

PHILOSOPHY  
DEPARTMENT  
COURSES  
2024-25



# PH202 MODERN EUROPEAN PHILOSOPHY: A VIEW FROM THE MARGINS OF REASON

Block 1            **AIM and EPG**

Taught by: Willow Mindich

Who is this for?

- People who wish to investigate the process(es) through which knowledge is acquired
- People who wish to interrogate the concept of the *ideal knower* and to whom such a label does or does not apply
- Anyone who is interested in learning more about why some people are wrongfully disqualified as knowers
- Students who are curious about philosophy and would like to give it a try—first-years are welcome!

Skills you'll develop:

- Close Reading
- Critical Reading
- Critical Thinking
- Critical Writing
- Equity and Inclusion
- Effective Communication on Sensitive Topics
- Introspection



# PH246 ENVIRONMENTAL ETHICS

Block 1

**AIM**

Cross-listed with EV

Taught by: Cara Greene

Who is this for?

- People who care about the natural world and want better tools for deciding the ethical questions surrounding its use.
- People interested in comparing Indigenous and Native American environmental ethics with Western environmental ethics.
- People who want to discuss the big—and often scary—existential questions about how to live ethically in the age of the Anthropocene.
- Students who are curious about philosophy and would like to give it a try—first-years are welcome!

Skills you'll develop:

- Close Reading
- Argumentation
- Comparing environmental paradigms
- Equity & Inclusion
- Mindfulness
- Communication
- Ethical reasoning



# PH303 THE AESTHETICS OF GAMES

Block 1            **CP**

Taught by: Helen Daly

Who is this for?

- People who love games or art
- People who want to think more deeply about what makes games valuable
- The course has a pre-requisite (at least one prior philosophy course), but the instructor will consider waiving this requirement for students who are passionate about the topic.

Skills you'll develop:

- Aesthetic Sensitivity
- Critical Reading
- Critical Writing
- Teamwork
- Mindful Game Design



# PH226 FORMAL LOGIC

Block 2            **FRL**

Taught by: Helen Daly

Who is this for?

- People who would like to improve their ability to understand and create arguments
- People who enjoy puzzles
- People curious about the foundations of human reason
- No experience necessary—all are welcome!

Skills you'll develop:

- Argument analysis
- Recognizing complex patterns
- Managing information
- Critical thinking



# PH261 PHILOSOPHY OF MIND

## Block 2

Taught by: Rick Furtak

Who is this for?

- Anyone who is curious about the nature of the human mind. What is the psyche? What is thought? Memory? Perception? Feeling?
- Could a computer be conscious? What are the abilities and limitations of scientific explanation in studying the mind?
- Students who are curious about philosophy and would like to give it a try—first-years are welcome!

Skills you'll develop:

- Interpret and analyze the methods used in addressing abstract questions, issues, and problems
- Engage with philosophical authors in their historical context
- Learn how to think and write more accurately and carefully



# PH281 INDIAN PHILOSOPHY

Block 2            **AIM**

Taught by: Cara Greene

Who is this for?

- People curious about questions that have puzzled Indian philosophers for 2000 years
- People interested in studying Hinduism, Buddhism, and Jainism philosophically
- People interested in non-Western philosophy, the history of philosophy, metaphysics, and/or philosophy of language
- People who see philosophy as a way of life
- Students who are curious about philosophy and would like to give it a try—first-years are welcome!

Skills you'll develop:

- Argumentation & writing
- Communication
- Close reading
- Mindfulness



# PH285 PHILOSOPHY AND RACE

Block 2            **AIM** and **EPG**    Cross-listed with REMS

Taught by: Cody Gomez

Who is this for?

- People who wonder what race is and what it means.
- People who wonder what racism is, its impact on us, and how to combat it.
- People who wonder about racial identities, their role, and impact on our lives.
- People interested in social justice.
- Students curious about philosophy and how philosophy can be applied to contemporary discussions of race and racism beyond the university. First-years are welcome!

Skills you'll develop:

- Critical thinking
- Critical reading
- Effective communication on sensitive topics
- Analytic writing
- Collaboration and teamwork
- Navigating disagreement toward common goals



# PH101 GREEK PHILOSOPHY

Block 3            **AIM** and **HP**    Cross-listed with Classics

Taught by: Jonathan Lee

Who is this for?

- Anyone interested in the origins of what has come to be called “philosophy” in the Western tradition.
- Anyone curious about the questions and texts that have shaped philosophical inquiry in the European traditions for 2500 years.
- Students who are curious about philosophy and would like to give it a try—first-years are welcome!

Skills you’ll develop:

- Critical thinking
- Oral and written communication
- Analysis of texts
- Interpretation of texts



# PH141 PHILOSOPHY AND LITERATURE

Block 3            **AIM**    Cross-listed with Comp. Lit.

Taught by: Rick Furtak

Who is this for?

- Any student who loves literature and/or philosophy, and who would like to enrich their experiences with these kinds of texts
- Anyone interested in reflecting on the variety of styles in which philosophy is written
- Students who are curious about philosophy and would like to give it a try—first-years are welcome!

Skills you'll develop:

- Interpret and analyze the methods used in addressing abstract questions, issues, and problems
- Engage with philosophical authors in their historical context
- Think and write more accurately and carefully



# PH203 PSYCHOANALYSIS, SELF, AND CREATIVITY

Block 3            **AIM**

Taught by: J.P. Rosensweig

Who is this for?

- Students who want to understand what it is to live an authentic life, and what blockages to such a life might be
- Students interested in creativity and the role it can play in our lives
- Students who want to discover how unconscious motivations can influence human lives
- Students who are curious about philosophy and would like to give it a try—first-years are welcome!

Skills you'll develop:

- Read and comprehend difficult texts
- Think and inquire philosophically
- Write about complex ideas with clarity
- Better understand oneself and others



# PH342 CRITICAL THEORY

Block 3            **SHB**

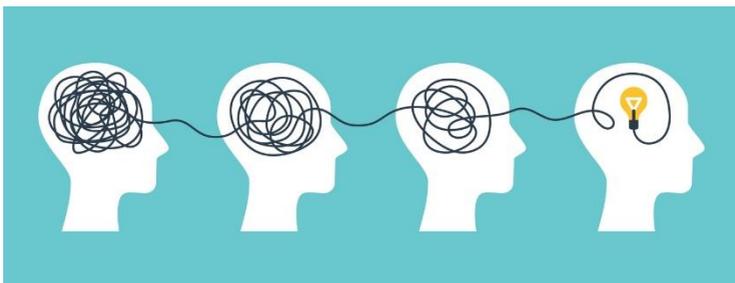
Taught by: Dennis McEnerney

Who is this for?

- Students who have taken at least one course in philosophy; or, with consent of the instructor, one course in a related field (political theory, sociological theory, intellectual history, psychoanalysis, etc.)
- Anyone interested in holistic radical critiques of the modern Western world, including the politics, economics, society, psychology, and technology that we find ourselves thrown into
- Readers willing to grapple with texts that are challenging both intellectually and personally
- People willing to step back from everyday practices, think in historical and global terms, and question the apparent naturalness of modern life

Skills you'll develop:

- Reading and interpreting challenging texts
- Contextualizing recent and contemporary life in historical perspective
- Recognizing and critiquing large-scale social processes
- Situating people and social groups within (and against) ubiquitous power structures
- Identifying opportunities for and limitations to democratic change



# PH203 MAD WORLD: PSYCHOANALYSIS AND SOCIETY

Block 4      **AIM**

Taught by: Cara Greene

Who is this for?

- People who feel like today's world is crazy-making.
- People concerned about the mental health crisis.
- People interested in phenomena like racism, aggression, narcissism, nationalism, trauma, and projection (among others) on individual & collective levels.
- People curious about why individuals act against their own interests.
- Students interested in psychoanalysis.
- Students interested in psychology, sociology, political theory, critical theory, and media studies.
- Students who are curious about philosophy and would like to give it a try—first-years are welcome!

Skills you'll develop:

- Close reading
- Self-knowledge
- Argumentation and writing
- Critical media analysis
- Oral communication
- Interpretation



# PH229 PHILOSOPHY OF LANGUAGE

Block 4      **AIM**

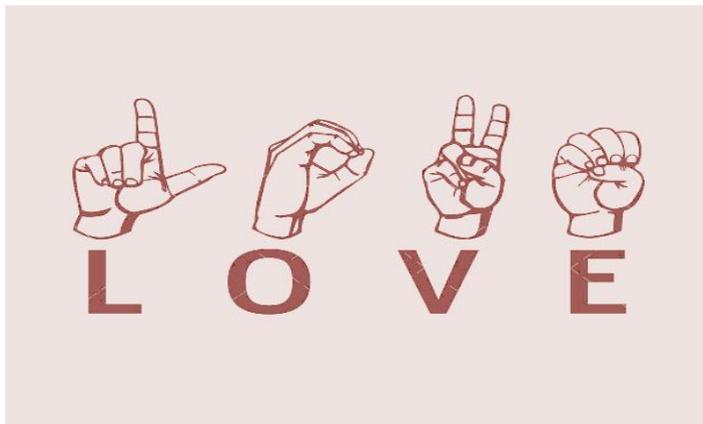
Taught by: Helen Daly

Who is this for?

- Anyone who has wondered about how communication works, or the limits of communication
- People who love words and want to think more about how words can mean things
- People interested in the mechanisms of subtle uses of language, like hints and political “dog whistles”
- Students who are curious about philosophy and would like to give it a try—first-years are welcome!

Skills you’ll develop:

- Critical Reading
- Written Communication
- Oral Communication
- Teamwork



# PH350 HISTORY-PHILOSOPHY SEMINAR

*(this year, on The History and Philosophy of Anarchism)*

Block 4

Cross-listed with History

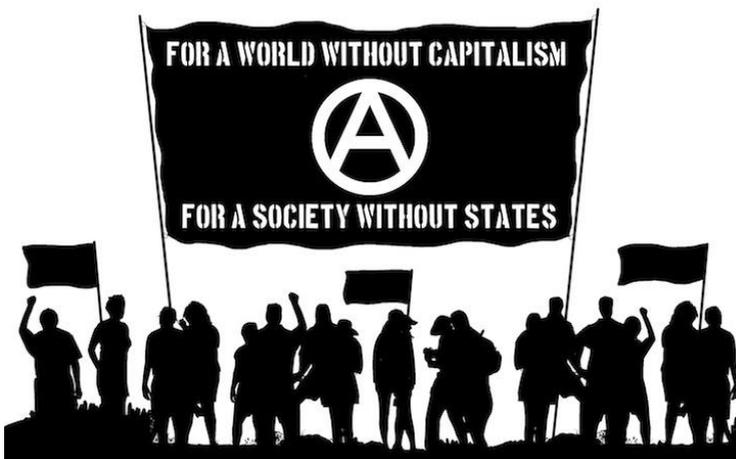
Taught by: Jonathan Lee and Jake Smith

Who is this for?

- Students who have already taken at least one course in history or philosophy, and who are interested in radical politics.
- Anyone interested in the important texts of the anarchist tradition.
- Anyone interested in the history of anarchist activism.
- Anyone who questions hierarchical forms of social and political organization.

Skills you'll develop:

- Critical thinking
- Oral and written communication
- Analysis of texts
- Interpretation of texts
- Teamwork



# PH204 AMERICAN PHILOSOPHY

Block 5      **AIM**

Taught by: John Riker

Who is this for?

- Anyone who thinks philosophy should apply to real life
- People who want to deepen their relation to nature
- Students who are curious about philosophy and would like to give it a try—first-years are welcome!

Skills you'll develop:

- Read and comprehend difficult texts
- Think about and connect complex concepts
- Write about complex ideas with clarity and rigor



# PH243 PHILOSOPHY AND POLITICS OF IDENTITY

Block 5            **SHB** and **HP**

Taught by: Cody Gomez

Who is this for?

- Anyone curious about the role of social identities in who we are as individuals or as a society
- People interested in politics and social justice.
- People who wonder about their own identity, its sources, and how it comes to be.
- Students curious about philosophy and how philosophy can be applied to contemporary discussions of identity beyond the classroom. First-years are welcome!

Skills you'll develop:

- Critical thinking
- Critical reading
- Introspection and communication
- Analytic writing
- Oral presentation
- Collaboration and teamwork
- Navigating diversity of experiences towards common goals



# PH244 CLASSICAL SOCIAL AND POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY

Block 5      **HP** and **WD**      Cross-listed with Classics

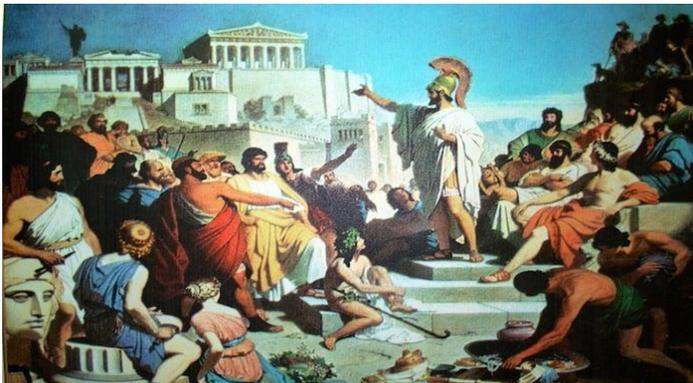
Taught by: Dennis McEnerney

Who is this for?

- People curious about the fundamental questions about life, nature, and power raised by Plato and Aristotle
- Students interested in exploring whether thought can contest brute power
- Students interested in pre-modern forms of politics and their implications for the contemporary world
- Anyone curious about philosophy and its origins as a discrete activity – first-year students welcome!

Skills you'll develop:

- Reading and interpreting complex and engaging texts
- Understanding how different historical circumstances shape norms and expectations – then and now
- Writing that connects both personal understanding and worldly concerns
- Recognizing and critiquing recurring patterns in personal, social, and political life



# PH303 HEGEL'S POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY

## Block 5

Taught by: Cara Greene

Who is this for?

- One prior course in philosophy is required.
- People interested in reading challenging philosophical texts.
- People interested in how philosophy can be mobilized in service of vastly different political ideologies like communism, fascism, and liberalism.
- People interested in history (esp. modern France and Germany), political science, critical theory, continental philosophy, and the history of ideas.

Skills you'll develop:

- Advanced close reading
- Advanced philosophical writing
- Argumentation



# PH380 JAPANESE EXISTENTIALISM

Block 5                      Cross-listed with Asian Studies

Taught by: Rick Furtak

Who is this for?

- Students interested in the intersection of Japanese and European philosophy
- People who wonder about whether life has a meaning
- Explore some of the twentieth century's most distinct and fascinating thinkers.
- One prior course in philosophy (or COI) is required.

Skills you'll develop:

- Interpret and analyze the methods used in addressing abstract questions, issues, and problems
- Engage with philosophical authors in their historical context
- Think and write more accurately and carefully



# PH247 AESTHETICS

Block 6            **AIM**

Taught by: Heather Adair

Who is this for?

- Anyone who participates in the arts (painting, photography, sculpture, music, theater, etc.)
- Anyone who loves the arts or wants to appreciate them more
- Anyone curious about what makes art distinctive
- Anyone who wants to think more deeply about our emotional reactions to art
- Students who are curious about philosophy and would like to give it a try—first-years are welcome!

Skills you'll develop:

- Critical thinking
- Class debate & discussion
- Analytic writing
- Art criticism
- Hands-on application of art theory to creation/appreciation



# PH248 CONTESTING CLIMATE JUSTICE

Block 6

**AIM** and **EPUS**

Cross-listed with EV

Taught by: Marion Hourdequin

Who is this for?

- Students interested in exploring the opportunities and challenges for just responses to climate change
- Students who want to understand diverse perspectives on climate justice
- Students who are curious about philosophy or environmental studies and want to take a course in these areas—first-years are welcome!

Skills you'll develop:

- Critical and close reading
- Analysis of concepts and arguments
- Informal and formal writing
- Ability to comparatively assess diverse discourses of climate justice
- Understanding the role of power in climate policy and climate justice discourses



# PH284 FEMINIST PHILOSOPHIES

Block 6            **AIM, SHB, and EPUS**

Taught by: Cara Greene

Who is this for?

- People interested in traditional, critical, intersectional, and decolonial feminist thought
- People interested in how women are represented in visual art, film, and TV
- People who want to talk to visual artists, comedians, and filmmakers about gender & creativity
- People who want to learn about gender and gender-based oppression through the lens of philosophy
- Students interested in women & gender studies, media studies, sociology, and politics
- Students who are curious about philosophy and would like to give it a try—first-years are welcome!

Skills you'll develop:

- Close reading
- Self-knowledge
- Argumentation and writing
- Critical media analysis
- Oral communication



# PH452 PHILOSOPHY JUNIOR SEMINAR

Block 6

**Topic: The Philosophy of Amy Allen: Critical Theory, Feminist Interventions, and Psychoanalytic Understanding**

Taught by: Dennis McEnnerney

Who is this for?

- Advanced philosophy majors – a course required of all Philosophy majors with a different topic each year
- Typically taken in the junior year, but can be delayed until the senior year
- Students interested in exploring this year's focus on advanced critical theory
- Open to minors and to advanced majors in related fields with consent of instructor

Skills you'll develop:

- Advanced philosophical reading and interpretation
- Understanding how an author develops their ideas
- Engaging with an innovative thinker in writing and in person
- Articulating your own perspective



*Amy Allen*

*Associate Dean for Faculty  
Affairs and Advancement*

*Distinguished Professor of  
Philosophy and Women's,  
Gender, and Sexuality  
Studies at Penn State*

# PH122 PHILOSOPHICAL ARGUMENT AND WRITING

Block 7            **AIM, CP, and WI**

Taught by: Cody Gomez

Who is this for?

- People who want to improve their writing and reasoning skills
- People who like to read and discuss well-written essays on interesting subjects
- People who want to develop their own opinions
- Students who are curious about philosophy and would like to give it a try—first-years are welcome!

Skills you'll develop:

- Logical reasoning
- Analytic writing
- Revising and editing
- Collaboration
- Oral presentation
- Critical reading
- Critical thinking



# PH140 ETHICS

Block 7      **AIM**

Taught by: John Riker

Who is this for?

- Anyone who wonders how to live a good life
- People who want to be true to themselves and do right by others
- People who want guidance in thinking deeply about the most important, basic questions that face all humans
- Students who are curious about philosophy and would like to give it a try—first-years are welcome!

Skills you'll develop:

- Read and comprehend difficult texts
- Think about and connect complex concepts
- Write about complex ideas with clarity and rigor
- Relate philosophical ideas to how you live your own life



# PH203 PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGION

Block 7                      Cross-listed with Religion

Taught by: Rick Furtak

Who is this for?

- Anyone who wonders about the philosophical grounds of religious belief and the life of faith
- Explore the nature and epistemic value, or lack thereof, of spiritually profound or unusual experiences
- Students who are curious about philosophy and would like to give it a try—first-years are welcome!

Skills you'll develop:

- Interpret and analyze the methods used in addressing abstract questions, issues, and problems
- Engage with philosophical authors in their historical context
- Learn how to think and write more accurately and carefully



# PH302 RECENT CONTINENTAL PHILOSOPHY

Block 7

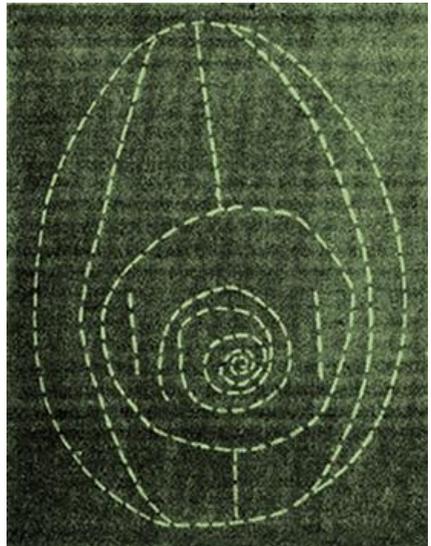
Taught by: Jonathan Lee

Who is this for?

- Students who have taken at least one prior course in philosophy
- Anyone interested in contemporary European thought
- Anyone interested in alternative philosophical methodologies

Skills you'll develop:

- Critical thinking
- Oral and written communication
- Analysis of texts
- Interpretation of texts



# PH340 ETHICS AND CONTEMPORARY LIFE

Block 7

Taught by: Willow Mindich

Who is this for?

- Students interested in learning more about stereotypes and stereotyping
- Students who wonder whether stereotypes can facilitate accurate interpretations of other human beings
- Students worried that stereotypes can generate misunderstanding and maltreatment
- This course has a pre-requisite (at least one prior philosophy course), but the instructor will consider waiving the requirement for students who are passionate about the topic

Skills you'll develop:

- Skills you'll develop:
- Close Reading
- Critical Reading
- Critical Thinking
- Critical Writing
- Equity and Inclusion
- Effective Communication on Sensitive Topics
- Introspection



# PH160 KIERKEGAARD: AN INTRODUCTION TO EXISTENTIAL PHILOSOPHY

Block 8

Taught by: Rick Furtak

Who is this for?

- Anyone who wonders about love, anxiety, and meaning
- People who are interested in genuine Christianity
- Anyone who has ever asked whether there is a greater purpose behind human existence
- Students who are curious about philosophy and would like to give it a try—first-years are welcome!

Skills you'll develop:

- Interpret and analyze the methods used in addressing abstract questions, issues, and problems
- Engage with philosophical authors in their historical context
- Learn how to think and write more accurately and carefully



# PH245 MODERN SOCIAL AND POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY

Block 8            **HP**

Taught by: Cara Greene

Who is this for?

- People who are concerned about modern alienation.
- People who ask themselves, “How did politics get here?” or “Where do we go from here?”
- Students interested in political theory
- Students who are curious about philosophy and would like to give it a try—first-years are welcome!

Skills you’ll develop:

- Close reading
- Political analysis
- Argumentation & writing
- Oral communication



# PH246 ENVIRONMENTAL ETHICS

Block 8      **AIM**      Cross-listed with EV

Taught by: Marion Hourdequin

Who is this for?

- People interested in human relations with plants, animals, and the environment, and who want tools for understanding and explaining the value of the natural world
- Students who are curious about philosophy and would like to give it a try—first-years are welcome!

Skills you'll develop:

- Understand theoretical frameworks about human relations with one another and the broader world
- Build a set of tools, approaches, and concepts for engaging in environmental ethical inquiry
- A richer sense of your own environmental ethical views
- A greater capacity to articulate and discuss your own ethical views and others'
- Critical writing, reading, and philosophical analysis



# PH360 PHILOSOPHY AND PSYCHOANALYSIS

Block 8            **AIM** and **SHB**

Taught by: John Riker

Who is this for?

- Students who have taken one prior course in philosophy
- People who want to understand how philosophy and psychoanalysis are interconnected and mutually enriching
- People interested in seeing human psychology through a humanistic lens
- People who want to probe the depths of the human mind to see what ultimately is motivating us

Skills you'll develop:

- Read and comprehend difficult texts
- Think and write about complex concepts with clarity and rigor
- Better understand oneself and others



# PH476 PHILOSOPHY SENIOR SEMINAR

Block 8

Taught by: J.P. Rosensweig

Who is this for?

- Senior Philosophy Majors who have already completed their Senior Essay block
- Only the most intellectually refined people

Skills you'll develop:

- Oral Presentation
- Revising and Editing
- Collaboration

