — Fourth-Year Thesis**

*Spring*

The fourth-year thesis should in some way represent the culmination of a student's work in philosophy, drawing on previous background and developed interests. It is therefore best undertaken in the spring semester of the fourth year. A student who is interested in writing a thesis must submit to the Chair of the Department a brief prospectus (2-4 pages) describing the proposed topic. This prospectus should clarify the problems, issues, or themes which the thesis will address, and present an initial plan of research. Ideally, the prospectus would provide at least a rough outline for the project as a whole. It should include a preliminary bibliography. The deadline for submitting a prospectus is the Monday following the Thanksgiving vacation. Once the prospectus is submitted, the Chair will review it in consultation with the prospective advisor who will approve the prospectus or suggest revisions. It is recommended that a student interested in submitting a prospectus meet with a potential advisor well in advance of the deadline. The prospectus is meant to ensure that the student has a coherent and manageable topic. It also ensures that substantive work on the thesis itself can begin at the outset of the spring semester. Equipped with an initial reading list, the student should be able to undertake preliminary research over the Christmas vacation. The completed thesis is to be submitted to the advisor and two additional readers (one of whom may be from outside the department) not later than the last regular day of classes. The readers will be chosen by the student together with the advisor and Department Chair. Shortly after the thesis is submitted (usually during the study period), the student will have the opportunity publicly to present, and to defend, his or her work. After the defense, the advisor (in consultation with the readers) will determine a letter grade for the thesis. One unit.