

Philosophy

The major and minor in philosophy are administered by the Department of Philosophy: Professors Bowie (*chair*), Wartenberg; Associate Professors Mitchell, Harold.

Contact Persons

Anna May Dion, *senior administrative assistant*
G. Lee Bowie, *chair*

As we go through life, we take many things for granted—that things exist besides ourselves; that some art is good, some art is bad, and some “art” is not really art at all; that other people feel pain, have emotions, dreams, and desires; that there are right ways to behave, and wrong ways too. However, even casual reflection reveals that these assumptions are just that—things we take for granted without much thought. In order to illuminate our lives and appreciate our existence, we ought to investigate these assumptions; as Socrates says, the unexamined life is not worth living.

Philosophy is a discipline that encourages the examination of life in all its myriad dimensions. Our fundamental assumptions about right and wrong, beauty, truth, the mind, language, and meaning are exposed to careful scrutiny in philosophy classes. We encourage you, as a student of philosophy, not only to strive to understand what philosophers have written, but also to be a philosopher yourself—thinking with depth and clarity about issues that are fundamental to our condition as human beings. Whether you take a course on philosophy of film, ethics, feminist philosophy, logic, or philosophy of science, philosophy will leave you seeing the world anew.

A major in philosophy will provide you with a broad understanding of the background in both historical and contemporary philosophical thought, with the tools for critical reasoning necessary for the conduct of philosophical inquiry, with a good understanding of some important philosophical themes, and with the enthusiasm for inquiry necessary for the productive pursuit of your own philosophical speculations. The critical

approach you will learn will be valuable for whatever you choose to do after graduation.

Requirements for the Major

Credits

- A minimum of 36 credits (nine courses) in philosophy
- At least 12 credits at the 300 level

Courses

Specific courses in the following areas of philosophy are required:

- Two courses in the History of Philosophy, such as:
 - Philosophy 201, Philosophical Foundations of Western Thought: The Greek Period
 - 202, Philosophical Foundations of Western Thought: The Modern Period
 - 252, Philosophical Foundations of Western Thought: The Nineteenth Century
 - 255, Existentialism
- One course in Ethics and Value Theory, such as:
 - 205, Ethics
 - 235, Medical Ethics
 - 240, Environmental Ethics: Nature/Culture/Values
 - 241, Issues in Contemporary Moral Theory
 - 242, Social and Political Philosophy
 - 248, Philosophical Issues in Race and Racism
 - 249, Women and Philosophy
 - 273, Philosophy of the Arts
 - 275, Philosophy and Film
- One course in Theoretical Philosophy, such as:
 - 206, Philosophy of Science
 - 208, Knowledge and Reality
 - 261, Philosophy of Physics
 - 263, Philosophy of Biology

- 264, Philosophy of Mind
- One course in Logic, such as:
 - 210, Logical Thought
 - 225, Symbolic Logic

Majors will be asked to fill out a form that specifies which courses they will use to satisfy these requirements. In some cases, the department may allow appropriate courses from other departments to satisfy requirements for a student's major.

Requirements for the Minor

Like the major, the minor is intended to provide an understanding of some of the structure and content of current philosophical thinking, with upper-level work in some area of special interest and with enough philosophical breadth to imbue a generous mixture of knowledge and enthusiasm.

Credits

- A minimum of 16 credits above the 100 level and
- At least 4 credits at the 300 level

Beginning the Study of Philosophy

The Department of Philosophy encourages students to begin their study of philosophy with Introduction to Philosophy (101); First-Year Seminar (102); Comparative Introduction to Philosophy (103); Philosophical Foundations of Western Thought: The Greek Period (201); Philosophical Foundations of Western Thought: The Modern Period (202); Ethics (205); Introduction to the Philosophy of Science (206); Knowledge and Reality (208); or Logical Thought (210). The first-year seminar offers an intensive introduction to philosophical problems and focuses on critical thinking and on writing skills. The history sequence is the department's principal comprehensive treatment of a selection of the major philosophers in the Western tradition and of the background and development of their thought. Ethics develops the study of philosophy by examining moral frameworks and the conduct of life, while Knowledge and Reality considers whether we really know what we think we do and whether things like

human minds really exist. Philosophy of Science introduces philosophical concepts through issues in scientific theory and practice, while the logic course works to cultivate the ability to think carefully and critically. Introduction to Philosophy provides a general survey of problems of philosophy.

Students with a special interest in the course topics may also take, without prerequisite, any of the following courses:

225	Symbolic Logic
226	Introduction to the Philosophy of Religion
232	Ethical Issues in Complex Organizations
235	Medical Ethics
240	Environmental Ethics: Nature/Culture/Values
248	Philosophical Issues in Race and Racism
249	Women and Philosophy
255	Existentialism
273	Philosophy of the Arts

Course Offerings

101fs Introduction to Philosophy

This course will explore topics that philosophers have grappled with for thousands of years, and that still undergird (or sometimes threaten to undermine) our understanding of the world, our knowledge, ourselves, and each other. In historical and modern texts of the Western intellectual tradition, we will read answers to questions such as: What exists? What knowledge can we claim? What are people like? What is, or should be, our role in the world? In considering these answers, we will learn to do philosophy ourselves, developing our own careful reflections on these issues.

Meets Humanities I-B requirement

J. Johnson, S. Mitchell

4 credits

102f First-Year Seminar

Fall 2009

102f(01) Personal Identity

(First-year seminar; speaking-intensive course) Who or what am I, and what makes

me what I am? How am I different from a very sensitive robot, or a very clever dog? Am I a single changing person throughout my life, or a temporal montage of unchanging ones? What will connect my past to my future? This is the cluster of philosophical worries that will occupy the center of this course. In the process of addressing them, we will work to develop methods for resolving problems that appear beyond solution.

Meets Humanities I-B requirement

L. Bowie

4 credits

***102(03) Forbidden Knowledge**

(First-year seminar; speaking-intensive course) In this course we will examine the prohibitions on knowledge by religious and political authorities, and the justifications offered for those limitations. We will explore whether there are areas that should not be investigated because of sacrilege, danger, privacy, or offensiveness; whether knowledge is morally neutral or could have a propensity toward abuse; government secrecy for the public good; and repressing knowledge that could be damaging to ourselves. Examples will range from Oedipus Rex, Adam and Eve, and Faust to nuclear power, genetic engineering, and racial differences.

Meets Humanities I-B requirement

The department

Prereq. fy or permission of instructor; 4 credits

***103s Comparative Introduction to Philosophy**

In this course, questions concerning views of the self, humans in relation to one another, and humans in relation to the non-human world will be explored by bringing together conventional philosophy texts with culturally diverse philosophical writings. Through these questions and the materials which address them, issues of ethnicity, race, class, and gender will impact our discussion of various perspectives on fundamental problems.

Meets multicultural requirement; meets Humanities I-B requirement

M. Brown

4 credits

201f Philosophical Foundations of Western Thought: The Greek Period

An introduction to ancient Greek philosophy, focusing mainly but not exclusively on the works and ideas of three Athenian philosophers who worked and taught in the period between the Persian Wars and the rule of Alexander the Great, more than 2,300 years ago: Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle. Topics to be discussed include: What is the nature of the world? What is truth, and how can it be known? What kind of life should we live? We will work to understand each philosopher's responses to these questions, but we will also learn to develop our own answers. We will take care to place these figures and their works in proper historical and cultural context.

Meets Humanities I-B requirement

G. Matthews

4 credits

202s Philosophical Foundations of Western Thought: The Modern Period

Investigates the development of Western philosophy in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries through the writings of Descartes, Locke, Leibniz, Hume, and Kant. Focuses on the impact of modern scientific thought on the philosophical tradition's understanding of the place of the human being in the world. Topics include the nature and extent of human knowledge, the nature of the mind, the existence of God, and the possibility of human freedom.

Meets Humanities I-B requirement

T. Wartenberg

4 credits

205f Ethics

This course serves as an introduction to some of the main philosophical theories of ethics and ideas about human nature through a study of fundamental approaches including utilitarian, deontological, and virtue ethics. Among the issues covered will be the clarification of basic assumptions about morality, such as whether morality has any basis beyond differing teachings of various cultures (relativism), or whether all actions are fundamentally selfish (egoism). Attention will be given to the application of ethical theory and principles to contemporary issues.

Meets Humanities I-B requirement

M. Brown
4 credits

208f Knowledge and Reality

This course is an introduction to the central topics in epistemology (theory of knowledge) and metaphysics (theory of reality). It will look at questions such as: How is knowledge possible? What is knowledge? Do we know anything? Is time real? What makes you the same person now and in ten years? Could things be otherwise than they are?

Meets Humanities I-B requirement

S. Mitchell
4 credits

210f Logical Thought

This course cultivates sound reasoning. Students will learn to see the structure of claims and arguments and to use those structures in developing strong arguments and exposing shoddy ones. We will learn to evaluate arguments on the strength of the reasoning rather than on the force of their associations and buzzwords.

Meets Humanities I-B requirement

L. Bowie
4 credits

*220s Introduction to the Philosophy of Science

Scientific theories come and go—what was once believed true is often later thought false. What then is the status of current scientific theories? What makes a theory “good”? How do we know whether accepting a theory is based on scientific reasoning—rather than scientific or nonscientific rationales? This course will explore answers to these questions proposed by scientists and philosophers of science. We will study some historical views, but will focus on scholars writing in the 1960s through the present.

Meets Humanities I-B requirement

S. Hawthorne
4 credits

225s Symbolic Logic

This course develops a symbolic system that can be used as the basis for inference in all fields. It will provide syntax and semantics for the language of this system and investigate its adequacy. It provides the basis for all further work in logic or in the philosophical

foundations of mathematics. Much of the course has a mathematical flavor, but no knowledge of mathematics is necessary.

Does not meet a distribution requirement

S. Mitchell
4 credits

226f Introduction to the Philosophy of Religion

(Same as Religion 226-01) This course begins its survey of the discipline of the philosophy of religion with the work of Augustine. We then proceed to an examination of the classical theistic arguments for knowledge of God's existence (those of Anselm, Aquinas, and Maimonides) that dominated Scholastic thought and consider the criticisms of these approaches by Enlightenment philosophers such as Kant. We trace the rise of experience as the central category of pietism and romanticism in the texts of Schleiermacher and Coleridge and in the poetry of Novalis. Finally, we focus on the pragmatic tradition in American philosophy of religion, especially in the work of William James, Josiah Royce, and Cornel West.

Meets Humanities I-B requirement

J. Grayson
4 credits

*227f Feminism and Knowledge

(Same as Gender Studies 212) Is knowledge gendered? Is science objective? What does it mean to make such claims, and how does one justify them? In this course, we will investigate how gender roles, gender identity, and ideas about gender influence the construction of knowledge. We will look at three competing views about these influences - in particular, empiricism, standpoint theory, and postmodernism - in the context of empirical research in the social sciences and biology. We will consider what it means to do research as a feminist and what kind of cognitive authority women hold in the creation of knowledge.

Meets Humanities I-B requirement

C. Lee

Prereq. 4 credits in gender studies or philosophy or permission of instructor; 4 credits

***232f Ethical Issues in Complex Organizations**

(Same as Complex Organizations 232) There is much talk recently of the need for increased attention to “ethics” in organizational life. This course examines the basis for this concern and the underlying beliefs and structures that give rise to ethical issues, with the goal of helping students to clarify their own positions. Topics addressed will include profit, governance, consumption, distribution, and the social contract. Readings will draw on philosophy, religion, economics, history, literature, management theory, and current events

Meets Humanities I-B requirement
Prereq. soph, jr, sr; 4 credits

235f Medical Ethics

Modern medicine has raised new and difficult moral and philosophical problems. Topics discussed include: What is the distinction between health and illness? How should limited health care resources be distributed? How are medical problems related to larger social problems (e.g., sex inequality)? What are the responsibilities of medical researchers toward their research subjects? What moral reasons do we have to be concerned about the growth of technology in medicine? Are the basic institutions of medicine and medical education just?

Meets Humanities I-B requirement
S. Hawthorne
4 credits

240s Environmental Ethics: Nature/Culture/Values

A fundamental problem we face as humans is how we should relate to the natural world. Why not turn Yosemite into a parking lot? Is nature to be controlled through applying technological expertise? Or is Thoreau correct in his suggestion that we must immerse ourselves in nature to discover who we truly are? Might the value of nature extend beyond its utility for humans? Students have the opportunity to explore these questions, challenging widespread assumptions about nature, culture, and values.

Meets Humanities I-B requirement
S. Hawthorne
4 credits

***241s Issues in Contemporary Moral Theory**

Do we need to develop virtues to lead a good life? Is morality founded on freedom or happiness? What does it involve for an individual to be just? What is the relationship between morality and power? This course explores questions and texts relevant to contemporary ethical philosophy. We will read a mix of contemporary and historical texts examining some of these questions in detail.

Meets Humanities I-B requirement
J. Harold

Prereq. Philosophy 205 or permission of instructor; 4 credits

***242f Social and Political Philosophy**

An examination of a variety of topics in social and political philosophy, drawing from historical as well as contemporary sources. We will examine questions such as the following: What is the nature and scope of political authority? Do citizens have a duty to obey the laws of their state? What duties do we have to oppressed and marginalized groups? How do race, class, gender, and sexual orientation matter to political freedom and authority? How should we balance political liberties against the public good? Attention will also be given to the application of these questions to particular contemporary social and political issues.

Meets Humanities I-B requirement
S. Hawthorne
4 credits

244s Philosophy and Literature

This course considers a range of philosophical topics about and in literature. Can literature give us knowledge about the world? How do we determine the meaning of a work of literature (if there is such a thing)? Can works of literature lead us morally astray? How is the identity of the reader relevant to reading literature? Is there a difference between philosophy and literature? We explore these questions through the discussion of some contemporary philosophical writing, as well as some well-known and provocative literary works.

Meets Humanities I-B requirement
J. Harold
4 credits

***248s Philosophical Issues in Race and Racism**

An introduction to discussions of “race” within philosophy and related discussions in science, the law, and the arts. Topics to be discussed include: Is “race” real, subjective, or produced by society? How is race relevant to our identities? How does the popular media represent “race?” Does science construct “race?” What is the connection between “race,” gender, and class? Class readings from philosophy and a variety of interdisciplinary texts, including film and literature.

Meets multicultural requirement; meets Humanities I-B requirement
S. Hawthorne
4 credits

249s Women and Philosophy

(Same as Gender Studies 210) Some say that philosophers pursue objective knowledge. Feminist philosophy is a body of scholarship that questions the extent to which traditional philosophy has pursued or can pursue knowledge in an objective way. This course is an introduction to issues in feminist philosophy, including its critique of traditional Western philosophy and its contributions to major areas of philosophy such as metaphysics, ethics, epistemology, social and political philosophy, and the philosophy of language.

Meets Humanities I-B requirement
S. Hawthorne
4 credits

***255f Existentialism**

Is life absurd? Do human beings really want to be free? Or do we prefer to sacrifice our freedom for comfort and amusement? Is God dead? Is it possible to live without religious belief? These are among the central questions about human life raised by existential thinkers. We will discuss these issues, and many others, through careful reading of philosophic and literary texts by such important existentialists as Søren Kierkegaard, Friedrich Nietzsche, Martin Heidegger, Jean-Paul Sartre, Albert Camus, Simone de Beauvoir, and Franz Fanon.

Meets Humanities I-B requirement
T. Wartenberg
4 credits

264s Philosophy of Mind

This course explores long-standing questions about the nature of consciousness; the relationship between mind and body; the relationship between mind and language; and the role that science has (if any) in negotiating these questions. We also will discuss contemporary, topical debates in the philosophy of mind.

Meets Humanities I-B requirement
L. Bowie

Prereq. 4 credits in department or permission of instructor; 4 credits

***271s Philosophy of Language**

Topics in the philosophy of language have become central to many philosophical debates since the early twentieth century. What gives words meaning? Must we understand a speaker’s intentions in order to know what she says? What makes a statement true? How do pointing, nodding, and other contextual factors influence interpretation? We will explore these and related issues through readings from Frege, Russell, Wittgenstein, Quine, Grice, Stalnaker, Perry, and others.

Meets Humanities I-B requirement
The department

Prereq. 4 credits in department or permission of instructor; 4 credits

***273fs Philosophy of the Arts**

The purpose of this course is to explore philosophical problems concerning the arts and aesthetic experience. Some questions to be explored include: What is the difference between beauty and moral goodness? Can taste be objective? What does it mean for a work of music to be “sad”? Are the intentions of artists relevant to appreciation? What is the purpose of art criticism? How do pictures represent objects? Readings will be drawn from both historical and contemporary philosophical writings.

Meets Humanities I-B requirement
J. Harold, T. Wartenberg

4 credits

280f Philosophy for Children

(Community-Based Learning course; speaking-intensive course) When you act bravely, can you be scared? How do you know that you are not dreaming now? If everyone told you you weren’t a person, would you believe

them? These questions are raised by children's books, such as *Frog and Toad Together* and *The Bear That Wasn't*. In this course, you will learn how to conduct discussions of philosophical questions like these among elementary school children using picture books. The first half of the course will concentrate on developing the necessary skills; the second on teaching philosophy to the children. Along the way, we'll delve into a range of philosophical issues, as we prepare to teach an introductory philosophy course for second graders.

Meets Humanities I-B requirement

T. Wartenberg

Prereq. 4 credits in department or Education 215 or permission of instructor; 4 credits

295fs Independent Study

Does not meet a distribution requirement

Prereq. soph, jr, sr, permission of department; 1-4 credits

***310f Twentieth-Century Analytic Philosophy**

An introduction to the history, themes, and methods of analytic philosophy, the dominant movement in twentieth-century English-speaking philosophy. Analytic philosophy uses logic and a careful analysis of language to solve philosophical problems. We will study most of the major figures of this movement, including Frege, Russell, Carnap, Quine, and Kripke. Topics addressed will include the logic of numerical identity, reference and existence, Quine's criticisms of logical positivism, and the meaning of necessity.

Meets Humanities I-B requirement

S. Mitchell

Prereq. 8 credits in department; 4 credits

321s Seminar in Philosophy of Language

According to the "Whorf Hypothesis" language constrains what we can think - our very concepts are shaped by our language. Much contemporary work in cognitive science argues the reverse - that concepts wired into our mind constrain what possible human languages there are, and that consequently all human languages share structure that reflects these constraints. On this view there are languages so alien that humans couldn't possibly learn them. This seminar

will explore the relationship between language and thought, reading work by Wittgenstein, Whorf, Orwell, Putnam, Pinker, Fodor, Prinz, and others.

Meets Humanities I-B requirement

L. Bowie

Prereq. 8 credits in department; 4 credits

327f Advanced Logic

(Same as Mathematics 327s) This course presents a careful development of predicate calculus, formal elementary number theory, and elementary recursion theory, culminating in a proof of Gödel's incompleteness results. It includes some discussion of the philosophical significance of these results for the foundations of mathematics.

Meets Humanities I-B requirement

S. Mitchell

Prereq. Philosophy 225, 4 credits in department or in mathematics and permission of instructor; 4 credits

***328f Non-Classical Logic**

This course looks at the recent flowering of non-classical logics. The most prominent are modal logics concerning necessity and possibility, which have come to dominate work in metaphysics and epistemology. Conditional logics, intuitionist logics, and relevance logics have also become important. These logics are particularly useful in graduate-level classes in philosophy but also are interesting in their own right.

Meets Humanities I-B requirement

S. Mitchell

Prereq. Philosophy 225 and 4 credits in philosophy or in mathematics; 4 credits

334fs Topics in Ethics

Fall 2009

***334f(01) Meta-Ethics**

Meta-ethics is the study of the concepts and methods used in ethical discourse and debate. It is not the study, for example, of which actions are right or wrong, but rather of what the terms "right" and "wrong" mean. Possible questions to be discussed in this seminar include: Can moral judgments be true or false? Are moral judgments expressions of feelings? Are they objective or subjective? Are we rationally required to be moral? Are there

moral facts? How are moral and aesthetic judgments different? This course presupposes a strong background in philosophy. Prior coursework in ethics and logic is recommended.

Meets Humanities I-B requirement

J. Harold

Prereq. 8 credits in department or permission of instructor; 4 credits

Spring 2010

334s(01) Contemporary Debates in Moral Theory

In this course, we study, and join, some of the most contentious present-day debates about moral theory. We look critically at the “big three” moral theories - Kantianism, utilitarianism, and virtue theory - and we evaluate major objections to these theories. Do traditional moral theories alienate people from their own personal values? Can utilitarianism justify punishing the innocent? Is moral deliberation possible without moral theory? What is the relationship between moral feeling and moral thought? The work we read is contemporary, but our discussion presupposes some background in the moral thought of Aristotle, Mill, and Kant.

Meets Humanities I-B requirement

J. Harold

Prereq. 8 credits in department including Philosophy 205 or permission of instructor; 4 credits

***347f Developments in Feminist Philosophy: Rethinking the World: Philosophy of Sex**

What makes a body sexy? Is heterosexuality natural? What is “sex?” Feminist philosophy is in the midst of a revolutionary transformation. Rather than remaining content with the task of indicating the shortcomings of the philosophical canon, feminist philosophers are constructing their own distinctively feminist version of philosophy. In this course, we shall explore what contemporary feminist philosophers have written about the nature of sex and sexuality.

Meets Humanities I-B requirement

The department

Prereq. 8 credits in department or permission of instructor; 4 credits

350fs Topics in Philosophy

Fall 2009

350f(01) Fact vs. Value

If I tell you “Goering was cruel,” have I expressed a fact or a value judgment? What if I say, “Carbon monoxide pollutes”? Is it true that you can’t derive an “ought” from an “is”? Drawing primarily on recent and contemporary philosophical literature, this seminar will explore the features and strength of the (supposed?) distinction between fact and value—considerations that underlie many current social, political, and scientific debates.

Meets Humanities I-B requirement

S. Hawthorne

Prereq. 8 credits in the department or consent of instructor; 4 credits

Spring 2010

**350s(02) Postmodern Feminist Philosophy*

(Same as Gender Studies 333(04)) This course examines the work of key feminist theorists of, or informed by, the French/Continental tradition. We focus on the issues of materialism, psychoanalysis, language, materiality, performativity, subjectivity, post-structuralism, and postmodern philosophy.

We read works of the following: Helene Cixous, Luce Irigaray, Julia Kristeva, Rosi Braidotti, Judith Butler, and Elizabeth Grosz.

Meets Humanities I-B requirement

J. Weinstein

Prereq. jr or sr; 4 credits

**350(01) Imagination*

The topic of this seminar is the phenomenon of imagination. What exactly is it that we are doing when we imagine? Does imagination make our knowledge of other people’s (or even our own) minds possible? Is imaginability a sound test of conceptual possibility?

Does moral behavior and reasoning require imagination? What is the role of imagination in aesthetic experience? Are all of these kinds of imagination the same? What is imagination, and is it as important as is often thought? We will read works by a variety of contemporary philosophers.

Meets Humanities I-B requirement

J. Harold

Prereq. 8 credits from the department or

permission of the instructor; 4 credits

***351s Systematic Study of One Philosopher: Aristotle**

This course will look closely at Aristotle's moral and aesthetic thought through a careful examination of his *Nicomachean Ethics* and his *Poetics*. In these works Aristotle gives us his conception of a well-lived life, as well as his view about the relationship between emotions and reason. In addition to the primary texts, we'll read some contemporary commentary on Aristotle, and we'll look at the influence of Aristotle's ideas on contemporary philosophical debates about art and life. This course presupposes prior study of ancient Greek philosophy. Prior coursework in ethics or aesthetics is also recommended.

Meets Humanities I-B requirement

J. Harold

Prereq. Philosophy 201 and 4 additional credits in department, or per I; 4 credits

***373fs The Philosophy of Art**

This class examines philosophical issues arising concerning the interpretation, creation, and experience of art. Topics vary from year to year.

Fall 2009

**373f(01) Arthur Danto*

This seminar will focus on the work of Arthur Danto, perhaps the preeminent contemporary philosopher of art and art critic for *The Nation*. We will explore his writings from his seminal essay, "The Artworld," to his recent book, *The Abuse of Beauty*, in an attempt to understand his views on art, its development, and its future.

Meets Humanities I-B requirement

T. Wartenberg

Prereq. 8 credits in department; 4 credits

Spring 2010

**373s(01) The Shock of the New*

(Same as Art Studio 280s-01) Innovative works of art shock the world and are difficult for viewers to interpret in light of previous artistic practice. How, then, can viewers and critics understand new and challenging works of art? This is the topic that we will investigate in this course by looking at art,

reading about art, making art, and writing about art.

Meets Humanities I-B requirement

R. Hachiyamagi, T. Wartenberg

Prereq. 8 credits in department; students enrolled in this course will be responsible for some of the cost of materials in addition to the standard studio fee of \$60.; 4 credits

375s Philosophy of Film

An examination of different theoretical issues concerning the nature of film and film viewing. Topics vary yearly.

Spring 2010

375s Philosophy of Film

(Same as Film Studies 390-02) Recently, philosophers have argued that films resemble philosophy in their use of thought experiments. But the role of thought experiments in philosophy is itself contested. The seminar will investigate how thought experiments are used in science and philosophy in order to determine whether films and, more generally, art can legitimately claim that their presentation of thought experiments connects them to philosophy. Some previous acquaintance with philosophy highly recommended.

Meets Humanities I-B requirement

T. Wartenberg

Prereq. 8 credits in department or in film studies or permission of instructor; 1 meeting (2 hours) and screening; 4 credits

395fs Independent Study

Does not meet a distribution requirement

The department

Prereq. jr, sr, permission of department; 1-8 credits