Department of Philosophy

Department Website: http://philosophy.uchicago.edu

Chair
- Matthew Boyle

Professors
- Matthew Boyle
- Dan Brudney
- James Conant
- Gabriel Richardson Lear, Social Thought
- Jonathan Lear, Social Thought
- Martha C. Nussbaum, Law
- Robert Pippin, Social Thought
- Robert Richards, History
- Candace Vogler

Associate Professors
- Jason Bridges
- Agnes Callard
- Kevin Davey
- David Finkelstein
- Anton Ford
- Anubav Vasudevan
- Malte Willer

Assistant Professors
- Matthias Haase
- Mikayla Kelley
- Daniel Moerner
- Thomas Pashby
- John Proios
- Ginger Schultheis

Lecturers
- Arnold Brooks
- Benjamin Callard
- Magnus Ferguson
- Bart Schultz
- Lisa Van Alstyne
- Tyler Zimmer

Emeritus Faculty
- Arnold Ira Davidson
- Michael Kremer
- Howard Stein
- Josef J. Stern
- William W. Tait
- William C. Wimsatt

The programs in philosophy are designed to develop skill in philosophical analysis, to enable the student to think clearly, systematically, and independently on philosophical issues, and to achieve a thorough acquaintance with major classics and contemporary works in philosophy. Philosophy classes are conducted so that students may develop philosophical skills by class discussions and by the writing of carefully directed papers.
The following is an outline of the main features of the graduate program. For full details, please write the Department of Philosophy directly.

**GRADUATE DEGREES**

The graduate program in philosophy is primarily a doctoral program. Admission as a graduate student normally implies that, in the opinion of the department, the student is a promising candidate for the Ph.D. degree. The Master of Arts degree, however, may be awarded to students in the program who meet the requirements specified below.

The application process for admission and financial aid for all graduate programs in the Division of the Humanities is administered through the divisional Office of the Dean of Students. The Application for Admission and Financial Aid, with instructions, deadlines and department specific information is available online at: http://humanities.uchicago.edu/students/admissions (http://humanities.uchicago.edu/students/admissions/).

Questions about admissions and aid should be directed to humanitiesadmissions@uchicago.edu or (773) 702-1552.

International students must provide evidence of English proficiency by submitting scores from either the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) or the International English Language Testing System (IELTS). Current minimum scores, etc., are provided with the application. For more information, please see the Office of International Affairs website at https://internationalaffairs.uchicago.edu, or call them at (773) 702-7752.

Students admitted to doctoral study receive full funding support for the duration of their enrollment, including full tuition coverage, annual stipend, fully paid individual premiums for UChicago’s student health insurance plan, and the student services fee. Pedagogical training requirements are also included as part of the degree requirements.

**THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS**

**Requirements**

The Department of Philosophy does not admit students directly into an MA program. Students seeking a terminal master’s degree should apply to the Master of Arts Program in the Humanities (MAPH), a three-quarter program of interdisciplinary study. Further details about the MAPH program are available at http://maph.uchicago.edu/.

Master’s degrees are awarded only to students who are enrolled in a PhD program at the University of Chicago. These can be either (i) doctoral students in another discipline who seek a “secondary” MA in Philosophy, in conjunction with their doctoral studies in that other discipline; or (ii) doctoral students in Philosophy who want an MA. The requirements for the degree are the same in either case. The requirements can be satisfied entirely by coursework; no thesis is required. These requirements are as follows:

- **Quality**: No course for which the student received a grade lower than a B+ will satisfy any requirement for the MA.
- **Level**: Only courses taken at the graduate level (i.e., with a course-number of 30000 or higher) can satisfy any requirement for the MA.
- **Quantity**: The student must complete at least 8 courses in Philosophy at the University of Chicago. (Reading and research courses do not count toward satisfying this requirement, nor do courses taken pass/fail, with the exception of the First-Year seminar, which may count as one course, if passed.)
- **Distribution**: The student must have taken at least 1 course in each of the Department of Philosophy’s four areas:
  - **Area I**: Contemporary Practical Philosophy
  - **Area II**: Contemporary Theoretical Philosophy
  - **Area III**: History of Philosophy: Ancient or Medieval Philosophy
  - **Area IV**: History of Philosophy: Modern Philosophy (up to and including the first half of the Twentieth Century)
- **Elementary Logic**: The student must demonstrate competence in elementary logic. This can be achieved taking Introduction to Logic (PHIL 30000), or any more advanced logic course offered by the Department. Alternatively, a student may fulfill the requirement by passing a course equivalent to Introduction to Logic (or to some more advanced logic course) at another institution or in another department at the University of Chicago with a grade of B+ or higher. Whether or not a course can satisfy the logic requirement will be determined by the current instructor(s) of Introduction to Logic on the basis of either an interview with the student making the request or such evidence as the syllabus for the course, the textbook for the course, and any other relevant course materials which the student can provide. Satisfying the logic requirement in this way will count neither toward a student’s eight course requirement nor toward their area distribution requirements (https://wiki.uchicago.edu/display/phildr/Course+Requirements/#CourseRequirements-
areas). Philosophy 30000 can count as one of the minimum eight courses, but it does not satisfy the Area II requirement. A more advanced logic class does both.

APPLICATION PROCEDURE

Doctoral Students in the Department of Philosophy may apply for the MA at any time after they have completed the requirements. To do so, students should (1) contact the Department Administrator so that the proper paperwork is submitted verifying that all coursework requirements for the MA have been met; and (2) contact the office of the Dean of Students in order to gain access to the degree application screen in the My.UChicago portal. In filling out this application, students should set their expected graduation date to the date on which they anticipate receiving the PhD.

Students in a PhD program at the University of Chicago in a department other than Philosophy who wish to receive a "secondary" MA in Philosophy must first apply for admission to the MA program in the Department of Philosophy. No student can apply unless they have taken at least three Philosophy courses, and it is expected that students will apply soon after completing that number of courses.

To initiate the application process, students should first read the University’s requirements for a second MA (https://studentmanual.uchicago.edu/academic-policies/degrees/), and then set up an appointment with Michael Beetley (mbeetle@uchicago.edu) in the Office of the Dean of Students in the Division of Humanities who will direct them through the required paperwork and obtain:

1. The applicant’s transcript of courses taken for the BA,
2. A transcript of the applicant's courses at the University of Chicago taken up to the time of the application.

In addition, the applicant must submit:

1. A sample of their best philosophical writing. This may but need not be a paper written for one of the applicant’s already completed Philosophy courses at the University.
2. A brief letter from the Department Chair or Director of Graduate Studies of the applicant’s home department supporting the application. The letter should explain why the student is seeking an MA in philosophy to complement their doctoral studies.
3. Names of two faculty in the Department of Philosophy who can comment on work done by the applicant and on their philosophical potential.
4. A statement by the applicant that explains why they are seeking an MA in Philosophy.

THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

The divisional and University requirements for the Ph.D. degree must be fulfilled. Departmental course requirements have parts concerning:

- Graduate course credit: q-credits and p-credits
- The number of required courses
- Area distribution requirements for q-credits
- Paper requirements for q-credits
- Logic requirement
- Deadlines for coursework and incompletes
- A note on foreign language study
- Transfer credits

GRADUATE COURSE CREDIT: Q-CREDITS AND P-CREDITS

During their first two years in the program, PhD students are required to complete a variety of graduate-level courses. Such coursework is meant to provide students with the general knowledge that will serve as the foundation upon which they will carry out the more specialized task of writing a doctoral dissertation.

Students must enroll in courses for one of two different kinds of credit:

1. (Q)uality Credit: To receive a Q-credit for a course, a student must complete all the requirements for the course and be awarded a quality grade of A, A-, B+, B, or B-.
2. (P)ass Credit: The requirements for receiving a P-credit for a course are established by the instructor. At a minimum, a student must register in the class and attend regularly, but they need not be required to submit a paper for the course or do all of the coursework that would be required to assign to that student a quality grade. A pass credit will be registered by assigning to a student a grade of P in the Registrar’s official database of grades.

This separation of course credits into Q-credits and P-credits is meant to provide students with the flexibility to construct for themselves a course curriculum that allows them to both broaden their horizons by exploring a diverse array of topics that may be of only peripheral interest to them, while, at the same time, affording them
adequate time to devote focused attention to those specific courses that most directly support their main research interests.

**THE NUMBER OF REQUIRED COURSES**

PhD students are required to complete 8 courses for Q-credit, all of which must come from the Department of Philosophy’s course offerings. In addition, students must complete 8 courses for P-credit, up to two of which can be awarded for classes offered in other departments (this can include courses in which the student has received either a grade of P or a quality grade of B- or higher). Students can petition to the Director of Graduate Studies to have more than two courses from outside the Department count toward their P-credit requirements, provided they believe that there are pedagogical reasons to support such an allowance.

In addition to the Q-credit and P-credit requirements described above, all first-year PhD students must also enroll in the First-Year Seminar (https://wiki.uchicago.edu/display/phildr/First-Year+Seminar/), and all second-year PhD students must enroll in the Paper Revision Workshop (https://wiki.uchicago.edu/display/phildr/Paper+Revision+Workshop/). The following describes a normal schedule for completing coursework during a PhD student’s first six quarters (or two academic years) in the program:

- **First Quarter:**
  - 1 course for Q-credit
  - 1 course for P-credit
  - First-Year Seminar (https://wiki.uchicago.edu/display/phildr/First-Year+Seminar/)

- **Second and Third Quarters:**
  - First-Year Seminar (https://wiki.uchicago.edu/display/phildr/First-Year+Seminar/) (Winter Quarter only)
  - 3 courses for Q-credit (with at least one Q-credit per quarter)
  - 3 courses for P-credit (with at least one P-credit per quarter)

- **Fourth and Fifth Quarters:**
  - 3 courses for Q-credit (with at least one Q-credit per quarter)
  - 3 courses for P-credit (with at least one P-credit per quarter)

- **Sixth Quarter:**
  - 1 course for Q-credit
  - 1 course for P-credit
  - Paper Revision Workshop (https://wiki.uchicago.edu/display/phildr/Paper+Revision+Workshop/)

In a typical quarter, a student will enroll in three classes. At some point during the quarter that student will choose either one or two of those classes to complete for Q-credit. This choice may be made at any point during the quarter, provided that the student is able to complete all the work for the course on the timeline set by the instructor. This arrangement is meant to afford students the flexibility to decide which courses they would like to complete for Q-credit based on their relative interest in the material presented in the courses in which they are enrolled.

**AREA DISTRIBUTION REQUIREMENTS FOR Q-CREDITS**

In addition to the requirement that a student take 8 courses for Q-credit, the courses taken for Q-credit must satisfy certain area distribution requirements. In particular, students are required to take at least one course for Q-credit in each of the following four areas:

1. Contemporary Practical Philosophy
2. Contemporary Theoretical Philosophy
3. History of Philosophy: Ancient or Medieval Philosophy
4. History of Philosophy: Modern Philosophy (up to and including the first half of the Twentieth Century)

Graduate courses included in the Department of Philosophy’s course offerings will generally be designated as belonging to one or more of these areas. While a course may be designated as belonging to more than one area, it can only count toward a student satisfying one of their area distribution requirements. The decision as to which requirement a course satisfies is left to the instructor’s discretion and is to be determined on the basis of the content of the work produced by that student for the course.

**PAPER REQUIREMENTS FOR Q-CREDITS**

Not every course requires a student to write a paper in order to receive a Q-credit. For example, in some courses, such as a logic course, a Q-credit may be awarded to a student based on their performance on a series of homework exercises and exams. Nevertheless, during their first two years in the program, students are required to write at least 5 papers in total for courses that they take for Q-credit. They must do so in accordance with the following schedule:
• At least 1 paper by mid-Spring Quarter of Year 1.
• At least 2 papers by the beginning of Year 2.
• At least 3 papers by the beginning of Spring Quarter of Year 2.
• At least 5 papers by the beginning of Year 3.

Before deciding to enroll in a course for Q-credit, students should consult with the instructor to clarify the options available to them for receiving a Q-credit and, in particular, whether the option exists to write a paper for the course.

**LOGIC REQUIREMENT**

The PhD program has a logic requirement that must be fulfilled in one of the following three ways:

1. **By receiving a Q-credit for Introduction to Logic (PHIL 30000).** Introduction to Logic is offered every Autumn Quarter. A Q-credit received for Introduction to Logic will count toward a student’s overall Q-credit requirements (https://wiki.uchicago.edu/display/phildr/Course+Requirements/#CourseRequirements-credits), but will not satisfy any area distribution requirement (https://wiki.uchicago.edu/display/phildr/Course+Requirements/#CourseRequirements-areas).

2. **By passing a course equivalent to Introduction to Logic (or to some more advanced logic course) at another institution or in another department at the University of Chicago with a grade of B+ or higher.** Whether or not a course can satisfy the logic requirement will be determined by the current instructor(s) of Introduction to Logic on the basis of either an interview with the student making the request or such evidence as the syllabus for the course, the textbook for the course, and any other relevant course materials which the student can provide. Satisfying the logic requirement in this way will count neither toward a student’s overall Q-credit requirements (https://wiki.uchicago.edu/display/phildr/Course+Requirements/#CourseRequirements-credits) nor toward their area distribution requirements (https://wiki.uchicago.edu/display/phildr/Course+Requirements/#CourseRequirements-areas).

3. **By receiving a Q-credit for a more advanced graduate course in logic - e.g., Accelerated Introduction to Logic (PHIL 30012) - offered in the department.** A Q-credit received for such an advanced logic course will count toward a student's overall Q-credit requirements (https://wiki.uchicago.edu/display/phildr/Course+Requirements/#CourseRequirements-credits) and may also satisfy the Contemporary Theoretical Philosophy area distribution requirement (https://wiki.uchicago.edu/display/phildr/Course+Requirements/#CourseRequirements-areas).

**DEADLINES FOR COURSEWORK AND INCOMPLETES**

Coursework must be completed in a timely manner. While faculty are free to set their own due dates for completing coursework, for submitting course papers the default expectations are as follows:

• For a course in Autumn Quarter, the paper must be turned in by the end of Winter Quarter of the same academic year.
• For a course in Winter Quarter, the paper must be turned in by the end of Spring Quarter of the same academic year.
• For a course in Spring Quarter, the paper must be turned in before the end of July in the Summer Quarter of the same academic year.

At the discretion of the instructor, coursework not completed on time may be regarded as an “incomplete.” This means that the instructor will permit a student to complete the work for a course after the deadline they have set. The instructor sets the time period for completion of the incomplete coursework, subject to the following limitation: a grade for a course must be submitted by the beginning of the subsequent academic year in which the course was taken, in order for that course to count toward the fulfillment of the course requirements for the PhD. This date is an absolute deadline and is not subject to further extensions by individual faculty members. In addition, students in their first year are not permitted to take any incompletes for classes they enroll in during their first quarter in the program.

**A NOTE ON FOREIGN LANGUAGE STUDY**

There is no official foreign language requirement that all PhD students must meet. Nevertheless, for many students, it will be advisable to acquire competence in one or more languages other than English depending on their area of specialization. Moreover, a student's dissertation committee may impose upon a student a formal requirement to demonstrate linguistic competence in a foreign language in order to conduct research under their supervision. For example, a student intending to write a thesis on Ancient Greek Philosophy or Hellenistic or Roman Philosophy will likely be required to receive a “High Pass” on the University's Reading Comprehension Assessment (https://languageassessment.uchicago.edu/arca/) in either Greek or Latin. All students should consult with their faculty advisors and the Director of Graduate Studies to determine which linguistic competencies may be required for their planned course of study.
Transfer Credits

Students wishing to obtain transfer credit for courses taken at other institutions must petition the Director of Graduate Studies, who will confer with the Department’s Graduate Program Committee before making a decision. Students requesting transfer credits must provide evidence in support of their transfer application at the request of the Committee. Such evidence may include course descriptions, syllabi, assignments, written work completed for the course, and other supporting materials. Students who are transferring to the University of Chicago from other PhD programs must make such a request for transfer credit upon their initial entry into the program. Students who take a course at another institution while enrolled in the PhD program should consult with the Director of Graduate Studies beforehand, and must still petition the Graduate Program Committee to have the course deemed eligible for transfer credit.

The following policy relating to transfer credits applies to the Philosophy PhD program. Special requirements enacted for joint programs take precedence over this policy.

1. Of the 8 required Q-credits ([https://wiki.uchicago.edu/display/phildr/Course+Requirements/#CourseRequirements-cr](https://wiki.uchicago.edu/display/phildr/Course+Requirements/#CourseRequirements-cr)) that students must acquire, no more than 2 credits can be transferred from other institutions.

2. Only courses taken while enrolled in a doctoral program in Philosophy can count toward a student’s Q-credit requirements ([https://wiki.uchicago.edu/display/phildr/Course+Requirements/#CourseRequirements-credits](https://wiki.uchicago.edu/display/phildr/Course+Requirements/#CourseRequirements-credits)).

3. Transferred credits are not allowed to count toward a student’s area distribution requirements ([https://wiki.uchicago.edu/display/phildr/Course+Requirements/#CourseRequirements-logic](https://wiki.uchicago.edu/display/phildr/Course+Requirements/#CourseRequirements-logic)) but may not be otherwise used to meet departmental course requirements.

Paper Revision and Publication Workshop

The aim of the Paper Revision and Publication (PRP) Workshop is to provide our graduate students with support and assistance to prepare papers to submit for publication in academic philosophy journals. Preparing papers to submit to journals for review and revising papers in response to the feedback received from journal editors and referees is an essential part of professional academic life, and students applying for academic positions with no publications to their name are at a disadvantage in today’s highly competitive job market. While students are strongly encouraged to continue to seek personalized advice about publishing from their dissertation committee members, the Department of Philosophy has determined that the need exists to provide its graduate students with more standardized programming, in the form of an annually recurring workshop, that is specifically aimed at supporting their initial efforts to publish in academic journals. The PRP Workshop was designed with the following three aims in mind: 1. to provide students with a basic understanding of the various steps involved in publishing in academic journals and to create a forum in which students can solicit concrete advice from faculty members about the publishing process; 2. to direct and actively encourage students to submit at least one paper to a journal for review on a timeline that would allow accepted submissions to be listed as publications on a student’s CV by the time they go on the academic job market; and 3. to create and foster a departmental culture in which the continued revision of work with the ultimate aim of publication in academic journals is viewed as an essential aspect of the professional training of our graduate students and in which both faculty and students work together to establish more ambitious norms for publishing while in graduate school.

The PRP Workshop meets weekly in the Spring Quarter. Participation in the PRP Workshop is mandatory for all students in year 2 of the program but is open to students in years 3-5 as well. Any student in years 3-5 of the program who wishes to participate in the workshop must apply to do so no later than week 9 of the preceding Winter quarter. Applications to participate in the workshop must include a draft of the paper that the student intends to revise in the workshop along with a brief statement outlining where they plan to submit their paper and a rough timeline to submission. Applications will be reviewed by the Graduate Program Committee who will make a decision as to which students will be allowed to participate in the workshop. In making these decisions, preference will be given to fifth- over fourth-year students, and to fourth- over third-year students, with further consideration being given to how often a student has presented in the workshop in the past. Regardless of whether they are participating in the workshop or not, all students in years 2-5 are welcome to attend the workshop sessions. First-year students and students in year 6 and up are not allowed to attend or participate in the workshop.

Topical Workshop

In their third year, all PhD students must enroll in the Topical Workshop, which meets regularly in both the Autumn and Winter Quarters, and which is led by the current Director of Graduate Studies. In this workshop, students develop, present, and discuss materials that they plan to use in their Topical Examination, such as dissertation project overviews and preliminary chapter drafts. The main purpose of the Topical Workshop is to help students establish expectations for what will be required for them to advance to PhD candidacy, to advise students on issues such as the overall direction of their research and the composition of the dissertation committee, and to initiate regular conversations between students and the faculty members who are most likely to participate in the workshop.
to serve as their dissertation committee members. While preparation for the Topical Examination may continue during the Spring Quarter and, if necessary, over the summer, at the conclusion of the Topical Workshop, students should have a clear sense of the subsequent steps that must be taken in order for them to pass their Topical Examination and advance to candidacy in a timely manner.

**Topical Examination**

The Topical Examination is an oral examination administered by the members of a student’s dissertation committee with the aim of evaluating the viability of the proposed dissertation project and the student’s ability to execute that project within a reasonable amount of time and at a sufficiently high standard of quality to merit awarding them a PhD. Students will be admitted to PhD candidacy only after they have officially passed their Topical Examination. The Department’s normal expectation is that students will have advanced to candidacy (including passing their Topical Examination) by the beginning of their fourth year. Students must have advanced to candidacy by the beginning of their fifth year to remain in the program.

During their third year, in connection with the Topical Workshop, students will establish, with their prospective dissertation committee chair, concrete plans for the Topical Examination. Those plans will include:

- a determination of the faculty members who will serve on the dissertation committee
- the expected character of the materials to be submitted by the student on which the Topical Examination will be based
- the expected date of the Topical Examination

Though the details will vary (depending on the subject matter, the state of the research, etc.) and are largely left up to the discretion of the committee, the materials must include a substantial new piece (around 25 double-spaced pages) of written work by the student. This could be a draft of a chapter, an exposition of a central argument, or a detailed abstract (or outline) of the whole dissertation. (It is expected that students will abide by these agreements; but, if there are unanticipated problems, they may petition their advisors and the Director of Graduate Studies, in writing, for a revision).

Students cannot take their Topical Examination until they have met all other program requirements. There can be exceptions to this, depending on circumstances, but students will have to petition their committee and the Director of Graduate Studies for such an exception in advance.

Beginning with their fourth year in the program, the Department requires all students to submit a written progress report on their progress by the end of Winter Quarter of each year. The report should be submitted to the Director of Graduate Studies and the student’s dissertation committee. In addition to this report, students who have advanced to candidacy must submit a substantial piece of new writing (25-30 pages in length) to the chair of their dissertation committee. The student will be notified whether or not she is making good progress following the annual review meetings in Spring.

It is very much in each student’s own interest to be well along with her dissertation as soon as possible, for a few related reasons, as all students are obligated to participate in course assistantships and/or teach a standalone course as part of their pedagogical training requirements, which can be time and energy consuming. Additionally dissertation completion fellowships, which come with added financial benefits, are awarded competitively on a Division-wide basis.

**Teaching Requirements**

**Pedagogical Training**

The Department of Philosophy views the pedagogical training of its students as an integral part of its PhD program. Above and beyond its role in professional academic life, the teaching of philosophy stands in a symbiotic relation of mutual support with the activity of philosophizing itself. For this reason, even those doctoral students who decide not to pursue a career in academia will benefit greatly from having acquired the myriad of complex social, communication, and organizational skills that underwrite effective teaching.

PhD students will acquire teaching experience through course assistantships, guest lectureships in faculty-led courses, and one standalone lectureship, in which they will serve as the sole instructor for an undergraduate-level philosophy course. In addition, students will be required to participate in a number of pedagogical training and mentoring activities, all with the aim of becoming excellent teachers of philosophy. For a detailed account of the teaching that Philosophy students do while enrolled in the program, see the Department of Philosophy’s Pedagogical Training Plan (https://wiki.uchicago.edu/download/attachments/185009771/Pedagogical%20Training%20Plan%202022.pdf?version=1&modificationDate=1662454504000&api=v2). The Department’s Pedagogical Training Plan has been specifically designed to ensure that all graduates of our PhD program are able to:

- design and teach introductory courses in philosophy
- design and teach upper-level undergraduate courses in their field of specialization
- create instructive assignments for students and provide helpful and constructive feedback on their work
- effectively facilitate in-class discussion
• deliver effective lectures
• cultivate and maintain an inclusive classroom environment
• describe their own approach to the education of students and provide thoughtful rationales for their pedagogical choices

TEACHING EXPERIENCES

COURSE ASSISTANTSHIPS

The first teaching opportunities for PhD students come in the form of course assistantships, in which students provide instructional assistance to faculty members in undergraduate-level philosophy courses. The duties of a course assistant (CA) vary from course to course, but usually include: (1) holding regularly-scheduled office hours, during which the CA will meet with students and address their individual questions relating to the course material; (2) hosting discussion sections, in which the CA will lead and facilitate discussion amongst the students about the course material and, at the faculty instructor’s discretion, either review or supplement this material; and (3) grading and providing feedback on papers and exams. All PhD students are assigned two (2) course assistantships per year in each of their third and fourth years in the program, and one (1) course assistantship per year in each of their fifth and sixth years in the program. For a detailed schedule of CA assignments, see the Department’s Pedagogical Training Plan (https://wiki.uchicago.edu/download/attachments/185009771/Pedagogical%20Training%20Plan%209-6-22.pdf?version=1&modificationDate=1662454504000&api=v2).

The faculty instructor responsible for the course in which a PhD student serves as a CA is responsible for monitoring that student’s teaching progress and for providing guidance to that student on the art of facilitating productive philosophical discourse and encouraging active student participation in class discussions. In addition, other faculty members will periodically observe a student’s teaching and provide them with feedback and advice on effective pedagogical methods. Students will also receive further pedagogical instruction through Chicago Center for Teaching (https://teaching.uchicago.edu/) programs and departmental workshops.

LECTURESHIPS

As they progress through the program, PhD students will be required to deliver occasional guest lectures in faculty-led departmental courses. These guest lectures will sometimes occur in the context of a course for which the student is serving as a CA, but may also be scheduled to take place in another course for which that student is particularly well-suited to serve as an instructor. The material presented by a student in a guest lecture will be workshopped in advance with the faculty member in whose course the guest lecture is to take place, and this faculty member will provide guidance to that student as to how to present this material most effectively.

In either their fifth or sixth year in the program, after having gained sufficient teaching experience as a course assistant and guest lecturer, PhD students are given the opportunity to teach a standalone course. This course may either consist of a tutorial offered to students enrolled in the intensive track of the undergraduate philosophy major, or it may consist of a section of a departmental course for which that student has already served as a CA or for which they have demonstrated all competencies required to provide high-quality instruction. The determination as to what course a student should teach will be made by each student in consultation with the DGS and their dissertation committee chair. This determination will be based on three factors: (1) a sample course syllabus submitted to the department during the student’s fourth year in the program, (2) faculty observation and feedback on the student’s prior guest lectures in departmental courses, and (3) a report from the student’s dissertation committee regarding progress towards completing the dissertation.

BUILDING A TEACHING DOSIER

Over the course of their graduate school career, PhD students will accrue various teaching-related materials, including the syllabi of courses in which they have served as either CA or instructor, written reports by faculty teaching mentors on their teaching performance in those courses, and undergraduate evaluations for those courses. When a PhD student prepares to go on the academic job market, with the assistance of the Department’s Placement Director, all of these materials will be gathered together into a comprehensive teaching dossier to be included with any applications that that student submits for academic positions post-graduation. In addition, one of that student’s faculty recommendation letters will document and survey the highlights of that student’s teaching career at the University of Chicago.

DISSERTATION AND FINAL ORAL EXAM

Students must inform their dissertation committee members of their intention to schedule a dissertation defense during the quarter prior to that in which they plan to defend. The student’s committee members will then consult with one another concerning whether the dissertation is in sufficiently final form to warrant the fixing of a date for the oral examination. Committee members will normally have seen the bulk of the work of the dissertation before making this judgment. Students should consult with their dissertation committee chair and other dissertation committee members about the specific material they will need to see and the time required in order for this judgment to be made. When a student’s dissertation committee judges that that student is ready to defend, the student must coordinate with the dissertation committee and Department Administrator William Weaver (wweaver@uchicago.edu) to schedule a date and time for the dissertation defense.
Students should consult with their dissertation committee concerning the deadline for submission of a final draft of the dissertation to the committee. To allow the committee sufficient time to review the work, a final draft of the dissertation is normally submitted several weeks to a month before the defense date. Students should be aware that, in practice, in order to graduate in a given quarter, the final draft of the dissertation must be submitted to the dissertation committee in the first week or two of that quarter, so that the defense can take place prior to the Dissertation Office’s deadline for submitting the final form of the dissertation, leaving time for any necessary revisions noted during the defense. All students are encouraged to visit the Dissertation Office Website (https://www.lib.uchicago.edu/research/scholar/phd/) to review the University’s dissertation policies and to determine the precise deadline by which the approved dissertation must be submitted in a given quarter for the degree to be granted in that same quarter. Note also that an exam cannot be scheduled for at least two weeks after the formal request has been submitted.

The defense usually must take place at the University of Chicago, preferably in the Autumn, Winter, or Spring Quarters. Summer defenses may be scheduled at the discretion of the student’s dissertation committee members.

The student and at least one member of the dissertation committee must be physically present at the defense.

The student should submit to the Department Administrator within the timeline noted:

- the scheduled date, time, and the members of the committee, and any special room requirements, at least 4 weeks prior to the defense, or as soon as the date and time of the defense are settled
- an electronic copy (.doc or .docx) of a 1-2 paragraph abstract, at least 3 weeks prior to the defense
- and, if available, an electronic copy of a 10-page abstract of the dissertation, at least 3 weeks prior to the defense

It is customary for the final oral exam to be a public event, with various faculty and graduate students from the Department of Philosophy, as well as family members of the doctoral candidate and other members of the general public, in attendance. However, at the student’s discretion, the final oral exam may also be arranged as a private event, attendance at which, for all participants other than the examining committee members, is by invitation only. In either case, the Department Administrator William Weaver (wweaver@uchicago.edu), will help to arrange a room for the defense and, if necessary, will publicize the event to the relevant parts of the philosophical community at large.

If a student passes the oral exam, then it is a possibility in the final phase of the exam that the members of the student’s dissertation committee will request a final round of revisions to the dissertation. The final granting of the degree is conditional upon the completion of these final revisions. These are to be made promptly after the exam and prior to the official submission of the PhD document to the Dissertation Office. After the dissertation is submitted, the student is encouraged to provide each member of the dissertation committee with an electronic version of the document in its final form.

Director of Graduate Studies
  • Malte Willer

Director of Undergraduate Studies
  • Anton Ford

PHILOSOPHY COURSES

PHIL 30000. Introduction to Logic. 100 Units.
An introduction to the concepts and principles of symbolic logic. We learn the syntax and semantics of truth-functional and first-order quantificational logic, and apply the resultant conceptual framework to the analysis of valid and invalid arguments, the structure of formal languages, and logical relations among sentences of ordinary discourse. Occasionally we will venture into topics in philosophy of language and philosophical logic, but our primary focus is on acquiring a facility with symbolic logic as such.
Instructor(s): Autumn 2023: Paskalina Bourbon (200); Malte Willer (200/300) Winter 2024: Molly Brown (200/300); Ryan Simonelli (200/300) Terms Offered: Autumn Winter
Note(s): Students may count either PHIL 20100 or PHIL 20012, but not both, toward the credits required for graduation.
Equivalent Course(s): PHIL 20100, CHSS 33500, HIPS 20700, LING 20102

PHIL 30012. Accelerated Introduction to Logic. 100 Units.
This course provides an introduction to logic for students of philosophy. It is aimed at students who possess more mathematical training than can be expected of typical philosophy majors, but who wish to study logic not just as a branch of mathematics but as a method for philosophical analysis. (II)
Instructor(s): Anubav Vasudevan Terms Offered: Autumn
Prerequisite(s): While no specific mathematical knowledge will be presupposed, some familiarity with the methods of mathematical reasoning and some prior practice writing prose that is precise enough to support mathematical proof will be useful.
PHIL 31002. Human Rights: Philosophical Foundations. 100 Units.
In this class we explore the philosophical foundations of human rights, investigating theories of how our shared humanity in the context of an interdependent world gives rise to obligations of justice. We begin by asking what rights are, how they are distinguished from other part of morality, and what role they play in our social and political life. But rights come in many varieties, and we are interested in human rights in particular. In later weeks, we will ask what makes something a human right, and how are human rights different from other kinds of rights. We will consider a number of contemporary philosophers (and one historian) who attempt to answer this question, including James Griffin, Joseph Raz, John Rawls, John Tasioulas, Samuel Moyn, Jiewuh Song, and Martha Nussbaum. Throughout we will be asking questions such as, “What makes something a human right?” “What role does human dignity play in grounding our human rights?” “Are human rights historical?” “What role does the nation and the individual play in our account of human rights?” “When can one nation legitimately intervene in the affairs of another nation?” “How can we respect the demands of justice while also respecting cultural difference?” “How do human rights relate to global inequality and markets?” (A) (I)
Instructor(s): Ben Laurence, Pozen Center for Human Rights Instructional Professor Terms Offered: Autumn
Equivalent Course(s): MAPH 42002, INRE 31602, PHIL 21002, HMRT 21002, HIST 39319, HMRT 31002, HIST 29319

PHIL 31414. MAPH Core Course: Contemporary Analytic Philosophy. 100 Units.
This course is designed to provide MAPH students - especially those interested in pursuing a Ph.D. in Philosophy - with an introduction to some recent debates between philosophers working in the analytic tradition. The course is, however, neither a history of analytic philosophy nor an overview of the discipline as it currently stands. The point of the course is primarily to introduce the distinctive style and method - or styles and methods - of philosophizing in the analytic tradition, through brief explorations of some currently hotly debated topics in the field.
Instructor(s): Thomas Pashby Terms Offered: Autumn
Prerequisite(s): This course is open only to MAPH students. MAPH students who wish to apply to Ph.D. programs in Philosophy are strongly urged to take this course.
Equivalent Course(s): MAPH 31414

PHIL 32277. The Philosophy of Thomas Kuhn. 100 Units.
Thomas Kuhn was both an historian and a philosopher of science, with broader interests in philosophical issues pertaining to the nature of language, truth and knowledge - and, in particular, pertaining to questions concerning the possibility of communicability, commensurability, and inter-translatability across radically divergent conceptual schemes, theoretical frameworks, or grammatical/linguistic structures. This course will be devoted to a close examination of the treatment of these topics in Kuhn’s work. For purposes of orientation, we will begin with several class meetings in which we read his classic work The Structure of Scientific Revolutions, first published in 1962, along with some of the central texts which figured in the controversies that book ignited in connection with the aforementioned topics. We will then examine some of the second thoughts Kuhn himself expressed concerning that work in scattered essays written between 1969 and 1977 (some of which are collected in The Essential Tension). The second half of the course will be on Kuhn’s work from 1978 until his death in 1996, starting with the essays collected in The Road Since “Structure”, and further developed in The Presence of Science Past (his 1987 Shearman Lectures) and The Plurality of Worlds (his final unfinished magnum opus). (B) (II)
Instructor(s): James Conant Terms Offered: Winter
Equivalent Course(s): CHSS 32277, PHIL 22277, HIPS 22277

PHIL 32709. Introduction to Philosophy of Quantum Mechanics. 100 Units.
In this class we examine some of the conceptual problems associated with quantum mechanics. We will critically discuss some common interpretations of quantum mechanics, such as the Copenhagen interpretation, the many-worlds interpretation and Bohmian mechanics. We will also examine some implications of results in the foundations of quantum theory concerning non-locality, contextuality and realism. (B) (II)
Instructor(s): Thomas Pashby Terms Offered: Autumn
Prerequisite(s): Prior knowledge of quantum mechanics is not required since we begin with an introduction to the formalism. Only familiarity with high school geometry is presupposed but expect to be introduced to other mathematical tools as needed.
Equivalent Course(s): HIPS 22709, CHSS 32709, PHIL 22709, KNOW 22709

PHIL 32960. Bayesian Epistemology. 100 Units.
This course will be an introduction to Bayesian epistemology. (B) (II)
Instructor(s): Mikayla Kelley Terms Offered: Spring
Prerequisite(s): Introduction to Logic (PHIL 20100/30000) or its equivalent.
Equivalent Course(s): PHIL 2960

PHIL 33022. Agency and Virtual Reality: A Technophilosophical Exploration. 100 Units.
This will be an exploratory course in philosophy of action focusing on how modern virtual reality technologies impact traditional debates within the metaphysics of action. Thus, we will engage in what David Chalmers calls “technophilosophy”: we will use new technologies to address old philosophical questions. In particular, we’ll...
be concerned with traditional metaphysical questions about agency such as what is action, what is distinctive about human action in particular, how do we exert control in action, what is the role of the body in agency, and to what extent does our agency manifest in the mind. But we will look at these questions keeping in close view that it may be only a matter of time before the vast majority of our lives are spent in virtual reality. To give sufficiently robust answers to these traditional questions—answers which are sensitive to a technologically changing world—we thus need to consider technophilosophical questions such as: could there be genuine virtual action? Can we make sense of genuine action without bodily movement? Are all actions in virtual reality simply mental actions? What are the limits of a human body, and could the human body extend into a virtual world? Are we responsible for what we do in virtual reality in the same way we are responsible for what we do in the real world? A previous course in philosophy of action would be helpful but is not necessary. (B) (II) Instructor(s): Mikayla Kelley Terms Offered: Winter
Prerequisite(s): At least one course in philosophy.
Equivalent Course(s): PHIL 23022

PHIL 33405. History and Philosophy of Biology. 100 Units.
This lecture-discussion course will consider the main figures in the history of biology, from the Hippocratics and Aristotle to Darwin and Mendel. The philosophic issues will be the kinds of explanations appropriate to biology versus the other physical sciences, the status of teleological considerations, and the moral consequences for human beings.
Instructor(s): R. Richards Terms Offered: Autumn
Note(s): For students taking PHIL 23405, the course is (B) (II).
Equivalent Course(s): KNOW 37402, PHIL 23405, HIST 25104, CHSS 37402, HIST 35104, HIPS 25104

PHIL 35712. Showing and Saying in the History of Philosophy. 100 Units.
Wittgenstein describes the theory of what cannot be said by means of propositions but is only shown as 'the cardinal problem of philosophy.' We shall ask how can the notion of showing, which is not familiar from tradition, can be regarded as the cardinal concern of philosophy. We shall discuss traditional accounts of philosophical understanding (e.g., Plato’s theory of form of the Good, Aristotle's account of the Nous of simples, Absolute Idealism) in light of ‘the theory of what cannot be said but shown.’
Instructor(s): Iiad Kimhi Terms Offered: Autumn. Autumn 2023
Prerequisite(s): Background in philosophy and logic for Undergraduates.
Equivalent Course(s): SCTH 25712, PHIL 25712, SCTH 35712

PHIL 35713. Wittgenstein’s Lecture on Ethics. 100 Units.
This course will be devoted to Wittgenstein’s ‘Lecture on Ethics’ (1929.) We shall study the lecture in the context of Wittgenstein’s work on logic and the history of ethics.
Instructor(s): Iiad Kimhi Terms Offered: Winter. Winter 2024
Prerequisite(s): Background in philosophy for Undergrads
Equivalent Course(s): SCTH 35713, PHIL 25713, SCTH 35713

PHIL 35823. Fascism. 100 Units.
Developments in recent years have clearly shown a resurgence of interest in “fascism”. While it designates a phenomenon which might concern everyone, it is also a term used more often in the manner of an insult than a precisely defined concept. One might even say it is what W.B. Gallie once called an essentially contested concept—not because many claim it for themselves today, but on the contrary, because virtually everyone denounces it in their own specific way. In this course, students will consider what “fascism” means by engaging with several influential explanations of it. We will read and discuss more contemporary philosophical views (Stanley, Eco), historical perspectives and documents (Paxton), but also classic perspectives from political theory (Arendt), philosophy (Burnham), and critical theory (Horkheimer, Adorno, Pollock), as well as political economy (Neumann, Sohn-Rethel, Gerschenkron, Fraenkel, Kalecki). With an eye to its historical and contemporary applications, our purpose throughout will be to reconstruct the arguments which we will consider in order to develop a rigorous concept of “fasism”. This course will be offered in English. Its only prerequisite is a non-dogmatic approach to reading and discussion.
Instructor(s): Daniel Burnfin Terms Offered: Autumn
Equivalent Course(s): HIST 32508, HIST 22508, GRMN 35823, GRMN 25823, PHIL 25823

PHIL 37379. Reparations. 100 Units.
This course focuses on reparations for racialized slavery in the United States. As we’ll see, the debate over reparations raises a number of complex philosophical questions: what does it mean today to atone for hundreds of years of slavery, given that those who were enslaved, and those who enslaved other human beings, are now dead? Who today has an obligation to atone for it? What are they obligated to do? And, perhaps most importantly, who should have the authority to decide what successful atonement or reparation would look like? These questions arguably cannot be answered decisively without a precise accounting for the wrongs intrinsic to the institution of slavery, on the one hand, and an analysis of post-slavery racial oppression, on the other. Some of the authors we’ll read include: Bernard Boxill, Angela Davis, Fredrick Douglass, W.E.B. Du Bois, C.L.R. James, Charles Mills, Robert Nozick and Jeremy Waldron. (A)
Instructor(s): Tyler Zimmer Terms Offered: Autumn
Equivalent Course(s): RDIN 27379, PHIL 27379, CRES 27379
PHIL 39408. Intuitionistic Logic. 100 Units.
This course will present the philosophical and mathematical foundations of intuitionistic logic, perhaps the most serious rival to classical logic. We will look at the historical origins of intuitionistic logic and the reasons for its continued influence today. The course will also involve a mathematically rigorous presentation of the metatheory of intuitionistic logic. (B) (II)
Instructor(s): Kevin Davey Terms Offered: Winter
Prerequisite(s): Students should have completed Elementary Logic, or a similar class in the mathematics department.
Equivalent Course(s): PHIL 29408

PHIL 37523. Reading Kierkegaard. 100 Units.
This will be a discussion-centered seminar that facilitates close readings some Kierkegaard texts: The Present Age, Fear and Trembling, Sickness Unto Death, and The Lily of the Field and the Bird of the Air. We shall consider both the issues and arguments as well as Kierkegaard’s forms of writing and manners of persuasion. Students will be expected to write comments each week and to read the comments of others. Our reading each week will be determined by the pace of the group.
Instructor(s): Jonathan Lear Terms Offered: Winter, Winter 2024
Prerequisite(s): This course is intended for majors in Philosophy and Fundamentals. All other students need the permission of the instructor. All Graduate Students need the Instructor’s consent.
Equivalent Course(s): PHIL 27523, SCTH 27523, SCTH 37523, FNDL 27523

PHIL 39913. Ancient Greek Philosophy of Race and Ethnicity. 100 Units.
This course will introduce students to race and ethnicity as topics of interest to ancient Greek philosophers, primarily Plato and Aristotle. We will look at the ways that Plato and Aristotle ask and address philosophical questions about human difference that approximate the modern concepts of race and ethnicity, such as the notion of a “barbarian”, mythologies of ancestry, the role of shared language, culture, and political forms versus genealogy, and the association of character traits and political capacities with groups of people. We will also consider relevant connections to other perceived forms of difference, such as gender, sexuality, and political status (e.g. slave, resident non-citizen). Since they are often relevant to how Plato and Aristotle address these issues, we will also consider relevant texts from the broader Greek intellectual world: medicine, drama, ethnography, and oratory. Finally, we will consider methodological issues, such as whether it is meaningful to talk about “race” in Greek antiquity, how it might differ from “ethnicity”, and how classicists, historians, and philosophers interested in this study can be misled by their own prejudices. (A) (III)
Instructor(s): John Proios Terms Offered: Winter
Prerequisite(s): Some familiarity with ancient Greek philosophy is expected.
Equivalent Course(s): CRES 22913, PHIL 29913, RDIN 29913, RDIN 39913

PHIL 46701. Descartes. 100 Units.
René Descartes is widely regarded as a (and perhaps the) foundational figure in modern philosophy, and he made seminal contributions to mathematics, natural science, and metaphysics. In this course we will work towards attaining a synoptic view of his thought. Our work together will be structured around a close, systematic reading of his Meditations on First Philosophy (i.e., on metaphysics), although we will read widely in the Cartesian corpus. Topics to be discussed include substance and mode; the nature of body; mind-body union; sensation; motion; causation; God and the infinite; and the will, among others. We will occasionally look to the medieval tradition to which Descartes was indebted, as well as to responses to his work by his contemporaries. Secondary sources will include writings by Lilli Alanen, Christia Mercer, Tad Schmaltz, Dan Garber, Anat Schechtman, Paul Hoffman, Marleen Rozemond, and John Carriero. (B)
Instructor(s): Andrew Pitel Terms Offered: Spring
Prerequisite(s): Open to undergraduate and MA students, and all others with consent.
Equivalent Course(s): PHIL 26701, MAPH 46701

PHIL 47303. The Principle of Sufficient Reason. 100 Units.
The Principle of Sufficient Reason (PSR) is the principle according to which every truth or fact can be explained. Appeals to explicability are pervasive in our everyday reasoning as well as in philosophy and the sciences - for example, the view that consciousness is grounded in physical features of the world is motivated by the thought that otherwise consciousness would be inexplicable. However, while the thought that phenomena admit of explanation motivates a great deal of philosophy, contemporary philosophers on the whole reject the PSR. Their reasons for doing so are partly because the PSR is thought to have the following surprising consequences: that God exists; that everything that could possibly be true is not only actually true, but necessarily true (also known as necessitarianism); and that only one thing exists (also known as monism). In this course we will read, write, and think about the philosophical tradition of metaphysical rationalism that is characterized by its embrace of the PSR. Our course will divide into three sections. First, we will study the ‘golden age’ of metaphysical rationalism in the 17th century through the writings of Spinoza and Leibniz. From there, we will turn to the recent resurgence of interest in metaphysical rationalism within analytic metaphysics, much of which has been influenced by scholars working in 17th century philosophy. (B)
Instructor(s): Andrew Pitel Terms Offered: Autumn
Prerequisite(s): Open to undergraduate and MA students, and all others with consent.
Equivalent Course(s): MAPH 47303, PHIL 27303
PHIL 49900. Reading & Research. 100 Units.
Reading and Research.
Instructor(s): Staff Terms Offered: Autumn Spring Winter
Prerequisite(s): Consent of Instructor.

PHIL 50002. Metaphysics of Action. 100 Units.
This is a graduate seminar on the metaphysics of action. The course will be structured as an intensive overview of some of the basic questions in the area. We will briefly cover some fundamentals including the relationship between actions, agency, and agents, the range of action kinds, the distinction between basic and nonbasic action, and agent nihilism. We will then turn to the question of what kind of thing action is. Is it an event? A process? A causing? A sui generis kind of thing? After that, in hopes of coming to better understand the nature of action, we will look at how action relates to other phenomena such as reasons, causation, knowledge, control, and ethical practice. (II)
Instructor(s): Mikayla Kelley Terms Offered: Autumn

PHIL 50100. First-Year Seminar. 100 Units.
This course meets in Autumn and Winter quarters.
Instructor(s): David Finkelstein Terms Offered: Autumn Winter
Prerequisite(s): Enrollment limited to first-year graduate students.

PHIL 50307. Hegel's Theory of Art. 100 Units.
Hegel's lectures on fine art revolutionized European thinking about the arts, transforming traditional theories of taste into a philosophy of art, and influentially arguing that art works must be studied historically. We shall read portions of both volumes of the English translations of this two volume work and will focus especially on his understanding of the relation between art and society, between art and philosophy, and his understanding of the historicity of art.
Instructor(s): Robert Pippin
Prerequisite(s): None
Equivalent Course(s): SCTH 50307, PHIL 20307, SCTH 20307

PHIL 51002. Neo-Aristotelian Practical Philosophy. 100 Units.
Neo-Aristotelianism marks philosophical views indebted to Aristotle. In practical philosophy-ethics, political philosophy, accounts of practical reason, and so on-these views are distantly indebted to Aristotle's views in metaphysics. The 4 crucial aspects of Aristotle's metaphysics, for our purposes are: I. His understanding of substances II. His understanding of causality III. His understanding of form and matter, and, relatedly, IV. His understanding of powers/potentialities, and actuality Substances are unified, individual objects of a specific kind that can have accidental features like color and location in addition to natures or essences. The paradigmatic instances of substances for Aristotle are individual living things-plants, animals, and human beings being three examples. These things-organisms-come in specific kinds-the geranium, for example, or the honey badger. The kinds are the substantial forms of the living things that are instances of those kinds. Organisms are composite things-their matter is informed. And the matter in question only counts as matter relative to the form it can take. Organisms have characteristic powers-sight, for instance, or nutrition, or discursive reason-and these powers are actualized when exercised. Aristotle identifies the substantial forms of living things as different kinds of souls-living things are animate things. The 'anima' in 'animate' holds the word for soul-or source of life-for Aristotle. (I)
Instructor(s): Jonathan Lear; Candace Vogler Terms Offered: Autumn
Prerequisite(s): Permission of Instructors.
Equivalent Course(s): SCTH 51002

PHIL 51408. Philosophy of Action. 100 Units.
TBA
Instructor(s): Matthias Haase Terms Offered: Spring

PHIL 51711. Aristotle's Politics. 100 Units.
Aristotle's Politics argues for and then elaborates the claim that human beings are by nature political animals. This claim, if it is true, has profound implications not only for our understanding of politics (e.g., of political authority), but also for our self-understanding as the individual human beings we are. We will read the text closely, giving particular attention to Aristotle's views about what a specifically political community is, how it relates to other kinds of community, and how the political nature of human beings inflects the virtues and happiness of individuals and societies. We will try to decide whether and to what extent the Politics is illuminating, including whether it can be disentangled from his commitment to natural slavery and the subordination of women. (III)
Instructor(s): Gabriel Richardson Lear Terms Offered: Winter
Equivalent Course(s): SCTH 56702

PHIL 55301. Plato's Parmenides. 100 Units.
The Parmenides is an important contribution to Plato's thought in the areas of metaphysics, epistemology, language, and logic. It asks: are there problems with the Platonic "theory of forms", at least in some version of the view? And it answers: yes, devastating problems, which can be overcome only through an elaborate and highly abstract training exercise. This exercise, which the dialogue enacts, involves a series of "deductions" or inferential chains regarding certain hypotheses and their negations. Naturally, this makes the Parmenides
a difficult dialogue, challenging its reader both to follow complex logic and to read "beyond" the page to the deeper meaning. In this course, we will read the text in full, week by week. Topics will include: the metaphysics of forms, Parmenides' methodology, the epistemology of paradox and contradiction, and how the dialogue develops a logical language. (III)

Instructor(s): John Proios Terms Offered: Spring
Prerequisite(s): Some familiarity with Plato’s dialogues is expected.

PHIL 57502. Finite Knowledge in the Critique of Pure Reason. 100 Units.
A consideration of the positive part of Kant's Critique of Pure Reason as the reflective investigation of the human capacity for empirical knowledge and as the adventancement, under the title of transcendental idealism, of a conception of metaphysics as the science of the object of that capacity as such, with attention to alternative interpretive possibilities. (IV)
Instructor(s): Thomas Pendlebury Terms Offered: Winter

PHIL 58009. Disjunctivism and the Philosophy of Language. 100 Units.
Disjunctivist accounts of human capacities always turn on some form of rejection of (what we will call in this course) a layer-cake assumption. One particularly widespread version of the latter sort of assumption, when asserted as a thesis about the nature of our cognitive faculties and their relation to one another, goes like this: The natures of our sentient and rational capacities respectively are such that we could possess one of these capacities, as a form of cognition, without possessing the other. The underlying assumption is that at least one of these capacities is a self-standing cognitive capacity - one which could operate just as it presently does in us in isolation of the other. This course will begin by examining the counterpart assumption in the philosophy of language, when it is asserted as a thesis about the relation between the aspects of language we respectively apprehend through our power of sensory perception (for example, in recognizing signs) and through our power of intellectual comprehension (for example, in grasping a meaning). One tendency, for example, which we find in much contemporary philosophy of language is to conceive of the linguistic expression as a composite notion to be analyzed in terms of a kind of mere physical mark or acoustic noise to which something further - a meaning or use - is assigned or added in order to yield a fully linguistic expression. (II)
Instructor(s): James Conant Terms Offered: Spring

PHIL 58012. Language, Evidence, and Mind. 100 Units.
The observation that ordinary uses of predicates such as “tasty” and “beautiful” trigger an acquaintance inference-they suggest that the speaker has first-hand knowledge of the item under consideration-has received immense attention by philosophers as well as by linguists in recent years. The goal of this seminar is to arrive at a comprehensive and systematic understanding of this phenomenon. We will explore the significance of the acquaintance inference in semantics and philosophy of language (in particular for our understanding of the interaction between literal meaning and discourse pragmatics) but also for aesthetics and meta-ethics. From the linguistics side, we will explore intricate questions surrounding the projection properties of acquaintance inferences as well as issues surrounding “subjective” attitude verbs. The guiding hypothesis of this interdisciplinary seminar is that natural language predicate expressions lexically specify what it takes for their use to be properly ‘grounded’ in a speaker’s state of mind-what state of mind a speaker must be in for a predication to be in accordance with the norms governing assertion-and that these grounding constraints may compositionally interact with other other natural language expressions in interesting ways.
Instructor(s): Chris Kennedy (Linguistics) and Malte Willer (Philosophy) Terms Offered: Spring

PHIL 59950. Workshop: Job Placement. 000 Units.
Course begins in late Spring quarter and continues in the Autumn quarter.
Instructor(s): Kevin Davey Terms Offered: Autumn Spring
Prerequisite(s): This workshop is open only to PhD Philosophy graduate students planning to go on the job market in the Autumn of 2023/2024. Approval of dissertation committee is required.

PHIL 70000. Advanced Study: Philosophy. 300.00 Units.
Advanced Study: Philosophy
Instructor(s): Malte Willer