

Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies

Dr. Fred Downing, Head
Room 1204, Ashley Hall

The Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies offers two programs of study that lead to a Bachelor of Arts with a major in philosophy and religious studies. Students may emphasize either a philosophy track or religious studies track. The department also offers minors in philosophy, religious studies, and professional and applied ethics. A major with the dual tracks of philosophy and religious studies challenges students to think critically and express themselves effectively. Students will develop an appreciation for lifelong learning and the richness of culture and intellectual history. On either track, students will find a solid foundation to build a career in professions that demand critical thinking and conceptual flexibility in interacting with diverse populations.

Students who take the philosophy track will study a broad spectrum of ideas, thinkers, issues, and arguments. The philosophy track addresses key questions from a variety of areas: the history of philosophy, reasoning and argumentation, ethics, philosophy of science, philosophy of mind, social and political theory, and aesthetics.

Students who take the religious studies track will investigate the diversity of religious thought and practice from multicultural perspectives. These students explore the influence of religious traditions in shaping values, norms, laws, and public policies in societies worldwide. Regular course offerings in Hinduism, Buddhism, Judaism, Christianity, Islam, and indigenous traditions are integral to our curriculum. Religious studies courses encourage multiple disciplinary approaches toward religious expression, whether in the fine arts, literature, politics, social conflict, language, history, or gender studies.

- Bachelor of Arts with a major in Philosophy and Religious Studies (<http://catalog.valdosta.edu/archive/2021-2022/undergraduate/academic-programs/humanities-social-sciences/philosophy-religious-studies/ba-philosophy-religious-studies/>)
- Minor in Philosophy (<http://catalog.valdosta.edu/archive/2021-2022/undergraduate/academic-programs/humanities-social-sciences/philosophy-religious-studies/minor-philosophy/>)
- Minor in Religious Studies (<http://catalog.valdosta.edu/archive/2021-2022/undergraduate/academic-programs/humanities-social-sciences/philosophy-religious-studies/minor-religious-studies/>)
- Minor in Professional and Applied Ethics (<http://catalog.valdosta.edu/archive/2021-2022/undergraduate/academic-programs/humanities-social-sciences/philosophy-religious-studies/minor-professional-applied-ethics/>)

Philosophy

PHIL 1001. Introduction to Philosophy. 3 Hours.

Introduction to the central issues, questions, and theories of Western Philosophy. Topics covered include logic and critical thinking; religion; knowledge and skepticism; philosophy of mind; freedom and determinism; and ethics. Students are expected to engage in philosophical discussion based on primary and secondary texts. For more information on this institution's eCore courses, please see <http://www.valdosta.edu/ecore/>.

PHIL 2010. Fundamentals of Philosophy. 3 Hours.

An introduction to the principal problems with which philosophy is concerned: methods of inquiry; principles of critical reasoning; analysis of value systems; appraisals and analysis of basic beliefs and attitudes. Emphasis is on the contribution of important movements and major philosophers and on the relevance of philosophy to religious, political, social, ethical, and/or scientific issues.

PHIL 2010H. Honors Fundamentals of Philosophy. 3 Hours.

An introduction to the principal problems with which philosophy is concerned: methods of inquiry; principles of critical reasoning; analysis of values and value systems; appraisals and analysis of basic beliefs and attitudes, taught in an enriched, discussion-oriented environment. Emphasis is on the contribution of important movements and major philosophers and on the relevance of philosophy to religions, political, social, ethical, and/or scientific issues.

PHIL 2020. Principles of Logic and Argumentation. 3 Hours.

An introduction to the principles of logic and the nature of argumentation. Attention is given to language analysis, fallacies of reasoning, deductive and inductive procedures, subjective factors of reasoning and scientific method. Emphasis is on the practical application of basic principles to the analysis of ethical, political, and legal arguments and theories.

PHIL 2020H. Honors Principles of Logic and Argumentation. 3 Hours.

An introduction to the principles of logic and the nature of argumentation, taught in a discussion-oriented environment emphasizing reasoned discourse. Attention is given to language analysis, fallacies of reasoning, deductive and inductive procedures, subjective factors of reasoning and scientific method. Emphasis is on the practical application of basic principles to the analysis of ethical, political, and legal arguments and theories.

PHIL 2030. Ethics and Contemporary Society. 3 Hours.

An introduction to the philosophical study of morality, including the theory of right and wrong behavior, the theory of value, and the theory of virtue.

PHIL 3030. African to African American Philosophy and Religious Studies. 3 Hours.

Also offered as PHIL 3030, REL 3030, and NAIS 3030. An examination of philosophies and religious traditions which begin in Africa and move through the Caribbean into the Americas. The course emphasizes ontological and epistemological themes that begin in Africa and cross the Atlantic as well as Indigenous African influences in the philosophies and religions of the Caribbean and the Americas.

PHIL 3060. History of Ancient Philosophy. 3 Hours.

A historical survey of philosophy of the ancient period, including Greek, Roman and other traditions.

PHIL 3070. History of Medieval Philosophy. 3 Hours.

A historical survey of philosophy of the medieval period.

PHIL 3080. History of Early Modern Philosophy. 3 Hours.

A historical survey of philosophy of the early modern period, ranging from the 16th to the 18th centuries A.C.E.

PHIL 3090. History of Late Modern Philosophy. 3 Hours.

A historical survey of philosophy of the late modern period, ranging from the 19th to the 20th centuries A.C.E.

PHIL 3100. Ethics and Health Care. 3 Hours.

A study of ethical issues in health care delivery, with special emphasis on abortion, euthanasia, paternalism, and autonomy, confidentiality, medical experimentation and informed consent, allocation of scarce resources, and the right to health care.

PHIL 3110. Aesthetics. 3 Hours.

A study of the nature of art and theories of value, with special attention to the definition of "art", what we mean by "having aesthetic taste", what "creativity" is, and how visual arts, music, poetry, and scientific images and models relate to issues in ethics, human emotions, and our social/political context.

PHIL 3120. Ethical Theory. 3 Hours.

An introduction to ethical theory, with special emphasis on survey of classical theorists and on the study of theoretical debates in normative ethics.

PHIL 3130. Social and Political Philosophy. 3 Hours.

An introduction to social theory and practice, with special emphasis on survey of classical theories and the study of practical policy issues.

PHIL 3140. Ethics and Law. 3 Hours.

A study of ethical issues in law and society, with special emphasis on the nature of law and legal reasoning, of responsibility and punishment, constitutional adjudication, procedural justice, the limits of liberty, and civil disobedience.

PHIL 3150. Ethics and Business. 3 Hours.

A study of ethical issues in business and society, with special emphasis on corporate responsibility, regulation of business, and the protection of workers, consumers and the environment.

PHIL 3160. Ethics and Media. 3 Hours.

A study of ethical issues in the media, with special emphasis on the pursuit of news, advertising, media lobbying, terrorism and the media, the reporter and personal ethics, freedom of the press, and ethics and the Internet.

PHIL 3170. Ethics and Sport. 3 Hours.

A study of ethical issues in sport and society, with special emphasis on issues such as contest and competition, commercialization of sport, cheating, drug use, violence, gender, and racial discrimination.

PHIL 3180. Ethics and the Environment. 3 Hours.

A study of ethical issues in our interaction with the environment, with special emphasis on the defining of an environmental ethic and on specific issues such as local and global environmental case studies, deep ecology, ecofeminism, the history of the land ethic and its refinements, international governmental and non-governmental policies, and the protection of endangered species and habitats.

PHIL 3190. Ethics and the Social Sciences. 3 Hours.

A study of ethical issues in the social sciences, with special emphasis on issues such as human and animal experimentation, counseling, behavior control, punishment, psychological and sociological determination, and gender and racial discrimination.

PHIL 3200. Philosophy of Science. 3 Hours.

A study of philosophical problems and issues in science, including theories of explanation, scientific method, implications of science practice on society.

PHIL 3210. Ethics and Technology. 3 Hours.

A study of ethical issues in technology and society, with emphasis on developing a philosophy of technology and on issues such as automation, artificial intelligence, nuclear technologies, and the impact of new technologies on existing social structures.

PHIL 3220. Cosmology. 3 Hours.

A scientific and philosophical study of our perception of the universe, including the world views of Ptolemy, Copernicus, and Einstein.

PHIL 3230. Philosophy of Mind. 3 Hours.

A study and analysis of main issues in philosophical psychology and cognitive science, including the nature of the mental, models of thought and rationality, the role of emotions, the problem of free will, and virtual reality.

PHIL 3240. Philosophy of Sex. 3 Hours.

Also offered as REL 3240 and WGST 3240. An examination of the historic and current definitions and scholarly trends involving human sexuality. Religious and philosophical constructs in both Western and non-Western cultures will be emphasized.

PHIL 3300. Philosophy of Religion. 3 Hours.

The study of basic problems of religious belief and critical analysis of proposed solutions to these problems.

PHIL 3400. Existentialism. 3 Hours.

The study of some of the principal existentialist thinkers such as Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, Sartre, Heidegger, Simone de Beauvoir, Camus, Buber, and Jaspers. Also offered as REL 3400.

PHIL 3430. American Philosophy. 3 Hours.

A study of American philosophical thought, including the traditions of transcendentalism, Native American philosophy, African American philosophy, American feminism, with a focus on American pragmatism, including the works of C.S. Peirce, W. James, J. Dewey, and G.H. Mead.

PHIL 3530. Christian Ethics. 3 Hours.

Classical and contemporary sources, methods, and norms evident in a variety of approaches to Christian ethics such as Biblical ethics, feminist ethics, Catholic and Protestant social teachings, and liberation theology. Applies the social teachings of Christian traditions to relevant issues in social ethics today.

PHIL 3540. Ecology and World Religions. 3 Hours.

Also offered as REL 3540. An exploration of how Eastern and Western religious traditions address the question of the environment. This study will include the relationship of harmony with nature found in indigenous cultures, such as Native Americans and Aborigines, and will also emphasize the reading of contemporary ecological spiritualities.

PHIL 3610. Native American Thought and Cultures. 3 Hours.

Also offered as REL 3610 and NAIS 3610. A study of native American cultures in the areas of epistemology, ontology, metaphysics, religion, and spirituality. The course will examine historic and current trends related to the interaction between Native American and Western cultures.

PHIL 3620. Post-Colonization Issues in Indigenous Cultures. 3 Hours.

Also offered as REL 3620 and NAIS 3620. An examination of post-colonial issues in Indigenous cultures throughout the world. The course will focus on the individual and academic voices of Indigenous people. Attention will be given to issues of epistemology, ontology, metaphysics, religion, spirituality, ethics and a range of social and political issues.

PHIL 3630. Native American Women. 3 Hours.

Also offered as REL 3630 or WGST 3630 or NAIS 3630. An examination of the contributions of North and South American Indigenous women in the areas of epistemology, ontology, metaphysics, religion, spirituality, and ethics. The course will include a range of Indigenous cultures, such as Alaskan, Hawaiian, and Pacific and Atlantic islanders and will explore the issues faced by Indigenous women in the Western hemisphere.

PHIL 3640. Environmental Philosophy. 3 Hours.

An introduction of environmental philosophy, with special emphasis on varying philosophical positions on epistemology, ontology, and aesthetics.

PHIL 3650. Mysticism and Social Justice. 3 Hours.

Also offered as REL 3650. An examination of the link between mysticism and social justice through selected writings of Western and Eastern mystical thinkers. The course will explore the historical and social contexts that gave rise to these mystical theologies and the personal and social commitment to integrate the contemplative life and the active life.

PHIL 3700. Buddhism. 3 Hours.

An exploration of major historical, cultural, and philosophical developments of the Buddhist tradition from its inception in the 5th century B.C.E. in India to its flourishing in modern times. Buddhist teachings, texts, and practices in Theravada, Mahayana, and Zen contexts are examined. Also offered as REL 3700.

PHIL 3710. Hinduism. 3 Hours.

An exploration of major historical, cultural, and philosophical developments of the Hindu tradition from its inception in 2300 B.C.E. in India to its flourishing in modern times. Hindu teachings, texts, cosmology, ritual, symbolic expression, and ethical practices will be explored. Also offered as REL 3710.

PHIL 3800. Philosophy, Religion and Film. 3 Hours.

Also offered as REL 3800. A study of the role of film in culture. This explores social context, religious themes, symbols, motifs, and images through screenings of films combined with an introduction to the growing literature on religion, ethics, and film.

PHIL 3801. Philosophical Themes in Film. 3 Hours.

An exploration of philosophical themes in film. This course will explore through film using epistemological, socio-political and ethical theories from the history of philosophy some of the most vexing questions of philosophy.

PHIL 3850. Philosophy of Race. 3 Hours.

A study of issues of race in society, with emphasis on developing a philosophy of race and anti-racism. The historical conceptualization of race will be addressed through the history of philosophy and in works by such philosophers as Aristotle, Kant, Hegel, Dworkin, and Rawls. Various American philosophers of race will be introduced, including W. E. B. DuBois, Cornel West, Angela Davis, Michele Moddy-Adams, Patricia Hill Collins, and Marilyn Frye.

PHIL 3900. Philosophy of Happiness. 3 Hours.

An in-depth examination of the philosophy of happiness, drawing from the work of contemporary applied philosophy and classic historical figures, from antiquity to the modern era.

PHIL 3920. Fate, Free Will, and Time. 3 Hours.

Also offered as REL 3920. An in-depth examination of the problem of free will and determinism and its relations to the problem of time, using historical readings and their relation to modern science, fiction, and film.

PHIL 4120. Ethics and Public Policy. 3 Hours.

A study of ethical issues involved in public policy, with special emphasis on issues such as environmental and urban planning, allocation of community resources, equal opportunity and affirmative action policies, allocation of medical resources, abortion, euthanasia, capital punishment, free speech, and privacy.

PHIL 4220. Ethics and Public Administration. 3 Hours.

Study of ethical issues in public administration. Special emphasis will be given to developing analytical skills in ethical decision-making in the public sector, highlighting the role of ethics and professional responsibility in public cases in public administration for ethical and theoretical underpinnings, and identifying situations involving professional malfeasance and conflict of interest. Students will analyze the environmental and human rights concerns that public administrators must incorporate into all their decision-making.

PHIL 4800. Special Topics in Philosophy. 1-3 Hours.

A study of selected topics in philosophy. May be repeated for up to 9 hours of credit when topics differ.

PHIL 4810. Directed Study in Philosophy. 1-3 Hours.

An individual study of a special area of philosophy under supervision of the instructor. May be repeated for up to 6 hours of credit when topics differ.

PHIL 4900. Special Topics in Ethics. 1-3 Hours.

A study of selected topics in theoretical and applied ethics. May be repeated for up to 9 hours of credit when topics differ.

PHIL 4910. Directed Study in Ethics. 1-3 Hours.

An individual study of a special area of ethics under supervision of the instructor. May be repeated for up to 6 hours of credit when topics differ.

PHIL 4920. Metaphilosophy. 3 Hours.

Prerequisite: Senior Philosophy Major. A capstone course for senior philosophy majors, which includes individual research projects on selected themes, presented by students to their peers and to the philosophy faculty, who are participants in the course. World Wide Web Internet technology is included in course research and presentation.

Religious Studies

REL 2010. Introduction to Religion and Culture. 3 Hours.

An analysis of how different religions respond to a variety of human issues such as marriage and family, war and peace, gender roles, poverty, child labor, and increasing globalization.

REL 2020. World Religions. 3 Hours.

A study of the major religious traditions in their historical and cultural contexts. Concepts of the Holy, sacred stories, rituals, symbols, ethical codes, and sacred communities are examined in pre-literate cultures, Hinduism, Buddhism, Taoism, Confucianism, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam.

REL 2020H. Honors World Religions. 3 Hours.

An enriched study of the major religious traditions in their historical and cultural contexts. Concepts of the Holy, sacred stories, rituals, symbols, ethical codes, and sacred communities are examined in pre-literate cultures, Hinduism, Buddhism, Taoism, Confucianism, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. A research component is selected from a variety of options relevant to the world's religions.

REL 3030. African to African American Philosophy and Religious Studies. 3 Hours.

Also offered as PHIL 3030, REL 3030, and NAIS 3030. An examination of philosophies and religious traditions which begin in Africa and move through the Caribbean into the Americas. The course emphasizes ontological and epistemological themes that begin in Africa and cross the Atlantic as well as Indigenous African influences in the philosophies and religions of the Caribbean and the Americas.

REL 3210. Religion, Violence, and Nonviolence. 3 Hours.

Prerequisite: REL 2020 or permission of the instructor. A study of the disturbing alliance between religion and violence and the hopeful alliance between religion and peace in a variety of religious traditions and social contexts. The course will involve historical, cultural, textual, and comparative analysis.

REL 3220. Inter-Religious Dialogue and Understanding. 3 Hours.

A study of the historical, cultural, philosophical, and theological themes, issues, and beliefs involved in inter-religious dialogue and in respectful interaction among the major world religions.

REL 3240. Philosophy of Sex. 3 Hours.

Also offered as PHIL 3240 and WGST 3240. An examination of the historic and current definitions and scholarly trends involving human sexuality. Religious and philosophical constructs in both Western and non-Western cultures will be emphasized.

REL 3270. The Human Quest for Faith and Values. 3 Hours.

A study of the human phenomenon of faith and the quest for values. This course examines the proposition that faith is a human universal - that all persons have some way of making meaning and choosing values. Emphasis is given to categories of faith and human development in interaction with human situations as portrayed in novels, films, and historical documents.

REL 3300. Philosophy of Religion. 3 Hours.

The study of basic problems of religious belief and critical analysis of proposed solutions to these problems.

REL 3330. New Testament. 3 Hours.

A general academic introduction to the history, thought and literature of the New Testament, and to some of the major problems addressed in the area of New Testament studies.

REL 3340. Old Testament/Hebrew Bible. 3 Hours.

A presentation of the principle characters, events, social structures and theological perspectives reflected in texts of the Hebrew Bible. Old Testament/Hebrew Bible introduces methods and interpretive frameworks shaped by current biblical scholarship.

REL 3350. Religious Autobiography and Spiritual Transformation. 3 Hours.

A study of the world's diverse religious traditions using the autobiographical writings of influential practitioners who inspire change through daily example.

REL 3360. Reading Sacred Texts: Hebrew Bible. 3 Hours.

An advanced reading of the Hebrew Bible utilizing recent methods and interpretative frameworks found in current scholarship. Emphasis is given to historical, literary, and cultural approaches to major texts.

REL 3400. Existentialism. 3 Hours.

The study of some of the principal existentialist thinkers such as Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, Sartre, Heidegger, Simone de Beauvoir, Camus, Buber, and Jaspers. Also offered as PHIL 3400.

REL 3500. Women and Gender in Early Christianity. 3 Hours.

Also offered as WGST 3500. A study of images and representations of women and gender in the New Testament and other early Christian texts including apocrypha, pseudepigrapha, and Gnostic writings with special attention paid to historical and contemporary significance.

REL 3504. The Archaeology of Ancient Israel. 3 Hours.

A study of the archaeology of ancient Israel within the cultural context of the Near East. The course will examine the history, culture, and religion of the relevant eras from the Neolithic Period to the Roman Era. Emphasis will be given to the origins of Israel in the Late Bronze and Iron Ages, to the growth and development of the Israelite state, and to the origin and growth of early Christianity.

REL 3505. Varieties of Early Christianity. 3 Hours.

A study of variety of early Christian thought and practice in the first three centuries of the Common Era with a focus on an examination of extra-canonical literature.

REL 3510. Judaism. 3 Hours.

An inquiry that examines historical and cultural implications of the diaspora from the post-biblical period in Judaism to the present. The course addresses sacred texts, significant figures and the influence of social and political change on the integrity and perseverance of this tradition.

REL 3520. Islam. 3 Hours.

An introduction to Islam from its inception in the 7th century to the present. This inquiry examines historical and social dimensions of Islam in several geographic and cultural contexts including major contributions to western civilization. The study of principal figures, sacred texts and traditions will familiarize students with the basic features of this world religion.

REL 3530. Christian Ethics. 3 Hours.

Classical and contemporary sources, methods, and norms evident in a variety of approaches to Christian ethics such as Biblical ethics, feminist ethics, Catholic and Protestant social teachings, and liberation theology. Applies the social teachings of Christian traditions to relevant issues in social ethics today.

REL 3540. Ecology and World Religions. 3 Hours.

Also offered as PHIL 3540. An exploration of how Eastern and Western religious traditions address the question of the environment. This study will include the relationship of harmony with nature found in indigenous cultures, such as Native Americans and Aborigines, and will also emphasize the reading of contemporary ecological spiritualities.

REL 3600. Women and Religion. 3 Hours.

Also offered as WGST 3600. An introduction to historical, theological, spiritual and liturgical dimensions of women's experience within religious traditions. Research opportunities increase students' awareness of the implication of gender as an interpretive category in religion.

REL 3610. Native American Thought. 3 Hours.

Also offered as PHIL 3610 and NAIS 3610. A study of Native American cultures in the areas of epistemology, ontology, metaphysics, religion, and spirituality. The course will examine historic and current trends related to the interaction between Native American and Western cultures.

REL 3620. Post Colonization Issues in Indigenous Cultures. 3 Hours.

Also offered as PHIL 3620 and NAIS 3620. An examination of post-colonial issues in Indigenous cultures throughout the world. The course will focus on the individual and academic voices of Indigenous people. Attention will be given to issues of epistemology, ontology, metaphysics, religion, spirituality, ethics and a range of social and political issues.

REL 3630. Native American Women. 3 Hours.

Also offered as PHIL 3630 or WGST 3630 or NAIS 3630. An examination of the contributions of North and South American Indigenous women in the areas of epistemology, ontology, metaphysics, religion, spirituality, and ethics. The course will include a range of Indigenous cultures, such as Alaskan, Hawaiian, and Pacific and Atlantic islanders and will explore the issues faced by Indigenous women in the Western hemisphere.

REL 3640. Alternative Religions of the World. 3 Hours.

Also offered as NAIS 3640. An examination of the religions of the world not typically counted among the major world religions. The course will include the religions of Africa, South America, the Pacific and Atlantic islanders, and Wiccan and Neo-Pagan religions. The focus will be on the traditions as they are expressed and experienced by the followers of the religions.

REL 3650. Mysticism and Social Justice. 3 Hours.

Also offered as PHIL 3650. An examination of the link between mysticism and social justice through selected writings of Western and Eastern mystical thinkers. The course will explore the historical and social contexts that gave rise to these mystical theologies and the personal and social commitment to integrate the contemplative life and the active life.

REL 3700. Buddhism. 3 Hours.

An exploration of major historical, cultural, and philosophical developments of the Buddhist tradition from its inception in 5th century B.C.E. India to its flourishing in modern times. Buddhist teachings, texts, and practices in Theravada, Mahayana, and Zen contexts are examined. Also offered as PHIL 3700.

REL 3710. Hinduism. 3 Hours.

An exploration of major historical, cultural, and philosophical developments of the Hindu tradition from its inception in 2300 B.C.E. India to its flourishing in modern times. Hindu teachings, texts, cosmology, ritual, symbolic expression, and ethical practices will be explored. Also offered as PHIL 3710.

REL 3800. Philosophy, Religion and Film. 3 Hours.

Also offered as PHIL 3800. A study of the role of film in culture. This explores social context, religious themes, symbols, motifs, and images through screenings of films combined with an introduction to the growing literature on religion, ethics, and film.

REL 3920. Fate, Free Will, and Time. 3 Hours.

Also offered as PHIL 3920. An in-depth examination of the problem of free will and determinism and its relations to the problem of time, using historical readings and their relation to modern science, fiction, and film.

REL 4700. Topics in Religious Studies. 1-3 Hours.

A forum for dialogue and discourse on a variety of timely issues in Religious Studies. The course reflects interests and concern of faculty and students by addressing particular subjects that relate the nexus of religion and human experience. May be repeated for up to 9 hours of credit when topics differ.

REL 4710. Directed Study in Religious Studies. 1-3 Hours.

An individual study of a special area of religious studies under supervision of instructor. May be repeated for up to 6 hours of credit when topics differ.

REL 4920. Senior Capstone Course. 3 Hours.

A capstone course for senior students in the Department of Philosophy who are taking the Religious Studies track. It includes individual research on selected themes, presented by students to their peers and to the Philosophy and Religious Studies faculty.