

# SUNY Buffalo State Philosophy Course Offerings

## Fall 2017

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**PHI 107: Intro to Math Logic**  
**CRN 3130 11:00am – 11:50am MWF**

**Dr. Julian Cole**

This class will introduce two types of mathematical models for assessing the formal correctness of reasoning. In particular, Venn diagrams will be discussed as geometric models for assessing categorical syllogisms, while sentential and monadic predicate logics will be discussed as algebraic models for assessing the types of arguments associated with these logics.

**No texts required**

**PHI 110: Meaning of Life**  
**CRN 4001 9:00am - 9:50am MWF**

**Dr. Leigh Duffy**

In this course, we examine the ways different thinkers throughout history have approached the question of the meaning of life. We consider philosophers who argue for meaning based on God, religion, or spirituality; those who claim that meaning can be found without religion in a variety of different ways, such as in purpose or happiness; and even some who argue that life is in fact meaningless. We discuss these different approaches and try to use the best views to answer related, applied questions, such as “how can I best live my life?”, “who would I want to be my model for living a meaningful life”, “how do I consider others when making decisions about how to live a good life?”, “is there a difference between a meaningful life, a happy life, a good life, and a purposeful life?”.

**Students will be required to watch some films on their own in order to be able to discuss how the theories get applied to characters in the film.**

**Required Text:** *The Meaning of Life: A Reader* ed. E.D. Klemke and Steven M. Cahn

**PHI 210: Existentialism**  
**CRN 3991 10:50pm – 12:05pm TR**

**Dr. Kimberly Blessing**

Existentialism is a philosophical and literary movement that first was popularized in France soon after World War II by figures such as Jean-Paul Sartre and Albert Camus. The roots of this movement can be traced back to the religious writings of Blaise Pascal in the seventeenth century and those of Søren Kierkegaard in the nineteenth century. The message of Existentialism is that every one of us, as an individual, is responsible—responsible for what we do, responsible for who we are, responsible for the way we face and deal with the world, responsible, ultimately, for the way the world is. Existentialist authors exemplify a host of psychological, philosophical, theological, and literary insights as they grapple with the main themes of life: anxiety, authentic living, meaning, love, relationships, God, and death. The course has three central aspirations: (1) to show the rise and development of existentialist thought; (2) to subject existentialist thought to rigorous critical evaluation; and (3) to encourage students to reexamine and reevaluate their own lives in relation to the challenges posed by existentialism. Among authors to be considered are the following: Pascal, Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, Camus, Sartre, de Beauvoir, Beckett, Dostoyevsky, and more. **Required Course Texts:** TBA

**PHI 221: Philosophy and Yoga**  
**CRN 4003 1:00pm -1:50pm MWF**

**Dr. Leigh Duffy**

In this course, we shall explore theory in and the practice of yoga. We will examine the eight limbs of yoga and put them into practice through the course of the semester. Students will be practicing the more familiar physical part of yoga during class and will learn about and involve themselves with the other seven limbs. We will discuss the big philosophical questions such as “what is the self?”, “what is the nature of reality?”, “what are the correct forms of knowledge?,” and “what does it mean to be good?” among others, from the perspective of this tradition.

**Required Course Text:** *Yoga: Discipline of Freedom: The Yoga Sutras Attributed to Patanjali*, Barbara Stoller Miller (translator) (Bantam Publishing); *The Living Gita: The Complete Bhagavad Gita – A Commentary for Modern Readers*, Sri Swami Satchidandanda (Integral Yoga Publication)

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### **PHI 300: Social-Institutional Reality**

**Dr. Julian Cole**

**CRN 3446 1:00pm - 1:50pm MWF**

In the last fifteen years or so, philosophers have begun to take a metaphysical interest in the aspects of reality that exist only in virtue of human agreement. In this course, we will explore John Searle's theory of this part of reality, frequently known as social reality. In order to understand this theory, we will also investigate Searle's theories of intentionality, collective intentionality, and language. If time permits, we will, in addition, explore Searle's application of his theory of social reality to political power and human rights.

**Required Text:** John Searle's *Making The Social World: The Structure of Human Civilization*, Oxford University Press. ISBN: 978-0-19-539617-1.

### **PHI 310: History of Ethics**

**Dr. John Abbarno**

**CRN 2305 6:00pm – 8:40pm M**

Historical study of the writings of great Western philosophers as they examine ethical questions about self-interest, freedom, duty, and happiness in regard to the moral life. This course will include assignments that demonstrate the impact of these theories on contemporary moral problems. Includes Plato, Aristotle, Kant, Mill, and Hume.

### **PHI 314: Contemporary Ethical Theory**

**Dr. John Draeger**

**CRN 4004 9:25am – 10:40am TR**

This course will explore the nature and value of fundamental ethical principles, such as liberty, equality, and fairness. We will use these principles to frame our discussion of contemporary ethical theories. For example, should equality be grounded in a utilitarian, contractarian, or deontological framework? Or might a suitable account of virtue eliminate the need to talk about equality altogether? The goal will be to clarify the nature of the fundamental concepts while also giving us the opportunity to hone our philosophical skills by working through some of the finer points of advanced ethical theory. Pre-requisite: *Upper-division status or one or more course in philosophy.*

**Required Course Text:** Readings will be drawn from the library's collection of electronic journals and posted on ANGEL. No other text is required.

### **PHI 317: Ancient Philosophy**

**Dr. Leigh Duffy**

**CRN 3142 10:00am – 10:50am MWF**

This course traces the emergence of ideas that will form the foundation of a great deal of subsequent intellectual history. Not only is Ancient philosophy fascinating in its own right, but it is also of particular importance for us, as it is the basis for much of later science, philosophy, psychology, and society. We will examine the views of the Ancients, largely Plato and Aristotle but others as well, on matters such as knowledge, the nature of reality, the nature of humanity, the universe, happiness, goodness, and the proper way for society to function. Studying the Ancients should also allow us to gain some insight into our own, modern world and to better understand what it means to be human and to live an intelligent and worthwhile human life.

Pre-requisite: Upper-division status or one or more course in philosophy. Required Course Text:

### **PHI 351: Ethics Bowl**

**Dr. Julian Cole**

**CRN 3149 4:30pm – 5:45pm MW**

This course will prepare students for a competition in which they are judged on their ability to deploy intricate ethical reasoning in addressing case studies from practical and professional ethics. Students will develop well-informed opinions about ethically complex, everyday scenarios, orally present these opinions and supporting arguments, and provide critical oral responses to the opinions and arguments of other students and judges.

While in the past only experienced philosophy students have been encouraged to participate in Ethics Bowl, *any* student with an interest is welcome to enroll. Moreover, any student who has participated in the past is welcome to discuss with Dr. Cole the possibility of doing so again for independent study credit.

**Required Text:** James Rachels' *The Elements of Moral Philosophy* (any edition), McGraw Hill. ISBN: 0-07-3122547-4.

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