Philosophy 4224: Epistemology
This course is designed to give the student a solid grounding in the main areas of debate in contemporary epistemology. Topics will likely include the analysis of justification and knowledge, externalism and internalism, naturalism, induction, skepticism, relativism, and anti-realism.

Instructor: W. Ott  CRN: 15260
Lecture: 2:00p-3:15p  SQUIR 234  T Th

Philosophy 4304: Topics in Social and Political Philosophy: Ethical Pluralism in Liberal Democracy
The course focuses on the significance of ethical, cultural, and religious diversity, and disagreement for liberal democratic political theory and practice. Topics to be covered include the nature of moral disagreement and its implications for objectivity, civic friendship and social unity; religious tolerance and the place of religion in the public sphere; the liberal values of autonomy, authenticity, and individuality; neutrality between lifestyle's and conceptions of the good life; multiculturalism and cosmopolitanism; the proper conduct of public deliberation in a context of disagreement; and the place of civility, moderation, and compromise in political life. Authors to be studied include Aristotle, Locke, Mill, Rawls, Kymlicka, and Okin. Student participation in class discussion will be a major aspect of the course.

Instructor: S. May  CRN: 15261
Lecture: 9:30a-10:45a  SQUIR 238  T Th

Philosophy 4344: Business and Professional Ethics
In this course we will investigate moral and ethical issues that arise in the context of business practices. We will begin with an overview of relevant ethical theories and a consideration of various approaches to ethics, and then spend the majority of the course discussing specific problems. We will address questions such as: To what extent should considerations other than profits determine business decisions? What rights and obligations do employers and employees have with respect to one another? What obligations does a business have to its consumers? To what extent do businesses adopt affirmatively action measures or other policies designed to promote diversity in the workforce? In considering these issues we will read a combination of scholarly articles and influential court cases.

Instructor: S. Daskal  CRN: 15263
Lecture: 9:30a-10:45a  SQUIR 236  T Th

Philosophy 4344: Jurisprudence: The Authority of the Law
The course is premised on the question: what is the law supposed to be, such that we are supposed to obey it? Topics to be discussed include civil disobedience and conscientious objection; competing theories of the nature of the law and its normative content; the enforcement of morality; the problem of political legitimacy; and the democratic genesis of the law; the nature of rights and their importance; constitutionalism and different approaches to constitutional interpretation; equality before the law; majoritarianism and the question of judicial review of legislation. Authors to be studied include Locke, Thoreau, King, Mandela, Raz, Feinberg, Hart, Dworkin, Coleman, Waldron, and Buchanan. Philosophy 4335 is a writing-intensive class and regular philosophical "briefs" will be expected.

Instructor: S. May  CRN: 15262
Lecture: 12:30p-1:45p  SHULT 109  T Th

Philosophy 5204: Topics in the History of Philosophy
God, Philosophy, and Man
A systematic examination of some of the main approaches to the study of religion found in Western thought from ancient times to the present, including analytical as well as phenomenological and existentalist approaches to philosophy. Common to these approaches, which will serve as a focus of the course, is the concern with the nature of religious experience and its place in justifying religious belief or unbelief. We will also explore other related issues including, but not limited to, the traditional arguments for and against the existence of God, problems concerned with the language used to talk about God, and the problem of reconciling divine omniscience with human freedom. Patristic, medieval, as well as contemporary philosophers and theologians such as Augustine, Anselm, Aquinas, Plantinga, Tillich, Hick will be surveyed.

Instructor: R. Mayorga  CRN: 15267
Lecture: 2:00p-3:15p  MAJWM 225  W

Philosophy 5306: Main Themes in the Philosophy of Modern Science & Technology
This course is an introductory graduate course. It is designed to help students become familiar with three major topics prominent in recent philosophy of science and technology and to develop skill in making and evaluating arguments about these and related topics. The topics are:

1. Can the history of science offer shed light on fundamental issues in philosophy of science and technology? Among the issues covered will be the goals of science, the nature of progress in science and technology, various ways in which contextual factors affect scientific and technological change, and the interactions among theory, experiment, and available technology.

2. What is the relationship between technological and scientific change? This question contains many hidden assumptions. Yet variants of this question are critical for understanding science as scientific advances ("advances") have come to depend increasingly on experimental technologies, technological advances ("advances") have come to depend increasingly on science, and as "scientific" technologies have come to play an ever-more central role in the dominant culture.

3. Incorporating both the above, can we tease out a useful account of the relationship between the direction of scientific research and the health of the surrounding society?

We will employ an "historical" approach to these topics and we will address the use of case studies in dealing with these topics. There will be short written assignments approximately every other week and a term paper. Students will have some opportunity to influence the readings employed and the issues addressed in the course.

Instructor: R. Burian  CRN: 14186
Lecture: 9:05a-11:50a  MAJWM 225  M
(Crosslisted with CRN 14729 – STS 5306)

Philosophy 5334: Ethics
This course will be an investigation into the process of moral reasoning. This will involve addressing a set of issues that lie at the intersection of metaethics and normative ethics, such as the following: What constitutes a reason to do something? What distinguishes moral reasons from other sorts of reasons? How does one go about determining what one has most reason to do? What moral principles, if any, are we committed to by our understanding of moral reasoning? We will proceed by working through four

Check the university timetable or the department website [http://www.phil.vt.edu/courses.html](http://www.phil.vt.edu/courses.html) for updated information.
Logic
In this course, we will determine whether the practice of some of the fundamental results of 20th century logic. We will start with set theoretic foundations, cover the central theorems about first-order logic with identity (completeness, compactness, Lowenheim-Skolem theorems), and will conclude with Godel’s incompleteness results.

Instructor: B. Epstein  CRN: 15272  Lecture: 12:30p-1:45p  NOR 211  TTh

Philosophy 6014: Special Topics in Philosophy
Groups and Individuals: Topics in the Philosophy of Economics and Social Science
Few people today would accept Hegel’s claim that nations or historical moments possess a “spirit” that guides their evolution. Even so, it’s clear that nations, historical periods, and groups in general have many properties that individuals do not. We speak of a country’s foreign policies, its unemployment rate, the national mood. Is group behavior an aggregation of individual behavior? Should explanations of social phenomena strive to be individualistic?

This seminar will consider some important aspects of these issues in the ontology and methods of the social sciences. A principal focus will be cases in microeconomics, where these debates have been particularly acute. Of particular interest will be the role of “rational agents” in economic explanation. Readings from Durkheim, Weber, Menger, Friedman, Rosenberg, Hausman, Cartwright, Pettit, and others.

Instructor: B. Epstein  CRN: 14194  Lecture: 3:00p-5:45p  MAJWM 225  T

Philosophy 6204: Advanced Topics in the History of Philosophy: Philosophy and T/Literature in Plato
Plato has long been famous for his theoretical criticisms of the value of literature, but he is equally famous for his brilliant use of literary techniques in his philosophical dialogues. The course will require mutual this apparent tension between Plato’s theory and his practice. The aim will be to understand both Plato’s theory of literature and his employment of literary devices, and to determine whether his practice is consistent with his theory. In the course of treating this overall question, we will also explore questions about the nature of philosophy, the nature of literature, and the respective values and disvalues of each, and in exploring these fundamental questions, naturally, a host of other philosophical issues, particularly in ethics and epistemology, will have to be addressed.

Instructor: M. Gifford  CRN: 14105  CANCELLED  Lecture: 6:00p-8:00p  MAJWM 225  M

Philosophy 6204: Advanced Topics in the History of Philosophy: Kant
Kant’s Critique of Pure Reason is arguably the most important book from the modern era of philosophy. It had a major influence on subsequent philosophical thinking and remains relevant today. Its main topic is the nature, scope, and limits of human cognition; and its main conclusion is that a priori knowledge, natural science, freedom, and human experience itself are possible if and only if transcendental idealism is true. The purpose of this course is to give a close, critical reading of Kant’s argument for transcendental idealism in the CPR all the way from the P relate to the Ideal of Pure Reason.

Instructor: B. Hall  CRN:15266  Lecture: 3:30p-6:15p  MAJWM 225  Th

Check the university timetable or the department website http://www.phil.vt.edu/courses.html for updated information.