

PHILOSOPHY (PHI)

Philosophy examines such topics as consciousness, knowledge, justice, free will, good and evil, and the nature of religious experience and belief. Engagement with the central questions of philosophy is valuable in itself; it is also valuable as a means of developing analytical, critical, and imaginative skills useful in the study of most other subjects, in the pursuit of careers as varied as law, business, medicine, science, education, and the arts, and in effective participation in civic life. A liberal arts education should introduce students to rigorous thinking and writing about philosophical issues and to the reading of great philosophical texts. We help to realize this goal through the courses we offer, through one-on-one discussion with students, and by presenting lectures, colloquia, and debates open to the University and the public.

Any 3-hour philosophy course numbered PHI 220 or lower counts towards satisfying the Division I requirement. Courses taken elsewhere after a student has enrolled at Wake Forest University will not count towards satisfying the Division I requirement in philosophy.

Contact Information

D (<http://college.wfu.edu/philosophy/>) Department of Philosophy (<http://college.wfu.edu/philosophy/>)
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Phone 336-758-5359

Programs

Major

- Philosophy, B.A. (<https://bulletin.wfu.edu/undergraduate/departments-programs/philosophy/ba-philosophy/>)

Minor

- Philosophy, Minor (<https://bulletin.wfu.edu/undergraduate/departments-programs/philosophy/minor-philosophy/>)

Courses

Philosophy (PHI)

PHI 111. Problems of Philosophy. (3 h)

Examines the basic concepts of several representative philosophers, including their accounts of the nature of knowledge, persons, God, mind, and matter. (D)

PHI 112. Introduction to Philosophical Ideas. (3 h)

How and why does philosophy engage religious belief and common sense? Why is the purposive world of pre-modern life abandoned by modern naturalism, skepticism, and existentialism? How are our contemporary ideas of self and world expressions of these opposing conceptions of life, love, and meaning? (D)

PHI 113. Knowledge and Reality. (3 h)

Examination of three interconnected philosophic problems: the nature of existence; the distinction between truth and falsity; and the question of what it means to know. (D)

PHI 114. Philosophy of Human Nature. (3 h)

A study of selected topics bearing on human nature, such as free will and determinism, the relation of mind and body, personal identity and personhood, and immortality. (D)

PHI 115. Introduction to Philosophy of Religion. (3 h)

A study of some central issues in the philosophy of religion, such as arguments for and against the existence of God; faith and reason; the divine attributes; the nature and existence of the soul; the possibility of immortality; and religious diversity. (D)

PHI 116. Meaning and Happiness. (3 h)

Examines the nature of happiness and meaning and the epistemic, ethical, and political issues surrounding their pursuit. Focus varies by instructor. (D)

PHI 160. Introduction to Political Philosophy. (3 h)

Examines basic concepts and problems in political thought, including social and economic issues, individual rights, equality, justice, and the common good. (D)

PHI 161. Introduction to Bioethics. (3 h)

A study of ethical issues that arise in health care and the life sciences such as informed consent, experimentation on human subjects, truth-telling, confidentiality, abortion, and the allocation of scarce medical resources. (D)

PHI 163. Environmental Ethics. (3 h)

An examination of ethical issues concerning the environment as they arise in individual lives and public policy. (D)

PHI 164. Contemporary Moral Problems. (3 h)

A study of pressing ethical issues in contemporary life, such as abortion, euthanasia, animal rights, affirmative action, marriage, cloning, pornography, and capital punishment. (D)

PHI 165. Introduction to Philosophy of Law. (3 h)

An examination of prominent legal cases and their underlying principles, with an emphasis on philosophical analysis and moral evaluation. Topics include the rule of law, constitutional interpretation, judicial review, legal enforcement of morality, punishment, and freedom of speech and of religion. (D)

PHI 220. Logic. (3 h)

Elementary study of the laws of valid inference, recognition of fallacies, and logical analysis. (D)

PHI 221. Symbolic Logic. (3 h)

Introduces propositional and predicate logic, including identity and functions. Construction of proofs. Use of models to demonstrate consistency and invalidity. Application of these techniques to the assessment of arguments expressed in ordinary language.

PHI 232. Ancient Greek Philosophy. (3 h)

A study of the central figures in early Greek philosophy, beginning with the Presocratics, focusing primarily on Plato and Aristotle, and concluding with a brief survey of some Hellenistic philosophers. P - One PHI course or POI.

PHI 235. Main Streams of Chinese Philosophy. (3 h)

Survey of the main streams of Chinese philosophical thought from their ancient beginnings to their development and influence on one another in later eras.

PHI 237. Medieval Philosophy. (3 h)

A survey of some major philosophers from Augustine to Suarez, including Anselm, Averroes, Maimonides, Avicenna, Aquinas, Scotus and Ockham. P-One PHI course or POI.

PHI 239. Latin American & Latinx Philosophy. (3 h)

Surveys important texts and figures in these two related philosophical traditions, addressing issues such as colonization, liberation, identity, and immigration. P-one course in PHI. (CD)

PHI 241. Modern Philosophy. (3 h)

A study of the works of influential 17th and 18th century European philosophers such as Descartes, Locke, Leibniz, Berkeley, and Hume, with a concentration on theories of knowledge and metaphysics. P-One PHI course or POI.

PHI 280. Topics in Philosophy. (1-3 h)

Seminar and/or lecture course in selected topics. May be repeated if course title differs. P—One PHI course or POI.

PHI 331. Plato. (3 h)

Detailed analysis of selected dialogues, covering Plato's most important contributions to moral and political philosophy, theory of knowledge, metaphysics, and theology. P-One PHI course or POI.

PHI 332. Aristotle. (3 h)

Study of the major texts, with emphasis on metaphysics, ethics, and theory of knowledge. P-One PHI course (232 or 331 strongly recommended) or POI.

PHI 333. Hellenistic Philosophy. (3 h)

Study of the Ancient Greek and Roman philosophical schools of the Hellenistic Period, focusing on the Stoics, Skeptics, and Epicureans. P-One PHI course or POI.

PHI 337. Thomas Aquinas. (3 h)

Study of some major texts, with a focus on metaphysics and philosophical theology. P—One PHI course (232 strongly recommended) or POI.

PHI 341. Kant: Theoretical Philosophy. (3 h)

A study of Kant's principal contributions to metaphysics and the theory of knowledge. P-One PHI course (241 strongly recommended) or POI.

PHI 342. Topics in Modern Philosophy. (3 h)

Treatment of selected figures and/or themes in 17th and 18th century European philosophy. P-One PHI course (241 strongly recommended) or POI.

PHI 343. Kant: Practical Philosophy. (3 h)

Study of Kant's principal contributions to theory of action, theory of value, and moral and political philosophy. PHI 341 is not a prerequisite for this course. P-One PHI course or POI.

PHI 352. 19th-Century European Philosophy. (3 h)

Surveys the work of important figures in this period, such as G. W. F. Hegel, Soren Kierkegaard, Karl Marx, Rosa Luxemburg, Friedrich Nietzsche, and Edith Stein, addressing issues such as the nature of history, society, nihilism, alienation, and authenticity. P – One PHI course or POI.

PHI 353. Heidegger. (3 h)

Heidegger early and late. Early Heidegger: the contrast between conformism and authenticity achieved through 'being-towards-death'; meaning through communal tradition. Late Heidegger: critique of modernity's reduction of everything to 'resource'; the ethics of 'dwelling' as our proper way of being in the world. P—One PHI course or POI.

PHI 354. Wittgenstein. (3 h)

A study of the work of Ludwig Wittgenstein on such topics as the picture theory of meaning, truth, skepticism, private languages, thinking, feeling, the mystical, and the ethical. P-One PHI course (221 strongly recommended) or POI.

PHI 355. Contemporary Philosophy. (3 h)

Study of the principal works of several representative 20th century philosophers. P-One PHI course (221 strongly recommended) or POI.

PHI 356. 20th-Century European Philosophy. (3 h)

Surveys the work of important figures in this period, such as Max Weber, Martin Heidegger, Herbert Marcuse, Hannah Arendt, Michel Foucault, Jurgen Habermas, and Angela Davis, addressing issues such as the 'disenchantment' and technological 'rationalization' of modernity and the challenges of multiculturalism. P-One PHI course or POI.

PHI 359. Environmental Ethics. (3 h)

Examines the source and content of moral obligations and ethical virtues concerning our relationship to the natural world. Also listed as ENV 305. P-one course in PHI.

PHI 360. Ethics. (3 h)

Systematic examination of central ethical theories in the Western philosophical tradition. Such theories include Kantian deontology, utilitarianism, Aristotelian virtue ethics, and divine command theory. P-One PHI course or POI.

PHI 361. Topics in Ethics. (3 h)

One PHI course or POI.

PHI 362. Social and Political Philosophy. (3 h)

A systematic examination of the work of selected contemporary and traditional philosophers on topics such as the state, the family, distributive justice, property, liberty, and the common good. P-One PHI course or POI.

PHI 363. Philosophy of Law. (3 h)

Inquiry into the nature of law and its relation to morality. Classroom discussions of readings from the works of classical and modern authors focus on issues of contemporary concern involving questions of legal principle, personal liberty, human rights, responsibility, justice, and punishment. P-One PHI course or POI.

PHI 364. Freedom, Action, and Responsibility. (3 h)

Study of the nature of human freedom and related matters in the philosophy of action, metaphysics, and moral philosophy. P-One PHI course or POI.

PHI 365. Philosophy of Love and Friendship. (3 h)

Study of the historical and contemporary philosophical investigations of love and friendship. P - One PHI course or POI.

PHI 366. Global Justice. (3 h)

Does justice transcend national boundaries? Topics include citizenship, national sovereignty, war, human rights, humanitarian concerns, distribution of resources and burdens, and international law. P-One PHI course or POI.

PHI 367. Philosophical Theories in Bioethics. (3 h)

A study of the main philosophical approaches to contemporary bioethics. Each approach is examined critically and students explore how each approach informs analysis of contemporary issues in bioethics. P—One PHI course or POI.

PHI 368. Concepts of Health & Disease. (3 h)

Concepts of health, disease, and disability shape discussions in bioethics and health policy. This course examines and critically evaluates competing conceptions of health and disease. The implications of adopting different understandings of health and disease for bioethics and health policy are explored. P—One PHI course or POI.

PHI 369. Philosophy and Psychology. (3 h)

Examines philosophical issues relating to moral, social, behavioral, and/or cognitive psychology. Topics may include the existence and nature of moral character; bias, self deception, and denial; reasoning, intuition, and deliberation; and perception and consciousness. P - One PHI course or POI.

PHI 370. Philosophy and Christianity. (3 h)

Examination of the philosophical foundations of Christian thought and belief. Christian concepts of God and life everlasting, trinity, incarnation, atonement, prayer, sin, evil and obligation. P-One PHI course or POI.

PHI 371. Aesthetics and the Philosophy of Art. (3 h)

Covers such questions as: What is beauty? What is taste? What is art? Must art be beautiful? Can immoral art be good art? Readings may cover historical figures such as Plato or Kant, or may focus on contemporary writers. P-One PHI course or POI.

PHI 372. Philosophy of Religion. (3 h)

What is religion? Are the gods dead? Is God dead? Is religious belief a symptom of an underlying human weakness or biological process, or could it be a response to the sacred? Must believers rely on something less than knowledge? Are philosophical proofs the way to knowledge of God? What sort of problem is the "problem of evil" and what is its significance? How are religious beliefs like and unlike metaphysical, moral, and modern scientific beliefs? P – One PHI course or POI.

PHI 373. Philosophy of Science. (3 h)

Systematic and critical examination of major views concerning the methods of scientific inquiry, and the bases, goals, and implications of the scientific conclusions which result from such inquiry. P-One PHI course or POI.

PHI 374. Philosophy of Mind. (3 h)

Selection from the following topics: the mind-body problem; personal identity; the unity of consciousness; minds and machines; the nature of experience; action, intention, and the will. P-One PHI course or POI.

PHI 375. Philosophy of Language. (3 h)

Study of such philosophical issues about language as truth and meaning, reference and description, proper names, indexicals, modality, tense, the semantical paradoxes, and the differences between languages and other sorts of sign-systems. Also listed as LIN 375. P-One PHI course (221 strongly recommended) or POI.

PHI 376. Epistemology. (3 h)

The sources, scope and structure of human knowledge. Topics include: skepticism; perception, memory, and reason; the definition of knowledge; the nature of justification; theories of truth. P-One PHI course or POI.

PHI 377. Metaphysics. (3 h)

A survey of such issues as the nature and existence of properties, possibility and necessity, time and persistence, causation, freedom and determinism, and dualism versus materialism about the human person. P-One PHI course or POI.

PHI 378. Philosophy of Space and Time. (3 h)

Philosophical thought about space and time, from the Presocratics to the present. Topics may include the reality of the passage of time, paradoxes of change and motion, puzzles and the awareness of time, spacetime and relativity, and the possibility of time-travel. P-One PHI course or POI.

PHI 379. Feminist Philosophy. (3 h)

Examination of feminist approaches to philosophical theorizing. Topics may include feminist critiques of the scope and methods of mainstream philosophy, feminist approaches to ethics, epistemology and philosophy of language, and feminist conceptions of the self, sexuality, and moral agency. Also listed as WGS 240. P-one PHI course or POI.

PHI 380. Philosophy of Emotion. (3 h)

Examines the nature of emotions and their relationship to mind, knowledge, ethics, meaning, and politics. Focus varies by instructor. P-one course in PHI.

PHI 382. Seminar in Public Philosophy. (3 h)

Examines the role of philosophers and the contributions of philosophy in addressing substantive matters of public importance or concern. Focus varies by instructor. P-one course in Philosophy.

PHI 385. Seminar. (3 h)

Offered by members of the faculty on specialized topics of their choice. With permission, may be repeated for credit. P-POI.

PHI 391. Honors I. (1.5 h)

Directed study and research in preparation for writing an honors thesis. P- Admission to the honors program in philosophy.

PHI 392. Honors II. (1.5 h)

Completion of the honors thesis begun in PHI 391. Graduation with honors in philosophy requires successful defense of the honors thesis in an oral examination conducted by at least two members of the department. P-PHI 391.

PHI 395. Independent Study. (1-3 h)

Faculty

Chair Stavroula Glezakos

Associate Chair Patrick Toner

Kenan Professor of the Humanities and Professor of Philosophy Julian Young

A.C. Reid Professor Christian Miller

Professors Emily Austin, Adrian Bardon, Ana S. Iltis, Ralph Kennedy, Win-chiat Lee

Associate Professors Stavroula Glezakos, Patrick Toner

Assistant Professors Amanda Beth Corris, Matthew Shields

Associate Teaching Professors Adam J. Kadlac, Clark Thompson

Part-time Associate Teaching Professor Hannah M. Hardgrave

Visiting Assistant Professors Tyron Goldschmidt, Justin Jennings