**SEMESTER ONE**

**Knowledge & Reality PHIL 20290**  
This course examines central philosophical issues in epistemology and metaphysics, or knowledge and reality. What is the nature of our knowledge of the world? Is our knowledge grounded primarily in sense experiences, or in reason (intellect)? What is knowledge, that is, how should that concept e defined or analysed? What are the limits of knowledge? How might we address sceptical challenges to the very possibility of knowledge in general or of various kinds (knowledge of self or of the 'external world', inductive knowledge, and so on)? On the side of reality, what are the fundamental kinds of things (substances, beings) that we know to exist in the world? Metaphysics is the rational investigation of the most general features of reality and of the human being: what is it to be a self, or a mind, or to have free will (if we do)? What is time? What are concepts and universals? How are language and thought related to one another? What is it to be the 'same' thing through change? These are the sorts of questions that are typically examined in this course, with the particular focus varying each year (to be clarified at the start of the module).

**Rationalism and Empiricism PHIL 20010**How do modern treatments of substance and causality differ from what came before? Do we require certain knowledge, or is probable knowledge enough? Do we really need to go outside nature to explain nature? Are there such things as innate ideas, or is the mind at its beginning a 'blank slate' awaiting sense impressions from outside? Does my identity lie in the unconscious, or in conscious experiences I can call my own, or both? In this course we will explore these questions, and others, by looking at the contrasting ideas and arguments put forward in the great philosophical traditions of Rationalism and Empiricism. Following a brief consideration of Descartes' later work, the philosophers to be examined in most detail will be Spinoza, Locke, Berkeley and Leibniz.

**Philosophy and Sociology of Education PHIL 20410**What is education, exactly? What is a good education, and what is a bad education? Why does every Irish child have to go to school? What does education do to us? What should we be trying to teach our children in the formal educational environment? Why do we not all have access to the same educational opportunities? This module will address these important questions by engaging with the two contrasting disciplines of philosophy and sociology. The first half of the module will be philosophical. Students will philosophically examine what the concept of education means, not only with respect to the traditional subjects such as English and Mathematics, but especially with the more controversial subjects such as citizenship, religion and morality. We will also examine the crucial question of equality and justice in education, at all three levels (primary, secondary, tertiary). The second half of the module will be sociological. We will look at sociological theory and research that explores the role of education in contemporary societies and the changing political economy of education. There will be further discussion on the dimensions of inequality, school choice and class differentials in educational achievement.

**Philosophies of Freedom PHIL 20400**Individual freedom is a central component of most modern Western conceptions of human flourishing. The course examines the idea of freedom as it features in the work of Rousseau, Kant, Hegel, Marx, Nietzsche, Foucault and others, focusing on the questions of why we should regard individual freedom as a value, how individual freedom is best conceptualized, and what kind of social conditions are necessary for promoting individual freedom.

**Philosophical Revolutions PHIL 20420**The early twentieth century witnessed the birth of three new philosophical schools: Analytic Philosophy, Phenomenology and Pragmatism. Continuing to codify distinct intellectual discourses, writing styles and methodologies, these schools still determine the intellectual landscape of contemporary academic philosophy. (1) The Analytic School was born out of a rejection of the then dominant German Idealist and Neo-Kantian approaches. Its founders, Gottlob Frege in Germany and Bertrand Russell in the UK, revolutionised philosophical methodology by introducing into philosophical discourse the formal vocabulary of mathematical logic and by insisting on the essential continuities between philosophy and the natural sciences. (2) Meanwhile, a second contemporaneous revolution was taking shape. Edmund Husserl attempted to shift philosophical discourse away from both the idealist emphasis on mere ideas and the purportedly objective discourse of science towards the phenomenological experiences of the mind 3) Pragmatism, the indigenous philosophical revolution of the United States possesses a distinct intellectual temperament that seems to lie equidistant between the analytic respect for the sciences and the phenomenological emphasis on lived experience. This innovative module uses the expertise available in the School of Philosophy in all three areas of philosophy to provide students with an understanding of the origins of contemporary philosophy.

**Hume & Kant PHIL 20060**In this course we will survey, through selected primary source readings, the overall views of two of the most important philosophers of the Eighteenth century Enlightenment period: David Hume and Immanuel Kant. (For background, see the lecturer's book on Kant: James R. O'Shea, \_Kant's Critique of Pure Reason: An Introduction and Interpretation\_, Acumen, 2012.) Topics will include all or some of the following: scepticism and the nature of knowledge and belief; consciousness and the nature of the self; perception, identity, and causality; freedom, morality, and religion. Hume's empiricist and sceptical naturalist outlook was famously opposed by the 'transcendental idealism' of Kant. Descendants of Humean and Kantian views are very influential in disputes today across the spectrum from metaphysics and epistemology to aesthetics, morality, and political philosophy, so this course will provide important background for many of our level three courses. (Students should be aware that Kant's writing in particular is often difficult to grasp and would be best approached by students who have already completed one or more philosophy modules.)

**SEMESTER TWO**

**Aristotle: Ethics and Politics PHIL 20350**Aristotle's 'Nicomachean Ethics' and 'Politics' are masterpieces of moral and political philosophy, and remain of great interest and influence today. As Aristotle sees it, ethics and politics are both concerned with the same thing: the pursuit of happiness. In the 'Nicomachean Ethics' he is concerned with identifying what an individual's happiness consists in, while in the 'Politics' he attempts to identify which political system will best promote the happiness of each citizen. In this module we will examine the key doctrines that Aristotle argues for in these seminal texts. Aristotle's work will be examined in its appropriate historical and philosophical context, in particular in relation to his great predecessors, Socrates and Plato. We shall also consider Aristotle's influence on modern moral and political philosophy. Every serious student of philosophy should take the opportunity to read and study the 'Nicomachean Ethics'; it is one of the handful of works that is taught in every philosophy department in the world. By looking also at the 'Politics', we will get a complete view on what Aristotle himself called 'the Philosophy of Human Life'.

**Philosophy of Science PHIL 20320**This course will subject the aims and methods of science to philosophical analysis; the basic question we want to answer is: what is science? We will start by asking whether scientific theories and the practice of science have distinctive features which allow us to draw a clear distinction between science and other human enterprises. It has been felt that a 'demarcation criterion' is particularly important for disqualifying as real science, 'pseudo-science' like Creationism and Homeopathy. We will examine some alleged demarcation criteria. It is difficult to come up with a demarcation criterion or an exact definition of science but there are some things that are clearly true of science: science seeks to explain natural events, and to formulate laws of nature. We will ask what it is to explain a natural event; and what is a law of nature? We will also investigate the general aim of science. Does science attempt to give a true account of the world; or just a useful or 'empirically adequate' account? A related question is whether scientific theories are committed to the existence of the unobservable entities they posit. Science, it is often claimed, aims for an objective view of the world and this aim is facilitated by its methods. Feminist philosophers of science have subjected the notion of objectivity and the claim that science is objective to critical scrutiny; we will examine this critique.

**Philosophy of Being PHIL 20070**A systematic discussion of fundamental themes in metaphysics, based on selected texts from Parmenides, Plato, Aristotle, Aquinas, Hegel, and Heidegger. Topics will include: Nature and purpose of metaphysics. Metaphysical nature of human existence. Question of being. Validity of metaphysical knowledge. Philosophy as search for unity. Affirmation of existence. Principles of being/laws of thought. Concept of being (Parmenides: Being is, Nonbeing is unintelligible. Hegel: Being and Nothing are identical). Unity and diversity of existence. Analogy: metaphor as illustrative of the universal affinity of beings. Plato's theory of being. Aristotle's search for substance. Aquinas' distinction between essence and existence. Existence of God. Theory of Evolution. Causality, freedom and personhood.

**Logic: Informal and Formal PHIL 20020**Logic is a study of the central notions of argument and inference. The module begins with an treatment of Traditional or Aristotelian Logic, continues with a brief analysis of argumentation in everyday informal contexts and moves on to consider the construction and evaluation of argument in modern formal contexts. Notes will be supplied for the Formal Logic section of the Module and these will be made available on Blackboard. Schematic notes on Rhetoric will also be made available to students on Blackboard. Anthony Weston's "A Rulebook for Arguments" is required supplementary reading and should be available for purchase from the College Bookshop. It is recommended that students read some supplementary material on informal logic, such as Madsen Pirie's "How to Win Every Argument" or Jay Heinrichs's "Thank Your for Arguing".

**Applied Ethics PHIL 20240**This module will examine certain metaphysical and ethical questions surrounding human death. What is death, exactly: a process or a state, or simply an end-point? What does the necessity of death (at a determinate but unknown time in the future) mean for our lives in the present? What would resurrection and immortality entail, exactly? Can a cadaver be harmed or wronged? Can a person’s life be tarnished by what happens to their projects after their death? Why can I decide, and why do I care, what happens to my organs and to my property, when neither will be ‘mine’ after I die? Why is suicide not like any other choice one can make? Why is dementia sometimes called a ‘living death’? Should euthanasia (in some form) be legalised?

**Single Major Research Project PHIL 20270**The Undergraduate Research Project offers second year Philosophy students the opportunity of working under the close supervision of a member of staff to produce a sustained in-depth piece of work (5,000 word max.). Successful completion of the project will require a significant degree of self-discipline and self-motivation, as it demands much independent research and study. Students are free to pursue a philosophical topic of their choice, on condition that the module co-ordinator considers the topic viable, and there is a member of staff who is able and willing to act as supervisor. Students should therefore begin to think about and prepare their proposals as soon as possible in the first semester. Students must also attend a series of seminars on research methods in the 2nd term. The project is due at the end of the eighth week of the second semester.