

# Philosophy

**MAJOR, MINOR**

**ASSOCIATE PROFESSORS:** James Patrick Downey, Michael Gettings

**VISITING ASSISTANT PROFESSOR:** Charles Lowney

The Hollins University philosophy major undertakes 1) to instruct students in the history of philosophy, 2) to train students in logic, critical thinking, the techniques of philosophical reasoning and writing, and 3) to engage students with the essential issues in philosophy and a variety of other vitally important topics in philosophy. All philosophy majors share a common core of courses. Through specific menus of requirements, minors, also, are ensured a balanced program of courses. Both majors and minors are guided through a progressive sequence of courses through stipulated course requirements. Introductory courses are offered at both the 100 and 200 levels. Majors are required to complete two 300-level courses. The accomplishments of graduating students are evaluated through a capstone senior seminar. Departmental honors may be achieved when approved by the faculty, through the writing of an honors thesis.

## REQUIREMENTS FOR A MAJOR IN PHILOSOPHY:

9 courses (36 credits)

- Four core courses (16 credits) from:  
 PHIL 201: Ancient Philosophy (4)  
 PHIL 202: Early Modern Philosophy (4)  
 PHIL 211: Symbolic Logic (4)  
 PHIL 470: Senior Seminar (must be 4 credits)
- Five additional PHIL courses (20 credits), two courses must be at the 300 level

NOTE: PHIL 110 or PHIL 120 (not both) and PHIL 181 or PHIL 182 (not both) may count for the major. Only one independent study course may substitute for a 300-level course in the major. PHIL 303 or PHIL 307 (not both) may count towards the major.

## REQUIREMENTS FOR A MINOR IN PHILOSOPHY:

6 courses (22 credits)

- Three courses (12 credits) from:  
 PHIL 110: Introduction to Philosophy (4) or PHIL 120: Critical Thinking (4)  
 PHIL 181: Contemporary Moral Issues (4) or PHIL 182: Environmental Ethics (4)  
 PHIL 201: Ancient Philosophy (4)  
 PHIL 202: Early Modern Philosophy (4)  
 PHIL 211: Symbolic Logic (4)
- Two additional PHIL courses (8)  
 NOTE: Only one independent study may be substituted for a course
- PHIL 470: Senior Seminar (2 credits) (Students minoring in philosophy will not be required to write a seminar paper.)

## REQUIREMENTS FOR A MINOR IN PHILOSOPHY WITH A CONCENTRATION IN ETHICS:

6 courses (22 credits)

- PHIL 120: Critical Thinking (4) or PHIL 170: Philosophy and Star Trek (4)
- PHIL 252: Ethics (4)
- Two courses (8 credits) from:  
 PHIL 181: Contemporary Moral Issues (4)  
 PHIL 182: Environmental Ethics (4)  
 PHIL 253: Biomedical Ethics (4)  
 PHIL 254: Social and Political Philosophy (4)  
 BUS 224: Ethical Leadership (4)
- One more course at the 200 or 300 level in PHIL (4)
- PHIL 470: Senior Seminar (2)

**COURSES IN PHILOSOPHY:****PHIL 110: INTRODUCTION TO PHILOSOPHY (4)****Department**

This course is a general introduction to the main themes and problems in the academic study of philosophy. It covers a number of areas and authors so that the student gets some idea of the discipline as a whole. Open to first-year students. No prerequisite. Not offered in 2020-21. (*f, w*)

**PHIL 120: CRITICAL THINKING (4)****Downey**

An introduction to Logic as it applies to everyday reasoning and writing. Students learn to identify and assess arguments, recognize fallacious reasoning patterns and write out in perfect, smooth English the core structures of arguments. Logic and analytical writing skills are intensively increased. Open to first-year students. No prerequisite. Offered Term 2. (*f, w, x*)

**PHIL 170: PHILOSOPHY AND STAR TREK (4)****Downey**

A general introduction to philosophy, examining issues in metaphysics, ethics, logic and epistemology, using Star Trek as our vehicle. No prior knowledge of Star Trek or philosophy required. Can androids and computers possibly be persons—capable of thought, emotions and moral significance? This relates to what we are. Are we soul or matter, free-willed or determined, moral agents or non-responsible robots? Is time travel really possible? How do we know what is real, anyway? Could there be any meaning of life? What is logic? Open to first-year students. No prerequisite. Offered Term 1. (MOD)

**PHIL 181: CONTEMPORARY MORAL ISSUES (4)****Lowney**

Philosophic analysis of current moral problems (e.g., abortion, euthanasia, capital punishment, poverty, immigration, racial and gender bias, environmental ethics, global justice, business ethics, artificial intelligence, and regulating the internet). Emphasis is on the clarifying issues and examining competing lines of argument. This course will provide an opportunity for students to come to their own well-reasoned and informed position on issues that are important to them. Open to first-year students. No prerequisite. Not offered in 2020-21. (*f, w*)

**PHIL 182: ENVIRONMENTAL ETHICS (4)****Lowney**

This seminar applies classical and modern moral theories to environmental issues. It includes philosophical examination of current ecological theory as it relates to environmental science. Central topics include pollution, global warming, population growth, animal rights, environmental degradation, conservation of the biosphere, and responsibilities to future generations. You are encouraged to think for yourself logically about these and other environmental philosophical issues. Also listed as ES 182. No prerequisite. Open to first-year students. Offered Term 2.

**PHIL 201: ANCIENT PHILOSOPHY (4)****Downey**

This course deals with the beginnings of Western philosophy among the Greeks, from the Pre-Socratics, to Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle—and their successors, stoics, skeptics and epicureans. The perspective is not only historical, but actively philosophical as we think along with these philosophers about issues including: whether reality is material or non-material and eternal, or both; whether knowledge is possible and if so of what; the nature of happiness; whether morality depends on the existence of God. No prerequisite. Open to first-year students. Offered Term 1. (PRE)

**PHIL 202: EARLY MODERN PHILOSOPHY (4)****Lowney**

Study of the philosophical systems of foundational 17th- and 18th-century philosophers, including Descartes, Spinoza, Leibniz, Conway, Locke, Berkeley, Cockburn, Hume, and Kant. Issues include: Is knowledge possible, and if so how—through reason, through experience (as Science holds), both or neither? Is all of reality dependent on mind? Are we souls, substantial bodies or merely transitory phenomena? Does God exist? Do we have free will, or are we necessitated to be what we are and to do what we do? No prerequisite. Open to first-year students. Offered Term 2. (MOD)

**PHIL 207: PHILOSOPHY OF ART: ART AND AUTHENTICITY (4)****Lowney**

This course is about the beautiful, the good, the true and *you*. It deals with the question of how beauty relates to morality and to knowledge about nature, society and the self. You will gain a basic understanding of classical, modern and contemporary aesthetic theories, but you will also be on a journey of self-discovery as we explore the concept of *authenticity* and what it means to be true to yourself. A central theme will be whether or not beauty or art can reveal something about reality. The course includes visits to performance events and a trip to an art gallery. This will allow you to *experience* beautiful art. There is also a workshop component that will give you the practical experience of making your own art. The ultimate goal of the course is to understand more about yourself, society and nature through the understanding and experience of art. Open to first-year students. Offered Term 2. (AES)

**PHIL 208: FEMINIST PHILOSOPHIES (4)****Department**

This course offers students a comprehensive introduction to some of the important theories and texts produced by feminist philosophers over the past few hundred years. The course addresses liberal, Marxist, socialist, psychoanalytic, existentialist, and postmodern feminisms; it examines questions concerning equality, patriarchy, essentialism, gender, and mothering, as well as claims about the special moral and cognitive capacities of women or the feminine. Also listed as GWS 209. Open to first-year students. Not offered in 2020-21.

**PHIL 211: SYMBOLIC LOGIC (4)****Gettings**

Study of the concepts in sound reasoning. Course goals include the basic grasp of three logics (propositional, Aristotelian, and predicate), and familiarity with the metatheory of propositional logic. Also listed as MATH 211. Open to first-year students with permission. Prerequisite: *q*. Offered Term 1. (Q)

**PHIL 216: 20TH CENTURY CONTINENTAL PHILOSOPHY (4)****Lowney**

Twentieth-century Europe has experienced an explosion of philosophical movements. We examine theories of existentialism, phenomenology, post-structuralism, deconstruction, and critical theory. After looking briefly at roots of the some of these movements in the thought of Nietzsche, Freud, Hegel and Marx, authors we will study include Husserl, Heidegger, Arendt, Merleau-Ponty, Foucault, Sartre, de Beauvoir, Lyotard, Derrida and Habermas. Offered 1 in conjunction with PHIL 316. Open to first year students at the 216 level. Not offered in t 2020-21.

**PHIL 220: ZOMBIES AND CONSCIOUSNESS (4)****Downey**

You have conscious experience. You know what it is like to feel, to see, to smell. Could a computer possibly know that, or must computers be "in the dark," lacking consciousness? If computers can be conscious, can they have moral rights? Is that what lies in our future? Could there conceivably be a fully functional physical human brain/body (functioning just like yours) that was merely a consciousness-less machine, a metaphysical zombie. If so, then how could consciousness be explained in mere physical terms? The answers to these and related questions bear on the issue: "Is consciousness something physical, or something non-physical?", a contemporary heir to the famous historical question "Are we bodies or souls?" "What are we?" You will learn to think logically and write logically. No prerequisite. Offered Term 2. (MOD)

**PHIL 223: PHILOSOPHY OF FICTION (4)****Gettings**

In this class we will be looking at a variety of theories of fiction, each of which attempts to answer a number of questions, including: What is a fictional character? Is there such a thing as truth in fiction? How do we as readers and writers of fiction relate to the fictional worlds of stories? How is it that the plight of a character in a novel, while make-believe, can evoke very real emotions? Open to first-year students. Not offered in 2020-21. (AES)

**PHIL 237: PHILOSOPHY OF LAW (4)****Downey**

We assess philosophical/logical foundations allegedly underlying the very notion of law and of certain types of law. Some hold that law rests on moral foundations from the consent of the people, from God, or both. Do these views make sense? "No crime without a guilty mind (intent)" supposedly guides criminal law. But not all crimes require it. What justifies that disparity? Some laws allegedly are un-Constitutional, whereas some laws upholding "community standards" have been judged Constitutional despite being discriminatory. So, what should it mean to be Constitutional--found "literally" in the Constitution, implied by the Framers intentions, or...? What does the notion of a right mean, for example in the right to free speech, the right to religious freedom, and in other alleged rights? These topics and many more. This course meets in conjunction with PHIL 337. Open to first year students at the 237 level. Not offered in 2020-21. (MOD)

**PHIL 241: POVERTY AND HUMAN CAPABILITY (4)****Lowney**

This course is about one of the most important social problems of our era: poverty in the midst of plenty. We examine poverty as a problem for individuals, families, and societies. We focus on the United States, perhaps one of the most impoverished of any developed nation. How should we define and measure poverty? Who is poor and who is not? Are there different kinds of poverty? What is it like to live in poverty? What are the causes of poverty? What are its effects on individuals (particularly children), families, communities, and societies? What values does it undermine? What moral and legal rights should the poor have, and what obligations do societies, governments, organizations, and individuals have to the poor? Do the poor also have obligations to themselves, others, and society? What are the plausible remedies for the negative aspects of poverty? Readings and lecture/discussions draw on economics, political science, psychology, philosophical and religious ethics, public policy analysis, sociology, journalism, and professional social work. Offered in conjunction with PHIL 341. Open to first-year students at the 241 level. Offered Term 1. (*f, w, x, DIV, MOD*)

**PHIL 252: ETHICS (4)****Downey**

Do right and wrong, good and bad, exist as objective properties of reality, or are they merely projections of our subjective feelings? Are there any supportable principles which determine how we ought to act in order to act ethically--for instance "The Golden Rule", or perhaps the principle of Utilitarianism? What could happiness possibly be, and how is living a moral life related to living a happy life? What roles do reasoning and feelings have in being ethical? Could we, in rational, principled ways, answer such questions as whether abortion is morally permissible, whether we ought to be allowed to own assault rifles, or whether bigoted speech ought to be tolerated--or are rational answers impossible? These explorations and more. You will also learn some logic. Open to first-year students. Not offered in 2020-21.

**PHIL 253: BIOMEDICAL ETHICS (4)****Lowney**

In this course we explore ethical issues in medicine and biotechnology. Topics covered may include the ethics of abortion, euthanasia, physician-assisted suicide, stem cell research, cloning, the treatment of permanently comatose or vegetative patients, human and animal research, and the distribution of health care. Discussions of these topics involve our notions of a person, justice, consent, privacy, rights, and duties. Special emphasis is placed on the variety of ethical approaches to these questions. Open to first-year students. Offered Term 1.

**PHIL 254: SOCIAL AND POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY (4)****Downey**

Do citizens have a moral obligation to obey the law? Governments may have the might to rule us, but can they ever have the moral right to rule us, and if so, how? Is there any sound argument in support of a moral right to private property ownership? Is there any good reason to believe in the existence of natural rights? Thinkers addressed will include Plato, Locke, Rousseau, and contemporary philosophers. Also listed as POLS 254. Not offered in 2020-21.

**PHIL 272: PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGION (4)****Lowney**

Are there any good reasons to believe that God exists - evidential reasons, pragmatic reasons, moral reasons? Does the fact that evil exists - particularly horrible suffering - logically rule out the existence of an all-good, all-powerful God? Is it moral for an educated person to believe in the sole truth of one religion, implying that other religions are not true? Does morality depend on the existence of God? Contemporary and past philosophers will be examined on these and other philosophical questions about religious belief. You will be encouraged to think for yourself, and invited to share your thinking in class. Also listed as REL 272. Open to first-year students. Not offered in 2020-21.

**PHIL 275: ASIAN PHILOSOPHY (4)****Downey**

This course examines the metaphysics (theories of reality), the epistemologies (theories of knowledge), the ethics and the logics of the philosophical-religious systems of Hinduism, Buddhism, Zen Buddhism, and Taoism. Some attention is given to their historical developments and practices. In addition, they will be compared to the views of Plato and other western philosophers. Readings include primary sources and contemporary analyses. No prerequisite. Open to first-year students. Offered Term 1. (GLO, PRE)

**PHIL 290: INDEPENDENT STUDY (2 or 4)****Department**

Independent study conducted below the advanced level. Application must be made with faculty prior to registration. Offered any term.

**PHIL 303: LITERARY HISTORY AND THEORY I (4)****Moriarty**

Also listed and described as ENG 303. Prerequisite: sophomore standing or permission. Offered Term 1. (MOD)

**PHIL 304: 19TH-CENTURY CONTINENTAL PHILOSOPHY (4)****Department**

In this course, the central figures of 19th-century philosophy are introduced through a focused study of their principal texts and common concerns. Authors addressed include Hegel, Schopenhauer, Kierkegaard, Marx, Nietzsche, and Freud. We address questions concerning each author's view of human nature, truth, history, the self, culture, and the individual's relationship to society. Prerequisite: PHIL 202, PHIL 252, or permission. Not offered in 2020-21.

**PHIL 307: LITERARY HISTORY AND THEORY II (4)****Moriarty**

Also listed and described as ENG 307. Prerequisites: PHIL 303 and junior standing or permission. Not offered in 2020-21.

**PHIL 316: 20TH-CENTURY CONTINENTAL PHILOSOPHY (4)****Lowney**

Twentieth-century Europe has experienced an explosion of philosophical movements. We examine theories of existentialism, phenomenology, post-structuralism, deconstruction, and critical theory. After looking briefly at roots of the some of these movements in the thought of Nietzsche, Freud, Hegel and Marx, authors we will study include

Husserl, Heidegger, Arendt, Merleau-Ponty, Foucault, Sartre, de Beauvoir, Lyotard, Derrida and Habermas. Offered in conjunction with PHIL 216. Open to first year students at the 216 level. Not offered in 2020-21.

**PHIL 320: THEORY OF KNOWLEDGE (4)**

**Downey**

Course material includes any of the following topics in the study of the concept of knowledge: definitions of knowledge – what does it mean to know? The problem of induction--how can we justify believing the future will conform to the past, without presupposing this? Skepticism about an external world, skepticism about other minds. And a priori knowledge. Questions raised include “Is knowledge possible?”, “Can we know anything about the future?”, “Is there a world external to my mind?”, and “Does all knowledge come from experience?”. Recent literature on these topics will be emphasized. Prerequisites: PHIL 201 and PHIL 202 or instructor’s permission. Not offered in 2020-21. (MOD)

**PHIL 321: METAPHYSICS (4)**

**Downey**

Course material includes any of the following topics in metaphysics: free will and determinism, the mind-body problem, the nature of consciousness, the philosophy of time and space, realism and anti-realism, and the nature of being. Questions raised include “What is the nature of time?”, “What fundamental kinds of being does reality include?”, “Are we genuinely free to choose our actions or is free will merely an illusion?”, and “Am I a body, a soul, or something else?”. Recent literature on these topics will be emphasized. Prerequisites: PHIL 201 and PHIL 202 or instructor’s permission. Not offered in 2020-21. (MOD)

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**Downey**

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**PHIL 341: POVERTY AND HUMAN CAPABILITY (4)**

**Lowney**

This course is about one of the most important social problems of our era: poverty in the midst of plenty. We examine poverty as a problem for individuals, families, and societies. We focus on the United States, perhaps one of the most impoverished of any developed nation. How should we define and measure poverty? Who is poor and who is not? Are there different kinds of poverty? What is it like to live in poverty? What are the causes of poverty? What are its effects on individuals (particularly children), families, communities, and societies? What values does it undermine? What moral and legal rights should the poor have, and what obligations do societies, governments, organizations, and individuals have to the poor? Do the poor also have obligations to themselves, others, and society? What are the plausible remedies for the negative aspects of poverty? Readings and lecture/discussions draw on economics, political science, psychology, philosophical and religious ethics, public policy analysis, sociology, journalism, and professional social work. Offered in conjunction with PHIL 241. Open to first-year students at the 241 level. Offered Term 1. (f, w, x, DIV, MOD)

**PHIL 380: GREAT THINKERS IN PHILOSOPHY – WITTGENSTEIN (4)**

**Downey**

An intensive study of the philosophy of Ludwig Wittgenstein, arguably the most influential philosopher of the 20th century, and among the greats of all time. We will begin with issues in philosophy of logic and language taken up by Frege and Russell before Wittgenstein. Then we read Wittgenstein's Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus, which answers these issues. Then his Philosophical Investigations. Both works revolutionized philosophy and profoundly affected other disciplines. We also read Ray Monk's fine biography of Wittgenstein, in order to understand the relationships between his personal life and his philosophy. Not offered in 2020-21. (MOD)

**PHIL 390: INDEPENDENT STUDY (2 or 4)**

**Department**

Independent study conducted at the advanced level. Application must be made with faculty prior to registration. Offered any term.

**PHIL 399: INTERNSHIP (4)**

**Department**

Application must be made with faculty prior to registration. May be proposed any term.

**PHIL 470: SENIOR SEMINAR (2 or 4)**

**Downey**

An annual seminar of discussion and research focused on the presentation and criticism of original essays. Required of senior majors and minors; not open to others except with permission. Offered Term 2.

**PHIL 490: SENIOR HONORS THESIS (4, 4)**

**Department**

Required both regular terms and Short Term. Theses are evaluated and decisions made in Term 2. Open only to qualified philosophy majors with permission of the philosophy department. Does not count toward major requirements.