Phil 0002:
Introduction to Philosophy

The major types of philosophical thought and the central problems of philosophy are presented through study of some classic texts of the great philosophers. Offered each term. (May be used to satisfy the second half of the college writing requirement by students with credit for ENG 1.)

Phil 0002:
Morality and the Wayward Mind
Amelie Rorty and Ian Blaustein

Why is there such a fuss about morality? Why are we exhorted to live according to its ideals and precepts? If living morally were as hard-wired, as natural as breathing or speaking, we would not need to praise its benefits or develop sanctions for its violation. To be sure, we might still analyze its content and conditions. But the prevalence and strength of the rhetoric of morality suggest there is some strong resistance to its strictures and performance.

We’ll first explore the dark side of some virtues: courage as bravado, integrity as moral narcissism, love and its burdens; then we’ll turn to the bright side of trouble: the advantages of deception and self-deception, the power of envy and greed, the lures of moral weakness, the wisdom of ambivalence. We’ll then examine the many distinctive—and often conflicting—functions of morality as a social practice: to set prohibitions, formulate ideals, define duties and obligations, characterize virtues. We’ll examine the role that different moral theories ascribe to their respective understanding of ‘reason’ and ‘rationality’ before turning to the limitations and modifications of those theories expressed by Nietzsche.

Phil 0003:
Language & Mind
Brian Epstein

Are we the only species with minds? Do animals — dolphins, chimpanzees, birds, spiders — have minds, or do they just have brains? We are the only species with language. Some animals have what might be called proto-languages, much simpler signaling systems, but these do not seem to give those species the spectacular boost in intelligence that language gives us. It is generally agreed that language makes our minds very different from animal minds, but how, and why? Are we the only conscious species? Are we the only self-conscious species? What is it like to be a bat? Is it like anything to be a spider?

In the first half of the course we will explore fundamental questions about the nature of minds. What does it take for something to have a mind? We will discuss the empirical research that has recently shed new light on the questions about animal minds, while sharpening philosophical questions about the nature of minds in general.

In the second half of the course, we will look at human language, its structure and evolution, and the effects it has on our minds. We will also explore "linguistic relativity": do people in other cultures think differently than we do? Is there a relation between the language we speak and how we think?

The course has no prerequisites, and it is particularly appropriate for students who are not likely to major in philosophy but want to get a substantial introduction to the specific philosophical issues
Course Goals: 1) Be familiar with basic facts about human language and how we study it (Languages & Language). 2) Have a working understanding of how languages are structured and the cognitive processes that subserve linguistic knowledge (Linguistic Theory). 3) Have a beginning understanding of how nurture and nature influence linguistic knowledge (Language Acquisition). 4) Understand how and why speech varies across individuals and time (Language & Society).

Phil 0020:
Introduction to Civic Studies

Civic Studies is an interdisciplinary field of study that focuses on critical reflection, ethical thinking, and action for social change. People who think and act together to improve society must address problems of collective action (how to get members to work together) and deliberation (how to reason together about contested values). They must understand how power is organized and how it operates within and between societies. They must grapple with social conflict, violence, and other obstacles to peaceful cooperation. When tensions arise within a group, people face questions of justice and fairness, and they must confront questions about appropriate relationships to outsiders of all types. This introductory course explores ethical, political, and theological frameworks for understanding how people can and should organize themselves to improve societies. Readings are drawn from philosophy and political theory, economics, the history of social movements, and other disciplines. This course provides theoretical grounding for Civic Studies majors and for other students interested in social change.

Phil 0024:
Introduction to Ethics
David Denby

At this moment, like every other, you're faced with a question: What should I do? People often say that, in general, what you should do is help others. But then they would, wouldn't they? Perhaps what you really should do is always act in your own self-interest. Perhaps that is what everyone else is already doing anyway (despite what they say). Some people say that you should promote the values of your community or society. But some societies have vile values. Indeed, don't the values of our society need at least a little adjustment? Anyway, why should the fact that a society is yours mean that you should promote its values, especially if doing so is contrary to your self-interest? Some people say that you should act according to God's will. But what does God will, exactly? And surely we should obey Him only if He is good and commands us to do what is right. Yet that seems to mean that morality is independent of Him. Some philosophers have argued that whether you should do an action depends entirely on its consequences (compared to those of its alternatives). But should you really ignore the past? Doesn't just punishment, for instance, depend on whether the person is actually guilty -- a fact about the past?

Other philosophers have focused instead on the motives behind an action, in particular on whether you're acting out of respect for others (and yourself). Still others have argued that whether you should do an action depends on a combination of these and perhaps other factors. But each of these suggestions faces problems: What on earth is “respecting others”? What is it to “combine” the various factors? Self-interest then? Maybe, but even self-interest is a tricky notion. Something is not in your self-interest simply because you want it, as every smoker knows. And maybe our interests, or at least the best means for achieving them, are mutually interdependent: perhaps the best way for you to get what you want depends on what I do and vice versa. We will discuss all this in this course. After a brief
introductory discussion of logic and the nature of ethical theory we will spend most of the semester critically evaluating a number of normative ethical theories. These will include various forms of Relativism, religiously-based theories, Utilitarianism, Kantianism, Egoism and Social Contract theories. We will also discuss self-interest, values, and other matters. Finally, we will discuss how to apply what we’ve learned to an issue of contemporary moral concern – probably abortion.

**Phil 0033:**
**Logic**  
Susan Russinoff

How can one tell whether a deductive argument succeeds in establishing its conclusion? What distinguishes good deductive arguments from bad ones? Questions such as these will be addressed in this course. We will discuss what a formal language is, how arguments in English are to be expressed in various formal languages, and what is gained from so expressing them. We will cover sentential logic, first-order predicate logic, identity theory, definite descriptions, and metatheory. Satisfies MATH requirement

**Phil 0045:**
**War & Terrorism**  
Lionel McPherson

The so-called “War on Terror” prompted renewed thinking about the ethics of war. Global terrorism is supposed to be radically different from conventional forms of warfare and even from domestic terrorism. From this perspective, new or revised justifications for why, where, and how states fight global terrorism may be warranted. Preventive war, drone strikes, extralegal assassination, torture, and indefinite detention are among the controversial issues that have emerged.

This course will explore the following topics. What might justify the use of political violence? Are there moral limits on the conduct of war? Can soldiers bear moral responsibility for fighting? Can conscientious objection be justified or even required? Is terrorism always wrong? Are civilians necessarily innocent? Can pacifism be a credible alternative to violence?

We will be mainly concerned with philosophical analysis—which may call into question certain deeply held assumptions about war and terrorism. Readings will include Frantz Fanon, Gandhi, Martin Luther King, Jr., Jeff McMahan, and Michael Walzer.

**Phil 0091-01:**
**Plato’s Republic**  
Christiana Olfert

What is justice? Is justice a good thing, and if so, in what sense? These are the two opening questions of Plato’s Republic, which is one of the most important works in the history of Western thought. It turns out, however, that answering these questions requires us to answer many others too. For instance: Does being just, or living in a just society, make us happy? What does it mean to live well and happily? What are the roles of pleasure, emotion, and reason in a happy life? What do wisdom and knowledge have to do with living well, and what is knowledge in the first place? What kinds of things are knowable,
and in general, what kinds of things make up reality? Our course will delve into these enduring questions and Plato’s answers in an intensive, semester-long reading of the Republic.

**Phil 0091-02:**
**Media Ethics**  
**Benedetta Giovanola**

The course aims at analyzing the ethical dimensions of communication and the media. It will address questions like: what is a good communication? Can communication and the media contribute to a better and more just society? What role do they have in shaping personal identity and interpersonal relations?

In order to answer these and other questions, the course will integrate theoretical reflection and analysis of concrete cases. Different relevant media will be taken into account, with a specific focus on the new media and the ethical issues raised by information and communications technology (ICT). Topics include: objectivity and neutrality in journalism, the significance of "fake news," reality and fiction in television, the impact of social networks, and ethical issues in cyberspace.

**Phil 0091-03:**
**Walter Benjamin and the Crisis of Experience**  
**Annie Pfeifer**

Few thinkers or writers have devoted as many pages as Walter Benjamin to showing how human experience is ultimately determined by historical forces. One important force that we will study in the course will be “crisis.” In texts from the late teens of the last century, when Benjamin was just over 20 years old, he conceptualized a sudden departure from 19th-century modes of experience, the departure brought on by WWI and other facts of early 20th century European history. In addition, he noted a shift in theories of experience, in philosophical schools searching for a non-transcendent account of human life, such as phenomenology. Between philosophy and history, Benjamin charted a course toward a new mode of experience in the midst of crisis.

Crisis’s methodological counterpart was critique, a specifically historical way of dealing with transformative events and transient experiences. We will read the texts in which Benjamin tests out new, formative, critical experiences, essays on phenomena such as: fate and character, the violence of the law, mourning, childhood and play, memory, on past epochs that forecast the most contemporary shifts in the social order, on new media such as film and radio, and on literary authors such as Franz Kafka and Marcel Proust who liberated experience from its strictures.

**Phil 0091-04:**
**Ethics Bowl**  
**Susan Russinoff**

The Intercollegiate Ethics Bowl is a debate-style competition in which teams of undergraduates argue against each other to resolve cases of actual ethical dilemmas. The Ethics Bowl gives students a chance to enter an academic competition that combines excitement and fun with an educationally valuable experience in the areas of practical and professional ethics. Participating students can earn 1/2 credit (pass/fail) and will attend coaching sessions on Mondays and Wednesdays during the noon free blocks during the weeks leading up to the Tufts competition. These sessions will help students think through
ethical questions and issues and prepare them to construct arguments to support their positions on the cases written for the Ethics Bowl.

**Phil 0103: Logic**  
George Smith

How can one tell whether a deductive argument succeeds in establishing its conclusion? What distinguishes good deductive arguments from bad ones? Questions like these will be addressed in this course. The principal text will be Richard Jeffrey's *Formal Logic*, though it will be supplemented by other texts and by notes from the instructor. The accent will be as much on coming to understand what the word 'formal' means in the title of Jeffrey's book as on what 'logic' means. We will discuss what a formal language is, how arguments in English are to be expressed in various formal languages, and what is gained from so expressing them. In the jargon of the field, we will cover sentential logic, first order predicate logic, identity theory, and definite descriptions. We will also look briefly at the history of logic. The course requires no specific background and no special ability in mathematics. Understanding why formal methods work will be as important as manipulating them. The course will require six written homework assignments and an open-book final exam. The homework assignments, which students are expected to work on in groups, form the core of the course. Students should anticipate spending an average of eight hours per week outside of class in this course.

**Phil 0112: Syntactic Theory**  
Dilip Ninan

Syntax is the scientific study of linguistic structure. It forms the core subcomponent of contemporary theoretical linguistics. This course serves as an introduction to modern syntactic theory within the generative grammar tradition. Students will be introduced to the basic elements of syntactic analysis, such as phrase structure rules, constituency trees, structural relations, binding theory, and movement. Attention will also be paid to the theoretical underpinnings of syntactic theory, and to the scientific methodology employed in contemporary linguistics.

**Phil 0117: Philosophy of Mind**  
Stephen White

This course will focus on the nature of conscious experience, its relation to the subjective point of view, and the implications of both for the mind-body problem. We will also consider carefully the nature of the subjective point of view as it is involved in seeing a world that contains opportunities for genuine action, states of affairs worth striving for, and agents like ourselves.

We will begin by examining the Cartesian conception of consciousness, which holds that the intrinsic features of conscious experience are fully manifest and completely given at the time the experience takes place. The intuition behind this conception is that conscious experience has no hidden sides and no unnoticed features. This intuition supports the sense-data theories of consciousness and experience held by the major figures from Descartes to Kant and implicit in many contemporary arguments that there cannot be a materialistic account of "qualia."
We will go on to consider a wide range of problems for this conception of consciousness, such as our ability to perceive depth and to perceive aspects. We will then look at some of the contemporary alternatives to the Cartesian conception, including behaviorism, physicalism, and functionalism. Despite the success of some of these theories in handling a number of the problems, the objection remains that such theories fail to explain the depth and significance of the distinction between those entities that do and those entities that do not enjoy consciousness.

An important distinction in the philosophy of mind is the distinction between intentional states such as beliefs and perceptual states, which represent the world as being a certain way, and sensational states, such as pains, which allegedly do not. Much of the work in philosophy of mind on consciousness has focused on such sensational or qualitative states, but more recently the emphasis has shifted toward perceptual experience. Work on perceptual experience raises important questions about the nature of the concepts that figure in our intentional states in general, the relation of those concepts to experience, and the assumption of the normative nature of intentional states.

This leads to Kripke's work on Wittgenstein's rule-following paradox, important in its own right and as an objection to functionalism. (Objections such as Jackson's objection based on the knowledge argument focus on the alleged inadequacies of functionalism as a theory of qualia. The rule-following argument focuses on functionalism's alleged inadequacies as a theory of content--usually thought to be its strong suit.) We will then consider whether Kripke's own so-called "skeptical solution" to the rule-following paradox is tenable. The threat of meaning skepticism leads to a number of transcendental arguments, which have implications both for the concept of agency and for causal theories across a range of philosophical subdisciplines. And the requirement that we do justice to agency leads to an alternative to the usual conception of science--one in which the priority of theory to practice is reversed.

With these points in place, we will examine the relation between consciousness and the justification of our perceptual beliefs about the external world. Recent work on the "phenomenology" of perception has centered on the thesis of disjunctivism--that as between veridical perception and a matching hallucination there is no "highest common mental factor" in virtue of which we are given the world only indirectly. Disjunctivism provides an attractive (anti-skeptical) position in epistemology, but in its apparent denial of the reality of full-blown subjective experience in cases of hallucination, it raises seemingly intractable problems in the philosophy of mind. Our discussion, in this context, of the varieties of the "internal/external distinction" will not only cut across the boundary between epistemology and philosophy of mind, it will have important implications for every major branch of philosophy.

Finally, we will draw on our earlier discussion of concepts when we examine the notion of nonconceptual content. Here, the fundamental question is whether we can make sense of a kind of content that is radically different from the kind we normally suppose our mental states have in virtue of our having a natural language.

Phil 0118:
Philosophy of Biology
Patrick Forber

We will examine the conceptual foundations of evolution, ecology, and genetics, with special attention to outstanding philosophical problems. The course begins with Darwin, and his original presentation of
natural selection in the Origin of Species. We will then look at two very different "big picture" views on evolutionary biology and the importance of natural selection, the first defended by Richard Dawkins and the second, by Richard Lewontin. The course continues by discussing specific philosophical and theoretical controversies, such as those over the units of selection, the nature of fitness, altruism and spite, biological function, causation, individuals, and what natural selection explains. Students require some exposure to philosophy or biological science, preferably both. Course requirements include regular attendance and participation in discussion, short essay exams, and a final term paper.

**Phil 0121:**
**Ethical Theory**  
Sigrún Svavarsdóttir

This is a course on general issues within normative ethics with special attention to what utilitarians, Kantians, and pluralistic deontologists have to say about these issues. What makes an action right or wrong? What is the primary object of moral evaluation: actions, motives, character traits, practices, or institutions? What value(s) ought to inform our actions? How exactly ought that value (those values) to inform our actions? Are there moral requirements that have nothing to do with value(s)? What is the relation between moral and rational action? Does morality require impartiality of us? Do moral duties arise out of relationships that we have with some but not all people? What role should or could moral principles play in our lives? Prerequisite: one course in philosophy.

**Phil 0131:**
**Epistemology**  
Dilip Ninan

This course is an introduction to epistemology, the branch of philosophy concerned with the nature of knowledge and justified belief. The course will be organized around two broad issues. First, what, precisely, is it know that a certain fact obtains? For example, in order to know something must you have a reason to believe it? Or is it sometimes simply enough that your cognitive faculties are attuned to your environment in the appropriate way? Second, how much do we really know? Ordinarily, we attribute knowledge to ourselves and to others rather freely, but powerful skeptical arguments seem to suggest that we actually know very little. We will consider a variety of forms of skepticism, along with a number of responses to the skeptical challenge. Readings will be drawn from classical and contemporary sources.

**Phil 0134:**
**Philosophy of Social Science**  
Brian Epstein

Why are the social sciences so difficult? If engineers can build airplanes that stay aloft, why can't economists figure out how to avoid recessions? If biologists can design mice that glow in the dark, and make bacteria crank out drugs to fight cancer, why can't we design political systems that avoid corruption and gridlock? Why are there so many versions of history, and why do theories in psychology go in and out of fashion every few years?
Are the social sciences inherently harder than the natural sciences? Are they just younger and less mature? Is the social world more complex than the natural world? Or are the goals of the social sciences, or the subjects they address, somehow different from those of the natural sciences? This course is an introduction to the philosophy of social science. We will consider the nature of explanation in the social sciences, contrasting a variety of approaches taken by historical and contemporary thinkers. We will read theorists who have put forward different approaches for making the social sciences scientific, and critics who argue that social science is essentially a matter for interpretation. Then we will turn to the nature of social facts, and finally to the pros and cons of "methodological individualism," i.e., the idea that society can be modeled in terms of individual people interacting with one another.

**Phil 0152: History of Modern Philosophy**
Christian Olfert

The aim of this course is to present you with a survey of canonical thinkers and texts from the Early Modern period of philosophy. Thinkers such as Descartes, Spinoza, Locke, Leibniz, Hume, and Kant all struggled to balance concerns about skepticism and the limits of what we can know with the optimism of the European Enlightenment and new scientific advances. This struggle, in turn, motivated some of philosophy's most enduring and challenging questions about the existence of God, the basic structure of reality, the nature of causation, human freedom, and personal identity, as well as the sources and consequences of our moral capabilities. In order to capture the breadth and systematic structure of these philosophers' concerns, we will devote roughly half of our time to examining each thinker's theories of reality and knowledge, and the other half to the implications of these theories for his view of ethics and morality. Prerequisite: one philosophy course.

**Phil 0167: Science Before Newton’s Principia**
George Smith

This is the first part of a two-course sequence focusing on Newton's Principia, the book that first showed the world how to do science in the modern sense of the term. In Philosophy 168 in the spring semester we will read the Principia itself. The revolution produced by the Principia is undoubtedly the most important single event in the history of science, ending controversies begun by the Copernican model of the planetary system and leading over the next 60 years to what we now call Newtonian mechanics. It produced no less of a revolution in scientific method by illustrating a way of marshaling evidence that stood in sharp contrast to both the narrow empiricist line then prevalent in England and the rationalist line prevalent on the continent. Because of this, the Principia is as important to philosophy of science as it is to history of science. It is the perfect work to focus on in investigating how science at its best succeeds in turning data into decisive evidence. The Principia is accessible to a wide range of students. It requires no background in physics or calculus. It does, however, require historical knowledge of the scientific context in which it was written. Thus, the goal of the fall semester is to cover the background needed to grasp the force of the evidential arguments in the Principia. We will review the work on planetary orbits by Kepler and those after him; Galileo's efforts toward a science of motion; Descartes' theory of planetary motion; and studies of curvilinear motion by Huygens and Newton that led directly into the Principia. Three 6 to 8 page papers will be required during the fall semester. In the spring semester we will examine the evidential argument developed throughout the Principia and responses to
it. The sole written requirement will be a term paper dealing with one of the major historical or philosophical issues surrounding the work.

Studying the Principia can be of value to a wide range of students. Besides offering an ideal way of studying the philosophy of science, it gives history students a vehicle for getting into the history of science. It offers students in the physical sciences and engineering an opportunity to learn how the foundations of their disciplines were secured. And it offers students in the humanities a way of studying what science is like from the inside, where the fundamental problem is not to obtain data, but to find ways of turning data into evidence. Science distribution credit is given for the spring semester.

**Phil 0191-01:**
**Rationality, Agency, and Cooperation**
Patrick Forber and Stephen White

Could there be a scientific theory of decision making in that identifies the optimally rational choice(s) for complex decisions? This seems problematic at the outset, since what is desired seems to be normative, and science seems to be inherently descriptive. Could we get around this by saying that the theorist takes the agents’ utility functions and subjective probability functions for granted then states theses about what will maximize the agents’ expected utility—theses that are completely factual?

Understood in this way, decision theory seems to lose most of the critical edge they might have been thought to have. Derek Parfit makes this point by imagining someone who is “future-Tuesday indifferent”: offered a choice between a negligible pleasure today and an enormous pleasure next Tuesday, he or she always opts for the negligible pleasure today. And offered a choice between a negligible pain today and a prolonged and excruciating pain next Tuesday, the subject always opts for the latter. Such a preference structure seems irrational—the subject makes normal choices regarding every other day in the future except Tuesday—but it seems there is nothing on this instrumental conception of rationality to be said against it.

Christine Korsgaard generalizes this point by saying that on this conception, practical reason has no normative force—there is nothing more to acting rationally than acting on one’s strongest desire, and whatever desire we act on will be, by definition, the strongest. It is as though we are torn between thinking of the agent as subject to norms and reasons and as productive of external behavior that is justified (when it is) and thinking of the agent as the kind of thing whose external behavior is merely explained as the causal product of an appropriate belief-desire pair.

A related foundational challenge concerns how utilities or values might be compared across agents. The standard ways of constructing utility functions for agents do not readily permit interpersonal comparisons. This raises skeptical concerns for rational accounts of group action and theories of justice.

The situation becomes more problematic when we consider game theory. Dominance reasoning says we should defect in the classic prisoner’s dilemma. But the application of dominance reasoning assumes that one should treat oneself as an agent and the other player as part of the causal machinery of the world. But what justifies this assumption? And if we drop it, the results are arguably very different from what the orthodox theory holds.
This connects to a general problem that game theory poses in striking clarity: is cooperation ever rational? That game theory seems to sanction noncooperation in the two-person, one-shot prisoner’s dilemma is tempered by the fact that if the game is repeated for the same players a kind of cooperation can be sustainable. Is this good enough? Arguably it is not. For the version of the prisoner’s dilemma that seems to pose the greatest threat to social cooperation is the many-person prisoner’s dilemma—a public goods game—essentially the situation that generates the “tragedy of the commons.” Do we, then, simply solve the problem through private ownership backed by laws? It seems not, since an effective system for enforcing the law is itself a shared or public good, and its availability presupposes the solution to a many-person prisoner’s dilemma apparently more difficult than the one it was postulated to solve. Application of considerations such as these to problems such as global warming and just distribution will be discussed.

**Phil 0191-02: TA Training Workshop**

David Denby

TAs are expected to do many things—grade papers and tests, hold office hours, lead discussions, and work with struggling students. In this workshop, we’ll discuss how best to do these things. The aim is to prepare students to take on TA-ships and ultimately to become better teachers. We will adopt the perspective of TAs in philosophy courses, but most of what we discuss will be relevant to TA-ing classes in other departments too. I also hope that the course will help the TAs themselves improve their own writing and presentation skills.

The class will meet once a week and will be conducted as a workshop. Often, I will give a short presentation and sometimes we’ll do some short in-class exercises. But we will spend most of our time in discussion. The topics will include how to deal with arguments and theories, the basics of writing papers, designing paper assignments and tests, leading recitation sections, grading, office hours and dealing with students face-to-face, the first day, dealing with “difficult” students, giving presentations, etiquette, rules and regulations, designing courses and syllabi. Other matters will arise along the way.

The course will be worth ½ credit. There will be no grades.

**Phil 0191-03: Fifty Years of Consciousness Research**

Daniel Dennett

This course will be a prerequisite for the spring course, “Current Theories of Consciousness,” and will include some classic and standard philosophical work, but mostly pioneering work in cognitive science. It will be restricted to grad students and upper division phil majors and CBS majors (or by permission). The first meeting of the course will be on Tuesday, Sept. 4th

**Phil 0191-04: Philosophy of Martin Luther King, Jr.**

Erin Kelly

In this seminar, we will study Martin Luther King Jr. as a political philosopher. We will take up King’s understanding of the civil rights movement—why it was necessary and what it aimed to achieve. Specifically, we will study his ideas about the political and economic organization of white supremacy,
the impact of racial ideologies, and the importance of racial integration and the right to vote. We will investigate King’s philosophy of civil disobedience and nonviolence as well as a set of values he relates to that philosophy: dignity, self-reflection, self-improvement, love, hope, and freedom. We will relate these values to King’s understanding of justice. Our investigation will encompass King’s remarks on the Vietnam War, and the global elements of his vision of justice. Critical responses to King’s thought will be considered, including his lack of attention to gender justice.

Readings will be from King’s speeches and writings and from a recent volume of essays by philosophers and political theorists (To Shape a New World: Essays on the Political Philosophy of Martin Luther King, Jr., edited by Tommie Shelby and Brandon M. Terry). In addition to the themes described above, these essays address the intellectual context of King’s work in relation to the teachings of W. E. B. Du Bois, Booker T. Washington, Ralph Waldo Emerson, and Mahatmas Gandhi.

**Phil 0191-06:**
**Environmental Ethics**
Sheldon Krimsky

Explores the values, rights, responsibilities and status of entities underlying alternative constructions of environmental issues. Subjects include: anthropocentric vs. biocentric approaches to natural resource protection, precautionary principle, ethics of cost-benefit analysis, equity and risk management, status of "rights" of non-human species and future generations, ethics of sustainable development and energy use, genetically modified crops, transgenic animals, deep ecology, and economic and non-economic value of wilderness and sacred lands.

**Phil 0291:**
**Metaethics: Value Judgements**
Sigrún Svavarsdóttir

This is a graduate seminar in metaethics, focused on ascriptions of value, say, to an untouched landscape, or a poem, or a musical composition, or a friendship, or an intellectual exchange, or a gesture of kindness, or to wilderness, or poetry, or music, or friendship, or intellectual activity, or creativity, or kindness. Can we make sense of such value ascriptions in a way that underwrites their role in the justification and criticism of attitudes and actions? Is there a way of verifying or justifying such value ascriptions? Is having value somehow a function of being valued? Prerequisite: a graduate standing or a permission from the professor.

**Phil 0297:**
A writing workshop open to all philosophy master's degree candidates who have completed at least one semester in the program. Graded SAT/UNSAT. Recommendations: Master's degree candidacy in Philosophy or permission of department chair; submission in advance of an acceptable paper draft or detailed paper outline to be polished during the course.