Hofstra University Department of Philosophy
Spring 2023 Courses

CGS 10 Introduction to Cognitive Science (IS)
MW 9:40-11:05, CRN: 21244
Professor Teehan

PHI 009T: Time Travel *1 credit
M 6:00pm-7:00pm, CRN: 23537
Professor Karofsky

PHI 10A What Does It All Mean?
Life, Meaning and Philosophy (HP)
TR 11:20-12:45, CRN: 23267
Professor McEvoy
TR 1:00-2:25, CRN: 23268
Professor McEvoy

PHI 10B Philosophic Themes in Film (HP)
TR 2:40-4:05, CRN: 22943
Professor Karofsky
TR 4:20-5:45, CRN: 22451
Professor Karofsky

PHI 10E Philosophical Themes in Science Fiction (HP)
MW 11:20-12:45, CRN: 23269
Professor Dardis

PHI 14 Introduction to Ethics (HP)
Multiple sections, one section mid-semester, multiple instructors

PHI 14S Skepticism and Knowledge (HP)
*FIRST YEAR STUDENTS ONLY *4 credits
MW 2:40-4:35, CRN: 21105
Professor Godlove

PHI 91 Technology and Human Values
TR 6:00pm-7:25pm, CRN: 23270
Professors Benjamin and Barry Dynkin

PHI 121 Crime and Punishment (HP)
MW 2:40-4:05, CRN: 23271
Professor Baehr

PHI 131 Ethics and Animals (HP)
TR 2:40-4:05, CRN: 23536
Professor Acampora

PHI 143 Classical Modern Philosophy
MW 11:20-12:45, CRN: 20092
Professor Godlove

PHI 150 Critical Reasoning
TR 9:40-11:05, CRN: 21495
Professor Acampora

PHI 152 Scientific Reasoning (QR)
MW 9:40-11:05, CRN: 21526
Professor Eliot

PHI 170 Ethical Theory
Values, Relativism and Pluralism (HP)
TR 2:40-4:05, CRN: 23273
Professor Singer

PHI 180B Metaphysics
MW 2:40-4:05, CRN: 23274
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 009T Time Travel (1cr.)
In this class, each student will explore a time-travel film of their choice. They will develop an explanation of the way the film explains and accounts for time-travel, examine problems for that explanation, work out some solutions, and then determine whether any of those solutions work. No prior philosophy courses required.

PHI 10A What Does It All Mean? Life, Meaning and Philosophy (HP) (3 cr.)
What does it all mean? What is the point of life? We’ve all wondered about these questions from time to time. 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. Great choice for a first course in philosophy.

PHI 10B Philosophic Themes in Film (HP) (3 cr.)
An introduction to 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. 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. Great choice for a first course in philosophy.

PHI 10E Philosophic Themes in Science Fiction (HP) (3 cr.)
Philosophy and science fiction go hand-in-hand: science fiction thinks about issues, in a way that is entertaining, vivid and gripping, that philosophy thinks about, too – issues such as identity, the nature of mind, time and time travel, appearance and reality, whether there are alternative worlds. This course will use excerpts from science fiction and philosophical readings to explore some of these issues and introduce the student to philosophy. No prior course or experience in philosophy is necessary. Great choice for a first course in philosophy.

PHI 014 Introduction to Ethics (HP) (3 cr.)
The focus of this course is on critical reasoning about ethics. It reviews major approaches to ethical values and examines the bases for why some conduct (like killing, deceit, fraud) is wrong, and why some things (like freedom, fairness, compassion) are valuable. The course also examines the relationship between ethics and society, with focus on contemporary issues. For example: ethics in professional or business contexts, health and medical contexts, ethics in personal relationships, and environmental ethics.
PHI 014S Skepticism and Knowledge (HP) (4 cr.) *first years only*
Philosophers often call into question assumptions we take for granted in everyday life or in the course of normal scientific inquiry. Some of these assumptions concern the limits and possibility of knowledge. Can we know whether there is an external reality independent of our minds? Do we have solid grounds to believe in the laws of nature formulated according to our best scientific methods? Do logic and mathematics constitute knowledge? Is there any knowledge that can be grounded independently of our experience? Skepticism about knowledge is the philosophical point of view that argues for negative answers to such questions. In this course, we will examine different forms of skepticism in the history of philosophy from Plato and Augustine through Descartes and Hume down to the present. We will look at a range of forces in contemporary life—for example, propaganda, social media, and prejudices of various sorts—that tend to undermine our ability to form objective judgments about the world around us.

PHI 91 Technology and Human Values (3 cr.)
This course is an investigation of the origin, nature, and status of human values in contemporary forms of technological civilization. The course combines three elements of coverage: a survey of the study of values; an introduction to philosophy of technology (including its relations to science and society); and an examination of engineering ethics (including professional duty, cultural conscience, and environmental responsibility). This semester there is a focus on information technology.

PHI 121 Crime and Punishment (HP) (3 cr.)
This course explores the question whether criminal punishment in principle, and our criminal justice system in particular, can be justified by canvassing standard philosophical views: deterrence theory, retributivism, and the moral education theory of punishment. Along the way, we explore criminal defenses, proportionality, attempts, alternative sanctions (for example shaming), mercy, rehabilitation and atonement. We also discuss the moral limits of the criminal law, and whether criminal punishment can be justified after appreciating recent advances in brain science. The main aim of the course is to empower students to understand and evaluate our practices of criminal punishment; this is of great importance because the criminal justice system is among the most coercive and potentially destructive domestic uses of state power.

PHI 131 Ethics and Animals (HP) (3 cr.)
This course is an inquiry into the ethical significance of non-human animals. We will consider issues such as whether non-human animals have interests and rights; whether animals’ capacity for consciousness or for pain and pleasure is a basis for their having ethical significance; and whether animals are due a certain level of care and concern. The course will also examine whether similarity to human beings is necessary for non-human animals to have ethical significance. The course may look at cases involving the treatment and portrayal of animals in agriculture and diet, science and education, wild nature and domestic life, and entertainment and fashion.

PHI 143 Classical Modern Philosophy (3 cr.)
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.
**PHI 150 Critical Reasoning** (HP) (3 cr.)
This course is 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.

**PHI 152 - Scientific Reasoning** (QR) (3 cr.)
This course is a systematic approach to scientific reasoning. Topics to be covered include the fundamental ideas of reasoning (support, evidence, argument); the nature of scientific theories and the evidence that grounds scientific theories; 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 will 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 170 Ethical Theory** (HP) (3 cr.)
This course is a detailed examination of some specific issue in contemporary ethical theory. Possible topics include the nature and objectivity of morality, the relationship between moral philosophy and theories of the self, the revival of a virtue-theory approach to ethics, and pluralism about values.

**PHI 180B Metaphysics** (3 cr.)
**PREREQUISITE:** Two previous philosophy courses or instructor permission
How does one event cause another? When we talk of possible ways things might have turned out, does this mean there are other, possible, worlds? Might you have existed if your parents had not conceived for another two months? These are metaphysical questions, and this course will look at some of the ways philosophers have attempted to answer these, and other such questions.