PHILOSOPHY (PHIL)

PHIL Courses

PHIL 101. Introduction to Philosophy. 4 units
Term Typically Offered: F
Prerequisite: Philosophy majors only.

Foundational methods and central issues in contemporary philosophy including logic, epistemology, metaphysics and ethics. Advising and orientation to the Philosophy major for freshmen in their first quarter at Cal Poly. 4 lectures.

PHIL 126. Logic and Argumentative Writing. 4 units
GE Area A3
Term Typically Offered: F, W, SP
Prerequisite: Completion of GE Area A1 with a grade of C- or better.

Principles of argument analysis, evaluation and construction. Deductive and inductive reasoning, including analogical arguments, universal and statistical generalizations, and causal inferences. Principles of organizing and writing argumentative essays. Moral dimensions of rational discourse. 4 lectures. Fulfills GE A3; for students admitted Fall 2016 or later a grade of C- or better is required to fulfill GE Area A3.

PHIL 230. Philosophical Classics: Knowledge and Reality. 4 units
GE Area C2
Term Typically Offered: F, W, S, R, SU
Prerequisite: Completion of GE Area A with grades of C- or better; or PHIL majors GE Area A3 with a grade of C- or better. Recommended: PHIL 126.

Critical examination of primary philosophical texts, from the ancient and modern periods, with focus on the nature of reality and the sources and limits of human knowledge. Course may be offered in classroom-based or online format. 4 lectures. Crosslisted as HNRS/PHIL 230. Fulfills GE Area C2.

PHIL 231. Philosophical Classics: Ethics and Political Philosophy. 4 units
GE Area C2
Term Typically Offered: F, W, S, R, SU
Prerequisite: Completion of GE Area A with grades of C- or better; or PHIL majors GE Area A3 with a grade of C- or better. Recommended: PHIL 126.

Readings from primary philosophical texts, from the ancient and modern periods, with focus on the identification, evaluation and contemporary relevance of the central ethical and political themes and arguments presented in them. Course may be offered in classroom-based or online format. 4 lectures. Crosslisted as HNRS/PHIL 231. Fulfills GE Area C2.

PHIL 241. Symbolic Logic. 4 units
Term Typically Offered: F, SP
Prerequisite: Completion of GE Area A3 with a grade of C- or better.

The nature of deductive logical systems. Methods of notation, translation and proof in sentential and predicate calculi including truth-trees and natural deduction systems. Introduction to meta-theory. 4 lectures.

PHIL 270. Selected Topics. 1-4 units
Term Typically Offered: TBD
Prerequisite: Open to undergraduate students and consent of instructor.

Directed group study of selected topics. The Class Schedule will list topic selected. Total credit limited to 8 units. 1 to 4 lectures.

PHIL 285. Ethics Bowl. 4 units
Term Typically Offered: F
Prerequisite: One of the following: PHIL 231, PHIL 331, PHIL 332, PHIL 333, PHIL 334, PHIL 335, PHIL 336, PHIL 337, PHIL 339, PHIL 340, PHIL 341 or PHIL 439; and completion of GE area A with grades of C- or better.

Preparation for competition in the Intercollegiate Ethics Bowl. Rules and format of competition, analysis and preparation of cases specific to the current year's competition. Coverage of ethical theory relevant to current cases. Field trips required. 4 lectures.

PHIL 301. Philosophical Topics. 4 units
GE Area C4
Term Typically Offered: TBD
Prerequisite: Junior standing or Philosophy major; completion of GE Area A with grades of C- or better; completion of one course in GE Area B1 with a grade of C- or better; and completion of GE Area C2.

Examination and analysis of philosophical areas, movements, texts, or figures. Topics may be of historical or contemporary importance. The Class Schedule will list topic selected. Total credit limited to 12 units. 4 lectures. Fulfills GE Area C4.

PHIL 309. Early Greek Philosophy through Plato. 4 units
GE Area C4
Term Typically Offered: TBD
Prerequisite: Junior standing or Philosophy major; completion of GE Area A with grades of C- or better; completion of one course in GE Area B1 with a grade of C- or better; and completion of GE Area C2.

Beginnings of Western philosophy and science in Ancient Greece. The Presocratics, Socrates, and Plato. 4 lectures. Fulfills GE Area C4.

PHIL 310. Aristotle and Hellenistic Philosophy. 4 units
GE Area C4
Term Typically Offered: F
Prerequisite: Junior standing or Philosophy major; completion of GE Area A with grades of C- or better; completion of one course in GE Area B1 with a grade of C- or better; and completion of GE Area C2.

Development of Western philosophy and science in the Hellenistic and Roman periods. Aristotle, Epicureanism, Stoicism, Skepticism. 4 lectures. Fulfills GE Area C4.

PHIL 312. Medieval Philosophy. 4 units
GE Area C4
Term Typically Offered: F
Prerequisite: Junior standing or Philosophy major; completion of GE Area A with grades of C- or better; completion of one course in GE Area B1 with a grade of C- or better; and completion of GE Area C2.

Development of Western philosophy from Augustine to Ockham, including Anselm, Abelard, Roger Bacon, Bonaventure, Aquinas, and Duns Scotus. 4 lectures. Fulfills GE Area C4.
PHIL 313. Early Modern Rationalism. 4 units
GE Area C4
Term Typically Offered: W
Prerequisite: Junior standing or Philosophy major; completion of GE Area A with grades of C- or better; completion of one course in GE Area B1 with a grade of C- or better; and completion of GE Area C2.

Development of Western philosophy from the late Renaissance through Leibniz, with special emphasis upon the epistemology and metaphysics of the Continental Rationalists. 4 lectures. Fulfills GE Area C4.

PHIL 314. Early Modern Empiricism. 4 units
GE Area C4
Term Typically Offered: F, SP
Prerequisite: Junior standing or Philosophy major; completion of GE Area A with grades of C- or better; completion of one course in GE Area B1 with a grade of C- or better; and completion of GE Area C2.

Development of Western philosophy from the Renaissance through Mill, with special emphasis on British Empiricism. 4 lectures. Fulfills GE Area C4.

PHIL 315. Kant and 19th Century European Philosophy. 4 units
GE Area C4
Term Typically Offered: W
Prerequisite: Junior standing or Philosophy major; completion of GE Area A with grades of C- or better; completion of one course in GE Area B1 with a grade of C- or better; and completion of GE Area C2.

Primary issues and concepts found in German philosophy from 1780 to 1900, with emphasis on Kant, Hegel, and Nietzsche. 4 lectures. Fulfills GE Area C4.

PHIL 317. History of Analytic Philosophy. 4 units
GE Area C4
Term Typically Offered: W
Prerequisite: Junior standing or Philosophy major; completion of GE Area A with grades of C- or better; completion of one course in GE Area B1 with a grade of C- or better; and completion of GE Area C2.

Major developments within 20th century British and American philosophy, with focus chiefly around Analytic philosophy. Other schools, such as Pragmatism, may be included, as may some philosophers outside of Britain and America whose work was influential in those countries. 4 lectures. Fulfills GE Area C4.

PHIL 318. Phenomenology. 4 units
GE Area C4
Term Typically Offered: SP
Prerequisite: Junior standing or Philosophy major; completion of GE Area A with grades of C- or better; completion of one course in GE Area B1 with a grade of C- or better; and completion of GE Area C2.

Methods and uses of phenomenological analysis through study of 20th century philosophers and contemporary applications. Topics include phenomenological method, perception, meaning, and the role of experience in philosophical inquiry. 4 lectures. Fulfills GE Area C4.

PHIL 319. Existentialism. 4 units
GE Area C4
Term Typically Offered: SP
Prerequisite: Junior standing or Philosophy major; completion of GE Area A with grades of C- or better; completion of one course in GE Area B1 with a grade of C- or better; and completion of GE Area C2.

Major existentialist philosophers of the 19th and 20th century such as Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, Heidegger, Sartre, de Beauvoir, Merleau-Ponty, and Marcel. Existentialist themes in historical or contemporary context. 4 lectures. Fulfills GE Area C4.

PHIL 321. Philosophy of Science. 4 units
GE Area C4
Term Typically Offered: F, SP
Prerequisite: Junior standing or Philosophy major; completion of GE Area A with grades of C- or better; completion of one course in GE Area B1 with a grade of C- or better; and completion of GE Area C2.

The rational foundations of inquiry and explanation in the physical, biological and social sciences. Justification of scientific claims, the difference between science and pseudoscience, the relationship between science and other fields of investigation. 4 lectures. Fulfills GE Area C4.

PHIL 322. Philosophy of Technology. 4 units
GE Area C4
Term Typically Offered: F, W, SP
Prerequisite: Junior standing or Philosophy major; completion of GE Area A with grades of C- or better; completion of one course in GE Area B1 with a grade of C- or better; and completion of GE Area C2.

Analyses of the philosophical foundations and implications of technology. Technology and the human condition, technology and philosophical ethics, technology and political philosophy, technology and the metaphysics of human nature, and the relationship between science and technology. 4 lectures. Fulfills GE Area C4.

PHIL 323. Ethics, Science and Technology. 4 units
GE Area C4
Term Typically Offered: F, W, SP
Prerequisite: Junior standing or Philosophy major; completion of GE Area A with grades of C- or better; completion of one course in GE Area B1 with a grade of C- or better; and completion of GE Area C2.

Ethical decision-making as applied to issues such as the use of robots, the treatment of animals, sustainability, scientific fraud, feminist analysis of science and technology, as well as questions about whether technology is just a value-neutral tool or, rather, embodies certain values. 4 lectures. Fulfills GE Area C4.

PHIL 327. Robot Ethics. 4 units
GE Area C4
Term Typically Offered: W
Prerequisite: Junior standing or Philosophy major; completion of GE Area A with grades of C- or better; completion of one course in GE Area B1 with a grade of C- or better; and completion of GE Area C2.

Introduction, short history, and overview of robot (meta)ethics, with applied ethics issues to include programming, environment, military uses, sex, legal implications, risk, liability, diversity, sustainability, healthcare, education, religion, and the home. Finally, future issues of robot rights and personhood. 4 lectures. Fulfills GE Area C4.
PHIL 328. Technologies and Ethics of Warfare. 4 units
GE Area C4
Term Typically Offered: W
Prerequisite: Junior standing or Philosophy major; completion of GE Area A with grades of C- or better; completion of one course in GE Area B1 with a grade of C- or better; and completion of GE Area C2.

Ethics of killing in warfare, including requirements of justice in declaring and waging war. Topics include terrorism, remotely piloted aircraft ('drones'), autonomous weapons ('killer robots'), cyber warfare, nuclear war, city bombing, and humanitarian intervention. 4 lectures. Fulfills GE Area C4.

PHIL 331. Ethics. 4 units
GE Area C4
Term Typically Offered: F, W, SP
Prerequisite: Junior standing or Philosophy major; completion of GE Area A with grades of C- or better; completion of one course in GE Area B1 with a grade of C- or better; and completion of GE Area C2.

Analyses of various traditional and contemporary positions on the difference between right and wrong, if there is one. Theories of metaethics and normative ethics including the divine command theory, relativism, intuitionism, noncognitivism, virtue ethics, egoism, utilitarianism and duty-based ethics. 4 lectures. Fulfills GE Area C4.

PHIL 332. History of Ethics. 4 units
GE Area C4
Term Typically Offered: TBD
Prerequisite: Junior standing or Philosophy major; completion of GE Area A with grades of C- or better; completion of one course in GE Area B1 with a grade of C- or better; and completion of GE Area C2.

The history of moral thought from Homer and the Pre-Socratics to the 20th century, and focus on theories of moral goodness and rightness of action. Related issues and areas of thought, e.g. metaphysics, theology, science, politics, psychology freedom/determinism to be considered, where they shed light on moral thought. 4 lectures. Fulfills GE Area C4.

PHIL 333. Political Philosophy. 4 units
GE Area C4
Term Typically Offered: SP
Prerequisite: Junior standing or Philosophy major; completion of GE Area A with grades of C- or better; completion of one course in GE Area B1 with a grade of C- or better; and completion of GE Area C2.

Analyses of the philosophical foundations of political ideologies, including theories of political authority, legitimacy, obligation, and rights, and of the proper function of the state, and the relation of these theories to issues in meta-physics, theory of knowledge, and ethics. 4 lectures. Fulfills GE Area C4.

PHIL 334. Philosophy of Law. 4 units
GE Area C4
Term Typically Offered: SP
Prerequisite: Junior standing or Philosophy major; completion of GE Area A with grades of C- or better; completion of one course in GE Area B1 with a grade of C- or better; and completion of GE Area C2.


PHIL 335. Social Ethics. 4 units
GE Area C4; USCP
Term Typically Offered: F, W, SP
Prerequisite: Junior standing or Philosophy major; completion of GE Area A with grades of C- or better; completion of one course in GE Area B1 with a grade of C- or better; and completion of GE Area C2.

Examination of contemporary moral problems, solutions to these problems, and the arguments for these solutions, with emphasis on two or more of the following sample problem areas: abortion, suicide and euthanasia, capital punishment, family ethics, race relations, social justice, war, women's issues. 4 lectures. Crosslisted as PHIL 335/HNRS 336. Fulfills GE C4 and USCP.

PHIL 336. Feminist Ethics, Gender, Sexuality and Society. 4 units
GE Area C4; USCP
Term Typically Offered: F, W, SP
Prerequisite: Junior standing or Philosophy major; completion of GE Area A with grades of C- or better; completion of one course in GE Area B1 with a grade of C- or better; and completion of GE Area C2.

Critical examination of the relations between gender, sexuality, ethnicity, society and ethics from feminist perspectives, with special attention paid to problems in contemporary applied ethics. Joint focus on theory and application. 4 lectures. Crosslisted as PHIL/WGS 336. Fulfills GE Area C4 and USCP.

PHIL 337. Business Ethics. 4 units
GE Area C4
Term Typically Offered: W
Prerequisite: Junior standing or Philosophy major; completion of GE Area A with grades of C- or better; completion of one course in GE Area B1 with a grade of C- or better; and completion of GE Area C2.

Critical examination of ethical problems that arise in business. 4 lectures. Fulfills GE Area C4.

PHIL 339. Biomedical Ethics. 4 units
GE Area C4
Term Typically Offered: F, SP
Prerequisite: Junior standing or Philosophy major; completion of GE Area A with grades of C- or better; completion of one course in GE Area B1 with a grade of C- or better; and completion of GE Area C2.

Critical examination of problems in biomedical ethics, proposed solutions to these problems, and the arguments for such solutions. Emphasis on two or more of the following sample problem areas: concepts of health and disease, human experimentation, informed consent, behavior control, genetic intervention, new birth technologies, euthanasia and physician-assisted dying. 4 lectures. Fulfills GE Area C4.

PHIL 340. Environmental Ethics. 4 units
GE Area C4
Term Typically Offered: F
Prerequisite: Junior standing or Philosophy major; completion of GE Area A with grades of C- or better; completion of one course in GE Area B1 with a grade of C- or better; and completion of GE Area C2.

Analyses of various positions on the moral status of nonhuman entities and problems such as the treatment of animals, wilderness preservation, population, pollution and global warming. 4 lectures. Fulfills GE Area C4.
PHIL 341. Professional Ethics. 4 units  
GE Area C4  
Term Typically Offered: SP  
Prerequisite: Junior standing or Philosophy major; completion of GE Area A with grades of C- or better; completion of one course in GE Area B1 with a grade of C- or better; and completion of GE Area C2.

Moral problems as they arise in professions such as law, medicine, engineering, research and education: deception, paternalism, confidentiality, discrimination and others. Consideration of various professional codes of ethics. 4 lectures. Fulfills GE Area C4.

PHIL 342. Philosophy of Religion. 4 units  
GE Area C4  
Term Typically Offered: W  
Prerequisite: Junior standing or Philosophy major; completion of GE Area A with grades of C- or better; completion of one course in GE Area B1 with a grade of C- or better; and completion of GE Area C2.

Inquiry into the rational and nonrational bases of religious claims. Arguments for and against the existence of God. Discussion of miracles, revelation, the definition of God, the problem of evil, the relation of faith and reason, the nature of religious experience, the verification of religious claims. 4 lectures. Fulfills GE Area C4.

PHIL 343. Power, Alienation, and Political Life. 4 units  
GE Area C4  
Term Typically Offered: W  
Prerequisite: Junior standing or Philosophy major; completion of GE Area A with grades of C- or better; completion of one course in GE Area B1 with a grade of C- or better; and completion of GE Area C2.

Analysis of social alienation, political resistance, and the interplay between power and individual life in 20th- and 21st-century Continental philosophy. Emphasis on issues such as structural injustice, cultural membership and exclusion, work, media, and the political impact of technology. 4 lectures. Fulfills GE Area C4.

PHIL 350. Aesthetics. 4 units  
GE Area C4  
Term Typically Offered: W  
Prerequisite: Junior standing or Philosophy major; completion of GE Area A with grades of C- or better; completion of one course in GE Area B1 with a grade of C- or better; and completion of GE Area C2.

Critical examination of philosophical views of art from both a historical and contemporary perspective. Treatment of theories from Plato and Aristotle through those of the twentieth century. Discussion of the problems raised by modern art. The relation between aesthetic values and metaphysics, epistemology, ethics and politics. 4 lectures. Fulfills GE Area C4.

PHIL 351. Philosophy of Literature. 4 units  
GE Area C4  
Term Typically Offered: TBD  
Prerequisite: Junior standing or Philosophy major; completion of GE Area A with grades of C- or better; completion of one course in GE Area B1 with a grade of C- or better; completion of GE Area C1; and completion of GE Area C2.

Analysis of philosophical issues related to literature such as interpretation, authorial intention, linguistic expression, ethical responsibilities of writers and readers, and use of literary styles by philosophers. 4 lectures. Fulfills GE Area C4.

PHIL 361. Indian Philosophy. 4 units  
GE Area C4  
Term Typically Offered: W  
Prerequisite: Junior standing or Philosophy major; completion of GE Area A with grades of C- or better; completion of one course in GE Area B1 with a grade of C- or better; and completion of GE Area C2.

Philosophies developed in South Asia including the metaphysical, epistemological, and logical presuppositions of the six Hindu schools, the Buddhist and Jain schools, and select theistic traditions. 4 lectures. Fulfills GE Area C4.

PHIL 362. Chinese and East Asian Philosophy. 4 units  
GE Area C4  
Term Typically Offered: SP  
Prerequisite: Junior standing or Philosophy major; completion of GE Area A with grades of C- or better; completion of one course in GE Area B1 with a grade of C- or better; and completion of GE Area C2.

Philosophies developed in China, Japan and East Asia, including Buddhism, Confucian moral philosophy, Daoist metaphysics and social ecology. 4 lectures. Fulfills GE Area C4.

PHIL 369. Postmodernism. 4 units  
GE Area C4  
Term Typically Offered: W  
Prerequisite: Junior standing or Philosophy major; completion of GE Area A with grades of C- or better; completion of one course in GE Area B1 with a grade of C- or better; and completion of GE Area C2.

Primary issues and developments in European philosophy in the second half of the 20th century. Examination of the influence of postmodern philosophy in areas such as art, literature, architecture, culture studies, philosophy of language, and philosophy of religion. 4 lectures. Fulfills GE Area C4.

PHIL 385. Advanced Ethics Bowl. 2 units  
CR/NC  
Term Typically Offered: F, W  
Prerequisite: PHIL 285.

Preparation for ongoing participation in Intercollegiate Ethics Bowl competitions. Preparation and discussion of current competition cases, development of research and presentation skills, and participation in competition. Field trips required. 2 lectures. Total credit limited to 6 units. Credit/No Credit grading only.
PHIL 400. Special Problems for Advanced Undergraduates. 1-4 units
Term Typically Offered: F, W, SP
Prerequisite: Consent of department chair.
Individual investigation, research, studies or surveys of selected problems. Total credit limited to 8 units, with a maximum of 4 units per quarter.

PHIL 411. Metaphysics. 4 units
Term Typically Offered: F, W, SP
Prerequisite: Junior standing and completion of GE Area C2.
Traditional and current ideas and arguments about substance, the relation of universals to particulars, space and time, events, causation and necessity, the self and free will. 4 lectures.

PHIL 412. Epistemology. 4 units
Term Typically Offered: F, W, SP
Prerequisite: Junior standing and completion of GE Area C2.
Analysis of the concept of knowledge. Development of competing theories of epistemic justification and truth. Inquiry into relationship between knowledge, belief, justification and truth. Examination of skepticism. 4 lectures.

PHIL 421. Philosophy of Space, Time and Matter. 4 units
Term Typically Offered: TBD
Prerequisite: Junior standing and completion of GE Area C2.
Investigation of the philosophical foundations and interpretation of relativity theory and elementary quantum mechanics. Emphasis on philosophical issues relevant to contemporary philosophy of science such as scientific realism. Some discussion of very recent theories of space, time, and matter. 4 lectures.

PHIL 422. Philosophy of Mind. 4 units
Term Typically Offered: F
Prerequisite: Junior standing and completion of GE Area C2.
Classic and current work in the problems and issues of the nature and unity of the self, consciousness, mental representations, and action, and of the relation of philosophy of mind to psychology, linguistics and computer science. 4 lectures.

PHIL 423. Philosophy of Language. 4 units
Term Typically Offered: W
Prerequisite: Junior standing and completion of GE Area C2.
Traditional and contemporary philosophical issues that arise from the structure of language. Relevant concepts include: syntax, semantics, pragmatics, meaning, reference, truth, identity, thought, reality. Important distinctions: use/mention, relations/properties of relations, sentences/statements/propositions. 4 lectures.

PHIL 429. Special Topics in the History of Philosophy. 4 units
Term Typically Offered: F, SP
Prerequisite: Junior standing and completion of GE Area C2.
Advanced discussion of selected topics in the history of philosophy. Examination and analysis of important philosophical movements (e.g., positivism, postmodernism) or alternatively, of particular philosophers or philosophical works of exceptional importance (e.g., David Hume; Kant’s Critique of Pure Reason). The Class Schedule will list topic selected. Total credit limited to 12 units. 4 lectures.

PHIL 439. Selected Problems in Ethics and Political Philosophy. 4 units
Term Typically Offered: F
Prerequisite: Junior standing and completion of GE Area C2.
Advanced discussion of selected topics in ethics and political philosophy. Examination and analysis of significant ethical or political theories (e.g., utilitarianism, contractarianism) or alternatively, of particular philosophers or philosophical works of exceptional importance (e.g., John Stuart Mill; John Rawls’ A Theory of Justice). The Class Schedule will list topic selected. Total credit limited to 12 units. 4 lectures.

PHIL 449. Selected Topics in Recent Philosophy. 4 units
Term Typically Offered: W
Prerequisite: Junior standing and completion of GE Area C2.
Advanced discussion of selected topics in recent philosophy. Examination and analysis of important recent movements in central philosophical areas (e.g., metaphysics, epistemology, philosophy of science, philosophy of language, philosophy of mind) or, alternatively, of particular philosophers or philosophical works of exceptional recent importance. The Class Schedule will list topic selected. Total credit limited to 12 units credit; may be repeated in same term. 4 lectures.

PHIL 459. Senior Project Preparation. 1 unit
CR/NC
Term Typically Offered: F, W, SP
Prerequisite: Senior standing and consent of instructor; Philosophy majors only.
Completion of philosophy senior exam, graduate exit interview, and career advising for philosophy majors nearing graduation. Library research training, and group and individual discussion of formulation of research plan for senior project. Credit/No Credit grading only. 1 activity.

PHIL 460. Senior Project I. 1 unit
CR/NC
Term Typically Offered: F,W,SPSU
Prerequisite: PHIL 241, senior standing, and consent of instructor; Philosophy majors only. Concurrent: PHIL 459.
Selection, initial development, and formulation of a research plan for a project conducted under faculty supervision. Minimum of 30 hours per quarter. Credit/No Credit grading only.

PHIL 461. Senior Project II. 2 units
Term Typically Offered: F,W,SPSU
Prerequisite: PHIL 460; Philosophy majors only.
Development and completion of a research project under faculty supervision. Results presented in a formal thesis. Minimum of 60 hours per quarter.

PHIL 470. Selected Advanced Topics. 1-4 units
Term Typically Offered: TBD
Prerequisite: Consent of instructor.
Directed group study of selected topics for advanced students. The Class Schedule will list topics selected. Total credit limited to 8 units. 1 to 4 lectures.