

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.

Sai Ying Ng

Offered Spring 2023

PHI/REL 108 The Meaning of Life

This course asks the big question, "What is the Meaning of Life?" and explores a range of answers offered by philosophers and religious thinkers from a host of different traditions in different eras of human history. We explore a variety of forms of philosophical and religious thinking and consider the ways in which philosophical and religious thinking can be directly relevant to our lives.

Nalini Bhushan, Andy Rotman

Offered Fall 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 Spring 2023

Courses Designed for First-Year Students

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 Fall 2022

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 2022

DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY SMITH COLLEGE

2022-23



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.)

Courses taught by Philosophy faculty Fall 2022 (F), Interterm (I) and Spring 2023 (S)

Nalini Bhushan

PHI 108 The Meaning of Life (F)
PHI 233 Aesthetics (F)
PHI 200 Philosophy Colloquium (S)
PHI 310 Cosmopolitanism (S)
Dewey Hall 204, nbhushan@smith.edu

Jay L. Garfield, Chair

PHI 234ts Philosophy of Human Nature:
The Self (F)
PHI 334 Self-Knowledge (F)
BUS 253 Indo-Tibetan Buddhist Philosophy (I)
PHI 222 Ethics (S)
Dewey Hall 101, jgarfield@smith.edu

Susan Levin (on sabbatical in fall)

PHI 124 History of Ancient and Medieval
Western Philosophy (S)
PHI 304 Medical Ethics (S)
Dewey Hall 203, slevin@smith.edu

Sai Ying Ng

PHI 220 Incompleteness and Inconsistency (F)
PHI 101 Plausible and Implausible Reasoning:
What Happened? What Will Happen Next? (S)
Henshaw C1 102, sng75@smith.edu

Jeffrey Ramsey (on sabbatical in spring)

PHI 125 History of Early Modern European
Philosophy (F)
PHI 238 Environmental Ethics (F)
Dewey Hall 202, jramsey@smith.edu

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)
Dewey Hall 201, espelman@smith.edu

Melissa Yates

PHI 240 Philosophy and Gender (F)
PHI 221 Ethics and Society (S)
PHI 2XX Data Ethics (S)
Dewey Hall 211, myates@smith.edu

