PHILOSOPHY COURSE DESCRIPTIONS
FALL 2017

FYS 1399-N6  The Inklings and Philosophy (HNR)
Ward  
TR 11:00-12:15
C.S. Lewis and J.R.R. Tolkien are best known for their fictional works, *The Chronicles of Narnia* by Lewis and *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings* by Tolkien. But these works did not emerge from an intellectual vacuum. Lewis and Tolkien were not just good story-tellers but careful thinkers who were part of a circle of intellectuals, called 'The Inklings,' who challenged each other to think deeply about the relationship between reason, imagination, and faith. This course will introduce you to the philosophical thought of Lewis, Tolkien, some other members of The Inklings, and to some of their intellectual influences. We will explore traditional philosophical themes through the fiction and non-fiction of these and other authors. These themes include the existence of God, the problem of evil, virtue and vice, the possibility of moral knowledge, and the meaningfulness of figurative language. Since we will be examining these philosophical issues through imaginative literature, one question we will ask throughout the course is this: To what extent can imaginative discourse effectively communicate truth?

FYS 1399-N7  Doubt, Questioning, & Pursuit of Truth
Anderson  
TR 9:30-10:45
We all want answers, but rarely examine the questions we ask. How do we question well? Is there such a thing as a bad question? Is doubt a neutral activity? Can I be confident in what I know? In this course, we will look at these and other central philosophical questions, drawing on close readings of classical and contemporary texts as our starting points—works from Plato, Aristotle, and Descartes, among others, then moving to modern authors such as C.S. Lewis. Classes are discussion based—composed of little to no lecture. Instead, we will wrestle with big ideas and hard questions through Socratic dialogue.

FYS 1399-N8  Thought of CS Lewis (HNR)
Dougherty  
TR 9:30-10:45
C. S. Lewis first trained as a philosopher, but his fame and fortune was gained by teaching English and by writing memorable fiction and prose. Still, he wrote philosophical works and his works of literature and prose are worth examining as an introduction to philosophy. In this course, we will examine issues in ethics, epistemology, and metaphysics through Lewis’s fiction and non-fiction, and get to know Lewis, the man, the person of heart and soul, the author of such fine work.

FYS 1399-N9  Faith and Reason (HNR)
Buras  
MWF 10:10-11:00
What has Athens to do with Jerusalem? That’s the way Tertullian famously put the question of the relationship of faith (Jerusalem) and reason (Athens) early in the third century. Does faith need reason’s support? Does reason require faith? Does each get on better in isolation from the other? Can they really be isolated, in the first place? This class introduces the study of philosophy by exploring answers to these questions, along with the challenges each faces. Our guides will be St. Thomas Aquinas, David Hume, Blaise Pascal, and a host of more recent thinkers, each of whom develop and defend interesting answers to these fundamental human questions. Our topics include the nature of faith and reason, the classic arguments for the existence of God, the problem of evil, the rationality of belief in miracles and revelation, and the compatibility of faith and science.

PHI 1306.01  Intro to Logic
Rosenbaum  
MWF 9:05-9:55  106
In this course students will master formal techniques for evaluating arguments. We will translate arguments into the languages of propositional and predicate logic, and test for deductive validity and
invalidity. Students will develop a keen attention to detail and to reasoning structure—skills of value in all college courses.

**PHI 1306.02  Intro to Logic**  
*Myers*  
MWF 10:10 – 11:00  110

What is clear reasoning? What different kinds of reasoning are there? What is the relationship between the rules of logic and everyday language? We’ll address such questions as we study informal fallacies, learn the rules of different forms of reasoning, and read and evaluate interesting arguments from both philosophical texts and popular venues. Small but regular assignments will emphasize learning how thoughtfully and judiciously to employ logic in writing and conversation.

**PHI 1306.03  Intro to Logic**  
*Buras*  
MWF 11:15 – 12:05  120

Logic is the study of good reasoning, with special attention to arguments. Accordingly, this course emphasizes the acquisition of basic logical concepts (or vocabulary) and the development and application of skills to distinguish good reasoning from bad reasoning, with emphasis on the capacity to distinguish different kinds of arguments and evaluate them as either good or bad arguments. Included is an introductory study of the logic of categorical statements, the logic of compound statements, informal fallacies, and more generally, the logic of inductive or non-deductive reasoning, with special attention to arguments from analogy.

**PHI 1306.04  Intro to Logic**  
*Guido*  
MWF 1:25 – 2:15  105

Everyday life contains a rich environment within which we try to think things through to logical conclusions; to distinguish between solid arguments on the one hand and erroneous ones on the other; to figure out what to believe or not to believe based on the evidence that is given; and to thoughtfully construct arguments to present to others in a variety of conversational situations. The purpose of this course is to make you more skilled in these kinds of everyday reasoning.

Part of the course will be focused on understanding the logical structures of the different types of arguments that we frequently employ in the course of everyday life. We will cover common missteps that people often make in everyday reasoning, so that you will be able to better recognize these when you see them and avoid making them yourselves.

By title, this course is a logic course, and logic plays a central role in reasoning “critically”—that is, carefully and well. Logic alone is not the same as critical reasoning, but reasoning cannot be critical if it violates elementary logical norms. So an important part of this course will be to gain a basic proficiency in formal logic. The discipline of logic brings one to awareness of logic’s norms, and can thereby be one’s best friend in the attempt to reason well. In all aspects, this course is intended to be interesting, practical, and enjoyable.

**PHI 1306.05  Intro to Logic**  
*Prasetya*  
MWF 2:30-3:20  106

Philosophy majors have consistently outperformed other majors in the analytical writing and verbal reasoning sections of the GRE (don't take my word for it, go and check!). Why? I do not know the full explanation for this, but logic is probably a major contributing factor. By studying logic, we learn crucial skills for reasoned discourse. First, it teaches us the importance of clarity and precision in discourse. We've all seen discussions where the parties involved seem to be talking past each other or misunderstanding each other's arguments. Logic gives us the tools required to clarify arguments, so that we may isolate ambiguities and identify points of disagreement. Second, we use logic to evaluate arguments, to construct good arguments and critique bad ones. Having these goals in mind, this class will cover valid and invalid forms of deductive arguments, logical proofs, inductive arguments, and informal fallacies.
This course is designed to cover basics of logic that might be useful to students. Many students who want to pursue further professional studies take standard national exams like the GRE, LSAT, GMAT, or MCAT. Many students believe this logic course helps on those kinds of exams, and I intend the course to cover materials with that explicit goal in mind. Assessing the quality of reasoning about specific issues is one primary aim of the course, and one tool for making these assessments appears on our course outline as "informal fallacies." In addition, much of the course is devoted to techniques of formal reasoning and to standard kinds of terminology for evaluating it; these techniques and terminology are also useful in larger contexts.

This course is designed to cover basics of logic that might be useful to students. Many students who want to pursue further professional studies take standard national exams like the GRE, LSAT, GMAT, or MCAT. Many students believe this logic course helps on those kinds of exams, and I intend the course to cover materials with that explicit goal in mind. Assessing the quality of reasoning about specific issues is one primary aim of the course, and one tool for making these assessments appears on our course outline as "informal fallacies." In addition, much of the course is devoted to techniques of formal reasoning and to standard kinds of terminology for evaluating it; these techniques and terminology are also useful in larger contexts.

Logic is the study of reasoning and argumentation. Studying logic can improve your ability to understand and evaluate competing claims in all areas of life. To that end, this course aims to enhance your reasoning by learning and applying concepts, principles, and methods in deductive and inductive logic. Much of the application will occur in communal considerations of readings about mercy and fraternal correction from Thomas Aquinas’s Summa Theologiae, and in writing personal reflection essays on these texts.

Can you tell good and bad reasoning apart? What does it mean for a series of statements or reasons to be "good"? Even if we don't know the answers to these questions, most of us still assume that we know a good argument when we see one. In the course of working through an understanding of correct patterns of reasoning, the suspicion is that the student will see just how far this assumption is from the truth. The student will learn to distinguish different forms of arguments and the elements within them, master the essential ingredients of a "first order" logical language, gain a deeper awareness of the logical structure of the English language, and learn to spot both formal and informal fallacies. While we will spend much of the course studying the formal rules of a deductive system, significant time will be dedicated to applying these formal rules to real-life content, in everything from arguments we can identify in TV shows to arguments in professional philosophical works (don't worry: we'll work through them together!) Students will receive the added bonus of developing the necessary skills for sound argumentative writing (though the course is by no means "writing intensive").

We encounter arguments in a wide variety of places, ranging from social media to conversation to books. In this course you’ll learn to identify arguments in various contexts, translate them into formal systems, and evaluate which are good and which are bad. We begin with some basics of reasoning – the difference
between deductive and inductive inference, and the notions of validity and soundness. For the bulk of the semester we’ll deal with deductive inference, focusing on propositional logic: you’ll learn to translate English statements and arguments into symbolic propositional logic, and work through argument proofs. The last third of the semester we’ll turn to some common types of inductive inference, including probabilistic reasoning, statistical reasoning, and arguments from analogy. The skills taught in this course typically help students improve their scores on graduate and professional school exams (the LSAT, GRE, MCAT, and GMAT).

**PHI 1307.01 Critical Thinking: Logic and Medicine**

Marcum  
TR 11:00-12:15  
110

Our skills of critical thinking trace their roots back to the Greek philosopher Socrates. He embodied the virtues that every rational thinker strives to imitate—he loved to pursue a topic by asking one question after another, until he was satisfied or not with the answer. To that end, this course is designed to assist you in developing skills that will allow you to think and ask questions critically, cogently, and creatively—particularly in terms of medical care. A critical thinker is one who is open to the evidence and evaluates it through rational thinking and discourse. That thinker does not follow authority in an uncritical manner. It is important for a critical thinker to distinguish between those beliefs that are supported or warranted by evidence and those that are not. To aid the student in that process, the deliberate development of deductive and inductive reasoning skills is stressed in this course, along with other critical thinking skills such as emotional intelligence and intuition. Finally, these skills are applied to everyday issues experienced in the delivery of medical care.

**PHI 1308.01 Introductory Topics in Ethics: Ethical Controversies**

Haldane  
TR 9:30-10:45  
110

Disagreement and confusion about right and wrong are common in everyday discussion, in the media and among policy makers. Sometimes these disagreements seem just to express different personal commitments, but often disputants give reasons that they think others should accept, and often these reasons have implications for more than one issue. In this course we will explore various areas of ethical controversy such as euthanasia and assisted suicide, abortion, the use and treatment of animals, genetic engineering, free expression and speech codes, legalizing recreational drugs, gun control, the death penalty, war and terrorism. We will consider arguments on different sides of these issues and examine different theories of ethics by which the issues might be resolved.

**PHI 1308.02 Introductory Topics in Ethics: Love & Sex**

Beary  
TR 11:00-12:15  
107

Love and sex are things that we often think about, but we don’t often subject them to careful reflection. We say that we love our friends, our romantic partners, our family, and our pets; but surely we love each of these in difference senses. What, then is love? And what, if anything, do these different expressions of love have in common? Is love just a feeling, or is it something else, like a commitment? Do we have control over who and how we love? Is love ever bad? Also, what does love have to do with sex? What is sex? Who should you have sex with? Is sex always good? Do love and sex affect men and women differently? These are the kind of questions we’ll be trying to answer in this course. We’ll read what some of the ancients—Plato and Aristotle—have to say about love; and we’ll look at the work of a variety of contemporary philosophers. The goals of course are to help you gain deeper insight into the complexity of human relationships, to identify and critique various undefended assumptions concerning love and sex, to learn to express your own views clearly, and moreover, to support your views with good arguments.
In this course, we will study the role of morality in achieving a good life. The topics studied are intended to engage us in philosophical reflection about the world and about ourselves, but especially about the kinds of lives we might choose and the sort of character we might aspire to have. Oddly, we will not focus on the human virtues, the character traits that we need to live a good life. Instead we will study the rich moral psychology of the capital vices, popularly called “the seven deadly sins.” These are pride, envy, wrath, sloth, greed, gluttony, and lust.

Why focus on the vices? As Augustine famously noted, “Although virtue claims the topmost place among human good, what is its activity in this world but unceasing warfare with vices, and those not external vices but internal, not other people’s vices but quite clearly our own, our very own?” (*City of God*, 19.4) So, we will be studying what we are up against when we struggle for deep community, true friendship, and human goodness. Our aim will be to explore the interrelation of the capital vices, and their damaging effects on human life.

Through classical and contemporary philosophical readings we will also address questions like “Are moral rules true for everyone?” “Are we capable of living morally good lives?” “Why should anyone follow moral guidelines?” and “What is the place of God in the moral life?” We will study character-based moral theory as it is presented in Aquinas and Aristotle, and its application to the questions that are raised above.

Medical ethics is a subset of biomedical ethics, a larger area of academic and professional interest, and one that is relatively new. The field of biomedical ethics is vast and includes topics as diverse as the physician-patient relationship, beginning and end of life issues (abortion, euthanasia, assisted suicide), the range of, and limits to, permissible medical experimentation (on human embryos, on non-human animals), genetic engineering (gene therapy, genetic modification, cloning, selecting and enhancing humans), allocation of scarce or expensive resources, organ donation, appeals to rights or justice in health care alternatives, public health care and justice, and more. No single course can cover all of these topics extensively. In this course, we will focus on key issues that often arise in the practice of medicine by physicians, nurses, and other health care professionals, and that often arise for non-medical personnel over the course of their lives. In doing so, students will be presented with a variety of views on several such topics. Surveying diverse views should better equip students to participate in various debates within medical ethics. And while it is not the goal of this course to develop uniformity of belief in students, this course does aim to enhance students’ powers of reasoning and discernment so as to help them learn to discover, appreciate, pursue, and defend the truth in these matters.
suffering implies that God does not exist, and arguments debating the rationality of religious belief and faith. And while these arguments are our primary focus, the course will also include an exploration into related topics, such as: free will, human nature, the nature of time, faith and its relation to reason, and conflicts between science and religion.

PHI 1321.03 Introductory Topics in Philosophy: Nature of Knowledge and Human Action
Sandwisch  TR 12:30-1:45  107
Philosophy is an inquiry into fundamental questions. Many of these philosophical questions affect our understanding of our world, our actions, and ourselves. In this course we will not focus on learning about philosophy so much as doing philosophy, and our goal will not be answers so much as an increased understanding. Our course will begin with an examination of the paradox of inquiry: How can we learn what we don't know for if we already know it, then we cannot learn it, and if we don't know it, how will we ever know that we have learned it. This paradox of inquiry will then lead us into deeper discussions of the nature of knowledge, its relation to ethics and action, the purpose of education, and our relation to technology.

PHI 1321.04 Introductory Topics in Philosophy: Philosophy & Science Fiction
Pruss  MWF 11:15-12:05  110
Science fiction raises a lot of radical questions about metaphysical and epistemological topics like time, personal identity, personhood, humanity and our knowledge of the external world, but also about various ethical questions, ranging from questions about the ethics of cloning, transhumanism and our potential relationships with non-humans. We will probe a selection of these philosophical questions in conjunction with reading and watching science fiction (including some selected Star Trek and Babylon 5 episodes). This is serious and challenging philosophy--but fun, too.

PHI 2301.01 Existentialism
Sneed  TR 9:30 – 10:45  107
This class will focus on a number of writers popularly described as “existentialists,” who are connected to each other not by agreement in their view of life but by wrestling with a common set of questions and concerns about the meaning of human life, the basis for responsible choice, and, ultimately, the quest for identity. One major divide that will be explored concerns the tension between religious and non-religious forms of existentialism. We will begin by looking at Søren Kierkegaard, Fyodor Dostoevsky, and Friedrich Nietzsche as the major nineteenth century figures who loom large over the movement, and then read some of the most important twentieth century figures: Miguel de Unamuno, Jean Paul Sartre, and Albert Camus. Readings will include philosophical writings, novels, and plays.

PHI 3301.01 Moral Philosophy
Beaty  MWF 10:10 – 11:00  108
How can we make sense of morality and its relationship to human happiness and well-being? What kinds of lives should we choose and what sort of character we should we aspire to have? After we examine the challenges to the institution of morality from Friedrich Nietzsche (1844- 1900), we will compare the rich moral psychologies and normative ethical theories of four pivotal thinkers. In the theories of Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) and John Stuart Mill (1806-1873) we encounter a “modern” conception of human freedom that places God at arm’s length in the moral life and shifts the focus to rules and obligations. Like Aristotle (384-322 BC) many centuries before, Aquinas (1225-1274) emphasizes the roles of happiness, virtues and vices, and character formation in the moral life, but with new twists that derive from the biblical view of morality. Class sessions feature small group discussions and presentations as well as mini-lectures.
PHI 3310.01 History of Philosophy: Classical
Ward  TR 12:30 – 1:45  106
“We think and feel differently because of what a little Greek town did during a century or two, twenty-four hundred years ago. What was then produced of art and of thought has never been surpassed and very rarely equaled, and the stamp of it is upon all the art and all the thought of the Western world.” --Edith Hamilton
Western philosophy begins with the ancient Greeks, and arguably there is thus no better way to study and to practice the love of wisdom than in companionship with Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle. In this course we will give special attention to the philosophers collectively known as the “presocratics,” to the remarkable life and death of Socrates as memorialized by Plato, and to the high water mark represented by the philosophical outlooks of Plato and Aristotle, respectively. Far more than merely grappling with their ideas, however, we will grapple with their understanding of philosophy as a way of life, one that calls our own unexamined lives into question and that beckons us toward nobler aims and worthier lives.

PHI 3312.01 History of Philosophy: Modern European
Miner  TR 11:00-12:15  105
In this course, we will swim in three of the most influential currents of modern European philosophy. In order to swim (or even stay afloat) in these currents, we must read some primary texts for ourselves. While by no means impossible to read, these texts are not written to accommodate our contemporary “sound-byte” sensibilities. They demand an unusual combination of attention and passion. The three currents:

1. The search for a new way of thinking that gives human beings the power to master nature. In light of its influence and effectiveness, we may call this “the modern project.” To grasp the philosophical foundations of the modern project, we will read Bacon (who inaugurates it), Galileo (who grounds it in an alliance of mathematics and observation), and Descartes (who states its underlying ontology and clarifies its ultimate goal).

2. Modern critiques of the modern project. “Modernity” does not name a single thing, as suggested by the existence of critics of the modern project who are themselves unmistakably modern. While such modern critics have no wish to return to a pre-modern stance, they articulate serious reservations about the modern project. Such critics include Montaigne, Pascal, and Vico.

3. Questions about the relation of religion to morality and politics. While modern philosophers often see religious fanaticism as a potential threat to civic harmony and democratic politics, their thinking is more subtle than straightforward opposition to religion as such. We will try to grasp some of the dominant attempts to address the issue, examining texts by some of the following philosophers: Hobbes, Spinoza, Hume, Kant, Mill, and Nietzsche.

PHI/PSC 3339.01 Law and Religion in the U.S.
Beckwith  TR 9:30-10:45  106
This course (cross-listed as PSC 3339 and AMS 3339) concerns the relationships between government and religion, especially, United States Supreme Court decisions dealing with prayer and Bible reading in public schools, government aid to church-related schools, and religious liberty rights of individuals and churches. Philosophical debates about the nature of religious free exercise and establishment, their justification, and their relationship to different political theories.

PHI/PSC 3339.02 Law and Religion in the U.S.
Beckwith  TR 12:30-1:45  110
This course (cross-listed as PSC 3339 and AMS 3339) concerns the relationships between government and religion, especially, United States Supreme Court decisions dealing with prayer and Bible reading in public schools, government aid to church-related schools, and religious liberty rights of individuals and
churches. Philosophical debates about the nature of religious free exercise and establishment, their justification, and their relationship to different political theories.

**PHI 4321.01 Metaphysics**

O’Connor TR 11:00 – 12:15 108

Metaphysics is that branch of philosophy that contemplates the fundamental constituents and structure of reality. It tries to discern what those constituents are, what they are like intrinsically, and how they 'hang together' in one overarching reality. For some, this prompts the question: isn’t that what physics is about? The short answer is: metaphysics pays attention to, but digs deeper and thinks in more abstract terms than physics (!), and it also considers theories of ‘deep reality’ that are entirely outside the purview of physics.

For the long answer, you’ll need to take the course. We will contemplate global questions such as these: Is there a way the world is, objectively – independently of how we may happen to think about it? Is reality a unity, in some basic way, or is it just a collection of many things? Is mind or matter the most fundamental reality? What is space? What is time? What is the nature of causation, the 'glue' that binds together objects and the events they undergo through time? Why is the world the way it is, and not some other way? (Why does anything exist at all?)

We will also contemplate a particular aspect of reality—ourselves—and ask: What kind of things are we? Am I the same person as the little rug rat my parents called by my name many years ago? What is it to be conscious and self-aware, and how does consciousness relate to brain processes? What is free will, and do we have it?

**PHI 4324.01 Philosophy and Fiction of Iris Murdoch**

Moore TR 9:30 – 10:45 Koker 135

This course will focus on the work of the British philosopher and novelist, Iris Murdoch. Murdoch was one of the most important moral philosophers of the twentieth century, and, according to John Updike, “the pre-eminent English novelist of her generation.” Her work provides an important rejoinder to a number of false dichotomies, especially the ancient quarrel between philosophy and poetry and the more contemporary dispute between “Analytic” and “Continental” philosophy. One can read Murdoch as engaging in a constant meditation on and response to Plato’s banishment of the poets. We will read the fiction and the philosophy together in the hope of understanding both through mutual illumination. We will read selections from *Existentialists and Mystics* and *Metaphysics as a Guide to Morals* as well as the novels *The Bell*, *A Fairly Honourable Defeat*, *The Black Prince*, *The Good Apprentice*, and *The Sea*, *The Sea*.

**PHI 4353.01 Philosophy of Language**

Dougherty MW 2:30-3:45 108

This class will treat both some classics in philosophy of language on the nature of reference and meaning as well as contemporary clashes between pragmatics and semantics. Special attention is given to theological applications of language and the distinction between metaphor and analogy.

**PHI 4363.01 Philosophy and Medicine**

Marcum TR 12:30 – 1:45 108

Contemporary medicine is pluralistic or fragmented both in terms of its approaches to what it is or should be, as well as to how it is or should be practiced. Approaches to the nature of medicine range from traditional scientific to humanistic accounts, while approaches to its practice range from evidence-based to person-centered medicine. These approaches often involve different philosophical perspectives. For example, a reductionist perspective is foundational to the biomedical sciences while a holistic perspective to person-centered medicine. In the course, these approaches to medicine are examined in terms of the
philosophical issues arising from medicine’s pluralism or fragmentation and what direction medicine may take in the future.

PHI 5311.01  Readings from Philosophers: MacIntyre  
Haldane  
W  2:30-5:15  107

Alasdair MacIntyre is one of the most wide-ranging, eclectic and prolific English-language philosophers of the 20th century influenced by, but dissenting from Marxism, Freudianism, and phenomenology as well as being a critic of analytical moral philosophy yet praised by prominent figures within it such as Charles Taylor and Bernard Williams, as well as by writers in anthropology, educational studies, international relations, political theory, psychology and theology. Although he published seven books prior to After Virtue (1981) and eight more books and two volumes of essays since, this remains his classic and most widely read and discussed work. The class will cover some of MacIntyre’s main ideas and arguments regarding the nature of moral philosophy, ethics and history, rival claims of different ethical theories, realism and relativism, social and political philosophy, and philosophy of mind and action.

PHI 5319.01  Philosophical Writing  
Pruss  
M  2:30-5:15  107

The Philosophical Writing course prepares students to write and revise (and revise and revise) papers until they are of publishable or at least conference-presentable quality.

PHI 5320.01  Special Topics in PHI: Aesthetics/PHI of Art  
Jeffrey  
W  9:05-11:50  107

This course is intended to provide an historical review and engagement with major texts in philosophical aesthetics. There will be some comparative references to related artistic practice, and we shall take note of the special place in Western art theory of religious art and the matter of the transcendentals, particularly Beauty. The readings in this seminar are organized in such a way as to allow us to consider foundational texts in a basic chronological order, but also with an eye to contemporary perspectives on these texts.

We will read a number of primary texts that have shaped western thought about aesthetics from Plato, Aristotle, Longinus, Horace, and Augustine down through Aquinas, Bonaventure to Kant and on to prominent shapers of the discipline in the twentieth century. Our focus will be upon the way stances in metaphysics shape aesthetic theory, and how in practice this turns much aesthetic reflection on beauty as a transcendental toward theological thought. For each week of the semester we will consider in relation to our reading a specimen work of art or music as a practicum grounding the relevant theory.

PHI 5322.01  Topics in Metaphysics: Free Will  
O’Connor  
T  2:00-4:45  107

We will explore a wide range of metaphysical issues, arguments, and ideas concerning free will, human and divine. The topic of free will is a nexus at which many other philosophical issues meet: substance, causation, ontological reduction (vs emergence), the relationship of causal and reasons-based explanations, and God’s agency and the relationship of human and divine action. Finally, in the 21st Century, it also engages sharp debate in the human sciences concerning what empirical study has to say about the scope and limits of our freedom.

This course will introduce you to a representative sample of the best contemporary philosophical writing on all these matters, grouped under the following headings:

• Incompatibilist Arguments
• Frankfurt’s Attack on the Principle of Alternative Possibilities
• Fischer’s Semi-compatibilist Account of Freedom and Responsibility
• Event-Causal Libertarianism
• Agent Causal Libertarianism
• Free Will & Moral Responsibility Skepticism
• Empirical Challenges to Free Will
• Freedom and Divine Foreknowledge
• God’s Freedom
• Freedom in Heaven

Members of the seminar will write weekly short commentaries on the readings (in advance of our seminar discussion) and either two mid-sized papers or a substantial term paper.

PHI 5361.01   Topics in Contemporary PHI of REL: Divine Hiddenness
Anderson     R 2:00-4:45     107
This course is an advanced exploration of the problem of Divine Hiddenness with a focus on the epistemology underlying the problem. We will explore how assumptions concerning the nature of evidence might make a different to the argument, and also will examine what it is to have an obligation to ‘provide evidence’ to another person and how that epistemic obligation might be fulfilled. After surveying the seminal literature on the topic at the beginning of the course, the majority of the seminar will consist of discussion of more recent (and forthcoming) treatments of the problem with the goal of seeing the problem anew, and advancing beyond the parameters set by the primary advocate of the problem, J.L. Schellenberg. In this way, we will approach Divine Hiddenness as a family of arguments, rather than as simply one argument. In the course of the semester, we will also consider a Bayesian approach to the argument, which relies on our expectations of the evidence we would have given a God, but also our expectations of the evidence we’d have if there were not a God. This will require exploration of a literature usually neglected in discussion of Divine Hiddenness—namely, alternative explanations of the origin of religious belief.