

SUNY Buffalo State Philosophy Course Offerings Fall 2022

PHI 101: Introduction to Philosophy

CRN 1692 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 102: Introduction to Ethics

CRN 2390 10:50am – 12:05pm 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*

PHI 103: Intro to Logic

CRN 2719 1:00 pm – 1:50 pm MWF

Dr. Julian Cole

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: *No Textbook Required*

PHI 111: Ethics for Scientists

CRN 2869 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*

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PHI 112: Ethics for Business

CRN 3509 3:00pm – 5:40pm

M

Dr. John Abbarno

The overall goal of this class is to give students more refined critical thinking skills with which to identify and effectively resolve a range of moral problems that routinely arise in business and professional life. Topics include the nature of moral reasoning; concepts of productive and distributive justice; the strengths and limitations of capitalism; corporation structures, with emphasis on emerging corporate forms focused on creating a responsible capitalism; the practice of ethical leadership; business responsibilities to the public, the environment and consumers; the rights and duties of employees; and cross-cultural conflicts in international business. Some classes involve discussion of one or more business cases in which students apply the concepts under study to the problems presented in the case situations

PHI 115: Minds and Machines

CRN 3510 11:00am – 11:50am

MWF

CRN 3789 1:00pm – 1:50pm

MWF

Dr. Leigh Duffy

Introduction to questions in the study of the philosophy of mind. Explores the difficulties of studying the mind and limitations of scientific investigation into the mind, including using data-processing machines as a model of the mind; the problem of other minds; questions regarding free will; what it means to be conscious; the claims of weak and strong A.I.; and the possibility of consciousness or intelligence in animals, in the natural world, and in machines.

Required Course Text: Philosophy of Mind by Amy Kind and other electronic readings shared through Blackboard

PHI 210: Existentialism

CRN 2720 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 301: Justice: Liberty v Equality
CRN 3511 1:40pm – 2:55pm TR

Dr. John Torrey

A rigorous examination of the history of the justification for government and the economic systems that accompany them. In particular, there is a focus on liberal democracies, societies influenced by Marxism, and navigating how to balance the freedoms people have while keeping the government and economic systems in a just order.

PHI 304: Philosophy of Law
CRN 3512 2:00pm – 2:50pm MWF

Dr. John Draeger

This course will explore a variety of questions. Why should we obey the law? Why should laws have authority over us? How are law and morality related? How are law and economics related? What is the difference between civil and criminal law? What is the relationship between legislators and the courts? This course will not resolve any of these important questions. However, in considering them, we should have a better understanding of the law as a complex social institution that helps govern our lives.

Required Course Text: TBA

PHI 324: Zen Buddhism
CRN 3513 10:00am – 10:50am MWF

Dr. Leigh Duffy

Zen is a paradoxical method by which suffering of existence is transformed into everyday enlightenment. This class examines the contemporary practices of Zen and its historical origins in Buddha's "complete and unexcelled" enlightenment and in Lao-Tzu's living in harmony with the Tao. We will also study the foundations of this practice in the noble truths of Buddhism.

Required Course Text: *Hesse, H. Siddhartha. (Translated by Joachim Neugroschel). Penguin Books., Suzuki, S. Zen Mind, Beginner's Mind. Weatherhill. (ZMBM), Lao Tzu. Tao Te Ching. (Translated by John C. H. Wu). Shambhala*

PHI 361: Race and Progress
CRN 2643 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 2546 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 105: Introduction to Christian Thought
CRN 3514 1:40pm – 2:55pm TR

Joseph Marren

This course looks at the formation of early Christian thought (patristics) and intersections with scholasticism and its Thomist critics. Parallels are drawn between the theoretical base and modern interpretations in areas such as literature, ethics, civil religion, etc., in the Western World.

Required Course Text: *No Textbook Required*

REL 321: World Religions
CRN 1353 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)*