

DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY

Department Chair: Russell Woodruff, Ph.D.

Faculty

E. Cantalamessa, Ph.D.
K. Brelje, Ph. D.
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Philosophy Major Program

Philosophers inquire into the great questions that address the human condition and the basic orientations that shape our understanding of contemporary life. Our department is especially concerned to promote a genuine engagement with the most important issues that concern us today. From matters of law and politics to ethics and medicine, from justice and society to art and literature, we enable students to thoughtfully understand and critically assess the essential dimensions of these pressing issues. In the process, we help students to develop crucial cognitive skills in logical thinking, interpretive comprehension, critical evaluation, and argumentative writing. Moreover, the department offers a program of study that can be tailored to the student's specific interests. In fact, it expressly encourages the incorporation of relevant courses from other disciplines into the philosophy major. The program is open and flexible, especially for those interested in philosophy as a second major.

The Philosophy Department allows students to design their own major around a basic structure that consists of

1. a common core of six courses and
2. four elective course, two of which must be philosophy courses at the 300 level or higher.

The designed major must be developed with the guidance of a Philosophy faculty advisor and approved by the Chair.

Philosophy Pre-Law Program

The department offers a philosophy pre-law program for those students interested in philosophy or a general arts education and in pursuing a legal career. It is generally acknowledged that a concentration in philosophy and the other arts provides an appropriate basis for the study of law. Students in the pre-law program complete the requirements of the Philosophy, Law and Politics track. Additional courses are selected in consultation with the department's pre-law advisor (who has a law degree) that will assist the student in preparing for law school and beyond.

- Philosophy, BA (<https://catalog.sbu.edu/undergraduate/arts-sciences/philosophy/philosophy-ba/>)
- Philosophy, Minor (<https://catalog.sbu.edu/undergraduate/arts-sciences/philosophy/philosophy-minor/>)

Philosophy (PHIL)

PHIL-102 INTRO TO PHILOSOPHY (3 Credits)

The aim of this course is to initiate a self-awakening in the student through a confrontation with the perennial problem of the nature of human existence. Students will be guided in the confrontation by the development and exercise of their capacity for critical reflection. Within the context of this aim, specific issues in epistemology, metaphysics and ethics will be considered.

PHIL-102H INTRO. TO PHILOSOPHY (HONORS) (3 Credits)

Restrictions: RG.HON

PHIL-104 INTRODUCTION TO ETHICS (3 Credits)

Ethics enquires into the fundamental perspectives and principles that bear on the evaluation of human conduct. It examines prominent theories about what constitutes a good life, articulates relevant principles of right action, poses basic questions about the nature of morality and engages with various moral problems that confront the individual and society. This course endeavors to acquaint students with traditions of moral inquiry and to equip them with key concepts

PHIL-105 HONORS INTRO TO ETHICS (3 Credits)

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Restrictions: RG.HON

PHIL-111 INTRODUCTION TO CRITICAL THINKING (3 Credits)

Introduction to Critical Thinking introduces the student to the concepts and techniques of critical thinking, focusing on the analysis and evaluation of arguments, creating cogent and sound arguments, recognizing errors in reasoning, evaluating definitions, determining the credibility of sources, and testing claims by means of seeking disconfirming evidence.

PHIL-210 METAPHYSICS (3 Credits)

This course focuses on the three traditional objects of metaphysical inquiry: God, Person and World. At least two metaphysical traditions are compared: the Christian metaphysical tradition and a modern (contemporary) non-Christian tradition. The overall objective is to challenge students' cultural presuppositions and to guide their attempt to develop a consistent account of the relation between God, Person and World.

PHIL-222 OPPRESSION AND PRIVILEGE (3 Credits)

This course is an introduction to the topics of oppression and privilege. We will look at U.S. history through "a different mirror" - from a multicultural perspective. We will explore how oppression and privilege operate on an individual, group, institutional and societal level. This approach should provide students with new cultural competencies and insights into the nature of American racism and white privilege.

PHIL-301 ETHICS (3 Credits)

The aim of this course is to give students a deeper understanding of some of the fundamental issues and perspectives regarding morality that were introduced in Clare 304 (The Good Life). Topics include the source, range, and truth-value of moral claims, the existence of moral facts, classic and contemporary normative moral theory, value theory, moral reasoning, and descriptive studies of moral decision-making and action.

PHIL-305 THE PHILOSOPHY OF SPORT (3 Credits)

This course examines sports through the lens of philosophy. The main areas of inquiry are conceptual, axiological, and ethical. In the conceptual domain we will explore the nature and definition of sport, and how sports relates to other human activities. Looking at sports axiologically, we will inquire into how sports can contribute to living well. In the ethical domain we will discuss both 'internal' issues related to sports such as the nature of fair play and the role of deception, and 'contextual' issues such as health risks and the moral status of 'blood sports'.

PHIL-307 FEMINIST PHILOSOPHY (3 Credits)

This course will acquaint students with the rich and diverse traditions of feminist thinking about women and society. The course will introduce students to feminist philosophy by exploring the interplay between gender, feminism, and foundational questions of philosophy.

PHIL-310APP SP TOP:ART, POWER & POLITICS (3 Credits)**PHIL-310N FEMINIST PHILOSOPHY (3 Credits)****PHIL-310TP SP TOP:TECHNOPHILOSOPHY (3 Credits)****PHIL-310Z SP TOP: OPPRESSION & PRIVILEGE 2.0 (3 Credits)****PHIL-312 SYMBOLIC LOGIC (3 Credits)**

This course is designed to introduce students to formal languages and to the relation between logic and language. Topics covered include: symbolization, validity, soundness, truth-tables, truth-connectives, formal proof, sentential logic, quantifiers, and predicate logic.

PHIL-315 NATIVE AMERICAN PHILOSOPHY (3 Credits)

This course introduces students to views about the world held by the nations of people who have lived on this continent long before the arrival of European colonizers. There are many such nations, and this course will identify some common themes among their views, as well as focus to some degree on the views of the six nations nearest our campus, the Haudenosaunee.

PHIL-317 PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGION (3 Credits)

An intensive investigation of the nature and foundations of religion, taking into consideration such ideas as God, human destiny, worship, faith and revelation. Considering the mainstream of religious thought, particularly the Judeo-Christian tradition, this course examines contemporary approaches to religion and theology, existentialism, naturalism and analysis.

PHIL-320 EXISTENTIALISM (3 Credits)

A critical study of philosophical and literary representatives of the existentialist movement. The origins of existentialism in the 19th century as well as its formulations in the 20th century are considered. Authors covered include Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, Sartre, Camus, Kafka, Hesse and others.

PHIL-324 MOCK TRIAL (3 Credits)

A course for students interested in participating in the annual National Intercollegiate Mock Trial Competition and for those who simply want to know more about the American trial process. The overall objective of the course is to acquaint students with the fundamental process of the adversarial system of justice, including the basic rules of trial procedure and evidence.

PHIL-325 PHILOSOPHY OF LAW (3 Credits)

A critical analysis of the basic theories of law and of the philosophical systems upon which they are based. Special attention will be paid to particular problems in the philosophy of law which are relevant to the contemporary social and political situation.

Prerequisite(s): take PHIL-104, PHIL-104H, PHIL-105 or CLAR-104

PHIL-326 LEGAL REASONING (3 Credits)

An examination of the principles and maxims that govern judicial reasoning through intensive analysis of selected statutes, judicial opinions and leading articles on the topic of legal reasoning. Students will be taught how to brief cases and will be exposed to the Socratic question-answer method of teaching frequently used in law school.

PHIL-327 LEGAL ETHICS (3 Credits)

An exploration of moral issues inherent in the practice of law, such as the limits of the duty of loyalty to one's client, confidentiality, lawyer advertising, the duty to make legal services available to all citizens, plea-bargaining, the use of unfair tactics, conflicts of interest and the extent to which the lawyer is subject to different moral norms than the average citizen. Students will learn basic legal research skills which can be employed to research and evaluate major issues of legal ethics.

Prerequisite(s): PHIL-104

PHIL-328 PARALEGAL INTERNSHIP (3-6 Credits)

The internship is designed to provide familiarity with aspects of the American legal system that will in turn form a practical basis for philosophical evaluations of that system. Each intern will be expected to serve 12 hours per week, usually for two consecutive semesters. Interns will be introduced to key legal concepts, principles and issues operating in various areas of law, and will be taught basic research skills. The particular areas of training will be a function of the interest and expertise of supervising attorneys.

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PHIL-330 BUSINESS ETHICS (3 Credits)

This course is designed as a critique of the business enterprise. It teaches recognition of ethical problems in the business and proposes methods toward their solution. Topics discussed include whistle-blowing, issues in marketing and advertising, consumer rights, ecological issues and employee and management issues.

Prerequisite(s): TAKE PHIL-104

PHIL-332 SOC. & ECON. JUSTICE (3 Credits)

This course will begin an examination of various theories of justice. A liberal view like that of John Rawls, a libertarian view like that of Robert Nozick and a socialist view like that of Karl Marx will be carefully examined. The second part of the course will be spent examining and discussing various case studies. We will consider how our understanding of different theories of justice can help us resolve the conflicts and disputes that arise in these case studies. Also, some attention will be paid to contemporary critiques of American society.

PHIL-335 PHIL. OF SCIENCE & MEDICINE (3 Credits)

The aim of this course is to introduce the student to the conceptual and methodological aspects of modern science and medicine. Special emphasis will be given to the relation between science, ethics, and medicine and to the analysis of such medical concepts as "health" and "disease."

PHIL-337 DEATH AND DYING (3 Credits)

A study of the philosophical aspects of death and dying, as they rise out of a personal confrontation with one's own feelings and attitudes toward death.

PHIL-338 HEALTH CARE ETHICS (3 Credits)

An exploration of the ethical and value issues inherent in modern medicine with particular emphasis on the issues of euthanasia, suicide, informed consent, abortion, truth-telling and confidentiality, allocation of scarce resources and care of the dying.

Prerequisite(s): PHIL-104

PHIL-339 PHILOSOPHY OF LOVE & SEX (3 Credits)

A critical examination of various problems in the areas of sexual language, monogamous marriage and its alternatives, pre-marital and extra-marital sex, the logic of deviation, feminism, pornography, abortion and the concept of love.

PHIL-341 ENVIRONMENTAL ETHICS (3 Credits)

An advanced, applied ethics seminar which examines three particular moral issues directly implied in our use (and abuse) of the natural environment: Distributive justice with reference to distant people intergenerational justice with reference to future generations and the rights of animals. A basic ethics course is presupposed. Students will be expected to participate in seminar discussions, to prepare brief papers summarizing articles in the philosophy journals such as *Philosophy Today* and *Environmental Ethics* and to present and defend, in the seminar, a position paper on some aspect of one of the three issues noted above.

Prerequisite(s): Take PHIL-104

PHIL-345 VALUES AT THE END OF LIFE (3 Credits)

This course deals with the fundamental value issues faced by dying people and those who care for them. After a brief overview of physical and medical aspects of dying, the focus of the course is on the psychosocial and philosophical factors that can contribute to dying well. Those factors include autonomy, relatedness and paternalism, communication and connection, and meaning and transcendence.

PHIL-361 Evil and Modern Thought (3 Credits)**PHIL-377 TECHNOPHILOSOPHY (3 Credits)**

As "technophilosophers", students in this course will engage with existing, emerging, or merely possible technologies as a way of reflecting on the forms of life that these technologies give rise to, as well as the philosophical implications of those forms of life—ethical, metaphysical, epistemic, political, and so on. The term "technophilosophy" was coined by philosopher David Chalmers to describe "a combination of (1) asking philosophical questions about technology and (2) using technology to help answer traditional philosophical questions," where two-way interaction is key (Chalmers, *Reality+*, p. xviii). Similarly, students in this course will consider arguments and conceptual frameworks used by philosophers of technology to investigate the nature, value, and implications of technology, but also how different technologies themselves sometimes urge us to reconsider longstanding philosophical questions and raise new ones. The course is intended to be flexible among areas of philosophy considered and technologies examined, but possibilities include: social media, video games, artificial intelligence, virtual reality, algorithms, block-chain currency, robotics, cybernetics, surveillance, military technologies, and sustainability technologies.

PHIL-381 ART, POWER & POLITICS (3 Credits)

In this class we will explore how art both facilitates and challenges authority, power, and oppressive social practices more broadly. We will consider the role of art in introducing and reinforcing biases, as a tool for propaganda, as a form of political speech, as a resource for challenging prejudice, and as an instrument for moral education. We will also employ frameworks from the philosophy of art and language to assess the harms of testimonial injustice, cultural appropriation, racism, ableism, pornography, and colonialization in the context of art and art appreciation.

PHIL-404 HIST.OF ANCIENT& MEDIEVAL PHILOSOPHY (3 Credits)

A course designed to trace a number of the basic ideas and problems from their beginnings in Ancient Greece to their development in the Middle Ages. A special effort will be made to display a continuity with respect to the philosophical enterprise considered by major philosophers and schools from 585 B.C. to 1600 A.D.

PHIL-450 INDEPENDENT STUDY (1-6 Credits)

Independent Study Directed reading and research.

PHIL-498 SENIOR RESEARCH SEMINAR (3 Credits)

This course covers research methodologies and skills, and provides the philosophy major with both structural support and mentoring for developing a successful "senior essay" in order to satisfy the department's comprehensive requirement for graduation.