

SUNY Buffalo State Philosophy Course Offerings Spring 2022

PHI 101: Introduction to Philosophy

CRN 1195 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 2708 10:50am – 12:05pm TR

CRN 2829 1:40pm – 2:55pm 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 102: Introduction to Ethics

CRN 2265 6:00pm – 8:40pm M

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*

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PHI 110: Meaning of Life

CRN 2273 11:00am – 11:50am 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 115: Minds and Machines

CRN 3567 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.

PHI 300: Mindfulness, Meditation, and Philosophy

CRN 2202 10:00 am – 10:50am MWF

Dr. Leigh Duffy

This course investigates the Eastern philosophical roots of mindfulness and meditation practices found specifically in Zen Buddhism and yoga. We will discuss the way these Eastern Philosophical traditions answer important questions about the nature of the universe, about humanity, about the nature of the mind, about personal identity, and about how to live a good life. We will look at the ways in which mindfulness and meditation are related to those answers and the methods of investigation and how they have changed. We will compare and contrast the alternative theories and analyze their strengths and weaknesses. We will also practice mindfulness and meditation exercises as a class. The personal practice will allow us to develop a deeper understanding of the philosophy and the tools to find more peace and contentment in life.

Required Course Text: TBA

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PHI 308: Love and Sex

CRN 2388 2:00pm – 2:50pm

MWF

Dr. John Draeger

This course explores the nature of intimate interpersonal relationships with friends, family, and romantic partners. For example, what is the difference between a friend and a lover? Is it the sex or is it an alternative form of love? In the process of considering how to characterize intimate relationships, we will examine a variety of related ideas, including love, trust, sex, and compassion

Required Course Text: TBA

PHI 314: Rights and Respect

CRN 3884 1:00pm – 1:50pm

MWF

Dr. John Draeger

This course will explore the nature and value of human rights and importance of respect for all people. We will use these principles to frame our discussion of contemporary ethical issues, such as black lives matter, #Metoo, and climate change. 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 Blackboard. No other text is required.

PHI 335: God and Religion

CRN 3568 3:00pm – 5:40pm

W

Dr. Kimberly Blessing

Philosophy of religion is the branch of philosophy that applies philosophical reasoning and methodology to matters concerning God and religion. This course will focus attention on God and religion as presented in the Judeo-Christian tradition, mainly Christianity. We shall read selections from philosophers including: Anselm, Aquinas, Pascal, Voltaire, Hume, Kierkegaard, Dostoyevsky, Bertrand Russell, John Hick, etc. We shall touch upon various topics and issues in philosophy of religion including: traditional proofs of God's existence and critiques of these proofs; the problem of evil and various responses to this problem; alternatives to the traditional proofs; differences between faith and reason; critiques of religion, etc.

Additionally, we will use the following books: Hume, David. Dialogues on Natural Religion (Hackett Publishers); Kreeft, Peter. Christianity for Modern Pagans: Pascal's Pensées (Ignatius Press); Voltaire. Candide (Wotton, trans.; Hackett Publishers). Additional readings are posted online.

PHI 360: Africana Philosophy

CRN 2580 3:00pm – 5:40pm

W

Dr. John Torrey

Philosophical thought across the African diaspora. Both historic and contemporary responses to issues specific to the black experience across the globe, such as understanding freedom, rationality, and humanity from the position of the formerly enslaved and/or colonized, and analysis regarding the intersections of race, gender, and white supremacy.

Required Course Text: TBA

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REL 104: Introduction to Religious Studies
CRN 2391 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 206: Introduction to the New Testament
CRN 3883 1:40pm – 2:55pm TR

Joseph Marren

This introductory course is intended to acquaint students with the various books of the New Testament and deal with questions concerning the possible purposes, authorship, and the historical and social situations in which these Christian Scriptures were written. The course will also help students become knowledgeable of some of the hypothetical sources used in these texts, the literary forms employed, and theological underpinnings that influenced their content.

REL 321: World Religions
CRN 1279 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)*