Philosophy

PHILOSOPHY: THE BIG QUESTIONS
PHL 2050-01  Keith Sims  11:15-12:10  MWF
PHL 2050-02  Keith Sims  10:10-11:05  MWF
PHL 2050-03  Linda Farmer  9:30-10:50  T&Th Honors Section

Like philosophers through the ages, students in this class will pursue the “big questions” of life. We will discuss such perennially fascinating topics as: Can you survive the death of your body, and if not, can it be bad for you to die? Is there a God? Is it rational to be moral? Are there “right answers” to ethical questions, or is ethics just subjective? What is the meaning of life? We will examine these questions by reading selections from classic philosophical texts, and put our own beliefs about them under critical scrutiny. Our goal in these discussions will be to appreciate the complexities and difficulties such questions raise for our most fundamental and deeply held beliefs. This course fulfills the Area 4: Arts & Humanities requirement in the WSU Core Curriculum.

CRITICAL THINKING
PHL 3000-01  Scott Wilson  11:15-12:10  MWF
PHL 3000-02  Scott Wilson  1:25-2:20  MWF
PHL 3000-03  William Irvine  2:30-3:25  MWF
PHL 3000-04  Erik Banks  11:00-12:20  T&Th
PHL 3000-05  Jacob Bauer  12:30-1:50  T&Th
PHL 3000-06  Jacob Bauer  2:00-3:20  T&Th

This course will develop your reasoning skills: your ability to recognize the differences between facts and opinions, to distinguish relevant from irrelevant information, to identify unstated assumptions, to detect bias, to recognize fallacious reasoning, and to evaluate claims, definitions and arguments. It will help you cultivate clear, disciplined, and independent thinking that is readily applicable to your academic, social and personal pursuits.

NOTE: Beginning Fall 2015 all CoLA Majors are required to take PHL 3000 Critical Thinking. If you have already taken PHL 2150 Inductive Logic, PHL 2230 Symbolic Logic, PHL 4710 Philosophy of the Physical Sciences, or PHL 4720 Philosophy of the Social Sciences you have fulfilled the CoLA requirement and do not need to take PHL 3000. But beginning Fall 2015 all CoLA Majors will have to take PHL 3000 to fulfill the CoLA requirement.

PHILOSOPHY & MODERN PHYSICS (1900-1930)  Erik Banks
PHL 3990/5990-01  2:00-3:20  T&Th

100 years ago the greatest of all scientific revolutions took place when the theories of relativity and quantum mechanics were discovered, changing our view of the universe forever, with enormous consequences for philosophy. We will look at some of the highlights of this amazing story from a humanistic as well as a scientific perspective. No scientific or mathematical background is assumed beyond a willingness to learn. This course fulfills the Core Curriculum area requirement for the Philosophy Major.
FAITH & REASON
PHL 3830/5830, REL 3930-5930-01  Linda Farmer
12:30-1:50 T&Th
Does God exist? Are any of the arguments for God’s existence any good? Is belief in God compatible with being a rational, intelligent person? Or is faith inherently irrational? What does it mean to believe in God anyway? These questions & more will be explored through primary readings & discussions. This course is an Integrated Writing course. This course fulfills the Value Theory area requirement for the Philosophy Major.

PHILOSOPHY OF STATE & SOCIETY
PHL 2100-01  William Irvine
1:25-2:20 MWF
Many people equate politics with the battle between MSNBC and Fox, between Democrats and Republicans, or between liberals and conservatives. Politics is far more than this, though. In Philosophy of State & Society, we will undertake a novel analysis of the political debates of our time by asking and attempting to answer a series of basic questions, including the following: What is fairness? What is poverty? What are rights? What is diversity? Do humans have a nature, and if so, what is it? What is happiness, and what is the best way to attain it? Which is more important, our motives for acting or the consequences of our actions? Students might not change their political views as a result of taking this course, but they will likely emerge far more knowledgeable about whatever views they hold. This course fulfills the Area 4: Arts & Humanities requirement in the WSU Core Curriculum.

ETHICS
PHL 3110/5110-01  Scott Wilson
11:00-12:20 T&Th
This course will familiarize students with contemporary meta-ethics. Unlike normative ethics or applied ethics, meta-ethics is not concerned with determining what actions are right or wrong, or what sorts of things are good or bad. Instead, meta-ethics is concerned with questions such as: Can ethics be objective? What does it mean to say that something is objective or subjective? If ethics is not objective, then how should we understand ethical statements? Are ethical properties secondary qualities? Do ethical judgments necessarily give us reasons to act? Do ethical judgments necessarily motivate us to act? As this is an upper-level seminar, prior classes in philosophy will be useful to do well in the course. This course fulfills the Value Theory area requirement for the Philosophy Major.