

PHILOSOPHY

Philosophy is the activity of rigorously inquiring into the fundamental truths concerning the most perspicuous aspects of human life and its place in the cosmos. Philosophy seeks to provide logical methods to investigate and discuss how we think, know, and talk about the reality around us, be it social, mental, or physical. Philosophy works at the periphery of many fields of human knowledge and yet lies at its core. It is so pervasive that the most significant achievements in physics, mathematics, AI, and cognitive sciences (among others) would not have been possible without contributions from logic, philosophy of mind, epistemology, ethics, and metaphysics. Students in philosophy develop skills of utmost value and methods that are useable in any fields. Philosophers are trained to construct good, convincing arguments for the resolution of complex problems. They are proficient in analysing concepts and worldviews, extracting and organise ideas from masses of information, and dealing with questions of value and meaning of human experiences.

Course Structure

12 Core Courses + 3 Electives = 15 courses

Semester 1	Social Philosophy		
	Critical Reasoning: Introduction to Logic		
Semester 2	Introduction to Philosophical Thinking		
Credits	Core Courses	<i>Elective</i>	<i>Minor</i>
Semester 3			
4	Ethics and Moral Theories		X
4	Political Philosophy		X
4	Philosophy of Knowledge		X
4	Philosophy of Perception		
Semester 4			

4	Philosophy of Science (I)		X
4	Logic (I)		
4	Philosophy of Mind and Cognitive Science (I)		
4	Metaphysics (I)		
Semester 5			
4	Philosophy of Science (II)		
4	Logic (II)		
4	Philosophy of Mind and Cognitive Science (II)		
4	Metaphysics (II)		
Semester 6			
4	Elective I	X	X
4	Elective 2	X	
4	Elective 3	X	
Credits			
	Elective Courses		
4	Philosophy of Biology	X	
4	Modal Logic	X	
4	Philosophy of Mathematics	X	
4	Philosophy of Economics	X	
4	Ancient Philosophy	X	X
4	Philosophy of Language	X	X
4	Philosophy of Religion	X	X
4	Business Ethics	X	
4	God, Death, and The Meaning of Life	X	X
4	Philosophy of Art	X	X

Core Courses

Semester 3

Ethics and Moral Theories

What is a moral theory? How we can apply moral principles to every-day cases? In this module, you will be introduced to main issues in normative and applied ethics, and you will be encouraged to develop your own perspective on a series of important real-life international case studies. In the first part of the module you will become familiar with various conceptions of morality that have existed over time. The second part of the module is entirely dedicated to ethical case analysis carefully matched with the theoretical material. You will become familiar with ethical issues characterizing technological advancement and you will learn to best frame both at the level of engineering design and at the level of business management. You will furthermore engage with a variety of cases involving war, torture, human trafficking, environmental protection, immigration, and many others.

Political Philosophy

What is Justice? What's good Democracy? What are the boundaries of political power? This course examines major texts in the history of political thought, and the ideas that have shaped our understanding of social and political order: justice, order, equality, liberty, rights. Students will be introduced to political philosophy – the study of the branch of philosophy that investigates whether, on what grounds, and to what extent government can be justified – through the work of Plato, Aristotle, Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau, Mill, Rawls, and Rawls. Governments have profound and far-reaching implications for human lives. The main goal of the course is to help students assess the strengths and weaknesses of various regimes as well as the nature of political authorities and rule-making.

Philosophy of Knowledge

This course introduces students to central problems in contemporary epistemology. The goal of the course is twofold. The first part of the course is devoted to explore the question of what knowledge is. We will discuss fundamentals of theories of justification and explore main views around the nature of knowledge. The second part will be dedicated to explore the question of how we come to know things. We will assess the sources of knowledge—reason, perception, memory, testimony— and explore complications that involve sharp epistemological solutions.

Philosophy of Perception

Most of the time, we come to know things by looking around. When we see the world, what exactly do we see? Is seeing “raw” or our beliefs, desires, and emotions influence what we see? What are we aware of when we hallucinate? Do we, in perception, always directly experience intermediaries between ourselves and objects in our external environment? This course expands the topic of perception as a source of knowledge, focusing on main contemporary philosophical theories of perception. Students will explore what does it mean to perceive something, the nature and the object of perception itself, abnormal perceptions, and the nature phenomenal properties, properties that subjects instantiate when they have typical perceptual experiences and bodily sensations.

Semester 4

Philosophy of Science (I)

Philosophy of Science is the branch of philosophy that engages with reasoning, theorising, and the practice of scientific inquiry. Thus, a student in philosophy of science will find herself engages with questions like: what scientific theories are? shall we be realist about the object that our scientific theories postulate, or rather shall we believe in a theory merely on empirical adequacy, because they work? To what extent are scientific evidences justified? What is the nature of an empirical observation, and what is the role of experiments in theory confirmation? What counts as a “scientific” explanation? In this course students will learn about a variety of philosophical answer to the general, foundational questions that lies at the hearth of the most reliable and successful means of obtaining knowledge about the world: science.

Logic (I)

This course introduces students to the fundamentals of formal logic. Formal logic aims to represent certain aspect of human thinking in abstract terms, allowing us to manipulate abstract, symbolic structures and to construct proof of validity. Students will learn the fundamentals of categorical, propositional, and predicate logic. Categorical (or Syllogistic) logic is the study of arguments whose constituent sentences express certain relations between classes. Propositional (or Boolean) logic, lies at the foundation of modern computer systems, and it is the study of sentence-connecting expressions that in ordinary language like and, or, and not. Finally, predicate (or first-order) logic is the study of arguments that depend on predication and quantification. Students will develop the ability to (a) represent thinking formally through rigorously defined symbolic language standing variety of class of natural language sentences (b) evaluate each language via mathematical models.

Philosophy of Mind and Cognitive Sciences (I)

We understand ourselves and others as having a variety of mental attitudes: we think, understand, belief, hope, plan. None of these attributions would be possible were we not thinking of ourselves as mental being, beings with a mind. But what is the Mind? and how can

we meaningfully inquiry about it? And how is it related to the brain? This course introduces students to the main philosophical topics underpinning the modern science of mind: the cognitive science. Students will learn basic elements of the main theories of mind: logical behaviorism, computational theories of mind and brain, mind-brain identity and dualism (and zombies), embodied and extended theories of mind. Along the way, students will form a solid understanding of what and why something count as a cognitive agent, and to which degree said agent resembles us humans.

Metaphysics (I)

Metaphysics is the study of the nature of reality. Unlike scientific questions, that address specific kind of entities such as biological or physical, metaphysical questions ask what things exist, and how they fit together in the very general sense. This course introduces students to central problems in metaphysics. The goal of the course is to explore questions such as the nature of time, truths and truth makers, the status of physical objects and their properties, persistence, causation, and modality. We will also engage with primary considerations regarding methodologies in metaphysics. We will discuss what are metaphysical questions, whether they do have an answer or not, and consider different second-order attitudes toward ontology.

Semester 4

Philosophy of Science (II)

This advanced course explores the nature of our physical reality through an analysis of our best scientific theories and their theoretical posits. In Block I we will discuss the notion of elementary and fundamentality in connection with the entities that our physical theories posit; their individuation and quantification, and the ontologies of Spacetime. In Block II we will examine how physical entities are located, and what location is; how they could be law-governed, and the implications of the Relativistic and the Quantum views of the universe for the metaphysics of time, modality, persistence, and identity. We will go sci-fi(sh) by the end of the module by introducing recent debates in the metaphysics of time-travel.

Logic (II)

This advanced course builds on previous knowledge of various formal systems and makes use of metatheoretical techniques to make logic itself the subject of formal investigation. Students will be first introduced to the basics of set theory, model theory, and recursion theory, gaining proficiency in set-theoretic and model-theoretic techniques. Students will learn about the properties of logical systems themselves, and how to tackle with standard metatheoretical results: completeness, compactness, the Lowenheim-Skolem theorems, and Gödel's incompleteness theorems.

Philosophy of Mind and Cognitive Sciences (II)

By the time students reach this course they will understand what a cognitive agent is, and in what a mind consists of. But how well do we know our own minds, anyway? Does the mind have a "content"? if so, is the mental content linguistic or imagery in nature? Do we discover this content by "looking inside" or "listening to"? is thinking, wandering, being conscious something that the mind does independently from us? And what set us apart from mindless robots that produce behaviour in light of stimulations from the environment, but lack any inner awareness or consciousness? In this course students will learn about cutting edge work from philosophy, psychology, and the neurosciences on the nature of consciousness and mental content, in both normal and abnormal conditions.

Metaphysics (II)

This course introduces students to advanced problems in contemporary metaphysics. The goal of the course is to build on Metaphysics I, helping students progress further into the study of contemporary metaphysics and expand their metaphysical horizons. We will first explore so-called "exotica", mind-bending philosophical problems concerning non-existence, the existence of minor entities (holes, shadows, surfaces), of negative entities (negative properties, negative facts), of vague entities, and finally of nothingness. As we will see, discussion of exotica brings interesting insights about the nature of our "positive" world. In Block II we will have a closer look at the metaphysics of possible and impossible worlds, their applications, the nature of fictions, the metaphysics of propositions, and recent implications from the hyperintensional revolution.

Course Coordinator: Dr. Andrea Raimondi (TSLAS)