Philosophy Course Offerings for Fall 2020
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Courses in blue satisfy general education requirements
Lower Division (1000-2000)

PHIL 1101 (Objective 4A): Introduction to Philosophy

Multiple sections offered, see BengalWeb class schedule.

An introduction to the major thinkers and major problems in Western philosophical and scientific traditions. Sections may emphasize either an historical or problems approach.

PHIL 1103 (Objective 4A): Introduction to Ethics

Multiple sections offered, see BengalWeb class schedule.

In Introduction to Ethics, we'll be looking at three key ethical theories from the history of Western Philosophy. First we'll read works of ancient Greek philosophers Plato and Aristotle who understand ethical questions as questions concerning how to achieve virtue, or human excellence. Then we'll jump to the eighteenth century to consider Kant's obligation-based ethical theory. Kant gives us a rational method for determining what obligations rational beings have to other rational beings. Finally we'll look at classical utilitarianism, a consequence based ethical theory from the nineteenth century, by reading works of John Stuart Mill. Mill thinks that actions must be judged right or wrong by their consequences, and that the right action is the one which produces the greatest happiness for the greatest number. These texts will introduce, in addition to ethical questions, questions concerning human nature and how human beings can best live together in societies.

PHIL 2201 (Objective 7): Introduction to Logic

01: MWF 10-10:50
Instructor: Russell Wahl

This course is a mix of traditional logic and modern symbolic logic. The section on traditional logic includes basic argument analysis and categorical syllogisms and the section on symbolic logic includes a study of truth tables and formal proofs and an introduction to quantificational logic. The focus throughout will be on what constitutes a good argument. Students will learn techniques of analysis that will improve their ability to discern what is and is not entailed by given claims.
PHIL 3305: History of Philosophy: Greek Reason and Christian Faith

01: MWF 11-11:50
Instructor: Evan Rodriguez

Aristotle says that philosophy begins with wonder: what’s out there? how do we know? how should we conduct our lives as a result? We will examine some of the puzzles that inspired the birth of Western philosophy, the methods that Greek and Roman philosophers developed to solve them, and the impact that their novel answers had on later philosophical and religious traditions.

There are no prerequisites for this course, though some previous experience with philosophy (e.g. PHIL 1101) is recommended. It is a requirement for the philosophy major and provides useful background for the philosophy and religion minor. It also will provide relevant background for a variety of other courses in the College of Arts and Letters that interface with Greek thought (art, history, and political science just to name a few). Special emphasis will be placed on the foundational skills of reading, interpreting, and discussing philosophical texts. These skills are essential for the major but are also widely applicable outside of the philosophy classroom.
PHIL 3355: Political and Social Philosophy

01: TR 1-2:15
Instructor: James Skidmore

Human beings tend to live in societies, rather than simply on our own. This raises important philosophical questions: What is the proper relationship between the individual and society (or the state)? Why should I obey the laws of the society in which I live? What justifies the existence (especially the coercive power) of any kind of state at all? What is the source of its authority? What does it mean to say that individuals have rights (like the right to life or liberty), and what rights must the state respect? How should wealth and other social goods be distributed in societies?

PHIL 4410/5510: Philosophy of Language

01: MW 1-2:15
Instructor: Michael Roche

Language is one of the distinguishing features of human beings. Yet there are many deep philosophical questions regarding it. How do words stand for things in the world? How is it that some words (e.g., Santa Claus) apparently refer to nothing that actually exists? How do different words (e.g., Lady Gaga and Stefani Germanotta) refer to the same thing in the world? How do metaphors work? How does our use of words connect to our thoughts and feelings? How is language learned? This class will explore these questions and more.
Upper Division/Graduate (4000/5000)

PHIL 4430/5530: Philosophy of Science
01-03: MW 2:30-3:45
This is a distance learning course with classes in Pocatello (01), Idaho Falls (02), and Meridian (03).
Instructor: Russell Wahl
This course will introduce the student to a variety of topics in the philosophy of science. The topics will include the demarcation between science and non-science, the nature of scientific explanation, causation, laws of nature, reductionism, and questions concerning realism and anti-realism. We will also look at recent work on the development of scientific theories and related questions concerning the rationality and objectivity of science. This part of the course will include readings from the history of science.

PHIL 4456/5556: Ethical Issues in Healthcare Law and Policy
01-03: MW 4-5:15
This is a distance learning course with classes in Pocatello (01), Idaho Falls (02), and Meridian (03).
Instructor: Ralph Baergen
This course examines the ethical issues that arise from the laws, institutional policies, and professional standards that shape healthcare. In addition to describing ethical systems and principles, the course will cover issues such as ethical concerns with strategies to control healthcare costs, the abuse of laws to protect conscientious refusals, physician conflict of interest, and responding to medical errors.