PHILOSOPHY (PL)

PL 101. Introduction to Philosophy. 3 Credits.
This course introduces students to a number of central questions in philosophy through critical exploration of ideas from selected great philosophers. It engages students in the close study of several fundamental issues that have arisen in the course of the development of the philosophical tradition—such as free will, our knowledge of the “external” world, and the meaning and value of truth and justice—giving students the basic tools for further work in philosophy.
Offered: Every year, Fall and Spring
UC: Humanities

PL 101H. Honors Introduction to Philosophy. 3 Credits.
This course offers students the opportunity to examine their own values and beliefs through critical exploration of ideas from selected great philosophers, western and non-western, on such themes as the nature of reality, the self, knowledge, the good, spirituality and the ultimate. Attention is given to the historical context of the persons and ideas studied and to their impact on human thought and development.
Offered: Every year, All
UC: Humanities

PL 202. Logical Reasoning. 3 Credits.
This course teaches students to recognize and evaluate logical patterns that recur in all language intended to persuade by reason. Students learn proof techniques for logical pattern evaluation, techniques to recognize and evaluate fallacies, and ways of understanding logical patterns in longer, extended passages. The goal of the course is to improve students’ natural ability to think clearly and critically by learning to apply logic to arguments in public, academic and private life.
Offered: Every year, Fall
UC: Humanities

PL 217. Contemporary Social and Political Philosophy (PO 217). 3 Credits.
This course introduces students to major contemporary debates about the nature of membership in a national community and in a global community. Potential topics include the relationship between an individual and a state, the nature of political authority, the problem of distributive justice, the nature of universal human rights, the ethics of global development, immigration, the problem of environmental justice, postcolonialism, the politics of identity, philosophy of race, and the morality of warfare.
Prerequisites: Take FYS 101 PL 101 or PO 215.
Offered: Every other year, Spring

PL 220. Ethics and Human Values. 3 Credits.
This course explores the meanings of such normative distinctions as good/bad, right/wrong and good/evil. Students critically examine theories of morality such as egoism, utilitarianism, deontological ethics, divine command theory, natural law theory, sentimentalism and virtue ethics, as well as a challenge to all ethical theorizing: the case for moral relativism. Students focus on the practical implications of theory: understandings are brought to bear on various real-life ethical issues such as war, poverty, racism, abortion and substance abuse.
Prerequisites: Take PL 101 or FYS 101.
Offered: Every year, Spring and Summer
UC: Humanities

PL 220H. Honors Ethics and Human Values. 3 Credits.
Designed for students in the university honors program, this course explores the meanings of such normative distinctions as good/bad, right/wrong and good/evil. Students critically examine theories of morality such as egoism, utilitarianism, deontological ethics, divine command theory, natural law theory, sentimentalism and virtue ethics, as well as a challenge to all ethical theorizing: the case for moral relativism. Students focus on the practical implications of theory: understandings are brought to bear on various real-life ethical issues such as war, poverty, racism, abortion and substance abuse.
Prerequisites: Take PL 101 or FYS 101.
Offered: As needed
UC: Humanities

PL 222. Bioethics. 3 Credits.
Students analyze complex ethical issues in contemporary bioethics using relevant technical vocabulary and methods from philosophy, in partnership with information from the contemporary biosciences and the health care professions. Ethical theories covered include deontology, utilitarianism, virtue-based approaches to ethics, Virginia Held’s ethics of care and Theddeus Metz’s reconstruction of an African moral theory. Ethical issues addressed may include: stem cell research, human subjects research, human enhancement, reproductive medicine, euthanasia, advance directives and end-of-life care, resource allocation, organ transplantation, the right to health care and global health.
Prerequisites: Take PL 101 or FYS 101.
Offered: Every year, Fall
UC: Breadth Elective, Intercultural Understand

PL 234. Philosophies of Health, Healing and Medicine. 3 Credits.
Students examine the concept of “health” and the assumptions, values and consequences involved in some of the more important ways of defining, preserving and restoring it. This leads to explorations of some of the significant understandings of “medicine” in relation to healing and to health. Among the understandings considered are: the Western “scientific” model; ancient models that are seen as offering provocative alternatives—Ayurvedic, Chinese, aboriginal; more recent alternatives developed within the West—Naturopathy, Homeopathy, Reiki, etc.; and faith-based approaches—Christian science, “miracle cures,” etc. Although focused on health, healing and medicine, this course ultimately deals with the nature of the good society and welcomes all who are concerned with this perennial question.
Prerequisites: Take PL 101 or FYS 101.
Offered: Every other year, Spring

PL 235. Philosophy of Science. 3 Credits.
Students consider the history and nature of, and assumptions and values involved in, the scientific method; the logic of scientific explanation and theory construction; philosophical and ethical problems in selected natural, social and human sciences.
Prerequisites: Take PL 101 or FYS 101.
Offered: Every other year, Spring
UC: Breadth Elective
PL 236. Philosophy of Language. 3 Credits.
This course focuses on the attempt to understand the nature of language and its relationship with speakers, their thoughts and the world. Students explore such questions as: What is language? How do we understand one another? Can we think without language? What is the connection between words and the objects to which they refer? What is meaning? What determines the truth and falsehood of our statements? Do we have innate linguistic abilities or do we learn to speak by observing the behavior of other speakers? Various philosophical theories about language are attempts to answer such questions. These are discussed, along with their far-reaching consequences for other areas of philosophy.
Prerequisites: Take PL 101 or FYS 101.
Offered: Every other year, Spring
UC: Humanities

PL 237. Philosophy of Mind. 3 Credits.
Are minds physical or non-physical? Is free will real or an illusion? Is consciousness computational? Can we build artificial minds? How can we explain phenomena such as emotions, delusions and pain? What are we, and where is the boundary between ourselves and our environment? In this course, students explore these and other issues in the contemporary philosophy of mind, focusing on questions that emerge at the intersection of philosophy, psychology, psychiatry, neuroscience and artificial intelligence.
Prerequisites: Take PL 101 or FYS 101.
Offered: Every other year, Spring
UC: Humanities

PL 238. Philosophy of Technology and Social Transformation. 3 Credits.
What is technology? How do science and technology relate to human values? What role should technology play in our everyday lives? Do technological developments result in greater freedom? How should technology shape our cities and the natural environment, now and in the future? Students in this course critically examine these and other related issues, using a range of philosophical texts, science fiction and film.
Prerequisites: Take PL 101 or FYS 101.
Offered: Every other year, Fall
UC: Humanities

PL 240. Philosophy of Sport (SPS 240). 3 Credits.
This course examines the notion that humans are "homo ludens" or beings who play from two perspectives. In the first part of the course, students look at such questions as: what is the nature or essence of sports? And how do we distinguish or define sports as distinct from other kinds of activities? In the second part of the course, students examine the relationship between sports and ethics, with a focus on topics such as what is fair play, whether athletic enhancement is cheating, what is gender equity within sports in society, and how do collegiate sports compare with professional sports.
Prerequisites: Take PL 101 or FYS 101.
Offered: Every other year, Spring
UC: Humanities

PL 250. Philosophy of Art. 3 Credits.
What is beauty? What does it mean to experience something—perhaps art or nature—aesthetically? What is art? What is the nature of artistic inspiration? What is—or what should be—the purpose of art? How does one determine the value of art? Is some art worthless? What is the relationship between art and truth? Should artistic expression ever be censored? How have racism, sexism and consumerism impacted the art world? These are some of the questions to be discussed as we consider aesthetic experience and artistic expression—in the visual arts, but also in music, dance, film, drama and other forms.
Prerequisites: Take PL 101 or FYS 101.
Offered: Every other year, Spring
UC: Humanities

PL 256. Living Religions of the World. 3 Credits.
Students explore the phenomenon of religion, the idea of a god, the holy or the divine, and the main religions and related questions of today. The course focuses on aboriginal religion (Native American), Hinduism, Judaism, Buddhism, Christianity and Islam. With prior instructor approval, students also may consider other past or contemporary religions, including atheism. Visits to two traditions other than your own and presentations by practicing members of the religions considered are included.
Prerequisites: Take PL 101 or FYS 101.
Offered: Every other year, Fall
UC: Humanities

PL 265. Diverse Global Philosophies. 3 Credits.
In this course, students explore global traditions in philosophy developed by people from diverse cultures, beyond Europe and the United States. Participants devote particular attention to insights and questions raised with regard to possible relationships or contrasts between diverse global philosophies and our existing assumptions, beliefs and values. Potential topics and course materials may include both classical and contemporary sources from Australia, Africa, the Caribbean, China, India, Japan, the Muslim world, the Pacific Islands and Latin America. Owing to the breadth of the field, the focus of the course shifts, reflecting the interests and work of the instructor in any particular semester.
Prerequisites: Take PL 101 or FYS 101.
Offered: Every other year, Spring
UC: Humanities, Intercultural Understand

PL 267. Philosophy of Religion. 3 Credits.
Religious language, religious experience and religious institutions make up a significant part of life in both traditional and modern cultures. This course analyzes the concepts and terms that are used in religious discourse, including God, holiness, redemption, idolatry, creation, eternal life and sacrifice, among others. Such analysis leads to questions regarding religious statements such as "God exists," "The cow is holy," and "If you fast, you will be redeemed" and their relationship with ordinary, everyday experience, as well as with science and with morality. Most important is the fundamental philosophical question "what is religion?"; answering it means moving beyond philosophy to anthropology, sociology, and of course psychology.
Prerequisites: Take PL 101 or FYS 101.
Offered: Every other year, Spring
UC: Humanities
PL 299. Independent Study in Philosophy. 1-3 Credits.
Tutorial study or independent projects in selected areas of philosophy are completed under the direction of a faculty member. This course may not be used as a substitute for required courses in the major or minor. 1, 2 or 3 credits (must be agreed on in advance by the student and faculty member, and approved by the department chairperson).
Offered: Every year, Fall and Spring

PL 312. Philosophy of War and Peace (PO 312). 3 Credits.
This course draws on what philosophers, legal scholars and political scientists have written about the nature, limits and morality of warfare. Students study the general frameworks for evaluating warfare in the theories of realism, pacifism and just war, and then turn to the evaluation of historical case studies concerning when it is just to initiate war, how war is to be conducted justly once it is initiated, and the obligations of combatants following war. Readings include both historical authors, such as Thucydides and Thomas Aquinas, and contemporary theorists, such as Michael Walzer and Jeff McMahan.
Prerequisites: Take PL 101; or one course from subject PL from level 200 or 300; or PO 211 or PO 215.
Offered: Every other year, Fall

PL 320. Thought and Work of Albert Schweitzer (SL: Service Learning). 3 Credits.
Albert Schweitzer (1875-1965) made significant, often controversial contributions in several areas: music, philosophy, religion, medical care, service to human need, animal rights and ecological awareness. In 1952 Schweitzer was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for his many decades of humanitarian work at his "jungle hospital" in West Africa. In his 80s, he became one of the most active voices in the struggle against the testing of nuclear weapons. Because Schweitzer considered his philosophy to be primarily one of action and service ("My life is my argument") Service Learning is an important component of the course. Quinnipiac's Albert Schweitzer Institute offers students many kinds of projects and activities reflecting Schweitzer's many areas of involvement. In this course, students critically explore Schweitzer's life, thought and work and their application to some of the moral problems and cultural and political issues we face today.
Prerequisites: Take PL 101; or Take one course from subject PL from level 200 or 300; or PO 211 or PO 215.
Offered: Every other year, Spring

PL 331. Philosophy of Humor. 3 Credits.
Historically, many thinkers have viewed humor with scorn while others have not considered it a topic worthy of philosophical investigation. This course explores the nature and value of humor in our daily lives and examines humor critically as a virtue that can help us take ourselves less seriously and live better lives. Students analyze the major accounts of humor such as the superiority, incongruity and relief theories highlighting the strengths and weaknesses of each theory. Adopting a critical philosophical lens, students also explore some important connections between humor and aesthetics, ethics and education.
Prerequisites: Take PL 101; or take 1 course from subject PL from level 200 or 300.
Offered: Every other year, Fall

PL 332. Ancient Philosophy. 3 Credits.
This course explores Greek and Roman philosophy through a focus on the concepts of erôs and philia or love and friendship. Students examine how Epic poetry, Greek tragedy, Plato, Aristotle, Epicurus, Stoicism and Lucretius reflected on the place of love and friendship in a life well-lived.
Prerequisites: Take PL 101; or Take one course from subject PL from level 200.
Offered: Every year, Fall
UC: Humanities

PL 333. Modern Philosophy. 3 Credits.
From the mid-16th through the 18th century, movements such as the Renaissance, the Reformation, the development of the modern sciences and increasing international trade and colonization introduced a new era of philosophy. Students explore human understanding, critically analyzing issues that potentially include the mind-body relationship, freedom and determinism, the nature of reality, the existence of God, perception, personhood and personal identity, the scope and limits of knowledge, and the value and limitations of our intellectual heritage from this period. Authors may include Descartes, Spinoza, Leibniz, Locke, Berkeley, Hume and Kant.
Prerequisites: Take PL 101; or take 1 course from subject PL from level 200 or 300.
Offered: Every year, Spring
UC: Humanities

PL 334. Medieval Philosophy. 3 Credits.
This course focuses on the history of medieval philosophy. Students discuss figures from the Christian, Islamic and Jewish traditions, including Augustine, Boethius, Ibn Sina, Al-Ghazali, Ibn Rushd, Maimonides, Aquinas, Scotus and Ockham. Particular attention is given to examine the manner in which these philosophers confronted and assimilated Aristotelian philosophy and how they anticipate certain dimensions of modern philosophy.
Prerequisites: Take PL 101; or take 1 course from subject PL from level 200 or 300.
Offered: Every Third Year, Spring
UC: Humanities
PL 335. Contemporary Philosophy. 3 Credits.  
Students explore dynamic philosophical movements in 19th- and 20th-century philosophy, and consider their contributions to humanism and diversity today. Potential topics may include Marxism, pragmatism, existentialism, phenomenology, logical positivism, feminism, poststructuralism, postcolonialism and philosophy of race. Potential material includes work by Hegel, Marx, Nietzsche, James, Dewey, Russell, Wittgenstein, Ayer, Du Bois, Sartre, de Beauvoir, Merleau-Ponty, Arendt, Foucault, Fanon, Biko, Derrida and Butler. Owing to the breadth of the field, the course focus each year reflects the interests and expertise of the instructor.  
Prerequisites: Take PL 101; or take 1 course from subject PL from level 200 or 300.  
Offered: Every year, Fall  
UC: Humanities

PL 337. Human Rights: Theory and Practice (PO 337). 3 Credits.  
This course provides a rigorous and critical introduction to the foundation, structure and operation of the international human rights movement. It begins with leading conceptual and theoretical discussions, moving on to the institutions and functioning of the international human rights mechanisms, including nongovernmental and intergovernmental organizations. It covers cutting-edge human rights issues—gender and race discrimination, religion and state, national security and terrorism—placing them in the context of current political conflict and human rights discourse.  
Prerequisites: Take PL 101; or take 1 course from subject PL from level 200 or 300; or PO 211; or PO 215.  
Offered: Every other year, Fall

PL 338. Paradoxes. 3 Credits.  
Paradoxes have been with us since a Cretan said "all Cretans are liars," and Zeno showed us how the tortoise could beat Achilles. Originally considered a problem for logical—and mathematical—thought, paradoxes run the gamut from logic to mathematics, to language, to science, to art and to ethics. This course presents the definition(s) of paradox, reviews some of the principal paradoxes known to us and asks about their essence: what is paradoxical about paradoxes? It then moves on to examine paradoxes in ethics, thereby asking about the real, paradoxical world of human—psychological and social—behavior.  
Prerequisites: Take PL 101; or take 1 course from subject PL from level 200 or 300.  
Offered: Every Third Year, Fall  
UC: Humanities

PL 340. Philosophy of Sex and Love. 3 Credits.  
This course presents a study of philosophical ideas on sex and love, the views of both Western and Eastern religions, and a critique of the moral issues concerning different types of sexual and love relationships. The significance of these viewpoints for living well is considered.  
Prerequisites: Take PL 101; or take 1 course from subject PL from level 200 or 300.  
Offered: Every other year, Fall

PL 368. Philosophy of Death and Dying. 3 Credits.  
What does it mean to live and what does it mean to die? How do we distinguish life and death, living and dying? Is there a way to "die well" in the same way that we assume there is a way to "live well"? How do we justify our beliefs about issues of life and death? Is suicide ethically defensible? Do we have a duty to prevent death? Should we consider death an evil, and could it ever be a good? Should we care about our posthumous reputations? Students in this course explore these and related questions, drawing important insights from a range of relevant philosophical literature and personal narratives on death and dying.  
Prerequisites: Take PL 101; or take 1 course from subject PL from level 200 or 300.  
Offered: Every other year, Spring

PL 395. Critical Game Studies (GDD 395). 3 Credits.  
In this course, students address current research in game studies, ludology or play theory, to develop critical, conceptual and cultural understandings of narrative, meaning and identity in digital games. The course also addresses the design and development of serious and meaningful games and the aesthetic, social and technological implications of new emerging forms such as digital storytelling, interactive theater, virtual worlds and locative media.  
Prerequisites: Take GDD 101 GDD 110 or PL 101.  
Offered: Every year, Spring

PL 396. Philosophy Internship. 1-3 Credits.  
This internship aims to promote student growth and exploration in professional fields connected with the philosophy major. Students complete placements and associated activities either off campus with partner organizations, or on campus, working under the direction of a partner organization supervisor and/or a faculty member. Course can be taken for 1, 2 or 3 credits (credits, placements and associated activities must be agreed on in advance of the relevant semester by the student and faculty member). This course is graded on a pass/fail basis.  
Offered: Every year, Fall and Spring

PL 399. Directed Research in Philosophy. 3 Credits.  
This is a more intensive directed research opportunity than that offered in PL 299. The course involves students in substantial independent research and writing projects in selected areas of philosophy, completed under the direction of a faculty member. This course may not be used as a substitute for required courses in the major or minor.  
Offered: Every year, Fall and Spring

PL 400. Special Topics in Philosophy. 3 Credits.  
Prerequisites: Take PL 101 or FYS 101.  
Offered: As needed

PL 401. Senior Seminar. 3 Credits.  
This is a writing and research seminar for senior philosophy majors. Students engage with philosophical primary and secondary readings in group discussion. They prepare and present a senior thesis on a topic of their choice, with guidance by faculty from the department.  
Prerequisites: Must be a PL Major with Senior Status.  
Offered: Every year, Spring

PL 499. Independent Study Philosophy. 3 Credits.  
Individual study of a special area. By agreement with the instructor, the student may undertake directed reading with discussion, examination and reports as arranged by the instructor in an area of the student’s interest not normally offered through scheduled courses.  
Offered: As needed, All