

OAKLAND UNIVERSITY
PHILOSOPHY
Course Brochure
Summer 2019, Fall 2019, and Winter 2020



The Oakland University philosophy department offers a wide range of courses that are of interest not only to philosophy majors, but also to any student who is studying at the University.

OAKLAND UNIVERSITY

PHILOSOPHY

Introductory Courses

PHL 1000: Introduction to Logic

Schedule: Many sections

General Education: Formal Reasoning

Course Description:

The relationship between conclusions and statements given in support of them. In addition to elementary deductive and inductive logic, topics may include analysis of ordinary arguments, argument by analogy and informal fallacies.

PHL 1070: Introduction to Symbolic Logic

Schedule: Many sections

General Education: Formal Reasoning

Course Description:

Formal or symbolic logic is a study of what makes deductive arguments valid, employing symbols to represent sentences, words, phrases, etc. in order to reveal the formal structure of the arguments.

PHL 1100: Introduction to Philosophy

Schedule: Many sections

General Education: Western Civilization

Course Description:

Study of the main types and problems of Western philosophy. Readings are chosen to illustrate the development of Western thought from the ancient Greeks to the present.

PHL 1300: Introduction to Ethics

Schedule: Many sections

General Education: Western Civilization

Course Description:

Major ethical analyses of right and wrong, good and evil, from the ancient Greeks to the present. Appeals to custom, theology, happiness, reason, and human nature will be examined as offering viable criteria for judgments on contemporary issues of moral concern.

PHL 1310: Introduction to Ethics in Science and Engineering

Schedule: Many sections

General Education: Western Civilization

Course Description:

Survey of canonical works in the history of Western ethical theory providing students a critical understanding of a plurality of viable ideas, principles, and criteria by which to evaluate and judge contemporary issues of ethical concern in the practice of science and engineering.

OAKLAND UNIVERSITY

PHILOSOPHY

PHL 2200: Ancient Greek Philosophy

Instructor: Matzke

Schedule: Fall 2019

General Education: Writing Intensive in the Major, Writing Intensive in General Education,
Knowledge Applications

Course Description:

Development of philosophical thought in Greece, from its beginning around 600 B.C.E. to the Hellenistic period. Emphasis on Plato and Aristotle.

PHL 2200: Ancient Greek Philosophy

Instructor: Propson

Schedule: Winter 2020

General Education: Writing Intensive in the Major, Writing Intensive in General Education,
Knowledge Applications

Course Description:

Development of philosophical thought in Greece, from its beginning around 600 B.C.E. to the Hellenistic period. Emphasis on Plato and Aristotle.

PHL 2220: Early Modern Philosophy

Instructor: Graves

Schedule: Summer 2019 and Fall 2019

General Education: Writing Intensive in the Major, Writing Intensive in General Education,
Knowledge Applications

Course Description:

Development of philosophical thought in Europe in the 17th and 18th centuries. Emphasis on Descartes, Locke, Hume and Kant.

PHL 3150: Philosophy of Religion

Instructor: Blanchard

Schedule: Winter 2020

Course Description:

This course introduces students to philosophical thinking about religion in a way that is rigorous, historically informed, and sensitive to the lived nature of religious practice. Problems and phenomena addressed in the course include: Can we know whether any gods exist and, if so, how? Is the existence of suffering a problem for rational belief in God? What is the nature of faith, and how does it relate to reason? What is the nature of mystical experience? What bearing, if any, do religious systems have on morality or the meaning of life? What are the philosophical implications of religious diversity? Identical with REL 3120.

OAKLAND UNIVERSITY

PHILOSOPHY

PHL 3300: Ethical Theory

Instructor: Blanchard

Schedule: Fall 2019

Course Description:

Nearly everyone has a set of moral views. Significantly fewer people have developed a full-fledged moral theory: a philosophical account of which things are good and why; which actions are forbidden, obligatory, or merely permissible; which character traits are worth developing or avoiding; whether consequences, intention, character, or something else is primary in moral evaluation; how human emotions should factor into moral decision-making; or whether there is just one or multiple equally morally legitimate ways to live. In this course, students will critically examine how historical and contemporary moral philosophers approach these issues, as well as develop their own thinking about them.

PHL 3400: Metaphysics

Instructor: Graves

Schedule: Winter 2020

General Education: Writing Intensive and Knowledge Applications

Course Description:

Study of selected influential attempts to characterize the basic features of the world. Emphasis on reformulations of metaphysical problems in the light of modern advances in scientific knowledge. Offered every other year.

PHL 3410: Theories of Knowledge

Instructor: Berry

Schedule: Fall 2019

Course Description:

Critical examination of knowledge claims and of the types of justification given in their support. Typical topics: skepticism, empiricism, rationalism, believing and knowing, intuition and limits of knowledge.

PHL 3500: Bioethics

Instructor: Propson

Schedule: Fall 2019

Course Description:

Central ethical issues in modern health care and research. Included are the distribution and allocation of health resources, the right to life and death, “informed consent” and eugenics.

OAKLAND UNIVERSITY

PHILOSOPHY

PHL 3610: Philosophy of International Relations: Law, War, and Peace

Instructor: Rigstad

Schedule: Summer 2019

Course Description:

Considers competing theories of global ethics, diplomacy, international law, just warfare, nationalism, military duty, disarmament, pacifism, non-violent resistance, civil strife, and terrorism.

PHL 3620: Global Justice

Instructor: Navin

Schedule: Winter 2020

Course Description:

We live in a world marked by unprecedented levels of international interdependence and global institutional power. Individuals and institutions across the planet have started to promote their shared interests in addressing issues like climate change, immigration and global poverty.

Furthermore, the language of human rights has become ubiquitous in the world's protest and reform movements; it is the *lingua franca* of global moral discourse. This course focuses on core issues in global justice, including international assistance, the justice of global institutions, international inequality, fair trade, nationalism, patriotism, and cosmopolitanism.

PHL 3800: Philosophy of Mind

Instructor: LaRock

Schedule: Winter 2020

Course Description:

This course explores key areas in the philosophy of mind, including the mind-body problem, theories of mind, artificial intelligence, the nature of consciousness, supervenience and mental causation, emotion, and the nature of persons.

OAKLAND UNIVERSITY

PHILOSOPHY

PHL 3810: Consciousness and Persons

Instructor: LaRock

Schedule: Fall 2019

Course Description:

This course explores central philosophical and scientific questions about the nature of consciousness and persons. What is consciousness? How does consciousness relate to the physical world? Do all characteristics of consciousness reduce to structures and functions? What is the unity of consciousness? Does consciousness reside at a specific level of neural organization? Are attention and working memory necessary for consciousness? Are some recent theories of consciousness better than others, and why? Can we learn something about the neural correlates of consciousness by discovering the neural correlates of anesthetic-induced unconsciousness? What is the difference between a philosophical zombie and an inverse zombie? Are philosophical and inverse zombies possible? What are persons? How do persons relate to their bodies? Are persons constituted by their bodies? Are persons generated by (and reducible to) their brains? Do persons persist over time? What strategies can persons deploy to enhance subjective well-being? Can persons survive biological death?

Required Books:

Michael Tye, *Consciousness and Persons: Unity and Identity*. Cambridge: MIT Press, 2003.

Antti Revonsuo, *Consciousness: the Science of Subjectivity*. New York: Psychology Press, 2010.

Max Velmans & Susan Schneider (editors), *The Blackwell Companion to Consciousness*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2017.

PHL 3830: Philosophy of Artificial Intelligence

Instructor: McDonald

Schedule: Winter 2020, Online

Course Description:

The philosophical foundations of artificial intelligence and cognitive science. Is the human mind a kind of computer? If so, what kind of computer is it? Could a sophisticated robot think, feel, or be consciously aware? Possible topics include cognition, perception, linguistic processing, action, the ethics of artificial intelligence research, and the value-ladenness of artificial intelligence research.

Prerequisite: PHL 1000 or PHL 1070 or PHL 3000 or CSI 1300

Required Books:

Keith Frankish and William Ramsey, editors, *The Cambridge Handbook of Artificial Intelligence*
John Haugeland, editor, *Mind Design II*, The MIT Press

OAKLAND UNIVERSITY

PHILOSOPHY

PHL 3910: Ethics Bowl

Instructor: Campbell

Schedule: Fall 2019

Course Description:

Students selected through competitive try-outs to be members of Oakland University's Ethics Bowl teams prepare for and participate in intercollegiate competition in philosophically informed debate over controversial issues. New cases are examined each year. Instructors guide students in independent theoretical research and in the art of public speaking.

PHL 4200: Study of a Major Philosopher: Daniel Dennett

Instructor: Graves

Schedule: Fall 2019

Course Description:

A study of the works of one major philosopher.

PHL 4970: Capstone: Rationality and Politics

Instructor: Rigstad

Schedule: Winter 2020

General Education: Capstone

Course Description:

One philosophical topic or problem at an advanced level of difficulty, normally requiring considerable background in philosophy.