PHILOSOPHY (PHL)

PHL 101 Human Person (3 credits)
Various first-year seminars are offered each year by philosophy faculty.
Attributes: First-Year Seminar, Undergraduate

PHL 150 First Year Seminar (3 credits)

PHL 154 Moral Foundations (3 credits)
A critical study of the various ways in which agents, actions, and social practices are evaluated from the moral point of view, as this has been articulated in major Western ethical theories. Tools for this study include an introduction to philosophical reasoning and concepts basic to the moral point of view, such as rights, duties, virtue and character. Theories studied include but are not limited to Consequentialism, Deontologism, and Natural Law. Satisfies the GEP Jesuit tradition course requirement.
Attributes: Signature Course (New GEP), Undergraduate

PHL 170 Special Topics in Philo (3 credits)

PHL 201 Knowledge and Existence (3 credits)
Three basic problems concerning reality and the quest to know reality: 1) the origin, validity, and limits of human knowledge; 2) Graeco-Christian, modern, and contemporary approaches to being and causality; and 3) the problem of God. Does not satisfy the GEP variable course requirement in the Philosophical Anthropology area.
Prerequisites: PHL 154
Attributes: Undergraduate

PHL 220 Logic (3 credits)
A study of the logic of ordinary language: the functions of language, forms of argument, fallacies, definition; analysis of propositions and deductive reasoning; inductive reasoning, analogy and scientific hypothesis testing. An introduction to symbolic logic is provided. Techniques are developed for translating arguments in ordinary language into a canonical language that highlights their logical form. The predicate and propositional calculi are used to establish the validity of simple arguments. Does not fulfill the philosophy GEP.
Prerequisites: PHL 154
Attributes: Undergraduate

PHL 240 Symbolic Logic (3 credits)
The study of the semantic and syntactic properties of propositional and predicate logics- natural deduction systems of the first order. Some results in meta-logic (such as the soundness and completeness proofs for particular systems) may be addressed, and attention may also be paid to the properties of axiomatic deductive systems in contrast to systems of natural deduction. The usefulness of formal systems for studying the property of validity in natural language arguments will also be addressed, in part by learning techniques for “translating” arguments from one language to the other. Does not fulfill the philosophy GEP.
Prerequisites: PHL 154
Attributes: Undergraduate

PHL 250 Philosophy of Death (3 credits)
A study of the reality of death as the boundary of human experience. The course explores the meaning of death and its relationship to the meaning of life, examines evidence for and against the thesis that death is the end of human existence, and considers implications for selected contemporary issues (e.g., death with dignity, medical definition of death). This course may be taken to satisfy the GEP variable course requirement in the Philosophical Anthropology area.
Prerequisites: PHL 154
Attributes: Philosoph Anthropol (New GEP), Undergraduate

PHL 251 Inside Out: Life and Its Boun (3 credits)

PHL 252 Philosophy of Karl Marx (3 credits)
An analysis and evaluation of the early writings of Karl Marx. Topics to be stressed include the metaphysical roots of Marx's concept of human beings, the causes and effects of alienation, economic determinism, and the rise of philosophical communism. This course may be taken to satisfy the GEP variable course requirement in the Philosophical Anthropology area.
Prerequisites: PHL 154
Attributes: Philosoph Anthropol (New GEP), Undergraduate

PHL 253 Hume, Darwin, Marx, and Freud (3 credits)
This course takes up four giant thinkers – Hume, Darwin, Marx, and Freud – men who changed their respective fields in radical ways. David Hume provided a bold philosophy of human understanding based on the empirical method of investigation. A century later Charles Darwin use the empirical method to develop his theory of evolution via natural selection, which revolutionized knowledge of human origins and the relatedness of all species. Karl Marx used empiricism to reconcile human history in economic terms and to predict a social revolution in class structure. Sigmund Freud applied empirical investigation to neurological problems resulting in the discoveries of psychoanalysis. We will ask, how did each figure overturn the knowledge tradition of his time to redescribe human functioning? This course may be taken to satisfy the GEP variable course requirement in the Philosophical Anthropology area.
Prerequisites: PHL 154
Attributes: Philosoph Anthropol (New GEP), Undergraduate

PHL 254 Phil & the Democratic Body (3 credits)
For centuries philosophers have tried to understand what it means to be human by analyzing various aspects of the human condition. Unfortunately, the fact that we are embodied beings has not yet received adequate treatment. This course is an attempt to correct many years of philosophical avoidance of the body. We will not begin our inquiry with the assumption that human consciousness is just a given and is the same in all human beings. Rather, we will begin with an analysis of various forms of embodiment and consciousness as affected by the types of bodies that we have and social attitudes towards these bodies. This course may be taken to satisfy the GEP variable course requirement in the Philosophical Anthropology area.
Prerequisites: PHL 154
Attributes: Philosoph Anthropol (New GEP), Undergraduate

PHL 255 Freedom and Determinism (3 credits)
A metaphysical and epistemological analysis and evaluation of the various philosophical positions on the determinism-free will issue. Various kinds of determinism (hard, soft, theological, etc.) will be critically examined, and various ways of arguing in support of free-will (from choice, deliberation, remorse, etc.) will be assessed. This course may be taken to satisfy the GEP variable course requirement in the Philosophical Anthropology area.
Prerequisites: PHL 154
Attributes: Philosoph Anthropol (New GEP), Undergraduate
PHL 257 Philosophy and Liberation (3 credits)
What do we mean by "liberation"? Liberation from what? Liberation for what? What role does philosophy play in the quest for liberation? This course will explore the meaning of liberation in a variety of contexts (biological, psychological, economic, political, spiritual), paying special attention to what it might mean for students and the university. In particular, we will be looking for those places where the philosophical, the political, and the spiritual intersect in the event of liberation. Emphasis will be on Latin American philosophies and theologies of liberation, focusing on the thought of Xavier Zubiri, Ignacio Ellacuria, and Enrique Dussel. This course may be taken to satisfy the GEP variable course requirement in the Philosophical Anthropology area.
Prerequisites: PHL 154
Attributes: Latin American Studies Course, Philosoph Anthropol (New GEP), Undergraduate

PHL 258 The Authentic Self (3 credits)
This course will center on careful textual study of primary sources in philosophy/theology that deal with the analysis of human "fallenness" and self-recovery. A key element that will emerge is the role of the will: not just the theoretical freedom of the will, but the necessity to make a specific act of the will, namely to will to be one's authentic self. Focus on works of Augustine, Kierkegaard, and Heidegger. This course may be taken to satisfy the GEP variable course requirement in the Philosophical Anthropology area.
Prerequisites: PHL 154
Attributes: Philosoph Anthropol (New GEP), Undergraduate

PHL 260 Philosophy of Human Nature (3 credits)
In this course we shall inquire into the nature of human beings by reading and discussing major philosophical texts from the western intellectual tradition along with essays written by contemporary philosophers. In particular we shall explore such topics as the nature of human rationality, knowledge and belief, immortality, virtue, free will, self-deception, the mind-body problem, and physicalism vs. dualism with respect to human persons. This course may be taken to satisfy the GEP variable course requirement in the Philosophical Anthropology area.
Prerequisites: PHL 154
Attributes: Philosoph Anthropol (New GEP), Undergraduate

PHL 262 Freedom, Citizenship, Culture (3 credits)
This course will survey recent trends in political philosophy with special attention to competing conceptions of political freedom, civic identity and responsibility, and the political significance of community and cultural diversity. Does our political freedom depend primarily upon securing the negative liberties celebrated in the classical liberal tradition? Does it also require adequate social rights, democratic self-determination and/or active and ongoing participation in the political process? How should claims of freedom be balanced alongside the need to promote the common good, political solidarity and unity, and a sense of common belonging? How should the demands of citizenship be weighed against commitments arising from membership in sub-state cultural groups and other forms of human community? This course may be taken to satisfy the GEP variable course requirement in the Philosophical Anthropology area.
Prerequisites: PHL 154
Attributes: Ethics Intensive (New GEP), Philosoph Anthropol (New GEP), Undergraduate

PHL 264 Topics in Moral Psychology (3 credits)
This course will explore human moral judgment, decision making, and behavior. Included are examinations of issues about whether the psychological processes involved in human moral practice are innate, about the respective roles of emotion and reasoning in moral judgment, and about the extent to which cultural forces shape our moral beliefs. Following the lead of much of the field in recent years, our focus will be primarily on working out the philosophical implications of recent scientific investigation on the topics. This course may be taken to satisfy the GEP variable course requirement in the Philosophical Anthropology area.
Prerequisites: PHL 154
Attributes: Philosoph Anthropol (New GEP), Undergraduate

PHL 266 Rel & Phil in Amer Identity (3 credits)
From the founding of the American nation under the influence of Puritanism to the rise of Transcendentalism in the nineteenth century, philosophic and religious propositions have decisively shaped the American character. This course examines several important episodes in American thought in order to determine what makes Americans different from other sorts of people, what habits of thought inform their decisions, and what principles govern their understanding of the relation between religion and public life. This course typically involves making two off-campus visits to historical sites in Philadelphia. This course may be taken to satisfy the GEP variable course requirement in the Philosophical Anthropology area.
Prerequisites: PHL 154
Attributes: Philosoph Anthropol (New GEP), Undergraduate

PHL 268 The Self: East and West (3 credits)
Philosophers East and West, ancient and modern, have struggled with the question: What does it mean to be a Self? What does it mean to be genuinely myself in the world in which I find myself? And what are important erroneous as well as "accurate" ideas that have practical consequences in the experience of myself? The course is intended to be an introduction to, and survey of, four philosophical notions of the Self, from East and West, from antiquity to recent times: Buddhism, Confucianism, Stoicism and Existentialism. This course may be taken to satisfy the GEP variable course requirement in the Philosophical Anthropology area.
Prerequisites: PHL 154
Attributes: Philosoph Anthropol (New GEP), Undergraduate

PHL 269 Plato & Waking Life: on Being (3 credits)
In 399 B.C., Socrates famously said, "The unexamined life is not worth living." He made that statement in Plato's work The Apology. In addition to The Apology, we will read Plato's Republic, where Plato presents his idea of the best possible state, both internally and externally. In the second half of the course we will start by watching a 2002 animated film, Waking Life, by the contemporary director Richard Linklater. We will delve into further topics that present and question modes of conscious being. All the materials of the course are connected with each other via the metaphysical notion of conscious existence and the degree to which it provides access to reality. A question to consider in both parts of the course: Is it possible to grasp reality through self-examination? This course may be taken to satisfy the GEP variable course requirement in the Philosophical Anthropology area.
Prerequisites: PHL 154
Attributes: Philosoph Anthropol (New GEP), Undergraduate
PHL 270 Special Topics in Philosophy (3 credits)

PHL 272 Human Intelligence (3 credits)
There are few things in the modern developed world that get as much attention as human intelligence. Yet, for all the attention that intelligence receives, most people have thought surprisingly little about it: What is intelligence? Can it be learned? Is it possible for us to measure intelligence, and if so how? This course will examine these issues in depth, consider empirical findings, and explore philosophical issues that these findings and a variety of everyday practices surrounding intelligence raise. This course may be taken to satisfy the GEP variable course requirement in the Philosophical Anthropology area.
Prerequisites: PHL 154
Attributes: Philosoph Anthropol (New GEP), Undergraduate

PHL 274 From Athens to Philadelphia (3 credits)
This course investigates how a city like Philadelphia was built and considers how a city can be built justly. This involves inquiring into the nature of cities and city life in the United States and attempting to formulate criteria for a just city. Attention will be given to topics of urban planning, to philosophical theories of justice, and to the Great Migration, the movement in the 20th century of African-Americans from the rural south into cities of the northern states. Students will be required to make several trips into Center City in Philadelphia as part of this course. This course may be taken to satisfy the GEP variable course requirement in the Philosophical Anthropology area.
Prerequisites: PHL 154
Attributes: Ethics Intensive (New GEP), Philosoph Anthropol (New GEP)

PHL 278 Philosophy of MLK (3 credits)
While much attention has been given to King as an activist, little has been written about his philosophical development and the further implications of his philosophical positions. Much of what King preached, wrote, taught, believed, and lived has its origin in his engagement with philosophy. In his writings one can see him struggle with such thinkers as Marx, Hegel, Kant, Nietzsche and others as he attempts to make sense of and transform the human condition. King's struggle against the dehumanization of African Americans and the poor often led him to an interesting synthesis of theology and philosophy. For this reason we must also address the philosophical and emancipatory aspects of the works of Paul Tillich, Reinhold Niebuhr, Howard Thurman, and Walter Rauschenbusch. This course may be taken to satisfy the GEP variable course requirement in the Philosophical Anthropology area.
Prerequisites: PHL 154
Attributes: Philosoph Anthropol (New GEP), Undergraduate

PHL 280 Life and Death (3 credits)
The focus of the course is primarily metaphysical. The course begins with an examination of what it means to be alive. Historically, this is a question that has had philosophical and scientific roots, and we will examine both. Early ideas about life included the view of life as breath, a view that persists etymologically in words such as “spirit”. We will survey these ideas leading up to Enlightenment debates between vitalism and mechanism. After completing this survey, we will consider what is meant by a life, as a process extended in time. This leads directly to a consideration of human life, and the life of a person. In the death part of the course, we will deal with some fairly standard issues, including the Harm Thesis, and the question of whether it is ever or always rational to fear (or at least want to avoid) death. In addition, conceptions of the afterlife will be considered, in light of points previously made concerning the nature of a life in general. The conditions that would make for a meaningful afterlife will be considered in light of the question of what makes for a meaningful life in the first place. This course may be taken to satisfy the GEP variable course requirement in the Philosophical Anthropology area.
Prerequisites: PHL 154
Attributes: Philosoph Anthropol (New GEP), Undergraduate

PHL 284 Philosophy & Personal Relation (3 credits)
This course is a philosophical exploration of relationships between individuals, particularly friendship and love, but including sex, marriage, and family, as well as any other ways in which individuals relate. Building on theories of philosophers and other thinkers, this course may consider, for example, what makes personal relationships valuable, how personal life relates to social context, how personal relationships like love and friendship have changed over time, how gender, race, age and other differences figure in personal relationships. This course may be taken to satisfy the GEP variable course requirement in the Philosophical Anthropology area.
Prerequisites: PHL 154
Attributes: Philosoph Anthropol (New GEP), Undergraduate

PHL 286 Philosophy of Mental Illness (3 credits)
This course will explore philosophical questions at the heart of the fields of psychiatry, clinical psychology, and other mental health professions. Broadly, we will identify and critically evaluate assumptions that underlie labeling and treating certain individuals as “insane”/“mentally ill”/“mentally disordered.” We will use conceptual tools within the philosophy of mind, philosophy of science, philosophy of medicine, and moral philosophy to consider questions such as: What is insanity? Is it a disease or illness, “just like diabetes”? What is a disease in the first place? How do we define a “good” or “healthy” human life? What are the ethical implications of labeling people as mentally disordered? Might so-called mental disorders be better described as forms of “neurodiversity,” to be celebrated instead of cured? This course may be taken to satisfy the GEP variable course requirement in the Philosophical Anthropology area.
Prerequisites: PHL 154
Attributes: Philosoph Anthropol (New GEP), Undergraduate
PHL 288 Minds & Souls (3 credits)
This course surveys both the main issues and theories in contemporary philosophy of mind as well as traditional and contemporary conceptions of the soul. It philosophically examines the differences between these two approaches, and will inquire: Why have soul theories been largely eclipsed by other approaches until relatively recently? Why are a few philosophers taking another look at soul theories? How do broader worldview considerations inform the debates? The topic of “singularity” will also be covered. This course may be taken to satisfy the GEP variable course requirement in the Philosophical Anthropology area.

Prerequisites: PHL 154
Attributes: Philosoph Anthropol (New GEP), Undergraduate

PHL 292 People, Animals, and Language (3 credits)
Modern humans emerged about a hundred thousand years ago, which is only an instant in the several-billion-year history of life on earth. Yet, in that short time we became the dominant species and radically changed the natural order. One proposed answer to the question of how humans rose to prominence so rapidly and decisively is the faculty of language. But what is the origin of this faculty? Darwin’s 1871 book The Descent of Man argues that humans descended from other species not only biologically but also psychologically. That is, all of the mental abilities thought to make our species special—consciousness, cognition, emotion, morality, and language—evolved. These abilities did not come on the scene suddenly with the appearance of Homo sapiens but instead existed in varying degrees in our nonhuman and prehuman ancestors. Following Darwin’s lead in looking for the origin of language in animal communication including gestures, singing, and calls, researchers have continued to explore these links. In our course, we will start by examining the general connections between the minds of nonhuman species and humans, and then we will focus on the evolution and importance of human language. Readings include several chapters from Darwin’s Descent of Man; Sapiens: A Brief History of Humankind by Yuval Noah Harari; Kanzi: The Ape at the Brink of the Human Mind by Sue Savage-Rumbaugh; and The First Word: The Search for the Origin of Language, by Christine Kenneally.

Prerequisites: PHL 154
Attributes: Philosoph Anthropol (New GEP), Undergraduate

PHL 302 Philosophy of Race (3 credits)
Race has long played a prominent role in our social existence, and continues to do so even in what some have called a “post-racial society.” In this course, we will take a philosophical approach to understanding a set of related questions about race. What is the origin and basis for racial concepts? Is race socially constructed? Does it have a biological basis? Does racial discourse serve to further entrench racial divisions? How does racial oppression relate to other forms of oppression such as class- and gender-based oppression? What is “privilege”? What could it mean to say that a person has moral obligations deriving from harms which s/he has not personally brought about, and do persons ever have such obligations? We will also investigate issues such as affirmative action, racial solidarity, and the ways in which racial oppression differentially affects men and women. This course may be taken to satisfy the GEP variable course requirement in the Philosophical Anthropology area.

Prerequisites: PHL 154
Attributes: Africana Studies Course, Diversity Course (New GEP), Philosoph Anthropol (New GEP), Undergraduate

PHL 304 African Philosophy (3 credits)
Introduction to African philosophical approaches to: the problems of God, causality and chance, freedom, fate and destiny, the concepts of spirit, the philosophical wisdom of the African proverbs and the implications of Africa’s history for philosophy, with applications to Western thought. Selected Readings from modern African novels, essays in anthropology, traditional philosophical, religious and literary texts, and essays by contemporary African philosophers.

Prerequisites: PHL 154
Attributes: Africana Studies Course, Undergraduate

PHL 308 Asian Philosophies (3 credits)
This course will examine the concepts of self, nature, and society in the Asian philosophical paradigms as they have been articulated by contemporary Asian philosophers or in one or more historical traditions, including Indian philosophy, Chinese philosophy, and Japanese philosophy.

Prerequisites: PHL 154
Attributes: Asian Studies Course, Non-Western Studies (GEP), Philosoph Anthropol (New GEP), Undergraduate

PHL 310 Philosophy of Art (3 credits)
An examination of the philosophical questions arising from the human activity of creating and appreciating art (of all kinds: visual, musical, literary, etc.). Questions can include: the relation of perception and aesthetic appreciation to knowledge; the relation between emotion and belief, the relation between artist/creator, audience/spectator, and art work. How is art distinguished from nature as possible object of aesthetic appreciation? Must art even be aesthetic? If not, how is the category ‘art’ defined, and by whom?

Prerequisites: PHL 154
Attributes: Philosoph Anthropol (New GEP), Undergraduate

PHL 311 Philosophy of Law (3 credits)
Philosophy of Law examines some of the philosophical questions raised by law and legal systems, such as the nature and limits of law, the relation between law and morality, the challenges in applying the principles of constitutional, contract, criminal and tort law, and specific issues such as civil disobedience, equality and liberty, rights and responsibility, and punishment and excuses.

Prerequisites: PHL 154
Attributes: Ethics Intensive (New GEP), Philosoph Anthropol (New GEP), Undergraduate

PHL 312 Animal Ethics (3 credits)
Animal ethics refers to the moral and legal obligations of humans to nonhuman animals. To determine these obligations, we will give the first few weeks of the course to considering the shared mental faculties of humans and animals. Traditionally obligations in ethics and law are owed in ethics to persons, and so it is necessary to find out whether any nonhuman animals qualify as persons. Related to the issue of nonhuman animals qualifying as persons, we will examine several moral theories in modern Western philosophy: Kant’s theory of duty, the original and contemporary versions of utilitarianism, the social contract theory of John Rawls, and Martha Nussbaum’s capabilities theory. In addition we will investigate the current situation in law for the permitted treatment of animals.

Prerequisites: PHL 154
Attributes: Ethics Intensive (New GEP), Undergraduate
PHL 314 Topics in Phil & Medicine (3 credits)
This course examines critical philosophical questions that arise from the practice of medicine and medical research. Central topics include: confidentiality; informed consent; research on humans and non-human animals; stem cell and genetic research; reproductive and end-of-life issues; and the just distribution of health care resources. May be taken to satisfy the Ethics Intensive course requirement.
Prerequisites: PHL 154
Attributes: Ethics Intensive (New GEP), Undergraduate

PHL 316 Food and Justice (3 credits)
It’s indisputable that there are complex moral issues related to food: How should we respond to the problems of global hunger in the 21st. century? How should we respond to the fact that millions of children and adults on our planet are severely malnourished, if not facing starvation? Are our current means of food production sustainable? And do they threaten the health and well-being of future generations? What moral challenges are raised by the use of biotechnology in food production and processing? How can we provide safe, acceptable, nutritious food for all persons in such a way that is respectful to the welfare of all sentient beings? May be taken to satisfy the Ethics Intensive course requirement.
Prerequisites: PHL 154
Attributes: Ethics Intensive (New GEP), Undergraduate

PHL 318 Psycholinguistics (3 credits)
This course is an introduction to the study of how language is represented in the human mind and what processes are involved in language use, including producing, comprehending, and storing both spoken and written language. Together, we will explore questions such as the following: How do humans store and recognize words? How do we analyze speech? What processes are involved when we speak and read? We will study spontaneously-occurring speech errors and misperceptions and carry out experimental investigations on language production and comprehension. This course is open to students from all academic majors.
Prerequisites: PHL 154
Attributes: Undergraduate

PHL 320 Business, Society and Ethics (3 credits)
This course will discuss ethical issues in the practice of business. Topics will typically include ethical issues in marketing, finance, human resources, the environment, product liability, global sales and labor practices, etc. The course will address these issues in business practice through the lenses of traditional ethical theories. May be taken to satisfy the Ethics Intensive course requirement.
Prerequisites: PHL 154
Attributes: Ethics Intensive (New GEP), Undergraduate

PHL 322 Philosophy of Science (3 credits)
This course will cover topics such as: Methodological problems of observation, discovery, testing; the realistic import of models and theoretical entities; the use of paradigms in science; revolutionary periods in science; the relationship between science and philosophy; scientific determinism; science and human values.
Prerequisites: PHL 154
Attributes: Undergraduate

PHL 324 Philosophy of Social Sciences (3 credits)
This course will involve an analysis of the metaphysical conceptions of the human person presupposed by various theories of the social sciences. The course will also examine the relation of various criteria for knowing to the theories which issue from them. Other topics may include materialism, positivism, historicism, cultural relativism, and various epistemological questions.
Prerequisites: PHL 154
Attributes: Philosoph Anthropol (New GEP), Undergraduate

PHL 326 Philosophy of Sports (3 credits)
This course will investigate a variety of philosophical issues surrounding sports. The main focus will be on ethical topics such as the use of performance enhancing drugs, the appropriateness of institutions surrounding college athletics, and the use of government funds to subsidize stadiums and arenas for professional sports franchises. These issues will be investigated by employing common methods in moral philosophy, informed by empirical research in economics and a variety of other scientific disciplines.
Prerequisites: PHL 154
Attributes: Ethics Intensive (New GEP), Undergraduate

PHL 328 Philosophy and Evolution (3 credits)
After examining the theory of evolution via natural selection, the course will cover two important philosophical debates provoked by Darwin's theory. First, by situating human beings within a purely natural context, evolutionary theory aroused the wrath of theologians, who looked to God as the source of creation of both man and nature. An important part of the argument is over teleology, the ancient theory that everything in nature has a purpose, and the course takes up the teleological argument for the existence of God and the Darwinian refutation of it. This issue leads to considering the role of religion in a post-Darwinian world. Second, by situating human beings within a purely natural context, Darwin's theory called into question the specialness of humans in relation to animals. The debate here is whether nonhuman animals can be considered to possess cognition, language, and morality, or whether humans alone have these abilities.
Prerequisites: PHL 154
Attributes: Ethical Anthropol (New GEP), Undergraduate

PHL 330 Social and Political Phil (3 credits)
This course serves as an introduction to major works in the history of social and political philosophy. With a survey of important figures and texts from pre-modern, modern and contemporary periods, the course will address basic philosophical questions about the individual, society and the political order, such as: What is justice? In what sense is the political order a kind of community? What is the philosophical basis and justification of law and political authority? What are the social and political implications of a commitment to human freedom and equality? What are the necessary social conditions for realizing freedom, justice and human flourishing? Major authors might include Plato, Aristotle, Augustine, Aquinas, Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau, Hume, Smith, Kant, Marx, Mill, Arendt, and Rawls.
Prerequisites: PHL 154
Attributes: Ethics Intensive (New GEP), Philosoph Anthropol (New GEP), Undergraduate
PHL 332 Economic and Social Philosophy (3 credits)
God calls individuals and communities to be just. Philosophers argue that justice is a virtue necessary for all societies and communities. But what does justice, especially social justice, mean? The concept has a history which this course will examine by a careful reading of contemporary commentaries or classic texts (e.g., Old Testament, New Testament, Aristotle, Aquinas, Locke, Marx, and Catholic Social Teaching). Contemporary issues of the working poor and economic globalization will be examined in light of these texts.
Prerequisites: PHL 154
Attributes: Philosoph Anthropol (New GEP), Undergraduate

PHL 334 Ethics and Criminal Justice (3 credits)
This course will address ethical issues in the criminal justice system at both the theoretical and applied levels. Typical theoretical issues addressed might include the following: the relationship between law and morality; theories of punishment; conditions for the moral and/or legal responsibility of individuals; notions of procedural justice. Typical applied ethics issues might include the following: limits on the police use of deception and of deadly force; search and seizure rules; plea bargaining; mitigation and excuse defenses (e.g., insanity); mandatory sentencing, especially life without parole; capital punishment.
Prerequisites: PHL 154
Attributes: Ethics Intensive (New GEP), Undergraduate

PHL 336 Violence and Non-Violence (3 credits)
This course will focus on two levels: philosophical reflection on the moral dimensions of violence and nonviolence in general, and analysis of some specific moral issues concerning the resort to violence. Issues include the morality of war, especially under current conditions, and criminal punishment. Theories of nonviolence, and practical alternatives to violence, will be examined.
Prerequisites: PHL 154
Attributes: Ethics Intensive (New GEP), Undergraduate

PHL 338 Vio & Reconciliation in N. Ireland (3 credits)
The course will examine violence and reconciliation in Northern Ireland from both a philosophical and empirical perspective. Special attention will be paid to both the socio-historical roots of “The Troubles” and the moral context of discourses of retribution and forgiveness. During the stay in Northern Ireland, SJU students are guests of Corrymeela, an ecumenical community committed to the work of reconciliation by providing a “safe and shared space” where people can meet as Protestants and Catholics, British and Irish, rich and poor, and through open dialogue and interaction grow in trust with one another. Students will also visit selected sites in Derry and Belfast.
Prerequisites: PHL 154
Attributes: Ethics Intensive (New GEP), Undergraduate

PHL 340 Topics in Political Philosophy (3 credits)
This course will examine recent developments and debates in social and political philosophy. The emphasis of the course will be on contemporary discussions of a problem or set of problems, though some attention may be paid to the treatment of these problems in the history of philosophy. Topics to be examined might include political legitimacy, human rights, private property and distributive justice, just and unjust war, cosmopolitanism and patriotism, global justice, social unity and solidarity, toleration, multiculturalism, and the role of religion in politics.
Prerequisites: PHL 154
Attributes: Ethics Intensive (New GEP), Undergraduate

PHL 342 Dimensions of Freedom (3 credits)
Political philosopher Hannah Arendt claims that the ability to forgive and the ability to make and keep promises are at the center of human freedom, the capacity to interrupt automatic processes and begin something new. The experience of imprisonment will be an important focus of class discussion, and a starting point to examine multiple dimensions of human freedom. These include: negative vs. positive freedom; freedom of action vs. inner freedom (thought, imagination, will); political freedom vs. political oppression; the extent to which freedom in any of these senses is a good, worthy of the value we tend to give it. For each dimension, we will also ask what inner and or external conditions limit or even preclude its exercise.
Prerequisites: PHL 154
Attributes: Philosoph Anthropol (New GEP), Undergraduate

PHL 350 God in Recent Philosophy (3 credits)
The course examines three different conceptions of God: [1] Popular Theism: God conceived as similar to a human person – though incorporeal, unobservable, and possessed with superhuman attributes. This is the view of God held by most traditional theists. [2] Perfect Existence Theism: in which God is not a being of any kind, not even a personal being, even though personal language can be used in speaking of God. This is the view of God espoused by Thomas Aquinas; and [3] Panentheism: God conceived as inclusive of rather than independent of the world; the relation between God and the world being like the relation between the mind and its body. This view has been defended by Charles Hartshorne. In the case of each form of theism, questions arise as to how it deals with the problem of evil: how its view of God squares with the fact that the world contains vast amounts of moral and physical evil. Satisfies Signature core course requirement in Faith and Reason.
Prerequisites: PHL 154 and (THE 154 or THE 221)
Attributes: Faith-Reason Course (New GEP), Undergraduate

PHL 351 Reason, Faith, and Relativism (3 credits)
Intelligent, sincere, and equally well-informed people often strongly disagree. This seems especially true when it comes to religious beliefs. In that context, people will often appeal to “faith,” which some construe as belief without good reason. It is therefore important to ask what counts as good reason for holding a belief, and whether all beliefs are subject to the same standard. If two individuals hold contradictory beliefs, then certainly one of them is wrong, but might both be justified in holding those beliefs? If so, does this imply that truth is relative? This course deals with the general topic of rational belief formation in a world that is religiously, ideologically, and culturally diverse. Satisfies Signature core course requirement in Faith and Reason.
Prerequisites: PHL 154 and (THE 154 or THE 221)
Attributes: Faith-Reason Course (New GEP), Undergraduate

PHL 352 Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, Dostoevsky (3 credits)
Against the backdrop of classical metaphysics and human rationality, the sources and early development of existential themes are developed. Selected readings from Kierkegaard (Either/Or, Fear and Trembling), Nietzsche, (Thus Spoke Zarathustra, Beyond Good and Evil), and Dostoevsky (Notes from the Underground). Satisfies Signature core course requirement in Faith and Reason.
Prerequisites: PHL 154 and (THE 154 or THE 221)
Attributes: Faith-Reason Course (New GEP), Undergraduate
PHL 353 Philosophy, Science & Religion (3 credits)
A consideration of important issues in philosophy and philosophy of religion within the historicizing context of the scientific world-view of the times. Simultaneously, the course will consider the implications of the current (and changing) scientific world-view (genetics, astronomy, physics) for philosophical and religious reflection, including the idea of God. Philosophically as well as scientifically, the course will take its point of departure in Darwin and come back to consider the radical implications for philosophy and religion prophetically seen by his contemporary Nietzsche. Satisfies Signature core course requirement in Faith and Reason
Prerequisites: PHL 154 and (THE 154 or THE 221)
Attributes: Faith-Reason Course (New GEP), Undergraduate

PHL 354 Philosophy of Religion (3 credits)
Philosophical analysis of some of the following topics: religious experience, testimony, belief, human destiny, evil, knowledge of and language and arguments about God. Readings from classical and contemporary sources. Satisfies Signature core course requirement in Faith and Reason.
Prerequisites: PHL 154 and (THE 154 or THE 221)
Attributes: Faith-Reason Course (New GEP), Undergraduate

PHL 355 Phil Iss in Christian Doctrine (3 credits)
This course will investigate the coherence and plausibility of some of the most central teachings of Christianity. A sampling of potential topics includes: heaven and hell, the Trinity, Original Sin, the Atonement, and the Incarnation. There will also be a discussion of different methods of deciding when a teaching is essential to Christianity, and an exploration of various alternative interpretations of the doctrines. Satisfies Signature core course requirement in Faith and Reason.
Prerequisites: PHL 154 and (THE 154 or THE 221)
Attributes: Faith-Reason Course (New GEP), Undergraduate

PHL 356 Religious Diversity (3 credits)
Religious diversity is an inescapable fact. It is hard to imagine anyone thinking their religion (should they have one) to be the only one that exists or the only one capable of evincing commitment and devotion. The diversity of religions raises questions that are practical as well as theoretical. The fact of religious diversity has elicited various philosophical reactions, ranging from exclusivism to relativism to inclusivism. Satisfies Signature core course requirement in Faith and Reason.
Prerequisites: PHL 154 and (THE 154 or THE 221)
Attributes: Faith-Reason Course (New GEP), Undergraduate

PHL 357 Uses & Abs of Jesus in Modrnty (3 credits)
A representative survey of important 19th and 20th century philosophical and theological writings about Christianity and Jesus of Nazareth as Christ, with particular attention to the role of philosophy of religion and theology within modernity. The course will address a variety of statements and standards for articulating the meaning and identity of Jesus as Nazareth as: the Jesus as history, the Christ of faith, and the Christ-idea and archetype in Western tradition. And it will give special attention to the ways in which the texts chosen both reflect and transform the cultural, philosophical and religious contexts within which they appear. Satisfies Signature core course requirement in Faith and Reason.
Prerequisites: PHL 154 and (THE 154 or THE 221)
Attributes: Faith-Reason Course (New GEP), Honors Course, Undergraduate

PHL 358 Atheism & Prob of God (3 credits)
After a study of the classical arguments concerning God's existence, the course examines examples of 19th century atheism (Feuerbach, Marx, Nietzsche) and belief (Kierkegaard, Dostoevsky), and 20th century atheism (Sartre, Camus) and belief (Rahner, Marcel). Satisfies Signature core course requirement in Faith and Reason.
Prerequisites: PHL 154 and (THE 154 or THE 221)
Attributes: Faith-Reason Course (New GEP), Undergraduate

PHL 359 Existence of God (3 credits)
This course will focus on arguments for and against the existence of God. It will begin by examining the ontological, cosmological, and design arguments for the existence of God. Included will be a discussion of purported evidence for the existence of God from modern biology and cosmology. It will then examine arguments against the existence of God based on human and animal suffering, followed by arguments against the existence of God arising from the scarcity of credible miracle claims. Satisfies Signature core course requirement in Faith and Reason.
Prerequisites: PHL 154 and (THE 154 or THE 221)
Attributes: Faith-Reason Course (New GEP), Undergraduate

PHL 360 Philosophy of God in Aquinas (3 credits)
This course will examine the philosophical writings of Thomas Aquinas on the existence and nature of God. Topics include the procedure of philosophical theology, the methodological problem of attaining true knowledge of God, Aquinas's "five ways" of demonstrating the existence of God, and arguments for the various "attributes" of God: simplicity, perfection, goodness, infinity, ubiquity, unchangeableness, eternity, and oneness. Aquinas's innovative method of analogical predication will be employed to offer a philosophical interpretation of core theistic assertions that God has life and knowledge that God wills and loves, that God exercises providence both justly and mercifully, that God is all-powerful and perfect happiness. This course may be taken to satisfy the major requirement for a course in the ancient or medieval period. Satisfies Signature core course requirement in Faith and Reason.
Prerequisites: PHL 154 and (THE 154 or THE 221)
Attributes: Faith-Reason Course (New GEP), Undergraduate

PHL 362 Faith & Reason in Kantian Phil (3 credits)
This course begins with an examination of two types of traditional arguments for the existence of God: those based on putative grounds of reason and those based on putative grounds of experience. The questionable success of such proofs will raise several questions: what is the nature of human reason, what is the nature of faith as a distinct epistemic attitude, and how should we think about the relation between them? We shall then pursue Kant's systematic answers to these questions with the hope that they will give us a workable and empowering alternative to the arguments studied earlier in the course. Possible further topics for the course include (1) the possibility of understanding the history of arguments for God's existence as a progressive development of reason's awareness and articulation of its needs, and (2) the application of Kant's analysis of reason to some fundamental claims and themes of the Christian religion in order to show how they can be understood as having a basis in reason. Satisfies Signature core course requirement in Faith and Reason.
Prerequisites: PHL 154 and (THE 154 or THE 221)
Attributes: Faith-Reason Course (New GEP), Undergraduate
PHL 364 God, Evil and Hiddenness (3 credits)
This course will examine recent arguments against the existence of God based on the problem of evil and the problem of divine hiddenness. (The problem of evil is the problem of reconciling God's existence with the presence and severity of suffering in the world, and the problem of divine hiddenness is the issue of understanding why God would provide so few clear and dramatic signs of his presence.) Although no prior mathematical knowledge will be presupposed, as part of the process of understanding the arguments students will also be expected to master some basics of probability theory. Satisfies Signature core course requirement in Faith and Reason.
Prerequisites: PHL 154 and (THE 154 or THE 221)
Attributes: Faith-Reason Course (New GEP), Undergraduate

PHL 365 Christianity and Evidence (3 credits)
This course will investigate several topics surrounding Christianity and evidence. The course is divided into two sections. The first is an exploration of the question of whether we have good evidence for Christianitity. Included in this first unit will be a discussion of both scriptural evidence and the evidence provided by purported miracles in the modern world. The second section will examine the relationship between belief and evidence, in an attempt to understand whether Christian belief (and religious belief more generally) should be based on evidence in the same way as many other kinds of beliefs. Satisfies Signature core course requirement in Faith and Reason.
Prerequisites: PHL 154 and (THE 154 or THE 221)
Attributes: Faith-Reason Course (New GEP), Undergraduate

PHL 367 Postmodernism & Religious Faith (3 credits)
This course will study the ways in which postmodern thought both challenges the notion of God as a foundation, and offers alternatives. Questions include: Is postmodernist suspicion an ally of religious faith, or its deadly enemy? How can anyone doubt the value of foundations and still speak meaningfully of God, or religious faith? And how successful is postmodern thinking in this bid to rework the connections traditionally made between faith and philosophy?
Prerequisites: PHL 154 and (THE 154 or THE 221)
Attributes: Faith-Reason Course (New GEP), Undergraduate

PHL 370 Special Topics in Philosophy (3 credits)

PHL 395 Junior Seminar (3 credits)

PHL 401 Ancient Philosophy (3 credits)
What is the nature of ultimate reality? What standards must our beliefs meet if they are to qualify as knowledge? Is the soul distinct from the body, and what sort of trait is virtue? These are among the most basic questions of philosophy, and they took shape originally in the ancient world of Greece and Rome. This class provides a critical survey of the questions and possible answers provided by the founders of the western philosophical tradition. Philosophers discussed include the Presocratics, Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, the Stoics.
Prerequisites: PHL 154
Attributes: Ancient Studies Course, Undergraduate

PHL 402 Plato and Aristotle (3 credits)
A focused examination of the major ethical, metaphysical, and political theories of Plato and Aristotle. The class will cover the ideas of these two philosophers on such topics as the nature of virtue, the soul, change in the physical world, substance, the best political regime, and the relation between political activity and philosophy.
Prerequisites: PHL 154
Attributes: Ancient Studies Course, Undergraduate

PHL 404 Love, Friendship, Ancient World (3 credits)
This course explores a number of descriptions of love and friendship found in works of literature and philosophy from ancient Greece and Rome. Two topics in particular will be studied in these works on love and friendship. The first is the connection between friendship, justice, and politics that is asserted in a number of ancient works. The second is the presentation of erotic love as a form of divine madness that can be both dangerous and beneficial. Some authors to be read include Sophocles, Euripides, Plato, Aristotle, Cicero, and Catullus. This course may be taken to satisfy the GEP variable course requirement in the Philosophical Anthropology area.
Prerequisites: PHL 154
Attributes: Ancient Studies Course, Philanthrop (New GEP), Undergraduate

PHL 408 Augustine, Politics, Self (3 credits)
Fifteen centuries after his death, Augustine of Hippo (354-430) remains one of the most influential figures in the western philosophical tradition. As a philosopher and rhetorician who later became a Christian bishop, Augustine did a great deal of thinking and writing about social and political questions. What is the place of the individual in society? What does it mean to be a Christian and a citizen? How is politics related to the common good of society? How should we think about issues like justice, war, and peace? This course will examine these themes and others as they appear in two of Augustine's major works, the Confessions and the City of God, as well as some shorter letters concerned with social and political questions. Coming to understand more fully the historical context of Augustine's work will be one of the goals of the course, but no prior knowledge of his life and times is required. This course may be taken to satisfy the Philosophical Anthropology requirement of the GEP.
Prerequisites: PHL 154
Attributes: Philanthrop (New GEP), Undergraduate

PHL 410 Medieval Philosophy (3 credits)
An introduction to medieval philosophy through a study of its most important thinkers (e.g., Augustine, Boethius, Anselm, Aquinas) and its central questions (e.g., the existence and nature of God, the problem of evil, the compatibility of human freedom and divine foreknowledge, the limitations of human reason, the immortality of the soul, happiness, virtue, natural law).
Prerequisites: PHL 154
Attributes: Undergraduate

PHL 412 The Philosophy of Aquinas (3 credits)
A close examination of Thomas Aquinas's writings on topics such as proofs for the existence of God, the nature of God, creation, providence, the relation of body and soul, immortality of the soul, human knowing, happiness, virtue, natural law.
Prerequisites: PHL 154
Attributes: Philanthrop (New GEP), Undergraduate

PHL 420 Early Modern Philosophy (3 credits)
A critical analysis of the rationalist and empiricist movements of the 17th and 18th centuries. Emphasis will be placed on the epistemological and metaphysical theories of the following thinkers: Descartes, Spinoza, Leibniz, Locke, Berkeley, and Hume.
Prerequisites: PHL 154
Attributes: Undergraduate
PHL 428 The Enlightenment & Its Critics (3 credits)
This course provides a survey of the "critical tradition" in philosophy – a tradition seeking to ascertain the nature and limits of human reason in the hopes of moving toward social and cultural progress. The course will begin with the critical tradition's roots in the thinkers of the French and German Enlightenments of the 18th century, continue with three of the Enlightenment's major critics – Marx, Nietzsche, and Freud – and culminate in the critical social theories of the Frankfurt School and Michel Foucault in the 20th century. In the end, the course will consider the tenability of the Enlightenment project and its hopes for the future as well as the status of critical social theory today.
Prerequisites: PHL 154
Attributes: Philosoph Anthropol (New GEP), Undergraduate

PHL 430 Kant's Critique of Pure Reason (3 credits)
In this course we shall pursue a close study and critical assessment of Kant's highly original theory of transcendental idealism as it is presented in his seminal work, the Critique of Pure Reason. Specific topics will include, but are not limited to, the nature of human reason, the nature of experience, the possibility of synthetic a priori knowledge, the relation between mind and world, the limits of human knowledge, transcendental idealism vs. transcendental realism, varieties of skepticism and responses to them, self-knowledge, the problem of free will, and philosophical method. We shall begin the course by sketching some of the problems that Kant inherited from early modern philosophy and to which he is responding.
Prerequisites: PHL 154
Attributes: Undergraduate

PHL 432 German Idealism (3 credits)
In this course we shall explore the views of the major thinkers of the German idealist period—namely, Kant, Fichte, Schelling, and Hegel—with respect to such topics as the nature of human reason, knowledge and the self, the relation between mind and world, the unconditioned, freedom and morality, the nature and role of art, God and religion, and reason in history. We shall begin the course by sketching the philosophical context and a set of problems that helped motivate the movement as a whole. Some attention may also be paid to some of the lesser-known figures of the period, such as Reinhold, Jacobi, and Maimon.
Prerequisites: PHL 154
Attributes: Undergraduate

PHL 434 Existentialism (3 credits)
A study of the Existentialist movement, from its 19th century origins in Kierkegaard and Nietzsche and the Phenomenology of Husserl to its most prominent 20th century representatives, including Heidegger, Jaspers, Sartre and Camus.
Prerequisites: PHL 154
Attributes: Philosoph Anthropol (New GEP), Undergraduate

PHL 436 French Existentialism (3 credits)
A study of major themes, problems, and methodological considerations in the writings of French existentialist philosophers (e.g., Marcel, Beauvoir, Sartre, Camus and Merleau-Ponty).
Prerequisites: PHL 154
Attributes: Philosoph Anthropol (New GEP), Undergraduate

PHL 438 Kierkegaard, Mozart & Desire (3 credits)
Using Kierkegaard's famous analysis of desire as presented in Mozart operas as a point of departure, the course will survey the analysis and theories of desire in Western thought from Plato to Freud and contemporary psychoanalytic theory.
Prerequisites: PHL 154
Attributes: Philosoph Anthropol (New GEP), Undergraduate

PHL 440 Phenomenology (3 credits)
A study of the philosophical background, methods, and results of the phenomenological movement in 20th century European thought. After examining a cluster of philosophical problems that gave rise to the movement, we shall focus mainly, though not exclusively, on the work of Husserl, Heidegger, and Sartre. In addition to our study of philosophical method, we shall explore phenomenological accounts of various matters such as consciousness, perception, hermeneutics, the existential nature of human beings, transcendence, self-deception, and otherness.
Prerequisites: PHL 154
Attributes: Undergraduate

PHL 442 Nietzsche, Wagner, Cult of Genius (3 credits)
An examination of the in/famous new philosophical term "genius" in the 19th century, from its origins to its emergence as a philosophical category. What does it mean for a human being to be recognized as a genius? Or to aspire to be a genius? By the mid-19th century, the controversial musical genius Wagner was highly influenced in his work by the works of Schopenhauer. He in turn influenced Nietzsche who subsequently turned violently anti-Wagner and postulated the term "Uebermensch", for a new kind of philosophical genius for the late 19th century.
Prerequisites: PHL 154
Attributes: Philosoph Anthropol (New GEP), Undergraduate

PHL 446 Feminist Epistemology (3 credits)
Feminist challenges to traditional ways of thinking in epistemology, philosophy of science, metaphysics and ethics. Examination of feminist criticisms regarding: the nature and justification of knowledge; dominant conceptions of rationality and objectivity; various dualistic ontologies; and prevailing conceptions of the self. Consideration of possible gender-bias in traditional philosophical methods.
Prerequisites: PHL 154
Attributes: Undergraduate

PHL 450 American Philosophy (3 credits)
Philosophy in the American context: the "American experience", historical and contemporary; philosophical concerns that arise in that context; the classical American philosophers—Edwards, Peirce, James, Royce, Dewey, and Whitehead. Central concerns: the meaning of experience; scientific inquiry as a model of knowing; the meaning of religion and religious experience; the problems of value (moral and aesthetic); the problem of community.
Prerequisites: PHL 154 and (THE 154 or THE 221)
Attributes: American Studies Course, Faith-Reason Course (New GEP), Undergraduate

PHL 461 Contemporary Thomism (3 credits)
St. Thomas Aquinas, one of the greatest philosopher-theologians of the Middle Ages, employed both faith and reason to conceive a remarkably comprehensive and nuanced understanding of reality. Recently, some philosophers have been returning to the works of Aquinas and attempting to transpose his vision to meet the distinctive intellectual challenges of our own quite different age. After providing an introduction to Aquinas' thought, this course will examine in depth the writings of one or more contemporary Thomists (e.g., Bernard Lonergan, Jacques Maritain, Etienne Gilson, Karl Rahner, Pierre Rousselot, Joseph Marechal, Josef Pieper).
Prerequisites: PHL 154
Attributes: Undergraduate
PHL 470 Special Topics in Philosophy (3 credits)

A critical examination of key problems in contemporary epistemology. Problems relating to the analysis of knowledge and justification will be examined. Topics may include: knowledge and warrant; knowledge closure; skepticism of various forms; foundationalism, coherentism, reliabilism, contextualism; virtue epistemology; internalism and externalism; the role of formal (probabilistic) models in epistemology.

Prerequisites: PHL 154
Attributes: Undergraduate

PHL 471 Problems in the Theory of Know (3 credits)

A critical examination of key problems in contemporary epistemology. Problems relating to the analysis of knowledge and justification will be examined. Topics may include: knowledge and warrant; knowledge closure; skepticism of various forms; foundationalism, coherentism, reliabilism, contextualism; virtue epistemology; internalism and externalism; the role of formal (probabilistic) models in epistemology.

Prerequisites: PHL 154
Attributes: Undergraduate

PHL 473 Philosophy of Mind (3 credits)

A critical examination of metaphysical and epistemological issues in the contemporary philosophy of mind. These issues include the problem of reductionism, the problems of intentionality and mental representation, personal identity, conceptual foundations of psychology, and the possibility of artificial minds.

Prerequisites: PHL 154
Attributes: Undergraduate

PHL 474 Language and Thought (3 credits)

Rene Descartes held a view called “mind-body dualism,” according to which human persons are fundamentally thinking substances that are somehow causally linked to particular physical substances: bodies. One of his reasons for holding this view was that he believed that the human faculty of language could never, even in principle, be adequately explained by any purely physical description of things. Language, as he saw it, is evidence of mind, and indeed he believed that where language is absent, mind is also absent. Creatures without language are, in Descartes’ view, mindless organic automata. Few today would defend Descartes’ view in all details, but the general sense that language is an important “mark of the mental” has not gone away. Instead, it has given rise to a cluster of narrower but interesting and important questions: Are certain kinds of mental states impossible without language? Does the specific language that we speak influence our thoughts in some way? Do our innate tendencies of thought force our languages to take certain forms?

Prerequisites: PHL 154
Attributes: Undergraduate

PHL 475 Language and Meaning (3 credits)

This course examines the core issues in the philosophy of language, including the nature of meaning, problems of reference, and the relation between language and thought. Further issues include the status of propositions, the problem of whether linguistic competence implies innate knowledge of some sort, the nature of metaphor, the private language problem, the indeterminacy of translation and language as symbolic capital.

Prerequisites: PHL 154
Attributes: Undergraduate

PHL 476 The Work of Daniel Dennett (3 credits)

Daniel Dennett is one of the most influential living philosophers. A protégé of Gilbert Ryle, Dennett has had an impact that goes beyond the disciplinary boundaries of philosophy, making him one of the few contemporary philosophers whose name and work are well known to the general educated public. The heart of Dennett’s work is in the philosophy of mind, where he defends an eliminative version of functionalism, arguing that many terms that philosophers argue with, and about, have little or no meaning. Such terms include “consciousness,” “qualia,” and “mental representation.” In addition, Dennett has tried to show how his specifically philosophical views on the mind can shed light on questions in comparative psychology, ethology, and other sciences. He has also written a well-received book on Darwinism, arguing that Darwinian theory is a “universal acid” that, correctly understood, dissolves many long standing problems and superstitions. This course will survey Dennett’s body of work, and the responses of his critics, on a wide range of topics.

Prerequisites: PHL 154
Attributes: Undergraduate

PHL 481 Analytic Philosophy (3 credits)

An introduction to the language-oriented way of approaching philosophical issues that is widely practiced in English-speaking countries and, increasingly, elsewhere. The course will focus on a major concern of this philosophical tradition: questions concerning the nature of language itself. What makes a series of sounds or inscriptions “meaningful” and able to affect interpersonal communication? Must language “represent” the world in order to be meaningful? Does failure to grasp the underlying logic of our language lead to philosophical confusion?

Prerequisites: PHL 154
Attributes: Undergraduate

PHL 493 Independent Research in Phil (3 credits)

PHL 494 Independent Research in Phil (3 credits)

PHL 495 Senior Seminar (3 credits)

Readings, research, and discussion concerning a common theme; a paper is required. Senior majors; minors with chair’s permission. Does not fulfill the philosophy GEP.

Prerequisites: PHL 154
Attributes: Undergraduate