Philosophy Courses Spring 2022

CGS 10 Intro to Cognitive Science (IS)
3 credits
MW 2:40-4:05, CRN: 21373
Professor Teehan

PHI 05F Insights: Friendship
*1 credit
TR 10:00-11:00, CRN: 23347
Professor Singer

PHI 10B Philosophic Themes in Film (HP)
3 credits
TR 9:40-11:05, CRN: 23348 Professor Karofsky
MW 4:20-5:45, CRN: 23349 Instructor TBA

PHI 10C Theories of Human Nature (HP)
3 credits
MW 2:40-4:05, CRN: 23350
Professor Acampora

PHI 14 Introduction to Ethics (HP)
3 credits
Multiple sections, multiple instructors

PHI 14S Atheism (HP)
FIRST YEAR STUDENTS ONLY
4 credits
TR 11:20-1:15, CRN: 22351
Professor Karofsky

PHI 14S The Meaning of Life (HP)
FIRST YEAR STUDENTS ONLY
3 credits
TR 1:00-2:25, CRN: 21212
Professor McEvoy

PHI 133 Ethics & the Natural Environment (HP)
3 credits
MW 9:40-11:05, CRN: 23354
Professor Acampora

PHI 143 Classical Modern Philosophy
3 credits
TR 2:40-4:05, CRN: 20101
Professor Godlove

PHI 150 Critical Reasoning (HP)
3 credits
MW 11:20-12:45, CRN: 21651
Professor Acampora

PHI 152 Scientific Reasoning (QR)
3 credits
MW 9:40-11:05, CRN: 21690
Professor Eliot

PHI 162 Philosophy of Biology (HP)
3 credits
MW 11:20-12:45, CRN: 23355
Professor Eliot

PHI 180A Epistemology (WI)
3 credits
TR 11:20-12:45, CRN: 23356
Professor McEvoy
CGS 10 Introduction to Cognitive Science (IS) (3 credits)
Cognitive science studies the mind and behavior from the points of view of philosophy, psychology, neuroscience, computer science, biology, and other disciplines. This course considers how mind appears on the scene in the course of human evolution, and how to make sense of mind as embedded in the natural world. Topics include the problem of consciousness, the question of non-human animal minds, the role of the body in cognition, and the workings of the moral mind.

PHI 005F Insights: Friendship (1 credit)
Friendship is a crucial part of a good human life. This one credit course explores puzzles that arise about this crucial and familiar relationship. For example: Can friendship be one-sided or does it have to be mutual? Can friendship be shallow? Do friends have to be similar or can they be very different from one another? And what is the value of friendship in the larger context of things we value (e.g., ambition, morality)?

PHI 10B Philosophic Themes in Film (HP) (3 credits)
This course is an introduction to various philosophical issues that arise in contemporary films like Ad Astra, Arrival, Ex Machina, Her, Beautiful Boy, Silence, A Serious Man, Edge of Tomorrow, Inception, and The Matrix. Some of the issues examined include the problem of skepticism, the mind-body problem, personal identity, artificial intelligence, free will and determinism, moral dilemmas and the meaning of life. (Formerly PHI 16.)

PHI 10C Theories of Human Nature (HP) (3 credits)
This course explores what is distinctive about human beings. Questions we explore include: Are we grown from the earth, self-made or destined for transcendence? What makes human beings moral? Why are human beings seekers of knowledge? Do human beings have an essence? What is the connection between human nature and the natural world? (Formerly PHI 25.)

PHI 014 Ethics (HP) (3 credits)
This course focuses on critical reasoning about ethics. It reviews major approaches to ethical values and examines the bases for why some conduct (for example killing, deceit and fraud) is wrong, and why some things (like freedom, fairness, compassion) are valuable. The course also examines the relationship between ethics and society, with a focus on contemporary issues, for example ethics in professional or business contexts, in health and medical contexts, in personal relationships, and with respect to the environment.

PHI 14S Atheism (HP) (4 credits)  
FIRST YEAR STUDENTS ONLY
This course explores atheism, the view that God does not exist. We examine the history of atheism from the ancient period to the present; reasons and arguments in support of atheism; and atheist responses to such questions as: Can an atheist lead a meaningful life? Can atheism provide for an objective basis for morality? And why and how does the universe exist? We consider the writings of various atheists including: Lucretius, Hume, D’Holbach, Darwin, Marx, Freud, Nietzsche, Russell, Dawkins, Harris, Hitchens, Dennett, and Onfray.
Philosophy Course Descriptions (Spring 2022)

PHI 14S The Meaning of Life (HP) (3 credits)  FIRST YEAR STUDENTS ONLY
What does it all mean? What is the point of life? For some people, the meaning of life has to do with God; for others, it is happiness; for others, it is helping others. Some thinkers reject the idea of a ‘one size fits all’ view of meaning, and hold that we must create our own meaning, while still others argue that life has no meaning. This course examines various approaches to the question of the meaning of life and how this question connects with other important philosophical questions.

PHI 51D Dangerous Ideas (1 credit)
Ideas matter. Concepts such as cultural identity, the meaning of food, democracy, faith, race, freedom, gender, have inspired social movements, shaped ways of life and political systems, and dramatically influenced the lives of individuals. Scientific ideas (such as evolution, species extinction, climate science) and skepticism about science also have power to shape our lives. Powerful ideas can be dangerous, generating turmoil and destabilizing the status quo, or supporting the status quo when change is needed, or creating unanticipated consequences. No reading required, just attendance.

PHI 51R Philosophy and Race (3 credits)
This course examines the ideas of race and racism. It investigates the science and metaphysics of race (the question “in what way is race ‘real’?”); the cognitive science of race and racism (what psychological mechanisms are involved in race classifications); the ethical and political theory of equality and egalitarianism; and the question, what, if anything, should we do about race and racism.

PHI 52 Philosophy and Popular Culture (3 credits)
Thought about philosophical issues is provoked by popular culture – by blogs and twitter, by TV shows, comic books, video games and films. This course pursues a set of philosophical questions through engagement with selected examples of popular culture.

PHI 90 Contemporary Ethical Issues (HP) (3 credits)
This course critically examines various positions taken on contemporary moral issues and dilemmas. Possible topics include abortion, sexism, euthanasia, sexual preference, marriage, racism, privacy, capital punishment, suicide, civil disobedience, punishment, punishment and the mentally ill, and environmental ethics.

PHI 120 Philosophy of Law (HP) (3 credits)
This course explores prominent answers philosophers have offered to the question ‘What is law?’ Along the way, we explore the idea of the rule of law, the relationship between law and the moral value of justice, the relationship between law and power, the centrality of rules and principles to the law, and the nature of legal reasoning.
**Philosophy Course Descriptions (Spring 2022)**

**PHI 133 Ethics and the Natural Environment (HP) (3 credits)**
This course explores the relationship between human nature and the natural environment. It considers whether human beings have ethical duties to the natural environment – including to animals and other species (e.g., plants and even microorganisms) – and what the basis for such duties might be. The course considers also whether only living things have ethical value or whether the environment itself has ethical significance.

**PHI 143 Classical Modern Philosophy (3 credits)**
This course examines the views of 17th and 18th century philosophers about knowledge and the nature of reality. Topics include perception, the limits and justification of knowledge, substance (is reality purely physical?), cause and effect, free will, personal identity and the existence of God. Attention is paid to philosophers’ efforts to understand and advance science, to deal with turmoil about religious authority and religious beliefs, and to improve human life.

**PHI 150 Critical Reasoning (HP) (3 credits)**
This course is a study of reasoning and argument as they appear in ordinary usage. The aim is to increase the student’s critical thinking skills, for example their ability to recognize unsupported assertions, to analyze and assess arguments encountered in everyday life, and to formulate and present cogent arguments of one’s own.

**PHI 152 Scientific Reasoning (QR) (3 credits)**
This course explores scientific reasoning. Topics include the fundamental ideas of reasoning (support, evidence, argument); the nature of scientific theories and the evidence that grounds them; statistical reasoning, reasoning about causes, and the relation between the two; ways scientific reasoning commonly goes awry; and how statistical reasoning can support decision-making under uncertainty. Students practice a variety of arguments from real contexts. Particular attention is paid to science as it is presented for non-specialist audiences, as for instance in science journalism.

**PHI 162 Philosophy of Biology (HP) (3 credits)**
This course surveys recent philosophical discussions of biology. Topics include the reality of species, races, and ecosystems; how and what genes explain; analysis of concepts like adaptation and fitness; evolutionary explanations of morality; and assumptions about what’s natural and unnatural in ecology.

**PHI 180A Epistemology (WI) (3 credits)**
Are all your experiences caused by an evil scientist electronically stimulating your brain, which he keeps in a jar in his laboratory? Do we have any evidence to believe that the sun will rise tomorrow? If a reliable psychic told you that you were going to die tomorrow, but admitted that she had no evidence for this claim, should you believe her? Epistemology – the study of knowledge – raises these and other fascinating questions about our beliefs and knowledge. This course examines answers various philosophers have offered to these, and other, questions.

Hofstra Philosophy Department. Chair: Prof. Baehr; Admin. Assist.: Joanne Herlihy; philosophy@hofstra.edu, 516-463-5612
Cognitive Science is an interdisciplinary study of the mind and behavior. This course will consider how “mind” appears on the scene in the course human evolution, and how to make sense of “mind” as embedded in the natural world. This will lead us to explore topics such as the problem of consciousness, the question of non-human animal minds, the role of the body in cognition, and the workings of the moral mind.

* This is interdisciplinary course (IS) is open to anyone; there are no prerequisites. It is a required course for those pursuing a Minor in Cognitive Science.
PHILOSOPHY OF LAW

What is law?

A special kind of morality?
The command of the sovereign?
What judges say it is?
A defense of the powerful?

In this class, students are empowered to develop their own convictions and to *figure things out for themselves.*

*In this discussion-based class we think deeply and question everything*
Friendship is a crucial part of a good human life, and is familiar to us all. But puzzles arise about this crucial and familiar relationship: Is friendship necessarily mutual or can it be one-sided? Are friendships always deep and significant or sometimes shallow? Does friendship allow for difference or require similarity? What happens if you have to choose between your friend’s interests and your own, or between your friend and your ideals?

This 1-credit course has no prerequisites, and doesn't presuppose prior experience in philosophy.
Like movies that make you *THINK*?

Then you should take

**PHI 10B: Philosophic Themes in Film**

In PHI 16, we will explore some key philosophical issues such as: skepticism, free will and determinism, artificial intelligence, and ethics. We will use movies like *Ad Astra, Arrival, Ex Machina, Her, Beautiful Boy, Silence, A Serious Man, Edge of Tomorrow, Inception,* and *The Matrix* in order to help us to think about these problems and analyze various solutions that are offered to them.

This course has no prerequisites.
This course explores what is distinctive about human beings through readings in philosophy. This course is an excellent Introduction to Philosophy.

Some themes explored:
• Are we grown from the earth, self-made, or destined for transcendence?

• What makes human beings moral?

• Why are human beings seekers of knowledge?

• Do human beings have an essence?

• What's the connection between human nature and the natural world?
People often make claims about good ways to live and right ways to act. What exactly do these claims mean? How, if at all, can we reasonably settle disputes about what way of life is best, and what action is right? What sort of authority do moral claims have over us? This course explores answers to these questions by studying several important moral theories.
PHI 14S

Atheism

ATHEISM

IS NOT A DIRTY WORD.

This course explores the view that God does not exist. We will examine the history of atheism from the ancient period to the present; the reasons and arguments in support of atheism; and the atheist responses to such questions as: Can an atheist lead a meaningful life? Can atheism provide for an objective basis for morality? And why and how does the universe exist?

We will consider the writings of various atheists including: Lucretius, Hume, D'Holbach, Darwin, Marx, Freud, Nietzsche, Russell, Dawkins, Harris, Hitchens, Dennett, and Onfray.

*As an introductory class, no prior knowledge of philosophy is necessary.

**Open to everyone – believers, nonbelievers, and anyone in between.
What does it all mean? What is the point of life? We've all wondered about these questions from time to time.

And there are a range of answers available. For some people, the meaning of life has to do with God; for others, it is happiness; for others, it is helping others. Some thinkers reject the idea of a "one size fits all" view of meaning, and hold that we must create our own meaning, while still others argue that life has no meaning.

Whatever the answer, the question of life's meaning quickly becomes entangled with other philosophical questions. This course will examine various approaches to the question of the meaning of life, and how this question connects with other important philosophical questions.
This course examines the ideas of race and racism, primarily in the United States. We investigate the science and metaphysics of race—the question “in what way is race ‘real’?”—the cognitive science of race and racism (what psychological mechanisms are involved in race classifications), the concept of “whiteness”, and the political theory of equality and egalitarianism. We will discuss the normative philosophical question: what, if anything, should we do about race and racism?
This course considers a selection of comic books classics and explores their philosophical perspectives on free will, personal identity, the nature of time, the existence of God. Students should have some prior familiarity with the genre and the works mentioned.
PHI 90 Contemporary Ethical Issues (HP)

This course critically examines various positions taken on some contemporary moral issues and dilemmas. Possible topics include abortion, sexism, euthanasia, sexual preference, marriage, racism, privacy, capital punishment, suicide, civil disobedience, punishment, punishment and the mentally ill, and environmental ethics.
Explore the relationship between humanity and the natural world, including our obligations toward nonhuman beings. This course will cover our responsibilities in respect of nature, and will delve into the metaphysics of environmental consciousness. The semester will be devoted to an in-depth examination of environmental ethics and philosophy of nature.
In this course we will examine the views of 17th and 18th century philosophers about knowledge and the nature of reality. The topics we will discuss include perception, the limits and the justification of knowledge, substance (is reality purely physical?), cause and effect, free will, personal identity, and the existence of God.

We will also pay attention to the efforts these philosophers made to understand and advance science, to deal with turmoil about religious authority and religious beliefs (we’ll develop a working understanding of various ways to be a heretic), and—directly or indirectly—to improve human life.
PHILOSOPHY 150: CRITICAL REASONING

A study of reasoning and argument as they appear in ordinary usage. The aim of the course is to increase the student’s skills in critical thinking: how to recognize unsupported assertions, how to analyze and assess arguments encountered in everyday life, and how to formulate and present cogent arguments of one’s own.
How does scientific reasoning work?

It's not obvious. And scientists disagree about it! Ideas about how scientific methods work have been changing since before science was called “science.” We will look at some of these ideas, from Bacon’s and Newton’s methods to the 20th century merger of scientific method with ideas about chance and probability. This isn’t a statistics course, but we work to understand some current disagreements about methods and the “replication crisis.” We will apply these ideas to many examples from actual science.

earns QR (Quantitative Reasoning) distribution credit

foundational for Minor in Sci Reasoning & Data Analysis
Epistemology: Evil Scientists, Absent Sunrises and Psychics

Are all your experiences caused by an evil scientist electronically stimulating your brain, which he keeps in a jar in his laboratory? Do we have any evidence to believe that the sun will rise tomorrow? If a reliable psychic told you that you were going to die tomorrow, but admitted that she had no evidence for this claim, should you believe her? Epistemology—the study of knowledge—raises these and other fascinating questions about our beliefs and knowledge. This course will examine answers that various philosophers have offered to these, and other, questions.