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# PHILOSOPHY

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Professor: William Beardsley (on leave fall 2018); Ariela Tubert

Associate Professor: Shen-yi Liao (on leave spring 2019); Justin Tiehen,  
*Chair*

Assistant Professor: Sara Protasi

Visiting Assistant Professor: James Garrison

## About the Department

Philosophy is the systematic consideration of timeless and timely questions of human concern. *What is it to be human? What is real? How should we live? What can we know? What is our moral responsibility toward future generations impacted by climate change? Could a machine think?* Such timeless philosophical questions have not only generated the academic disciplines that comprise a liberal arts education, but continue to interrogate and inform their intellectual foundations. *How does race structure social reality? How does gender influence the transmission of knowledge? What is our moral responsibility toward future generations impacted by climate change? Could a machine think?* Such timely philosophical questions apply the same systematicity to conditions that confront us today so that we can better understand what the world is, who we are, and what we should do.

The timeless and timely questions of philosophy can be very roughly divided into two categories. Questions regarding knowledge and reality systematically consider the relation between ourselves and the world. Questions within value theory systematically consider what matters to us and how values inform our judgments, feelings, actions, and relationships. Finally, the study of history and traditions of philosophy reveals responses to these questions across cultures and eras. The pursuit of philosophy allows us to consider timeless and timely questions of human concern so that we can better provide answers to them for our place and our time.

The Philosophy Department strives to introduce students to influential historical and vibrant contemporary philosophical work. In so doing the Department stresses certain intellectual values traditionally associated with the discipline: breadth of outlook, rigorous argument, imagination, consistency, systematicity, and the dialectical interplay of different minds. It thereby contributes to the liberal arts education of all students taking its courses, helping students better understand how the world is, who they are, and what they should do. At the same time, it provides majors with the basis for graduate study in philosophy as well as related fields, such as linguistics, psychology, politics, and religion. The Department also provides its majors with a springboard for training in a variety of professional fields, such as law, bioethics, environmental policy, education, social work, technology, international affairs, and business.

Students completing the major in Philosophy will have gained:

1. The ability to carefully engage in close reading of demanding texts;
2. The ability to produce precise and carefully structured writing;
3. The ability to participate extensively in reasoned discussion;
4. The ability to make cogent and carefully constructed oral presentations;
5. Familiarity with and an appreciation of a range of contemporary philosophical texts, theories and methods;
6. Familiarity with and an appreciation of a range of texts and theories drawn from the history of philosophy;
7. The ability to construct sustained arguments and analyze and criticize the arguments of others;
8. The ability to develop and defend their own philosophical position and to engage in sustained and critical reflection on their own values and beliefs;

9. The ability to reflect meaningfully on themselves, others and the world.

Students who major in the department's program undertake, and succeed in, a variety of endeavors upon graduating. Those who wish to do graduate work are well prepared for it. Others pursue professional programs in such fields as law, education, media studies, business, public administration, divinity, and even medicine and public health. Without further education, many Philosophy graduates add their own energy and good sense to the abilities developed in them by the study of philosophy, and find rewarding positions in business, in the arts, in journalism, technology, and in government. Virtually any career that requires clear thinking, intellectual creativity, good command of language, and a perspective on competing values and systems of belief provides opportunities for a graduate in Philosophy. But equally important is the value of an education that develops a reflective understanding of ourselves, and of our experience of the world and of others.

## General Requirements for the Major or Minor

General university degree requirements stipulate that 1) at least four units of the major or three units of the minor be taken in residence at Puget Sound; 2) students earn a GPA of 2.0 in courses taken for the major or the minor; and 3) all courses taken for a major or minor must be taken for graded credit. Any exceptions to these stipulations are indicated in the major and minor degree requirements listed below.

## Requirements for the Major

A major in Philosophy consists of the following:

1. At least ten units in Philosophy, excluding courses numbered 480 or above. At most two of these ten units can be satisfied with courses numbered 199 or below.
2. Level Requirements:
  - A. Intermediate Level. Three of the following courses: 210 Ancient Greek Philosophy; 220 17th and 18th Century Philosophy; 230 Philosophy of Mind; 240 Formal Logic; 250 Moral Philosophy.
  - B. Advanced Level. At least four courses numbered 300–399. At least two of these four courses must be completed on campus.
  - C. Specialist Level. At least one of the following courses: 410 Topics in History and Traditions; 430 Topics in Knowledge and Reality; 450 Topics in Value Theory.  
Note: Students can take one additional course at the Specialist Level (numbered 410-450) in lieu of one course at the Advanced Level (numbered 300-399).
3. Area Requirements:
  - A. History and Traditions. At least two of the following courses: 210 Ancient Philosophy; 220 17th and 18th Century Philosophy; 310 Aristotle; 311 Classical Chinese Philosophy; 312 Latin American Philosophy; 320 British Empiricism; 323 Kant; 325 19th Century Philosophy.
  - B. Knowledge and Reality. At least two of the following courses: 230 Philosophy of Mind; 240 Logic; 330 Epistemology; 331 Metaphysics; 332 Philosophy of Science; 333 Philosophy of Emotions; 336 Philosophy of Language.
  - C. Value Theory. At least two of the following courses: 250 Moral Philosophy; 285 Environmental Ethics; 292 Bioethics; 350 Metaethics; 353 Philosophy of Film and Performing Arts; 360 Aesthetics; 370 Social and Political Philosophy; 378 Philosophy of Law; 389 Race and Philosophy; 390 Gender and Philosophy.

## Requirements for the Minor

A Minor in Philosophy consists of the following:

1. At least five units in Philosophy, excluding courses numbered 480 or above. At most one of these units can be satisfied with a course numbered 199 or below.
2. At least two of the following courses at the **Intermediate** level: 210 Ancient Greek Philosophy; 220 17th and 18th Century Philosophy; 230 Philosophy of Mind; 240 Logic; 250 Moral Philosophy.
3. At least two courses at the Advanced and Specialist levels, numbered 300–479. At least one of these two courses must be completed on campus.

### Notes

1. Only two courses may be used simultaneously to satisfy core curriculum and Philosophy major or minor requirements.
2. Intermediate Level requirements should be completed by the end of the junior year.
3. Courses taken more than six years ago will be accepted or rejected for the minor by the Philosophy Department on a case-by-case basis.

## Course Offerings

Unless otherwise specified, each course carries 1 unit of credit and is offered at least once each academic year. Please see “Frequency of Course Offerings” in this Bulletin.

**Seminars in Scholarly Inquiry.** See *Seminars in Scholarly Inquiry in the Core Curriculum* section of this Bulletin for course descriptions (page 10).

**SSI1/SSI2 111 Life, Death, and Meaning**

**SSI1/SSI2 128 The Philosophy and Science of Human Nature**

### Other courses offered by Philosophy Department faculty

**CONN 393 The Cognitive Foundations of Morality and Religion**

Satisfies the Connections core requirement.

**LAS 399 Latin American Travel Seminar**

Satisfies the Connections core requirement.

**STS 333 Evolution and Ethics**

Satisfies the Connections core requirement.

**101 Introduction to Philosophy** Representative philosophical topics, such as mind and body, the grounds of knowledge, the existence of God, moral obligation, political equality, and human freedom, are discussed in connection with contemporary philosophers and figures in the history of philosophy. *Satisfies the Humanistic Approaches core requirement.*

**102 Freedom and the Self** This course covers a range of philosophical problems centering on issues of personhood and rational agency. Readings are drawn from both classic and contemporary sources and address such topics as freedom of the will, personal identity, knowledge of the self, weakness of will and self-deception. *Offered frequently.*

**103 Philosophy of Religion** The course assesses the reasonableness of various forms of religious belief and of irreligion. Noted historical and contemporary authors are read. Students attempt to develop personal views on the truth of religion and its place in life. *Offered occasionally.*

**104 Existentialism** Existentialism describes an influential set of views that gained prominence in Europe following World War II, stressing radical human freedom and possibility, as well as concomitant responsibility and anxiety, in a world bereft of transcendent significance. This course

examines the nineteenth-century philosophical roots of such views, their leading twentieth-century philosophical and theological expression, and a few of their most compelling incarnations in literature. *Offered frequently.*

**106 Language, Knowledge, and Power** This course investigates the ways in which power relations—such as racism, sexism, and ableism—structure two significant areas of individual and collective behavior: language and knowledge. It shows the necessity of philosophy in critical engagement with the world by connecting social phenomena with social scientific theories. It also shows philosophy’s strength in making fundamental inquiries and bridging academic disciplines by drawing on diverse types of empirical evidence. *Satisfies Social Scientific Approaches core requirement. Satisfies Knowledge, Identity, and Power graduation requirement.*

**105 Neuroethics and Human Enhancement** This course examines the ethical, political, and philosophical questions raised by some of the new forms of human enhancement made available by breakthroughs in science and technology, from fields like neuroscience and genetic engineering. For example: Should parents be allowed to use genetic screening or modification to create “designer children,” either for the purpose of avoiding diseases and other ailments or to select desired traits such as their child’s intelligence, athletic ability, or good looks? Should we pursue immortality or, failing that, radically extended lifespans? Is there any important ethical difference between artificial and natural intelligence, and will the former soon surpass the latter? What justification is there, if any, for regarding the use of steroids in athletics as a form of cheating while regarding the use of weight training regimens as fair game? Is the goal of human enhancement compatible with the pursuit of social equality? What constitutes the self, as opposed to the tools or pieces of technology that a self uses?

**210 Ancient Greek Philosophy** A survey of the origins of Western philosophy in Ancient Greece, beginning with the Presocratics and covering Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, and Hellenistic philosophy. In this course students are introduced to the answers some of the most influential ancient philosophers have given to the question: “How can we be happy?” In addition to learning what these philosophers thought, students are stimulated to think about these questions from their own modern perspective, and reflect on the extent to which their modern viewpoint differs. Finally, but not least importantly, students learn to read and interpret texts that were written millennia ago. In the process, they encounter argumentative techniques that are still as current as the theses defended through them. *Satisfies the Humanistic Approaches core requirement.*

**220 17th- and 18th-Century Philosophy** European philosophers of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries struggled to make sense of ordinary perceptual experience in light of the emerging mathematical physics that culminated in Newton. This new physics presented a picture of the world according to which things in space and time are not as they appear to the senses, and thus overturned the Aristotelian worldview endorsed by the Church since the Middle Ages. The philosophical issues of this period concern the nature of knowledge of the world and how it is acquired. Also included are various accounts of the mind and of its intellectual and sensory capacities.

**230 Philosophy of Mind** This course introduces central issues in the philosophy of mind, especially the relation between mind and body—the brain, in particular—and the nature of consciousness. Other topics may include the possibility of artificial intelligence, the nature of psychological explanation, self-knowledge, psychopathology and psychopharmacology, psychoanalysis, and the concept of a person. Course materials

reflect scientific developments in such fields as psychology, neurobiology, medicine, linguistics, and computer engineering.

**240 Formal Logic** A study of the principles and techniques of deductive logic, taking the formal approach that prevails in contemporary practice. Arguments are paraphrased in a formal language and elements of that language are interpreted by being assigned certain simple mathematical structures. Topics include the concepts of consistency, logical consequence, and proof; the logic of truth-functions, quantifiers, and identity; and an introductory consideration of theorems about the formal language and their interpretations themselves (what is called metalogic). The nature of logic, its role in reasoning, and its epistemological standing are considered philosophically. *Satisfies the Mathematical Approaches core requirement.*

**250 Moral Philosophy** This course examines a number of ethical theories - theories attempting to provide a systematic account of our beliefs about what is right and wrong, good and bad. The course examines a range of answers to questions like the following: What makes for a good life? What, if anything, is of value? What does morality require? Should we care about moral requirements and, if so, why? Is there a connection between morality and freedom? In addition to a careful study of various classic views, we will consider recent defenses and critiques of these views.

**285 Environmental Ethics** This course focuses on ethical issues that arise in the context of human relationships to nature and to non-human living things. The course explores questions such as the following: What is nature? Is nature intrinsically valuable? Should wilderness be preserved? What is biodiversity and should it be promoted? What are our moral obligations to non-human animals and to future generations? What ethical considerations arise in facing global poverty and overpopulation? *Offered frequently.*

**292 Basics of Bioethics** This course is an examination of Western philosophical understandings of moral issues brought on by advances in health care, science and technology. In this course, students will learn the "Principles approach" to bioethics, as well as other ethical approaches to the difficult moral issues raised by contemporary medical science and its clinical applications. *Cross-listed as BIOE 292. Students may not receive credit for both BIOE/PHIL 292 and BIOE/REL 292. Offered frequently.*

**310 Aristotle** This course is a moderately comprehensive and systematic treatment of Aristotle, including method, metaphysics, psychology, ethics, and politics. It considers Aristotle's criticism of Plato's theory of forms and his own views about what is real, the relation of form and matter, the nature of the soul, the highest human good, and the relation of the individual and the community. *Offered frequently.*

**311 Classical Chinese Philosophy** This course introduces students to influential philosophical questions in early Chinese thought, such as ones concerning human nature and living the good life. And it exposes students to the philosophical ideas of thinkers such as Kongzi (Confucius), Laozi (the fictitious author of Daodejing), Mozi, Zhuangzi, Mengzi (Mencius), Xunzi, and Han Feizi. It is both a course in history of philosophy and a course in comparative philosophy. Hence, students are expected to both develop skills for making historically-informed interpretations of these thinkers' responses to the influential philosophical questions, and to consider their ideas' relevance to practical and philosophical discourses today. (This course does not assume any background in philosophy or in Sinitic languages.) *Offered frequently.*

**312 Latin American Philosophy** This course introduces students to philosophy in Latin America – broadly construed to include Indigenous

philosophy and Latinx philosophy in the United States. The course is especially focused on issues of identity in Latin American Philosophy, to include: 1) Latin American philosophers' self-conscious discussion about whether there is such a thing as a Latin American Philosophy; 2) alternative conceptions of self, other, and community in selected indigenous conceptions of the world; 3) issues of gender, race, and identity in Latin American anti-colonial and independence philosophy, liberation philosophy, and Latinx philosophy in the United States.

**320 British Empiricism** This seminar examines the metaphysical and epistemological theories of the British Empiricists of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries through close readings of Locke's *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, Berkeley's *The Principles of Human Knowledge*, and Hume's *A Treatise of Human Nature*. It considers such issues as realism, idealism and skepticism, the nature and scope of scientific knowledge, the nature of the self and self-knowledge, and personal identity. Special consideration is paid to the development of empiricism in the context of scientific and religious controversies in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Britain. Readings in recent secondary literature are also required. *Offered occasionally.*

**323 Kant** This course consists of a careful reading of Kant's Critique of Pure Reason, designed to provide a thorough introduction to the epistemological aspect of Kant's critical philosophy. Philosophical issues discussed include the nature of the human mind, the possibility and extent of human knowledge, the reality of space and time, the basis of mathematics and logic, self and personal identity, the foundations of natural science, matter and substance, force and causation, the origin and composition of the universe, freedom of the will, the existence and properties of God, teleology, and the basis of morality. *Offered occasionally.*

**325 19th-Century Philosophy** This course is an introduction to philosophical systems of Hegel, Feuerbach, Marx, J.S. Mill, Kierkegaard, and Nietzsche. Topics include the nature of history and historical change, the extent of human freedom, the relation between individuals and their cultures, the historical and psychological importance of religious, moral, and philosophical consciousness, and the nature of truth. *Offered frequently.*

**330 Epistemology** Epistemology, otherwise known as the theory of knowledge, addresses issues about the nature of knowledge, justification, and truth, issues that arise from questions such as "How do you know?" and "Can you be sure?" It has been an especially lively area of philosophy in English in recent decades; many currents in the humanities appeal to epistemological notions—such currents as post-modernism, relativism, social constructionism, feminism, and situated knowing. This course answers both developments. It introduces such disciplinary concerns as foundationalism, virtue epistemology, internalism and externalism, naturalism, reliabilism, and the Gettier problem. It also engages such wider concerns as relativism about truth and reason and the role of social institutions and social structures, power and privilege, in constituting knowledge.

**331 Metaphysics** This course is a survey of some of the central issues in contemporary metaphysics, the area of philosophy devoted to understanding the fundamental level of reality. Topics of the course may include existence and nonexistence, identity, personal identity, possibility and necessity, time and persistence, realism and antirealism, and free will. Featured philosophers may include W.V.O. Quine, Saul Kripke, David Lewis, Judith Jarvis Thomson, and Derek Parfit. *Offered frequently.*

**332 Philosophy of Science** This course consists of a philosophical examination of science. The course examines attempts to describe

what is distinctive about science, including views concerning scientific methodology. The course also examines the character of scientific change, asking how one should understand the history of science. This examination leads to a discussion of the nature of scientific knowledge, including whether scientific entities should be considered real and what role values play in the development of science. Issues that arise from particular sciences also may be discussed. *Prerequisite: one previous course in Philosophy or junior standing with a major in Biology, Chemistry, Geology, Natural Science, Physics, or Science, Technology, and Society. Offered frequently.*

**333 Philosophy of Emotions** Anger, fear, joy, sadness, disgust, surprise, envy, pride, jealousy, love, grief... without emotions our experience of the world would be flat and grey, void of the upheavals, accelerations, and turns that make the journey of life so exciting. But what are emotions? What kind of mental state are they? Are there universal emotions, or are all emotions culturally-relative? What does it mean to feel fear—as opposed to think—that something is scary? How can we know that someone is envious? Is disgust always bad? Can joy be inappropriate? In this course students explore these and many other questions concerning the metaphysics, epistemology, phenomenology, value, and rationality of emotions. Readings are drawn from a variety of sources: classical philosophical texts, contemporary articles in philosophy and psychology, popular culture, and literature. *Offered frequently.*

**336 Philosophy of Language** Philosophers have long regarded language as the essential intermediary between thought and the world. Accordingly, this course studies philosophically important theories about language and more general philosophical conclusions drawn from considerations about language. Central topics concern meaning, reference, inference, existence, and truth. In addition to discursive language, some attention is devoted to systems of notation and of pictorial representation. *Offered occasionally.*

**350 Metaethics** This course is concerned with the study of epistemological, metaphysical, and psychological issues related to ethics. The course focuses on questions like the following: Are moral judgments objective or subjective? Are they relative to the speaker or to the community of the speaker? Are there moral facts? If so, what kind of facts are they (e.g., natural, non-natural, psychological)? What motivates moral action (is it reason, desire, a combination)? What is the relationship between freedom and moral responsibility? Readings are drawn primarily from contemporary authors. *Offered frequently.*

**353 Philosophy of Film and Performing Arts** This course surveys some of the fundamental philosophical questions that arise from the performing arts in general, and cinema in particular. What is a film? What does it have in common and how does it differ from other performing arts? How do these in turn differ from the other arts? What challenges do they pose to the traditional understanding of art? How do cinema and television differ? Other topics covered may include: the problem of identifying authorship in a collective enterprise such as a film or a theater production; the reasons and nature of our emotional engagement with movies or plays; the relation between film and society. *Offered frequently.*

**360 Aesthetics** This course is a critical examination of the problems that arise in trying to understand the creation, nature, interpretation, evaluation, and appreciation of works of art. Art is viewed in its relation to other aspects of culture such as morality, economics, and ecology. A variety of classical and contemporary perspectives are examined. *Offered occasionally.*

**370 Social and Political Philosophy** This course explores some of the central questions in Social and Political Philosophy as well as some well-developed attempts to answer these questions: What makes a government legitimate? What should the goal of government be? Is it to maximize justice, to maximize liberty, to provide common defense, or something else? What is justice? What is liberty? Readings are drawn from prominent historical and contemporary thinkers like Plato, Aristotle, Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau, Marx, Mill, Rawls, Nozick, Cohen, Okin. *Offered occasionally.*

**378 Philosophy of Law** This course is concerned with the nature of law and the relationship between law and morality. The course is centered on questions like the following: What is the connection between law and morality? Is it morally wrong to break the law? Is breaking the law sometimes morally permissible or even morally required? Should morality be legally enforced? To what extent, if at all, should legal decisions be influenced by moral beliefs? What are the relationships between legal, constitutional, moral, and political rights? How can legal punishment be morally justified? While pursuing answers to these questions through the work of leading legal philosophers, students read a number of actual court cases and discuss specific issues like hate speech, homosexuality, and capital punishment, among others. Cross-listed as PG 348. *Prerequisite: one previous course in philosophy or one course in Political Theory (PG 104, PG 340-348). Offered frequently.*

**389 Race and Philosophy** The construct of race is omnipresent in the way people think, the way society is structured, and even in the materials that people use. Despite its omnipresence, race remains difficult to discuss, if it is discussed at all, because of its theoretical complexity, contested social history, and emotional triggers. This course challenges students to engage in courageous conversations about the nature of race and its relations to mind, language, and aesthetics. Students will confront difficult questions such as: What is race? How does race influence human cognition? How does race structure human communication? How does race shape human aesthetic preferences and artistic endeavors? Students use tools developed in different areas of philosophy and its cognate disciplines to construct answers to these difficult questions about race. At the same time, students learn that these difficult questions about race can challenge and extend common conceptions of analytic philosophy. *Satisfies the Knowledge, Identity and Power graduation requirement. Offered frequently.*

**390 Gender and Philosophy** This course is a study of a number of philosophical and political questions related to gender and with the relation between these two types of questions. The course will be concerned first, with metaphysical issues concerning gender: What is gender? How many genders are there? Is there an essence of womanhood or manhood that goes beyond certain physical characteristics? Are 'woman' and 'man' purely natural categories or are they to some extent socially constructed? Is gender a social/political concept? Second, with epistemological issues that relate to gender difference: Do women, for example, see the world differently from men? What kind of implications does this have for scientific and philosophical knowledge? Are there, for example, specifically female ways of thinking or reasoning? If so, to what extent are they marginalized? Do gender related values or political aims affect scientific knowledge? Finally, with ethical issues related to gender: What is gender oppression? What is sexism and heterosexism? Granted that everyone has an equal right to flourishing regardless of gender, is a woman's flourishing, for example, different from a man's? Are there specifically gendered roles for men and women? To what extent are we culturally biased when we think that women or those who don't conform to gender norms living in other cultures are oppressed?

*Crosslisted as PG 390. Satisfies the Knowledge, Identity, and Power graduation requirement. Offered occasionally.*

**410 Topics in History and Traditions** Conducted as an advanced seminar, the course addresses topics from the history of philosophy, typically concentrating on a major philosopher or philosophical movement. Each student writes and presents a substantial seminar paper related to the course. Representative course topics include Plato, the Stoics, Ancient and Modern Skepticism, Aquinas, Rationalism, Hume, Idealism, Nietzsche, the Pragmatists, and Russell and Wittgenstein. *Prerequisite: Two courses from PHIL 210, 220, 310, 311, 312, 320, 323, and 325. May be repeated for credit with permission of instructor. Offered frequently.*

**430 Topics in Knowledge and Reality** Conducted as an advanced seminar, the course addresses topics from metaphysics and epistemology, understood to include the philosophy of mind. Each student writes and presents a substantial seminar paper related to the course. Representative course topics include human freedom and the causal order, conceivability and possibility, number and other abstractions, the infinite, a priori knowledge, relativism and truth, knowledge of the self, intentionality, mental causation, and the nature of consciousness. *Prerequisite: Two courses from PHIL 230, 240, 330, 331, 332, 333, and 336. May be repeated for credit with permission of instructor. Offered frequently.*

**450 Topics in Value Theory** Conducted as an advanced seminar, the course addresses topics from value theory, understood to include ethics, political philosophy, aesthetics, and philosophy of religion. Each student writes and presents a substantial seminar paper related to the course. Representative course topics include sources of normativity, virtues of character and moral rules, personal identity and moral responsibility, objectivity and moral relativism, the role of reason in ethics, critical theory, ethics and psychoanalysis, and religious commitment and civil liberties. *Prerequisite: Two courses from PHIL 250, 285, 292, 350, 353, 360, 370, 378, 389, and 390. May be repeated for credit with permission of instructor. Offered frequently.*

**499 Ethics Bowl** 0.25 activity unit This course provides students with a unique opportunity to practice applying ethical theories to controversial ethical problems. An Ethics Bowl is a collaborative yet competitive event in which teams analyze a series of wide-ranging ethical dilemmas. Throughout the semester, students research and discuss case studies dealing with complex ethical issues in a number of practical contexts and possibly compete in an Ethics Bowl. Cases concern ethical problems on wide ranging topics, such as personal relationships (e.g. dating, friendship), professional ethics (e.g. cases in engineering, law, medicine), social and political ethics (e.g. free speech, gun control, health care, discrimination), technology (e.g. autonomous cars, carebots), and global issues (e.g. the impact of globalization, global warming, biodiversity). *Pass/fail grading only.*