Department of Philosophy, Spring 2015 Electives

PHIL 20100: Logical Reasoning, Professor Mark Robertson (Tu/Th 3:30-4:45)
This course provides students with an introduction to the elements of logical reasoning. Basic rules and methods of assessing validity and proving arguments as they occur in natural language are introduced (such as truth tables and rules of inference). The goal of the course is to enable students to translate and evaluate arguments in natural language using the basic tools of modern logic. The focus of this course enables it to serve as an excellent form of preparation for SATs, LSATs and other standardized tests, as well as an analytic resource for further academic studies.

PHIL 20200: Introduction to Logic, Professor Lisa Warenski (M/W 5-6:15)
This course introduces students to the basics of modern logic. Topics covered include truth-tables, the rules of inference for the propositional calculus, and introduction to quantification theory. It focuses both on rules for producing formal proofs, and for translating natural language arguments into logical notation. Primarily designed as a preparation for advanced logic, the course would also be very useful for anyone expecting to deal extensively with complex reasoning.

PHIL 20600: Philosophy of Science Fiction, Professor Nickolas Pappas (M 2-4:30)
Sometimes science fiction (SF) and philosophy treat the same topics, like time travel. Sometimes SF raises its own philosophical questions. Meanwhile philosophy asks: What is SF? So this course has three parts, looking at philosophy and SF, philosophy in SF, and the philosophy of SF, and ultimately focusing on the relationship between SF and tragedy. By asking how SF is like or unlike tragedy, we might achieve fresh insight into this mythology from the future.

PHIL 30600: History of Philosophy II: Modern, Professor Ben Vilhauer (Tu/Th 9:30-10:45)
This class surveys the history of modern philosophy, a period when new worldviews and puzzles arose which continue to influence philosophy today. Topics include the relationship between mind and body, free will and determinism, knowledge of the external world, God, the foundations of ethics, and the distinction between appearance and reality. Philosophers studied may include Descartes, Spinoza, Leibniz, Locke, Berkeley, Hume, and Kant.

30700: Metaphysics and Epistemology, Professor Elise Crull (M/W 11-12:15)
Time. Existence. Being. Knowledge. Belief. Truth. The analysis of such concepts has formed the core of philosophical inquiry since the very inception of the discipline. Today, inquiries regarding the nature of
reality and the nature of knowledge are typically the domain of Metaphysics and Epistemology. In this course, we will explore canonical questions in both these branches of analytic philosophy through engagement with a range of historical and contemporary sources.

PHIL 30900: Social and Political Philosophy, Professor Jennifer Morton (M/W 9:30-10:45)
We are social beings that thrive in communities, yet we have different values, moral commitments, and opinions on a diversity of matters. Questions in political philosophy center on how political institutions and practices should be organized to allow us to live together despite these disagreements. This course will serve as an introduction to social and political philosophy, including historical figures such as Mill, Hobbes, Locke, Hume, Marx, and Rousseau, as well as contemporary figures, such as Rawls, Nozick, and Okin.

PHIL 32300: Philosophy of Mind, Professor Katherine Ritchie (Tu/Th 2-3:15)
This course examines classical and contemporary problems relating to our concepts and theories of mind, and of psychological phenomena such as beliefs, desires, emotions, and rationality. Topics may include theories of the relation between mind and brain (varieties of dualism and materialism); self-knowledge and knowledge of other minds; the nature of consciousness; mental causation; artificial intelligence; and personal identity.

PHIL 34404: Buddhism, Professor Lou Marinoff (Tu/Th 11-12:15)
This course surveys the origins, evolution, and propagation of Buddhism. First, we revisit Siddhartha Gautama’s reformation of orthodox Indian philosophy, and Buddhism’s re-absorption by the Vedic tradition. Next, we trace Buddhism’s evolution via the Theravada-Mahayana bifurcation, and the development of Tibetan, Chinese and Japanese traditions. Finally, we witness Buddhism’s contemporary migration to Western civilization, its reception and rooting in the West, and its role in 21st century world affairs.

PHIL 34904: Business Ethics (M/W 3:30-4:45)
This course is an examination of ethical issues that arise in business. General topics to be taken up include corporate social responsibility, employer/employee relations, technology and privacy, the ethics of advertising and marketing, and corporate culture. Specific topics may include corporate philanthropy, corporate leadership, and building a values-based corporate culture as well as moral dilemmas involving whistle-blowing, discrimination in the workplace, product safety and liability, and factors that contributed to the financial crisis of 2008. We will focus on ethical decision-making from both personal and policy-level perspectives.