Philosophy

http://philosophy.jhu.edu/

The Department of Philosophy offers programs and courses at the undergraduate and graduate levels. The courses cover major periods in the history of Western philosophy and many of the main topics of systematic investigation: epistemology, metaphysics, ethics, aesthetics, philosophy of language, mathematical logic, and philosophy of science.

The undergraduate courses are designed to introduce students to the history of philosophy and its place in Western civilization, to teach them how to read philosophical texts, and to help them think about philosophical problems, including those that arise in other disciplines. Students may major in philosophy or use it as a concentration for an area major in Humanistic Studies. They may also study philosophy along with another subject, either by constructing a double major or by taking courses designed to help them develop philosophical perspectives on their own fields of interest.

The graduate program is intended primarily for those planning to teach philosophy and make their own contributions to it. While the acquisition of a broad background in the history and different systematic fields of philosophy is required, students will have ample opportunity to develop their own special interests.

The Department of Philosophy encourages its students to take advantage of the rich resources of other departments at Johns Hopkins University. As a look at their offerings will show, numerous philosophically important courses are offered by such departments as Political Science (political philosophy), History of Science and Technology (philosophy of science), the Humanities Center (hermeneutic, interpretive, and literary theory), and Cognitive Science.

Philosophy poses such fundamental questions as: What can we know? How should we live? and How do the results of human inquiry, obtained so far, hang together? It is an excellent preparation for professional studies such as law and medicine; it provides perspective on other disciplines such as psychology, mathematics, literature, and political science; and it centers on a set of questions that thinking people cannot avoid. At Hopkins it can be studied in a variety of ways.

A number of our courses are designed to provide broad introductions to the subject. Both AS.150.111 Philosophic Classics and AS.150.112 Philosophical Problems cover a wide range of topics, the former through the study of some of the major texts of Western thought, the latter by more systematic examination of representative issues. Either one will show a student a variety of approaches to philosophical problems. The courses AS.150.201 and AS.150.205 offer historically oriented introductions to the subject, giving the student a basic grasp of the development of philosophy in two of its major periods. Other courses, such as AS.150.118 Introduction to Formal Logic, 150.223 Aesthetics, and AS.150.220 Introduction to Moral Philosophy, are designed for students with an interest in the particular areas they cover. All of these courses are readily available without prior study of philosophy.

The 400-level courses are open to graduate students as well as to undergraduates. Some require no previous course work in philosophy. Others presuppose some familiarity with philosophy, such as would be provided by one of the introductory courses. Still others require more specific preparation. A student with questions about whether he/she has the background for a particular 400-level course should consult either the instructor or the departmental undergraduate studies.

A student who wants to study an area of philosophy not provided for in the regular curriculum or to undertake a special project of writing and research should consult with a faculty member about taking AS.150.511 Directed Study-AS.150.512 Directed Study. An undergraduate who has the proper background may enroll in a graduate seminar if the instructor approves.

Learning Goals

A student who graduates with a BA in philosophy will be able to demonstrate:

• A broad understanding of the work of major figures in the history of philosophy, both ancient (especially Plato and Aristotle) and modern (especially the period of Descartes through Kant)
• Familiarity with the most important topics in a range of areas that are typically regarded as lying at the center of contemporary philosophical thought, including metaphysics, theory of knowledge, philosophy of mind, and philosophy of language
• Familiarity with the most important topics in ethics and political philosophy
• Familiarity with formal logic, including the ability to understand the logical symbolism used in many contemporary philosophical texts
• The capacity to think analytically and creatively about philosophical texts and issues
• The capacity to express philosophical ideas and support them effectively in argument, both in writing and orally.

Requirements for the B.A. Degree

(Also see Requirements for a Bachelor's Degree (http://e-catalog.jhu.edu/undergrad-students/academic-policies/requirements-for-a-bachelors-degree).)

Philosophy majors must take 11 departmental courses. A minimum of six courses must be at the 300 level or higher. Of the two general introductory courses, 150.111 Philosophic Classics and 150.112 Philosophic Problems, only one may count toward the major, and two total 100-level courses may count toward the major. Majors are required to take the Undergraduate Seminar, preferably in the junior year. Courses in which a grade of D is received may not count toward the major, nor may courses taken satisfactory/unsatisfactory.

Other courses must be distributed by taking at least one course in each of the five following categories:

• Ancient philosophy
• Modern philosophy
• Logic, philosophy of science, or philosophy of mathematics
• Philosophy of mind, theory of knowledge, philosophy of language, or metaphysics
• Ethics, aesthetics, or political philosophy

The first two categories are normally satisfied by taking AS.150.201 Introduction To Greek Philosophy and AS.150.205 Introduction to the History of Modern Philosophy. The student thus has four or five additional electives after satisfying the distribution requirements.

Well-qualified majors may be admitted to a graduate seminar during their senior year. They should consult their major adviser.
If you have any questions or concerns regarding these requirements, please contact the director of undergraduate studies.

**Major Requirements**

**Major Requirements**
One course in ancient philosophy 3
One course in modern philosophy 3
One course in logic, philosophy of science, or philosophy of mathematics 3
One course in philosophy of mind, theory of knowledge, philosophy of language, or metaphysics 3
One course in ethics, aesthetics, or political philosophy 3
One undergraduate seminar (300-level; ideally in junior year) 3
Five additional courses 15

Total Credits: 33

**Sample Program of Study**

**Freshman**

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<tr>
<th>Fall</th>
<th>Credits</th>
<th>Spring</th>
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<tr>
<td>AS.150.1xx-2xx elective</td>
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<td>Course in Modern Philosophy AS.150.2xx-4xx</td>
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Sophomore

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Course in Ancient Philosophy AS.150.2xx-4xx</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>AS.150.3xx-4xx elective</td>
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Junior

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AS.150.3xx (Undergraduate Seminar)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Course in Ethics AS.150.2xx-4xx</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AS.150.3xx-4xx elective</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Course in Phil of Mind AS.150.2xx-4xx</td>
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Senior

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<td>Course in Logic AS.150.2xx-4xx</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>AS.150.3xx-4xx elective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AS.150.3xx-4xx elective</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>AS.150.3xx-4xx elective (if needed to have six 300 level or higher courses)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total Credits: 33

**Examples of Courses in Each Required Area**

**Ancient Philosophy**
AS.150.201 Introduction To Greek Philosophy 3
AS.150.401 Greek Philosophy: Plato and His Predecessors 3
AS.150.402 Aristotle 3
AS.150.403 Hellenistic Philosophy 3

**Modern Philosophy**
AS.150.205 Introduction to the History of Modern Philosophy 3
AS.150.412 Kant’s Critique of Practical Reason 3
AS.150.417 Kant’s ‘Critique Of Pure Reason’ 3

**Logic, Philosophy of Science, or Philosophy of Mathematics**
AS.150.419 Kant’s Critique/Judgment 3
AS.150.118 Introduction to Formal Logic 3
AS.150.420 Mathematical Logic I 3
AS.150.421 Mathematical Logic II 3
AS.150.422 Axiomatic Set Theory 3
AS.150.429 Topics in Logic: Ontology and Knowledge Representation 3
AS.150.433 Philosophy of Space & Time 3
AS.150.434 Formal Methods of Philosophy 3

**Philosophy of Mind, Theory of Knowledge, Philosophy of Language, or Metaphysics**
AS.150.245 Introduction to Philosophy of Mind 3
AS.150.476 Philosophy and Cognitive Science 3

**Ethics, Aesthetics, or Political Philosophy**
AS.150.219 Introduction to Bioethics 3
AS.150.220 Introduction to Moral Philosophy 3
AS.150.452 Freedom of Will & Moral Responsibility 3
AS.150.454 The Value of Humanity 3
AS.150.455 Ethics And Animals 3

**Double Majors**
The department encourages linking the study of philosophy with the study of other disciplines. For example, the subject matter and course requirements of the philosophy and psychology departments are such as to make a double major both practical and intriguing. Similarly, knowledge of literature or the history of art is pertinent to the study of aesthetics; a solid understanding of science is valuable for those interested in the philosophy of science; and students of ethics benefit considerably by combining their work with study of political theory and of the political realities in which morality must function. Members of the department are available to assist students in planning double majors tailored to their interests.

**Honors Program in Philosophy**
Students with an overall GPA of 3.0 and a Philosophy GPA of 3.5 or higher (or outstanding recommendations from three department members) are eligible for the Senior Honors Thesis Program. In addition to the 11 courses required for the major, successful applicants take AS.150.551 Honors Project and AS.150.552 Honors Project, to write a thesis of about 50 pages under the supervision of a faculty member. The thesis must be completed prior to spring vacation of senior year. If the student withdraws prior to completion of a thesis, a satisfactory/unsatisfactory grade will be awarded.

The grade for the thesis will depend on the thesis itself and an oral examination about it, conducted by the thesis adviser and two other faculty members. Graduation Honors will be awarded to those whose work receives an A- or better. For more information about the Honors Program, contact the department’s director of undergraduate studies.

**Honors Thesis Program**
AS.150.551 Honors Project 3
AS.150.552 Honors Project 3
Minor in Philosophy

Philosophy minors must take seven departmental courses, which should include the following:

- At least one course in the history of philosophy, either ancient or modern.
- At least one course in two of the following areas:
  - Logic, philosophy of science, or philosophy of mathematics
  - Ethics, aesthetics, or political philosophy
  - Philosophy of mind, theory of knowledge, philosophy of language, or metaphysics

Minor Requirements

- One course in history of philosophy (ancient or modern) 3
- Two courses, each from a different focal area 6
- Four additional courses 12
- Total Credits 21

Minor in Bioethics

The practice of medicine, the development of public health policies, and advances in the biomedical sciences raise fundamental moral and philosophical issues. The bioethics program is designed to provide students with an understanding of these issues, and the background and the conceptual tools to think about them clearly. The program is a collaboration between the Berman Institute of Bioethics and the Department of Philosophy, and draws on the resources of both.

See Bioethics Program [link] for more details.

BA/MA Program

The department now offers an accelerated BA/MA program. The requirements for the BA and for the MA remain unchanged, but in the combined BA/MA program, two 400-level courses taken as part of the BA can also be used toward the MA. This means that the MA requires only eight additional courses, rather than the 10 required for a free-standing MA. See the Graduate tab for more information.

When The Johns Hopkins University was founded in 1876, it was the first university in the United States designed as a center for research and doctoral education. Among its earliest graduate students were Josiah Royce and John Dewey. C. S. Peirce was an early faculty member. The Department of Philosophy continues this tradition today, preparing graduate students to make original contributions to the field and to pursue careers in college and university teaching.

Usually there are about 15 graduate students taking courses and seminars, and another 15 at various stages in the writing of their dissertations. Because classes are small, we look for students who wish to take advantage of the individual attention available here. The department’s purpose is to provide opportunities for students to develop special interests within a program that also ensures breadth of knowledge. We offer classes, seminars, and directed study in the history of ancient, modern, and contemporary Western philosophy, and in the systematic areas of epistemology, metaphysics, ethics, philosophy of science, philosophy of physics, philosophy of language, philosophy of mind, philosophy of mathematics, mathematical logic, and aesthetics. Courses with relevance to philosophy are frequently offered in other departments, and in certain circumstances these may be used toward the PhD or MA course requirements in philosophy.

The graduate program is designed primarily for those seeking the PhD, but under exceptional circumstances students aiming at the MA may be admitted.

Graduate Requirements

Graduate students are required to take 13 courses, some of which must be selected to meet the departmental distribution requirements. Students also take an examination in a field of special interest to them. During the third year, students work intensively on a substantial paper on a topic in that field. After satisfying these requirements and writing a dissertation prospectus, students concentrate on the doctoral dissertation.

Students are expected to complete examinations and course work within three years. Most students take about two to three years to write their doctoral dissertation.

For complete details of PhD and MA requirements, advising, student evaluation, and other matters relating to the graduate program, view the following:

New Philosophy Graduate Program Requirements [link] (students entering 2015 and after)

Philosophy Graduate Program Requirements [link] (students entering before 2015)

BA/MA Program

The department now offers an accelerated BA/MA program. The requirements for the BA and for the MA remain unchanged, but in the combined BA/MA program, two 400-level courses taken as part of the BA can also be used toward the MA. This means that the MA requires only eight additional courses, rather than the 10 required for a free-standing MA. For full details of the MA program and the BA/MA program, see the Requirements handbook [link] in the Graduate section here and on the department website.

In order to be admitted to the BA/MA program, you must already be a philosophy major; you can apply in the spring term of your junior year or any time in your senior year. If you meet the qualification for the BA honors thesis (overall GPA of 3.0, philosophy GPA of 3.5), you will automatically be admitted; others may be admitted on a case-by-case basis. Interested students should contact the chair of the department, Professor Richard Bett [link].

Please note that there is no departmental financial aid for BA/MA students. However, BA/MA students whose MA-level studies extend into a fifth year get a 50% discount on their tuition in their fifth year.

All application material and supporting documents should be uploaded through the online application; these include:
Online application (https://app.applyyourself.com/AYApplicantLogin/fl_ApplicantLogin.asp?id=jhu-grad)—be sure to select Combined Graduate Student option.

- Transcripts: unofficial transcripts must be uploaded through the online application.

**PhD Admissions**

While an undergraduate major in philosophy is good preparation for graduate study in the department, applications are welcomed from students with other majors whose interests are now turning toward philosophy.

To apply, please read the information below and on the Graduate Admissions website (http://www.grad.jhu.edu/admissions/apply), and complete the application online.

If applying to more than one department, please send complete application materials for each department. All application documents must be provided in English (either the original or translations of the original documents). If you are unable to secure translations to English, we recommend that you contact World Education Services (http://www.wes.org).

All application materials and supporting documents should be uploaded through the online application; these include:

- Online application (https://app.applyyourself.com/?id=jhu-grad)
- Application fee
- Statement of Purpose (briefly state your area of interest at the beginning of your Statement of Purpose; upload through the online application)
- Letters of recommendation (at least two): Letters of recommendation should be submitted and uploaded electronically following the instructions in the online application.
- Transcripts: Unofficial transcripts must be uploaded through the online application. Applications will be ready for review with unofficial transcripts, but official transcripts will be required if an offer of admission is made.
- GRE scores (mandatory)
- TOEFL or IELTS score (for international applicants)
- Sample of work (the sample should reflect the applicant’s area of interest, and generally does not have to be more than 20 pages in length).

**Application Deadline**

The deadline for applications is January 15 or, if January 15 falls on a weekend or a holiday, the next business day. Admissions decisions will be made by around March 15.

For questions or inquiries about the online application and supporting documents, contact the Graduate Admissions office using the online contact form (http://www.grad.jhu.edu/contact/form). You may also contact Veronica Feldkircher-Reed, the academic program coordinator for the philosophy department, at vfeldk1@jhu.edu or 410-516-7524.

**Financial Aid**

All students admitted to the program receive financial assistance. Support is guaranteed for five years, provided that a student continues to make satisfactory progress toward completion of the PhD. Department fellowships cover tuition and pay a stipend. Outstanding applicants may be nominated for a George Owen Fellowship, which also covers tuition and for which the stipend is higher. All students receive fellowship support for the first two years; no teaching is required.

Third, fourth, and fifth-year students are supported by teaching assistantships, which carry full tuition and a stipend. In practice, the department is often able to offer teaching assistantships to students beyond their fifth year, though this support is not guaranteed.

**Sachs Fellowship Fund**

A generous bequest by a former member of the department, David Sachs, has established the Sachs Fellowship Fund. Sachs Fellowships are dissertation-year fellowships awarded to students who are making substantial progress toward completing their dissertations. For more information, see the Philosophy Graduate Program Requirements (http://philosophy.jhu.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/7/2013/01/Philosophy-Graduate-Program-Requirements-Revised.pdf) (Attachments 4 and 5).

**Graduate Student Travel Funding**

The department encourages graduate students to present their work at conferences and workshops, and it is committed to helping to make this possible by providing funds for travel and/or accommodation to students whose papers are accepted for presentation. Funding for students to participate in special summer schools is also a possibility; however, in such cases the topic must be clearly related to the student’s actual or intended area of specialization.

The funds available to the department for these purposes are limited, and so some guidelines are necessary in order to ensure that the money is distributed in the most equitable and effective way possible. With this in mind, the following guidelines are in now in place:

- For any student who makes one request for funding in a given academic year, the department will do its best to provide funding. If a student requests funding for more than one event in a given academic year, the second request will have lower priority. Similarly, a student who has had numerous trips funded over several years may find further requests given lower priority.
- The amount provided may vary depending on the cost of the trip. However, more expensive trips are more likely to receive only partial funding than less expensive ones. In particular, those involving international travel may receive only partial funding.
- The significance and prestige of the conference, workshop, or summer school in which a student is to participate will be a factor in decisions as to whether, or to what extent, to provide funding.
- A student’s proximity to the job market may result in a funding request being given higher priority than it would otherwise.
- Since conferences and workshops can happen at any time of year, it is not practical to impose any specific deadlines for funding requests. The department will, however, ensure that some funds remain available throughout the year, so that students making requests late in a given year do not lose out simply because of the timing. (This means that students making requests early in the year may sometimes receive less than they have asked for.)

These guidelines may sometimes be in tension with one another. But these will be the major factors to be taken into account in making these decisions.

Students requesting funding should supply documentation concerning the event—a link to a website will often be sufficient—as well as a breakdown of the expected costs of attending. Requests should be sent to the department chair and the director of graduate study.
William Miller Essay Prize
The Miller Prize is an essay prize awarded for an essay submitted by an eligible student in the philosophy graduate program. A prize competition is held every year. It is not guaranteed that an award will be made every year; however, provided at least one essay submitted in a given year is judged to be of superior quality, the prize will go to the author of the best essay submitted in that year. Given essays of sufficiently high quality, it is also possible that more than one award could be made in the same year.

Miller Prize Submission Guidelines
Entrants must be registered graduate students in philosophy at Johns Hopkins University who are prior to the completion of their eighth semester in the program (i.e., anyone in their first four years). Submissions should be self-contained essays of no more than 10,000 words, not including footnotes. Students may submit at most one essay per year. Papers accepted for publication are not appropriate submissions.

Submissions should be anonymous; your name should not appear anywhere in the paper. The papers should be submitted to Veronica Feldkircher-Reed, either electronically (via email at vfeldki1@jhu.edu) or as a hard copy. If you do the latter, you should include a separate cover page with your name, the title of the paper, and a word count. If you submit it electronically, do not include a cover page, but include the paper title and word count in the email to which you attach the paper. The cover pages or emails will be kept separately in the office and will not be shown to the selection committee.

The submission deadline for the Miller Prize is the same day the third-year papers are due.

For current faculty and contact information go to http://philosophy.jhu.edu/people/

Faculty
Chair
Richard Bett
Professor (Chair): ancient Greek philosophy, ethics.

Professors
Peter Achinstein
philosophy of science, analytic philosophy.

Eckart Förster
metaphysics, history of philosophy, Kant and German idealism.

Robert Rynasiewicz
logic, philosophy of science, history and philosophy of physics.

Michael Williams
Krieger-Eisenhower Professor: theory of knowledge, philosophy of language, history of modern philosophy, epistemology.

Associate Professors
Hilary Bok
Henry R. Luce Professor in Bioethics and Moral and Political Theory: moral philosophy, bioethics, freedom of the will Kant.

Steven Gross
philosophy of language, philosophy of mind, metaphysics.

Chris Lebron
political philosophy focusing on issues of social justice and race

Yitzhak Melamed
Early Modern Philosophy, German idealism, metaphysics.

Dean Moyar
German idealism, social and political philosophy, ethics.

Assistant Professors
Justin Bledin
logic, epistemology, philosophy of language.

Elanor Taylor
metaphysics, philosophy of science, and philosophy of mind; she also works on the metaphysical side of philosophy of gender.

L. Nandi Theunissen
Peterson Assistant Professor in: ethics.

Emeriti
Stephen Barker
Jerome B. Schneewind
Meredith Williams

Joint/Adjunct Appointments
Jeffrey Bub
Professor (Philosophy, University of Maryland, College Park): philosophy of quantum mechanics.

Jeffrey Kahn
Professor (Bloomberg School of Public Health)

Paola Marrati
Professor (Humanities Center): contemporary French thought.

Maria Merritt
Assistant Professor (Bloomberg School of Public Health): bioethics.

Govind Persad
Assistant Professor (Bloomberg School of Public Health)

Lawrence Principe
Professor (History of Science and Technology): history and philosophy of science.

Andrew Siegel
Core Faculty (Berman Institute of Bioethics).

Hent de Vries
Professor (Humanities Center): modern European thought.

For current course information and registration go to https://sis.jhu.edu/classes/

Courses
AS.150.100. Philosophy of Sport. 3.0 Credits.
This course introduces students to philosophical methods by bringing them to bear on the topic of sports and games. We will explore questions about what it is for a certain practice to be a game or a sport (the metaphysics of sport) as well as questions about fair play, performance enhancement, gender equity, and commercialism and corruption in sports (the ethics of sports).

Instructor(s): T. Wilk
Area: Humanities
Writing Intensive.
AS.150.111. Philosphic Classics. 3.0 Credits.
The course introduces students to philosophy by critically examining selected texts in the Western philosophical tradition. Philosophers whose ideas will be examined include Plato, Descartes, Kant and Nietzsche.
Instructor(s): A. Abazari
Area: Humanities
Writing Intensive.

AS.150.112. Philosophical Problems. 3.0 Credits.
An introduction to philosophy through several central problems. This year's topics are free will, death, time, and race.
Instructor(s): S. Gross
Area: Humanities.

AS.150.113. Freshman Seminar: Objectivity. 3.0 Credits.
This course examines the notion of objectivity and challenges to it. Its topics include the status of objective facts and beliefs, the structure of social reality, and rational disagreement. Dean's Prize Freshman Seminar.
Instructor(s): N. Goldberg
Area: Humanities.

AS.150.114. Philosophy of Human Rights. 3.0 Credits.
From domestic debates about abortion and human rights to international dialogue about women's rights, genital mutilation and genocide, human rights claims have become increasingly common, and we've come to rely on the discourse of human rights to assess the way human beings are treated by one another and by states. But what are human rights? How are human rights claims justified? Are human rights really objective and universal or are they contingent and relative to particular cultures? Where did the human rights culture begin, and how has it become so important? This course aims to explore these questions by examining foundational human rights documents, historical works on human rights and contemporary philosophical inquiry into their foundations (or lack thereof).
Instructor(s): T. Wilk
Area: Humanities.

AS.150.116. Mortal Questions. 3.0 Credits.
What is the meaning of life? Is the question well-formed? What does living well require? Does death give human life meaning? What does it mean to say that life is 'absurd'? Are we free to do as we choose? What should we make of our daily lives and the activities that compose them? Do those who are equipped with the relevant capacities and apprised of the relevant information bear a moral obligation to the communities of which they are members? Crucially, these questions require us to reflect deeply on our human values. To address these questions, we will read selected works of philosophers ranging in time from Plato to the present — including both analytic and continental philosophers, men and women, the canonized and otherwise.
Instructor(s): D. Lindeman
Area: Humanities
Writing Intensive.

AS.150.118. Introduction to Formal Logic. 3.0 Credits.
An introduction to symbolic logic and probability. In the first two parts of the course we study formal ways of determining whether a conclusion of an argument follows from its premises. Included are truth-functional logic and predicate logic. In the third part we study the basic rules of probability, and learn how to make probability calculations and decisions in life. Co-listed with AS.150.632 (for graduate students) (01-F 11:00-11:50am).
Instructor(s): P. Achinstein
Area: Humanities, Quantitative and Mathematical Sciences.

AS.150.125. Introduction to Modern Philosophy. 3.0 Credits.
The course will examine four major figures of early modern philosophy: Descartes, Leibniz, Hume, and Kant. Although the most recent of these thinkers died more than 200 years ago, we still refer to them as "modern" philosophers, revealing their great influence on the way we think about ourselves and our place in the world. The course will look at what these philosophers thought about questions such as: What kind of beings are we and how are we related to the world around us? Is knowledge of the world possible and if so what are its sources? Can we answer the question of God's existence? Is order something we find in the world or impose on it? etc.
Instructor(s): G. Lebanidze
Area: Humanities
Writing Intensive.

AS.150.127. Realism and Antirealism in the Philosophy of Science. 3.0 Credits.
Are our best scientific theories approximately true, or useful but false? Does science converge on the truth over time? This course addresses such questions by surveying the scientific realism debate. Dean's Prize Teaching Fellowship course. Freshmen Only.
Instructor(s): J. Hricko
Area: Humanities.

AS.150.128. Cognitive Science & Political Philosophy. 3.0 Credits.
Cognitive Science & Political Philosophy: Is a person born a republican, or are they raised that way? Are democrats Democrats because they have emotional personalities? Is politics the product of evolution, or of culture? Should the brain sciences determine public policy and law? In this course we will consider these questions and many more like them by looking at recent work in philosophy and the brain sciences.
Instructor(s): J. Waterman
Area: Humanities.

AS.150.129. The Theory of Knowledge: Classic and Contemporary Questions. 3.0 Credits.
What is knowledge and how to define it? Does knowing require an ability to produce supporting reasons or is it sufficient that our beliefs track the truth? Which general model better its structure, Foundationism, Coherentism or Infinitism? Does knowing depend on context? Can we discover empirically what knowledge is? These are key questions we will be discussing in our seminar, inspired by reading texts ranging from classics like Plato, the Stoics, and Sextus Empiricus, to contemporary authors like Gettier, Davidson, Goldman, DeRose, and others. Dean's Prize Freshman Seminar.
Instructor(s): P. Stojanovic
Area: Humanities.
AS.150.130. Introduction to Philosophy. 3.0 Credits.
A topics-based introduction to the history and methods of philosophical reflection. We will consider several of the most important perennial questions of philosophy, primarily from some of the most significant philosophers in the history of Western philosophy (with the addition of some non-Western and contemporary authors). Topics include: What is philosophy?, logical thinking, the existence of God, what should we believe and how can we have knowledge, human nature, and ethics.
Instructor(s): S. Ogden
Area: Humanities.

AS.150.131. Introduction to Social Philosophy. 3.0 Credits.
An introduction to social philosophy through critical reading of selected texts of two major figures: Adam Smith and Karl Marx. These two thinkers offered opposing theories of capitalism, which continue to shape our basic understanding of the world. We will address the method and foundations of their theories, as well as the normative concepts that inform their thought (e.g. freedom, human flourishing, alienation, exploitation, etc).
Instructor(s): A. Abazari
Area: Humanities, Social and Behavioral Sciences.

AS.150.134. Freshman Seminar: Socrates in Context. 3.0 Credits.
A study of Socrates as portrayed by his contemporaries, and of intellectual and political trends to which he may have been reacting. Authors will include Plato, Xenophon and Aristophanes. Freshmen Only.
Instructor(s): R. Bett
Area: Humanities.

AS.150.136. Philosophy & Science: An Introduction to Both. 3.0 Credits.
Philosophers and scientists raise important questions about the nature of the physical world, the mental world, the relationship between them, and the right methods to use in their investigations of these worlds. The answers they present are very different. Scientists are usually empiricists, and want to answer questions by experiment and observation. Philosophers don’t want to do this, but defend their views a priori. Why? Can both be right? Readings will present philosophical and scientific views about the world and our knowledge of it. They will include selections from major historical and contemporary figures in philosophy and science. This course has no prerequisites in philosophy or science.
Instructor(s): P. Achinstein
Area: Humanities, Natural Sciences.

AS.150.182. What is Science? 3.0 Credits.
A philosophical introduction to very basic questions about scientific reasoning, its scope and limits. Is there a universal scientific method? Can science really explain everything, anything? Must everything be proved in science? Is science incompatible with religion? Readings will be from scientists and philosophers who have thought about these issues from Descartes and Newton to the present. No prerequisites either in philosophy or science.
Instructor(s): P. Achinstein
Area: Humanities, Natural Sciences.

AS.150.191. Freshman Seminar. 3.0 Credits.
The class takes a problem-oriented approach to select dialogues in Plato. Central questions will include: the nature of motivation, and in particular, whether it is true that everyone desires the good; and the role of knowledge in leading a good life, in particular, whether it is true that that virtue is knowledge. We will focus on Ion, Apology, Euthyphro, the Meno, and the ethical books of the Republic.
Instructor(s): L. Theunissen
Area: Humanities
Writing Intensive.

AS.150.192. Freshman Seminar: Self and Self-Knowledge. 3.0 Credits.
Instructor(s): M. Williams
Area: Humanities.

AS.150.193. Philosophy of Language Seminar: Proper Names and Definite Descriptions. 3.0 Credits.
In talking with each other, we often use proper names like ‘Juliet’ and definite descriptions like 'The most beautiful fresco in Italy' to pick out persons and objects in our world. But what do these expressions mean exactly? In this seminar, we'll slowly and carefully work through some classic philosophical texts that address this issue. These texts will provide an introduction to the philosophy of language, and to analytic philosophy in general.
Instructor(s): J. Bledin
Area: Humanities
Writing Intensive.

AS.150.194. Freshman Seminar: Skepticism Ancient and Modern. 3.0 Credits.
Can we gain knowledge of reality, or is everything a matter of opinion? Does it matter? Why do we want (or need) knowledge anyway? Questions like this have been the stock in trade of philosophical skeptics throughout the entire history of our Western philosophical tradition. This class will involve close readings of some classic works on the topic of skepticism with a view to understanding some of the main arguments for (and against) skepticism: how they work and how they may have changed over time. Readings include selections from Sextus Empiricus, Descartes, Hume and Wittgenstein.
Instructor(s): M. Williams
Area: Humanities.

AS.150.201. Introduction To Greek Philosophy. 3.0 Credits.
A survey of the earlier phase of Greek philosophy. Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle will be discussed, as well as two groups of thinkers who preceded them, usually known as the pre-Socratics and the Sophists.
Instructor(s): R. Bett
Area: Humanities.

AS.150.202. Freshman Seminar: Philosophy of Medicine. 3.0 Credits.
This course explores philosophical issues that are of central importance to medicine. Topics to be covered include: history of medicine, relationship between medicine and science, distinction between health and disease. Dean's Prize Teaching Fellowship.
Instructor(s): B. Miller
Area: Humanities.

AS.150.203. Contemporary Metaphysics. 3.0 Credits.
This course will provide students with a survey of major topics in contemporary metaphysics, including such issues as the identity of objects through change and the metaphysical status of persons. Dean’s Teaching Fellowship course.
Instructor(s): J. Brandau
Area: Humanities
Writing Intensive.
AS.150.205. Introduction to the History of Modern Philosophy. 3.0 Credits.
An overview of philosophical thought in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. We shall focus on fundamental questions in epistemology (knowledge, how we acquire it, its scope and limits), metaphysics (the ultimate nature of reality, the relation of mind and body, free will), and theology (the existence and nature of God, God's relation to the world, whether knowledge of such things is possible): all questions that arose in dramatic ways as a result of the rise of modern science. The principal philosophers to be discussed are Descartes, Locke, Hume and Kant, though we shall also make the acquaintance of Spinoza, Leibniz and Berkeley. 
Instructor(s): M. Williams
Area: Humanities.

AS.150.206. Introduction to Ethics. 3.0 Credits.
How should one live? Can we establish firmly the truth of moral claims? Or is morality an invention of society? We will be exploring the works of Aristotle, Kant, and Mill, as well as looking into some more contemporary readings. Further, we will be making connections and discussing how the questions relate to bioethics and business
Instructor(s): A. Englert
Area: Humanities.

AS.150.207. Philosophy and Schizophrenia. 3.0 Credits.
Instructor(s): N. Andonovski
Area: Humanities, Natural Sciences, Social and Behavioral Sciences.

AS.150.210. Minds, Consciousness, and Computers. 3.0 Credits.
This course is a philosophical introduction to the mind, brain, and identity. We will examine such questions as: What is the mind? What is consciousness? Could robots ever be conscious? Are our identities just our minds, and could we upload them to machines?
Instructor(s): K. Brophy
Area: Humanities.

AS.150.215. Business Ethics. 3.0 Credits.
What is a responsible business practice? Do corporations have responsibility as “moral agents”? What is the relation between business and environment? In this course we will investigate the relationship between business practices and ethical thinking by analyzing and assessing philosophical arguments about the moral status of business. We will start by reading philosophical texts that offer an analysis of moral practices, decision-making procedures, and moral theories. In particular, we will read historical text by Aristotle, Hume, Adam Smith, Mill, Marx, and Keynes. Then we will see how these philosophical concepts and theories can be applied to the contemporary world of business. The main goal of this course is to critically evaluate the philosophical foundations and justifications for business and economic systems, and how these apply to specific issues as workplace discrimination, ethics of advertising, environmental destruction and consumer protection.
Instructor(s): M. Bergamaschi Ganapini
Area: Humanities.

AS.150.216. Minds and Machines. 3.0 Credits.
The course is a philosophical introduction to the topic of artificial intelligence. We will examine such questions as whether machines can think and whether we can build robots that have emotions, personalities and a sense of self. In doing so, we will touch upon a closely connected question: is the human mind itself a machine?
Instructor(s): N. Andonovski
Area: Humanities, Natural Sciences.

AS.150.217. Neuroethics. 3.0 Credits.
Can electroencephalography show that we lack free will? Can modern neuroimaging show that someone will commit a crime in the future? Is it ethical to use this promethean knowledge to put them in jail before they even commit a crime? In Neuroethics, we'll consider these and other pressing questions emerging at the frontiers of neuroscience and modern moral theory.
Prerequisites: This course is equivalent to AS.150.472
Instructor(s): P. Stojanovic
Area: Humanities.

AS.150.219. Introduction to Bioethics. 3.0 Credits.
Introduction to a wide range of moral issues arising in the biomedical fields, e.g. physician-assisted suicide, human cloning, abortion, surrogacy, and human subjects research. Cross-listed with Public Health Studies.
Instructor(s): H. Bok
Area: Humanities, Social and Behavioral Sciences
Writing Intensive.

AS.150.220. Introduction to Moral Philosophy. 3.0 Credits.
An introduction to moral philosophy through in-depth and critical reading of selected texts from the history of philosophy. The philosophers whose texts will be discussed include Plato, Aristotle, Kant and Nietzsche.
Instructor(s): H. Bok; L. Theunissen
Area: Humanities.

AS.150.223. Formal Methods of Philosophy. 3.0 Credits.
During the last century or so, symbolic logic and other formal methods have come to play an essential role in most areas of systematic philosophical inquiry. This course serves as an introduction to these formal prerequisites for more advanced study in a wide variety of contemporary philosophical areas. Topics include the syntax and semantics of sentential and first-order predicate logic, natural deduction, modal set theory, mathematical induction and recursion, probability, modal logic, and non-standard logics. The emphasis is on basic comprehension, not on mathematical virtuosity. (Co-listed/combined with AS.150.434)
Instructor(s): R. Rynasiewicz
Area: Humanities.

AS.150.231. Philosophical Intuitions. 3.0 Credits.
At least according to a prevalent conception, analytic philosophers frequently appeal to intuitions - immediate opinions we come to have about cases or claims. In this course, we will discuss three questions that naturally arise: (1) How can we define intuitions and what underlies them? (2) Do philosophers really appeal to intuitions as frequently as they seem to think? (3) Which role should intuitions play in philosophy?
Instructor(s): J. Lossau
Area: Humanities, Social and Behavioral Sciences.

AS.150.235. Philosophy of Religion. 3.0 Credits.
Can one prove or disprove the existence of God? What is the relation between reason and faith? Are science and religion at odds with one another? We will consider historically significant discussions of these questions as well as important contemporary writings.
Instructor(s): S. Gross
Area: Humanities.
AS.150.236. Contemporary Moral Issues. 3.0 Credits.
In this course, we will discuss ethical controversies related to some of the issues currently debated in the public sphere: homosexuality, sexism, racism, immigration, abortion, cloning, genetic enhancement, war, terrorism, torture, and others. Our goal will be to explore how major philosophical theories in ethics approach these controversies, and how they can help us understand and resolve these controversies.
Instructor(s): P. Stojanovic
Area: Humanities.

AS.150.237. Foundations of Modern Political Philosophy. 3.0 Credits.
This course is an introduction to modern political philosophy through an intensive study of the classic texts. The focus will be on the nature and limits of political authority under modern social conditions. Authors included are Machiavelli, Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau and Mill.
Instructor(s): D. Moyar
Area: Humanities
Writing Intensive.

AS.150.238. Philosophy, Science Fiction, and Human Nature. 3.0 Credits.
This is an introduction to philosophy through themes in science fiction. Particular emphasis will be on philosophical questions related to what it means to be a human such as personal identity, free will, the nature of mind, and the nature of knowledge.
Instructor(s): J. Simpson
Area: Humanities

AS.150.245. Introduction to Philosophy of Mind. 3.0 Credits.
This is an introduction to the central problems of philosophy of mind: the mind-body problem and the problem of self-knowledge. Of particular interest in contemporary work is the relation of mind and brain and whether, or how, we acquire self-knowledge.
Instructor(s): E. Taylor
Area: Humanities

AS.150.248. Introduction to Metaphysics. 3.0 Credits.
The class is an introduction to contemporary, analytic, metaphysics. Topics to be discussed include: what is metaphysics, the nature of existence, time and temporality, modality and possible worlds, identity and personal identity, persistence, mereology, causation, and universals and abstract entities.
Instructor(s): Y. Melamed
Area: Humanities.

AS.150.253. Introduction to Philosophy of Psychology. 3.0 Credits.
Psychology is the study of mind and behavior, and philosophy of psychology is the study of the foundations of psychology. Foundational issues in psychology addressed by philosophy of psychology come in the form of the following questions. What is the nature of mental representation? What is the basic architecture of the mind, and is it innate? Can psychological theories proceed in abstraction from the environment? The purpose of this course is to introduce students to these and related questions and the various answers they’ve been given.
Instructor(s): D. Lindeman
Area: Social and Behavioral Sciences.

AS.150.254. Philosophy and Memory. 3.0 Credits.
This course is designed as a survey of the major philosophical questions about memory, with a particular emphasis on the way in which these questions are affected by recent empirical evidence from psychology and the neurosciences. The course is divided into four main parts, exploring the topics of concern: 1. Memory and Representation 2. Memory and Reconstruction 3. Memory, Time and Personal Identity 4. Memory, Ethics and Politics In addressing these questions, we will read some of the major philosophical works concerning memory published in the last 100 years, but we will also investigate the emerging theoretical and experimental paradigms coming from psychology and the neurosciences.
Instructor(s): N. Andonovski
Area: Humanities, Social and Behavioral Sciences.

AS.150.256. Is There Progress in Science?. 3.0 Credits.
In this class we will consider the problems related to the progress of science. First, we will discuss the problem of theory change: is there a way to compare different scientific paradigms and to assess their progressiveness? Next, we will deal with a more specific question: does history of science provide evidence that our best current theories are approximately true? Indeed, are we even justified in thinking that our scientific theories gradually approach truth?
Instructor(s): A. Kabeshkin.

AS.150.259. Introduction to the Theory of Knowledge. 3.0 Credits.
An introduction to the central problems, concepts and theories of philosophical epistemology (theory of knowledge). Topics to be explored will include: what is knowledge (and why do we want it)? Can we get it (skeptics answer "No!"), or is everything in the end a matter of opinion? (skeptics say "Yes!"). Theories of knowledge and justification: foundationalism versus the coherence theory; externalism versus internalism in epistemology. To what extent is knowledge an appropriate object of theory? Readings from early 20th century through contemporary sources.
Instructor(s): M. Williams
Area: Humanities.

AS.150.269. Philosophy of Human Rights. 3.0 Credits.
This course introduces students to the methods of philosophical inquiry and writing via an exploration of philosophical questions about the foundations of human rights, the modern human rights culture, and the relationships between human rights, civil rights, group rights, and women’s rights. No background in philosophy will be assumed, as the aim of the course is to teach philosophical methods while examining the language and practice of human rights, which have been central to the post-WWII global order.
Instructor(s): T. Wilk
Area: Humanities
Writing Intensive.

AS.150.300. Prometheus Editorial Workshop. 1.0 Credit.
Prometheus is an international undergraduate philosophy journal published by students at Johns Hopkins University. The purpose of the journal is to promote philosophic discourse of the highest standard by offering students an opportunity to engage in open discussion, participate in the production and publication of an academic journal, and establish a community of aspiring philosophers. Students enrolled in this workshop will act as the staff readers for the journal. For more information, please visit www.prometheus-journal.com. Prerequisite: MUST have taken one philosophy course.
Instructor(s): C. Cummings
Area: Humanities.
AS.150.301. Majors Seminar: Topics in Theoretical Ethics. 3.0 Credits.
The seminar investigates the nature of practical reason, normativity, motivation, virtue, and the good. We read contemporary classics by Joseph Raz, T. M. Scanlon, Harry Frankfurt, Judith Thomson, and Richard Kraut.
Instructor(s): L. Theunissen
Area: Humanities.

AS.150.304. The Ethics of Human Experimentation. 3.0 Credits.
This course will explore ethical theory, key historical events, and operational requirements of research involving human beings. Weekly discussions will focus on seminal literature and case studies that highlight conceptual and practical challenges related to informed consent; research ethics review; risk/benefit analysis; justice/fairness; globalization of research; participation of vulnerable populations; clinical equipoise; obligations to research participants and communities during studies and after research is completed; and deception in psychological and behavioral research. The course will also explore the emergence and development of the rules governing the protection of human subject research.
Instructor(s): J. Ali
Area: Humanities.

AS.150.305. Global Health & Human Rights: Theoretical Foundations & Practical Implications. 3.0 Credits.
This course systematically examines the human right to health. Topics will include the theoretical foundation(s) of human rights; how human rights compare and contrast to other dominant views of global justice (including Rawlsian versions, cosmopolitanism, and capabilities, among others); and whether (or under what circumstances) health can be properly called a “right”. Special scrutiny will be given to access to essential medicines as a recent example of the invocation of a right to health.
Instructor(s): M. DeCamp
Area: Humanities.

AS.150.309. Introduction to Philosophy of Physics. 3.0 Credits.
This course starts on July 7th and runs until August 1st. This course aims at introducing the student to the basic philosophical issues that lie at the heart of the modern physicist’s conception of nature. To this end, we will look carefully at the foundations of two modern theories of physics, namely, the special theory of relativity and quantum theory. Relativity revolutionized our understanding of space and time, whereas quantum physics shattered our established beliefs about causality and determinism in nature. In the special relativity section of this class, we will cover topics such as the speed of light postulate, conventionality of simultaneity thesis, and the twin paradox. In the foundations of quantum physics, we will probe the measurement problem, Schrödinger’s cat paradox and the uncertainty principle. No previous background in physics is required.
Instructor(s): G. Guralp
Area: Humanities, Natural Sciences.

AS.150.312. Philosophy and Complexity. 3.0 Credits.
This course aims to engage with philosophical problems that stem from sciences of complexity in an interdisciplinary way. We will pose questions concerning how disciplines such as biology, economics, neuroscience, astrophysics etc. deal with the problem of complexity, and we will look at the basic problems philosophers of science single out in this context. After introducing the general problematic of the course, we will have two main parts under which we examine the philosophy of complex systems. The first part will be devoted to the epistemological aspects of the problem such as models, laws, explanation and evidence, and the second part will examine the metaphysical aspects of emergence and reduction.
Instructor(s): G. Guralp
Area: Humanities.

AS.150.315. Philosophy of Human Rights. 3.0 Credits.
From domestic debates about abortion and health care to international dialogue about women’s rights, genital mutilation and genocide human rights claims have become increasingly common, and we’ve come to rely on the discourse of human rights to assess the way human beings are treated by one another and by states. But what are human rights? How are human rights claims justified? Are human rights really objective and universal or are they contingent and relative to particular cultures? Where did the human rights culture begin, and how has it become so important? This course aims to explore these questions by examining foundational human rights documents, historical works on human rights and contemporary philosophical inquiry into their foundations (or lack thereof).
Instructor(s): T. Wilk
Area: Humanities
Writing Intensive.

AS.150.316. Puzzles and Paradoxes. 3.0 Credits.
The course is a survey of puzzles and paradoxes of truth, belief, knowledge, meaning, confirmation, rational action, and vagueness. Specific puzzles and paradoxes include, among others: Russell’s paradox, the Liar paradox, Moore’s paradox, the Skeptical paradox, Newcomb’s paradox, and the Sorites paradox. Besides being fun to think about, these puzzles and paradoxes touch on many areas of philosophy, including philosophy of language, logic, metaphysics, and epistemology. When introducing each puzzle or paradox, attention will be paid to its history and significance. In addition to this exposure to some of the many domains of philosophy, students will gain analytical skills applicable well beyond philosophy.
Instructor(s): D. Lindeman
Area: Humanities.

AS.150.317. Undergraduate Seminar for Philosophy Majors: Can Everything Be Explained?. 3.0 Credits.
We will study various philosophical theories about the nature of explanation, reduction, and speculation.
Instructor(s): P. Achinstein
Area: Humanities.

AS.150.320. Marx: Critique of Political Economy. 3.0 Credits.
A close reading of Marx’s Capital: Volume One. Specific attention will be given to clarification of Marx’s methodology, the foundational categories of his critique of political economy, the systematic unity of his theory, and the underlying normative concepts which inform his work. No previous course in philosophy or social sciences is required.
Instructor(s): A. Abazari
Area: Humanities, Social and Behavioral Sciences.
AS.150.322. Emotion, Mind & Morality. 3.0 Credits.
In this course, we will investigate a number of important philosophical questions about the normative structure of emotions and their role in moral cognition by surveying some of the classic works in philosophy. We will also read a number of contemporary papers. Finally, we will look at recent work in psychology and cognitive neuroscience on the impact of emotion on reason.
Instructor(s): M. Bergamaschi Ganapini
Area: Humanities
Writing Intensive.

AS.150.323. Undergraduate Seminar: Topics in Meta-Ethics. 3.0 Credits.
This is a seminar on theoretical topics in ethics. We focus on debates over cognitivism and non-cognitivism; realism and anti-realism; reasons internalism and externalism; relativism and pluralism. We read contemporary classics by Sharon Street, T.M. Scanlon, Joseph Raz, Bernard Williams, Allan Gibbard, and others.
Instructor(s): L. Theunissen
Area: Humanities
Writing Intensive.

AS.150.325. Philosophy of Oppression and Resistance. 3.0 Credits.
Human social structures can be oppressive in either explicit or covert forms, even in societies highly committed to just democratic ideals. The course will investigate what it means for an individual, practice, or institution to be oppressive, and will explore the concrete mechanisms which can underlie racialized and gendered forms of oppression in particular. Special attention will be given to the political and moral problems raised by hate speech, pornography, propaganda, ideology, and material inequality. Finally, we will discuss how social agents can resist explicit and covert oppression in a way that is conducive to the realization of just ideals.
Instructor(s): K. Powell
Area: Humanities
Writing Intensive.

AS.150.326. Philosophy of Art: A Historical Introduction. 3.0 Credits.
A reading of a number of important texts from the history of philosophy dealing with topics in the philosophy of art. Particular attention will be given to the German aesthetic tradition, and especially to Hegel's aesthetics, although the most important ancient Greek contributions will be considered as well. In particular, we will read Plato, Aristotle, Plotinus, Kant, Schiller, early German Romantics, and Hegel, as well as selected secondary literature. No previous coursework in philosophy or history of art is required.
Instructor(s): A. Kabeshkin
Area: Humanities
Writing Intensive.

AS.150.330. Decisions, Games & Social Choice. 3.0 Credits.
This course is an introduction to decision theory, game theory, and social choice theory with an emphasis on their philosophical underpinnings and philosophical applications. Topics covered include the Prisoner's Dilemma, Newcomb's Problem, convention and social contracts, risk, and Arrow's Theorem.
Instructor(s): J. Bledin
Area: Humanities.

AS.150.351. The Philosophy of Race and Racism. 1.0 Credit.
The twin specters of race and racism have perennially dominated nearly every aspect of American social, economic, and political life. In this course, we will try to appreciate the nature and scope of this dominance by addressing fundamental questions about the natures, functions, and manifestations of race and racism in contemporary American life. Topics include: the "metaphysics" of race, conditions of racial membership, the moral harms introduced by racism, the psychology of racial bias, and institutional forms of racism.
Instructor(s): P. O'Donnell
Area: Humanities, Social and Behavioral Sciences.

AS.150.401. Greek Philosophy: Plato and His Predecessors. 3.0 Credits.
A study of pre-Socratic philosophers, especially those to whom Plato reacted; also an examination of major dialogues of Plato with emphasis upon his principal theses and characteristic methods. Cross-listed with Classics.
Instructor(s): R. Bett
Area: Humanities
Writing Intensive.

AS.150.402. Aristotle. 3.0 Credits.
A study of major selected texts of Aristotle.
Instructor(s): R. Bett
Area: Humanities
Writing Intensive.

AS.150.403. Hellenistic Philosophy. 3.0 Credits.
A study of later Greek philosophy, stretching roughly from the death of Aristotle to the Roman imperial period. Epicureans, Stoics, and Skeptics will be the main philosophical schools examined.
Instructor(s): R. Bett
Area: Humanities
Writing Intensive.

AS.150.404. The Idea of Power. 3.0 Credits.
The idea of Power surveys seminal texts in the history of political thought on the nature, promise, and dangers of political and social power; it also critically engages contemporary texts on race and gender power relations.
Instructor(s): C. Lebron
Area: Humanities.

AS.150.405. Alienation. 3.0 Credits.
In this course we will study the topic of alienation both historically and systematically. We will examine the concept's historical roots at the turn of the 19th century and engage with contemporary discussions by authors working in philosophy of mind, ethics and political philosophy.
Instructor(s): D. Moyar
Area: Humanities
Writing Intensive.

AS.150.406. Can Science Explain Everything?. 3.0 Credits.
What is scientific explanation? We will examine various theories about this in order to determine whether and how science can explain everything physical and everything mental (including consciousness, emotions, purposes, and values). In addition to science are non-scientific theories, for example, religious ones, necessary? Do they compete with or complement scientific ones?
Instructor(s): P. Achinstein
Area: Humanities.
AS.150.407. Enlightenment and Alienation. 3.0 Credits.
Why does the increase in enlightenment not correlate with an increase in morality and happiness? Jean-Jacques Rousseau raised this question in the middle of the 18th century and it remains a pressing question today. The course will examine the issue in Rousseau, Hegel, Marx, and Adorno, as well as in the contemporary work of Richard Moran and Rahel Jaeggi.
Instructor(s): E. Forster
Area: Humanities.

AS.150.408. The Ethics of Climate Change. 3.0 Credits.
In this course we consider ethical issues related to climate change and climate change policy. These include issues about how we ought to distribute the burden of mitigation and adaption, what we owe to future generations and to the non-human world, and about our responsibilities as individuals (with respect, for example, to our diets). We briefly consider geoengineering and issues related to the widespread reliance on cost-benefit analyses in climate policy.
Instructor(s): J. McBee
Area: Humanities.

AS.150.411. Arabic-Islamic Philosophy. 3.0 Credits.
Introduction to major philosophers of the Arabic-Islamic tradition, including Avicenna, al-Ghazali, and Averroes. Topics addressed include the existence of God, metaphysics (e.g., causality), human freedom and knowledge, revelation and reason.
Instructor(s): S. Ogden
Area: Humanities.

AS.150.412. Kant’s Critique of Practical Reason. 3.0 Credits.
A historical and systematic study of Kant’s ethics and philosophy of religion, with special attention to his Critique of Practical Reason.
Instructor(s): E. Forster
Area: Humanities.

AS.150.414. Topics in Political Philosophy: Liberalism. 3.0 Credits.
This course will examine recent liberal political philosophy, with particular emphasis on the work of John Rawls and Jürgen Habermas.
Instructor(s): D. Moyar
Area: Humanities.

AS.150.415. Schelling’s System of Transcendental Idealism. 3.0 Credits.
Schelling’s System of Transcendental Idealism is one of the key texts in the transition from Kant to Hegel. It is also one of Schelling’s clearest and most successful publications, and one of the best introductions to his philosophy. This course offers a close examination of the System of Transcendental Idealism against the background of Kant and Fichte.
Instructor(s): E. Forster
Area: Humanities.

AS.150.416. Kant’s major “minor writings. 3.0 Credits.
Some of Kant’s so-called “minor writings” are in fact brilliant essays that represent important stages in the formation and development of his mature, “critical” philosophy. In this course we will study ten of these essays in detail.
Instructor(s): E. Forster
Area: Humanities.

AS.150.417. Kant’s ‘Critique Of Pure Reason’. 3.0 Credits.
An examination of the philosophy of Immanuel Kant, with emphasis on The Critique of Pure Reason.
Instructor(s): E. Forster
Area: Humanities.

AS.150.419. Kant’s Critique/Judgment. 3.0 Credits.
This course will examine closely and in detail the aesthetic and teleological parts of Kant’s third masterpiece, The Critique of the Power of Judgment.
Instructor(s): E. Forster
Area: Humanities.

AS.150.420. Mathematical Logic I. 3.0 Credits.
The development, first, of sentential logic and, then, of first-order predicate logic. Topics covered include formal languages, effective procedures, truth-functional and Tarski semantics, logical entailment, systems of derivation, deductive soundness and completeness, compactness, theories, formalization of mathematics, sizes of models, and interpretations between theories.
Instructor(s): R. Rynasiewicz
Area: Humanities, Quantitative and Mathematical Sciences.

AS.150.421. Mathematical Logic II. 3.0 Credits.
Gödel’s two incompleteness theorems regarding, first the unaxiomatizability of arithmetic and, second, the impossibility of proving the consistency of arithmetic using arithmetic methods (unless arithmetic is inconsistent). Computability and Church’s Thesis.
Prerequisites: Prereq: AS.150.420
Instructor(s): R. Rynasiewicz
Area: Humanities, Quantitative and Mathematical Sciences.

AS.150.422. Axiomatic Set Theory. 3.0 Credits.
A development of Zermelo-Fraenkel set theory (ZF), including the axiom of choice (ZFC), a system in which all of mathematics can be formulated (i.e., entails all theorems of mathematics). Although, we'll do an exposure to transfinite ordinals and cardinals in general so that you can get a sense for how stupendously “large” these can be, the main thrust concerns certain simple, seemingly well-posed conjectures whose status appears problematic. For example, the Continuum Hypothesis (CH) is the conjecture that the cardinality of the real numbers is the first uncountable cardinality, i.e., the first cardinality greater than that of the set of natural numbers. Equivalently, there is no uncountable subset of real numbers strictly smaller in cardinality than the full set of reals. (You'd think that if there were one, you would be able eventually to find such.) Cantor thought that CH is true, but could not prove it. Gödel showed, at least, that if ZFC is consistent, then so is ZFC+CH. However, Paul Cohen later proved that if ZFC is consistent, then so is ZFC+ the negation of CH. In fact, CH could fail in astoundingly many ways. For example, the cardinality of the continuum could be (weakly) inaccessible, i.e., of a cardinality that cannot even be proved to exist in ZFC (although the reals can certainly be proved to exist in ZFC). So, are there further, intuitively true axioms that can be added to ZFC to resolve the cardinality of the continuum, and CH is definitively true or false? Or, as Cohen thought, does CH simply lack a definite truth value?
Instructor(s): R. Rynasiewicz
Area: Humanities, Quantitative and Mathematical Sciences.

AS.150.425. Poetic Thought. 3.0 Credits.
This course will examine essays and poems by Goethe, Hölderlin, and Rilke with an eye toward the ways in which their work addresses issues central to German Idealism and modern German thought. These include the relation of subject to object, the problem of the representation of the whole; the reconciliation of science and art, and the role of consciousness in the construction of the world. Readings to include texts by Goethe, Hölderlin, and Rilke with commentary by Heidegger, Gadamer, Henrich, Husserl, Benjamin, and Allemann. Reading knowledge of German is required.
Instructor(s): E. Forster; R. Tobias
Area: Humanities, Natural Sciences.
AS.150.426. Philosophy and Disability. 3.0 Credits.
In this course, we will consider various philosophical issues related to disability. What counts as a disability? What obligations do we have, both as individuals and as a society, to people with disabilities? What counts as respectful treatment of people with disabilities, and what counts as unjustifiable discrimination against them?
Prerequisites: AS.150.219 OR AS.150.220
Instructor(s): H. Bok
Area: Humanities, Social and Behavioral Sciences
Writing Intensive.

AS.150.427. Aristotelian Philosophical Psychology. 3.0 Credits.
What did philosophy of mind look like before Descartes? It centered on study of the soul (psuche), or philosophical psychology. This course will focus on Aristotle's view of the soul, its functions, and its relation to matter (hylomorphism), as well as the development of his thought by later ancient and medieval Aristotelians, including Alexander of Aphrodisias, Averroes, and Aquinas. We will conclude with examination of some renewed interest in Aristotle relative to contemporary philosophy of mind.
Instructor(s): S. Ogden
Area: Humanities.

AS.150.428. Spinoza's Theological Political Treatise. 3.0 Credits.
The course is an in-depth study of Spinoza's Theological-Political Treatise. Among the topics to be discussed are: Spinoza's Bible criticism, the nature of religion, philosophy and faith, the nature of the ancient Hebrew State, Spinoza's theory of the State, the role of religion in Spinoza's political theory, the freedom to philosophize, the metaphysics of Spinoza's Theological-Political Treatise, and finally, the reception of the TTP.
Instructor(s): Y. Melamed.

AS.150.429. Topics in Logic: Ontology and Knowledge Representation. 3.0 Credits.
Knowledge representation deals with the possible structures by which the content of what is known can be formally represented in such a way that queries can be posed and inferences drawn. Ontology concerns the hierarchical classification of entities from given domains of knowledge together with the relations between various classes, subclasses, or individuals. The main framework in which we will work is that of description logics, which are decidable fragments of varying degrees of first order predicate logic. In ontology development we will examine RDF (Resource Description Framework), its extension to RDFS, and OWL (Web Ontology Language), and use the software Protegé for specific applications. Finally, we will take a look at query languages such as SPARQL (SPARQL Protocol and RDF Query Language).
Instructor(s): R. Rynasiewicz
Area: Humanities, Quantitative and Mathematical Sciences.

AS.150.430. Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit. 3.0 Credits.
An in-depth study of Hegel's masterpiece, the Phenomenology of Spirit. We will be concentrating on the first half of the text.
Instructor(s): E. Forster.

AS.150.431. Introduction to Philosophy of Science. 3.0 Credits.
This course introduces students to some major philosophical problems about science, including these three: (1) Is there a universal set of rules constituting the "scientific method" that scientists must always follow in order to be rational? (2) Can science provide knowledge of an "unobservable" world underlying our experiences, and if so how? Or is science confined to speaking about the world of observation? (3) Are there important differences between philosophy and science? We will consider disputes between rationalists (e.g., Descartes) and empiricists (e.g., Newton) on scientific method; historical and contemporary debates between scientific realists and instrumentalists about the reach of science, as well as different viewpoints concerning the relationship between philosophy and science. No particular science or philosophy background is presupposed.
Instructor(s): P. Achinstein; R. Bett
Area: Humanities.

AS.150.432. Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit, Part 2. 3.0 Credits.
This course is a continuation of Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit, Part One, taught last Spring. We will closely study the second half of the book, compare its methodology with that of the first half, and end with an examination of Hegel's systematic reflections in the "Preface".
Prerequisites: AS.150.430
Instructor(s): E. Forster
Area: Humanities.

AS.150.433. Philosophy of Space & Time. 3.0 Credits.
Is space an entity that exists independently of matter, or is it only an abstraction from spatial relations between bodies? Is there a lapse of time even when nothing changes, or is time only a measure of motion? Are motion and rest contrary states of a body, or are there only changes in the positions of bodies relative to one another? Philosophers and physicists have disputed these questions from antiquity to the present day. We survey the arguments and attempt to find a resolution. But there are further questions. Is there a fact of the matter as to the geometry of space (Euclidean or non-Euclidean), or as to whether spatially separated events occur at the same time? Why does time exist? Is there a "direction"? Are past, present and future objective features of reality? Are space and time ultimately discrete on small scales? Do space and time, or even just spatio-temporal relations between bodies and events, really exist? Or are they merely emergent features of a fundamental non-spatio-temporal reality?
Instructor(s): R. Rynasiewicz
Area: Humanities, Natural Sciences.

AS.150.434. Formal Methods of Philosophy. 3.0 Credits.
During the last century or so, symbolic logic and other formal methods have come to play an essential role in most areas of systematic philosophical inquiry. This course serves as an introduction to these formal prerequisites for more advanced study in a wide variety of contemporary philosophical areas. Topics include the syntax and semantics of sentential and first-order predicate logic, natural deduction, basic set theory, mathematical induction and recursion, probability, modal logic, and non-standard logics. The emphasis is on basic comprehension, not on mathematical virtuosity. (Co-listed/combined with AS.150.223)
Instructor(s): R. Rynasiewicz
Area: Humanities.
AS.150.435. Maimonides’ Guide of the Perplexed & Political Theology. 3.0 Credits.
The seminar is an in-depth study of Maimonides’ magisterial work, the Guide of the Perplexed. Special attention will be given to Maimonides’ views about the political functions of religion. We will also read modern commentaries and responses to the Guide, by Leibniz, Spinoza, and Salomon Maimon.
Instructor(s): Y. Melamed
Area: Humanities.

AS.150.437. KANT’S Opus Postumum. 3.0 Credits.
Why did Kant, after he had completed the three Critiques, work on a book with the title, Transition from the Metaphysical Foundations of Natural Science to Physics – better known as his Opus postumum? Why did this project eventually come to include ethics and result in a revision of Kant’s transcendental philosophy? Questions like these will be answered by means of a close study of Kant’s text, and by relating the text to (a) his Metaphysical Foundations of Natural Science and (b) to his ethical writings from the critical period.
Instructor(s): E. Forster
Area: Humanities.

AS.150.438. Spinoza's Ethics. 3.0 Credits.
The seminar is an in depth study of Spinoza’s major work, The Ethics.
Instructor(s): Y. Melamed
Area: Humanities.

AS.150.439. Epistemology. 3.0 Credits.
Is knowledge (or even strong evidence) required, or possible, in science and in philosophy? We will focus on whether standard forms of non-demonstrative reasoning are justified, how it is possible to gain knowledge of the observable and unobservable world, whether and how theories in philosophy can be established, and what to do in science and philosophy when you can’t prove or get strong evidence for your theory.
Instructor(s): P. Achinstein
Area: Humanities.

AS.150.442. The Philosophy of Ludwig Wittgenstein. 3.0 Credits.
We will read Wittgenstein’s two great works: Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus (1921) and Philosophical Investigations (1953). We may also devote some time to his late, unpublished work, Uncertainty.
Instructor(s): M. Williams
Area: Humanities.

AS.150.443. Wittgenstein’s Philosophy of Mind. 3.0 Credits.
The seminar will begin with a careful examination of the private language argument in the Philosophical Investigations. Among the additional themes we will examine are his analogy between philosophy of mathematics and his philosophy of psychology, implicit criticisms of the representational theory of mind, the problem of other minds and the role of deception, and the “grammar” of psychological concepts. There are numerous manuscripts concerned with mental and psychological concepts. Two volumes of the Remarks on the Philosophy of Psychology will be ordered for the seminar, though we will not be “working through” them in a systematic way. The Philosophical Investigations and Zettel are essential. Recommended Course Background: Familiarity with Wittgenstein’s work.
Instructor(s): M. Williams
Area: Humanities.

AS.150.444. The Identity of Indiscernibles. 3.0 Credits.
Can two things (such as bodies, events, moments, thoughts, or geometrical points) have precisely the same qualities? If so, what makes them different from each other? In this class we will explore the debate about the Principle of the Identity of Indiscernibles. Readings will include texts by: Leibniz, Clarke, Max Black, Ayer, Ian Hacking, Robert Adams, and Michael Della Rocca.
Instructor(s): Y. Melamed
Area: Humanities.

AS.150.446. Hegel's Science of Logic. 3.0 Credits.
In this course we will focus on the first two parts of Hegel’s Science of Logic, and address the following issues (among others). In what sense is Hegel’s dialectical logic continuous with the classical metaphysical tradition and in what sense is it a critique of traditional metaphysics? What motivates the project, or what questions does Hegel think his logic can answer that previous logics did not?
Instructor(s): D. Moyar; E. Forster
Area: Humanities.

AS.150.452. Freedom of Will & Moral Responsibility. 3.0 Credits.
What are freedom of the will and moral responsibility? Are they compatible with determinism or naturalism? This course will examine various philosophers’ answers to these questions.
Instructor(s): H. Bok
Area: Humanities
Writing Intensive.

AS.150.454. The Value of Humanity. 3.0 Credits.
Are human beings distinctively valuable? What makes us valuable? And how should we respond to the value of human beings? The course is divided into four parts. The first part takes up questions about the basis of human value. We consider various proposals, including Kant’s, about the valuable feature or capacity of human beings. Are we valuable in virtue of having a good will, in virtue of being agents, in virtue of being valuers, or something further? The second part takes up questions about the explanation of the value of human beings. Does the proposed feature make us valuable because it instantiates a simple value property, making us valuable in ourselves, or simpliciter? We consider whether the notion of value simpliciter is a notion we fully understand, or need. Does the proposed feature make us valuable because it makes us good-for something or someone? Who or what does it make us good-for? Or again, does the proposed feature make us such that we are objects of an appropriate attitude or practical stance? If so, what is the attitude or stance? The third part of the course takes up normative questions about the appropriate mode of responding to human beings.
We consider whether it makes sense to say that human beings are “ends-in-themselves,” and what it would mean to treat a person as an end-in-itself. We also consider various accounts of respect. A guiding question is whether human beings are the only appropriate objects of respect, or whether we can respect other beings, and even artifacts. The fourth part of the class applies what we have learned so far to related topics: to the question of whether human life or existence is valuable, and conversely, whether death is disvaluable. We consider, albeit briefly, the value of human beings in relation to the value of animals. And we ask about the role of Kantian notions like dignity in applied contexts, so that highly philosophical considerations about value are shown to have real-world bearing.
Instructor(s): L. Theunissen
Area: Humanities.
AS.150.455. Ethics And Animals. 3.0 Credits.
Instructor(s): H. Bok
Area: Humanities
Writing Intensive.

AS.150.456. Medieval Philosophy. 3.0 Credits.
Instructor(s): S. Ogden
Area: Humanities.

AS.150.460. Rawls and His Critics. 3.0 Credits.
John Rawls was the most important moral and political thinker of the 20th century. In this course we will look at his two main works, A Theory of Justice and Political Liberalism, along with some of the more influential criticisms of his ideas. Main topics will include the derivation of principles of justice, the role of the good in liberal political theory, and the nature of reasonable pluralism.
Instructor(s): D. Moyar; H. Bok
Area: Humanities.

AS.150.461. Russell, Frege, Wittgenstein: Foundations of Analytic Philosophy. 3.0 Credits.
Russell, Frege, and Wittgenstein (in Tractatus) provided much of the philosophical foundation for 20th C. analytic philosophy. Their influence continues to be felt, especially in their conception of philosophical problems and the methods by which they can be solved.
Instructor(s): M. Williams
Area: Humanities.

AS.150.462. Islamic Political Philosophy. 3.0 Credits.
An introduction to the history of Islamic political philosophy, primarily focused on two flashpoints of encounter between the religion of Islam and other philosophical/political systems—an early one with ancient Greek philosophy (especially in the works of Plato and Aristotle), and a period of interface with modern Western secular political thought, from the late 19th century to present. Our goal will be to try to understand some of the varying responses in each period as Muslim thinkers seek authentic engagement with external and internal trends, both religious and philosophical. The focus will be on primary texts from philosophically engaged thinkers (who may or may not consider themselves philosophers).
Instructor(s): S. Ogden
Area: Humanities.

AS.150.465. Genetics, Genomics and Society. 3.0 Credits.
This course will examine the ethical, legal and social implications (ELSI) of human genetics through the lens of significant and field-defining periods and events in the history of the field. We will study the ELSI issues raised by those events, and how the events have shaped and defined the current state of the science and emerging scientific, ethical, policy and public health issues. Juniors and Seniors only.
Instructor(s): D. Mathews
Area: Humanities, Social and Behavioral Sciences.

AS.150.466. Recent Work in Skepticism. 3.0 Credits.
We all take it for granted that perceptual experience yields knowledge of the world around us. But in the first of his Meditations on First Philosophy, Descartes invents a new and puzzling thought experiment. He imagines an Evil Demon with the power to manipulate the total course of his (Descartes’s) experience, so that what he naturally takes to be experience of the world around him is really a kind of perpetual dream: a simulation or virtual reality, as we might way today. Descartes’s problem, which has made its way into popular culture through films like those in the “Matrix” series, remains a source of philosophical puzzlement. While no one believes that skeptical hypotheses like Demon or computer deception are true, it is not easy to say how we can exclude them. Given that the deception is systematic, it seems that any “evidence” I cite could itself be part of the simulation. So how do I (or could I) know (for sure) that I’m not the victim of the Deceiver or the Matrix? We shall examine some of the latest attempts to respond to Descartes’s challenge. Does the “How could I know?” question admit of a theoretical answer, or is the question itself somehow ill-posed? Can we answer it without making significant concessions to skepticism? Exploring such questions should teach us some interesting lessons about knowledge (or the concept of knowledge).
Instructor(s): M. Williams
Area: Humanities.

AS.150.467. Philosophic Logic. 3.0 Credits.
This course is a survey of various topics in philosophical logic. We begin with a review of the model theory of classical first-order logic. In our first unit, we will then move beyond the standard existential and universal quantifiers and consider generalized quantifiers, substitutional quantifiers, and plural quantification. In our second unit, we will investigate the theory of propositional modal logic, considering its syntax, semantics, and proof theory, and some of its applications. In our third unit, we will investigate various formal approaches to defining truth. In our fourth unit, we will get more philosophical and ask: what is logical consequence? In the course of answering this question, we will consider intuitionistic, normative, and informational conceptions of logic.
Instructor(s): J. Bledin
Area: Humanities.

AS.150.468. Global Food Ethics. 3.0 Credits.
This course is an introduction to ethical issues that arise within the contemporary global agrifood system. The overarching goal of the class is to give you the opportunity to think critically about a variety of conflicting views as to how we should produce, distribute, and consume food to achieve food security for over 9.6 billion people by 2050. We will borrow tools from practical ethics and theories of justice to shed light on these pressing issues that determine our common future and the way we personally relate to the food we eat.
Instructor(s): Y. Saghai
Area: Humanities.

AS.150.472. Neuroethics. 3.0 Credits.
Neuroethics: Can electroencephalography show that we lack free will? Can modern neuroimaging show that someone will commit a crime in the future? Is it ethical to use this Prometheus knowledge to put them in jail before they even commit a crime? In Neuroethics, we’ll consider these and other pressing questions emerging at the frontiers of neuroscience and modern moral theory.
Instructor(s): P. Stojanovic
Area: Humanities.
AS.150.474. Justice and Health. 3.0 Credits.
Course will consider the bearing of theories of justice on health care. Topics will include national health insurance, rationing and cost containment, and what justice requires of researchers in developing countries.
Instructor(s): H. Bok
Area: Humanities.

AS.150.475. Addiction, Depression, and the Self. 3.0 Credits.
An examination of the moral implications and effects of addiction, depression and Pharmacological treatments for depression on our conception of our own agency. Recommended Course Background: AS.150.219, AS.150.220, or permission required.
Instructor(s): H. Bok
Area: Humanities
Writing Intensive.

AS.150.476. Philosophy and Cognitive Science. 3.0 Credits.
This term's topic is perception. Questions will include: How does perception differ from belief, hallucination, imagination? Can what we believe affect what we perceive? What distinguishes the various senses? Is linguistic comprehension a kind of perception?
Instructor(s): S. Gross
Area: Humanities, Social and Behavioral Sciences
Writing Intensive.

AS.150.479. The Ethics of Making Babies. 3.0 Credits.
In this class, we will investigate many aspects of the ethics of making babies, asking not only which children we should create and how we should create them, but whether we should make any more people at all. Investigating these questions will take us through large chunks of moral theory, bioethics, and public health ethics. For more information, or to request permission of the instructor (for those who do not meet the prerequisite requirements), email Travis Rieder at trieder@jhu.edu. Recommended Course Background: One course in ethics or bioethics, or permission of the instructor.
Instructor(s): T. Rieder
Area: Humanities.

AS.150.483. Topics in Jewish Philosophy: Heresy. 3.0 Credits.
Hasidism is the ecstatic religious movement that emerged in East European Jewry in the mid-eighteenth century. In this research seminar we will concentrate on the teachings and activities of the circle of Dov Ber of Mezrich between 1760 and 1772. We will study both internal and external sources (such as Salomon Maimon’s report in his Lebensgeschichte). All materials will be available in English translation, though reading knowledge of Hebrew would be an asset.
Instructor(s): Y. Melamed.

AS.150.487. Fundamental Principles of Philosophical Rationalism. 3.0 Credits.
At the center of Leibniz rationalist metaphysics are four interrelated philosophical principles: (1) The Law of Non-Contradiction, (2) The Principle of Sufficient Reason (roughly, the claim that everything must have a reason), (3) The Identity of Indiscernibles (roughly, the claim that there are no two perfectly similar things), and (4) The Predicate in Subject Principle (the claim that in every true proposition the concept of the predicate is somehow contained in the concept of the subject). In this class we will study these four principles, i.e., their modal strength, range, justification, and interrelations both in early modern philosophy (Leibniz, Spinoza, and Clarke), and in contemporary philosophy (Della Rocca, Sam Levey, Dasgupta, Max Black).
Instructor(s): J. Bledin; Y. Melamed
Area: Humanities.

AS.150.490. Animal Minds. 3.0 Credits.
An examination of some of the scientific and philosophical literature on the nature of animal minds and the way(s) in which they differ from the human mind. The most important of these apparent differences are the use of language, the exercise of concepts, and instrumental reasoning, including the use of instruments. Co-listed 300.411
Instructor(s): M. Williams
Area: Humanities.

AS.150.493. Introduction to Scientific Methods. 3.0 Credits.
We will study various methods for proving scientific claims defended by scientists and philosophers. Included will be rationalism (Descartes), various forms of empiricism (Newton, Mill, Whewell), realism vs. anti-realism, and scientific strategies to follow when you cannot prove your favorite theory. No particular scientific background required.
Instructor(s): P. Achinstein
Area: Humanities, Social and Behavioral Sciences.

AS.150.494. Descartes. 3.0 Credits.
The course is an introduction to the philosophy of Rene Descartes. We will read most of his main philosophical works, and part of his correspondence. The class is open to both undergraduate and graduate students.
Instructor(s): Y. Melamed
Area: Humanities.

AS.150.496. Topics in the Theory of Value. 3.0 Credits.
We ask a basic question in value theory: what is it for something to be good, or of value? Is it for something to instantiate the simple value property ‘good’? Can goodness be identified with some natural property, perhaps, the property ‘pleasant’, or some dispositional property, perhaps, ‘what we desire to desire’? Is goodness a relation between some object, state of affairs, or activity and a subject, so that the good is benefit? On the other hand, are reasons and not values primitive in value theory, so that we should theorize about the good in terms of appropriate responses to it? We will read classic works by G. E. Moore, Peter Geach, Judith Jarvis Thomson, Connie Rosati, Nicholas Sturgeon, Richard Kraut, Donald Regan, T. M. Scanlon, and others.
Instructor(s): L. Theunissen
Area: Humanities.

AS.150.497. Kant and the Early Moderns. 3.0 Credits.
A critical examination of Kant’s dialogue with his Early Modern predecessors (Descartes, Spinoza, Leibniz, Locke, Berkeley, Hume), and of their own respective positions.
Instructor(s): E. Forster; Y. Melamed
Area: Humanities.

AS.150.498. Modal Logic and Its Applications. 3.0 Credits.
In the first part of the course, we’ll investigate the theory of modal logic, considering its syntax, semantics, and proof theory. We’ll then turn to some its philosophical applications: epistemic logic, counterfactuals, deontic logic, intuitionistic logic, and the metaphysics of time.
Instructor(s): J. Bledin
Area: Humanities, Quantitative and Mathematical Sciences.
AS.150.499. The Principle of Sufficient Reason. 3.0 Credits.
According to the Principle of Sufficient Reason every fact must have a reason, or explanation. In other words: there are no brute facts. If a certain penguin has three dots on its right wing - there must be a reason for this. If there are no penguins with precisely three dots on their right wings – there must be a reason for that as well. In the first half of the course we will read works by the two philosophers who introduced the principle: Spinoza and Leibniz. In the second part, we will read texts by Kant, Maimon, Hegel, Schopenhauer, and some contemporary analytic philosophers, and discuss the plausibility, implications, and justification of the principle.
Instructor(s): Y. Melamed
Area: Humanities.

AS.150.511. Directed Study. 3.0 Credits.
Individual study of special topics, under regular supervision of a faculty member. Special permission is required.
Instructor(s): Staff
Writing Intensive.

AS.150.512. Directed Study. 0.0 - 3.0 Credits.
Instructor(s): Staff.

AS.150.551. Honors Project. 3.0 Credits.
See departmental major adviser.
Instructor(s): Staff.

AS.150.552. Honors Project. 0.0 - 3.0 Credits.
Instructor(s): Staff.

AS.150.598. Internship. 1.0 Credit.
Instructor(s): D. Moyar; M. Tumulty.

AS.150.605. Foundations of Ethics.
The seminar will serve as an advanced, topical introduction to normative theories in ethics, and will include some meta-ethics. Our central question is: what is the foundation, or motivational basis, of ethics? Is it the individual asking what she wants for her life? Is it the determination of rational requirements on action? We think about the relationship between reason, reasons, and motivation. We consider the debate over internalism and externalism about reasons. We work through the distinction between agent-neutral and agent-relative reasons and values. Among others, we will read Thomas Nagel, Phillipa Foot, Shelly Kagan, Samuel Scheffler, Derek Parfit, G. E. M. Anscombe, and Bernard Williams.
Instructor(s): L. Theunissen
Area: Humanities.

Course will focus on ancient skepticism as a way of life, and on the role of epistemological argument in skepticism so conceived. The seminar will end with a brief look at early modern reactions to ancient skepticism.
Instructor(s): M. Williams; R. Bett.

AS.150.607. Graduate Seminar: Knowledge and Perception.
How does perception reveal the world, if it does? Why have philosophical reflections on perception often led to skepticism? For background, we will start with readings from Ayer and Austin (on the sense-datum theory), and Sellars (on the Myth of the Given). We will then spend time on contemporary “disjunctive” accounts of perceptual consciousness, with readings from McDowell, Travis and (possibly) others.
Instructor(s): M. Williams
Area: Humanities.

AS.150.608. Graduate Seminar-Speculation: Scientific and Philosophical.
Some say that speculation whether in science or philosophy, should be avoided at all costs (e.g., Descartes, Newton). Others say that speculation is okay as long as it is followed by argument or evidence (e.g., Popper). Still others encourage one to freely speculate in the absence of argument or evidence (e.g., Feyerabend). Are any of these views right? What is speculation, and is it subject to any universal standards? What is evidence, and is it subject to universal standards? Readings will be from authors mentioned above and from quite a few others. We will look at some very general influential philosophical=scientific speculations, such as the claim that nature is simple and that everything is explainable, as well as some more specific ones.
Instructor(s): P. Achinstein
Area: Humanities.

AS.150.610. Virtue Ethics.
A study of recent work in virtue ethics.
Instructor(s): H. Bok.

AS.150.614. Topics in Meta-Ethics (Graduate Seminar).
This is a seminar on theoretical topics in ethics. We focus on debates over cognitivism and non-cognitivism; realism and anti-realism; reasons internalism and externalism; relativism and skepticism. We read contemporary classics by Sharon Street, T. M. Scanlon, Joseph Raz, Bernard Williams, Allan Gibbard, and others.
Instructor(s): L. Theunissen
Area: Humanities.

AS.150.615. Martin Heidegger, Being and Time: Integral Reading and Current Perspectives.
Starting with a detailed discussion of its Introduction and Division One, this jointly taught seminar will bring phenomenological, hermeneutic, and deconstructive as well as analytic, epistemological, and pragmatist methods and viewpoints to bear upon this modern classic. Co-listed with AS.300.653
Instructor(s): H. de Vries; M. Williams
Area: Humanities.

AS.150.618. Martin Heidegger, Being and Time: Integral Reading and Current Perspectives II.
Starting with a brief overview and recapitulation of themes discussed in its Introduction and Division One, this jointly will focus on Division Two of Being and Time and bring phenomenological, hermeneutic, and deconstructive as well as analytic, epistemological, and pragmatist methods and viewpoints to bear upon this modern classic.
Instructor(s): H. de Vries; M. Williams
Area: Humanities.

AS.150.619. Topics in Hegel's Philosophy: The Philosophy of Right.
This course will be a close reading of G.W.F. Hegel's Philosophy of Right. Some of the main topics for discussion will be the relation of law and morality, the dependence of the political philosophy on Hegel's Logic, and the relation of individual and social conceptions of freedom.
Instructor(s): D. Moyar
Area: Humanities.
AS.150.625. Fatalism and the Logic of Unconditionals.
Since the early eighties, there has been a growing movement away from traditional truth-centric theories of meaning and consequence towards more information-oriented accounts. Given these relatively new developments, I think the time is ripe for reconsidering one of the oldest arguments in philosophy: the "Idle Argument" for fatalism. This notorious argument survives in Cicero's De Fato from 44BC but the version that we will focus on in the seminar is based on Dummett's classic "Bringing About the Past" [1964].
Instructor(s): J. Bledin
Area: Humanities.

AS.150.627. Seminar in Epistemology.
Topic: Realism and its Critics Questions circling around issues of "realism" have been prominent in contemporary philosophy. Some philosophers argue for or against realism across the board. Here the fundamental issue is often taken to be semantic: can truth be radically evidence-transcendent, so that a proposition must be true or false even if we will never have evidence one way or another? But there are also more local questions. Do scientific theories that postulate unobservables aim to state literal truths about such theoretical entities (as scientific realists claim), or are they better understood as devices for linking and systematizing observational evidence (as instrumentalists or constructive empiricists argue)? Are there mind-independent moral or aesthetic facts (as moral and aesthetic realists suppose), or are moral and aesthetic judgments better understood in some other way, for example as fundamentally "expressive" rather than "descriptive". Many philosophers continue to hold that such questions raise deep metaphysical issues. But this view has been challenged by metaphysical quietists, who argue that the whole issue of realism versus non- or anti-realism is best avoided. So should we be realists, either in general or selectively? Or is quietism the better option? What is realism anyway? The aim of this seminar is to explore influential arguments that arise in the attempt to answer such questions.
Instructor(s): M. Williams; P. Achinstein
Area: Humanities.

AS.150.630. Seminar In Metaphysics: Mind and Cosmos.
We will begin by reading Thomas Nagel's new book: Mind and Cosmos. This will be followed by other works to be selected in class.
Instructor(s): P. Achinstein.

AS.150.632. Formal Logic.
An introduction to symbolic logic and probability. In the first two parts of the course we study formal ways of determining whether a conclusion of an argument follows from its premises. Included are truth-functional logic and predicate logic. In the third part we study the basic rules of probability, and learn how to make probability calculations and decisions in life." Co-listed with AS.150.118 (for undergraduate students) (01-F 11:00-11:50am).
Instructor(s): P. Achinstein
Area: Humanities, Quantitative and Mathematical Sciences.

AS.150.633. Kant's Opus Postumum.
This research seminar examines the reasons that led Kant to revise his transcendental philosophy late in life. Special attention to problems in the Metaphysics of Nature and the Metaphysics of Morals. Students should be familiar with Kant’s theoretical and practical philosophy.
Instructor(s): E. Forster.

AS.150.634. Seminar in Philosophy of German Idealism: Explanation or Construction? The Question of Method in the Philosophy of Nature.
"We must do away with all explanation, and description alone must take its place." This sentence, although written over a century later and in a different context, could serve as a motto for what is perhaps the most important debate about the proper method of Naturphilosophie in German Idealism. In this seminar we will examine the philosophical significance of this debate over the role of explanation in our knowledge of nature. Readings will come from Jacobi, Goethe, Schiller, Kant, Schelling, Hegel, as well as from Pascal, Spinoza, and Newton.
Instructor(s): E. Forster
Area: Humanities.

AS.150.636. Spinoza and Hegel.
Spinoza and Hegel are two of the greatest philosophers of the modern period. Both philosophers are bold and difficult, and both exerted a decisive influence on later developments of Western philosophy. In this class, we will attempt to reconstruct a philosophical dialogue between the two philosophers. Topics to be discussed include: the nature of philosophy, basic ontology, kinds of knowledge, negation and contradiction, freedom, the reality of time, teleology and human history, the role and value of the state.
Instructor(s): E. Forster; Y. Melamed
Area: Humanities.

This seminar will focus on language acquisition as involving a special kind of learning, one that requires the active participation of an adult in what the child does. The account we will be discussing draws heavily on Wittgenstein's philosophy of language, particular the treatment of the problem of similarity and the development of reference.
Instructor(s): M. Williams
Area: Humanities.

A study of Kant's major works in moral philosophy.
Instructor(s): H. Bok.

Although all three were Copernicans in the broad sense, these great mathematician-philosophers of the 17th century held subtly different positions on the question whether the sun or the earth moves, in large part because they proposed very different analyses of what it is for a body to move. These analyses emerge from quite divergent views on space, time, matter, mind, and scientific-philosophical method in relation to natural theology. The focus of the seminar is on the interaction of these views: Newton's rejection of Descartes' Followed by the clash between Newton's and Leibniz's.
Instructor(s): R. Rynasiewicz
Area: Humanities.

AS.150.652. Seminar in the Philosophy of Science.
Philosophy of experiment, Bayesianism, severe tests. Readings from Hacking, Galison, Franklin, Mayo, and others. Applications range from physiology to cosmology.
Instructor(s): R. Rynasiewicz
Area: Humanities, Social and Behavioral Sciences.
AS.150.653. Philosophy of Physics Seminar: Non-Locality for the Layperson.
Non-locality arises when measurement outcomes on space-like separated systems are correlated in such a way that no common cause or super-luminal signaling could possibly account for the pattern of the correlations. Such happens in quantum mechanics. Einstein referred to it as “spooky action-at-a-distance.” Schrödinger spoke of the states of the separated quantum systems as “entangled.” Non-locality, rather than the failure of determinism, has come to be regarded as the deeper feature separating quantum from classical physics. However, whether nature is local or non-local can be defined independently of quantum mechanics, and, in principle, reality could be even more non-local than as described by quantum mechanics. This seminar will be a gentle introduction to non-locality, as presented in Jeff Bub’s Bananaworld: Quantum Mechanics for Primates, which presupposes no prior background in quantum theory. But there is more. Pondering super-non-local possibilities suggests that the wave-function need not be ontologically fundamental, thus freeing us from the outrageous conclusion that the world branches upon measurement into parallel realities corresponding to spectrum of possible measurement outcomes. It remains to be seen, however, how one might then avoid lapsing into Quantum Bayesianism, which holds that the wave function merely represents our subjective degrees of belief about what will happen.
Instructor(s): R. Rynasiewicz
Area: Humanities.

AS.150.656. Practical Reason in German Idealism.
In this course we will examine the development of idealist theories of practical reason. We will read Kant’s Critique of Practical Reason, Fichte’s System of Ethics, and selections from Hegel’s writings.
Instructor(s): D. Moyar
Area: Humanities.

AS.150.657. Philosophy of Language.
We will investigate one or more specialized topics in formal semantic and pragmatics.
Instructor(s): J. Bledin.

AS.150.658. Topics in the Philosophy of Language.
An examination of recent work in the philosophy of language and/or related work in the philosophy of mind.
Instructor(s): S. Gross.

AS.150.659. Topics in Formal Semantics: Counterfactuals?
In this seminar, we will investigate the semantics and communicative function of counterfactuals. Among the questions that we will consider are these: What are the compositional semantic values of counterfactual conditionals? What is the context change potential of a counterfactual and what kind of structure must we add to the common ground of a conversation to model its communicative effect? Do counterfactuals recommend a dynamic approach to meaning? Are counterfactual conditionals truth-apt? Do they serve to describe the world? If so, which aspect of reality is a counterfactual sensitive to?
Instructor(s): J. Bledin
Area: Humanities, Social and Behavioral Sciences.

AS.150.667. Explanation in Science and Metaphysics.
Questions about the nature of metaphysical explanation are central to contemporary metaphysics. These questions are relevant to similar debates in philosophy of science about the nature of scientific explanation. In this seminar we will examine questions about the nature and role of metaphysical explanation, specifically focusing on the comparison between metaphysical explanation and scientific explanation.
Instructor(s): E. Taylor
Area: Humanities, Social and Behavioral Sciences.

AS.150.810. Independent Study.
Sec. 01 Theunissen Sec. 02 Förster Sec. 03 Gross Sec. 04 Moyar Sec. 05 Rynasiewicz Sec. 06 Williams (Meredith) Sec. 07 Bok Sec. 08 Bett Sec. 09 Williams (Michael) Sec. 10 Bledin Sec. 11 Achinstein Sec. 12 Melamed
Instructor(s): Staff.

AS.150.811. Directed Study.
Please see AS.150.810 for section numbers to use when registering.
Instructor(s): Staff.

AS.150.812. Directed Study.
Please see AS.150.810 for section number to use when registering.
Instructor(s): Staff.

Preparing philosophy graduate students for the impending job market by discussions of, and practicing for, constructing and submitting dossiers, interviews and giving talks both in and outside one’s particular field. Open to all philosophy graduate students, regardless of year and field. No degree credits. Offered sporadically.
Instructor(s): P. Achinstein.

AS.150.821. Research Seminar in Language and Mind.
A workshop for current departmental research in language and mind. Permission required.
Instructor(s): S. Gross
Area: Humanities.

Cross Listed Courses

Political Science
AS.191.344. Belonging to Nature in the Anthropocene. 3.0 Credits.
This course explores debates in contemporary environmental political thought concerning humanity’s relationship to nature in the Anthropocene. The Anthropocene refers to the era in which “human” activity becomes a force of “nature”—when the impact of human activity on natural processes manifests itself in the stuff of the Earth. For many of us, these planetary transformations are hardly noticeable in day-to-day life, but they are dramatic: we are living through the Earth’s sixth mass extinction. What is our relationship to these transformations? Do we have the power to stop them, or at least to minimize their harmful effects? Course readings and films introduce multiple visions of the human/nature relationship and examine the responses they recommend to these and other questions. The political stakes of these visions are brought to light as we consider: How do visions of the human/nature relationship shape and texture core political concepts like freedom, agency, responsibility, and progress? What do they suggest about the strategies most likely to motivate action amid the uncertainty of the Anthropocene? How do these visions subtly (and not so subtly) relegate some to the realm of “nature” so that others can be classified as “human”?
Instructor(s): S. Erev
Writing Intensive.
Psychological Brain Sciences

AS.200.336. Foundations of Mind. 4.0 Credits.
An interdisciplinary investigation into the innateness of concepts: perception, number, language, and morality, physics discussed. Evidence from animals, infants, patients, brains. Students collect data in sections investigating claims from the readings. Cross-listed with Cognitive Science and Philosophy.
Instructor(s): J. Halberda; L. Feigenson
Area: Social and Behavioral Sciences.

German Romance Languages Literatures

AS.213.265. Panorama of German Thought. 3.0 Credits.
A unique aspect of the German intellectual tradition is the attention it pays to the role of the subject in constructing the world. While this tendency is associated in particular with Kant who turned philosophy back to the study of the subject's faculties, it also features prominently in the work of thinkers as varied as Freud, Panofsky, and Einstein, who founded new disciplines (i.e., psychoanalysis, iconology, and quantum mechanics). This course will examine the crucial role that German thought has played in the development not only of modern philosophy but also of modern science and the humanities. Students will become acquainted with an intellectual tradition that is as concerned with what we know as how we know it.
Instructor(s): R. Tobias
Area: Humanities
Writing Intensive.

What if Rousseau's description of the sentiment de l'existence were to join to the models of consciousness Damasio develops in The Feeling of What Happens? This course explores aspects of consciousness in French literature (Rousseau, Sand, Nerval, Amiel, Flaubert, Valéry, Proust, Sartre) in a dialogue with recent texts in theory, philosophy, neuroscience (e.g. Poulet, Merleau-Ponty, Sartre, Scarry, Noë, Humphrey, Damasio, Sacks).
Instructor(s): E. Ender
Area: Humanities
Writing Intensive.

AS.213.309. Walter Benjamin and His World. 3.0 Credits.
All readings and class discussions in English. This course will provide an introduction to the thought, writing, and world of Walter Benjamin—one of the most interesting and influential German writers of the early 20th century. Although he died in exile having published only a single book in his lifetime, in the past three decades his ideas and preoccupations have changed the way we think about Cultural Studies, Media Studies, Literary Studies, German thought, Jewish mysticism, and the philosophy of history. We will be examining some of his major writings in tandem with precursors such as Charles Baudelaire and Louis Aragon; contemporaries such as Theodor Adorno and Gershom Scholem; and the legacy of his work among contemporary theorists, critics, and artists.
Instructor(s): M. Caplan
Area: Humanities
Writing Intensive.

AS.213.313. Heidegger's "Being and Time" and "Rectify. 3.0 Credits.
This course will introduce students to Heidegger's seminal work as seen through the lens of the TV series Rectify, which considers what it means to be "thrown" into the world and how we construct a meaningful horizon for our experiences. We will explore some of the fundamental concepts in Being and Time, including care, projection, fallenness, affect and time, and being-unto-death, and consider how these same issues are taken up in Rectify, which as a TV show has to develop its own visual vocabulary to explore the structure and nature of being in the world.
Taught in English
Instructor(s): R. Tobias
Area: Humanities.

AS.213.666. "To be continued"- Seriality in Literature and Other Media.
Taught in German. By ending with the words "(To be continued)" ["(ist fortzusetzen)"], Goethe's Wilhem Meisters Wanderjahre not only reflects on the open form of the modern novel but also points toward serialized formats of fiction as they emerge in the 19th century due to advances in printing technologies. The publication of fiction in periodical installments in magazines or newspapers brings about the development of new genres (serialized novel/Feuilletonroman) along with specific serial narrative techniques. The cliffhanger e.g. – although invented earlier – becomes a prominent technique to create suspense. The course analyzes seriality with respect to narrative forms and genres across various media (literature, theater, film, TV) from the 19th century to the present. It further discusses serial aesthetics, seriality in structuralist and poststructuralist theory as well as the ambivalent status of seriality in the arts between avantgarde and popular culture. The course material will include: Stifter, Fontane, excerpts from the magazine "Die Gartenlaube", Wagner, Freud, Kafka, Lévi-Strauss, Deleuze, Eco, Iser, "The Perils of Pauline" (serial, 1914), "Copycat" (Jon Amiel, 1995), "Twin Peaks" and current US-American TV series.
Instructor(s): E. Strowick
Area: Humanities
Writing Intensive.

AS.213.705. Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit.
We will study key passages of The Phenomenology of Spirit from a queer-feminist perspective and engage with some of the feminist scholarship on Hegel
Instructor(s): K. Pahl
Area: Humanities.

The course explores some aspects of the contradictory constitution of the modern subject as a subject that is split, opposed, in tension. Two archetypal figures of this split are the "bourgeois," as the social-economic subject, and the "citoyen" or "citizen," as the political subject. The bourgeois and the citizen are defined by distinct and opposing conceptions of the "will," of education (Bildung), and of the relation between law and nature, normativity and facticity. In asking how to understand the conflictual relationship between these two basic figures of the modern subject, the course will focus especially on the paradoxes of "individual rights" (subjektive Rechte) as the fundamental mechanism of modern subject-formation. How do rights both empower subjects, while also contributing to forms of their disempowerment? To what extent do rights contain and organize the tensions between subjects understood as social or economic, and as political? CLASS BEGINS FEBRUARY 25 AND ENDS APRIL 1. Readings will include excerpts from (among others): Hegel, Marx, Nietzsche, Horkheimer and Adorno, Heidegger, Foucault, Balibar and Rancière.
Instructor(s): C. Menke; R. Tobias
Area: Humanities.
AS.214.479. Dante Visits the Afterlife: The Divine Comedy. 3.0 Credits.
Dante’s Divina commedia is the greatest long poem of the Middle Ages; some say the greatest poem of all time. We will study the Commedia critically to find: (1) what it reveals about the worldview of late-medieval Europe; (2) how it works as poetry; (3) its relation to the intellectual cultures of pagan antiquity and Latin (Catholic) Christianity; (4) its presentation of political and social issues; (5) its influence on intellectual history, in Italy and elsewhere; (6) the challenges it presents to modern readers and translators; (7) what it reveals about Dante’s understanding of cosmology, world history and culture. We will read and discuss the Commedia in English, but students will be expected to familiarize themselves with key Italian terms and concepts. Students taking section 02 (for 4 credits) will spend an additional hour working in Italian at a time to be mutually decided upon by students and professor.
Instructor(s): W. Stephens
Area: Humanities
Writing Intensive.

Giambattista Vico’s Principi di scienza nuova d’intorno alla comune natura delle nazioni (1725, 1730, 1744) was intended to found an “ideal” and “eternal” model of human development, valid for all societies. Vico considered his project both philology and philosophy, and tried to revolutionize thinking about human history as practiced between about 1550 and 1700, by exposing misconceptions behind attempts to square “sacred history” (the presumed historical accuracy of the Bible) with “profane” or non Judeo-Christian concepts of history, both ancient and modern. The culture shock underlying this “old science” stimulated Vico to base philosophical and historical knowledge of mythology on a conception of narration. Recommended Course background: Italian and Latin
Instructor(s): W. Stephens
Area: Humanities
Writing Intensive.

Theatre Arts Studies
AS.225.328. The Existential Drama: Philosophy and Theatre of the Absurd. 3.0 Credits.
Existentialism, a powerful influence on contemporary modern drama and theatre, has had a profound influence on contemporary political thought, ethics, and psychology, and has transformed our very notion of how to stage a play. Selected readings and lectures on the philosophy of Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, Camus and Sartre – and discussion of works for the stage by Sartre, Ionesco, Genet, Beckett, Albee, Pinter, Athol Fugard (with Nkani & Nshone), Heiner Müller and the late plays of Caryl Churchill. Opportunities for projects on Dürrenmatt, Frisch, Havel, Witkiewicz, and Mrozek.
Instructor(s): J. Martin
Area: Humanities
Writing Intensive.

Humanities Center
AS.300.228. Brain and Society. 3.0 Credits.
On April 2, 2013, President Obama unveiled the Brain Activity Map Project, a 100 million dollar investment to map the single-celled neurons composing the human brain. Scientific in its aim, the project is culturally significant as well. Popular websites lumosity.com and neuronetlearning.com offer brain-exercises to boost intelligence, while the emergent academic fields neurophilosophy, neuroethics, and neurohistory borrow from the brain sciences. The interaction between the brain and society, however, is by no means new. In this course, we will investigate the origins of brain maps and trace their reception in nineteenth-century European and American literature, philosophy, and politics. Topics include phrenology, the nervous system, psychopathology, and brain localization, and these fields’ resonance in German Idealism, Victorian literature, French anthropology, and American fiction. The course is reading intensive.
Instructor(s): L. McGrath
Area: Humanities, Social and Behavioral Sciences.

AS.300.327. Introduction to Comparative American Cultures: Obama and Philosophy. 3.0 Credits.
This course will investigate the philosophical as well as theological, juridical and political, and rhetorical and literary backgrounds that have informed and shaped Barack Obama’s writings, speeches, and policy strategies leading up to and during his presidency. While paying minute attention to a few selected controversial debates in domestic and international governance and relations, and while discussing the question of Obama’s legacy in and after the upcoming elections, our primary focus will be on understanding the curious blend of Christian realism, influenced by the theologian Reinhold Niebuhr, the tradition of American civic republicanism and pragmatism, and Obama’s specific brand of post-Civil Rights, if not necessarily post-racial, politics. All these tenets coalesce in a vision and politics that may well be described as one of “deep” pragmatism. Attention will be paid to Obama’s early appeal to “simple ideas” and “small miracles,” each of them yielding the Biblical and sobered injunction of a “hope against hope.” But extensive consideration of his thought and impact in the assessment of biographers and intellectual historians, legal scholars and political theorists, cultural critics and pundits will add to our attempt to understand and take stock of the Obama phenomenon as well.
Instructor(s): H. de Vries
Area: Humanities.

AS.300.399. Cinema and Philosophy. 3.0 Credits.
Do movies have anything to say about philosophical problems? Why is contemporary philosophy so interested in cinema? What are the most productive ways of bringing films and philosophy into conversation? Why is contemporary philosophy so interested in cinema?
Instructor(s): P. Marrati
Area: Humanities.

AS.300.411. Animal Minds. 3.0 Credits.
An examination of some of the scientific and philosophical literature on the nature of animal minds and the way(s) in which they differ from the human mind. The most important of these apparent differences are the use of language, the exercise of concepts, and instrumental reasoning, including the use of instruments. Co-list with AS.150.490
Instructor(s): M. Fried; M. Williams
Area: Humanities.
AS.300.422. Luther, Philosophy, Politics: 500 Years After the Reformation. 3.0 Credits.
As historical legend has it, in 1517 the German monk and then professor of theology Martin Luther inaugurated a revolution in thinking, belief and moral practice, known as the Protestant Reformation by nailing his Ninety-Five Theses, under the title Disputation on the Power of Indulgences, to the door of the Castle Church of Wittenberg. Known for his brutal characterization of reason as “the devil’s whore,” his theology of the hidden god, his catechisms, the doctrine of the two realms, and his condemnation of peasants’ revolts of his days, Luther’s influence has been profound and lasting. We will study some of his most influential theses, treatises, and sermons and will seek to gauge the effect they had on the Western narrative of secularization and modernity, together with their deep influence on post-Reformation and, indeed, recent philosophy and political thought. Readings include: Luther, G.W. F. Hegel, Max Weber, Martin Heidegger, Karl Barth, Erik Peterson, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Kaj Munk, Ernst Bloch, Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe, Marcel Gauchet, Giorgio Agamben, and others.
Instructor(s): H. de Vries
Area: Humanities.

AS.300.424. Psychoanalysis as a Theory of Thinking. 3.0 Credits.
This course will introduce students to the writings of Wilfred Bion, the British psychoanalyst who expanded Sigmund Freud’s and Melanie Klein’s metapsychology. Bion developed an epistemological theory of thinking, surmising that the mind grows when it is exposed to the truth of one’s emotional experience. In his many writings and lectures, Bion developed a sophisticated theoretical model that conceptualizes the transformation of emotional experience into the capacity for thought. While in his early writings he is inspired by life sciences and mathematics, in his later writings Bion shifts away from the scientific view to an aesthetic/mystical vertex, drawing on poets mystics and philosophers, such as Keats, Milton, Shakespeare, Sophocles, Meister Eckhart, St John of the Cross, Plato, Hume and Kant.
Instructor(s): O. Ophir
Area: Humanities.

AS.300.435. Emmanuel Levinas: Essential Works, Guiding Concepts, Lasting Influence. 3.0 Credits.
This seminar will address the major writings and guiding concepts of Emmanuel Levinas and investigate his increasing critical role as a touchstone and dividing line in the formation of twentieth century and contemporary schools of thought (phenomenology, pragmatism, post-analytic philosophy, literary, feminist, and political theory, anthropology). Additional readings will include Stanley Cavell, Jacques Derrida, Vasily Grossman, Jean-François Lyotard, and Hilary Putnam.
Instructor(s): H. de Vries
Area: Humanities.

AS.300.653. Martin Heidegger, Being and Time: Integral Reading and Current Perspectives.
Starting with a detailed discussion of its Introduction and Division One, this jointly taught seminar will bring phenomenological, hermeneutic, and deconstructive as well as analytic, epistemological, and pragmatist methods and viewpoints to bear upon this modern classic.
Instructor(s): H. de Vries; M. Williams.

AS.300.657. Martin Heidegger, Being and Time: Integral Reading and Current Perspectives, II.
Starting with a brief overview and recapitulation of themes discussed in its Introduction and Division One, this jointly will focus on Division Two of Being and Time and bring phenomenological, hermeneutic, and deconstructive as well as analytic, epistemological, and pragmatist methods and viewpoints to bear upon this modern classic
Instructor(s): H. de Vries; M. Williams.

AS.300.658. Must We Mean What We Say?.
Starting out from Stanley Cavell’s programmatic book and title, this seminar will revisit his discussion of J.L. Austin, John Searle, Jacques Derrida, and Shoshana Felman, with special emphasis on these authors’ theories of intentionality, seriousness, and sincerity, and with reference to the ancient and modern concepts of tragedy on which they partly rely. In addition to the aforementioned thinkers’ relevant works, reading will include selections from Euripides, Henrik Ibsen, Isaiah Berlin, Emmanuel Levinas, and Jean-Luc Marion.
Instructor(s): H. de Vries.

Center for Africana Studies

AS.362.450. Critical Thinking in Africana Studies. 3.0 Credits.
This seminar examines various ideas, theories, and practices of thinkers, writers, and activists whose work and practices have constituted an Africana Studies intellectual tradition. The purpose of this seminar is to teach students to read, think, and write critically about questions relative to the formation and history of Africana thought and its intellectual tradition, in particular, and the genealogy of thought and intellectual traditions, in general. We will also think about various fields of knowledge that have shaped Africana Studies. The seminar therefore will work through the different meanings of intellectual work and critical thought and theory in Africana Studies.
Instructor(s): F. Hayes
Writing Intensive.