

Philosophy and Religion

FACULTY: E. Berg, R. Stewart.

The department offers a major in the combined fields of Philosophy and Religion as well as separate minors in Philosophy and in Religion.

Twelve courses are required for the major: Philosophy 203, 220, 304, 315, and either 305 or 306; Religion 203, 219, 238, and 308; two other courses in the department, and Philosophy or Religion 474, a senior research project.

For a minor in Philosophy six courses are required: Philosophy, 220, 304, 305, and 315; Religion 219, and one other course in either Philosophy or Religion.

For a minor in Religion six courses are required: Religion 203, 219, and 308; either 238 or 240; Philosophy 315, and one other course in either Religion or Philosophy.

Courses

PHILOSOPHY

PHIL 203. INTRODUCTION TO PHILOSOPHY. (3) A survey of basic problems in philosophy: the nature of reality, the reaches of human knowledge, the quest for identity, the relation of mind and body, freedom and necessity, definitions of truth and various conceptions of the good life.

PHIL 211. INTRODUCTION TO LOGIC. (3) A study of the techniques of critical thinking with the aim of making logic a tool for reasoning in everyday life and in the student's academic discipline. Emphasis will be on practical exercises in reasoning and in detecting logical fallacies. No prerequisite.

PHIL 220. CONTEMPORARY ETHICAL PROBLEMS. (3) An introduction to ethical methodology and its practical application to contemporary problems. Current issues to be explored may include pornography, sexual ethics, affirmative action, criminal justice, abortion and the environment.

PHIL 226. ETHICS IN SOCIAL SCIENCES. (3) Explores moral problems that are often raised for people working in criminal justice and social work. The class will begin by examining moral theory and the logical reasoning of moral decision making. Issues to be studied may include due process, race, gender, professional codes of ethics, confidentiality, loyalty, truth-telling, corruption, just use of force, and the role of punishment.

PHIL 304. ANCIENT PHILOSOPHY. (3) The beginnings of Western philosophy, starting with the pre-Socratics, closely examining the thought of Plato and Aristotle, and then looking at philosophy for the next 1500 years: The Stoics, Epicureans, Augustine, Anselm, and Aquinas. This course will examine the foundations for Western beliefs about science, knowledge, virtue, politics, God, and the human soul.

PHIL 305. MODERN PHILOSOPHY. (3) An exploration of major 17th and 18th century Western philosophers, especially Descartes, Hume, and Kant. The questions that modern philosophers raised about God, knowledge, science, and morality have defined the way we think in the 21st century; we are still struggling with the issues they raised.

PHIL 306. 19th AND 20th CENTURY PHILOSOPHY. (3) An examination of several 20th century philosophical movements, beginning with their 19th century roots. These movements are Existentialism, Pragmatism, Process Philosophy, and Analytic Philosophy. Key concerns and questions of 20th century philosophy are: How can we know anything? Does life have meaning and purpose? Is the classical view of God adequate for contemporary people?

PHIL 315. PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGION. (3) A critical examination of the philosophical arguments offered for the existence of God, the occurrence of miracles, the status of religious experience, faith and reason, the relationship between God and morality, the Problem of Evil, the conflicting claims of the world's religions, and the existence of an afterlife.

PHIL 474. SENIOR RESEARCH PROJECT. (3) Offered by Directed Study.

RELIGION

RELG 201. INTRODUCTION TO RELIGION. (3) A study of the various forms of expression found in religious systems. The focus will be on people's understanding of God/gods, rituals, moral issues and notions of sin, evil and salvation.

RELG 203. INTERPRETING CHRISTIAN TRADITIONS. (3) Who wrote the Bible? What do Christians believe about heaven, hell and Satan? What is the difference between Roman Catholics and Protestants? The answer to these and many other questions will be explored as we study the basic beliefs, rituals, and social formations of Christianity from New Testament times to the modern era. The class will examine both the development of Christian doctrines within their historical contexts as well as the institutional structure and spiritual formation of a variety of Christian groups.

RELG 219. TOPICS IN WORLD RELIGIONS. (3) An examination of various religious beliefs, experiences and institutions of selected world religions. Topics may include: Confucianism, Taoism and Zen; Hinduism and Buddhism; Islam; Native American Spirituality; and World Religions in America.

RELG 238. RELIGION IN AMERICA. (3) A survey of major religious groups and movements within the American context. Special emphasis will be given to the diversity of religious experience in America. Topics to be discussed may also include the relationship between church and state, religious freedom, institutional revivalism and evangelicalism.

RELG 240. NEW RELIGIOUS MOVEMENTS IN AMERICA. (3) An in-depth look at several homemade varieties of religion. The course will study the historical context in which new religious activity occurred as well as the ideas, experiences and significant individuals unique to each religious movement. Topics may include Mormonism, Christian Science, Pentecostalism, Christian Identity Movement (white supremacists), and Scientology.

RELG 308. GOD, PERSONS, AND THE WORLD. (3) The Christian faith is explored both systematically in terms of its major components as a belief system, and topically in terms of representative contemporary thinkers who attempt to explore the relationship between the claims of faith and the particular era in which we are living. Prerequisite: Religion 203 or permission of the instructor.

RELG 343. WOMEN AND RELIGION. (3) A study of various expressions of Christianity by and about women. The course will explore the relationship between women, the church, and culture throughout the Western tradition, as well as contemporary religious issues in light of feminist arguments.

REL 474. SENIOR RESEARCH PROJECT. (3) Offered by Directed Study.