

## Courses Designed for First-Year Students

**NOTE:** Some 200-level courses may be appropriate for first-year students. If you're interested in taking one, speak with that course's instructor.

### **PHI 101 Plausible and Implausible Reasoning: What Happened? What Will Happen Next?**

The course provides an introduction to deductive and inductive logic. It introduces classical Aristotelian and modern truth-functional logic; explains the relationship between truth-functional logic, information science and probability; and it introduces basic features of statistical and causal reasoning in the sciences. *Theresa Helke*  
**Offered Spring 2022**

### **PHI 102 Valid and Invalid Reasoning: What Follows From What?**

Formal logic and informal logic. The study of abstract logic together with the construction and deconstruction of everyday arguments. *Jay L. Garfield, Theresa Helke, Melissa Yates*  
**Offered Fall 2021**

### **PHI/PSY 120 Introduction to Cognitive Science**

Cognitive science is an interdisciplinary approach to the study of mind, drawing from cognitive psychology, philosophy, artificial intelligence, linguistics and human neuroscience. The class will cover five key problems: vision and imagery, classes and concepts, language, logic and reasoning, and beliefs. *Jill de Villiers*  
**Offered Spring 2022**

### **PHI 124 History of Ancient and Medieval Western Philosophy**

Western philosophy from the early Greeks to the end of the Middle Ages, with emphasis on the pre-Socratics, Plato, Aristotle, the Stoics and Epicureans, and some of the scholastic philosophers. *Susan Levin*  
**Offered Fall 2021**

### **PHI 125 History of Early Modern European Philosophy**

Western philosophy from Bacon through the 18th century, with emphasis on Descartes, Spinoza, Leibniz, Locke, Berkeley, Hume, and especially Kant. *Jeffry Ramsey*  
**Offered Spring 2022**

### **PHI 127 Indian Philosophy**

An introduction to the six classical schools of Indian philosophy and a consideration of the relation of these ancient traditions to the views of some influential modern Indian thinkers. Comparisons with positions in the western philosophical tradition will be an integral part of the course. *Nalini Bhushan*  
**Offered Fall 2021**

## Courses Designed for First-Year Students

### **FYS 120 Philosophical Explorations of Humor and Laughter**

A focus on some of the ethical, social and political issues raised by humor and laughter. Humor can be a forceful instrument, often deployed by the powerful to control the powerless and by the powerless to try to topple the powerful. Its effects, intended or unintended, can be benign or hurtful. Closely examining texts from a variety of philosophical perspectives, we explore questions such as: What have been the hopes for, and worries about, what humor achieves? Who offers instructions about the proper objects of and occasions for humor and laughter? What reasons have they given for doing so?

*Elizabeth V. Spelman*

**Offered Fall 2021**

### **FYS 176 Existentialism**

The term "existentialism" refers to a nexus of twentieth-century philosophical and literary explorations focused on themes including human freedom, responsibility, temporality, ambiguity, and mortality. Existentialists Simone de Beauvoir, Albert Camus, Martin Heidegger, and Jean-Paul Sartre oppose a longstanding philosophical view that human beings flourish by understanding themselves and the cosmos in rational terms.

*Susan Levin*

**Offered Fall 2021**

### **FYS 190 Borders, Justice and Identity**

As the mobility of information, goods, capital, and people has increased worldwide, so has the backlash against migration. This seminar examines contemporary bordering principles and practices in and asks moral questions about citizenship, mobility, and identity. We will investigate principles of inclusion and exclusion and ask how borders define moral status. We will then investigate bordering practices through social theory, ethnography, human geography, and art. Should democratic societies adopt more open or closed policies toward immigration? How should nations conceive of the rights of climate refugees? Should territorial bordering practices be subject to international law and scrutiny?

*Melissa Yates*

**Offered Spring 2022**

# DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY SMITH COLLEGE



## STUDYING PHILOSOPHY

- Grapple with the biggest and most interesting ideas
- Think with clarity, objectivity, and precision
- Become a more skillful writer adept at expressing difficult concepts
- Express yourself more clearly in discussions
- Recognize and analyze the philosophical issues that arise in your other classes

## Why Study Philosophy?

- 1) Start with the fact that philosophy has always been at the heart of a college education;
- 2) Follow up with the fact that philosophy courses feature some of the most exciting, interesting, and accessible professors and students at Smith; and then
- 3) Consider the kinds of fascinating questions with which philosophy grapples:
  - What is happiness? Can we hope to attain it? Can bad people be happy?
  - Since I sometimes see and hear things incorrectly, how do I know that my perceptions are ever correct? Might they always be wrong?
  - How do we balance our desires, needs, and rights against those of other individuals? against those of future generations? children? animals?
  - Is there a God? And if so, how can there be so much evil in the world?
  - Do people the world over think the same way about basic issues, or are there fundamental differences among cultures regarding these things? And if there are, must we respect those differences? (Think of cannibalism.)

## Philosophy Faculty Courses for Fall 2021 (F), Interterm (I) and Spring 2022 (S)

### Nalini Bhushan

PHI 127 Indian Philosophy (F)  
PHI 237 19th C. Philosophy: Friedrich Nietzsche (F)  
PHI 200 Philosophy Colloquium (S)  
PHI 345 Practicing Philosophy in Public Sphere (S)  
nbhushan@smith.edu (413) 585-3421

### Jill de Villiers (Philosophy and Psychology)

PHI 236 Linguistics (F)  
PHI 120 Cognitive Science (S)  
jdevilli@smith.edu (413)585-3907

### Jay L. Garfield, Chair

PHI 102 Valid and Invalid Reasoning: What Follows from What? (F)  
BUS 253 Indo-Tibetan Buddhist Philosophy (I)  
PHI 252 Buddhist Philosophy: Madhyamaka and Yogacara (S)  
PHI 330 Seminar in History of Philosophy: Schopenhauer and Indian Philosophy (S)  
jgarfield@smith.edu (413)585-3649

### Theresa Helke

PHI 102 Valid and Invalid Reasoning: What Follows from What? (F)  
PHI 101 Plausible and Implausible Reasoning (S)  
thelke@smith.edu (413)585-6732

### Susan Levin

FYS 176 Existentialism (F)  
PHI 124 History of Ancient and Medieval Western Philosophy (F)  
PHI 242 Topics in Medical Ethics (S)  
PHI 255 Philosophy and Literature (S)  
slevin@smith.edu (413)585-3647

### Jeffrey Ramsey

ENV 101 Sustainability and Social-Ecological Systems (F)  
PHI 304 Seminar in Applied Ethics: Sustainability (F)  
PHI 125 History of Early Modern European Philosophy (S)  
HSC 211 Perspectives in the History of Science—Topic: The Scientific Revolution (S)  
jramsey@smith.edu (413)585-3425

### Elizabeth V. Spelman

FYS 120 Philosophical Explorations of Humor and Laughter (F)  
PHI 235 Morality, Politics, and the Law (F)  
PHI 204 Philosophy and Design (S)  
PHI 250 Epistemology—Topic: Ignorance (S)  
espelman@smith.edu (413)585-3646

### Melissa Yates

PHI 102 Valid and Invalid Reasoning: What Follows from What? (F)  
PHI 222 Ethics (F)  
PHI 221 Ethics and Society (S)  
PHI 345 Practicing Philosophy in Public Sphere (S)  
FYS 190 Borders, Justice and Identity (S)  
myates@smith.edu  
(413)585-3569

