

PHILOSOPHY (PL)

PL245 Survey of Philosophy: The Big Questions (3.0 Credits)

In this introductory course students will explore the responses to some of the most challenging philosophical questions: What can I know and how is knowledge acquired? What is the nature of reality and how do we experience it? What is human existence and is there a meaning to it? Do justice and morality exist, and do they even matter? Students will confront a variety of historical and contemporary expressions of these concerns, study the arguments proposed to conceive and clarify them, and acquire the critical and analytical abilities necessary to construct their own views on the topics. This focus on perennial problems and methods of philosophy is developed through reading, discussion, and written assignments. Specific course content may vary by semester and by instructor.

Prerequisite(s): Grade of C or better in EN111, its equivalent, or EN221.

PL290 Social & Political Philosophy (3.0 Credits)

PL290 will provide students a historical survey of the major political philosophers of the Western tradition from Plato to Rawls by way of exposition and analysis of primary readings representing classical Greece, the Renaissance, the social contract tradition, Marxism and liberalism. Authors read include Plato, Aristotle, Augustine, Aquinas, Machiavelli, Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau, Marx, and Rawls.

PL300 Philosophical Ethics (3.0 Credits)

Inspired by Socrates' dictum that "The unexamined life is not worth living," this course will engage students in a critical discussion of major philosophical themes central to the morally good life: the relation between ethical reasoning and the world's major religious traditions; the importance of character and the moral personality; the nature of virtue and its relation to happiness; ethical criteria for moral actions; and relation of ethics to politics, the role of the individual in society. Readings will include selections from ethical literature of both East and West as represented by such thinkers as Confucius, Lao Tzu, Plato, Aristotle, Aquinas, Kant, Kierkegaard, Mill, Nietzsche, Sartre, Camus, Rawls, and MacIntyre.

Prerequisite(s): 3 credits as required to meet the current General Education requirements in either philosophy or religious studies; PL245 strongly recommended.

PL354 Bioethics (3.0 Credits)

This course provides a basic introduction to the main ideas, debates, and traditions in the history of Western ethical and moral philosophy, especially as applied to medical practice, biotechnology, and environmental issues. Lectures and group discussions apply various ethical traditions to actual and hypothetical cases. Topics could include decision making at the beginning and end of human life; patient's rights and professionals' duties; ethical issues raised by biotechnologies; the environmental determinants of health; and the ethical value of sentient animals, all living things, species, and ecosystems.

Prerequisite(s): 3 credits as required to meet the current General Education requirements in either philosophy or religious studies; PL245 strongly recommended.