

# PHILOSOPHY

Connecticut Hall, 203.432.1665  
<http://philosophy.yale.edu>  
M.A., Ph.D.

## **Chair**

Paul Franks

## **Director of Graduate Studies**

Sun-Joo Shin ([sun-joo.shin@yale.edu](mailto:sun-joo.shin@yale.edu))

**Professors** Stephen Darwall, Michael Della Rocca, Keith DeRose, Paul Franks, Tamar Gendler, Daniel Greco, Verity Harte, Brad Inwood, Shelly Kagan, Joshua Knobe, Laurie Paul, Thomas Pogge, Scott Shapiro, Sun-Joo Shin, Steven Smith, Jason Stanley, Zoltán Szabó, Kenneth Winkler, Gideon Yaffe

**Associate Professors** Robin Dembroff, John Pittard

**Assistant Professors** Claudia Dumitru, Lily Hu, Jacob McNulty

## **FIELDS OF STUDY**

The department offers a wide range of courses in various traditions of philosophy, with strengths and a well-established reputation in the history of philosophy, ethics, philosophy of law, epistemology, philosophy of language, and philosophy of religion as well as other central topics.

## **SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS FOR THE PH.D. DEGREE**

1. In the first two years all students must complete a total of twelve term courses. Graduate courses are grouped: (1) metaphysics, theory of knowledge, philosophy of mind, philosophy of language, philosophy of science; (2) ethics, aesthetics, philosophy of religion, political philosophy, philosophy of law, and theory of value; (3) history of philosophy. No more than six of the twelve and no fewer than two courses may be taken in each group. At least one of the twelve courses taken must be in formal methods (unless the formal methods requirement is satisfied in some other way), and this course does not count toward the required minimum of two within any of the three categories.
2. Two qualifying papers must be submitted, one in the history of philosophy, the other in another distribution area. These papers must be more substantial and professional than an ordinary term paper.
3. Approval of the dissertation prospectus is expected before the end of the sixth term. Upon completion of all predissertation requirements, including the prospectus, students are admitted to candidacy for the Ph.D. Admission to candidacy must take place by the end of the third year of study.
4. Students in Philosophy typically teach in the third, fourth, and sixth years.

5. In addition to the twelve required philosophy courses, before the dissertation defense students must take at least one class that is not listed in philosophy on a subject that is relevant to their research.
6. The dissertation is expected to be submitted in the end of the fifth to sixth year.

## **CLASSICS AND PHILOSOPHY COMBINED PH.D. PROGRAM**

The Classics and Philosophy Program is a combined program, offered by the Departments of Classics and Philosophy at Yale, for students wishing to pursue graduate study in ancient philosophy. Suitably qualified students may apply for entry to the program either through the Classics department for the Classics track or through the Philosophy department for the Philosophy track.

Applicants for the Classics track of the combined program must satisfy the general requirements for admission to the Classics graduate program, in addition to the requirements of the Classics track of the combined program. Details of the Classics track of the program are available online at <https://classics.yale.edu/research/ancient-philosophy/classics-and-philosophy-joint-program>.

Applicants for the Philosophy track of the combined program must satisfy the general requirements for admission to the Philosophy graduate program, in addition to the requirements of the Philosophy track of the combined program. Details of the Philosophy track of the program are available online at <http://philosophy.yale.edu/graduate-program/classics-and-philosophy-program>.

The combined program is overseen by an interdepartmental committee currently consisting of Verity Harte and Brad Inwood together with the director of graduate studies (DGS) for Classics and the DGS for Philosophy.

## **PHILOSOPHY AND PSYCHOLOGY COMBINED PH.D. PROGRAM**

The Philosophy and Psychology Program is a combined program, offered by the Departments of Philosophy and Psychology at Yale. Students enrolled in the program complete a series of courses in each discipline as well as an interdisciplinary dissertation that falls at the intersection of the two. On completing these requirements, students are awarded a Ph.D. either in Philosophy and Psychology, or in Psychology and Philosophy.

Students can be admitted into the combined program either through the Psychology department or through the Philosophy department. Students must be accepted into one of these departments (the “home department”) through the standard admissions process, and both departments must then agree to accept the student into the combined program.

Students can be accepted into the combined program either (a) at the time they initially apply for admission to their home department, or (b) after having already completed some course work within the home department. In either case, students must be accepted into the combined program by each department.

Students in the combined program complete two-thirds of the course requirements of each of the two disciplines, then write a qualifying paper and a dissertation that are fully interdisciplinary. For more details about the program requirements, see <http://>

philosophy.yale.edu/graduate-program/philosophy-and-psychology-combined-phd-program.

## MASTER'S DEGREE

**M.A.** Students who successfully complete the course requirements of their program with an average grade of High Pass will be awarded the M.A. degree.

Please see the Philosophy website for information on the program: <http://philosophy.yale.edu>.

## COURSES

### **PHIL 500a, Sartre and De Beauvoir** Stephen Darwall and Jacob McNulty

This course examines writings from two of the most important French philosophers of the twentieth century, Jean-Paul Sartre and Simone de Beauvoir. We begin with a popular statement of the existentialist outlook, "existentialism is a humanism." We then consider the methodological underpinnings of this new philosophical approach by examining Sartre's response Husserlian phenomenology and the notion of intentionality that lies at its center. The bulk of the course is devoted to a reading of Sartre's masterwork, *Being and Nothingness*. Themes we consider include realism and idealism; the difference between the "for itself" and "in-itself"; bad faith; "the look" and intersubjectivity; love; embodiment; sadism and masochism; freedom, responsibility, choice; the notion of a fundamental project; and the desire to be God. In the remainder of the course, we consider Beauvoir's moral philosophy, as set forth in an early essay and in her masterwork *The Ethics of Ambiguity* (traditionally, this work has been overshadowed by her *Second Sex*). Here, we devote attention to the idea of an existentialist ethics and the demanding ideals of freedom and authenticity that are at its center. We also consider Beauvoir's perspectives on patriarchy, racism, colonialism, and war. Throughout the course, we give ourselves the option of consulting secondary readings by Anglophone philosophers writing in the existentialist tradition, e.g. Moran, Dover and Gingrich, and others. However, the emphasis is on the primary texts. Prerequisite: at least one prior course in philosophy, preferably in ethics and political philosophy or history of philosophy.

### **PHIL 503a, Early Modern Theories of the Passions** Claudia Dumitru

This course focuses on seventeenth-century discussions of the passions, also referred to as "affects," "perturbations," or "emotions." We explore questions such as: What is the nature and function of the passions? How do they differ from sensations, opinions, judgments? What is the connection between passions and the will? Do non-human animals have passions? Can the passions be diminished or eliminated? What is the relation between reason and the passions? We also examine more closely a few passions that were taken to have important implications for scientific inquiry, religion, or politics such as: wonder, love, and glory. Main authors discussed include René Descartes, Elisabeth of Bohemia, Nicolas Malebranche, Thomas Hobbes, Baruch Spinoza, Mary Astell, and Damaris Masham. Prerequisites: Two courses in philosophy, of which one must be in the history of philosophy.

### **PHIL 507a, Hegel** Jacob McNulty

Hegel is among the most important and influential figures in the history of Western philosophy. This course aims to provide a broad overview of his thought. We begin with selections from Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit*, intended as an introduction to

his system. We also consider his mature system itself, starting with his main work of theoretical philosophy, *The Science of Logic* and extending to his main work of practical (moral and political) philosophy, the *Philosophy of Right*. Time permitting, we consider other appendages of the system as well, like the philosophy of history, aesthetics, and philosophy of religion. Topics to be addressed across these areas include idealism, monism, historicism, the “sociality of reason,” self-consciousness, negation and negativity, mutual recognition, Spirit, Hegel’s critique of Kant’s theoretical and practical philosophies, the fate of metaphysics, and, finally, the relationships between art, religion, and philosophy. Prerequisite: at least one prior course in philosophy, preferably on the history of philosophy (for example, Kant).

**PHIL 540a, The Social and Political Philosophy of W.E.B. Du Bois** Robert Gooding-Williams

In this seminar we examine three of Du Bois’s books—*The Souls of Black Folk* (1903), *Darkwater* (1920), and *Black Reconstruction* (1935)—with some attention to a fourth, *Dusk of Dawn* (1940). We also give attention to some of Du Bois’s essays. Through close readings of these writings, we consider Du Bois’s evolving conceptualization of the “Negro Problem” in the perspective of his philosophy of the human sciences, his political thought, and his aesthetics.

**PHIL 551a / CLSS 751a, Ancient Philosophy of Language** Verity Harte and Zoltan Szabo

A seminar on central texts on topics in philosophy of language in the Greco-Roman philosophical tradition. The seminar does not attempt a full survey of the tradition on these topics but select texts and topics of special interest, including exploring points of comparison and contrast with contemporary discussions in philosophy of language. Topics to be covered include: linguistic categories, the nature of grammar, origins of language, naming, and meaning. Prerequisites: one prior course in the history of ancient Greco-Roman philosophy and at least one additional prior course in philosophy.

**PHIL 567a, Mathematical Logic I** Sun-Joo Shin

An introduction to the metatheory of first-order logic, up to and including the completeness theorem for the first-order calculus. An introduction to the basic concepts of set theory is included.

**PHIL 570a, Epistemology** Keith DeRose

Introduction to current topics in the theory of knowledge. The analysis of knowledge, justified belief, rationality, certainty, and evidence.

**PHIL 573a, Weakness of Will** Michael Della Rocca

An examination of the apparent phenomenon of weakness of will or akratic action whereby one knowingly (in some sense of “knowingly”) acts contrary to one’s better (in some sense of “better”) judgment. Attention to the metaphysical underpinnings of akratic action that seem to make such action possible. Discussion of the connection between weak-willed action and other forms of apparent irrationality and exploration of the implications of akrasia for moral philosophy. Attention both to historical and recent and contemporary including Plato, Aristotle, Augustine, Spinoza, Leibniz, Anscombe, Davidson, Korsgaard, Bratman, Holton, Buss, Schapiro, and others. Prerequisite: at least two courses in philosophy.

**PHIL 590a, Sidgwick's Methods of Ethics** Shelly Kagan

Henry Sidgwick's *The Methods of Ethics* is one of the greatest works of moral philosophy of the nineteenth century. A systematic and extremely careful study of three basic approaches to ethics – egoism, utilitarianism, and intuitionism (roughly, commonsense deontological morality) – the *Methods* is a masterpiece that is widely praised (at least, by philosophers!) but much less frequently read, since it is a long and demanding book. We devote the semester to studying it. Prerequisite: A previous class in moral philosophy.

**PHIL 625b, Topics in Epistemology** Keith DeRose and Timothy Williamson

A survey of some recent work in epistemology, with an emphasis on connections between formal approaches to epistemology and traditional epistemological questions. We explore the power and limitations of Bayesian approaches to epistemology; the relationship between credence on the one hand, and belief and knowledge on the other; higher-order knowledge and probability; and other topics.

**PHIL 627b, Computability and Logic** Sun-Joo Shin

A technical exposition of Gödel's first and second incompleteness theorems and of some of their main consequences in proof theory and model theory, such as Löb's theorem, Tarski's undefinability of truth, provability logic, and nonstandard models of arithmetic.

**PHIL 637b, Philosophy of Mathematics** Sun-Joo Shin

We take up a time-honored debate between Platonism and anti-Platonism, along with different views of mathematical truth, that is, logicism, formalism, and intuitionism. We read classical papers on the subject. Why do we need the philosophy of mathematics? This question could be answered toward the end of the term.

**PHIL 642a, Language and Power** Anne Quaranto

An investigation into the way language shapes our social world, drawing on readings from feminist theory, critical race theory, formal semantics and pragmatics, political psychology, and European history.

**PHIL 650b, The Problem of Evil** Keith DeRose

The evils of our world can seem to present strong reasons for disbelieving in the existence of God. This course examines the main forms that this problem for theism takes, and some of the proposed ways of solving, or at least mitigating, the problem.

**PHIL 652b, History of Early Modern Ethics** Stephen Darwall

The seventeenth and eighteenth centuries were an unusually fertile period in philosophical ethics. Among other things, thinkers of the period attempted to work out and investigate a distinctive ethical conception, the idea of morality and its distinctive demands or obligations. We investigate major and some lesser-known figures, including Hobbes, Francis Hutcheson, Hume, Bishop Joseph Butler, Rousseau, Kant, Adam Smith, and Bentham. The main topics include the nature of moral obligation and moral motivation, whether morality can be based on reason or sentiment, and the relation between the right and the good.

**PHIL 655b, Normative Ethics** Shelly Kagan

A systematic examination of normative ethics, the part of moral philosophy that attempts to articulate and defend the basic principles of morality. The bulk of the course surveys and explores some of the main normative factors relevant in determining the moral status of a given act or policy (features that help make a given act right

or wrong). Brief consideration of some of the main views about the foundations of normative ethics (the ultimate basis or ground for the various moral principles).

**PHIL 677a / WGSS 677a, Feminist Philosophy: Theories of Sex, Gender, and Sexual Orientation** Robin Dembroff

This course surveys several feminist frameworks for thinking about sex, gender, and sexual orientation. We consider questions such as: Is there a tenable distinction between sex and gender? Between gender and sexual orientation? What does it mean to say that gender is a social construction, or that sexual orientation is innate? What is the place of politics in gender and sexual identities? How do these identities – and especially resistant or transgressive identities – impact the creation and revision of social categories?

**PHIL 685b, Wittgenstein** Paul Franks

Study and discussion of Wittgenstein's *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, *Philosophical Investigations*, and *On Certainty*, with some attention to their background in writings by Frege, Russell, and Moore. Consideration of Wittgenstein's influence on more recent philosophers, among them Iris Murdoch, Elizabeth Anscombe, Saul Kripke, and Cora Diamond. Prerequisite: permission of the instructor.

**PHIL 705a, First-Year Seminar** Laurie Paul and Robin Dembroff

Required of and limited to first-year students in the Philosophy Ph.D. program. Topic varies from year to year. Preparation for graduate work. Reading, writing, and presentation skills.

**PHIL 706a, Work in Progress I** Daniel Greco

In consultation with the instructor, each student presents a significant work in progress, e.g., a revised version of an advanced seminar paper or a dissertation chapter. Upon completion of the writing, the student presents the work in a mock colloquium format, including a formal question-and-answer period.

**PHIL 729b / LATN 732b, Seneca: Letters on Ethics** Brad Inwood

Lucius Annaeus Seneca was one of the most distinguished writers of Latin prose and also an important Stoic philosopher. This course focuses on readings in his most important and best known works, the *Epistulae Morales*. Most of the letters we read deal with themes of broad general interest, but some include the more challenging philosophical topics in Stoic ethics that form the culmination of the work. We aim to read the letters included in *Seneca: Selected Letters*, ed. Catharine Edwards (2019), which has an excellent literary and philological commentary; a few additional letters are read with the more philosophical commentary found in the instructor's *Seneca: Selected Philosophical Letters* (2007).

**PHIL 740b, The Philosophy of Cognitive Science and Artificial Intelligence** Laurie Paul and Tyler Wilson

This course looks at a number of questions in the philosophy of cognitive science and AI. Questions like: What is the structure of the mind? Can what we think influence what we see? And, are people rational or irrational? We investigate these by trying to build up a picture of the mind, looking at the space of possible minds described by AI, the major division of the mind into perception and cognition, and contemporary philosophical issues raised by recent developments in AI. Prerequisite: previous courses in philosophy.

**PHIL 750a or b, Tutorial** Sun-Joo Shin

By arrangement with faculty.

**PHIL 754a, Recent Work in Analytic Philosophy of Religion** Keith DeRose and John Pittard

An advanced seminar engaging state-of-the-art work in analytic philosophy of religion, with attention given to both traditional questions and areas of emerging interest. Possible topics include theodicy, alternatives to traditional theism and naturalism, fine-tuning arguments, creation ethics, skeptical worries facing various religious and nonreligious outlooks, and norms pertaining to religious hope and commitment.

**PHIL 782a, Hume** Kenneth Winkler

Study and discussion of Hume's three-volume *Treatise of Human Nature*, concentrating on selected themes in his logic of the understanding (Book I), his theory of the passions and the will (Book II), and his account of morals (Book III). Likely topics include the theory of ideas, space and time, causal reasoning, skepticism and naturalism, personal identity, passion and action, liberty and necessity, the foundation of morals, and justice as an artificial virtue. Some consideration of Hume's sources and influence.

**PHIL 850a or b, Prospectus Tutorial** Sun-Joo Shin

Prospectus tutorial for Philosophy Ph.D. students.