PHILOSOPHY TOPICS COURSES  
(from Fall 1998 to present)

PHI 240A Topic: Philosophy of the Body. Focuses on the topic of the body in philosophy. Discusses the mind/body problem; the traditional Cartesian view that the mind and body are separate substances. Contributes to a general understanding of philosophy and an appreciation of how the body as a topic is dealt with in philosophy. Women’s studies minor elective course.

PHI 240B Topic: Cross Cultural Concepts of the Self. Focuses on three cultural complexes— that of the West, the Balinese, and the Australian Aborigines. Explores the Western concept of self, which emphasizes atomistic individualism, and juxtaposes it to more collectivist ideas of the self. Considers the implications of the differing notions of self on our understanding of how we relate to others and to the environment.

PHI 240C Topic: Zombies, Serial Killers, and Madmen. Moral philosophy subjects our everyday intuitions about moral reasoning and individual responsibility to scrutiny using the principles of logic and critical thinking. Course investigates the modern phenomena of zombies and serial killers, and the ancient phenomena of madmen, to answer important moral questions such as: Is rationality a necessary condition for responsibility? The point of this scrutiny is twofold: (1) to expose any misconceptions or fallacious positions we might hold concerning sanity and responsibility, and (2) to gain a better understanding of the role that philosophy plays in ethical decision-making and our practices of imposing punishment on one another.

PHI 240D Topic: Chinese Philosophies -- Explorations of the Tao. Introduces classical Chinese philosophies. Studies various schools of Chinese philosophical thought, including the Confucian, Taoist (Daoist), Mohist, Legalist and Buddhist traditions. Provides understanding of the relevance of such thought to contemporary life, the relationships between the various Chinese philosophies, the similarities and differences between classical Chinese and Western philosophical thought, and the challenges of approaching such philosophical texts in translation. Readings will include translations of Confucius (Kongzi), Mo Tzu (Mozi), Mencius (Mengzi), the Tao te Ching of Lao Tzu (Laozi), Chuang Tzu (Zhuangzi) and others. All readings will be in English.

PHI 240E Topic: Culture Wars. Students will gain knowledge of traditional and contemporary ethical debates and theories concerning art production and evaluation. Competing theories of how value is assigned to artworks, the role art institutions play in assessing that value, and how art ‘works’ or produces effects in society will be examined and applied to particular contemporary American art works and art historical movements, debates, and contexts including National Endowment for the Arts policies, censorship, funding issues, and artistic autonomy. Students will learn to identify what is ethically at stake in large-scale societal practices and policies in the arts, and will gain the ability to assess, critique, and propose alternatives to such. Also taught as ARH 365B Studies: Modern American Culture Wars (V).

COM 240H/PHI 240H Topic: Evolution and the Law. This interdisciplinary course examines the current evolution debates, asking how/why legal change happens and if it confirms an inevitable evolution of social policy reflecting shifts in U.S. social norms.
**PHI 240J Topic: Human Nature in a Cross-Cultural Context.** The old question of whether human nature is the result of nature or nurture has been expanded by findings in evolutionary biology, neuroscience, and cross-cultural psychology. These areas raise fundamental questions about what it means to be human. This course examines these issues, focusing particularly on cross-cultural issues, as well as ethical implications of this new research.

**PHI 308 Topics in Ethics: Business Ethics.** Develops sensitive and systematic ways of thinking about the ethical aspects of business decisions. Topics may include the possible conflicts between one’s personal ethics and the “rules of the business game,” accountability for corporate actions, company loyalty, honesty in advertising and sales tactics, product safety, discrimination in hiring and promotion, and sexual harassment.

**PHI 308 Topics in Ethics: Care Ethics.** Recent moral theorists argue that women employ an ethic of care rather than an ethic of rights. In this course we will read Carol Gilligan’s *In A Different Voice*, which sets out the theoretical framework for this claim. We will explore the claim that women use a “different voice” in moral reasoning, and that this results in an ethic of care. We will discuss both applications and criticisms of care ethics, including whether or not it is a gender-specific form of moral reasoning. We will discuss specific cases and draw on examples from literature and film.

**PHI 308 Topics in Ethics: Ethics and Identity.** Contemporary debate in moral theory centers on whether to accept or reject the Kantian view of the moral self as completely autonomous and abstracted from circumstances. Many philosophers now argue that the self is best viewed as intersubjective. Examines the arguments that lead to this intersubjective view of force and discuss the implications of this view for ethics. *Prerequisite: PHI 108.*

**PHI 308 Topics in Ethics: Happiness.** A study of the philosophical disputes about happiness, moral objectivity, and the good life. Questions considered include: What is the nature of happiness? Is there more than one conception of happiness? What is the connection between happiness and the good life? What is the connection between happiness and moral objectivity? Readings include selections from Plato, Aristotle, Mill, Nozick, Mackie, Huxley, McFall and others.

**PHI 308D Topic: Gender, Relativism, and Rights.** Explores tension between respecting cultural traditions and respecting human rights. Role of gender is emphasized as many cultural traditions that violate human rights disproportionately affect women. Issues such as female genital mutilation, forced prostitution, dowry, suttee (widows throwing themselves on husbands’ funeral pyres), and ‘wearing the will’ are considered. Explores the theoretical debate on these issues, examines specific cases, and discusses the implications for politics, ethics, and public policy. *WMS Minor elective course.*

**PHI 308G Topic: Philosophy of Politics and Poverty.** Subjects everyday intuitions concerning political theory and the practice of politics to scrutiny using the principles of logic and critical thinking. Considers contemporary political and economic theories, and legal cases to answer important questions such as, *What is the proper relation between politics and poverty?* Exposes misconceptions or false beliefs concerning political theory and the practice of politics enabling adjusted beliefs, and, provides a better understanding of the role that philosophy plays in political theory, economic theory, and the practice of politics with respect to the problem of poverty. *Prerequisite: PHI 108.*
PHI 308J **Topic: Terrorism and Human Rights.** Provides students with a historical, philosophical, and legal understanding of the phenomena of terrorism and how it affects the balance between our duty to secure the state and our duty to respect the human rights of all. Studies the philosophy of terrorism and humans, and some legal rulings concerning terrorism and human rights. In short, this course will be taught using two methods: philosophy and case law. Course goals are threefold: 1) to give students a historical perspective on terrorism and human rights, 2) to give students a philosophical understanding of terrorism and human rights, and, 3) to give students a legal understanding of terrorism and human rights.

PHI 314 **Topic: Games, Rationality and Behavior.** Uses class games derived from game theory and cross-disciplinary experiments to develop an understanding of rationality. Drawing on readings in economics, philosophy, psychology, and evolutionary anthropology, we will explore the power and limitations of rationality as a core concept for understanding our behavior and ourselves. **Prerequisites:** two PHI courses, junior/senior status.

PHI 314 **Topic: Human Nature.** Examines recent work in philosophy, psychology, anthropology, and evolutionary biology to discern the elusive contours of human nature. Focuses on: sex- and race-related differences among people; what brain science might tell us about human nature; humans raised by other species (wolf-children), and what, if anything, they can teach us about ourselves; cross-cultural comparisons in search of common human nature; and the recent resurgence of Darwinism in social thought. Examines ways that claims about human nature influence social, political, and ethical discourse. **Prerequisite:** One (1) philosophy course.

PHI 314B **Topic: Controversies in the Philosophy of Mind.** Advanced course in the philosophy of mind intended primarily for those who have completed PHI 348. Focuses on three areas of active interest and debate today: 1) What is consciousness, what is it good for and can it be understood? 2) Are our evolutionarily-developed ways of thinking rational? If not, why do they usually seem to work so well? and 3) Is mind primarily "in the head" or is it extended through the body and even embodied in the surrounding world? **Prerequisite:** PHI 348 or consent.

PHI 314D **Topic: Phenomenology.** Introduces phenomenology, the most important continental philosophy of the last century. Focusing on the work of Husserl, Heidegger, and Merleau-Ponty, examines phenomenology's method and field of inquiry, as well as its influence on other continental European philosophies.

PHI 314G **Topic: Analytic Philosophy: Truth, Language, and the Limits of Philosophy.** Analytic philosophy is marked by a preoccupation with the relationship between language and the true nature of reality. Examines the major developments during the twentieth century in the analytic tradition by considering the following questions: what is language, and how does it work? What is thought, and how does it relate to the external world? What is truth, and how can we find it? Focuses on how, in answering these questions, analytic philosophers deny the skepticism common to the previous era of philosophy only to create a new type of skepticism — a skepticism that questions even the very possibility of philosophic knowledge. Covers many of the most influential and important philosophers of the last 100 years — Bertrand Russell, W. V. O. Quine, Ludwig Wittgenstein, and Saul Kripke.
PHI 314H Topic: Queer Theory. Queer theory is the most recent of a number of influential theories that examine salient aspects of human identity, such as race, class, sex, gender, and sexuality, exploring the relationships among these categories, as well as their origin and meaning. Although queer theory is a relatively recent phenomenon, emerging out of feminist theory and gay and lesbian studies in the 1990's, its impact has been felt in a wide range of disciplines including literature, classic art, history, philosophy, religion, sociology, anthropology, psychology, history, film studies, communication studies, cultural studies, and biology. This interdisciplinary course familiarizes students with the key texts and figures in queer theory, including Michel Foucault, Judith Butler, and Kate Bornstein. We will explore the issues raised through theory, literature, and film.

PHI 314J Topic: The ‘Linguistic Turn’: 20th Century Analytic and Continental Approaches to the Question of Language. Two of the most influential philosophical movements in the 20th century are the analytic and the continental movements. As opposed to most previous philosophical traditions, both of them focus on a correct understanding of and use of language as the way to solve or dissolve philosophical problems, but each approaches this task in different ways (and from different assumptions). This course examines these two movements in their respective “linguistic turns” and prepares the way to better understand contemporary philosophy.

PHI 314K Topic: Advanced Logic. Philosophy forces us to go beyond our ordinary intuitions and perceptions about the world by subjecting them to scrutiny using the principles of logic and critical thinking. The process leads to true, justified, belief, or, simply put, knowledge, by expressing arguments in everyday language and evaluating them using the principles of logic and critical thinking. Course focuses primarily on formal logic, symbolizing arguments and evaluating them using the principles of logic and critical thinking, to gain understanding of the role that philosophy, or logic, plays in constructing and evaluating our intuitions and beliefs grounded in arguments about the world. Predicate and modal logic will be used to symbolize arguments and the validity of the arguments symbolize will be determined. Prerequisite: one PHI course.

PHI 314M Topic: Freedom. Systematic attempt to understand the concept of human freedom from psychological, metaphysical, political, and existential perspectives. Looks at answers to questions like: What does it mean to say that someone is free? Is anyone free? Why would anyone want to be free? Readings taken from classical and contemporary sources, including works of philosophers, psychologists, novelists, and scientists. Prerequisite: One PHI course.

PHI 314N Topic: Self in Philosophy. There is no more central idea in philosophy and psychology than the self. Examines views of the self developed in the Western philosophical tradition by major philosophers and discusses theories by contemporary philosophers and psychologists. Also examines non-Western approaches to the self, especially examining the distinction between Western individualism and Eastern collectivism. Takes a philosophical perspective on material in philosophy, psychology, and anthropology with the aim of taking a critical perspective on our traditional assumptions. Prerequisite: one PHI course. Australian Studies minor elective.

ANT 305W/PHI 314O Topic: Women and Globalization. Focuses on the particular problems women experience due to processes of globalization. Gendered effects of globalization include the drastic increase of poverty among women and children, human trafficking and sexual abuse, low status employment and economic exploitation, and the responsibility for maintaining households in traditional
societies where men have migrated elsewhere in search of labor. This course is linked to a field study trip to San Miguel de Allende, Mexico, over Spring Break (see field study description, page xx). Students should contact professors directly for application guidelines. Prerequisite: ANT or PHI major or minor. Fulfills elective requirement for Women’s Studies minor.

**CLS 305E/PHI 314P Topic: Socrates and Sophistry.** A study of the life and philosophy of Socrates in fifth-century Athens during the war with Sparta. The course examines the different perceptions of Socrates held by his contemporaries (Aristophanes, Xenophon, and Plato). Focusing on Plato's middle dialogues, we shall contrast Socrates' use of dialectic and irony with rhetorical and eristic practices of the Sophists such as Gorgias, Protagoras, and Hippias. Fulfills an elective requirement for either Philosophy or Classical Studies majors/minors.

**PHI 314Q Topic: Foucault.** An examination of Michael Foucault's thought and its implications for philosophy. Arguably one of the most important thinkers in the twentieth century, Foucault (1926-1984) influenced not only the discipline of philosophy, but also those of history, sociology, criminology, psychology, political science, and literary theory. Foucault was a prolific writer and his books cover a wide range of subjects: knowledge, language, madness, health, medicine, prisons, gender, sexuality, methodology, truth, power, and politics. Classified as a postmodernist philosopher, Foucault successfully challenged many of the legacies of modern philosophy, all the while addressing perennial philosophical questions.

**PHI 490 Senior Seminar: Foucault.** Michael Foucault was a prolific writer and his books cover a wide range of subjects: knowledge, language, madness, health, medicine, prisons, gender, sexuality, methodology, truth, power, and politics. Examines Foucault's thought and its implications for philosophy and investigates some of the major themes and topics in Foucault's work, including his concepts of freedom, subjectivity, power, and truth. Prerequisite: Junior/Senior majors/minors or instructor's consent.

**PHI 490 Senior Seminar in Philosophy: Nietzsche.** Examines the work of the 19th-century existentialist, Friedrich Nietzsche. Focuses on his rejection of Modernist philosophy, especially ethics, as well as his criticisms of religion, especially Christianity. Also examines his attempts at offering alternatives, embodied in such notions as: will to power, beyond good and evil, overman, perspectivism, and eternal recurrence. Prerequisite: senior philosophy major or instructor's consent.

**PHI 490 Senior Seminar in Philosophy: Plato.** Examines Plato's dialogues on love and friendship, concentrating on the Symposium, Phaedrus, and Lysis. Discussion will focus on Plato's use of love or erôs in his metaphysics, ethics, and political theory. Intended for third- and fourth-year Philosophy and Classical Studies majors and minors.

**PHI 490 Senior Seminar in Philosophy: Spinoza.** Spinoza was recognized (and persecuted) as a heretic and a radical in his own seventeenth century. He wrote two important philosophical works, one on religion and politics, and the other on metaphysics and ethics. Both books were immediately banned by the Church and by governments all over Europe. His ideas on religion and politics no longer seem quite so revolutionary today, but his overall view – of human beings as a part of nature and of how we can achieve joy and “salvation” through reason and self-knowledge – are as timely as they ever have been. Revered by scientists (Einstein) and Romantic poets (Coleridge), by contemporary neuroscientists and environmentalists, Spinoza has been most recently hailed as the seminal thinker of the “Radical
Enlightenment.” Seminar provides historical and philosophical context for his writings and a close reading and discussion of his two undisputed masterworks – the *Theological-Political Treatise* and the *Ethics.*