

Faculty

Cyrus W. Banning
Professor Emeritus

Juan E. De Pascuale
Associate Professor

Susan Hahn
Visiting Assistant Professor

Daniel Kading
Professor Emeritus

Ronald E. McLaren
Professor Emeritus

Andrew W. Pessin
Associate Professor

Joel F. Richeimer
Chair, Associate Professor

Yang Xiao
Assistant Professor

The great philosophers seek to answer the most basic questions about the world and our place in it. Can we distinguish between what is real and what is unreal? What is knowledge?

What are the roles of reason, perception, and feeling in shaping our relations with the world and with each other? What does it mean to be a person? What is the value of art?

What are we to think about religion?

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

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

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

Regardless of background, students should normally take **the introductory course, PHIL 100**, before they take any other philosophy course at Kenyon. Each member of the philosophy faculty offers a section of the introductory course. This course serves as an introduction to the subject through the reading of original works by major philosophers.

Although many of our texts derive from earlier centuries and from classical Greece, we are concerned with what is of timeless and present importance in them. We emphasize classroom discussion, focusing on interpretation of the texts and

consideration of the philosophical issues raised by them. We assign several short papers and we give a final examination.

Other courses that may be taken without prerequisites are PHIL 105, Introduction to Logic; PHIL 115, Practical Issues in Ethics; PHIL 200, Ancient Philosophy; PHIL 210, Modern Philosophy; PHIL 225, Existentialism; and PHIL 240, Philosophy of Religion.

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

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

Requirements for the Major

1. Course Requirements

4 1/2 units of philosophy, including the following courses:

PHIL 100 Introduction to Philosophy
PHIL 105 Introduction to Logic **or**
PHIL 120 Symbolic Logic
PHIL 200 Ancient Philosophy
PHIL 210 Modern Philosophy

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

2. Senior Exercise

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

3. Friendly Advice

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

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

Requirements for Honors Majors

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

1. Course Requirements

5 units of philosophy, including the following courses:

PHIL 100 Introduction to Philosophy
 PHIL 120 Symbolic Logic
 PHIL 200 Ancient Philosophy
 PHIL 210 Modern Philosophy
 PHIL 215 Nineteenth-Century Philosophy

PHIL 398 Junior Honors Seminar
 PHIL 497 and 498 Senior Honors
 One course from each of the three core areas (see below), one of which must be a seminar

For normal sequence of courses, see “Friendly Advice,” above

2. Senior Exercise

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

3. Honors Thesis and Oral Examination

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

4. Divisional Approval

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

Core Area Courses

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

Ethics

PHIL 110 Introduction to Ethics
 PHIL 400 Seminar in Contemporary Ethics

Epistemology

PHIL 220 Pragmatism
 PHIL 405 Theory of Knowledge

Metaphysics

PHIL 205 Medieval Philosophy
 PHIL 215 Nineteenth-Century Philosophy

Senior Exercise

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

Students with a grade point average of 3.5 and above in the major,

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

Graduate School Considerations

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

Synoptic Majors

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

Off-Campus Studies

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

Requirements for the Minor

The minor in philosophy consists of 2 1/2 units of work in the department, including the following courses:

- PHIL 100 Introduction to Philosophy
- PHIL 105 Introduction to Logic or PHIL 120 Symbolic Logic
- One course from the history sequence (PHIL 200, or PHIL 210, or PHIL 215)
- Two additional 1/2-unit courses in philosophy of the student's choice

First-Semester Courses

Introduction to Philosophy

- ◆ PHIL 100 (1/2 unit)
De Pascuale, Yang

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

Practical Issues in Ethics

- ◆ PHIL 115 (1/2 unit)
Xiao

This course examines moral issues we face in private and public life from a philosophical point of view. We shall deal with topics such as abortion, capital punishment, euthanasia, the moral status of nonhuman animals, the environment, war, same-sex marriage, inequality, and social justice. There is a strong emphasis on discussion. This course is suitable for first-year students.

Symbolic Logic

- ◆ QR PHIL 120 (1/2 unit)
Richeimer

This course presents an introduction to modern formal logic. The nature of

deductive reasoning is examined through the study of formal systems, representing the principles of valid argument.

Ancient Philosophy

- PHIL 200 (1/2 unit)
Richeimer

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

Medieval Philosophy

- PHIL 205 (1/2 unit)
Pessin

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

Nineteenth-Century Philosophy

- PHIL 215 (1/2 unit)
Hahn

This course follows the rise and fall of German idealism. The German idealists attempted to demonstrate the unity of all experience and knowledge by formulating all-encompassing philosophical systems. We will study

the most elaborate of these attempts—Hegel's encyclopedic system of philosophy—and then turn to a succession of critics: Marx, who argued that philosophical reflection could not unify experience; Schopenhauer, who argued that no such unity can be found in life; and Nietzsche, who argued that we must create our own unified experience. Throughout the course, we will focus on these philosophers' understanding of the idea that we are alienated and their prescriptions for how to overcome such alienation.

The readings in this course are extraordinarily difficult, and it is strongly recommended that students have some previous experience with the history of philosophy. Prerequisite: sophomore standing or above.

Existentialism

- PHIL 225 (1/2 unit)
De Pascuale

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

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

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

but PHIL 100 or RELN 111 is desirable. Enrollment limited.

Philosophy of Art

PHIL 230 (1/2 unit)
De Pascuale

This course is a seminar/workshop in which we will attempt to philosophically scrutinize the delightful, complicated, and varied world of art. The philosophy of art is not art history, art appreciation, or art criticism. It is, instead, that division of philosophy in which we critically examine the assumptions made by artists, historians, and critics of art. In Philosophy of Art, we try to define art, establish general criteria for distinguishing what is important or unique in art works, understand creativity, and ascertain the role of art in human life and society.

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

Philosophy of Language

PHIL 255 (1/2 unit)
Pessin

In this course, we will examine recent material in the philosophy of language. Questions about meaning will form the core of our study. What is meaning? What conditions must an expression meet in order to have meaning? Is meaning psychological and subjective, or objective? How is it possible to speak meaningfully of nonexistent things (including fictional entities)? Can claims be true solely by virtue of their meanings? What is the true logical form of

certain sorts of propositions? Other questions to be explored include how expressions refer to the world (or how we use them to do so), how communication occurs, the nature of speech acts (utterances that accomplish some act, such as a promise or a bet), metaphor, and the possibility of a purely private language. Some familiarity with logic would be useful but is not required. Prerequisite: PHIL 100 or equivalent.

Political Philosophy

PHIL 270 (1/2 unit)
Hahn

This course examines the political philosophy of Machiavelli, Hobbes, Rousseau, Kant, Hegel, and Nietzsche. We will study the concepts, principles, and moral psychology that form the basis of their political theories. We will consider, in particular, how they relate certain philosophical concepts to a politics of freedom, civil disobedience, and dissent. We will address questions such as: Do individuals' interests ever conflict with the common good? In such cases, is it ever right to coerce individuals in accordance with universal principles of right and freedom? What right do individuals have to safeguard their rights in the face of abuses of power?

Seminar on the Theory of Knowledge

PHIL 405 (1/2 unit)
Richeimer

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

Individual Study

PHIL 493 (1/2 unit)
Staff

Prerequisites: permission of instructor and department chair.

Senior Honors

PHIL 497 (1/4 unit)
Staff

Prerequisite: permission of department chair.

Second-Semester Courses

Introduction to Philosophy

◆ PHIL 100 (1/2 unit)
Hahn, Richeimer

See first-semester course description.

Introduction to Logic

◆ PHIL 105 (1/2 unit)
Hahn

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

Introduction to Ethics

PHIL 110 (1/2 unit)
Xiao

This course examines major ethical theories such as utilitarianism, Kantianism, Aristotelian virtue ethics, and Daoist ethics, along with meta-ethical issues such as relativism, subjectivism, and value pluralism. The emphasis is on classical texts. Prerequisite: sophomore standing or 1/2 unit in philosophy.

Special Topic: Hellenistic and Roman Philosophy

PHIL 203 (1/2 unit)
De Pascuale

The Hellenistic and Roman period of Western philosophy has long been neglected by mainstream philosophers. Contemporary philosophers rarely mention philosophers from this period, and you will look long and hard before you find a department of philosophy, undergraduate or graduate, that offers a course on this subject. One reason for this neglect is that many do not regard what the

philosophers of this period were doing as “philosophy” in the accepted academic sense of the term. The Epicureans, Sceptics, and Stoics practiced philosophy not as a detached intellectual discipline in the manner of professors of the subject, but as a worldly art of grappling with issues of daily and urgent human significance: the fear of death, love and sexuality, anger and aggression, the duties of friendship, the relative value of different life pleasures. Philosophy for these thinkers and writers was a way of life, a way of coping with life’s difficulties and the mystery that is human existence.

This seminar will not be a strict historical survey of Hellenistic and Roman philosophy. Instead, we will critically analyze some of the best and most influential writings of this period in order to understand and evaluate what these philosophers thought was the best way to live life. We will read and discuss the writings of Epictetus, Lucretius, Seneca, Marcus Aurelius, Cicero, Plutarch, and others. Prerequisites: Introduction to Philosophy and Ancient Philosophy, or permission of instructor. Enrollment limited.

Modern Philosophy

PHIL 210 (1/2 unit)
Pessin

This course examines seventeenth-through eighteenth-century philosophy. Major emphasis will be placed on Descartes, Locke, Berkeley, Hume, and Kant, but we will also stop in on figures such as Malebranche, Arnauld, and Reid. We will stress metaphysical and epistemological issues throughout. It wouldn’t be unfair to say that Descartes sets the agenda by creating a certain conception of the mind and the nature of knowledge, while each of the subsequent figures works out various implications of that conception. As such, the course content takes something of a narrative form, where we start with a certain optimism about knowledge, work our way into a deepening skepticism, only to be rescued at the end (by a rescuer whose price may not be worth

paying). There are no official prerequisites, but PHIL 100 is recommended.

Early Chinese Philosophy

PHIL 212 (1/2 unit)
Xiao

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

Pragmatism

PHIL 220 (1/2 unit)
Richeimer

Pragmatism is the only major philosophical tradition on the world stage originating in the United States. And it is the only tradition of philosophy since Kant that is respected and taken seriously in both the Anglo-American philosophical tradition and the continental philosophical tradition. Many movements claim their origins in the American pragmatism—these include verificationism, Husserlian phenomenology, Quinean naturalism, and some trends in postmodernism, cybernetics, vagueness logic, semiotics, the dominant trend in American educational philosophy, Italian fascism, American experimental psychology, and Gandhi’s philosophy of nonviolence. We will examine that tradition by reading the major works of Peirce, James, and Dewey, and their critics.

Freedom and Free Will

PHIL 283 (1/2 unit)
Hahn

This course is on modern views about freedom and free will. Issues will include: Is determinism compatible with free will? What notion of agent-causation is necessary for free will? What account of human psychology is necessary for free action? Why do we want free will in the first place? The course will include

readings from Wolf, Chisholm, Frankfurt, Strawson, Kane, and others.

Nietzsche

PHIL 300 (1/2 unit)
De Pascuale

Nietzsche is a disturbing presence in the modern world. In a series of beautifully written books that are at once profound, elusive, enigmatic, and shocking, Nietzsche does nothing less than challenge our most precious and fundamental beliefs: the idea of truth, the existence of God, the objectivity of moral values, and the intrinsic value of the human being. As a critic of both the Western metaphysical tradition and the Judeo-Christian religion, Nietzsche may well be the most controversial thinker in the entire history of philosophy. In this seminar, we will submit some of Nietzsche’s most important books to a close, critical reading in an effort to come to terms, so far as this is possible, with his mature thought. We will examine his most famous yet perplexing views—the death of God, will to power, the *Übermensch*, nihilism, perspectivism, the eternal recurrence—as they are developed in *Untimely Meditations*, *Twilight of Idols*, *Genealogy of Morals*, *Beyond Good and Evil*, and selections from *Will to Power*. Prerequisites: PHIL 100, PHIL 225, or permission of instructor.

Junior Honors Seminar:

Philosophical Analysis

PHIL 398 (1/2 unit)
Pessin

This course will examine one or more major philosophical issues in contemporary form. We will seek both to comprehend the problem(s) and to understand and apply contemporary techniques of philosophical analysis. Students will be expected to present reports in the seminar. The course is intended for junior honors candidates and those interested in honors. The topic(s) for this year will be announced. Prerequisite: junior honors candidacy.

Seminar on Contemporary Ethics

PHIL 400 (1/2 unit)

Xiao

This seminar examines important topics in contemporary ethics such as free will, agency, moral luck, emotions, virtues, and the foundations of moral knowledge. Recent ethical theories and anti-theories are considered. Twentieth-century writers are emphasized. Prerequisites: junior and senior philosophy majors or minors.

Individual Study

PHIL 494 (1/2 unit)

Staff

Prerequisites: permission of instructor and department chair.

Senior Honors

PHIL 498 (1/4 unit)

Staff

Prerequisite: permission of instructor and department chair.