

# PHILOSOPHY (PHIL-SHU)

## PHIL-SHU 40 Ethics (4 Credits)

*Typically offered occasionally*

Examines fundamental questions of moral philosophy: What are our most basic values, and which of them are specifically moral values? What are the ethical principles, if any, by which we should judge our actions, ourselves, and our lives? Prerequisite: None. Fulfillment: Humanities Introductory course (18-19: Critical Concepts/Topic).

**Grading:** Ugrd Shanghai Graded

**Repeatable for additional credit:** No

- SB Crse Attr: NYU Shanghai: Humanities Other Introductory Course

## PHIL-SHU 70 Logic (4 Credits)

*Typically offered occasionally*

This is an introductory course in formal logic. No prior knowledge of logic, mathematics or philosophy will be assumed. We will study a number of logical systems, and learn some methods for producing derivations and determining validity in these systems. We will also learn how to translate sentences and arguments from ordinary language into these systems, and examine some applications of logic to traditional philosophical problems. Prerequisite: None. Fulfillment: CORE AT; Humanities Introductory Courses (18-19 Survey Courses).

**Grading:** Ugrd Shanghai Graded

**Repeatable for additional credit:** No

- SB Crse Attr: NYU Shanghai: Algorithmic Thinking
- SB Crse Attr: NYU Shanghai: Humanities Other Introductory Course

## PHIL-SHU 76 Epistemology (4 Credits)

*Typically offered occasionally*

Considers questions such as the following: Can I have knowledge of anything outside my own mind—for example, physical objects or other minds? Or is the skeptic's attack on my commonplace claims to know unanswerable? What is knowledge, and how does it differ from belief? Prerequisite: None. Fulfillment: Humanities 18-19 topic.

**Grading:** Ugrd Shanghai Graded

**Repeatable for additional credit:** No

## PHIL-SHU 80 Philosophy of Mind (4 Credits)

*Typically offered occasionally*

Examination of the relationship between the mind and the brain, of the nature of the mental, and of personal identity. Can consciousness be reconciled with a scientific view of the world? Prereq: None. Fulfillment: Humanities Introductory/Advanced course (18-19: Critical Concepts/Topic).

**Grading:** Ugrd Shanghai Graded

**Repeatable for additional credit:** No

- SB Crse Attr: NYU Shanghai: Humanities Other Advanced Course
- SB Crse Attr: NYU Shanghai: Humanities Other Introductory Course

## PHIL-SHU 90 Philosophy of Science (4 Credits)

*Typically offered occasionally*

This is a survey course in general philosophy of science. Our topics include: Is scientific knowledge different from other forms of knowledge? Should the history of science be seen as an ever-increasing advance of knowledge? Given that most scientific theories have turned out to be false, are we justified in believing that our current theories are true? What are scientific explanations, and what makes an explanation better than another? Do the laws of nature govern the world or simply encapsulate some interesting patterns in the world? What is the relationship between more and less fundamental scientific theories? We will examine these questions through readings drawn from both the history and philosophy of science. Prerequisites: GPS. Fulfillment: CORE STS; Humanities Interdisciplinary/Advanced course (18-19: Critical Concepts/Topic)

**Grading:** Ugrd Shanghai Graded

**Repeatable for additional credit:** No

- SB Crse Attr: NYU Shanghai: Humanities Advanced Course-Interdisciplinary Crse
- SB Crse Attr: NYU Shanghai: Humanities Other Advanced Course
- SB Crse Attr: NYU Shanghai: Science, Technology and Society

## PHIL-SHU 91 Philosophy of Biology (4 Credits)

*Typically offered occasionally*

This class is an introduction to philosophy of biology focussing on issues connected with the nature and scope of biological explanations. How much does natural selection explain about evolution, and how does it explain? How much do genes explain about development, and how do they explain? No prior philosophy of science or biology will be assumed. Prerequisite: None. Fulfillment: CORE STS; Humanities Interdisciplinary/Advanced course (18-19:Topic)

**Grading:** Ugrd Shanghai Graded

**Repeatable for additional credit:** No

- SB Crse Attr: NYU Shanghai: Humanities Advanced Course-Interdisciplinary Crse
- SB Crse Attr: NYU Shanghai: Humanities Other Advanced Course
- SB Crse Attr: NYU Shanghai: Science, Technology and Society

## PHIL-SHU 101 Foundations: What is Philosophy? (4 Credits)

*Typically offered Spring*

This course is an introduction to the problems and methods of contemporary philosophy. Topics fall into the core subfields of philosophy, including metaphysics, epistemology, and ethics, and may include: What makes the baby you and the 80-year-old you the same person? What is the relationship between mind and body? Can we act freely if the laws of nature determine everything we do? Do we really know we are not a brain in a vat, where intricate neural processes cause reality-like experiences? Do the different moral codes across cultures prove that there is no objective morality? Would you still behave morally if you were to have a magic ring that gives you unlimited power? Prerequisite: None. Fulfillment: Humanities Foundational/Introductory Courses (18-19: Critical Concepts).

**Grading:** Ugrd Shanghai Graded

**Repeatable for additional credit:** No

- SB Crse Attr: NYU Shanghai: Humanities Introductory Course - Foundations Crse
- SB Crse Attr: NYU Shanghai: Humanities Other Introductory Course

**PHIL-SHU 103 Topics in Metaphysics and Epistemology (4 Credits)***Typically offered occasionally*

This course will cover selected topics in the metaphysics and epistemology of mathematics and modality, including but not limited to: set theory and infinity; the analytic, the a priori and the necessary; possible worlds and counterfactuals. Prerequisite: None. Fulfillment: Humanities 18-19 Topic.

**Grading:** Ugrd Shanghai Graded**Repeatable for additional credit:** No**PHIL-SHU 105 Introduction to Chinese Philosophy (4 Credits)***Typically offered occasionally*

This course is an introduction to classical Chinese philosophy. We will focus on three major philosophy traditions in the pre-Qin period China: Confucianism, Mohism, and Daoism. Many of the ideas in these three traditions have shaped the last two thousand years of Chinese—and to a large extent, Eastern Asian—culture. We will read primary texts as well as some secondary literature. The primary texts include: The Analects, Mengzi, and Xunzi from the Confucian tradition, Mozi from the Mohist tradition, and The Daodejing and Zhuangzi from the Daoist tradition. We will discuss issues in ethics, political philosophy, epistemology, and metaphysics in classical Chinese philosophy. We will also discuss the relevance of classical Chinese philosophy to contemporary philosophy and psychology. Pre-requisites: None Fulfillment: CORE HPC or IPC; GCS Chinese History, Society, and Culture.

**Grading:** Ugrd Shanghai Graded**Repeatable for additional credit:** No

- SB Crse Attr: NYU Shanghai: GCSE: Chinese History, Society, and Culture
- SB Crse Attr: NYU Shanghai: Humanistic Perspectives on China/China Arts-HPC/CA
- SB Crse Attr: NYU Shanghai: Interdisciplinary Perspectives on China

**PHIL-SHU 106 Ancient Greek and Roman Philosophy (4 Credits)***Typically offered occasionally*

What is the basic structure of reality? What makes a life good? Why should we be just, when being unjust can be so profitable? What is knowledge and how is it acquired? This course investigates philosophical works of the Presocratics, Plato, Aristotle, Stoics, Epicureans, and Pyrrhonian Skeptics. We will explore their answers to these and other questions concerning reality, knowledge, the natural world, and the good life. Prerequisite: None. Fulfillment: Humanities Introductory course.

**Grading:** Ugrd Shanghai Graded**Repeatable for additional credit:** No

- SB Crse Attr: NYU Shanghai: Humanities Other Introductory Course

**PHIL-SHU 107 Great Works in Philosophy (4 Credits)***Typically offered every year*

This class centers on close reading and discussion of classic philosophical texts. In this course, we will start with the ancient Greek philosophers whose work shaped the debate in European and Middle Eastern philosophy for millennia, and which has come to influence, in some way or another, nearly all contemporary philosophy. We will read some shorter Dialogues by Plato as well as the entirety of Plato's Republic. We'll then read Aristotle's Categories and de Anima (or "on the Soul"), and then the work of the Medieval Islamic philosopher, Ibn Sina, working in the Aristotelian tradition. After that, we'll see how these debates developed over time and were reflected in Descartes' Meditations on First Philosophy, David Hume's Enquiry into Human Understanding, and Immanuel Kant's Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics. Prerequisite: None. Fulfillment: Humanities: New Major Introductory course; Old Major Survey

**Grading:** Ugrd Shanghai Graded**Repeatable for additional credit:** No

- SB Crse Attr: NYU Shanghai: Humanities Other Introductory Course

**PHIL-SHU 110 Traditional Chinese Political and Legal Philosophy (4 Credits)**

China in the so-called pre-Qin period (770 B.C.E.-221 B.C.E.) experienced a profound political transition. Competing schools of political philosophers offered proposals to restore order, which would lay the foundations of the political and legal framework for traditional China in the next 2,000 years. The so-called "Legalists" were advocates of the rule of law, although critics claim that they were actually advocates of the rule by law. Early Confucians criticized the Legalist approach and proposed the rule of virtue, although this proposal has often been blamed for the lack of the spirit of law in traditional and contemporary China. Both schools advocated an equality-based meritocracy, but they differed on what should be considered merits. In this course, we will examine some primary texts by the Legalist philosopher Han Fei Zi and some early Confucians (mostly Confucius and Mencius) in order to understand their general legal and political philosophy. We will also investigate how they treated particular legal issues such as the conflict between the interest of society and the interest of the law, laws of international relations, etc. To help us understand the implications and the influences of these philosophical ideas, we will also look into some real legal codes and legal judgments in traditional China. Through these studies, I hope that not only can we understand the legal philosophies of these thinkers and how they influenced traditional Chinese legal practices, but also see their relative merits and shortcomings to each other and to Western legal ideas. Prerequisite: GPS. Fulfillment: Core Curriculum SSP/ HPC or IPC; GCS Elective Chinese History, Society, and Culture; Humanities Major Other Advanced Courses (18-19 Topic Courses).

**Grading:** Ugrd Shanghai Graded**Repeatable for additional credit:** No

- SB Crse Attr: NYU Shanghai: GCSE: Chinese History, Society, and Culture
- SB Crse Attr: NYU Shanghai: Humanistic Perspectives on China/China Arts-HPC/CA
- SB Crse Attr: NYU Shanghai: Humanities Other Advanced Course
- SB Crse Attr: NYU Shanghai: Interdisciplinary Perspectives on China
- SB Crse Attr: NYU Shanghai: Social Science Perspective on China

**PHIL-SHU 115 Ethics and Society (4 Credits)***Typically offered Fall*

This class introduces students to the methods of contemporary analytic philosophy through the study of selected moral, social, and political topics. Our focus will be on political authority, social justice, legitimacy, and justifiable resistance in the face of injustice. We will consider questions as follows: What justifies the existence of civil government? What are the key elements of social justice? Do we have a duty to obey the law, and if so, what is the source of that duty? Does the duty extend to unjust laws? When we protest against unjust laws, must we always act civilly or peacefully, or can uncivil protest, and even rioting, be morally justified? Prerequisite: None. Fulfillment: Humanities Major Introductory requirement.

**Grading:** Ugrd Shanghai Graded**Repeatable for additional credit:** No

- SB Crse Attr. NYU Shanghai: Humanities Other Introductory Course

**PHIL-SHU 130 Philosophy of Technology: Thinking Machines (4 Credits)***Typically offered occasionally*

This course aims to train students to think philosophically about our rapidly changing—and ever more intimate—relationship with machines. We focus in particular on the following subjects: artificial intelligence, robots, cyborgs, automation and science fiction speculation. Prerequisite: Global Perspectives on Society (GPS) Fulfillment: CORE STS; Humanities Interdisciplinary or Advanced course; IMA/IMB elective.

**Grading:** Ugrd Shanghai Graded**Repeatable for additional credit:** No

- SB Crse Attr. NYU Shanghai: Humanities Advanced Course-Interdisciplinary Crse
- SB Crse Attr. NYU Shanghai: Humanities Other Advanced Course
- SB Crse Attr. NYU Shanghai: IMA Elective
- SB Crse Attr. NYU Shanghai: IMB Interactive Media Arts/Business Elective
- SB Crse Attr. NYU Shanghai: Science, Technology and Society

**PHIL-SHU 145 Philosophy of Art (4 Credits)***Typically offered every year*

What makes artworks different from ordinary objects? Is Plan 9 from Outer Space a bad work of art or not an artwork at all? What makes art different from pornography? How much should we care about what the author intended when we read a work of literature? Why is there only one Mona Lisa but there can be three performances of Hamlet on a given night in New York? Is beauty objective? Why do we pity Anna Karenina even though we know she isn't real? What are we doing when we appreciate a work of art? Aesthetics and the philosophy of art involves the study of problems raised by the nature of art, artworks, and aesthetic judgments like the ones mentioned above. The goal will be to think clearly and reason efficiently and creatively about these and other philosophical questions. We will discuss answers to these questions defended by classic and contemporary philosophers, and attempt to analyze and critique these arguments using the tools of philosophical argumentation. Prerequisite: None. Fulfillment: Humanities Introductory course.

**Grading:** Ugrd Shanghai Graded**Repeatable for additional credit:** No

- SB Crse Attr. NYU Shanghai: Humanities Other Introductory Course

**PHIL-SHU 165 Indian Buddhist Philosophy (4 Credits)***Typically offered occasionally*

In this course, we shall survey a range of topics in Indian Buddhist philosophy. Using translations of primary texts, we will pay attention to arguments that Buddhist philosophers used to defend their views and respond to their critics. Our approach to these arguments shall be twofold. On the one hand, we will try to understand these arguments in their historical context. On the other hand, we will ask what we, as philosophers, can learn from these arguments. The aim of this course is to familiarize students with prominent questions, arguments, and views in classical Indian metaphysics, epistemology, philosophy of mind, ethics, and philosophy of religion. Students will also develop skills in critical thinking, reading, and writing. Prerequisites: None Fulfillment: Humanities 18-19 Topic.

**Grading:** Ugrd Shanghai Graded**Repeatable for additional credit:** No**PHIL-SHU 200 Topics in Epistemology: (4 Credits)***Typically offered occasionally*

Prerequisite: None. Fulfillment: Humanities 18-19 Topic.

**Grading:** Ugrd Shanghai Graded**Repeatable for additional credit:** No**PHIL-SHU 201 Pragmatic Turn in Epistemology (4 Credits)**

Course Description: Unsatisfied with the narrowness of the prevailing conception of knowledge which is focused on propositional knowledge, i.e., knowledge as justified true belief (JTB), this course, by drawing on the intellectual resources from the pragmatist tradition, the Polanyian tradition, the Wittgensteinian tradition, and the phenomenological tradition in philosophy, and from the latest developments in cognitive science, will argue for a pragmatic turn in epistemology. By installing action/practice at the core of knowledge, the pragmatic turn will put knowledge by acquaintance and knowing how, two basic forms of tacit knowledge, at the center stage, and will work out a much richer picture of human knowledge that speaks to people in real life. We will read texts by authors in the aforementioned philosophical traditions and in cognitive science, and will encourage students to engage in the current debates on knowing how, tacit knowledge, etc. Pre-requisites: GPS.

**Grading:** Ugrd Shanghai Graded**Repeatable for additional credit:** No**PHIL-SHU 202 Epistemology and Imagination (4 Credits)***Typically offered every year*

In both the philosophy of mind and epistemology, imagination is usually contrasted with perception. In the first part of this course, we will look at the differences and connections between them. How do imagination and perception differ in their phenomenal character? Are they clearly separate? What makes perception capable of giving us justified non-modal beliefs about the external world, and what lessons can we learn from the former discussion about imagination? Can imagination give us justified non-modal beliefs? In the second part of this course, we will examine various other questions in the epistemology of imagination, including the role of imagination in thought experiment, the power of imagination to justify modal beliefs, and, if there is time, difficulty in imagining fictional worlds that we take as morally deviant. Prerequisite: Global Perspectives on Society (GPS) Fulfillment: Humanities Advanced course (18-19: Topic).

**Grading:** Ugrd Shanghai Graded**Repeatable for additional credit:** No

- SB Crse Attr. NYU Shanghai: Humanities Other Advanced Course

**PHIL-SHU 203 Epistemology and Memory (4 Credits)***Typically offered occasionally*

We seem to form beliefs based on memory or retain beliefs through memory all the time, but what makes our memory beliefs rational? Does memory only preserve rationality that is gained from other sources, such as perception, or can memory generate new rationality? Recent empirical research suggests that memory is constructive: memory can incorporate contents other than the original inputs before or at retrieval, and some research shows that the incorporated contents can come from our cognitive states. How do these new empirical findings shape our epistemological discussion of memory? Moreover, there are interesting connections between memory and imagination, which we will also explore in this course. Prerequisite: GPS. Fulfillment: Humanities Advanced Courses (18-19 Critical Concepts Core Course/ Topic Courses).

**Grading:** Ugrd Shanghai Graded**Repeatable for additional credit:** No

- SB Crse Attr: NYU Shanghai: Humanities Other Advanced Course

**PHIL-SHU 204 Metaphysics and Epistemology: Perception (4 Credits)***Typically offered every other year*

Compare a sighted person with a blindsighted person, who has no experience of a visual stimulus, but nevertheless registers its presence in unconscious processing. Does the sighted person have more justification for believing that a visual stimulus is present? Compare a visual experience with a visual imagining. Does the visual experience have a distinctive kind of phenomenal character? If so, does such phenomenal character help explain how the experience justify beliefs? In this course, we will survey a few features of perceptual experiences that might explain their ability to justify beliefs, including phenomenal character, content, and etiology. We will also consider the epistemological significance of a range of perceptual phenomena, such as cognitive penetration and perceptual learning. Prerequisite: Writing as Inquiry

**Grading:** Ugrd Shanghai Graded**Repeatable for additional credit:** No**PHIL-SHU 220 Philosophy of Law (4 Credits)***Typically offered every year*

Law is present in almost every aspect of our lives. It requires us to stop at the red light and pay taxes. It empowers us to acquire properties, make binding contracts, form political associations, and vote for our representatives. On what basis does law claim this ubiquitous authority to structure our lives? What principles should inform the content of law? The class is divided into two units. In the first unit, we will look into the philosophical foundations of prominent branches of private laws, including property, contract, and tort laws. In the second unit, we will look into critical principles that constitute the backbones of public laws, including constitutional, criminal, and immigration laws. Prerequisite: GPS. Fulfillment: Humanities Introductory course (18-19 Survey course).

**Grading:** Ugrd Shanghai Graded**Repeatable for additional credit:** No

- SB Crse Attr: NYU Shanghai: Humanities Other Introductory Course

**PHIL-SHU 230 Philosophy of Physics (4 Credits)***Typically offered every year*

Physics is the study of matter in motion. This course concerns the theories and properties of matter in modern physics, and examines their physical and philosophical foundations. Of these, the dominant account, and the physical theory with the most experimental support in history, is the theory known as quantum mechanics. The course will also touch on other issues pertaining to the nature of matter in modern physics. These may include (depending on student interest, time constraints, and fit with other units): Relations between quantum mechanics and the theories of special and general relativity. More contemporary debate about the ontology of the quantum mechanical wave function. Theories of atomism and gunk, and their physical upshots. Theories about the nature of physical properties, including dispositions and physical magnitudes. Prerequisite: Global Perspectives on Society (GPS) Fulfillment: CORE STS; Humanities Advanced Courses (18-19 Topic Courses).

**Grading:** Ugrd Shanghai Graded**Repeatable for additional credit:** No

- SB Crse Attr: NYU Shanghai: Humanities Other Advanced Course

- SB Crse Attr: NYU Shanghai: Science, Technology and Society

**PHIL-SHU 255 Habermas and Chinese Modernity (4 Credits)***Typically offered every year*

While Jürgen Habermas is a German thinker well-known for his philosophical defense of modernity as “an unfinished project”, China has surprised the world with its dramatic developments and ambiguous potentials. Reading Habermas in the context of China could hopefully lead both to a clear understanding of modernity and to a solid preparation for further studies on related topics. The main body of the course includes 5 sections, respectively focusing on value rationality and instrumental rationality, democracy and science, capitalism and socialism, universalism and particularism, and the national and the international. In each section students are introduced to a particular problem at issue, are shown how it was discussed in China and how it was addressed by Habermas, and are encouraged to present and argue for their own ideas on it. Prerequisite: None. Fulfillment: Humanities Advanced Courses (18-19 Topic Courses); The Politics, Economy, and Environment of China.

**Grading:** Ugrd Shanghai Graded**Repeatable for additional credit:** No

- SB Crse Attr: NYU Shanghai: GCSE: The Politics, Econ, Environment of China

- SB Crse Attr: NYU Shanghai: Humanities Other Advanced Course

**PHIL-SHU 301 Independent Study (2-4 Credits)***Typically offered occasionally*

A student may register for an independent study course (PHIL-SHU 301; 2 to 4 credits per term) if he or she obtains the consent of a faculty member who approves the study project and agrees to serve as advisor. The student must also obtain the endorsement of his or her advisor. Prerequisite: None.

**Grading:** Ugrd Shanghai Graded**Repeatable for additional credit:** No