

AS.150 (PHILOSOPHY)

Courses

AS.150.112. Philosophical Problems. 3 Credits.

An introduction to philosophy through several central problems. This year's topics are free will, death, time, and race.

Distribution Area: Humanities

AS Foundational Abilities: Writing and Communication (FA1), Ethics and Foundations (FA5)

Writing Intensive

AS.150.114. Introduction to Environmental Ethics. 3 Credits.

Some of the most pressing moral issues of our time arise from our impact on the environment. We will explore questions such as: What obligations, if any, do we have to future generations, other species, or ecosystems? What does it mean for something to be natural, and is being natural desirable? What is sustainability, and is it desirable? What does justice look like in a world where alleviating poverty may require worsening climate change? What kinds of actions (if any) are ethically required of us as individuals: should we leave action on environmental issues to the state, billionaires, and corporations, or ought we to make drastic changes in our own lifestyles? Is violent or destructive action appropriate to avert disasters that could kill millions? How can ordinary individuals determine which experts to listen to on complex issues, and can we deal with such issues within a liberal democratic society?

Distribution Area: Humanities

AS Foundational Abilities: Ethics and Foundations (FA5)

AS.150.118. Introduction to Formal Logic. 3 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.

Distribution Area: Humanities, Quantitative and Mathematical Sciences

AS Foundational Abilities: Science and Data (FA2), Ethics and Foundations (FA5)

AS.150.125. Life and Death. 3 Credits.

This course will address some of the Big Picture questions about human life using the methods of analytic philosophy. These questions include: What am I, and what kinds of things could happen to me before I'd no longer be me? Should I be afraid of death? Is it better to be than to never have been anything at all? When is it permissible to end a life? To what extent do I live my life freely?

Distribution Area: Humanities

AS Foundational Abilities: Ethics and Foundations (FA5)

AS.150.136. Philosophy & Science: An Introduction to Both. 3 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. The course has no prerequisites in philosophy or science.

Distribution Area: Humanities, Natural Sciences

AS Foundational Abilities: Science and Data (FA2), Ethics and Foundations (FA5)

AS.150.139. Introduction to Philosophy of Mind. 3 Credits.

Introduction to the philosophy of mind with special emphasis on the relationship between human minds and artificial machines. Questions to be discussed include: Is the mind the brain, or something over and above it? Can computers think, and if so, do they think the way we do? How do our thoughts get to be about things in the external world? What is the nature of conscious experience?

Distribution Area: Humanities

AS Foundational Abilities: Writing and Communication (FA1), Ethics and Foundations (FA5)

Writing Intensive

AS.150.141. Introduction to the History of Chinese Philosophy. 3 Credits.

This is a survey of the main philosophers and philosophical schools in China from the classical age to the early modern age. Special focus is given to three historical periods: the pre-Qin era, the Wei-Jin era, and the Song-Ming era. We will see how Chinese philosophers tackled important questions such as what the world is like, are human beings special, how we should live our lives, and how we should construct a political community. Some of the philosophers surveyed are Confucius (Kongzi), Laozi, Mencius (Mengzi), Zhuangzi, Xunzi, Guo Xiang, Zhu Xi, and Wang Yangming..

Distribution Area: Humanities

AS Foundational Abilities: Ethics and Foundations (FA5)

AS.150.183. The Scientific Method: Historical and Contemporary Approaches. 3 Credits.

Some scientists and philosophers believe that there is a universal scientific method for discovering and proving truths about the world. Other scientists and philosophers deny that such a method exists. Those in the first camp defend various viewpoints, including rationalism, inductivism, hypothetico-deductivism, and retrodution. Those in the second camp argue that these methods do not work universally and that what method a scientist should use is not general but is specific to the scientific problem and situation. In this introductory course we examine various universal methods proposed by scientists and philosophers including Rene Descartes and Isaac Newton in the 17th century, William Whewell and John Stuart Mill in the 19th, and various writers in the 20 and 21st. We also examine works of contemporary writers, including Thomas Kuhn and Paul Feyerabend, who reject all universal methods and claim that science is most innovative and successful when these methods are violated. Who is right, and why?

Distribution Area: Humanities

AS Foundational Abilities: Science and Data (FA2), Ethics and Foundations (FA5)

AS.150.201. Introduction To Greek Philosophy. 3 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.

Distribution Area: Humanities

AS Foundational Abilities: Ethics and Foundations (FA5)

AS.150.202. Introduction to Islamic Philosophy. 3 Credits.

In the Islamic Golden Age (800-1400 CE), philosophers such as al-Farabi, Avicenna, al-Ghazali, and Averroes made enormous contributions to every aspect of philosophy, including metaphysics, epistemology, ethics, political philosophy, and philosophical theology. But philosophy in the Islamic world did not end with Averroes. It continued to flourish in Muslim Eastern countries, in particular Persia and India, with the works of such philosophers as Suhrawardi and Mula Sadra. In the contemporary era, drawing on their rich tradition, Muslim philosophers such as Muhammad Iqbal, Seyyed Hossein Nasr, and Amina Wadud continue to tackle social, philosophical, and theological issues in the Islamic world. In this course, we will discuss the works of Muslim philosophers from the Golden Age to the present day.

Distribution Area: Humanities

AS Foundational Abilities: Culture and Aesthetics (FA3), Ethics and Foundations (FA5)

EN Foundational Abilities: Creative Expression (FA3)

AS.150.205. Introduction to the History of Modern Philosophy. 3 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.

Distribution Area: Humanities

AS Foundational Abilities: Writing and Communication (FA1), Ethics and Foundations (FA5)

Writing Intensive

AS.150.219. Introduction to Bioethics. 3 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.

Distribution Area: Humanities, Social and Behavioral Sciences

AS Foundational Abilities: Writing and Communication (FA1), Ethics and Foundations (FA5)

Writing Intensive

AS.150.220. Introduction to Moral Philosophy. 3 Credits.

Others ask, more narrowly, "How must we treat other people, in the world that we share?" Still others examine the nature of moral requirement: when we say that doing or failing to do something would be immoral, or that something is morally required, what exactly are we saying? What is morality, that we should care about it? This course will examine various conflicting answers to these questions before utilizing them in answering a few narrower moral questions. Throughout, we will engage in the practice of philosophy: expositing, criticizing, and constructing arguments. Students will be asked to think through these issues in written assignments and through participation in lecture, sections, and working groups

Distribution Area: Humanities

AS Foundational Abilities: Ethics and Foundations (FA5)

AS.150.223. Formal Methods of Philosophy. 3 Credits.

For better or for worse (and we think better), during the last century or so, philosophy has become infused with logic. Logic informs nearly every area of philosophy; it is part of our shared language and knowledge base. Vast segments of literature, especially in contemporary analytic philosophy, presuppose basic competence in logic and a familiarity with associated formal methods, particularly set theoretical. The standard philosophy curriculum should therefore guarantee a minimum level of logic literacy, thus enabling students to read the literature without it seeming like an impenetrable foreign tongue. This course is an introductory survey of the formal methods that a contemporary philosopher should be familiar with. It is not mathematically demanding in the way that more advanced courses in metalogic and specialized topics may be. The emphasis is on basic comprehension, not on mathematical virtuosity.

Prerequisite(s): Students who have already taken AS.150.434, are not eligible to take AS.150.223.

Distribution Area: Humanities

AS Foundational Abilities: Science and Data (FA2), Ethics and Foundations (FA5)

AS.150.235. Philosophy of Religion. 3 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.

Distribution Area: Humanities

AS Foundational Abilities: Ethics and Foundations (FA5)

AS.150.240. Introduction to Political Philosophy. 3 Credits.

This course begins by reviewing canonical texts in modern political philosophy beginning with Thomas Hobbes and John Locke and ends by exploring classic questions in contemporary debates in race, gender, and identity.

Distribution Area: Humanities

AS Foundational Abilities: Citizens and Society (FA4), Democracy (FA4.1), Ethics and Foundations (FA5)

EN Foundational Abilities: Engagement with Society (FA4)

AS.150.245. Philosophy of Mind. 3 Credits.

If we know anything, it is natural to think it is our own minds. Despite this, philosophers have long disagreed about the natures of the states which make up our minds. And there is equally little agreement as to what makes such states count as mental in the first place. This course will investigate the nature of different aspects of mind and their interrelations. Time permitting, we will explore debates and puzzles about perception, memory, imagination, dreaming, pain and bodily sensation, emotion, action, volition and those states commonly classed as propositional attitudes: knowledge, belief, desire and intention. This will put us in a position to ask what if anything unifies such phenomena as mental

Distribution Area: Humanities

AS Foundational Abilities: Ethics and Foundations (FA5)

AS.150.260. Introduction to Metaphysics. 3 Credits.

Metaphysics addresses fundamental questions about the nature and structure of reality. This course will offer an introduction to metaphysics, and a survey of metaphysical debates about topics including free will, possibility and necessity, and arguments for the existence of God.

Distribution Area: Humanities

AS Foundational Abilities: Ethics and Foundations (FA5)

AS.150.300. Prometheus Workshop. 1 Credit.

Prometheus is Johns Hopkins' undergraduate philosophical society.

The society organizes a conference and publishes a journal each year and more generally provides a community for philosophically-minded students. The Prometheus workshop facilitates this through open philosophical discussion; interaction with faculty, graduate students, and other members of the Philosophy Department; and other activities. For more information, please visit <<https://prometheus.students.jh.edu/>>.

Prerequisite: MUST have taken one philosophy course

Distribution Area: Humanities

AS Foundational Abilities: Ethics and Foundations (FA5), Projects and Methods (FA6)

AS.150.301. Majors Seminar. 3 Credits.

Topics change by semester. Please view class search to see what the topic is for a specific term.

Distribution Area: Humanities

AS Foundational Abilities: Writing and Communication (FA1), Ethics and Foundations (FA5)

Writing Intensive

AS.150.312. Applied Public Health Ethics and Decision-Making. 3 Credits.

In this course, students receive an introduction to core theoretical foundations and case studies in public and global health ethics. This course adopts an applied framework for understanding how public health ethical values are navigated in different decision-making processes. This course is geared toward juniors and seniors.

Distribution Area: Humanities, Social and Behavioral Sciences

AS Foundational Abilities: Writing and Communication (FA1), Science and Data (FA2), Ethics and Foundations (FA5)

Writing Intensive

AS.150.313. Technology, Democracy, and Social Justice. 3 Credits.

This course will consider healthcare technologies through the lens of political values: democracy and social justice. At a broad level, we will ask of these technologies: Who should decide on their design and use when the experts don't resemble the public and the public lacks expertise? How can we provide broad access to the benefits of these new technologies without exposing vulnerable people to further risk and unfairness? More narrowly, the course will focus on four technologies that affect healthcare: anti-malarial "gene drive" mosquitoes, medical AI, genomic data collection, and social media. Gene drives hold the promise of modifying mosquitoes to prevent the spread of infectious disease, but they also expose people in lower-income countries to unanticipated risks. Artificial intelligence and genomic data can deliver scarce medical resources to those who need it most and tailor it to minorities based on their precise characteristics. But they can also exacerbate existing unfairness while exposing minorities to risks of further discrimination and surveillance. Social media has a similar potential to deliver crucial health data, especially in a pandemic. But it also promotes the spread of misinformation among the populations most in need of help. This course will consider how we can balance the benefits and risks of these novel technologies and who gets to decide that balance.

Distribution Area: Humanities

AS Foundational Abilities: Writing and Communication (FA1), Citizens and Society (FA4), Democracy (FA4.1), Ethics and Foundations (FA5)

EN Foundational Abilities: Engagement with Society (FA4)

Writing Intensive

AS.150.330. Decisions, Games & Social Choice. 3 Credits.

We investigate rational decision-making at the individual and group level. The first part of this course covers decision theory, which is concerned with how agents should act in different situations given their knowledge (or lack thereof) about the world and their particular risk profiles.

The second part focuses on game theory, exploring different kinds of competitive and cooperative strategic interactions between rational agents and defining different solution concepts for these games. The final part of the course covers social choice theory, which is concerned with decision-making at the society-wide scale and addresses famous impossibility results by Arrow and Sen.

Distribution Area: Humanities

AS Foundational Abilities: Science and Data (FA2), Ethics and Foundations (FA5)

AS.150.332. Ethics and Technology. 3 Credits.

In this course, we will examine philosophical debates concerning the moral permissibility of developing, distributing, and/or using certain controversial technologies. Candidate technologies for consideration include, but are not limited to, nootropics (smart drugs), moral bioenhancement, so-called "ultraviolent" video games, memory-alteration technologies, the development of drugs that aim to create, sustain, or eliminate love, and AI intended to function as therapists, romantic interests, or interactive representations of deceased loved ones

Distribution Area: Humanities

Writing Intensive

AS.150.333. An Iconoclast in Islamic Philosophy: Abu Bakr al-Razi. 3 Credits.

Abu` Bakr al-Ra`zi` was a fascinating philosopher and physician in the golden age of Islam. He was credited with being the first to apply placebos in clinical trials and scientifically distinguishing measles from smallpox. He also applied his rigorous methodology in medicine to philosophy. He provided very original arguments for surprising conclusions on topics ranging from metaphysics to religion. In this course we will survey al-Razi's philosophy in general. We will both learn and examine al-Razi's philosophical ideas on metaphysics, ethics and religion as well as the relevant philosophical background for his philosophy. We will also compare his ideas in various fields of philosophy to contemporary approaches to these issues. Recommended Course Background: Introductory Philosophy Course.

Distribution Area: Humanities

AS Foundational Abilities: Writing and Communication (FA1), Ethics and Foundations (FA5)

Writing Intensive

AS.150.334. He Said, She Said: Topics in Feminist Philosophy of Language. 3 Credits.

Feminist Philosophy of Language began as a critical movement that called for changes within language to reflect the goals of the early Feminist movement. These critiques were aimed both at the discipline of Philosophy of Language and at language itself. In the late 20th century, a second branch of Feminist Philosophy of Language emerged and has since grown considerably. This branch contains a range of emancipatory projects that adopt the tools, frameworks, and concepts developed in the Philosophy of Language to address oppressive features of our world. Emancipatory projects in Feminist Philosophy of Language are broadly concerned with the identification of speech related harms, the clarification of linguistic devices and mechanisms that constitute modes of oppression, and the development of theory that aids in the resistance of oppression in ordinary language context. This course will focus on this recent branch of Feminist Philosophy of Language and the emancipatory projects it contains. In this course students will be introduced to the central Pragmatic theories in Philosophy of Language which underpin emancipatory projects in Feminist Philosophy of Language. Using these theories as a foundation, this course will be cover to topics such as practices of silencing, hate speech and slurs, political and propagandistic rhetoric, sexual consent, and oppressive speech.

Distribution Area: Humanities

AS Foundational Abilities: Citizens and Society (FA4), Ethics and Foundations (FA5)

EN Foundational Abilities: Engagement with Society (FA4)

AS.150.375. Majors Seminar: Philosophy of Language (Proper Names and Descriptions). 3 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.

Distribution Area: Humanities

AS Foundational Abilities: Writing and Communication (FA1), Ethics and Foundations (FA5)

Writing Intensive

AS.150.376. Philosophy of Perception. 3 Credits.

A discussion of central issues in the philosophy of perception, including but not limited to: Do we perceive external objects directly? What is the distinction between seeing and thinking? How do we distinguish the various sense modalities (vision, hearing, touch, etc.)?

Distribution Area: Humanities

AS Foundational Abilities: Ethics and Foundations (FA5)

AS.150.401. Greek Philosophy: Plato and His Predecessors. 3 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.

Distribution Area: Humanities

AS Foundational Abilities: Writing and Communication (FA1), Culture and Aesthetics (FA3), Ethics and Foundations (FA5)

EN Foundational Abilities: Creative Expression (FA3)

Writing Intensive

AS.150.402. Aristotle. 3 Credits.

A study of major selected texts of Aristotle.

Distribution Area: Humanities

AS Foundational Abilities: Writing and Communication (FA1), Ethics and Foundations (FA5)

Writing Intensive

AS.150.403. Hellenistic Philosophy. 3 Credits.

A study of later Greek philosophy, stretching roughly from the death of Aristotle to the Roman imperial period. Epicureans, Stoics, and Sceptics will be the main philosophical schools examined.

Distribution Area: Humanities

AS Foundational Abilities: Writing and Communication (FA1), Ethics and Foundations (FA5)

Writing Intensive

AS.150.405. Evidence: An Introduction. 3 Credits.

What is evidence? Can it ever be disregarded in science, the law, or religion, and if so, when? What are the paradoxes of evidence (grue, ravens) and how can they be solved?

Distribution Area: Humanities

AS Foundational Abilities: Science and Data (FA2), Ethics and Foundations (FA5)

AS.150.406. Tragedy and Living Well. 3 Credits.

This course revisits the idea of tragedy as represented in Ancient Greek thought for the purpose of approaching questions of flourishing and ethical living from a different angle.

Distribution Area: Humanities

AS Foundational Abilities: Writing and Communication (FA1), Culture and Aesthetics (FA3), Ethics and Foundations (FA5)

EN Foundational Abilities: Creative Expression (FA3)

Writing Intensive

AS.150.413. The Nature of Consciousness in Kant and Beyond. 3 Credits.

This course examines theories of consciousness in Kant and selected post-Kantian thinkers in the German tradition, including Johann Gottlieb Fichte, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, and Edmund Husserl. Important topics includes the unity of consciousness, the perspectival nature of consciousness, subjectivity, reflexivity and self-consciousness, temporality and phenomenal qualities, intentionality, objectivity and intersubjectivity. Emphasis will be placed on close reading of the original texts, historically informed interpretation, and systematic argumentation.

Distribution Area: Humanities

AS Foundational Abilities: Ethics and Foundations (FA5)

AS.150.417. Kant's 'Critique Of Pure Reason'. 3 Credits.

An examination of the philosophy of Immanuel Kant, with emphasis on The Critique of Pure Reason.

Distribution Area: Humanities

AS Foundational Abilities: Ethics and Foundations (FA5)

AS.150.420. Mathematical Logic I. 3 Credits.

Mathematical Logic I (H,Q) is the first semester of a year long course studying the logical methods used in mathematical reasoning. The first semester explores the construction of formal languages in which to cast mathematical discourse, introduces systems of proof for deriving propositions from assumptions, and develops a formal semantics that provides a precise criterion of logical consequence. We expect a system of proof to allow the derivation only of propositions that are logical consequences of the assumptions (soundness). A principal result establishes the converse: these systems of proof are such that any logical consequence is derivable (completeness). This provides us with a purely mathematical characterization of logic within which mathematical theories can be formulated and their properties studied (decidability, axiomatizability, consistency, completeness), a pursuit commonly known as metamathematics.

Distribution Area: Humanities, Quantitative and Mathematical Sciences

AS Foundational Abilities: Science and Data (FA2), Ethics and Foundations (FA5)

AS.150.421. Mathematical Logic II. 3 Credits.

Euclid set a precedent for the codification of mathematics by axiomatizing the set of geometric truths. An obvious question that arises is whether all branches of mathematics are axiomatizable, especially fundamental ones, such as arithmetic. In the late nineteenth century, what became known as Peano arithmetic was proposed as an axiomatization. The essential feature of an axiomatization is that, although one might have an infinite number of axioms, as does Peano arithmetic, one must have a decision procedure for determining whether a given proposition is or is not an axiom. In 1931, Gödel proved the astounding result that, not only is Peano arithmetic incomplete in the sense that it does not entail all arithmetic truths, but any attempted axiomatization of arithmetic is incomplete, and thus the set of arithmetic truths must be undecidable. Subsequently, Alfred Tarski showed the set of arithmetic truths is not even definable. Also, by finding a finitely axiomatizable undecidable subtheory of Peano arithmetic, Alonzo Church was able to show that there is not even an effective procedure for determining whether a given sentence is a logical truth. Finally, in his 1931 paper, Gödel argued a second incompleteness theorem, viz., that any theory strong enough to express its own consistency, as he showed Peano arithmetic to be, cannot prove its own consistency unless it is inconsistent. We will cover these and other results that have had a profound effect on the foundations of mathematics. It remains an open question whether so basic a theory as Peano arithmetic is consistent.

Prerequisite(s): AS.150.420

Distribution Area: Humanities, Quantitative and Mathematical Sciences

AS Foundational Abilities: Science and Data (FA2), Ethics and Foundations (FA5)

AS.150.422. Axiomatic Set Theory. 3 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 definitely true or false? Or, as Cohen thought, does CH simply lack a definite truth value?

Distribution Area: Humanities, Quantitative and Mathematical Sciences

AS Foundational Abilities: Science and Data (FA2), Ethics and Foundations (FA5)

AS.150.423. Theory of Knowledge. 3 Credits.

An advanced introduction to the central problems, concepts and theories of contemporary philosophical epistemology (theory of knowledge). Topics to be explored will include: what is knowledge (and why do we want it?); theories of justification (foundationalism, the coherence theory, etc.); externalism and internalism in epistemology; skepticism, relativism and how to avoid them. Reading from contemporary sources.

Distribution Area: Humanities

AS Foundational Abilities: Science and Data (FA2), Ethics and Foundations (FA5)

AS.150.424. Moral Emotions. 3 Credits.

Certain emotions seem closely related to our regarding other people as moral agents, who are responsible for their actions. These include: resentment, forgiveness, trust, guilt, shame, shamelessness, gratitude, hope, contempt, respect, regret. After starting with a quick introduction to ways philosophers think about emotions, we will spend investigate these emotions and their role in responsibility attributions.

Distribution Area: Humanities

AS Foundational Abilities: Ethics and Foundations (FA5)

AS.150.426. Philosophy and Disability. 3 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 respecting people with disabilities, and what counts as unjustifiable discrimination against them?

Prerequisite(s): AS.150.219 OR AS.150.220

Distribution Area: Humanities, Social and Behavioral Sciences

AS Foundational Abilities: Writing and Communication (FA1), Citizens and Society (FA4), Ethics and Foundations (FA5)

EN Foundational Abilities: Engagement with Society (FA4)

Writing Intensive

AS.150.428. Spinoza's Theological Political Treatise. 3 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.

AS Foundational Abilities: Citizens and Society (FA4), Democracy (FA4.1), Ethics and Foundations (FA5)

EN Foundational Abilities: Engagement with Society (FA4)

AS.150.430. Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit. 3 Credits.

From the opening chapter on "Sense-certainty" to the concluding "Absolute Knowledge," we will follow Hegel's account of the experience of consciousness through the transitions to self-consciousness, reason, spirit, and religion.

AS Foundational Abilities: Citizens and Society (FA4), Ethics and Foundations (FA5)

EN Foundational Abilities: Engagement with Society (FA4)

AS.150.433. Philosophy of Space & Time. 3 Credits.

Is space an entity that exists independently of matter (substantialism), or is it only an abstraction from spatial relations between bodies (relationism)? Is there a lapse of time even when nothing changes, or is time only a measure of motion? Are motion and rest contrary properties or 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. What is the significance of incongruent counterparts (left hands vs. right hands)? Is there a fact of the matter as to the geometry of space (flat, hyperbolic or elliptical), or as to whether space-like separated events occur at the same time? What is the principle of relativity? Does Einstein's theory have consequences for the substantialist/relationist debate? What is the status of spacetime in current physics and cosmology? Why does time but not space have a "direction"? Are past, present and future objective features of reality, or are they merely "stubborn illusions"? Does time flow? If not, how do we account for our sense of the passage of time?

Distribution Area: Humanities, Natural Sciences

AS Foundational Abilities: Science and Data (FA2), Ethics and Foundations (FA5)

AS.150.434. Formal Methods of Philosophy. 3 Credits.

For better or for worse (and we think better), during the last century or so, philosophy has become infused with logic. Logic informs nearly every area of philosophy; it is part of our shared language and knowledge base. Vast segments of literature, especially in contemporary analytic philosophy, presuppose basic competence in logic and a familiarity with associated formal methods, particularly set theoretical. The standard philosophy curriculum should therefore guarantee a minimum level of logic literacy, thus enabling students to read the literature without it seeming like an impenetrable foreign tongue. This course is an introductory survey of the formal methods that a contemporary philosopher should be familiar with. It is not mathematically demanding in the way that more advanced courses in metalogic and specialized topics may be. The emphasis is on basic comprehension, not on mathematical virtuosity. Co-taught with AS.150.223 Formal Methods of Philosophy.

Prerequisite(s): If you have taken AS.150.223 Formal Methods of Philosophy you cannot take AS.150.434.

Distribution Area: Humanities

AS Foundational Abilities: Science and Data (FA2), Ethics and Foundations (FA5)

AS.150.435. Philosophy of Cosmology. 3 Credits.

This course will consider philosophical topics in the foundations of physics, with an emphasis on cosmological issues. Entropy and the arrow of time – why time has a direction, whether it can be explained in terms of entropy, and what role the arrow of time plays in causation and emergence. Anthropic and indexical uncertainty – approaches to probability, reference classes, the cosmological multiverse, Boltzmann brains, simulation and doomsday arguments. Foundations of quantum mechanics – the measurement problem, many-worlds, probability and structure, alternative approaches.

Distribution Area: Humanities, Natural Sciences

AS Foundational Abilities: Science and Data (FA2), Ethics and Foundations (FA5)

AS.150.436. Philosophy of Gender. 3 Credits.

In this class we will examine philosophical questions about gender, and about the intersections between gender and other social categories including race, class and sexuality. We will focus specifically on questions about the metaphysics of gender and other social categories.

Distribution Area: Humanities

AS Foundational Abilities: Writing and Communication (FA1), Citizens and Society (FA4), Ethics and Foundations (FA5)

EN Foundational Abilities: Engagement with Society (FA4)

Writing Intensive

AS.150.438. Spinoza's Ethics. 3 Credits.

The seminar is a study of Spinoza's philosophical masterpiece, the Ethics. We will attempt to cover all five parts of the book and discuss major interpretive problems and debates.

Distribution Area: Humanities

AS Foundational Abilities: Ethics and Foundations (FA5)

AS.150.439. Catastrophe Ethics. 3 Credits.

Catastrophe Ethics explores the question, “how do you live a morally decent life in an era of massive, structural catastrophes?” Most of what we do contributes to harm and injustice as a result of climate change, ecological devastation, child labor and exploitation in the global supply chain, the spread of infectious diseases like Covid-19, animal welfare issues, and much more. And yet, as individuals with incredibly little power, most of us can’t make a difference to any of these problems no matter what we choose. So our actions seem to matter morally (Recycle! Boycott bad companies! Go vegan!), and yet also to matter not at all (You don’t make a difference!). In attempting to address this problem—the puzzle of individual responsibility amidst collective threats—this course takes students on a tour of both traditional moral philosophy, and newer, disruptive moral concepts. By the end of the semester, students will be provided with tools to think more clearly about living in our chaotic world and hopefully, to do better and feel better about the mark that they’re leaving on the planet and on society.

Distribution Area: Humanities

AS Foundational Abilities: Ethics and Foundations (FA5)

AS.150.442. The Philosophy of Ludwig Wittgenstein. 3 Credits.

An advanced introduction to the philosophical work of Ludwig Wittgenstein. We shall begin by examining the central ideas of Wittgenstein’s *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* against the background of the philosophical work of Frege and Russell. We shall then move on to the *Philosophical Investigations*, paying special attention to his searching self-criticisms and to the “rule-following” and “private language” problems, as highlighted by Saul Kripke’s pathbreaking but controversial account of Wittgenstein’s argument.

Distribution Area: Humanities

AS Foundational Abilities: Ethics and Foundations (FA5)

AS.150.445. Berkeley’s Idealism. 3 Credits.

Idealism is the view that, at bottom, whatever is - is an idea. For the idealist, to be is to be perceived. George Berkeley is probably the most famous idealist among European philosophers, and on this seminar we will read closely two of his major texts: *Principles of Human Knowledge* and *Three Dialogues between Hylas and Philonous*. Topics to be discussed include: the nature of bodies, the nature of the mind, the possible sources of our ideas, and Berkeley’s understanding of God.

Distribution Area: Humanities

AS Foundational Abilities: Ethics and Foundations (FA5)

AS.150.447. The Logic of Spinoza’s Ethics. 3 Credits.

One of the unique aspects of Spinoza’s major work, the *Ethics*, is its formal or “geometric” structure. The book is written following the model of Euclid’s *Elements*, with Definitions, Axioms, Propositions, and Demonstrations. In this seminar, we scrutinize the deductive structure of the *Ethics* and some of its earlier drafts. We consider the role and epistemic status of the definitions and axioms, attempt to provide rigorous reconstructions of some of its key propositions, and also investigate the possibility of alternative routes between these propositions.

Distribution Area: Humanities

AS Foundational Abilities: Ethics and Foundations (FA5)

AS.150.450. Topics in Biomedical Ethics. 3 Credits.

Distribution Area: Humanities

AS Foundational Abilities: Writing and Communication (FA1), Ethics and Foundations (FA5)

Writing Intensive

AS.150.451. Animal Points of View. 3 Credits.

Are non-human animals conscious? Do they possess a stream of consciousness like our own? This course will explore these questions by asking what it is for an animal to possess a point of view and a temporal point of view in particular.

Distribution Area: Humanities, Quantitative and Mathematical Sciences
AS Foundational Abilities: Science and Data (FA2), Ethics and Foundations (FA5)

AS.150.452. Freedom of Will & Moral Responsibility. 3 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.

Distribution Area: Humanities

AS Foundational Abilities: Writing and Communication (FA1), Ethics and Foundations (FA5)

Writing Intensive

AS.150.453. Hegel’s Logic. 3 Credits.

This seminar is a close study of Hegel’s major work, the *Science of Logic*. Among the issues to be discussed are the questions: How should philosophy begin and what - if anything - can it take for granted? We will also attempt to scrutinize Hegel’s attitude toward the law of non-contradiction.

Distribution Area: Humanities

AS Foundational Abilities: Ethics and Foundations (FA5)

AS.150.455. Ethics And Animals. 3 Credits.

Do we have moral obligations towards nonhuman animals? If so, what are they? If not, are there any limits on how we can permissibly treat nonhuman animals? In this course we will consider these and other questions concerning the moral status of nonhuman animals and how we should treat them.

Distribution Area: Humanities

AS Foundational Abilities: Writing and Communication (FA1), Ethics and Foundations (FA5)

Writing Intensive

AS.150.460. Rawls and His Critics. 3 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.

Distribution Area: Humanities

AS Foundational Abilities: Writing and Communication (FA1), Citizens and Society (FA4), Democracy (FA4.1), Ethics and Foundations (FA5)

EN Foundational Abilities: Engagement with Society (FA4)

Writing Intensive

AS.150.461. Theory Of Value. 3 Credits.

What is value? What is the difference between instrumental and final value? What is the relation of ethical and economic value? This course will explore a range of answers to these questions, with special focus on the role of desire and reason in determining value. Readings will include historical and contemporary authors.

Distribution Area: Humanities

AS Foundational Abilities: Ethics and Foundations (FA5)

AS.150.465. Topics in the Philosophy of Physics. 3 Credits.

This course will consider some philosophical topics in the foundations of physics. Entropy and the arrow of time – why time has a direction, whether it can be explained in terms of entropy, and what role the arrow of time plays in causation and emergence. Anthropic and indexical uncertainty – approaches to probability, reference classes, the cosmological multiverse, Boltzmann brains, simulation and doomsday arguments. Foundations of quantum mechanics – the measurement problem, many-worlds, probability and structure, alternative approaches.

Distribution Area: Humanities

AS Foundational Abilities: Ethics and Foundations (FA5)

AS.150.468. Essence. 3 Credits.

An exploration of historical and contemporary work on the metaphysics of essence, and related questions about modality, explanation, identity and the Principle of Sufficient Reason. Readings will include work from Aristotle, Avicenna, Spinoza, Kripke, and Fine.

Distribution Area: Humanities

AS Foundational Abilities: Ethics and Foundations (FA5)

AS.150.469. Immanuel Kant's Political Philosophy. 3 Credits.

Immanuel Kant's political philosophy is primarily presented in two works very late in his corpus: Perpetual Peace and the Metaphysics of Morals. In these Kant presents an account of justice as based on the innate right of individuals to freedom, which situates his account in the history of the liberal tradition of political philosophy. But what really follows from the starting point of individual freedom? In this course we will both pay careful attention to Kant's texts, and also think about the implications of the position for contemporary concerns, as well as for how liberalism should be understood.

Distribution Area: Humanities

AS Foundational Abilities: Citizens and Society (FA4), Democracy (FA4.1), Ethics and Foundations (FA5)

EN Foundational Abilities: Engagement with Society (FA4)

AS.150.470. Philosophical Naturalism. 3 Credits.

Naturalism, in the philosophical sense, is the claim that the natural world is the entire world – there is no need for anything supernatural or non-natural in our best understanding of reality. This course will discuss varieties of philosophical naturalism as well as the related notions of materialism and physicalism. We will investigate challenges to naturalism from a variety of sources – the origin of the universe, the origin of life, consciousness, morality, and meaning – and how they might be overcome. We will also touch on the ontological status of mathematical objects, laws of physics, and other worlds.

Distribution Area: Humanities

AS Foundational Abilities: Ethics and Foundations (FA5)

AS.150.471. Philosophy and AI. 3 Credits.

This course explores philosophical issues raised by developments in Artificial Intelligence. For example, can a machine be conscious? (What is consciousness?) Who is responsible for a bad decision made by AI? What light, if any, do developments in AI shed on age-old debates about nature vs. nurture?

Distribution Area: Humanities, Social and Behavioral Sciences

AS Foundational Abilities: Ethics and Foundations (FA5)

AS.150.472. Women Philosophers in the German tradition. 3 Credits.

This course examines the works, influence, and legacy of often underappreciated and overlooked women philosophers of the German tradition in the 19th and 20th centuries. Although they were largely deprived of formal education and academic positions and excluded from academic discourse, women thinkers developed their own ways of philosophizing, of engaging in dialogue with their contemporaries, and of shaping the philosophical movements of their time. The course will focus on Lou Andreas-Salomé (1861-1937) and her engagement with the philosophy of life movement and psychoanalysis, Edith Stein (1891-1942) and her impact on the phenomenological tradition, and Hannah Arendt (1906-1975) and her lasting contribution to existential questions of human intellectual, social, and political life. The underlying theme of the course that connects these three thinkers is the life of the mind: what can we learn from each thinker about the conditions of human life, the dynamics of personal development, and the potential for emancipation?

Distribution Area: Humanities

AS Foundational Abilities: Culture and Aesthetics (FA3), Ethics and Foundations (FA5)

EN Foundational Abilities: Creative Expression (FA3)

AS.150.473. Classics of Analytic Philosophy. 3 Credits.

A reading of some of the classic philosophical works in 20th Century Analytic Philosophy, beginning with G. Frege and ending with W.V.O. Quine.

Distribution Area: Humanities

AS Foundational Abilities: Ethics and Foundations (FA5)

AS.150.474. Justice and Health. 3 Credits.

This 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.

Distribution Area: Humanities

AS Foundational Abilities: Writing and Communication (FA1), Citizens and Society (FA4), Ethics and Foundations (FA5)

EN Foundational Abilities: Engagement with Society (FA4)

Writing Intensive

AS.150.475. The Nature and Significance of Animal Minds. 3 Credits.

Humans have a complicated relationship with other animals. We love them, befriend them and save them. We hunt, farm and eat them. We experiment on and observe them to discover more about them and to discover more about ourselves. For many of us, our pets are amongst the most familiar inhabitants of our world. Yet when we try to imagine what is going on in a dog or cat's mind – let alone that of a crow, octopus or bee – many of us are either stumped about how to go about this, or (the science strongly suggests) get things radically wrong. Is our thought about and behaviour towards animals ethically permissible, or even consistent? Can we reshape our habits of thought about animals to allow for a more rational, richer relationship with the other inhabitants of our planet? In this course, students will reflect on two closely intertwined questions: an ethical question, what sort of relationship ought we to have with animals?; and a metaphysical question, what is the nature of animal minds? Readings will primarily be from philosophy and ethics and the cognitive sciences, with additional readings from literature and biology. There are no prerequisites for this class. It will be helpful but certainly not necessary to have taken previous classes in philosophy (especially ethics and philosophy of mind) or in cognitive science

Distribution Area: Humanities, Social and Behavioral Sciences

AS Foundational Abilities: Writing and Communication (FA1), Science and Data (FA2), Ethics and Foundations (FA5)

Writing Intensive

AS.150.476. Philosophy and Cognitive Science. 3 Credits.

This year's topic is perception. Questions will include: In what ways might perceptual states be like and unlike pictures? Does what we believe affect what we perceive? Is linguistic comprehension a kind of perception?

This course is geared toward advanced undergraduates and graduate students in philosophy and in the mind brain sciences and related fields. Others may be successful in the course depending on their prior course of study.

Distribution Area: Humanities, Social and Behavioral Sciences

AS Foundational Abilities: Science and Data (FA2), Ethics and Foundations (FA5)

AS.150.477. The Philosophies of Locke and Leibniz. 3 Credits.

In this course we will do a close reading of Locke's Essay along with Leibniz's New Essays, which is a point-by-point critique of the former.

The aim of this course is to clarify the main differences between the two philosophers and how they relate to the two philosophical systems as a whole. Since Locke and Leibniz are widely regarded as champions of empiricism and rationalism respectively, this course will give the students a deep grasp of pre-Kantian European philosophy.

Distribution Area: Humanities

AS Foundational Abilities: Ethics and Foundations (FA5)

AS.150.478. The Philosophy of Hasdai Crescas. 3 Credits.

The seminar is a study of Hasdai Crescas' major work: The Light of the Lord. Topics to be discussed include: Crescas' defense of actual infinity; determinism; plurality of (possible) worlds; the nature of belief; the infinity of God's attributes; Crescas' influence on Spinoza.

Distribution Area: Humanities

AS Foundational Abilities: Ethics and Foundations (FA5)

AS.150.479. The Ethics of Making Babies. 3 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.

Distribution Area: Humanities

AS Foundational Abilities: Citizens and Society (FA4), Ethics and Foundations (FA5)

EN Foundational Abilities: Engagement with Society (FA4)

AS.150.482. Food Ethics. 3 Credits.

Eating is an essential human activity: we need to eat to survive. But how should we eat? In this course, we consider such ethical questions as: Is it morally wrong to make animals suffer and to kill them in order to eat them? What is the extent of hunger and food insecurity, in this country and globally, and what should we as individuals do about it? Should the government try to influence our food choices, to make them healthier?

Distribution Area: Humanities

AS Foundational Abilities: Ethics and Foundations (FA5)

AS.150.484. Knowledge, Meaning and Necessity: Themes from Wilfrid Sellars. 3 Credits.

Wilfrid Sellars was one of the most original American philosophers of the second half of the last century, notable for combining systematic theorizing with a deep and wide knowledge of the history and of philosophical problems. This seminar will involve close reading of some of Sellars's most important essays, including "Inference and Meaning," "Empiricism and the Philosophy of Mind," and "Philosophy and the Scientific Image of Man". Time and interest permitting, we may look at the reception and development of some of Sellars's central ideas in the work of contemporary philosophers, Robert Brandom and John McDowell.

Distribution Area: Humanities

AS Foundational Abilities: Ethics and Foundations (FA5)

AS.150.488. Hume's Treatise of Human Nature. 3 Credits.

This is a close study of David Hume's major work, the Treatise of Human Nature.

Distribution Area: Humanities

AS Foundational Abilities: Ethics and Foundations (FA5)

AS.150.489. Spinoza's Philosophy of Mind and Psychology. 3 Credits.

The seminar will focus on Spinoza's philosophy of mind and psychology (Ethics, Parts II-III) Topics to be discussed include: the nature of the mind; mind-body parallelism; imagination and temporality; the three kinds of cognition; the conatus doctrine; emotions. No previous knowledge will be assumed.

Distribution Area: Humanities

AS Foundational Abilities: Ethics and Foundations (FA5)

AS.150.490. Mutual Recognition. 3 Credits.

This course will examine the historical origins of mutual recognition theory in J.G. Fichte and G.W.F. Hegel, and then turn to the recent appropriations of mutual recognition by Jürgen Habermas, Axel Honneth, Judith Butler, and others.

Distribution Area: Humanities

AS Foundational Abilities: Citizens and Society (FA4), Ethics and Foundations (FA5)

EN Foundational Abilities: Engagement with Society (FA4)

AS.150.494. Being Human. 3 Credits.

A review of literature in Greek drama and virtue ethics on achieving human flourishing. Recommended Course Background: At least one course in Philosophy.

Distribution Area: Humanities

AS Foundational Abilities: Writing and Communication (FA1), Ethics and Foundations (FA5)

Writing Intensive

AS.150.495. Moral Repair. 3 Credits.

In this course, we will examine various philosophical views concerning the nature and ethics of moral repair. We will consider questions such as: Under what conditions might one count as being redeemed for a moral wrongdoing? What does it mean to forgive? Are we ever morally required to forgive or to withhold forgiveness? When, and to what extent, does disappointed trust warrant feelings of distrust and/or betrayal?

Distribution Area: Humanities

AS Foundational Abilities: Ethics and Foundations (FA5)

AS.150.499. The Principle of Sufficient Reason. 3 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. One half of the course will concentrate on works by the two philosophers who introduced the principle: Spinoza and Leibniz. In the other half, we will read texts by Kant, Maimon, and some contemporary analytic philosophers, and discuss the plausibility, implications, and justification of the principle, as well as its application to theories of grounding.

Distribution Area: Humanities

AS Foundational Abilities: Ethics and Foundations (FA5)

AS.150.511. Directed Study. 3 Credits.

Individual study of special topics, under regular supervision of a faculty member. Special permission is required.

Prerequisite(s): You must request Customized Academic Learning using the Customized Academic Learning form found in Student Self-Service: Registration > Online Forms.

AS Foundational Abilities: Writing and Communication (FA1), Ethics and Foundations (FA5), Projects and Methods (FA6)

Writing Intensive

AS.150.512. Directed Study. 1 - 3 Credits.

By special arrangement, at the discretion of the Instructor.

Prerequisite(s): You must request Customized Academic Learning using the Customized Academic Learning form found in Student Self-Service: Registration > Online Forms.

AS Foundational Abilities: Writing and Communication (FA1), Ethics and Foundations (FA5), Projects and Methods (FA6)

Writing Intensive

AS.150.551. Honors Project. 3 Credits.

See departmental major adviser.

Prerequisite(s): You must request Customized Academic Learning using the Customized Academic Learning form found in Student Self-Service: Registration > Online Forms.

AS Foundational Abilities: Writing and Communication (FA1), Ethics and Foundations (FA5), Projects and Methods (FA6)

Writing Intensive

AS.150.552. Honors Project. 1 - 3 Credits.

By special arrangement, at the discretion of the Instructor.

Prerequisite(s): You must request Customized Academic Learning using the Customized Academic Learning form found in Student Self-Service: Registration > Online Forms.

AS Foundational Abilities: Writing and Communication (FA1), Ethics and Foundations (FA5), Projects and Methods (FA6)

Writing Intensive

AS.150.601. Topics in Philosophy of Language. 3 Credits.

TBA

Distribution Area: Humanities, Social and Behavioral Sciences

AS.150.603. Seminar in Modern Philosophy. 3 Credits.

German-style colloquium for advanced graduate students working in the history of modern philosophy. Course will meet synchronously online every other week for the duration of the academic year. Spring offering will carry a separate course number.

Distribution Area: Humanities

AS.150.606. Seminar on Skepticism - Ancient & Modern. 3 Credits.

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.

AS.150.608. Hegel and Brandom. 3 Credits.

In this course, we will read Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit together with Robert Brandom's A Spirit of Trust. Topics include the pragmatist semantic reading of Hegel, the recognitive nature of self-consciousness, and the expressive metaphysics of agency.

Distribution Area: Humanities

AS.150.613. Graduate Seminar: Topics in the Philosophy of Mind - Perception. 3 Credits.

Recent work on the philosophy of perception, including Tyler Burge's new book Perception: First Form of Mind

Distribution Area: Humanities

AS.150.616. Is Scientific Knowledge Possible?. 3 Credits.

Philosophical Views of Descartes, Newton, Duhem, Popper, Carnap, Goodman (grue), Kuhn, and Feyerabend.

Distribution Area: Humanities, Social and Behavioral Sciences

AS.150.617. Origins of Analytic Philosophy; Frege to Carnap. 3 Credits.

Course description forthcoming. Previous philosophy classes of History of Modern Philosophy and/or Elementary Logic useful. This class is geared toward graduate students in philosophy.

Distribution Area: Humanities

AS.150.621. Advanced Topics in Philosophy of Mind and Cognitive Science. 3 Credits.

An exploration of a variety of advanced topics in philosophy of mind and cognitive science.

Distribution Area: Humanities

AS.150.622. Graduate Seminar: Metametaphysics. 3 Credits.

Metametaphysics is the study of the nature and viability of metaphysics. In this seminar we will engage with questions about metametaphysics, including questions about the relationship between metaphysics and science, responses to deflationist challenges, and the nature of social metaphysics.

Distribution Area: Humanities, Quantitative and Mathematical Sciences

AS.150.623. Seminar in German Idealism. 3 Credits.

This course explores the transformation of Kantian idealism by F.W.J. Schelling and G.W.F. Hegel in their early years in Jena. Readings will include Schelling's System of Transcendental Idealism as well as Hegel's "Difference" essay and Faith and Knowledge.

Distribution Area: Humanities

AS.150.624. Topics in Epistemology. 3 Credits.

Discussion of recent research on knowledge and belief, with attention to connections between traditional and formal epistemology.

Distribution Area: Humanities

Writing Intensive

AS.150.626. Complexity, Information, and Emergence. 3 Credits.

This course will examine the notion of a complex system through scientific and philosophical lenses. Through a series of readings of classic papers and contemporary research, we will discuss what it means to be a complex system, the role of information, and how complexity can emerge from fundamentally simple underlying behavior.

AS.150.628. Aboutness and Experience. 3 Credits.

This seminar will straddle the philosophy of perception and metaphysics/philosophical logic. We will explore two overarching questions: (i) Can the phenomenology and cognitive significance of perceptual experiences be accounted for in terms of those experiences' logical contents, and (ii) How fine-grained are propositions, properties, and relations? These two questions turn out to be intimately related: if we hope to give an affirmative answer to the first, we are pushed towards some new and surprising answers to the second.

Distribution Area: Humanities

AS.150.635. Graduate Seminar: Truthmaker Semantics & Pragmatics. 3 Credits.

An investigation into the theory of truthmaker semantics and pragmatics and its applications to various problems in philosophical logic and linguistics. This course is geared toward graduate students. Some background in mathematical logic will be useful in this class.

Distribution Area: Humanities, Quantitative and Mathematical Sciences

AS.150.637. Self and Self-Formation in Kant and selected Post-Kantian Thinkers. 3 Credits.

This course examines theories of the self and self-formation in Immanuel Kant and selected post-Kantian thinkers in the German tradition, including Johann Gottlieb Fichte, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, and Wilhelm Dilthey. The course will focus on how knowing oneself and becoming oneself are mutually dependent. For each thinker, we will discuss their accounts of self-consciousness and self-understanding as well as the conditions for forming a moral character. Emphasis will be placed on close reading of the original texts, historically informed interpretation, and systematic argumentation.

Distribution Area: Humanities

AS.150.641. Dept Colloquium. 1 Credit.

Presentations by invited speakers.

AS.150.651. Animal Points of View. 3 Credits.

Are non-human animals conscious? Do they possess a stream of consciousness like our own? This course will explore these questions by asking what it is for an animal to possess a point of view and a temporal point of view in particular.

AS.150.652. Topics in Epistemology, Language and Mind. 3 Credits.

This course will focus on the phenomenon of semantic shiftiness, with special attention to its relevance to puzzles of modal variation. Other topics to be discussed include speech reports, the problem of the many, and personal identity.

Distribution Area: Humanities

AS.150.653. Seminar: Philosophy of Physics. 3 Credits.

The Principle of Relativity in historical and philosophical perspective. For the history from Galileo to Einstein, we will read Olivier Darrigol's recent (2022) book on the topic supplemented by various primary sources.

For the philosophy, the problem is simply to formulate the principle in a non-question begging way, especially in light of Kretschmann's 1917 observation that general covariance alone does not constitute a general principle of relativity, as well as his contention that, properly analyzed, general relativity is less relativistic than special relativity. We will then consider various formulations by physicists and philosophers over the last 50 years.

Distribution Area: Humanities, Quantitative and Mathematical Sciences

AS.150.666. Philosophy of Emotional Attachment. 3 Credits.

In this seminar, we will explore various ways in which we might be emotionally connected to others and how those relations bear on philosophical treatments of agency and emotion. In particular, we will focus on the roles that attachment plays in structuring human agency, constituting and informing certain emotions and emotional processes, and helping us to lead flourishing lives. In examining these issues, we will engage with philosophical literature (and some psychological research) on attachment and related forms of emotional connectedness, including some relevant work on caring, love, and grief.

Distribution Area: Humanities

AS.150.669. Topics in Practical Philosophy. 2 Credits.

An investigation into central topics in practical philosophy.

Distribution Area: Humanities

AS.150.671. The First-Person Perspective. 3 Credits.

In this seminar, we will study the first-person perspective and its implications for both theoretical reasoning (including self-understanding) and practical reasoning (including self-development). Drawing on texts from historical and contemporary sources, we will explore questions such as: --What does it mean to be a thinker with a first-person perspective? (Can there be a thinker without one?) --Does the first-person perspective necessarily include a position for the subject? --What role does the body play in the first-person perspective? --Are perspectivity and objectivity mutually exclusive? --Do empathy and morality require us to exit the first-person perspective? --What is the relation (if any) between the first-person perspective and "the self" as it figures in moral psychology? Readings may include, but are not limited to, texts by Descartes, Kant, and Husserl, as well as Anscombe, Perry, Lewis, and Bar-On.

Distribution Area: Humanities

AS.150.672. Social Metaphysics. 3 Credits.

In social metaphysics the tools of analytic metaphysics are applied to the social world. In this seminar we will survey different methodologies for social metaphysics including social metaphysics as philosophy of social science, social metaphysics as an emancipatory political project, deflationist social metaphysics, and social essentialism. On the way we will explore methodological and meta-metaphysical issues raised by the prospect of social metaphysics.

Distribution Area: Humanities

Writing Intensive

AS.150.673. Williams and MacIntyre vs. Liberalism. 3 Credits.

This course stages a critical conversation between the virtue ethics and tragic traditions championed by Bernard Williams and Alasdair MacIntyre and the contemporary liberal tradition whose roots are in Immanuel Kant's metaphysics and later championed by John Rawls's political philosophy. The core question is: what are the lessons about a good society taught us by virtue ethics and tragedy and can contemporary liberalism begin to incorporate any of them?

Distribution Area: Humanities

AS.150.679. Minds Matter (free will & moral responsibility). 3 Credits.

We will consider whether the problem of free will and moral responsibility can be unwound by, first, expanding our idea of control and, second, recentering our idea of responsibility. The framing text will be Hieronymi's four Gifford Lectures, *Minds Matter*. The lectures will be supplemented with other readings from the literature. Particular attention will be paid to the way in which concerns about freedom infect our ideas about ethics.

Distribution Area: Humanities

AS.150.680. Truthmakers and Mental Models. 3 Credits.

In this seminar, we examine the connections between recent work in truthmaker semantics by philosophers and linguists and the mental model theory of deduction developed by psychologists since the 1980s.
Distribution Area: Humanities, Natural Sciences

AS.150.681. Puzzles about Belief. 3 Credits.

We will explore puzzles about belief, focusing on Frege's puzzle and the preface paradox, as well as questions about the logical relations among different doxastic and epistemic attitudes, such as certainty, confidence, and knowledge.

Distribution Area: Humanities

AS Foundational Abilities: Ethics and Foundations (FA5)

AS.150.684. Philosophical Issues in Newton and Newtonianism. 3 Credits.

The seminar will examine Isaac Newton's engagement with a number of philosophical topics: the nature of space and time, causation, matter theory, laws of nature, God, and the mind-body problem. The goal will be to understand the development of Newton's views in response to the work of Descartes, Hobbes, Gassendi, and Henry More as well as the ways in which Newton's philosophical views informed and were informed by his various scientific and theological commitments. We will also look at the early reception of Newton's thought, both efforts to further develop it by Newton's allies and efforts to criticize it by figures like Leibniz.

Distribution Area: Humanities

AS.150.810. Independent Study. 3 - 9 Credits.

By special arrangement, at the discretion of the Instructor.

AS.150.811. Directed Study. 10 - 20 Credits.

Please see AS.150.810 for section numbers to use when registering.

AS.150.812. Directed Study. 10 - 20 Credits.

Please see AS.150.810 for section number to use when registering.

AS.150.813. Seminar in Modern Philosophy. 2 Credits.

German-style colloquium for graduate students working in the history of modern philosophy. We will read newly-published work, invite speakers, and have presentations by advanced graduate students. First- and second-year students may register for a grade. Advanced graduate students in history of modern should audit/present

Distribution Area: Humanities

AS.150.815. TA Practicum. 3 Credits.

This course is to develop essential teaching skills.

AS.150.822. Readings and Skills in Contemporary Philosophy Part I. 2 Credits.

This course provides skills training for a successful career in philosophy, through engagement with contemporary work across a wide range of areas of philosophy. As a class, we will choose accessible articles of general interest recently published in top journals. Each student will be responsible for presenting one of these articles to the class and leading discussion, with guidance from the instructors. All students will be required to carefully and closely read each paper for each class, and come prepared to discuss it in depth. The aim of this part of the course is to learn how to read and analyze articles, present work, and engage in constructive philosophical discussion. After presenting the paper, each presenter will be required to write a short reply. As a class, we will then engage in a mock review process, crafting anonymous referee reports, revising replies in the light of these, and writing letters to the editor explaining the revisions. The aim of this part of the course is to gain knowledge and skills relevant to writing philosophy and successful publication. This course is STRICTLY limited to 1st and 2nd year Philosophy PhD Students ONLY. It will meet every other week in both the fall and the spring semesters; each semester is worth 2 credits and students are required to enroll in both. Grading will be based predominantly on participation and effort

Distribution Area: Humanities

AS.150.823. Readings and Skills in Contemporary Philosophy II. 2 Credits.

This course provides skills training for a successful career in philosophy, through engagement with cutting-edge contemporary work across a wide-range of areas of philosophy. As a class, we will choose accessible articles of general interest recently published in top journals. Each student will be responsible for presenting one of these articles to the class and leading discussion, with guidance from the instructors. All students will be required to carefully and closely read each paper for each class, and come prepared to discuss it in depth. The aim of this part of the course is to learn how to read and analyze articles, present work, and engage in constructive philosophical discussion. After presenting the paper, each presenter will be required to write a short reply to it, in the style of the relevant journal. As a class, we will then engage in a mock review process, crafting anonymous referee reports, revising replies in the light of these, and discussing these as editors. The aim of this part of the course is to gain knowledge and skills relevant to writing philosophy and successful publication. The course is open to 1st and 2nd year graduate students. It will meet every other week in both the fall and the spring semesters; each semester is worth 2 credits and students are required to enroll in both. Grading will be based predominantly on participation and effort. Upper-year graduate students may audit the course by permission of the instructors, conditional on their commitment to attend and engage as full members of the class; if student numbers are high, priority with respect to presentations will be given to 1st and 2nd year students.

Prerequisite(s): AS.150.822

Distribution Area: Humanities

Writing Intensive

AS.150.824. Research Seminar. 2 Credits.

For 3rd and 4th year Philosophy graduate students working on their Qualifying Papers and Dissertation Proposals. Meets every other week.
Distribution Area: Humanities

AS.150.825. Research Seminar. 2 Credits.

In this course students will present drafts of Qualifying Papers and first dissertation chapters, receiving feedback from students, the instructor and other relevant faculty.

Distribution Area: Humanities

AS.150.850. Summer Research. 9 Credits.

Students research and develop their dissertation topic.