

# PHILOSOPHY & RELIGION (PHRE1-CE)

## PHRE1-CE 9001 "Unretirement" Conversations and Toolkit: A Masterclass with Richard Eisenberg (0 Credits)

Register for this Summer 2023 course on the new <https://nyusps.gatherlearning.com/events/unretirement-conversations-and-toolkit-a-masterclass-with-richard-eisenberg>>NYU SPS Academy of Lifelong Learning website.</a></strong></p><br><br><br><p>Transitioning to retirement these days can mean transitioning to "unretirement"—combining part-time work with volunteering, mentoring, travel, and time with family and friends. But making the transition can be challenging. It requires changing the way you think about things, readjusting priorities and finding meaning and purpose in this new stage of life. This masterclass, from an "unretired" journalist, will help you unretire by offering the questions to ask and the ways to find answers, through conversations with experts on retirement and the second half of life. The readings will include Chris Farrell, *Unretirement*; Steve Lopez, *Independence Day*; Joe Casey, *Win the Retirement Game*; Michael Clinton, *Roar*; Tony Hixon, *Retirement Stepping Stones*; and Michelle Pannor Silver, *Retirement and Its Discontents*.</p><strong>Summer 2023 tuition is \$699.</strong></p><br><br><br><p></p>

**Grading:** SPS Non-Credit Graded

**Repeatable for additional credit:** Yes

## PHRE1-CE 9004 Hannah Arendt in Dark Times (0 Credits)

Hannah Arendt was one of the 20th century's leading political philosophers and most controversial public intellectuals. Her life spanned the upheavals of two world wars, revolutions, and civil wars; these events forged her determination to understand and illuminate the darkness of the 20th century. In masterful works—*The Origins of Totalitarianism*, *The Human Condition*, *The Life of the Mind*, and *Eichmann in Jerusalem*—she explored the private and the public; freedom and authority; violence and revolution; labor, work and action; and, above all, the nature of evil as she formed an original vision of politics based on the enhancement of human freedom. "The banality of evil" earned her notoriety, animosity, admiration, and the rare satisfaction of becoming proverbial. We will read and discuss selections from her work in order to grasp and assess her continued relevance to contemporary political, moral, and intellectual life. Course material will take into consideration the interests and prior acquaintance of participants with her work.</p>

**Grading:** SPS Non-Credit Graded

**Repeatable for additional credit:** Yes

## PHRE1-CE 9005 The Meaning of Life (0 Credits)

The meaning of life is an eternal philosophical conundrum; a central question that all philosophies and religions attempt to answer. Compare and discuss different religious, scientific, and philosophical approaches to this mystery through the works of Plato, Aristotle, Epicurus, Thomas Aquinas, David Hume, Jeremy Bentham, Charles Darwin, A.J. Ayer, Jean-Paul Sartre, Matt Ridley, and other prominent thinkers.

**Grading:** SPS Non-Credit Graded

**Repeatable for additional credit:** Yes

## PHRE1-CE 9006 Tibetan Meditation II: Living, Loving, and Letting Go (0 Credits)

Expand and enrich your experience of living a meaningful life. This course is for people with some exposure to Tibetan meditation and those who have already participated in an introductory-level meditation course. Focus on more advanced Tibetan meditation techniques designed to deepen one's experience of wisdom and compassion. Guided meditation and relaxation exercises are part of each class.

**Grading:** SPS Non-Credit Graded

**Repeatable for additional credit:** Yes

## PHRE1-CE 9007 Secularism and Modernity (2 Credits)

Secularism, or the principle of the separation of government institutions from religious institutions and influence, draws its intellectual roots from Enlightenment thinkers, yet the debates it engenders are vibrantly alive and well in our 21st-century world. Explore the proponents and critics of secularism, and acquire some philosophical and critical tools to approach various contemporary issues, including the spread of religious affairs into the public sphere, the rise of fundamentalism, and minority rights. In this course, read works by Immanuel Kant, G.W.F. Hegel, Carl Schmitt, Karl L&#246;with, Talal Asad, and Charles Taylor, among others.

**Grading:** SPS Non-Credit Graded

**Repeatable for additional credit:** Yes

## PHRE1-CE 9008 Judaism and Christianity: History and Relationship (2 Credits)

No two religions of the world are more intimately and problematically interrelated than Judaism and Christianity. At times, their history together reads like the story of a rebellious child appealing for the approval of an indifferent parent. But there also are moments of mutual comprehension, affirmation, and peace. In this course, look first at the theoretical underpinnings of the relations between the two religions in scripture, theology, and liturgy. Then, examine how the relationship has played out historically. Finally, consider some models of bridge building that are operating between the two today.</p>

**Grading:** SPS Non-Credit Graded

**Repeatable for additional credit:** Yes

## PHRE1-CE 9009 Judaism and the Origin of Christianity (0 Credits)

The period that led to the emergence of Christianity and Second Temple Judaism (400 BCE&ndash;400 CE) is a fascinating era of both continuity and innovation in religious traditions. Explore this period and its history, literature, and religious communities by reading an array of ancient primary sources and exploring the connections and adaptations made to earlier traditions. Examine how these primary texts reflect and contribute to identity formation for different groups within these traditions. Topics include canon and prophecy; death and afterlife; temples, synagogues, and churches; sin and righteousness; and the concepts of messiah and redemption.

**Grading:** SPS Non-Credit Graded

**Repeatable for additional credit:** Yes

## PHRE1-CE 9010 Introduction to Philosophical Thought (0 Credits)

Explore a range of compelling ideas about the nature of the universe and the role we play in it. Examine philosophy's relationship to religion and science, and inquire into different philosophical approaches to morals and ethics, artistic creation, the nature of the state, and the meaning of human life and aspirations. Readings and discussions consider philosophers from Eastern and Western traditions, as well as from Islam. Become more familiar with major philosophical traditions, such as idealism, rationalism, empiricism, existentialism, and postmodernism.

**Grading:** SPS Non-Credit Graded

**Repeatable for additional credit:** Yes

**PHRE1-CE 9011 Religion in Psychological Perspective (0 Credits)**

Contemporary thought and research on psychology and religion have broadened our understanding of the complexities of religion and spirituality. Explore this fascinating field through a variety of topics and perspectives, including definitions of religion, the place of spiritual beings (souls, gods, angels, and demons) in religion, and the existence (or nonexistence) of universal religious phenomena. We also address the importance of identity and social learning in religious adherence, the paradoxical relation of women to religion, pro- and antisocial aspects of religious adherence (including religiously inspired violence), the characteristics of conversion, and the development of secularization.

**Grading:** SPS Non-Credit Graded

**Repeatable for additional credit:** Yes

**PHRE1-CE 9012 Religion and Literature: From the Bible to James Baldwin (0 Credits)**

Register for this Spring 2023 course on the new [NYU SPS Academy of Lifelong Learning](https://nyusps.gatherlearning.com/events/religion-and-literature-from-the-bible-to-james-baldwin) website.

The Hungarian critic Georg Lukács said that the novel is the epic of a world that has been abandoned by God. That suggests a stark divide between the novels we enjoy and the religions that continue to inform us. Yet so many of the novels, poems, and plays we read address the same themes that religions do. In this course, we compare some classic religious texts, such as the Bible, the Midrash, and the writings of Augustine, with some famous writers of past and present—Homer, Dante, Shakespeare, George Eliot (that is, Mary Ann Evans), James Baldwin, and Mary Gordon, among others—on their answers to some perennial questions: What is the nature of love? What is the origin of evil? Why do we suffer? Is death the end? Does forgiveness redeem? And we will ask, Can literature take the place of religion?

Spring 2023 tuition is \$559.

**Grading:** SPS Non-Credit Graded

**Repeatable for additional credit:** Yes

**PHRE1-CE 9013 Nietzsche: Perspectives on Perspectivism (0 Credits)**

Friedrich Nietzsche, the notorious 19th-century German classicist and philosopher, has alternately been viewed as high priest of postmodernism, proto-Nazi, ethical genius, and prophet of nihilism. In this course, we will explore the work of this provocative figure who continues to exert a controversial influence on contemporary writers, thinkers, and artists. We will look at his writings on ancient Greek tragedy and philosophy, Socrates, and Jesus, and we will examine his personae as social critic, moral polemicist, philosophical terrorist, and visionary madman. The course will feature integrated readings and discussions of some of his works, together with a selection of the original ancient texts that inspired them.

**Grading:** SPS Non-Credit Graded

**Repeatable for additional credit:** Yes

**PHRE1-CE 9014 An Introduction to Ethics: Virtue, Duty, Goodness (0 Credits)**

This course presents an integrated study of works by Aristotle (Nicomachean Ethics), Kant (Grounding for the Metaphysics of Morals), Mill (Utilitarianism), and Iris Murdoch (The Sovereignty of Good) on the nature of morality. It also features short stories by Tolstoy depicting the ethical and religious awakening of individuals. Other readings on topics of interest to the participants of the course, such as Simone Weil's The Need for Roots, will be covered, if time allows.

Questions? Contact us at The Center for Applied Liberal Arts (CALA). Email [sps.cala@nyu.edu](mailto:sps.cala@nyu.edu) or call 212-998-7289.

**Grading:** SPS Non-Credit Graded

**Repeatable for additional credit:** Yes

**PHRE1-CE 9015 Cultivating Mindfulness and Compassion in Today's World (0 Credits)**

As the 21st century unfolds, technology and world events intrude upon our attention and our humanity, inviting a call for both renewal and resilience. Responding to that call, this course explores the principles and practices of mindfulness and compassion, the objectives of which are to train attention, soften the heart, navigate difficult emotions and runaway thoughts, facilitate kindness and equanimity, and access the wisdom that lies beneath patterns of reactivity. Class sessions are experiential, emphasizing the imperative of practice—the idea that mindfulness is a type of exercise whose benefits accrue over time, while compassion is a balm valued by people around the globe. In this regard, the tools and techniques presented can help you to develop a mindfulness practice that you can carry into all aspects of your life.

**Grading:** SPS Non-Credit Graded

**Repeatable for additional credit:** Yes

**PHRE1-CE 9016 Goddesses in the Ancient World (0 Credits)**

In recent decades, scholars have been examining goddesses in the ancient world (particularly those of the ancient Near East, Egypt, Greece, and Rome) and their influence on contemporary society. Their research has raised questions about the complexities that lie at the intersection of religion, gender, and power, as well as about the history of women representing the divine. In this course, we will examine these questions and explore the relationship between goddesses as they appear in myth and ritual and narrative accounts of women's lives; the roles and practices of devotees (both male and female); and the ways in which women's bodies and sexuality were construed in religions with female divinities. By the end of the class, you will have a greater understanding of female divinities and their continued influence on life and religion today.

**Grading:** SPS Non-Credit Graded

**Repeatable for additional credit:** Yes

**PHRE1-CE 9017 Augustine of Hippo: Lust, Love, and the Life Eternal (0 Credits)**

No other thinker has been more lavishly praised&mdash;or more harshly blamed&mdash;for all that is &ldquo;right&rdquo; and &ldquo;wrong&rdquo; with the Western tradition than Augustine of Hippo. Born into a middle-class family in Roman North Africa, he lived to see the beginning of the collapse of Roman political power. His life embraced the conflicts and extremes of his time. He was African and Roman, provincial and cosmopolitan, a confessed sexual &ldquo;profligate,&rdquo; a monogamous &ldquo;husband,&rdquo; a passionate celibate, an intellectual adventurer, and a definer of Christian orthodoxy. This eight-week survey traces three themes that dominate Augustine&rsquo;s work&mdash;the concepts of sin and salvation, sex within and outside of marriage, and the relationship between the Church and civil society. This course uses <em>Confessions,</em> Augustine&rsquo;s account of his conversion to Catholic Christianity, to explore the foundations of his ethics, his efforts to prevent a split between married and celibate Christians, and his vision of life on earth and in the heavenly city. <i>No prior knowledge of religion or philosophy necessary for this course.</i>

**Grading:** SPS Non-Credit Graded

**Repeatable for additional credit:** Yes

**PHRE1-CE 9018 Three Jewish Heretics: Elisha ben Abuyah, Spinoza, and Jacob Frank (0 Credits)**

A heretic is someone who chooses a path outside the norm. Rabbinic Judaism has been a norm for centuries, and yet for centuries there have been Jews who chose another path. In this single-session course, we will look at three Jewish thinkers who famously rebelled against traditional ideas: Elisha ben Abuyah from the first and second centuries, Spinoza (1632&ndash;1677), and Jacob Frank (1726&ndash;1791). The work of these three philosophers represents tendencies toward ancient Greek wisdom, modern philosophy, and quasi-Christian messianism. Despite their dissent from Jewish tradition, explore how&nbsp;these so-called heretics have remained very much a part of Jewish history and have come to represent some interesting byways within it. <i>No prior knowledge of Jewish theology is necessary.</i>

**Grading:** SPS Non-Credit Graded

**Repeatable for additional credit:** Yes

**PHRE1-CE 9051 Thinking About How We Know and How We Teach (0 Credits)**

Teaching is a constituent element of what is often called civilization. How truth is to be constituted and by whom is an essentially contested issue, and how this central question is resolved speaks volumes about a society. Topics such as the aims of education, the relationship between knowledge and teaching, and teaching truth to power have been in circulation since ancient times. In this course, examine ancient, modern, and near-contemporary texts, with each one advancing a different appraisal of the aims and methods of the best teaching. Readings include works by Plato, Rousseau, W.E.B DuBois, Paulo Freire, and John Dewey.

**Grading:** SPS Non-Credit Graded

**Repeatable for additional credit:** Yes

**PHRE1-CE 9052 Wittgenstein and Language (0 Credits)**

<p style="MARGIN: 0in 0in 0pt" class="MsoNormal"><span style="FONT-FAMILY: 'Times New Roman',serif; mso-ascii-theme-font: minor-latin; mso-hansi-theme-font: minor-latin; mso-bidi-theme-font: minor-latin"><font size="3">Ludwig Wittgenstein, one of the most influential philosophers of the 19th&nbsp;and 20th&nbsp;centuries, worked on issues of logic, mathematics, philosophy of mind, and philosophy of language. He believed that his <i style="mso-bidi-font-style: normal">Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus</i> (his only work to be published in his lifetime) resolved all the major problems of philosophy, and it established his thinking on language as a logical structure. Explore the works of this seminal thinker and his changing views on<span style="mso-spacerun: yes">&nbsp;</span>language as he moved in his <i style="mso-bidi-font-style: normal">Philosophical Investigations</i> to a concern for the pragmatic dimensions of language use&#8211;&#8211;views which were to influence legions of philosophers and social thinkers after him.<!--?xml:namespace prefix = o ns = "urn:schemas-microsoft-com:office:office" /--><o:p></o:p></font></span></p><br><br><p>&nbsp;</p>

**Grading:** SPS Non-Credit Graded

**Repeatable for additional credit:** Yes

**PHRE1-CE 9053 Wittgenstein and Language, Part 2 (0 Credits)**

Ludwig Wittgenstein, one of the most influential philosophers of the 19th and 20th centuries, worked on issues of logic, mathematics, philosophy of the mind, and philosophy of language. He believed that <i>Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus</i> (his only work to be published in his lifetime) resolved all the major problems of philosophy, and it established his thinking on language as a logical structure. Explore his <i>Philosophical Investigations</i> and <i>On Certainty</i>, and examine his changing views on language&#8212;views that were to influence legions of philosophers and social thinkers after him.

**Grading:** SPS Non-Credit Graded

**Repeatable for additional credit:** Yes

**PHRE1-CE 9054 The Enlightenment and Modern Philosophy (0 Credits)**

<p>During the 17th century, Western Europe&rsquo;s social, political, and religious structures were in turmoil, and by its end, the foundations of our modern world outlook of freedom of conscience, of the press, and of secular government were being laid. Trace the growth of this intellectual revolution and its further development&mdash;known as the Enlightenment&mdash;from its beginnings in the works of Descartes and Spinoza to its culmination in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. In this course, read both Enlightenment and anti-Enlightenment figures, such as Hume, Kant, Hegel, Marx, Nietzsche, Sartre, and Derrida, among others, and discuss the role of reason versus tradition in our contemporary world.</p>

**Grading:** SPS Non-Credit Graded

**Repeatable for additional credit:** Yes

**PHRE1-CE 9055 Aristotle's <i>Poetics</i>: Continuing Influence and Dilemmas (0 Credits)**

<p><em>Poetics</em> is often considered the most important treatise on literary and dramatic criticism in the Western world, with its focus on tragedy, comedy, and epic poetry. Its impact is still felt today, even in art forms that did not exist in Aristotle&rsquo;s Greece, such as film and television. Perennial puzzles remain in the text: Why is catharsis the goal of tragedy, and what could catharsis mean? This course identifies and explores many of the famous issues, especially those relating to staged tragedy and comedy and some that arguably have been misunderstood since the Renaissance.</p>

**Grading:** SPS Non-Credit Graded

**Repeatable for additional credit:** Yes

**PHRE1-CE 9066 Psychology and Religion (0 Credits)**

Ever since Freud, the relationship between psychology and religion has been discussed and debated. Explore the contributions that psychology, and particularly psychoanalysis, can make to an understanding of religion. Look at some of psychology's founding figures—Freud, Jung, James, Fromm, and Erikson—as well as some contemporary psychoanalytic thinking on religion. Explore what psychology and psychoanalysis can tell us about ideas of the sacred, of deity, of rituals and their meanings, and of the emotional underpinnings of belief and faith. Compare the healing functions of religion and psychoanalysis (the psychoanalyst as “physician of the soul”), among other issues.

**Grading:** SPS Non-Credit Graded

**Repeatable for additional credit:** Yes

**PHRE1-CE 9067 The Public and the Private (0 Credits)**

The gap between the private and the public is often insurmountable. The private sphere is identified with the innermost predilections and aspirations of the individual, whereas the public realm often is determined by violent mass movements and antagonisms. To understand the dynamics of the dichotomy and to reflect on the personal and collective issues confronting us, we will read and discuss texts on the relation between the individual and society; ethics and politics; and alternative economic, social, and political systems. Is democracy the worst form of government, except for all the others, as Winston Churchill famously declared? Are anarchy, authoritarianism, totalitarianism, and various versions of utopia viable options? How about socialism? Is there a role for psychology? What about philosophy? Course readings are selected from the works of Aristotle, *Politics*; Epicurus, *Letters* and *Principal Doctrines*; Epictetus, *The Enchiridion*; Marx, *The Communist Manifesto*; Freud, *Civilization and Its Discontents*; Hannah Arendt, *Between Past and Future* and *The Human Condition*; and Simone Weil, *The Need for Roots*.

**Grading:** SPS Non-Credit Graded

**Repeatable for additional credit:** Yes

**PHRE1-CE 9068 Food and World Religion (0 Credits)**

Why do Muslims and Jews abstain from eating pork? What do various foods symbolize in world religions? What is the role of fasting in spirituality? Explore the fascinating relationship with food, eating, and food prohibitions in several major world religions. Approximately half the material is drawn from Asian religious traditions (mainly Hinduism, Buddhism, and Jainism). The rest comes from the three Abrahamic traditions (Judaism, Christianity, and Islam). Course readings include a range of religious texts, ethnographies, legal texts, histories, films, and ritual studies.

**Grading:** SPS Non-Credit Graded

**Repeatable for additional credit:** Yes

**PHRE1-CE 9085 The Philosophy of Art (0 Credits)**

What is art? What is the significance of art? How is art meant to be understood? Philosophers, artists, and art historians have struggled to answer these questions for centuries. In this course, we will explore the various attempts by classic thinkers, sociologists, art historians, and art critics to unravel the complexities of these ideas, and we will make our own attempt at answering these perennial questions. Along with traditional philosophical theories of art, we will examine more recent approaches. Readings will include work by the art historian E. H. Gombrich, selections from Danto's *The Philosophical Disenfranchisement of Art*, Heidegger's *The Origin of the Work of Art*, and essays by the feminist critics Arlene Raven and Joanna Frueh. Theoretical discussions will go hand in hand with concrete analysis of paintings from artists including Giotto, Leonardo, Bernini, El Greco, van Gogh, Matisse, Kirchner, de Kooning, and Isa Genzken. The course also will include an examination of women artists who worked in the shadow of famous painters but are now recognized as important on their own, including M. Robusti (daughter of Tintoretto), J. Leyster (thought to have worked under Frans Hals), and C. M. Charpentier (worked under Jacques-Louis David).

**Grading:** SPS Non-Credit Graded

**Repeatable for additional credit:** Yes

**PHRE1-CE 9086 Hegel's Philosophy of History (0 Credits)**

Hegel famously observed that the only thing we learn from history is that we never learn from history. He elaborated a philosophy of history that has affected philosophers, historians, and other thinkers for the last 200 years. Follow Hegel in his profoundly insightful journey through world history and explore a monumental philosophical system of extraordinary reach, comprehension, and splendor. Read Hegel's *Reason in History* and selections from *The Philosophy of History*. Lectures provide background and context from other relevant works by Hegel.

**Grading:** SPS Non-Credit Graded

**Repeatable for additional credit:** Yes

**PHRE1-CE 9087 Hegel's *Encyclopedia Logic* (0 Credits)**

Hegel's philosophical system, so remarkable for its breadth and depth, is enjoying a resurgence of interest both in analytic and continental philosophical circles. Hegel himself considered his *Logic* to be the “absolute foundation” of his entire system. This course is designed to combine a close reading of the *Encyclopedia Logic* with a discussion of Hegel's relevance to contemporary debates in epistemology, metaphysics, philosophy of mind, and ethics. In class, we make ample use of other writings by Hegel, as well as commentaries on this work.

**Grading:** SPS Non-Credit Graded

**Repeatable for additional credit:** Yes

**PHRE1-CE 9091 Comparative Religion: From Christianity to Confucianism (0 Credits)**

Register for this Fall 2023 course on the new [NYU SPS Academy of Lifelong Learning website](https://nyusps.gatherlearning.com/events/comparative-religion). Religion is consistently a news item in our world today; it factors into conflicts in North America, Europe, the Middle East, and India, among other places. Catholics are divided on the wisdom of the pope, Jews on the policies of Israel, and Muslims on their relation to modern secularism. But none of these divisions makes sense to outsiders without a basic understanding of the religions involved. In this course, gain a basic understanding of the beliefs and practices of the world's major religions. Explore the meaning of religious experience, the distinction between myth and history, and the appeal—or not—of ritual. We also will discuss important questions: Why do religious communities split, for example, Sunni and Shiite Islam? What does “law” mean to observant Jews? What do Christians mean by the “Trinity”? Can “nothing” be “something”; in Hindu and Buddhist contexts? Is Confucianism a religion at all? These questions and more will enliven our explorations into the major religions of the world. **Fall 2023 tuition is \$849.** Registering at least 3 weeks prior to the course start date is highly recommended.

**Grading:** SPS Non-Credit Graded

**Repeatable for additional credit:** Yes

**PHRE1-CE 9092 Philosophy as a Guide to Spiritual Life (0 Credits)**

Seekers of a spiritual life sometimes forget that philosophy is as much a resource as religion. In ancient times, philosophy was understood as a life-guide alternative to and in competition with religions. In this class, we consider some ways that philosophy distinguishes itself from religion as a guide to spiritual life, and we examine the spirituality inherent to some classic philosophical texts, including the Upanishads and works by Plato, Lucretius, Marcus Aurelius, Immanuel Kant, William James, Bertrand Russell, and Simone Weil. Topics addressed include the role of reason and experience in the spiritual life, philosophical therapy for life's ills, and the afterlife.

**Grading:** SPS Non-Credit Graded

**Repeatable for additional credit:** Yes

**PHRE1-CE 9102 The Bible in Literature: Good Books Inspired by the Good Book (0 Credits)**

Pulitzer Prize-winning author Marilynne Robinson once wrote, “The Bible is the model for and subject of more art and thought than those of us who live within its influence, consciously or unconsciously, will ever know.” Robinson was referring to the myriad ways that writers through the years have drawn from the Bible as a source for inspiration and ideas. In this course, we will examine selections from the Bible alongside notable instances of stories that engage with the Bible through reference, retelling, and response. We’re especially interested in how understanding authors’ uses of biblical imagery and resonance can contribute to our understanding of their works. Readings will include excerpts from Dante’s *Commedia* and Milton’s *Paradise Lost*; Isak Dinesen’s “Sorrow-Acre”; Elie Wiesel’s *The Trial of God*; Flannery O’Connor’s “Revelation”; Cormac McCarthy’s *The Road*; Margaret Atwood’s *The Handmaid’s Tale*; and Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein*.

**Grading:** SPS Non-Credit Graded

**Repeatable for additional credit:** Yes

**PHRE1-CE 9105 Religious Sects, Cults, and Small Denominations (0 Credits)**

Explore American religious life from the perspective of those whom the mainstream have deemed “religious outsiders”; at certain points in history. In this course, take a closer look at groups that today have been admitted to the cultural mainstream but once were labeled with the pejorative term “cult”; including the Mormon Church (Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints), various African American Pentecostal traditions, and particular Jewish sects. We also will examine groups that the mainstream still today looks at askance, including Father Divine’s International Peace Mission Movement and Jim Jones and the Peoples Temple. Over six weeks, we will approach the topic of religious outsiders in a number of ways, including by examining their beliefs, history, waxing or waning popularity, and reception by the mainstream. And with the charity and rigor of a religious studies lens, we will aim to uncover something deeper—perhaps universal—about these groups’ appeal and ongoing operation.

**Grading:** SPS Non-Credit Graded

**Repeatable for additional credit:** Yes

**PHRE1-CE 9106 Essential Questions: Philosophical Excursions into Real Life (2.5 Credits)**

In this conversation-rich course, explore the philosophical aspects of familiar real-life problems and questions, deepening our understanding of the nature of these issues and bringing to light new ways of thinking about solutions. Topics include the idea of a meaningful life, the nature of happiness, the nature of love, the importance of choice, and how to think about ethical conflicts. We mine our questions from newspapers, blogs and personal experiences, the developing literature on philosophical practice, and the insights of philosophers such as Plato, Aristotle, Thomas Aquinas, David Hume, John Stuart Mill, Immanuel Kant, and Elizabeth Anscombe.

**Grading:** SPS Non-Credit Graded

**Repeatable for additional credit:** Yes

**PHRE1-CE 9107 Women in the Ancient Near East (0 Credits)**

Register for this Summer 2023 course on the new [NYU SPS Academy of Lifelong Learning website](https://nyusps.gatherlearning.com/events/women-in-the-ancient-near-east). This course will explore a basic question concerning women in the Ancient Near East: How can we define, on the basis of the existing literature and art, women’s position in the sociopolitical sphere beyond their traditional domestic functions (as wives, mothers, concubines, and daughters)? In other words, how did women participate in the social institutions of their time and place, and can we uncover the existence of specifically female institutions that were later forgotten or suppressed? We will read (translated) literature, including biblical texts, of and about ancient Near Eastern cultures. **Summer 2023 tuition is \$499.**

**Grading:** SPS Non-Credit Graded

**Repeatable for additional credit:** Yes

**PHRE1-CE 9108 The Idea of the Sacred (2 Credits)**

The sacred is often considered the essential feature of religion, yet it is difficult to define. Aspects of the complex quality of the sacred, reflected in many traditions, are that it is set apart from ordinary life and experience, cannot be approached outside of a ritual context, and is endowed with power. Paradoxically, it is ambiguous, being either pure or impure, divine or demonic, revered or reviled. Explore the works of major thinkers from a variety of disciplines—including theology, anthropology, sociology, psychology, and religious studies—and explore the many facets of what constitutes the sacred across diverse cultures and different facets of life.

**Grading:** SPS Non-Credit Graded

**Repeatable for additional credit:** Yes

**PHRE1-CE 9124 Human Rights: Relativism and Universalism (2 Credits)**

One of the most important issues of the last 50 years—the expansion of human rights—has been characterized by two conflicting philosophies. Universalism argues that there is one set of truths and that all cultures should have the same system of rights as Western cultures. Relativists argue that traditional cultures and their social values are primary, not abstract, notions of human rights. Explore what major philosophers have to say about this compelling conflict—from Sextus Empiricus to Friedrich Nietzsche, Hannah Arendt, Richard Rorty, and others. Consider the repercussions of this debate in contemporary issues such as the rights of women, religious fundamentalism, and the separation of Church and State.

**Grading:** SPS Non-Credit Graded

**Repeatable for additional credit:** Yes

**PHRE1-CE 9142 Tibetan Meditation: Bringing Meaning to Every Moment (0 Credits)**

Explore ways in which the Mahayana Buddhist concepts of compassion and wisdom, coupled with unique Tibetan meditation techniques, can transform the mind and can serve as the basis for a healthy, happy, and meaningful life. Focus on essential Tibetan meditation techniques designed to calm the mind and to bring meaning to every moment. Included are visualization and breathing techniques; meditation exercises to transform the mind; and a study of the Tibetan practice of taking each occurrence in our daily lives as a basis for mental, physical, and spiritual development. Guided meditation and relaxation exercises are part of each class.

**Grading:** SPS Non-Credit Graded

**Repeatable for additional credit:** Yes

**PHRE1-CE 9144 From Plato to Hobbes: An Introduction to Western Philosophy (0 Credits)**

Trace the development of philosophy's prime directive to understand the world by means of reason by returning to its sources: Plato, Aristotle, Bacon, and Hobbes. Study the battle between faith and reason, which resulted in the Roman suppression (and by the imposition of Christianity) of the Epicureans, Stoics, Sceptics, and Neoplatonists. Echoes of this conflict reverberate in the Middle Ages in the works of Augustine, Maimonides, al-Farabi, Averroes, and Aquinas. This course provides an indispensable background for anyone who has an interest in philosophy or who wishes for a heightened understanding of the historic origin of today's culture wars.

**Grading:** SPS Non-Credit Graded

**Repeatable for additional credit:** Yes

**PHRE1-CE 9147 Modern European Philosophy From Descartes to Derrida (2 Credits)**

Survey European philosophy from the 17th-century scientific revolution to contemporary times. How have the discoveries of the natural and social sciences changed the way in which we perceive the world? Why is Descartes considered the first modern philosopher? Debate the merits of the foundations of modernity as laid out in the works of Descartes, Spinoza, Hume, Voltaire, and other Enlightenment thinkers, including Kant, Hegel, Marx, and Nietzsche. Discuss such 20th-century modernists and postmodernists as Russell, Wittgenstein, Sartre, and Derrida. Texts include Bertrand Russell, *A History of Western Philosophy* and *The European Philosophers From Descartes to Nietzsche*, both edited by Monroe Beardsley.

**Grading:** SPS Non-Credit Graded

**Repeatable for additional credit:** Yes

**PHRE1-CE 9153 East Meets West: Major Thinkers of India and China (1.5 Credits)**

Through an exploration of the development of philosophy in India and China, discover how Eastern philosophy confronts many of the same existential questions found in the West. Beginning with the foundations of Indian thought—the Vedas, Buddhism, and the Bhagavad Gita—the course moves on to study the six orthodox Indian systems, culminating in the Vedanta. Then, turning to China, we explore the texts of Confucius and Mencius and touch upon Taoism and Chinese Buddhism. Discussion includes the contemporary relevance of these traditions and their relevance to the works of scholars who have been influenced by Western philosophy, such as Fung Yulan, Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan, and Wendy Doniger.

**Grading:** SPS Non-Credit Graded

**Repeatable for additional credit:** Yes

**PHRE1-CE 9160 The Nature of Free Will: A Central Human Issue (0 Credits)**

For 2,500 years, philosophers, political theorists, social scientists, and others have debated the religious, ethical, and scientific implications of free will. Can religion be reconciled with ideas of individual responsibility? Does our biological nature determine the majority of our actions? What does it mean to believe we are free? Explore these vital human issues with the insight of great thinkers such as Plato, Aristotle, St. Augustine, Hobbes, Locke, Kant, Nietzsche, and beyond. We focus on the issue of free will from both religious/ethical and scientific/materialist points of view, and explore the nature of free will and moral responsibility in our actions.

**Grading:** SPS Non-Credit Graded

**Repeatable for additional credit:** Yes

**PHRE1-CE 9161 Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit (0 Credits)**

G.W.F. Hegel was the last of the great systematic philosophers, and his monumental system is widely considered the most elegant and comprehensive of all philosophical methods. Not only did Hegel profoundly influence subsequent philosophers as disparate as Marx, Dewey, and Žižek, but he also has enjoyed a renaissance among prominent contemporary analytic philosophers such as John McDowell, Robert Brandom, and Michael Forster. *The Phenomenology of Spirit* is Hegel's seminal work in which he outlines his extraordinary system. Read key sections of that work and discuss it in light of scholarly commentaries and other works by Hegel.

**Grading:** SPS Non-Credit Graded

**Repeatable for additional credit:** Yes

**PHRE1-CE 9162 Essentials of Creative Thinking (2 Credits)**

This course introduces basic concepts of creative thinking; what creative thinking is and is not; how to think creatively; and why creative thinking is necessary academically, personally, and professionally. Topics include generating and gathering ideas; evaluating and refining them; stimulating the imagination; the roles of play, humor, and error in creativity; developing the creative habit; and strategies of innovation, including what can be learned from innovative exemplars such as Leonardo da Vinci, Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Edison, and Steve Jobs. This course features weekly written assignments and regular application of creative thinking principles, tools, and techniques. At least one group project is required.

**Grading:** SPS Non-Credit Graded

**Repeatable for additional credit:** Yes

**PHRE1-CE 9163 Essentials of Critical Thinking (2 Credits)**

Understand the basic concepts of critical thinking; what it is and is not; how to think critically; and why critical thinking is necessary academically, personally, and professionally. Topics include barriers to thinking and ways of overcoming them; observation and inference; perception, knowledge, and error; the roles of doubt, uncertainty, and ambiguity in knowledge acquisition; principles of logic and sound reasoning; careful reasoning using evidence, causality, authority, and analogy; and critical thinking tools and techniques. The course includes weekly written assignments and regular application of critical thinking principles, tools, and techniques.

**Grading:** SPS Non-Credit Graded

**Repeatable for additional credit:** Yes

**PHRE1-CE 9164 Jewish Philosophy for a Secular Age (0 Credits)**

Judaism is often said to embrace four different approaches and textual traditions: the biblical, the rabbinic, the mystical, and the philosophical. The philosophical tradition, because of its reliance on common human reason and experience, may speak most engagingly to a secular age. Examine topics addressed by Jewish philosophers across the ages, which do not necessarily presuppose a personal, providential deity as presented in the Bible. Topics include suffering, peoplehood, statehood, ethics, the relevance of history, creation, revelation, and the spiritual life. Philosophers range from the biblical Ecclesiastes to medieval Maimonides to such modern thinkers as Franz Rosenzweig and Martin Buber.

**Grading:** SPS Non-Credit Graded

**Repeatable for additional credit:** Yes

**PHRE1-CE 9612 From Apocalypse to Zombie: The End of the World in Religion, History, and Culture (0 Credits)**

Is this the end? This question has haunted humanity for millennia. From Nostradamus to World War Z, religion, art, and popular culture have long manifested our enduring fascination with, anxiety about, and even hope for the end of the world. Explore the historical, religious, and social forces that have shaped conceptions of the end of time; what scholars call eschatology; from the ancient world to modern day. Beginning with the apocalyptic literature of early Judaism and Christianity, we will move forward to medieval doomsday oracles tied to the first millennium, the rise of Islam, and the black death. We will examine the hellish landscapes of Hieronymus Bosch, the prophecies of Nostradamus, the strange religious visions of Christopher Columbus, and the cataclysmic effects of European colonization on indigenous peoples. Finally, we will explore modern apocalyptic terrors; nuclear war, environmental disasters, pandemics, and even zombies; through a sampling of contemporary media and literature, such as Doctor Strangelove, World War Z, The Omen, Margaret Atwood's Oryx and Crake, and even TV's Doomsday Preppers.

**Grading:** SPS Non-Credit Graded

**Repeatable for additional credit:** Yes

**PHRE1-CE 9730 Sin and Sex in the Biblical World (1 Credit)**

Sex-determined biological difference, gender difference, differences in sexual orientation, and societal beliefs about appropriate and inappropriate sexual behavior have been hot-button issues since biblical times. This was especially true in the ancient Near East, where power lay in the hands of heterosexual males, whose preferences and behaviors were reflected in the laws of the time. Examine human relationships in the Bible and in the ancient world, including the roots of gender roles, power, forbidden sexuality, and consequences for deviation. Prior to the first class session, enrolled students will be sent a digital PDF of text selections to be discussed; writings that deal with human life in all of its sexual dimensions: sensual, sordid, and sublime.

**Grading:** SPS Non-Credit Graded

**Repeatable for additional credit:** Yes

**PHRE1-CE 9735 Crime and Punishment in the Ancient Near East (1 Credit)**

In the ancient Near East, the notion of law was inseparable and virtually indistinguishable from the judicial process. Surprisingly, most legal texts from this time have many similarities both in style and content. This class will compare and contrast the major bodies of legal rules, both criminal and civil, in the ancient Near East: the Laws of Ur-Nammu (21st century BCE); the Laws of Lipit-Ishtar (c. 1950 BCE); the Laws of Eshnunna (c. 1800 BCE); the Code of Hammurabi (c. 1792-1750 BCE); the Hittite laws (c. 1400-1300 BCE); the Assyrian Laws (c. 1400-1100 BCE); and Biblical Law (c. 900-700 BCE). This course will cover laws pertaining to marriage, including bride price, adultery, and divorce; slaves and servants; forbidden sexual relationships; criminal law, including theft, murder, rape, and kidnapping; personal injury and negligence; prohibitions against sorcery; false witness; honesty in dealing with others; inheritance; obligations of a husband to all his wives (plural); and more. We will also discuss common punishments, both corporal and financial.

**Grading:** SPS Non-Credit Graded

**Repeatable for additional credit:** Yes

**PHRE1-CE 9994 Plato's Republic (2 Credits)**

A work of monumental scope and significance, *The Republic* presents Plato's conception of the ideal polis, or city-state. Unified around the theme of justice, it explores issues concerning society, politics, psychology, education, gender, art, and metaphysics. It also contains an incisive account of his famous theory of Forms or Ideas. The supreme product of Plato's mature years, it contains virtually the entire universe of Plato's philosophy. Written in ancient Greece during a time of major political upheaval, Plato's *Republic* also holds special significance for today's world: it compels us to grapple with the question of how—considering the economic, social, and political challenges of globalization—our society ought to be constituted and governed.

**Grading:** SPS Non-Credit Graded

**Repeatable for additional credit:** Yes

**PHRE1-CE 9995 The World of Michel Foucault (1 Credit)**

Many of today's most burning social issues were presaged by French social historian and philosopher Michel Foucault: the domination of nature, Internet surveillance, the implanting of technology in human bodies, the move toward a "cashless" society, the construction of identity on Facebook, the Kindle, the architecture of finance and memory as built into the new World Trade Center, and the mass proliferation of digital cameras. Explore Foucault's writing to better understand the world we now live in.

**Grading:** SPS Non-Credit Graded

**Repeatable for additional credit:** Yes