

Faculty

Cyrus W. Banning
Professor Emeritus

Juan E. De Pascuale
Chair, Associate Professor

Daniel Kading
Professor Emeritus

Ronald E. McLaren
Professor Emeritus

Andrew W. Pessin
Associate Professor

Joel F. Richeimer
Associate Professor

Chris Yeomans
Assistant Professor

Yang Xiao
Assistant Professor (on leave, second semester)

The great philosophers seek to answer the most basic questions about the world and our place in it. Can we distinguish between what is real and what is unreal? What is knowledge? What are the roles of reason, perception, and feeling in shaping our relations with the world and with each other? What does it mean to be a person? What is the value of art? What are we to think about religion?

Many philosophical questions are inescapable. How is one to live one's life? What are good and bad, right and wrong? How do we acquire obligations? How are we to make moral decisions? In every life, such questions arise, and everyone assumes one answer or another. To attempt to articulate your answer and to search

for better answers is to become a philosopher.

Original works of the great classical and contemporary philosophers are used in all courses. Texts are analyzed critically in order to understand what is being said and judge their merit. In class discussion and in written work, we raise questions, develop additional ideas, and construct new arguments. Classes in philosophy are generally small and usually emphasize discussion and dialogue. Students are encouraged to engage in critical thought and to come to their own conclusions.

The Philosophy Curriculum

Nearly all courses are designed to be of interest and accessible to both majors and nonmajors. Look for the ♦ symbol, which designates those courses particularly appropriate for first-year or upperclass students new to the philosophy department curriculum.

Regardless of background, students should normally take the introductory course, PHIL 100, before they take any other philosophy course at Kenyon. Each member of the philosophy faculty offers a section of the introductory course. This course serves as an introduction to the subject through the reading of original works by major philosophers. Although many of our texts derive from earlier centuries and from classical Greece, we are concerned with what is of timeless and present importance in them. We emphasize classroom discussion, focusing on interpretation of the texts and consideration of the philosophical issues raised by them. We assign several short papers and we give a final examination.

Other courses that may be taken without prerequisites are PHIL 105,

Introduction to Logic; PHIL 115, Practical Issues in Ethics; PHIL 200, Ancient Philosophy; PHIL 210, Modern Philosophy; PHIL 225, Existentialism; and PHIL 240, Philosophy of Religion.

Intermediate-level courses include such courses as PHIL 120, Symbolic Logic; PHIL 245, Philosophy of Science; PHIL 215, Nineteenth-Century Philosophy; and PHIL 270, Political Philosophy.

PHIL 335, Wittgenstein, PHIL 315, Phenomenology, and PHIL 345, Kant, are among the more advanced courses. Although the seminars—PHIL 400, Contemporary Ethics; PHIL 405, Theory of Knowledge; and PHIL 410, Metaphysics—are primarily for majors, they may be of interest to other advanced students as well.

Requirements for the Major

1. Course Requirements

4.5 units of philosophy, including the following courses:

PHIL 100 Introduction to Philosophy

PHIL 105 Introduction to Logic or

PHIL 120 Symbolic Logic

PHIL 200 Ancient Philosophy

PHIL 210 Modern Philosophy

One course from each of the three core areas (see "Core Area Courses" below)

2. Senior Exercise

All students must successfully complete the Senior Exercise (see description below).

3. Friendly Advice

Here are some tips on course planning. PHIL 100 is normally the first course. PHIL 105 or PHIL 120, PHIL 200, and PHIL 210 should normally be taken as early as possible. PHIL 400, PHIL 405, and PHIL 410 should normally begin no earlier than the second semester of the junior year.

Students who expect to do graduate work in philosophy should take PHIL 120.

Senior Exercise

The Senior Exercise consists of a comprehensive essay examination with questions drawn from Modern Philosophy, Ancient Philosophy, and core area courses.

Students with a grade point average of 3.5 and above in the major, however, have the option of writing a paper in place of sitting for the examination. The paper option is designed as an opportunity for the student to display and refine his or her philosophical skills, as well as engage in close philosophical dialogue with a faculty member. It consists of the writing of a paper under the close supervision of a faculty member, who guides the paper from its earliest stages as a mere proposal, through several drafts, until the final, polished version. The exercise concludes with the student delivering the paper before an audience of majors and faculty members and then, typically, replying to questions raised by the audience. This discussion also gives the student the opportunity to expand upon his or her ideas. The written work and oral work are evaluated as a unit.

Honors

Central to the Honors Program is a series of three related courses culminating in a thesis at the end of the senior year. The first of these courses, PHIL 398, is designed to acquaint the student with contemporary methods of philosophical thought as a preparation for writing a thesis, as well as to help in finding and developing a suitable thesis topic. The second, PHIL 497, enables the student to pursue the search for and development of a suitable topic. By the second semester of the senior year, the student should have the background necessary for writing an honors thesis in PHIL 498. Students interested in the Honors Program should submit a written request to the chair of the department before the second semester of their junior year.

1. Course Requirements

5 units of philosophy, including the following courses:

- PHIL 100 Introduction to Philosophy
 - PHIL 120 Symbolic Logic
 - PHIL 200 Ancient Philosophy
 - PHIL 210 Modern Philosophy
 - PHIL 215 Nineteenth-Century Philosophy
 - PHIL 497 and 498 Senior Honors
- One course from each of the three core areas (see below), one of which must be a seminar

For normal sequence of courses, see "Friendly Advice," above

2. Senior Exercise

All honors candidates must successfully complete the Senior Exercise (see description above).

3. Honors Thesis and Oral Examination

Upon completion of the thesis, an outside examiner and a department faculty member will read the honors thesis and participate in an oral examination on it.

4. Divisional Approval

The candidate must meet the requirements of the College and of the Humanities Division for admission to and retention in the Honors Program.

Core Area Courses

There are three core areas: ethics, epistemology, and metaphysics. The courses that may be selected to satisfy the core area requirements are listed below under the core area they satisfy. Additional courses may be announced.

Ethics

- PHIL 110 Introduction to Ethics
- PHIL 215 Nineteenth Century Philosophy
- PHIL 400 Seminar on Contemporary Ethics

Epistemology

- PHIL 220 Pragmatism
- PHIL 345 Kant
- PHIL 405 Theory of Knowledge

Metaphysics

- PHIL 205 Medieval Philosophy
- PHIL 215 Nineteenth-Century Philosophy
- PHIL 310 Heidegger's Ontology
- PHIL 410 Seminar on Metaphysics

Graduate School Considerations

Philosophy majors interested in attending graduate school are strongly encouraged to select PHIL 120 to satisfy the logic requirement, and to select PHIL 400, PHIL 405, and PHIL 410 to satisfy the core area course requirement. Such students should also consult with a faculty member as early as possible.

Synoptic Majors

Philosophy courses are often suitable for inclusion in synoptic majors, and the department welcomes such majors.

Off-Campus Studies

Philosophy majors who wish to do so are generally able to participate in off-campus study programs, particularly if they begin their major programs as sophomores.

Requirements for the Minor

The minor in philosophy consists of 2.5 units of work in the department, including the following courses:

- PHIL 100 Introduction to Philosophy
 - PHIL 105 Introduction to Logic or PHIL 120 Symbolic Logic
- One course from the history sequence (PHIL 200, or PHIL 210, or PHIL 215)

Two additional .5-unit courses in philosophy of the student's choice

First-Semester Courses

Introduction to Philosophy

◆ PHIL 100 (.5 unit)
Staff

The primary aim of this course is to acquaint the student with the spirit, methods, and problems of philosophy. An attempt is made to show the range of issues in which philosophical inquiry is possible and to which it is relevant. Major works of important philosophers, both ancient and modern, will be used to introduce topics in metaphysics, theory of knowledge, ethics, and other traditional areas of philosophical concern. Enrollment limited.

Introduction to Logic

◆ PHIL 105 (.5 unit)
Staff

This course presents an introductory examination of the nature of reasoning. Topics will include the relation between formal and ordinary language, inductive and deductive arguments, and fallacious reasoning. The emphasis will be on providing students with the basic conceptual tools and methods of thinking that are necessary to identify and evaluate both formal and informal reasoning.

Introduction to Ethics

PHIL 110 (.5 unit)
Xiao

This course explores the central question in ethics, "How should I live my life," by examining major ethical theories such as utilitarianism, Kantianism, Aristotelian virtue ethics, honor ethics, and Confucian and Daoist ethics, along with meta-ethical issues such as relativism, subjectivism, and value pluralism. The emphasis is on classical texts. Prerequisite: .5 unit in philosophy or permission of instructor.

Modern Philosophy

PHIL 210 (.5 unit)
Yeomans

This course examines seventeenth-through eighteenth-century philosophy. Major emphasis will be placed

on Descartes, Locke, Berkeley, Hume, and Kant, but we will also stop in on figures such as Malebranche, Arnauld, and Reid. We will stress metaphysical and epistemological issues throughout. It wouldn't be unfair to say that Descartes sets the agenda by creating a certain conception of the mind and the nature of knowledge, while each of the subsequent figures works out various implications of that conception. As such, the course content takes something of a narrative form, where we start with a certain optimism about knowledge, work our way into a deepening skepticism, only to be rescued at the end (by a rescuer whose price may not be worth paying). There are no official prerequisites, but PHIL 100 is recommended.

Early Chinese Philosophy

PHIL 212 (.5 Unit)
Xiao

This course is an introduction to early Chinese philosophy (in translation). We will focus on the major thinkers of the classical period of Chinese philosophy (550-221 BC): Confucius, Mozi, Mencius, Laozi, Zhuangzi, Xunzi, and Han Feizi. This is a lecture/discussion course. It is recommended that students complete PHIL 100, but there are no formal prerequisites for this course.

Existentialism

PHIL 225 (.5 unit)
De Pascuale

Existentialism is one of the most influential philosophical movements in modern culture. Unlike other recent philosophies, its impact extends far beyond the cloistered walls of academia into literature (Beckett, Kafka, Ionesco), art (Giacometti, Bacon, Dadism), theology (Tillich, Rahner, Buber), and psychology.

Existentialism is at once an expression of humanity's continual struggle with the perennial problems of philosophy (knowledge, truth, meaning, value) and a particularly modern response to the social and spiritual conditions of our times (alienation, anomie, meaninglessness).

In this course, we will study existentialism in its complete form as a cultural and philosophical movement. After uncovering the historical context from which this movement emerged, we will view the "existential" paintings of de Chirico and Munch; read the fiction of Kafka, Dostoevsky, Tolstoy, and Beckett; and closely study the thought of Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, Heidegger, and Sartre. Among the topics we shall examine are alienation, authenticity, self-knowledge, belief in God, the nature of value, and the meaning of life. No prerequisite, but PHIL 100 or RELN 111 is desirable. Enrollment limited.

Philosophy of Art

PHIL 230 (.5 unit)
De Pascuale

This course is a seminar/workshop in which we will attempt to philosophically scrutinize the delightful, complicated, and varied world of art.

The philosophy of art is not art history, art appreciation, or art criticism. It is, instead, that division of philosophy in which we critically examine the assumptions made by artists, historians, and critics of art. In Philosophy of Art, we try to define art, establish general criteria for distinguishing what is important or unique in art works, understand creativity, and ascertain the role of art in human life and society.

The aim of this course is to enable us to see and hear more clearly the kinds of objects that art presents for our contemplation and experience, so that we may come to know more and feel more. The first half of the course will be spent reading and discussing the theories of Bell, Tolstoy, Aristotle, Collingwood, Langer, Hanslick, and others. The second half of the course will largely be spent viewing, hearing, feeling, reading, and otherwise experiencing art works and philosophically questioning that experience. We shall discuss the nature of art, the ontology of objects of art, and the problems of the interpretation and criticism of art. No prerequisite. Enrollment limited.

Philosophy of Religion

PHIL 240 (.5 unit)
Pessin

In this course we will subject the concept of “God” to rigorous philosophical analysis, examining both historical and contemporary work. Among the topics we will cover: arguments for theism and atheism, the objections raised to them, and replies to these objections; the divine attributes—omnipotence, omniscience, benevolence, perfection, simplicity, etc., and the puzzles arising from them; the problems of reconciling God and His attributes with the existence of evils, or with our free will, or with scientific explanations; the problem of understanding the causal relationship between God and the world; the nature of miracles; and the question of whether belief in God without evidence may be rational. In short, we will examine whether it is possible to develop a coherent and satisfying concept of “God.” Prerequisite: PHIL 100.

Seminar on Contemporary Ethics

PHIL 400 (.5 unit)
Xiao

This seminar examines important topics in contemporary ethics, such as practical reasoning, moral luck, virtue ethics, the role of moral emotions, the sources of normativity, and the foundations of moral knowledge. Recent ethical theories and anti-theories are considered. Twentieth-century authors are emphasized. Enrollment limited to junior and senior philosophy majors or minors.

Seminar on Metaphysics

PHIL 410 (.5 unit)
Staff

The content of this course varies but includes such topics as the nature and scope of reality, causality, space, time, existence, free will, necessity, and the relations of logic and language to the world. Traditional topics such as the problems of substance and of universals may be discussed. Much of the reading will be from contemporary sources. Prerequisites: This course

is for junior or senior philosophy majors; others may be admitted with permission of the instructor.

Individual Study

PHIL 493 (.5 unit)
Staff

Prerequisites: permission of instructor and department chair.

Senior Honors

PHIL 497 (.25 unit)
Staff

Prerequisite: permission of department chair.

Second-Semester Courses**Introduction to Philosophy**

◆ PHIL 100 (.5 unit)
De Pascuale, staff

See first-semester course description.

Symbolic Logic

◆ QR PHIL 120 (.5 unit)
Staff

This course presents an introduction to modern formal logic. The nature of deductive reasoning is examined through the study of formal systems, representing the principles of valid argument.

Ancient Philosophy

PHIL 200 (.5 unit)
Staff

Ancient Greek philosophy is not only the basis of the Western and the Arabic philosophical traditions, but it is central for understanding Western culture in general, whether literature, science, religion, or values. In this course, we examine some of the seminal texts of Greek philosophy, focusing on the work of Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle. But we also examine the work of the pre-Socratics (such as Heraclitus, Zeno, and Democritus) and the Sophists (such as Protagoras and Gorgias). This is a lecture/discussion course. It is recommended that students complete PHIL 100, but there are no formal prerequisites for this course.

Medieval Philosophy

PHIL 205 (.5 unit)
Pessin

Philosophically speaking, the period between the eleventh and sixteenth centuries was a remarkably fertile one that both warrants and rewards close study. In this course we will examine some of the major thinkers and themes from the Jewish, Muslim, and Christian late medieval traditions, with an emphasis on understanding both how the medievals synthesized the wisdom of Aristotle with their dominant religious concerns and how they developed the world view against which early modern philosophy (seventeenth to eighteenth century) must be understood. Prerequisite: two philosophy courses, including either PHIL 200 or 210.

Nineteenth-Century Philosophy

PHIL 215 (.5 unit)
Yeomans

Kant’s revolutionary philosophy sparked a philosophical explosion in nineteenth-century thought. We will read four authors of the Kantian aftermath: (1) Fichte, who radicalized Kant’s focus on self-consciousness; (2) Hegel, who combined this focus on self-consciousness with a systematic treatment of philosophical problems; (3) Schopenhauer, who despised Hegel and promoted a pessimistic interpretation of Kantian philosophy; and (4) Marx, who found the very focus on self-consciousness to be complicit in the alienation of the working class. Our readings focus on the way in which self-consciousness is used in arguments in practical philosophy regarding concepts such as property, punishment, morality, and political authority. Prerequisite: at least one of the following, PHIL 210 (Modern Philosophy), PHIL 270 (Contemporary Political Philosophy), or PHIL 345 (Kant).

Philosophy of Mind

PHIL 260 (.5 unit)
Pessin

Mentality is not like much else in the universe. Mentality (or mind) is quite

peculiar. The human brain (unlike other physical things) has the power to think. We have thoughts. Yet what are thoughts? Thoughts don't seem to be physical. For instance, unlike physical objects, thoughts don't have any weight. One does not gain weight by having new thoughts or lose weight by forgetting them. Unlike physical objects, thoughts have no shape. The thought of a circle is not circular. Yet thoughts have power. When we explain human behavior, we do so by saying that the person has certain thoughts; i.e., they have certain beliefs and certain desires. Those beliefs and desires (those thoughts) caused the person to act the way he did. The view that there are thoughts, that thoughts are in minds, that thoughts cause behavior, is the ordinary everyday view of the world. It is called folk psychology (i.e., the psychology of ordinary folk). Folk psychology seems obviously true. But is it true? And if it is true, can we describe it in a clear way? Does contemporary research in psychology support or undermine folk psychology? We will see that what seems so obvious is in fact quite controversial. Many psychologists and philosophers think something is wrong with folk psychology. We will examine some of those debates.

Nietzsche's Philosophy

PHIL 300 (.5 unit)
Depasquale

Nietzsche is a disturbing presence in the modern world. In a series of beautifully written books that are at once profound, elusive, enigmatic, and shocking, Nietzsche does nothing less than challenge our most precious and fundamental beliefs: the idea of truth, the existence of God, the objectivity of moral values, and the intrinsic value of the human being. As a critic of both the Western metaphysical tradition and the Judeo-Christian religion, Nietzsche may well be the most controversial thinker in the entire history of philosophy. In this seminar, we will submit some of Nietzsche's most important books to a close, critical reading in an effort

to come to terms, so far as this is possible, with his mature thought. We will examine his most famous yet perplexing views—the death of God, will to power, the *Übermensch*, nihilism, perspectivism, the eternal recurrence—as they are developed in *Untimely Meditations*, *Twilight of Idols*, *Genealogy of Morals*, *Beyond Good and Evil*, and selections from *Will to Power*. There are no prerequisites for this course, although PHIL 100 or PHIL 225 would be helpful.

Kant

PHIL 345 (.5 unit)
Yeomans

Kant attempted to put metaphysics on a scientific basis by attending to the conditions under which human beings can experience the world. His “Copernican Revolution” placed self-consciousness at the center of philosophical inquiry into knowledge and introduced a radically new form of argument: the transcendental deduction, in which a claim is proved by showing that it is necessary for the possibility of any human experience at all. In this course we will read selections from his *Critique of Pure Reason* and his *Critique of Judgment*. Prerequisite: PHIL 210 (Modern Philosophy) or PHIL 215 (Nineteenth-Century Philosophy).

Seminar on the Theory of Knowledge

PHIL 405 (.5 unit)
Staff

This is an advanced course on the central debates in epistemology: internalism versus externalism, foundationalism versus coherentism, naturalism versus antinaturalism. We examine these issues through the writings of Quine, Rorty, Putnam, Stroud, Dretske, Wittgenstein, and others. Prerequisites: PHIL 100, junior standing, and permission of instructor.

Individual Study

PHIL 494 (.5 unit)
Staff

Prerequisites: permission of instructor and department chair.

Senior Honors

PHIL 498 (.25 unit)
Staff

Prerequisite: permission of instructor and department chair.