

Courses Designed for First-Year Students

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

PHI 100 Thinking About Thinking

What is thinking? What is the distinction between mind and body, and ought we to accept it? Can the mind survive the death of the body? Can you be thoughtful and passionate at the same time? What kind of access can we have to the worlds of human beings from other cultures and historical periods? Readings from ancient, modern and contemporary philosophers primarily in the Western tradition. Designed to introduce beginning students to problems and methods in philosophy and to the philosophy department at Smith. Maximum number of students per section 20. {H} {S} 4 credits
Theresa Helke/Jeffry Ramsey (Philosophy)
Offered Fall 2020

PHI 108 The Meaning of Life

Same as REL 108. 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 religious and philosophical thinking can be directly relevant to our own lives. {H} {L} 4 credits
Lois Dubin (Religion)/*Jnv. Garfield* (Philosophy).
Offered Spring 2021

PHI 125 History of Early Modern European Philosophy

A study of Western philosophy from Bacon through the 18th century, with emphasis on Descartes, Spinoza, Leibniz, Locke, Berkeley, Hume, and especially Kant. Maximum number of students per section 15. {H} {M} 4 credits
Jeffry Ramsey (Philosophy)
Offered Spring 2021

Courses Designed for First-Year Students

LOG 100 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. Logical symbolism and operations, deduction and induction, consistency and inconsistency, paradoxes and puzzles. Examples drawn from law, philosophy, politics, literary criticism, computer science, history, commercials, mathematics, economics and the popular press. Deduction and induction, logical symbolism and operations, paradoxes and puzzles. {M} 4 credits
Jay L. Garfield (Philosophy and Logic)
Theresa Heike (Philosophy and Logic)
Melissa Yates (Philosophy and Logic)
Offered Fall 2020

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. This course is designed for students who are uncomfortable with symbolic systems. Enrollment limited to 24. {M} 4 credits
Theresa Heike (Philosophy and Logic)
Offered Spring 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. Enrollment limit 16. WI {H} 4 credits
Susan Levin (Philosophy)
Offered Fall 2020

DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY SMITH COLLEGE

2020-2021



STUDYING PHILOSOPHY WILL HELP YOU ...

- 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 2021 (S)

Nalini Bhushan

On Leave Fall 2020 and Spring 2021
nbhushan@smitli.edu

Jill de Villiers (Philosophy and Psychology)

On Leave Fall 2020
PHI 209 Philosophy and History of Psychology (S)
idevilli@smitli.edu (413)585-3907

Jay L. Garfield, Chair (Philosophy and Logic)

BUS 120 The Study of Buddhism (F)
LOG 100 Valid and Invalid Reasoning: What Follows from What? (F)
PHI 330 Seminar in the History of Philosophy
Topic: Buddhist Ethics (I)
PHI 108 The Meaning of Life (S)
jgarfield@smidi.edu (413)585-3649

Theresa Heike (Philosophy and Logic)

LOG 100 Valid and Invalid Reasoning: What Follows from What? (F)
PHI 100 Thinking About Thinking (F)
PHI 101 Plausible and Implausible Reasoning (S)
PHI 220 Incompleteness and Inconsistency: Topics in the Philosophy of Logic (S)
PHI 262 Meaning and Truth: The Semantics of Natural Language (F)
dielke@smidi.edu (413)585-6732

Susan Levin

PHI 225 Continental Philosophy (F)
PHI 200 Philosophy Colloquium (S)
PHI 304 Colloquium in Applied Ethics
Topic: Enhancing Humans: How We Could Do It, Whither We Should (S)
FYS 176 Existentialism (F)
slevin@smidi.edu (413)585-3647

Jeffrey Ramsey

PHI 100 Thinking About Thinking (F)
PHI 125 History of Early Modern European Philosophy (S)
PHI 238 Environmental Ethics (F)
HSC 211 Perspectives in the History of Science—
Topic: The Scientific Revolution (S)
jramsey@smidi.edu (413)585-3425

Elizabeth V. Spelman

PHI 235 Morality, Politics and the Law (F)
PHI 310 Seminar: Recent and Contemporary Philosophy—Topic: The Work of Repair (I)
PHI 204 Philosophy and Design (S)
PHI 250 Epistemology—Topic: Ignorance (S)
espelman@smidi.edu (413)585-3646

Melissa Yates (Philosophy and Logic)

LOG 100 Valid and Invalid Reasoning: What Follows from What? (F)
PHI 200 Philosophy Colloquium (S)
PHI 221 Ethics and Society (S)
PHI 222 Ethics (I)
FYS Ethics of Big Data (S)
myates@smidi.edu (413)585-3569

