Philosophy Course Offerings for Spring 2021
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SO courses are Online Courses that meet Synchronously Online.

AO courses are Online Courses that meet Asynchronously Online.

**Courses in blue satisfy general education requirements.**
PHIL 1101 (Objective 4A): Introduction to Philosophy

Multiple sections offered, see BengalWeb class schedule.

An introduction to major thinkers and major problems in philosophy. Topics may include the existence of God, the nature of knowledge, and the meaning of life.

PHIL 1103 (Objective 4A): Introduction to Ethics

Multiple sections offered, see BengalWeb class schedule.

How should we live? This is the fundamental question of ethics, and it is in this sense that ethics, as a branch of philosophy, is practical rather than theoretical: it is concerned not primarily with what to believe or with what exists but with what to do, how to act. This course will introduce you to some of the most important questions that arise in ethics: What would constitute a good human life? What is the highest good? What is the foundation of morality? Can moral claims be objectively true or false? What could make them true or false? What is the content of morality? What (kinds of) actions are morally right or wrong, and why? Why should I be moral? What is the relationship between morality and self-interest? Is it always in my interest to behave morally? If so, how?

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. The focus throughout will be on what constitutes a good argument. Students will learn techniques of analysis which will improve their ability to discern what is and is not entailed by given claims.
PHIL 2210 (Objective 9): Asian Philosophy

01: MWF 11-11:50
Instructor: William McCurdy

This course will explore the philosophical thought of classical Hinduism, Gautama Buddha (the historical Buddha), the Confucianism of Kongfu-zi (Confucius) and Meng-zi (Mencius), the Taoism of Lao-zi and Zhuang-zi, and finally, the Shingon (True Word) Buddhism of Kūkai. Our intellectual journey will traverse a great arc from India through China and on to Japan. With the exception of Kūkai, who stands very near the beginning of Japanese intellectual history and is one of Japan’s most original thinkers, the philosophical ideas we will examine blossomed in what is often called the Axial Period of World History (800 – 200 B.C.E.) During this period lived thinkers who generated the philosophical matrix in which the major cultures of the world developed and have in many ways continued to grow. This is as true in Asia as it is in the West. Our vehicles for this journey will be canonical texts of the aforementioned thinkers and traditions. Among our topics will be the radical oneness of all reality of Upanishadic Hinduism, the non-substantiality of the self and things in the teachings of the historical Buddha, analogical reasoning in Meng-zi’s virtue theory of ethical goodness, Zhuang-zi’s mixture of strange, beautiful, startling, witty, and weird allegories in support of his perspectival theory of truth, and Kūkai’s semeiotical theory of reality, human beings, and Mahavairocana (the cosmos as

PHIL 2230: Medical Ethics

01: AO Online
Instructor: Ralph Baergen
02-03: AO Online
Instructor: Nobel Ang

Could lying to or deceiving a patient ever be justified? How far does a patient’s right to refuse treatment extend? Who should make decisions for the patient if she is unable? Is it ever permissible to help a patient die? To what extent should conscientious refusal among health care workers be permitted? Is it unethical for health care workers to participate in executions? Is abortion ever morally justified? Is it ever unjustified? How should scarce medical resources like donor organs be distributed? To what extent do citizens have a right to basic health care?
PHIL 2250 (Objective 7): Contemporary Moral Problems

01: AO Online
Instructor: James Skidmore
In this course we’ll investigate some of the most interesting and urgent moral questions in contemporary life: Is the death penalty a just form of punishment? When is abortion morally permissible? What is terrorism? Why is it wrong? Could torture ever be permissible in grave emergencies? Do non-human animals have rights? Is it morally wrong to eat meat? Do we have any obligation to preserve natural environments? Do we have any obligation to help people in the world who are desperately poor?

PHIL 2299: Philosophy of Life and Death

01: SO MWF 10-10:50
Instructor: Evan Rodriguez
In this course we will discuss some of the most important and difficult questions about life and death. How should we live in light of the fact that each of us will die? Is death really the end? Is there anything special about human existence, and is there one best way to live as a result? If we could achieve immortality, would it be worth it?

We will investigate answers from ancient philosophers both East and West as well as contemporary thinkers still grappling with these issues today. We will also consider perspectives informed by both religious and non-religious traditions. Socrates said that the unexamined life is not worth living, so let’s take this opportunity to examine!
PHIL 3315: Early Modern Philosophy
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 is a survey of early modern philosophy from Descartes to Kant, covering the traditional "rationalist" philosophers, Descartes, Spinoza, and Leibniz, and the traditional "empiricist" philosophers, Locke, Berkeley, and Hume, as well as Kant, who saw himself as synthesizing the two traditions. The focus of the course will be on the concerns in metaphysics and epistemology, although there will be some touching on ethical issues in the works of Spinoza and Kant. There will be some take home examinations and a paper required for the course.

PHIL 3355: Introduction to Political Philosophy
01: TR 11-12:15
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 coercive power the state? 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 4454/5554: Topics in Biomedical Ethics

01: AO Online
Instructor: Ralph Baergen

Healthcare is shaped by 3 intersecting factors: The clinical realities of caring for patients, the laws and policies that govern that care, and ethical rules and principles. This course will examine how healthcare laws and policies can be shaped by – or be in serious conflict with – ethical standards. This class will also focus on ethical issues that are raised by the COVID-19 pandemic.

PHIL 4490/5590: Philosophy Seminar: Self-Knowledge

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

You know that you’re currently thinking about whether to take this course. This is an example of self-knowledge: knowing your current thoughts, intentions, desires, imaginings, and so on. Self-knowledge appears to be quite unique in at least two ways. First, knowledge of one’s current thoughts and feelings seems especially secure, perhaps even reaching the level of certainty. Second, such knowledge seems to be acquired directly, without the aid of evidence. Philosophers working on self-knowledge are interested in whether these two apparent facts are indeed facts and, if so, how they are to be explained. Much of this class will focus on these matters. Other issues to be explored include: the reliability of introspection; the unconscious mind; consciousness; Buddhist approaches to the self; and knowledge of others’ minds.