Philosophy Courses

PHI 100 Introduction to Philosophy (3 credits)
A consideration of basic problems, such as the nature of reality, the possibilities of human understanding, the relation of the mind to physical existence, the difference between right and wrong, the relation between the individual and society. Recommended as the first course in philosophy.

PHI 203 Introduction to Logic (3 credits)
A study of argumentation, formal and informal. The recognition of arguments, the detection of informal and formal fallacies, the testing of validity with Venn Diagrams, the use of techniques for translating ordinary language into standard forms, and the use of techniques for defining terms will be studied.

PHI 205 Introduction to Symbolic Logic (1.5 credits)
A course in how to render ordinary language arguments into symbolic form and how to test them for validity. The principles of both propositional and predicate logic will be studied.

PHI 212 Ethics (3 credits)
An introduction to moral reasoning that focuses on a variety of contemporary moral problems such as abortion, euthanasia, the treatment of animals, social justice, and capital punishment. Students will learn to clarify and defend their views on such issues, and they will deepen their understanding of the nature of morality.

PHI 216 Existentialism (3 credits)
The philosophy of existence, studied through the works of such thinkers as Kierkegaard, Heidegger, Nietzsche, Sartre, and Jaspers. Existentialism in its influence in political theory, literature, and the fine arts is also treated.

PHI 231 Business Ethics (3 credits)
An analysis of the different positions people take on the moral issues involved in the conduct of business. Topics such as work safety standards, preferential hiring, responsibility for the environment, truth in advertising, government regulation, and consumer rights will be examined. In addition, the course will study several important theories of economic justice.

PHI 232 Aesthetics: The Visual Arts (1.5 credits)
A study of twentieth century theories of the visual arts. We will examine the creative process, what our arts tell us about our sensibilities, and how people come to appreciate (or why they fail to appreciate) art. Particular attention will be paid to theories of non-representational art. We will read authors such as Karsten Harries, Kenneth Clark, and Jose Ortega y Gassett.

PHI 233 Aesthetics: The Literary Arts (1.5 credits)
A study of philosophical theories about prose and poetry. We will read authors such as Frank Kermode, Susanne Langer, Friedrich Nietzsche and Michael Polanyi.

PHI 245 Ethical Issues in Technology and Society (3 credits)
This course will examine the ethical and philosophical issues that emerge from technological developments. From gunpowder to the personal computer, technology has had a profound impact on the way we live. Today, new developments in genetics and information technology confront society with issues concerning right to privacy, how to define human life, and the threat of eugenics. This course will examine the implications of controversial technologies such as these. Examples from the past and present will be used. The relationship between science, technology, and society will also be explored.

PHI 246 Environmental Philosophy (3 credits)
An exploration of ethical and conceptual problems arising out of humanity's relation to nature. Topics include the value of wilderness, the concept of nature, our obligations towards other animals, deep ecology, and ecofeminism. In addition to developing reasoned views on such topics, students will acquire a basic understanding of major environmental problems. If taken for upper-level credit, students will be required to complete additional, more advanced, reading and writing assignments.

PHI 301 The Beginnings of Philosophy (3 credits)

The history of Hellenic and Hellenistic philosophy from its beginnings in myth and religion. Emphasis upon the major thinkers and movements of the Greek world, beginning with the pre-Socratics, and concluding with philosophy in Roman times. Concentration upon Plato and Aristotle.

PHI 302 Jewish, Christian and Islamic Philosophy (3 credits)
A study of philosophy as created by Jewish, Christian and Islamic cultures and of the problems posed for philosophy by the monotheistic faiths. This course will consider the background and contribution of such men as Augustine, Anselm, Averroes, Maimonides and Thomas Aquinas. Several modern thinkers in these religious traditions will also be considered.

PHI 303 Modern Philosophy and Scientific Revolutions (3 credits)
A study of the impact of modern science on Western philosophy and the response of major thinkers to changes in views of the world and humanity. The course concentrates on the major figures from Descartes to Kant.

PHI 304 Recent Philosophy and Technological Revolutions (3 credits)
A study of the impact of the industrial and post-industrial revolutions on philosophy and the reaction of philosophers of the 19th and 20th centuries to historicism and social change.

PHI 310 Philosophy of Language (3 credits)
A study of the major contending theories of language in 20th century British, French and American philosophy: logical positivism, ordinary language philosophy, language on the model of a game, and postmodernism. Prerequisite: PHI 203 and at least one additional course in philosophy.

PHI 318 Social and Political Philosophy (3 credits)
An examination of the theories of society which are original and most influential. The course emphasizes the essential structures of these theories, which are contemporary as well as classical. Both problem-oriented and historically oriented methodologies will be used in the study.

PHI 324 Critical Studies in Philosophy (1.5 credits)
A study of some important philosopher or philosophical movement or text. The course will also sample some of the critical secondary literature concerning its focal topic. The course may be taken repeatedly provided the focal topic is different. (This course meets the requirement for senior seminar).

PHI 325 American Philosophy (3 credits)
A sample of several well-known American philosophers such as William James, John Dewey, Sidney Hook, and Richard Rorty. A central problem addressed will be whether there is a distinctively "American Philosophy."

PHI 333 Philosophy of Law (3 credits)
An analysis of the major philosophical issues concerned with legal concepts such as "liberty," "responsibility," and "law" itself. The course will study historically significant treatments of these topics as well as current discussion of them. Prerequisite: PHI 203 and at least one additional course in philosophy.

PHI 341 Philosophical Issues in Mass Communication (3 credits)
An investigation of the impact of electronic communication on our thought processes. Attention will be paid to recent historical shifts in the way we think about nature, personal relationships, vocation, social conformity, and moral value; to the connection between technological developments in media and "postmodernism"' and to the future impact instantaneousness is likely to have on our awareness and on our social configurations.

PHI 349 Bioethics (1.5 credits)
Advances in medicine and biotechnology have brought a number of ethical issues to the fore. Ethical theories will be discussed and applied to topics such as: patient consent, medical experimentation, euthanasia, and the new reproductive technologies. The course should be of interest to students in the sciences, or those interested in the health professions. However, a knowledge of science is not assumed. Prerequisite: Upper level standing, or consent of instructor.

PHI 350 Ethical Theory (1.5 credits)

This course will examine the three main ethical theories of the Western philosophical tradition: virtue ethics, deontological ethics, and utilitarianism. Emphasis will be placed on primary sources, such as Aristotle, Kant, Bentham and Mill. Both historical and contemporary perspectives will be covered.

PHI 448 Phenomenology (3 credits)
A study of selected works in the 20th century French and German philosophy from Husserl to Sartre and of the American philosophers influenced by this method of philosophical description. We will explore applications of phenomenology to a wide variety of fields (e.g. the social sciences, psychology, art history, and ethnology) and evaluate its contribution to learning in those fields.

PHI 465 and RST 465 Senior Seminar (2 credits)
Philosophy and Religious Studies Seminar for seniors. Meets with PHI 365/RST 365. Required of all seniors majoring in Philosophy and Religious Studies. Application of learning in the major to a discussion and analysis of a current issue in philosophy or religious studies, including analysis and discussion of recent literature on current issues. Synthesis in a major essay the learning as a Philosophy and Religious Studies major around a single theme.