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 0016: Philosophy of Religion
Elizabeth Lemons

(Cross-listed as REL 6.) Introduction to the philosophical analysis of major religious concepts, such as God, human nature, freedom of will, immortality, and the problem of evil through a study of representative types of religious philosophies.

Phil 0024-01: 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 0025:**
**Food Ethics**
Sigrun Svavarsdottir

Access to food varies greatly. Whereas some have ample choices regarding what to consume, others have poor access to life-sustaining nutrition. Is it morally obscene that some people sit down at a fancy restaurant for a $100 meal, while others starve? How ought we to respond to problems of starvation and poor nutrition across the globe? Is this a question of how generous we ought to be or is this a question of justice? If the latter, is this a question of reparative or distributive justice? Are there similar ethical quandaries that arise domestically?

Our current methods of food production have an environmental impact that will shape the lives of future generations. Are there any ethical strictures on how food is produced given that? Do the interests of future generations matter? What kinds of risk are morally acceptable? Do the interests of non-human animals matter? What about inanimate nature?

In this course, we wrestle with these and other related ethical questions concerning food production and food distribution. There is no prerequisite other than a commitment to approaching these questions in an open-minded and intellectually responsible manner. Although the readings will be mostly drawn from the philosophical literature, the intent is to reach students across the university, interested in ethical questions concerning how food is produced and distributed. This course satisfies the introductory course requirement in the Minor in Food Systems and Nutrition, offered through the Environmental Studies Program.

**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 0042/PS 42:**
**Western Political Thought II**
Robert Devigne

(Cross-listed as PS 0042.) Central concepts of modern political thought. The views of those writers who challenged the dominance of Christianity: Machiavelli, Descartes, Hobbes, and others. Some of the main transformations of political thinking that characterized the Enlightenment: the possibility of scientific thinking...
and reasoning as the basis for human freedom. Nietzsche's critique of the Enlightenment, and the ability to find political principles that are genuinely true or liberating.

**Phil 043:**
*Justice, Equality and Liberty*
*Lionel McPherson*

Students will learn about how moral and political philosophy relate to questions of public importance. The seminar will study a range of practical ethical questions concerning themes such as: moral responsibility, criminal justice, and the aims of punishment; terrorism and just war; multiculturalism and religious toleration; animals; the environment.

We will approach these issues by considering case studies and by evaluating moral principles for resolving ethical dilemmas. We will be especially concerned with the challenges to ethical thought posed by ethnic, religious, and political diversity.

**Phil 052:**
*Aesthetics*
*Lydia Amir*

This course introduces the major aesthetic theories and examines their pros and cons. Its aim is to understand the value of art in order to assess its significance in our lives.

We begin by introducing the main questions in the field of aesthetics. Focusing on the question of the value of art, we continue by examining the various answers Western theorists have given to this question from Ancient Greece to this day. The alternative values of art we address are the cognitive value of art, the emotive value of art, the aesthetic value of art, the metaphysical value of art, the naturalistic-psychological value of art, and the cultural-political value of art.

The cognitive value of art is further divided into the view of art as imitation (Plato, Aristotle) and representation (Goodman, Gombrich). The emotive value of art is further divided into art as emotional expression (Tolstoy, Poe, Beardsley) and intuition (Croce, Collingwood). Immanuel Kant grants aesthetic value to art and Friedrich Nietzsche represents the view granting metaphysical value to art. Through Sigmund Freud’s thought, we will explain the naturalistic-psychological value of art; finally, Walter Benjamin’s view exemplifies the cultural-political value of art.

As the value of art cannot be assessed without understanding the nature of art, a second question this course addresses all along is, “what is art?” Moreover, as philosophic understanding of art needs some acquaintance with art itself, the course introduces various art forms, such as music, drama, dance, literature, painting, and sculpture, follows their historical developments and highlights their masterpieces.

**Phil 092-01:**
*Pre-College Philosophy*
*Susan Russinoff*

In this course we will think about the value and obstacles to infusing pre-college education with philosophical discourse and inquiry. We will design a curriculum for students at Medford High School and then work with them weekly throughout the semester.

This is an opportunity for those with a strong interest in philosophy pedagogy and in working with teens on philosophical problems of mutual interest. Preference is given to students who have taken Philosophy for
Children. Two previous philosophy courses are required as a prerequisite. Please contact Prof. Russinoff for more information

**Phil 0092-02:**
* Nietzsche
* Jody Azzouni

As philosophers go, Nietzsche is perhaps the most notorious, and this despite the near nonexistence of anything we can label a personal life. Part, but only part, of the reason for this is the fresh and radical things he had to say about subjects near and dear to us: the ‘death’ of God, the sociology of moral and religious ideals, the will to power, the hidden (unpalatable) psychological sources of some of our favorite institutions (such as nation-states, science, and penal codes).

More important (for notoriety at least) is his style: witty, aphoristic, polemical, prone to self-aggrandizement, overstatement, and not above the untranslatable pun; consequently: ideally suited for misinterpretation, and adolescent fixation.

And so, one finds his ‘influence’ everywhere: from rather respectable sociologists and psychologists (such as Weber and Freud), to (relatively respectable) continental philosophers such as Heidegger, Sartre, Jaspers and Foucault, to writers such as Shaw, Mann, and Hesse. Even unbalanced politicians and murderers, such as the Nazis, were not above quoting choice morsels, sufficiently mutilated of course.

In this course we simply intend to take a sober look at what Nietzsche has written: The Birth of Tragedy, The Genealogy of Morals, Beyond Good and Evil, and so on

**Phil 0092-03:**
* Problems of the Self
* Dilip Ninan

Problems of the self are problems that involve our subjective, first-person point view on the world. Many central philosophical problems are problems of the self in this sense. This course will serve as an introduction to some of these problems. (1) We will consider the nature of minds and how they relate to the objective world described by science. Are minds simply part of the physical world, or are they somehow a further, irreducible aspect of reality? We will investigate this broad issue by discussing a number of related questions: Can computers think? What is consciousness? Do we have free will? (2) We will also consider how selves persist over time, an issue has typically been approached by philosophers via thought experiments. But the issue re-emerges in a somewhat new guise in connection with certain interpretations of quantum mechanics. We will also consider the possibility of life after death, and the related question of whether immortality is something worth having or not. (3) The traditional problem of skepticism about the external world has also typically been posed as a first-person problem, a problem about what I can know given my evidence. We will examine traditional arguments for skepticism, along with more recent arguments that seem to imply that we are very likely to be living in a computer simulation. Readings will be drawn from historical and contemporary authors.

**Phil 0092-04:**
* Philosophy as a Way of Life
* Christiana Olfert
This course is about the practice of philosophy in everyday life. Philosophy, as conceived by Socrates and his followers, is not only a matter of reflection, argument, and discussion. It also invites us to be, feel, and act in certain ways. It is a way of approaching the world in relationships, at work, at meals, and in solitude – as well as in the classroom. Our coursework will combine traditional readings from Ancient Greece and Rome with exercises designed to help you live like a Socratic, an Aristotelian, an Epicurean, or a Stoic. Ultimately, our goal is to help you become wiser and to lead a better life through the practice of philosophy.

**Phil 0116: Philosophy of Science**  
**George Smith**

Nowadays, few words of praise outrank ‘scientific,’ and the scientific method is held up to be the best approach for answering questions about the world around us. This is not without justification. The more advanced sciences have achieved extraordinary results over the last 300 years. Physics, for example, has exhibited an uninterrupted train of progress since Newton, raising questions, answering them, and going on to new questions. Chemistry, and more recently biology, have not been far behind. Clearly, these sciences are doing something right.

Not all sciences, however, have had such success. Psychology, sociology, and political science, for example, have continued to struggle. Questions are answered, only to have the answers rejected a few years later when some new school of thought comes into vogue. These sciences claim to be following the same method as the more advanced sciences, yet they have not achieved the same sort of step-by-step progress. Why? In particular, are they really following the same method?

To begin addressing these questions, we first need to clarify what the method is that the advanced sciences follow and how this method contributes to the progress they achieve.

This is what the course will focus on. We will examine three different accounts of the scientific method, accounts that yield different pictures of the nature and growth of scientific knowledge. We will also read, as illustrations of the scientific method, a watershed paper by J. J. Thomson that did much to initiate modern atomic physics and a couple of other pieces.

The prerequisites for the course are either the one course in philosophy or a major in science. The course will focus on physics, but the physics we discuss will be accessible to anyone who has satisfied the prerequisites. The substantive requirement of the course will be five short papers.

**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.
Metaphysics addresses fundamental questions about the existence and reality of what there is: What kinds or categories of things are there? Are there, for example, mental objects as well as physical objects? Properties as well as things having properties? Abstract objects in addition to concrete ones? Leibniz said that whatever is, is one. What are the conditions under which something is one thing rather than two? Can one thing share all of its properties with another? How can a thing change and remain one and the same?

Beginning with an introduction to some ways in which philosophers have dealt with such questions, this course will focus upon those concerning unity and identity, especially over time: How is it that a thing remains one and the same object or individual when it undergoes more or less radical change? How can a butterfly have been a caterpillar when no butterfly is a caterpillar? How can someone with the feelings and thoughts of a child be the same person as one who is now a student at Tufts? What, if anything, is essential to an object or individual?

Readings: will be drawn from classical and contemporary sources: McTaggart, Williams, Lewis, Kripke, Parfit, and others.

**Phil 0121: Ethical Theory**
Lionel McPherson

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 0124 Bioethics**
Valentina Urbanek

This course has four parts. In the first part, we focus on ethical issues involved in ending human life. Is it ever permissible for a health care practitioner to kill their patient? Could it even be morally required? Is there a moral difference between killing someone by lethal injection and letting them die by not resuscitating them? Is it permissible to end the life of a human fetus, for example, by aborting? Is it permissible to conduct stem cell research, which, like abortion, involves the destruction of the embryo?

New technologies, including cloning, in vitro fertilization, and genetic engineering, have raised a host of new ethical questions about creating human life. In the second part of the course, we turn to them. Is it permissible to clone human embryos for reproductive purposes? How much discretion should parents have in deciding what their future child is like -- is it permissible to select for sex? Deafness? Intelligence? Is it permissible to genetically engineer? intelligence? We will also ask, in general, whether creating human life can ever benefit or harm the person who's created, and whether it could, at least sometimes, be morally wrong to procreate.
In the third part, we discuss the patient-health care practitioner relationship, asking how involved the patient should be in his or her health care. Should advance directives always be followed? Should the health care practitioner always tell the patient the truth? What's the meaning of informed consent, and is informed consent even ethically important? If a healthy individual consents, after being informed, to amputation, should a health care practitioner perform the operation?

Finally, we will turn to ethical issues raised by allocating scarce lifesaving resources. On what basis should we decide who gets what? Age? Lifestyle/merit? Quality of life?

Phil 0155:
Twentieth-century American and British Philosophy
David Denby

At the end of the nineteenth century, a form of Idealism derived from Hegel dominated philosophy. Then Bertrand Russell, G.E. Moore, and others turned against it in spectacular fashion, rejecting not just its central doctrines, but its methodology, techniques, and even the questions it focused on. Philosophy was transformed. This was the dawn of Analytic Philosophy. Since then it has seen dazzling successes and stark failures, and lots of unexpected twists and turns. Now, at the beginning of the twenty-first century, Analytic Philosophy dominates philosophy departments in the English-speaking world to an even greater extent than Hegelian Idealism once did. It is impossible to understand contemporary philosophy without understanding Analytic Philosophy.

This course is an upper-level history of Analytic Philosophy, focusing especially on developments up to the 1960s. Drawing on a varied and thrilling body of work, we will look at some of the questions that have captured the imaginations of analytic philosophers about language, knowledge, reality, mind, morality, and modality. And we will try to see them through analytic eyes—learning to think like an analytic philosopher is an important goal of this course. There aren’t really any core doctrines, but certain tendencies will emerge: a revulsion at obscurantism; a belief that philosophy starts with the everyday; a belief that philosophy can be pursued piecemeal; among others. Above all, I hope the course will provide a forum for really doing philosophy, not just learning about it. That’s the best way to grasp and enjoy analytic philosophy.

Readings include: Frege, Russell, Moore, Wittgenstein, Ayer, Hempel, Carnap, Quine, Strawson, Grice, Kripke, Lewis, and others. Course prerequisite: either Phil 33 or Phil 103

Phil 0170:
Computation Theory
George Smith

Computation theory is an area in which philosophy, mathematics, and computer science overlap. The basic concern is the nature and limits of symbol manipulation, though this is often expressed in terms of what can and what cannot be done by computational devices of various sorts. The field developed during the 1930's as an outgrowth of studies in the foundations of logic and arithmetic. Among its major early results are conclusions, both established by Kurt Godel, that formal logic is a matter of symbol manipulation, whereas arithmetic involves something beyond mere symbol manipulation. During the 1940's, computation theory provided the theoretical foundation for the development of digital computers, and during the 1950's it was extended to cover the mathematical study of languages and grammars.

This course will be in three parts. The first part will be devoted to automata theory, i.e., the mathematical theory of devices that manipulate symbols. Topics will include McCulloch-Pitts networks and the relationship between devices of various kinds and the kinds of languages they can process and problems they can solve.
The second part will examine the computable functions, which will be characterized in terms of Turing machines, recursive functions, and register machines. The third part will then consider the relationship between computation, on the one hand, and formal logic and arithmetic, on the other. We will prove Godel's completeness and Church's undecidability theorems for logic and Godel's celebrated incompleteness theorems for arithmetic. These last results are of considerable philosophical interest since they show that logic is and arithmetic is not, strictly speaking, axiomatizable.

The course will require written homework assignments (to be done in groups) and an open-book final exam. No background will be presupposed. Although the course will be self-contained, with no substantive prerequisites, it is strongly recommended that students already be familiar with some area of the material to be covered. Hence the formal prerequisite for the course is at least one of the following: Philosophy 33, Electrical Engineering 14, Math 46, or Computer Science 15.

**Phil 0192-01:**
**The Political Philosophy of MLK, JR**
Peter Levine

In this seminar, we will study Martin Luther King Jr. as a political thinker. The whole class will read major works by King and excerpts from biographies and historical documents. Additional readings will be distributed among students, who will contribute insights from their assigned texts to the seminar discussions. The additional readings will include works that influenced King, writings by some of his contemporaries, and interpretations from a recent volume, *To Shape a New World: Essays on the Political Philosophy of Martin Luther King, Jr.*, edited by Tommie Shelby and Brandon M. Terry. We will investigate 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, sacrifice, self-reflection, self-improvement, love, faith, and freedom. We will relate these values to King’s understanding of justice. Criticisms of King will also be considered. Studying King and his critics will provide a window into post-WWII American political thought. (This course is the Capstone for the Civic Studies Major and open to other majors.)

**Phil 0192-02:**
**Current Work on Free Will**
Dan Dennett

Philosophers, neuroscientists, physicists and psychologists have recently been orbiting around some shared issues: the nature of causation, control and autonomy, the role of consciousness in self-control, the epistemic situation of agents, and of course the justification, if any, of a moral and legal system of responsibility and punishment. In this seminar we will attempt to integrate these various projects into a unified account of free will. Among the authors we will read are Judea Pearl, Jenann Ismael, Aaron Schurger, Sam Harris, Susan Blackmore, Jerry Coyne, Gregg Caruso, Erin Kelly, and Bruce Waller.

**Phil 0192-03:**
**Philosophical Foundations of Cognitive Science**
Brian Epstein

Cognitive models of perception, memory, control and many more specific mental phenomena typically postulate systems of representation, but there is so far no uncontroversial theory of mental (or cerebral)
representation, or of information-processing in the brain. This course will look at the philosophical background of work on minds and mental processes, including the concepts of intentionality, function, computation, and reduction, and the issue of how explanation in cognitive science compares with explanations in the other sciences. This course is designed for graduate students in the disciplines comprising cognitive science, and for advanced undergraduate majors in brain and cognitive science or philosophy.

**Phil 0192-04: Nothingness**  
Stephen White & Charles Inouye

What do the negative spaces of certain traditions of Japanese painting, the concept (from Buddhism and the thought of Nagarjuna) of nothing (mu), and the animism of Shinto have in common? And what do they share with the nihilism of Yukio Mishima and the Zen arts of kendo, flower arrangement, and the tea ceremony? In this course we will look at the multivalent concept of Nothingness in these and other Japanese cultural contexts through comparisons with concepts drawn from a variety of European philosophical traditions including Kantian and post-Kantian German Idealism, British Romantic literature, Phenomenology and Existentialism, and the philosophy of Wittgenstein. Chief among the concepts on the European side will be that of the experience of the sublime, variously understood as the experience of: the ground of being prior to the division of the self and nonself; that which is unrepresentable because a condition of the possibility of representation; and that, the embrace of which, in our ability to face our own immanent destruction, makes us truly agents. This last dimension of Nothingness, tying together as it does the work of Mishima and Kojève, Hegel, and Sartre, reveals the moral and political underpinning of a complicated metaphysical story. We will look at arguments that we must inhabit a dynamic and meaningful world more like the animistic world of Shinto or of the Gutai Manifesto than the disenchanted world of Max Weber. And we will look at Paul Schrader’s suggestions (in Transcendental Style in Film) as to how such a world is given (the revelation of the invisible in the visible) in the work of Bresson and Ozu. The course is co-taught by Inouye (Japanese literature and visual studies) and White (Philosophy, aesthetics, and film).

**Phil 0194-01: The Problem of “The World”**  
Avner Baz

Appeals to something called ‘the world’ (and sometimes to other ‘possible worlds’) are central and pervasive in contemporary analytic philosophy. Metaphysicians take themselves to be studying the basic structure and components of ‘the world’; epistemologists and philosophers of perception take themselves to be studying our epistemic and perceptual relation to ‘the world’; in meta-ethics, philosophers ask whether our moral assertions do, or do not, purport to express truths about ‘the world’; philosophers of language often speak of words as referring to (denoting, naming, picking out) ‘items (objects, properties, relations) in the world’; and semantic theorists often couch their accounts in terms of ‘possible world(s)’. What do these philosophers mean by ‘world’ or by ‘the world’? The basic premise of this course is that the answer to this question is far from clear. As we will see, what is meant by ‘(the) world’ is often left obscure, and when attempts are made to explicate the notion, they run more or less immediately into serious difficulties. One possibility we will explore is that the difficulties are rooted in a failure to take seriously what is arguably the most fundamental insight of Kant’s *Critique of Pure Reason*, which is that the objective world, or the world as objectively understood, is not a world ‘as it is in itself’—that is, as it is apart from our sense-making practices and the (worldly-historical) conditions of those practices—and that philosophical difficulties arise when philosophers forget that. In addition to portions of *The Critique of Pure Reason*, we may read works by Gideon Rosen, Saul Kripke, Cora Diamond, David Lewis, Charles Travis, Andy Clark, Rebecca Kukla, Daniel Stoljar, and Jeffrey King.
Phil 0194-02:
Autonomy from Kant to Beauvoir
Nicolas Garcia Mills

This course will provide an introduction to the moral and social philosophy of Kant, Hegel, and some of Hegel’s successors and critics. Our guiding theme will be freedom. We will ask: What kind of freedom is required for morality? In what sense, if any, are moral laws self-legislated or laws that we give ourselves? What is the relation between our freedom as individuals and the social world around us? Under what social and psychological conditions are we free, exactly, and under what conditions are we unfree? Are workers in a capitalist society free, for example? What about women in a patriarchal society? And why should we value freedom, anyway? Our main text for the course will be Hegel’s Philosophy of Right. Other readings will include Kant, Marx, Kierkegaard, and Beauvoir.

Phil 0292-01:
Advanced Epistemology
Jody Azzouni

Epistemology is a morass of puzzles. Here are just some of them: If you know something, then any evidence against what you know is misleading. Misleading evidence should always be disregarded. So, you should ignore any purported evidence against what you know. (But really? You should ignore stuff that contradicts what you know? Isn’t that how conspiracy theorists think? Shouldn’t we avoid thinking about evidence the way that conspiracy theorists think about it?) If knowers are infallible, then no one, pretty much, knows anything. I’d like to know things (wouldn’t you?). So, I guess I must be fallible. But if I’m fallible, how come it’s weird for me to say, “I know it’s raining out, but I might be wrong”? If knowers are fallible, then someone who knows p—for any p—can be wrong. But can we be wrong about 123,445,445 + 345,989,334 = 469,434,779? (Of course we can be wrong about it because, like any complicated or long calculation, we can do it wrong. But that sum is necessarily true so how is it possible for someone to be wrong about it?) If someone knows something, then that person needs to be justified, right? After all, we’re not impressed with someone’s claim to know something if she says, “I know p, but I can’t explain how I know it.” But wait—animals know things, don’t they? (Cats know when you’re supposed to feed them; dogs know when a stranger is trying to get into the house; wolves know that deer are edible and that beer cans aren’t.) Can animals justify what they know? How or when? Unlike crossword puzzles, epistemological puzzles resist solutions for centuries (over 20 of them so far). This is because epistemological puzzles straddle many subject areas. Animal ethology, cognitive science, lexical semantics, logic, philosophy—all are all pertinent. Epistemological puzzles aren’t really “puzzles”—that’s why they’re so hard to solve—they’re annoying dark knots of ignorance. They indicate that in some profound way, we really don’t understand how knowledge works or what it is. We use the word “know” effortlessly (and correctly, surely), but we don’t know what it means.

Readings: Attributing knowledge by Jody Azzouni—forthcoming with Oxford University Press. (He claims he can solve all these puzzles; surely this isn’t something he knows.) Other readings by classical and modern epistemologists assigned by the professor or by the students. (There are hundreds to choose from ...)

Prerequisites: This is a research seminar. Whatever you know helps.
Requirements: One term paper. At least one presentation (maybe two). Weekly write-ups of a ½ page to a page due each week on the readings assigned for that week.

**Phil 0292-02:**
**The Metaphysics of Modality**
Dilip Ninan

A traditional question in modal metaphysics is whether there are merely possible individuals, or whether only actual individuals exist. In his recent book *Modal Logic as Metaphysics*, Timothy Williamson argues that this question ought to be replaced with a different question: does everything exist necessarily, or do some things exist only contingently? Put that way, the answer might seem obvious, for it would seem that most ordinary objects exist only contingently. I exist, for example, but surely I could have failed to exist. Against the seeming obviousness of this answer, Williamson marshals some powerful arguments in favor of “necessitism,” the view that everything exists necessarily. This seminar will begin with a discussion of the debate between contingentism and necessitism, along with related issues in the philosophy of time. Readings will be drawn from Williamson’s book and from the works of other authors. Williamson’s case for necessitism employs the framework of higher-order modal logic, and so we will spend some time acquainting ourselves with that framework. We will also be examining some further applications of this framework to other issues in philosophy; topics here may include how fine-grained reality is and Frege’s Puzzle about attitude ascriptions.

**Phil 0292-03:**
**The Objectivity of Value**
Sigrun Svavarsdottir

Realism about value is standardly characterized as, minimally, advancing the cognitivist thesis that value ascriptions are *truth-evaluable* and the anti-skeptical thesis that there are *true* value ascriptions. Some anti-realists deny the first claim (non-cognitivists), while other anti-realisits accept the first claim but deny the second claim (error theorists). Is there a third way of being an anti-realist: namely, to accept that some value ascriptions are true but deny that their truth is objective? This seminar examines whether there is such a residual issue once the two minimal realist claims are granted and, if so, whether the issue is deeper than how to use pieces of jargon within meta-ethics. In other words, our central question is how to understand questions regarding the objectivity of value. Reading assignments have not been finalized but they are likely to come from the work of Simon Blackburn, Selim Berker, David Enoch, Sarah McGrath, Gideon Rosen, Russ Shafer-Landau, Sharon Street, Sigrún Svavarsdóttir, and Crispin Wright. The main writing requirement will be a seminar paper, due at the end of the term. This is a research seminar offered at the graduate level. A recommended background is *Phil-129: Metethics* or an equivalent course. – *Prerequisite:* a graduate standing or a permission from the professor.