DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY

http://www.uvm.edu/~phildept/

The Philosophy Department offers undergraduate instruction in all major areas of philosophy, including historical and contemporary approaches to the discipline. In addition to an understanding of substantive philosophical issues, a philosophy education provides a student with strong analytical skills, the ability to read complex material critically, and the ability to express oneself clearly, both orally and in writing.

Philosophy is a quest to understand the fundamental truths of life, such as the nature of right and wrong and the relationship between the mental and the physical. The University’s Philosophy faculty consistently rates among the nation’s top six in schools that do not offer graduate studies in the discipline, according to the Philosophical Gourmet Report, the preeminent ranking of philosophy programs in the English-speaking world.

The Department’s strengths include faculty outstanding in their fields; small, discussion-based classes taught by these faculty members; close interactions between students and their professors; and a diverse range of courses and research opportunities. Faculty interests range from metaphysics, medical ethics, feminism and philosophy of law to free will and determinism, Chinese philosophy, and metaethics. Philosophy majors develop skills applicable to professions such as law, medicine, public policy, teaching, business, journalism, politics, and many other fields.

MAJORS

PHILOSOPHY MAJOR

Philosophy B.A.

MINORS

PHILOSOPHY MINOR

Philosophy

Courses

PHIL 010. Introduction to Philosophy. 3 Credits.
Courses introducing philosophical argument and analysis in a variety of ways. Content, readings and assignments vary by section. Not repeatable for credit. Credit not awarded for more than one Philosophy course numbered below 100, except that credit will be given for PHIL 013 in addition to one other course numbered below 100.

PHIL 013. Introduction to Logic. 3 Credits.
Study of the basic principles of deductive inference.

PHIL 095. Special Topics. 1-18 Credits.
See Schedule of Courses for specific titles.

PHIL 096. Special Topics. 1-18 Credits.
See Schedule of Courses for specific titles.

PHIL 101. History of Ancient Philosophy. 3 Credits.
Study of the works of the Pre-Socratics, Plato, Aristotle, and their successors. Prerequisite: One Philosophy course.

PHIL 102. History of Modern Philosophy. 3 Credits.
Study of works of the major philosophers of the 17th and 18th centuries: Descartes, Spinoza, Leibniz, Locke, Berkeley, Hume, Kant, and others. Prerequisite: One Philosophy course.

PHIL 105. History of Medieval Philosophy. 3 Credits.
Study of works of such major philosophical figures as Augustine, Anselm, Abelard, Aquinas, Duns Scotus, and William of Ockham. Prerequisite: PHIL 101 is recommended.

PHIL 108. Plato. 3 Credits.
A survey of Plato’s works, including the “early,” “middle,” and parts of the late” dialogues. Emphasis will be laid on reading the dialogues themselves. Prerequisite: One course in Philosophy or in Classics (Greek culture or Greek). Cross-listed with: CLAS 161.

PHIL 111. Philosophy of Mind. 3 Credits.
Inquiry into such topics as consciousness, the relation between the mental (beliefs, sensations, etc.) and the physical (chemicals, neurons, etc.) and how minds represent things. Prerequisite: One course in Philosophy or Instructor permission.

PHIL 112. Philosophy of Science. 3 Credits.
Introduction to major philosophical problems raised by science. Typical topics: the nature of scientific inference, the structure of theories, causation, explanation, and scientific change. Prerequisite: One course in Philosophy or two courses in any natural science.

PHIL 118. Metaphysics. 3 Credits.
A study of such topics as vagueness, the nature of time, persistence of objects and people through change and whether numbers or properties exist. Prerequisite: One Philosophy course.

PHIL 120. Phil of Cognitive Science. 3 Credits.
An examination of philosophical issues concerning the nature of the human mind raised by the cognitive sciences (psychology, computer science, linguistics, and neuroscience). Prerequisite: One course in Philosophy or Instructor permission (students with relevant background are encouraged to seek permission).

PHIL 121. D2: Chinese Philosophy I. 3 Credits.
Study of the Classical Schools of Chinese thought, including Confucianism, Taoism, Mohism, and Legalism. Prerequisite: One course in Philosophy, Religion, or Asian Studies.

PHIL 135. Philosophy of Religion. 3 Credits.
Typical topics: the nature of religion, the concept of God, the grounds for belief in God, mortality, truth, and revelation. Historical and contemporary sources. Prerequisite: One Philosophy course.

PHIL 140. Social & Political Philosophy. 3 Credits.
Examination of some major figures in the history of social and political philosophy, focusing on issues such as political obligation, rights, property, and justice. Prerequisite: One Philosophy course.
PHIL 142. Philosophy of Law I. 3 Credits.
Analysis of the nature of law, the relation between law and morality, legal obligation, and the judicial decision. Prerequisite: One Philosophy course or POLS 041. Cross-listed with: POLS 143.

PHIL 143. Philosophy of Law II. 3 Credits.
Problems of liberty, e.g. freedom of expression, privacy, paternalism; scope and limits of the criminal law; philosophy of punishment; selected problems in criminal justice, e.g. plea bargaining; preventive detention. Prerequisites: One Philosophy course or POLS 041. Cross-listed with: POLS 144.

PHIL 144. Phil Problems in Medicine. 3 Credits.
Such issues as the physician-patient relationship, allocation of organs for transplantation, reproductive assistance technology and genetic engineering, the justice of the health-care delivery system. Prerequisite: One Philosophy course.

PHIL 145. Killing Things. 3 Credits.
It is sometimes morally permissible to kill things: you can kill a mosquito biting you, for example. What else is permissible to kill? When? Prerequisite: One Philosophy course or Instructor permission.

PHIL 152. Philosophy of Art. 3 Credits.
A consideration of some leading theories of art, and their application to problems of art as they appear in music, literature, painting, and in the general criticism of the arts. Prerequisite: One Philosophy course.

PHIL 160. Continental Philosophy. 3 Credits.
An explanation of such movements in Continental philosophy as phenomenology, existentialism, and structuralism and such figures as Husserl, Heidegger, Sartre, and Foucault. Prerequisite: One Philosophy course.

PHIL 170. Feminism: Theories and Issues. 3 Credits.
Theories of libertarianism, liberalism, and egalitarianism; application to the analysis and evaluation of social issues of contemporary interest, such as abortion and affirmative action. Prerequisite: One course in Philosophy. Cross-listed with: GSWS 120.

PHIL 195. Intermediate Special Topics. 1-18 Credits.
See Schedule of Courses for specific titles.

PHIL 196. Intermediate Special Topics. 1-18 Credits.
See Schedule of Courses for specific titles.

PHIL 197. Readings & Research. 1-6 Credits.
Prerequisite: Instructor permission.

PHIL 198. Readings & Research. 1-6 Credits.
Prerequisite: Instructor permission.

PHIL 205. Seminar: Maj Phil Author/School. 3 Credits.
Study of major philosophical texts by a single author or school of thought. May be repeated for credit when different authors are studied. Prerequisite: One Philosophy course at 100-level.

PHIL 211. Phil of Mind: Advanced Topics. 3 Credits.
In-depth study of topics like consciousness, the relation between the mental (belief, sensations, etc.) and the physical (chemicals, neurons, etc.) and how minds represent things. Prerequisite: One Philosophy course at the 100-level.

PHIL 217. Philosophy of Language. 3 Credits.
Philosophical study of the nature of language. Prerequisite: One Philosophy course at 100-level. Recommended: PHIL 013.

PHIL 218. Metaphysics: Advanced Topics. 3 Credits.
In-depth study of such topics as vagueness, the nature of time, persistence of objects and people through change, and whether numbers or properties exist. Prerequisite: One Philosophy course at the 100-level.

PHIL 219. Epistemology: Advanced Topics. 3 Credits.
In-depth study of select topics concerning theories of knowledge and related concepts such as belief, truth, rationality, evidence, perception, and memory. Prerequisite: One Philosophy course at the 100-level.

PHIL 221. D2: Topics in Chinese Phil. 3 Credits.
Detailed examination of a classical Chinese philosophical text or school. Prerequisite: PHIL 121.

PHIL 235. Topics in Phil of Religion. 3 Credits.
Advanced study of such issues as the metaphysics of religion, the epistemology of religious belief, philosophy and faith, religion and science, and religion and ethics. (May be repeated for credit when topic is significantly different and with departmental approval.) Prerequisite: PHIL 101, PHIL 102 or PHIL 135.

PHIL 240. Contemporary Ethical Theory. 3 Credits.
In-depth study of metaethics, emphasizing recent work. Topics include moral objectivity, moral language, moral epistemology, and the relationship between morality and reasons. Prerequisite: One Philosophy course at the 100-level.

PHIL 241. Contemp Social & Political Phil. 3 Credits.
The ideas of leading contemporary philosophers concerning freedom, tolerance, economic justice, international relations, and the relationship between the individual, the community and the state. Prerequisite: PHIL 140, PHIL 142, PHIL 143, or PHIL 144.

PHIL 242. Justice & Equality. 3 Credits.
An examination of contemporary normative theories of distributive justice and equality. Prerequisites: POLS 041 and either a 100-level POLS course, or PHIL 140, PHIL 142, PHIL 143, or PHIL 144. Cross-listed with: POLS 241.

PHIL 244. Phil of Medicine: Adv Topics. 3 Credits.
In-depth study of issues in contemporary medical ethics such as genetic engineering, cloning, embryonic stem cell research, abortion and physician-assisted suicide. Prerequisite: One Philosophy course at 100-level.
PHIL 265. American Philosophy. 3 Credits.
The thought of such leading American philosophers as Peirce, James, Royce, Santayana, Dewey, and Whitehead. Prerequisites: PHIL 101, PHIL 102.

PHIL 295. Advanced Special Topics. 1-18 Credits.
See Schedule of Courses for specific titles.

PHIL 296. Advanced Special Topics. 1-18 Credits.
See Schedule of Courses for specific titles.

PHIL 297. Adv Readings & Research. 1-6 Credits.
Independent study with an instructor on a specific philosopher or philosophical problem. Prerequisites: Instructor permission; an appropriate 200-level course in Philosophy.

PHIL 298. Adv Readings & Research. 1-6 Credits.
Independent study with an instructor on a specific philosopher or philosophical problem. Prerequisites: Instructor permission; an appropriate 200-level course in Philosophy.