

# PHILOSOPHY (PHIL)

Pierre S. duPont Foundation

PROFESSORS COOPER, SESSIONS  
ASSOCIATE PROFESSORS MAHON, GREGORY,  
SMITH  
ASSISTANT PROFESSORS BELL, GOLDBERG,  
VERHAGE  
VISITING ASSISTANT PROFESSORS JACKSON,  
LOWNEY

## MAJOR

A **major in philosophy** leading to a Bachelor of Arts degree requires completion of 33 credits including the following:

1. At least 30 credits from 10 three- or four-credit courses in philosophy, exclusive of PHIL 473 and 493, and including:
  - a. PHIL 106
  - b. *History of philosophy or major figures*: two courses chosen from PHIL 141, 142, 168, 221 (CLAS 221), 222, 263, 265, 311, 314, 316 and, when the topics are appropriate, 195, 295, 395, and 403
  - c. *Ethics and value theory*: two courses chosen from PHIL 101, 108, 207, 215, 216, 219, 256, 258, 259, 269, 280, 309, 320, 341, (INTR 341), 342, (INTR 342) and, when the topics are appropriate, 195, 295, 395, and 403
  - d. *Metaphysics and epistemology*: two courses chosen from PHIL 102, 205, 206, 208, 212, (REL 212), 255, 257, 260, 301, 312, 313 and, when the topics are appropriate, 195, 295, 395, and 403
  - e. At least 21 credits from seven three- or four-credit philosophy courses numbered 200 or above
2. *Thesis*: PHIL 473 (3) or 493 (3-3). The Senior thesis is prepared and presented for evaluation in the fall term of the senior year; the Honors Thesis is prepared in the fall and winter terms, and is presented for evaluation in the winter term of the senior year.

## MINOR

A **minor in philosophy** requires completion of at least 18 credits from six courses in philosophy, exclusive of PHIL 473 and 493. A student may not complete both a major and a minor in philosophy. In meeting the requirements of this discipline-based minor, a student may not use more than nine credits that are also used to meet the requirements of another major or minor.

1. PHIL 106
2. Six credits chosen from two courses from two of the following three groupings:
  - a. *History of philosophy or a major figure*: PHIL 141, 142, 168, 221 (Classics 221), 222, 263, 265, 311, 314, 316, and 195, 295, 395, and 403 when the topics are appropriate
  - b. *Ethics and value theory*: PHIL 101, 108, 207, 215, 216, 219, 256, 258, 259, 269, 280, 309, 320, 341 (INTR 341), 342 (INTR 342), and

195, 295, 395, and 403 when the topics are appropriate

- c. *Metaphysics and epistemology*: PHIL 102, 205, 206, 208, 212 (REL 212), 255, 257, 260, 301, 312, 313, and 195, 295, 395, and 403 when the topics are appropriate
3. Of the 18 credits required for the minor, at least 12 credits must be chosen from four philosophy courses numbered 200 and above

*HONORS: An Honors Program in philosophy is offered for qualified students; see department head for details.*

### PHIL 101: Problems of Philosophy (3)

*Open to first-year students and sophomores only.* An introduction to some of the major ethical, political, and social problems we persistently confront. Selected readings from major philosophers. (HU, GE4c) *Staff.*

*Fall, Winter*

### PHIL 102: Problems of Philosophy (3)

*Open to first-year and sophomores only. PHIL 101 is not a prerequisite for this course.* An introduction to some of the major problems that arise in inquiry into the nature of knowledge and reality. Selected readings from major philosophers. (HU, GE4c) *Staff.*

*Fall, Winter*

### PHIL 106: Introduction to Logic (3)

The study of argumentation and modern formal logic. This course explores the basic principles of deductive and inductive reasoning. Students learn to symbolize and evaluate natural language arguments. Topics covered include the study of formal and informal fallacies, propositional and predicate logic, scientific induction, and probabilities. (HU, GE4c) *Goldberg, Gregory, Jackson.*

*Fall, Winter*

### PHIL 108: Ethics and the Environment (3)

This course is a philosophical exploration of one's responsibilities to the natural world. It has three main objectives: first, to provide an understanding of different dominant ethical theories and their application to animals, plants, and ecosystems; second, to provide an understanding of major environmental issues in current political debates, such as climate change, species preservation, and sustainable development; and third, to facilitate the development of a student's own ethic towards the environment. (HU, GE4c) *Lowney.*

*Fall*

### PHIL 141: Ancient Philosophy (3)

An examination of the metaphysics of the pre-Socratic philosophers, especially the Milesians, Pythagoras, Xenophanes, Heraclitus, Parmenides, Zeno of Elea, and the Atomists, and the ethics and political philosophy of Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle. Topics include the origin and nature of the *kosmos*, the nature and existence of the god(s), the trial and execution of Socrates, theories of virtue, the nature of knowledge and truth, justice and the ideal state, the nature of *eudaimonia* (happiness, flourishing), and the possibility of *akrasia* (weakness of the will). (HU, GE4c) *Mahon.*

*Fall*

**PHIL 142: Modern Philosophy (3)**

An examination of the metaphysics, epistemology, and philosophy of religion in the rationalist philosophers Rene Descartes, Baruch Spinoza, and Gottfried Wilhelm von Leibniz, and the empiricist philosophers John Locke, George Berkeley, and David Hume. Topics include skepticism about the external world, mind-body dualism, the existence and nature of God, theories of substance, free will and determinism, personal identity, and causation. (HU, GE4c) *Mahon, Goldberg.*

*Winter*

**PHIL 144: 20th-Century Philosophy (3)**

An examination of philosophical issues in recent Western thought, from logical atomism to deconstructionism: Husserl, Russell, Heidegger, Dewey, Wittgenstein, Quine, and others. (HU, GE4c) *Sessions.*

**PHIL 168: Chinese Philosophy (3)**

An introductory course focusing on classical (Zhou period) Confucian and Taoist philosophers. No background in Chinese studies is presupposed. (HU, GE4c) *Sessions.*

*Not offered in 2009-2010*

**PHIL 195: Seminar for First-Years and Sophomores (3)**

*Prerequisite: Permission of the instructor.* A consideration of selected issues in philosophy. May be repeated for degree credit with permission and if the topics are different. (HU, GE4c) *Bell.*

*Winter, Spring*

**PHIL 205: Philosophy of Language (3)**

A survey of central topics in the field, including some or all of the following: reference, meaning, truth, analyticity, speech acts, pragmatics, verificationism, indeterminacy, innateness, metaphor, and development of language in the species and in the individual. (HU, GE4c) *Gregory.*

*Fall*

**PHIL 206: Problems in Logic (3)**

*Prerequisite: PHIL 106 or permission of the instructor.* An inquiry into formal logic and philosophical issues related to logic. The course includes a study of truth and meaning, vagueness, the revisability of logic, and Gödel's theorem. It also extends propositional and predicate logic to include topics such as the logic of identity, fuzzy logic, many valued logic, mereology, and modal logic. (HU, GE4c) *Staff.*

*Not offered in 2008-2009*

**PHIL 207: Aesthetics (3)**

A consideration of the basic issues in philosophy of art. Selected viewings and readings from contemporary sources. (HU, GE4c) *Staff.*

*Spring*

**PHIL 208: Philosophy of History (3)**

A consideration of the basic issues in philosophy of history. Selected readings from classical and contemporary sources, including Kant, Hegel, Marx, Nietzsche, Freud, and Hannah Arendt. (HU, GE4c) *Lambert.*

*Fall 2009 and alternate years*

**PHIL 212 (REL 212): Philosophy and Religion (3)**

An exploration of selected issues, such as mystical and numinous experiences and doctrines, theistic arguments, faith and reason, religion and morality, and science and religion. (HU, GE4c) *Sessions.*

*Fall*

**PHIL 215: Social Inequality and Fair Opportunity (3)**

An exploration of the different range of opportunities available to various social groups, including racial, ethnic and sexual minorities, women, and the poor. Topics include how to define fair equality of opportunity; the social mechanisms that play a role in expanding and limiting opportunity; legal and group-initiated strategies aimed at effecting fair equality of opportunity and the theoretical foundations of these strategies; as well as an analysis of the concepts of equality, merit and citizenship, and their value to individuals and society. (HU, GE4c) *Bell.*

*Winter*

**PHIL 216: Feminist Social and Political Philosophy (3)**

This course critically examines the gender norms that pervade our identities, govern our everyday behavior, and organize our social life. Questions addressed may include: What is gender? In what ways does it affect the quality of women's and men's lives? Is gender difference natural? Is it valuable? Can it contribute to, or interfere with, human flourishing? Can a gendered society be just? What can any of us do to promote good relations among women and men? (HU, GE4c) *Bell.*

*Fall 2010 and alternate years*

**PHIL 219: Philosophy of Sex (3)**

This course explores questions related to contemporary conceptions of sexuality and its proper role in our lives. Questions addressed include: What is the purpose of sex? Are sexual practices subject to normative evaluation on grounds of morality, aesthetics, and/or capacity to promote a flourishing human life? We consider the relation between sex and both intimacy and pleasure, viewed from the perspective of heterosexual women and men, and gay men and lesbians. What are our sexual practices and attitudes toward sex? What should they be like? (HU, GE4c) *Bell.*

*Fall*

**PHIL 221 (CLAS 221): Plato (3)**

A close study of one or several dialogues. (HU, GE4c) *Smith.*

*Winter*

**PHIL 222: Aristotle (3)**

A study of Aristotle's comprehensive philosophy of man and nature, including his logic, physics, metaphysics, psychology, ethics, and aesthetics. (HU, GE4c) *Sessions.*

*Winter*

**PHIL 251: Existentialism (3)**

Overview of existential thought in the 19th and 20th centuries. The course presents core existentialist thinkers and their critics—e.g. Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, Sartre, de Beauvoir, Fanon, Heidegger, Camus—and explores important existential themes such as human experience, anxiety, freedom, authenticity, and absurdity. (HU, GE4c) *Verhage.*

*Fall*

**PHIL 255: Philosophy of Science (3)**

Discussion of philosophical issues raised by the natural sciences. Topics include the nature of scientific theories, evidence, and explanation, the demarcation of science from non-science, scientific revolutions, the unity of science, and scientific realism. (HU, GE4c) *Gregory.*

*Winter*

**PHIL 256: Philosophy and Literature (3)**

Great literature is often profoundly philosophical and great philosophy sometimes takes the form of powerful fiction. This course considers the many philosophical themes in the writings of 19th- and 20th-century authors, including Fyodor Dostoyevsky, Virginia Woolf, Ernest Hemingway, Franz Kafka, Samuel Beckett, Chinua Achebe, Toni Morrison, Jorge Luis Borges, and Robert Musil. (HU, GE4c) *Verhage.*

*Fall*

**PHIL 257: Philosophy of Biology (3)**

An examination of philosophical issues raised by biology, with an emphasis on current evolutionary theory. Topics include the structure of the theory of evolution by natural selection, an examination of the concepts of fitness and adaptation, the role of teleological explanation in biology, reductionism, the nature of biological species, individuality, levels of selection, and sociobiology. (HU, GE4c) *Staff.*

*Not offered in 2008-2009*

**PHIL 258: Philosophy of Law (3)**

An examination of topics in the philosophy of law, such as the concepts of a law and of a legal system; Natural Law theory; legal positivist and legal realist theories of law; the nature of the relationship between law, morality, and religion; civil disobedience; rights in the U.S. Constitution; freedom of speech and pornography; abortion and the right to privacy; punishment and the death penalty; and different forms of legal liability. Readings include United States Supreme Court opinions. (HU, GE4c) *Bell, Mahon, Jackson.*

*Winter*

**PHIL 259: Philosophy of the Family (3)**

This course considers philosophical issues raised by family as a social institution and as a legal institution. Topics addressed include the social and personal purposes served by the institution of family, the nature of relationships between family members, the various forms that family can take, the scope of family privacy or autonomy, and how family obligations, mutual support, and interdependency affect individual members of families. (HU, GE4c) *Bell.*

*Winter 2009 and alternate years*

**PHIL 260: Philosophy of Nature (3)**

An examination of various understandings of nature and the natural from the ancient Greeks to the present. The course includes exploration of basic philosophical issues regarding the concepts "nature," "wild," and "wilderness." The focus is on the relationship between landscapes and conceptualizations of time, self, and community. (HU, GE4c) *Staff.*

*Not offered in 2008-2009*

**PHIL 263: Kierkegaard (3)**

A study of *Philosophical Fragments* and *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* with emphasis on the analysis of the religious and moral life. (HU, GE4c) *Sessions.*

*Fall*

**PHIL 265: Nietzsche (3)**

An examination of Nietzsche's central philosophical conceptions—revaluation of values, genealogy of morality, self-overcoming, eternal recurrence—through selected readings from various periods in Nietzsche's authorship. (HU, GE4c) *Staff.*

*Winter*

**PHIL 269: Contemporary Ethics (3)**

An examination of different metaethical theories, including ethical realism, emotivism, error theory, and constructivism, and different normative ethical theories, including utilitarianism, Kantian deontology, virtue ethics, and the ethics of care, followed by an application of these normative theories to a selection of ethical problems, including famine and world hunger, abortion, infanticide, euthanasia, cloning, suicide, and self-defense. Philosophers include G.E. Moore, W.D. Ross, A.J. Ayer, J.L. Mackie, Bernard Williams, Susan Wolf, Peter Singer, Michael Tooley, Judith Jarvis Thomson, and Shelly Kagan. (HU, GE4c) *Mahon.*

*Winter*

**PHIL 280: Philosophies of Life (4)**

*Prerequisite: One W&L course in philosophy, one course taught by a W&L philosophy faculty member, or permission of the instructor.* This course provides opportunities to explore philosophies of life held by influential philosophers and by ordinary people, focusing on what it means to live a good or worthwhile life. It also gives students a chance to clarify and develop their own vision of what a good life is for them. Projects include conducting interviews with members of the community outside the classroom. (HU, GE4c) *Bell.*

*Spring 2010 and alternate years*

**PHIL 295: Seminar on Philosophical Topics (3)**

*Prerequisite: Permission of the instructor.* A consideration of selected issues in philosophy. May be repeated for degree credit with permission and if the topics are different. (HU, GE4c) *Staff.*

*Fall, Winter*

**PHIL 301: Metaphysics (3)**

An examination of central issues in metaphysics. Topics include existence, the relationship between an object and its properties, time, space, persistence, and cause and effect. Topics may also include the nature of possibility, actuality, and necessary, and discussions about why anything exists at all. (HU, GE4c) *Goldberg.*

*Winter*

**PHIL 309: History of Ethics (3)**

A close examination of the writings of some of the philosophers who have shaped modern ethical thought, including St. Thomas Aquinas, Niccolo Machiavelli, Thomas Hobbes, David Hume, Immanuel Kant, Friedrich Nietzsche, and John Stuart Mill. Topics include theories of Natural Law; the social contract; the origin and nature of justice; morality and reason; morality and Christianity; and individual autonomy and state paternalism. (HU, GE4c) Mahon.

Fall

**PHIL 311: Wittgenstein (3)**

A close study of Wittgenstein's *Philosophical Investigations*. Emphasis on the analysis of language, meaning, and states of consciousness. (HU, GE4c) Staff.

Not offered in 2009-2010

**PHIL 312: Theory of Knowledge (3)**

An examination of the basic problems in epistemology with an emphasis on contemporary discussions. Topics include skepticism, knowledge, justification (foundationalism, coherentism, reliabilism), relativism, and rationality. (HU, GE4c) Goldberg, Gregory.

Winter

**PHIL 313: Philosophy of Mind (3)**

A consideration and assessment of dualism and materialism and of various theories of the relation between the mental and the physical, such as the identity theory, functionalism, and supervenience. (HU, GE4c) Gregory.

Fall

**PHIL 314: Heidegger (3)**

We use the expression 'being' all the time in our everyday language, but do we really understand what Being is? Heidegger argues that the extraordinary question of Being is the most important question of philosophy. This course explores this question through a careful reading of Heidegger's magnum opus *Being and Time* and some later essays. In addition to the meaning of Being, we discuss the following themes in Heidegger's writing: temporality, being-in-the-world, being-towards-death, authenticity, and care. (HU, GE4c) Verhage.

Winter

**PHIL 316: Kant (3)**

An exploration of the full sweep of Kant's *Critical Philosophy*, with special attention to the *Critique of Pure Reason*. (HU, GE4c) Sessions.

Winter

**PHIL 320: Distributive Justice (3)**

*Prerequisite: Junior standing or permission of the instructor.* How should the product of social cooperation be distributed in a just society? Is wealth redistribution through taxes fair? Is it a fair distribution of wealth that a just society depends on, or is distributive justice more complicated than that? Should we have welfare programs, and, if so, what should they be like? Our studies may include John Rawls' political liberalism, Robert Nozick's libertarianism, Ronald Dworkin's equality of resources, Amartya Sen's capabilities approach, Stuart White's justice as fair reciprocity, and criticisms of the distributive paradigm. (HU, GE4c) Bell.

Fall 2009 and alternate years

**PHIL 341 (INTR 341): Medical Ethics (3)**

*Prerequisite: Permission of the instructor.* An examination of the issues arising out of the human impact of modern biomedical research and practice. Specific issues are selected from among the following: abortion, contraception, death and dying, experimentation/research, genetics, in vitro fertilization, mental retardation, public health/community medicine, science/technology, transplantation and patients' rights. (HU, GE4c) Cooper.

Winter

**PHIL 342 (INTR 342): Legal Ethics (3)**

*Prerequisite: Permission of the instructor.* An examination of the issues associated with lawyers' roles in society and their impact upon and obligations to the client, the court, and the legal profession. The course also addresses questions of the role and function of law and the adversary system. (HU, GE4c) Cooper.

Winter

**PHIL 370: Roe v. Wade and the Abortion Question (4)**

*Prerequisite: Permission of the instructor.* This course considers the question of whether abortion should be legal in a modern state from the perspectives of contemporary moral philosophy and U.S. law. (HU, GE4c) Mahon.

Spring 2010 and alternate years

**PHIL 395: Advanced Seminar (3)**

*Prerequisites: Six credits in philosophy and permission of the instructor.* An intensive and critical study of selected issues or major figures in philosophy. May be repeated for degree credit with permission and if the topics are different. (HU, GE4c) Staff.

Fall, Winter

**PHIL 401, 402: Directed Individual Study (1,2)**

*Prerequisite: Permission of the department.* May be repeated for degree credit with permission and if the topics are different. Staff.

Fall, Winter

**PHIL 403: Directed Individual Study (3)**

*Prerequisite: Permission of the department.* May be repeated for degree credit with permission and if the topics are different. Staff.

Fall, Winter

**PHIL 473: Senior Thesis and Seminar (3)**

*Prerequisites: Senior standing and major in philosophy.* Seminar in which each major prepares and presents a senior thesis or prepares a chapter of an honors thesis. Staff.

Winter

**PHIL 493: Honors Thesis (3-3)**

*Prerequisites: Honors candidacy and senior standing.*

Fall-Winter