

SUNY Buffalo State Philosophy Course Offerings Fall 2021

PHI 101: Introduction to Philosophy

CRN 3640 1:40pm – 2:55pm TR

Dr. Kimberly Blessing

This course is specifically designed to introduce first-year students to some of the major figures and issues in Western Philosophy. Some of the Big Questions we will consider include: What is the point of liberal education?; Are things always as they seem?; Does God exist?; Am I free or ruled by fate?; Is there an afterlife?; What is happiness?; Am I living a good life?; Who am I and what do I value?; What is the meaning of life?; What is the nature of friendship?; Etc. Students who successfully complete this course should develop a deeper understanding of yourself, and a heightened sense of wonder about the world in which we live. Maybe even a love of wisdom. Students who do well in this course relish being challenged intellectually and enjoy reading and writing (i.e., placed into CWP 102 in their first semester.)

Required Course Text: *Frankfurt, On Bullshit (Oxford); Deresiewicz, Excellent Sheep (Simon Schuster)*

PHI 101: Introduction to Philosophy

CRN 1851 10:00am – 10:50am MWF

Dr. Leigh Duffy

This course will take a thematic approach to some basic philosophical topics including the nature of knowledge, God/religion, the nature of mind, and morality. This course will expose students to basic philosophical issues and develop their ability to think critically about such issues. This exposure will probably challenge some basic beliefs, so an open mind and a willingness to consider other beliefs are necessary.

Required Course Text: *TBA*

PHI 102: Introduction to Ethics

CRN 2753 2:00pm – 2:50pm MWF

Dr. John Draeger

This course explores a variety of social and moral questions. Should the public good outweigh private concerns? Do we have a duty to help those in need or is it enough that we leave them alone? Should the government sanction abortion, euthanasia, stem cell research, same sex marriage or capital punishment? This course will not resolve any of these important questions. However, in considering them, we will gain a better understanding of ourselves and the world around us.

Required Course Text: *No Textbook Required*

PHI 102: Introduction to Ethics

CRN 2793 1:40pm – 2:55pm TR

CRN 2919 3:05pm – 4:20pm TR

Dr. John Torrey

This course is designed to introduce students to different philosophical approaches to value theory and social and political philosophy. The primary question driving this course is, “How should we live together?” This notes, in particular, questions of justice, freedom, morality, and human nature through the work of various thinkers, including Plato, Hobbes, Locke, Martin Luther King, Jr., and Patricia Hill Collins. In addition, the course will challenge students to be proactive in shaping and forming their own worldview. In order to achieve these aims, students will learn the skills to create and evaluate arguments.

Required Course Text: *No Textbook Required*

SUNY Buffalo State Philosophy Course Offerings Fall 2021

PHI 102: Introduction to Ethics
CRN 3286 6:00pm – 8:40pm

M **(ONLINE SYNCHRONOUS)**

Dr. John Abbarno

Various views of how we ought to live and how society should be organized, considered in the context of discussions about the “good” life and “good” society. Several ethical issues shall be presented which underscore the breadth of meaning one can offer for the “good society.”

Required Course Text: *Sommers & Sommers, Vice and Virtue in Everyday Life (VV) Rachels, James, Moral of Moral Philosophy (EMP)*

Recommended: *Read the current new magazines such as Time*

PHI 103: Intro to Logic
CRN 3641 1:00 pm – 1:50 pm

MWF

Dr. Leigh Duffy

Every day we are bombarded with information that attempts to persuade us to act in various ways. This information includes material from newspapers and magazines, political broadcasts, pamphlets on various causes, television ads, details of investment opportunities, and many other sources. The primary aim of this course is to provide students with some of the intellectual tools that are available for evaluating this information. Specifically, we shall be considering a number of common fallacies to which arguments in these media often fall prey. A secondary aim of this course is to aid students in clearly understanding, representing, evaluating, and writing arguments, particularly arguments found in everyday contexts.

Required Course Text: *TBA*

PHI 111: Ethics for Scientists
CRN 3835 12:00pm – 12:50pm

MWF

Dr. Jason Grinnell

Ethics for Scientists is designed to appeal to the academic interests and needs of students majoring in the sciences. We shall study ethics by focusing on scientific issues, problems, and controversies. Among other things, we will explore scientific reasoning and skepticism, Darwinism, egoism, altruism, some traditional ethical theory, and a range of particular topics in applied ethics such as research ethics or animal rights.

Required Course Text: *No Textbook Required*

PHI 210: Existentialism
CRN 3644 3:00pm – 5:40pm

W

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 Text: *TBA*

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PHI 300: Emotions

CRN 3645 11:00am – 11:50am MWF

Dr. Leigh Duffy

The capacity for reason is often taken to be the distinguishing feature of human beings. However, humans are also unique in the wide range of emotions they are able to experience. While some emotions are displayed in ways very similar to animal behavior, other emotions are much more sophisticated and almost seem to require a higher intellect. Yet, there is a tendency to view emotions as in direct conflict with reason and logic. Philosophically speaking, there is much to discuss when it comes to emotions!

The entry point into Philosophy of Emotions for this class is in comparing different theories of emotions, broadly construed. Are emotions mental events or are they merely physical events? Do all emotions have an associated feeling and is a feeling sufficient? Do all emotions require a belief? Is there a difference between an emotion, a mood, and a mere reaction? These and other related questions having to do with the nature of emotions, as a subset of mental events, will be the focus of the first half of the class. Once students have an understanding of the different theories of emotions generally speaking, we will pick one or two emotions to focus on in order to better understand the subtleties around them (e.g. fear & startle; happiness & joy; or envy & jealousy). With time permitting, we will also address the questions of what emotions can tell us about the world, whether or not animals have emotions, and what would it mean for a robot or highly developed machine to have emotions.

Required Course Text: *TBA*

PHI 361: Race and Progress

CRN 3207 3:00pm – 5:40pm M

Dr. John Torrey

The questions of African-American philosophy are diverse and address a number of unique issues. African-American philosophy refers here to conceptually and analytically rigorous philosophical studies of topics closely related to the social, legal, economic, historical, and cultural experiences of the descendants of African slaves in the United States. In this course, we will examine the notion of progress for African-Americans by engaging questions such as: What is progress for the African-American community? Has the concept of race changed due to progress? Does political solidarity among African-Americans promote progress? Why is the measure of progress in the African-American community often ignoring the status of African-American women? Does progress require the end of racism? Looking at how African-American philosophers have responded to these questions across history can help us investigate what progress means in contemporary times.

Required Course Text: *No Textbook Required*

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REL 104: Introduction to Religious Studies
CRN 2973 8:00am – 9:15am TR

Dr. Elizabeth Lenegan

This is a general introduction to religious studies. We will examine what is important in religions generally, ethics, basic questions, philosophy, beliefs about good and evil, the afterlife, and why they work as they do. The emphasis is on religions in general rather than analyzing a specific religion

Required Course Text: *TBA*

REL 303: Women in Global Religions: Women in Islam
CRN 3765 3:05pm – 4:20pm TR

Susan C. Randaccio

This course examines the history of women and gender in Islam from Muhammad to contemporary times. We will begin by building an understanding of Abrahamic faith traditions that precede the Revelations to Muhammad. We will study the Revelations received by Muhammad, the birth of Islam, and the traditions of the early Muslim community. We will then look at the traditions as well as how women practice and experience Islam and Muslim culture in the Golden Age of Islam through the Ottoman period, looking at religious, social, and legal trends. The second half of the course will focus on the impact of the rise of the West and appraise the impact of colonialism, modernist reform, nationalism, and Western orientalist perceptions, looking at the examples of Egypt, secular Turkey, and Saudi Arabia in the 19th and 20th century as case studies. Lastly, we will look at contemporary experiences of faith for Muslim women worldwide, including in Western migrant communities.

Required Course Text: *TBA*

REL 321: World Religions
CRN 1434 9:25am – 10:40am TR

Dr. Elizabeth Lenegan

This course is designed to introduce the student to the major religions of the world- Hinduism, Buddhism, Taoism, Confucianism, Shinto, Judaism, Christianity and Islam. The values, rituals, doctrines and practices of these traditions will be explored.

Required Course Text: *Molloy, Experiencing the World Religions (7th Edition)*

REL 360: Western Monotheisms
CRN 2974 1:40pm – 2:55pm TR

Joseph Marren

This course is an examination of the belief systems of the three major Abrahamic faiths (Judaism, Christianity and Islam). It will provide a brief overview of the core beliefs and theological challenges as they evolved in contact with each other. Parallels with Hellenistic thought will also be examined as the basis for ontotheology. Ideas and efforts toward ecumenism will be explored.

Required Course Text: *TBA*