

## Spring 2023 Electives - Description List

**Course:** Philosophical Perspectives on Science II (PHIL2151)

**Professor:** Marius Stan

**Time:** TTH 3:00PM-4:15PM

**Description:** Continued Course. Part II. This course is an examination of the scientific enterprise with the tools of modern analytic philosophy. Topics include the structure of a scientific theory, evidence and knowledge in science, the nature of scientific explanations, and the role of values in science. As paradigmatic examples, we will explore major breakthroughs by Archimedes, Newton, Darwin, and Einstein. Open to science and pre-med majors.

**Level:** Undergrad Elective

**Course:** Boston: An Urban Analysis (PHIL2216)

**Professor:** David Manzo

**Time:** TH 3:00PM-5:30PM

**Description:** This is a PULSE elective course open to all students who are willing to investigate, analyze, and understand the history, problems, and prospects of Boston's neighborhoods. Classes meet both on campus and in the neighborhoods of Boston. You must be willing to travel to different parts of the city. You will see first-hand how cities change and develop. A four-hour per week (plus travel time) service commitment is a requirement for this course.

**Level:** Undergrad Elective

**Course:** Mass Incarceration: Philosophical and Theological Perspectives (PHIL2230)

**Professor:** Marina McCoy

**Time:** TTH 10:30AM-11:45AM

**Description:** This course will explore problems of justice in relation to incarceration in the United States with particular attention to race, social class, gender, and immigration status. Students will read authors writing on the philosophy of race, gender, and class in relation to incarceration, the phenomenology of solitary confinement and the concept of "social death," church documents and theological works on incarceration, and works on restorative justice and other models of justice that serves the common good. Catholic Social Justice teachings and discussion will also be a part of the course. The course will also address interconnections between immigration and incarceration. This course will be offered as a PULSE elective, in which students undertake four hours per week of service in the City of Boston at institutions such as Suffolk County Jail and nonprofits that provide transitional services for returning residents or formerly incarcerated individuals or that advocate for prison reform. The PULSE office will vet and coordinate students' placements and serve as a liaison with community partners.

**Level:** Undergrad Elective

**Course:** Telling Truths II: Depth Writing as Service (PHIL2262)

**Professor:** Alexis Rizzuto

**Time:** W 3:00PM-4:45PM

**Description:** This PULSE elective will focus on the power of story-telling to achieve justice and social liberation. We will read theoretical and narrative accounts of the role of story, examine the use of story-telling among marginal populations as a means of participating in their own solutions. We will explore the benefits and liabilities of social media in emerging change movements. Students will engage in story gathering, telling, and analysis, through their PULSE placements and class discussion, producing a collection of original writings. A four-hour per week (plus travel time) service commitment is a requirement for this course.

**Level:** Undergrad Elective

**Course:** Logic (PHIL2264)

**Professor:** Maxwell Wade

**Time:** MWF 10:00AM-10:50AM

**Description:** This course will consider the principles of correct reasoning together with their application to concrete cases.

**Level:** Undergrad Elective

**Course:** Philosophy and Theology of Community II (PHIL2292)

**Professor:** Meghan Sweeney

**Time:** W 3:00PM-5:45PM

**Description:** This course is a continuation of the themes of Philosophy of Community I which further explores the themes of that course: the nature of community, particularly in the American context; the historical, cultural, political and religious forces that have shaped American community and the American understanding of community.

**Level:** Undergrad Elective

**Course:** Classical Rhetoric, Contemporary Politics (PHIL2929)

**Professor:** Marina McCoy

**Time:** TTH 1:30PM-2:45PM

**Description:** This course undertakes an exploration of sophistic and philosophical rhetoric, their differences and similarities. Figures studied include ancient Greek sophists and orators, Plato, Aristotle, and Cicero. In class, we will relate the ideals of these texts to historic and contemporary examples of political speeches, debates, and other forms of persuasive speech.

**Level:** Undergrad Elective

**Course:** Towards Deep Subjectivity: Architecture, Ethics, and the Personhood of Place (PHIL3240)

**Professor:** Brian Braman

**Time:** M 4:30PM-6:50PM

**Description:** In *Genius Loci: A Phenomenology of Architecture* Christian Norberg-Schultz argues that if human beings are to dwell authentically under the sky and on the earth, the architecture's role is to provide an "existential foothold," which grounds people's relationship to their environment. "Man dwells when he can orientate himself with his environment and experiences it as meaningful" and thus ethical; to have an existential foothold allows one to "be" at home. To dwell means that human beings achieve an individual and communal identity--a

personhood in a given place. The purpose of this course will be to explore the relationship between subjectivity, architecture, ethics, and the notion of personhood as authentic dwelling on the earth and under the sky.

**Level:** Undergrad Elective

**Course:** The Ethics of Emerging Technologies (PHIL3999)

**Professor:** Stephen Hudson

**Time:** MWF 12:00-12:50PM

**Description:** In this course, we will focus on how a philosophically informed interdisciplinary approach is needed for a more human centered ethical application of emerging technologies to address issues like global health, the environment, development, prosperity, and global peace. We will first briefly look at the ancient world and how technology was viewed and assessed using various ethical theories. We will then spend the majority of the course on the ethical debates surrounding emerging technologies such as genetic engineering, artificial intelligence, nanotechnology, life extension, virtual reality, etc.

**Level:** Undergrad Elective

**Course:** Love and Wisdom and Love of God (PHIL4002)

**Professor:** Jeffrey Bloechl

**Time:** MWF 11:00AM-11:50AM

**Description:** This course studies the relationship between philosophy and spirituality as it emerged in western European monasticism, and is modified by developments in modern and contemporary thought. We will read some texts on early monastic practices, Bonaventure's Journey of the Mind to God, and passages by Ignatius, Pascal, Edith Stein and Simone Weil. This course will include one week in a monastery, immersed in the hours of prayer and study. There will be a program fee of \$400 for this course (spring 2023).

**Level:** Undergrad Elective

**Course:** Does God Exist? (PHIL4403)

**Professor:** Ronald Tacelli, SJ

**Time:** MW 4:30PM-5:45PM

**Description:** This course aims to be a serious examination, for capable undergraduates, of arguments for and against the existence of God.

**Level:** Undergrad Elective

**Course:** What is Democracy? (PHIL4443)

**Professor:** Micah Lott

**Time:** TTH 12:00-1:15PM

**Description:** Etymologically, "democracy" means rule by the people, or people power. But what does it mean for the people to rule, or to have power? And what is so valuable about the people ruling, if anything? This course examines these questions, with a focus on contemporary political philosophy. We will look at issues like: deliberation, participation, political voice, and the relationship between capitalism and democracy. Throughout, we will consider democracy's connection to the social ideal of a "society of equals."

**Level:** Undergrad Elective

**Course:** Unheard Voices: Philosophy at the Crossroads of Identity (PHIL4454)

**Professor:** Cherie McGill

**Time:** MW 1:30PM-2:45PM

**Description:** What is a just society? What responsibility does each of us have to contribute to a common good? This course starts from the idea that answering these questions requires hearing the voices of those typically unheard, and recognizing the interlocking systems that construct our world. We will attempt to hear voices typically not heard, identify the forces that converge to make voices heard or unheard, and understand the roles that each of us play as silenced and silencer. We will attempt to discern a way forward to a more just society — a way forward that begins from where we are.

**Level:** Undergrad Elective

**Course:** Philosophy of World Religions (PHIL4470)

**Professor:** Peter Kreeft

**Time:** TTH 10:30AM-11:45AM

**Description:** The purpose of this course is as follows: (1) to familiarize students with the teachings of each of the world's major religions; (2) to understand, empathize with, and appreciate them; (3) to appreciate one's own religion (or lack of one) better by comparison; (4) to philosophize critically and rationally about a subject that is not in itself critical and rational; and (5) to question and search for a universal nature of core of religion, if possible.

**Level:** Undergrad Elective

**Course:** Classical Chinese Philosophy (PHIL4476)

**Professor:** You Jiang, SJ

**Time:** TTH 4:30PM-5:45PM

**Description:** This course is an introduction to Classical Chinese Philosophy and designed to introduce students to the major philosophical schools of classical China, including the Confucian, Mohist, Daoist, and Buddhist schools. Through lectures, discussions, and reading of select primary and secondary sources, we will explore the formulations and subsequent transformations of key beliefs, doctrines, practices, and institutions that characterized specific cultural, educational, spiritual and philosophical traditions.

**Level:** Undergrad Elective

**Course:** Self-Knowledge and Discernment (PHIL4495)

**Professor:** Jeremy Wilkins

**Time:** N/A

**Description:** This course will provide some of the theological, philosophical, and historical resources needed to render an extended walk on the Camino de Santiago, one of the great pilgrimage routes of the Christian world. A time of reflection and discernment that we undertake as both individuals and as a class community.

**Level:** Undergrad Elective

**Course:** The Nature of Science (PHIL4512)

**Professor:** Marius Stan

**Time:** TTH 1:30PM-2:45PM

**Description:** This course is an examination of the scientific enterprise with the tools of modern analytic philosophy. Topics include: the structure of a scientific theory; evidence and knowledge in science; the role of models in research and theorizing; the nature of scientific explanations; and the place of values in science. Open to advanced undergraduates.

**Level:** Undergrad Elective

**Course:** The Problem of Evil (PHIL4555)

**Professor:** Peter Kreeft

**Time:** TTH 9:00AM-10:15AM

**Description:** The problem of evil (both moral evil and physical and emotional evil (pain and suffering) is life's fundamental problem both practically (personally) and theoretically (philosophically and theologically), and the strongest argument for atheism. This course will explore the question with the help of writers like Eli Weisel, C.S. Lewis, Augustine, Aquinas, Dostoyevski, Camus, William James, and the mystics. No final answers, proofs, or certainties are guaranteed.

**Level:** Undergrad Elective

**Course:** Happiness and Utopia: Thinking about the Ideal Life (PHIL4565)

**Professor:** Micah Lott

**Time:** TTH 10:30AM-11:45AM

**Description:** This course examines the notion of an ideal human life, understood as living well in ideal circumstances. This notion is at once familiar and puzzling. On the one hand, we all have some conception of living well - i.e., happiness, flourishing, the good life. And we recognize some circumstances as inimical to human flourishing, such as conditions of famine, poverty, oppression, and exploitation. Moreover, we seem to operate with some idea of good circumstances whenever we wish good fortune for our loved ones, or whenever we work to make our societies more supportive of human well-being. But on closer inspection, the notion of ideal circumstances raises a number of questions. What would human life look like in utopian conditions? Would humans still work and labor, or would we pass our lives entirely in leisure? Could our lives still have meaning and purpose, if there were nothing in our circumstances to struggle against? Would we still need virtues like courage and perseverance, with nothing to fear or overcome? And what about death: is it the ultimate non-ideal circumstance that might be overcome in some future utopia? This course considers such questions in relation to the notion of an ideal human life. We will read a range of philosophical texts, from Aristotle to Thomas More to contemporary thinkers. We will also examine film and works of imaginative literature by writers such as H.G. Wells.

**Level:** Undergrad Elective

**Course:** Medieval Philosophy (PHIL5005)

**Professor:** Peter Kreeft

**Time:** TTH 1:30PM-2:45PM

**Description:** Far from being monolithic and repetitive, the Middle Ages were a creative period during which multiple solutions were tried to make sense of the world and of human life. The legacy of Antiquity, the philosophic and scientific knowledge of the time, and religious views were combined in original syntheses. The aim of the course is to provide a picture of this diversity, through a study of the main problems that a wide range of authors (Christian thinkers from St. Augustine to Ockham, but also Islamic and Jewish philosophers) faced. Medieval philosophy was an important step in the development of human thought. Discovering it will be essential to your philosophical education. This course will especially highlight the ideas, in metaphysics, theory of knowledge, and ethics, which medieval thinkers created and transmitted to modern philosophy. In addition, analysis of texts, debates, and writing assignments will help you to develop rigorous argumentation and expression skills. (NB: This course was previously offered as PHIL 4407; you cannot take it if you took PHIL 4407)

**Level:** Graduate Elective

**Course:** Aquinas and the Classics (PHIL5247)

**Professor:** Sarah Byers

**Time:** MW 3:00PM-4:15PM

**Description:** While it is commonly known that Aquinas was a product of the twelfth-century renaissance of classical thought when it comes to Aristotle, less attention is typically given to his use of Roman Hellenistic philosophy and Greek Neoplatonism. This course is devoted to analysis of how Aquinas developed key elements of his ethics and philosophical psychology, as well as some of his metaphysics, from Roman and Greek authors including Cicero, Seneca, Augustine, and Ps-Dionysius in addition to Aristotle.

**Level:** Graduate Elective

**Course:** British Empiricists (PHIL5249)

**Professor:** Anne Davenport

**Time:** TTH 3:00PM-4:15PM

**Description:** Why are the British Empiricists both perplexing and indispensable? Do they deserve the odium that they often receive? How fundamental are they to our American identity? This course conducts an in-depth examination of John Locke, George Berkeley, and David Hume. We look at the entire spectrum of their concerns, from theories of the self to political science, ethics, and aesthetics. We tease out and discuss their views of the "good life." We probe their arguments critically and look at some of their followers and opponents in order to understand more fully the impact of their positions. We end with Rousseau's critique of British Empiricism.

**Level:** Graduate Elective

**Course:** The Aristotelian Ethics (PHIL5505)

**Professor:** Deborah DeChiara-Quenzer

**Time:** MWF 11:00AM-11:50AM

**Description:** This course has recently been added for the fall. For students interested in Aristotle's Nicomachean Ethics, this course is for you! It consists of a close reading of the whole of the Nicomachean Ethics beginning with ethical virtue (Books II-IX) and ending with happiness (Books I & X). I have found that a student's understanding of Aristotle's ethical concepts is enhanced when he/she considers those concepts in relation to leading figures in Ancient Greek literature. Thus, occasionally we will discuss some of Homer's Iliad and Sophocles' Oedipus Tyrannus to consider how some of the following issues relate to Achilles, Hektor, Paris, Oedipus, and Jocasta. What does it mean to have an ethical virtue (or vice), to engage in involuntary actions, to be responsible, courageous, good-tempered, truthful, temperate, continent, incontinent, and happy? Since the course will be run seminar style, students are expected to participate generously in classroom discussions.

**Level:** Graduate Elective

**Course:** Philosophy of Existence (PHIL5512)

**Professor:** Richard Kearney

**Time:** TTH 3:00PM-4:15PM

**Description:** An introduction to the main questions of existentialist philosophy from Kierkegaard and Nietzsche to Heidegger, Sartre and Camus. The major issues dealt with include freedom and determinism, desire and death, anxiety and the search for the absolute.

**Level:** Graduate Elective

**Course:** Skepticism, Stoicism, and Neo-Platonism (PHIL5528)

**Professor:** Sarah Byers

**Time:** MW 12:00-1:15PM

**Description:** Ancient philosophy is the period following Aristotle and stretching into the third century A.D., Hellenistic and Roman Philosophy. A number of philosophical schools flourished: Stoicism, Epicureanism, Skepticism, Middle-Platonism, Neo-Platonism. Some had sophisticated answers to questions in epistemology, ethics, and metaphysics: Does the human mind use mental language? Are we responsible for our thoughts? Is pleasure the goal of life? What kinds of emotions does the wise person have? Can Plato's account of the Forms be enriched by Aristotle's account of God? What is the metaphysical status of Socrates' "daimon"? The primary emphases of the course are Stoicism and the Platonisms.

**Level:** Graduate Elective

**Course:** Selected Readings in Phenomenology (PHIL5549)

**Professor:** Dermot Moran

**Time:** TTH 12:00-1:15PM

**Description:** This course offers a critical introduction to phenomenology, one of the most important movements of twentieth-century European philosophy, including its French existentialist development, and its critics. The major themes and movements in phenomenology and existentialism will be studied through several key thinkers: Franz Brentano, Edmund Husserl, Martin Heidegger, Edith Stein, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Jean-Paul Sartre, Emmanuel Levinas. Themes that will be critically considered include: intentionality, phenomenological description, perception and embodiment, moods and emotions, self-consciousness, the nature

of the self, sociality and the surrounding lifeworld. The course will have both a historical and a critical orientation with an emphasis on reading selected primary-source texts in English translation.

**Level:** Graduate Elective

**Course:** Symbolic Logic: Theory and Practices (PHIL5577)

**Professor:** Richard Atkins

**Time:** TTH 12:00-1:15PM

**Description:** An introduction to the powerful ways the logical forms woven into deductive reasoning and language can be analyzed using abstract symbolic structures. The study of these structures is not only relevant for understanding effective reasoning, but also for exploring the Anglo-American analytic philosophical tradition and foundations of mathematics, computer science, and linguistics. Philosophically interesting properties about logical systems will be explored, including the task of proving whether a logical system is complete and consistent. A number of interesting topics of twentieth-century logic will be briefly considered, such as set theory, Russell's paradox, and Goedel's theorems.

**Level:** Graduate Elective

**Course:** Hegel's Philosophy of Spirit (PHIL6250)

**Professor:** Elisa Magri

**Time:** MW 1:00PM-2:15P

**Description:** This course is dedicated to Hegel's philosophy of Geist, which is often translated in English as "spirit," "mind," or "collective cultural mindset." However, the full meaning of Geist in Hegel's philosophy comprises a more fine-grained and richer development of affective, psychological, and practical elements. Drawing on Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit as well as on the sections on the Philosophy of Spirit of Hegel's Encyclopaedia, this course will explore the main philosophical questions that surround the dimension of Geist in both Hegel's philosophy and contemporary debates, including Hegel's departure from transcendental philosophy and the nature-spirit relation, the novelty of Hegel's philosophical anthropology, the problem of recognition, and the quest for absolute knowledge.

**Level:** Graduate Elective

**Course:** Heidegger and Politics (PHIL6555)

**Professor:** Charles Fried

**Time:** TTH 10:30AM-11:45AM

**Description:** This course will examine the connection between Heidegger's thought and politics, in his own work, in scholarly debates about the extent and meaning of this connection, and in relation to contemporary issues in global politics. We will begin with an intensive review of concepts and themes in Being and Time, especially those having to do with the historicity of community. We will then read key texts from Heidegger's period of political engagement, such as Introduction to Metaphysics, Being and Truth, his political speeches, and the Black Notebooks to analyze Heidegger's conception of the history of Being in its relation to politics and what he deems the metapolitical features of the Western traditions slide, starting with Plato, into metaphysics, nihilism, and the technicity of modernity. We will conclude with an examination of



the debates over the meaning and legacy of Heidegger's political thought and what this can tell us about contemporary politics.

**Level:** Graduate Elective

**Course:** Rationality and Religious Commitment (PHIL6615)

**Professor:** Daniel McKaughan

**Time:** T 3:00PM-5:45PM

**Description:** An examination of cutting edge work in contemporary analytic philosophy of religion, organized around foundational questions about the nature, rationality, and value of religious faith. What is faith? Is faith adequately characterized as believing something without sufficient evidence? To what extent is faith compatible with doubt? Can faith be positively related to skepticism? How is faith related to belief, acceptance, trust, hope, and love? Can it be rational to have faith? If so, under what conditions? Can a deeper understanding of faith open up new ways of thinking about the relations between faith and reason or science and religion?

**Level:** Graduate Elective

**Course:** Philosophy and the Pedagogy of Service II (PHIL7401)

**Professor:** Patrick Byrne, Marina McCoy

**Time:** F 10:00AM-12:30PM

**Description:** Part II of Graduate PULSE (3 credits per semester, two semester sequence): In this two-semester course, the student will learn both the theory and practice of teaching a Philosophy service-learning course. The student will attend an undergraduate section of PULSE, doing the same readings as the undergraduates and working in a service placement for four hours a week. The student will also attend a bi-weekly seminar with other graduate students in the course and the graduate PULSE instructor, doing readings in the pedagogy of service learning, philosophy of education, and related fields. In consultation with the section instructor, the student will also serve as a writing mentor to undergraduates in the class. Requirements will include short reflection and exploratory papers, similar to the undergraduates, and a final research paper each semester. The first semester will focus on philosophy of education and on the pedagogy of service-learning; the second semester will focus on applied philosophical issues raised by specific service placements, either in the ethics of engaged service work or on policy questions connected to the service. Enrollment requires the permission of the undergraduate section instructor, the instructor for the graduate course, and the Director of the PULSE Program.

**Level:** Graduate Elective

**Course:** The Fundamental Concepts in Phenomenology: New Reflections (PHIL7543)

**Professor:** Jean-Luc Marion, Dermot Moran

**Time:** TTH 4:00PM-6:30PM

**Description:** This course is being offered by the Philosophy Dept. visiting Gadamer Chair, Jean-Luc Marion. It will be offered for an abbreviated semester, from March 28-May 4. Many of the most significant phenomenologists have established a set of fundamental concepts, which remain in use up to the present. However, the more recent developments of the actual practice of phenomenology have modified or enriched many of these concepts. The intention of these

seminars will be to check and update some of them, and to measure how far their new definition will open new issues. I propose to examine the following concepts: (a) Reduction: its relation to epoche; singularity or plurality; the principles in phenomenology. (b) Intentionality; objectivity, non-objectivity; noema; the core of the noema and the 'in itself' (an sich) of the phenomenon. Empty, common-law, and saturated phenomena. (c) Reversed or counter-intentionality. The ego, the transcendental subject, Dasein, the hostage and the election, the add-on. (d) The object and the thing in itself. (e) The face of the Other. Seeing and being seen. (f) The possible and the impossible.

**Level:** Graduate Elective

**Course:** Narrative and Interpretation (PHIL7742)

**Professor:** Richard Kearney

**Time:** W 6:00PM-8:45PM

**Description:** This course will explore the philosophical implications of narrative imagination and identity. It begins with Aristotle's analysis of mythos-mimesis in the Poetics and then focuses on a detailed discussion of Paul Ricoeur's Time and Narrative (vol. 1 and 3). Attention will be given to the interpretation of the principal genres of narrative: myth, chronicle, fable, history and fiction. We will discuss the critical implications of a hermeneutics of narrative for the interweaving of story and history, including the case histories of psychoanalysis; testimonial literature of holocaust and genocide; personal and political narratives of identity; and an ethics of oneself as another.

**Level:** Graduate Elective

**Course:** Aristotle's Metaphysics (PHIL7788)

**Professor:** William Wians

**Time:** M 4:30PM-6:50PM

**Description:** The course will be devoted to one of the rarest, most excellent, and most difficult philosophical texts ever written. Aristotle's Metaphysics presents a profound and profoundly influential answer to the question What is being? But even apart from his answer, the Philosopher reveals his greatness as a thinker by the way he approaches the question of being: what does the question pre-suppose? What does it imply for nature, knowledge and language? How can the question of being be answered when all we experience are individual beings?

**Level:** Graduate Elective