ETHICS IN SOCIETY (ETHICSOC)

ETHICSOC 106. Human Rights in Comparative and Historical Perspective. 3-5 Units.

This course examines core human rights issues and concepts from a comparative and historical perspective. In the beginning part of the course we will focus on current debates about the universality of human rights norms, considering the foundation of the international human rights regime and claims that it is a product of western colonialism, imperialism, or hegemony. We will then discuss a series of issues where the debates about universality are particularly acute: gender inequality and discrimination, sexual violence, child marriage and forced marriage more generally, and other related topics. We will also consider the way in which issues of gender-based violence arise in the context of internal and international conflicts.

Same as: CLASSICS 116, HUMRTS 106

ETHICSOC 111. Leadership Challenges. 4-5 Units.

This course will examine the responsibilities and challenges for those who occupy leadership roles in professional, business, non-profit, and academic settings. Topics will include characteristics and styles of leadership, organizational dynamics, forms of influence, decision making, diversity, social change, and ethical responsibilities. Class sessions will include visitors who have occupied prominent leadership roles. Readings will include excerpts of relevant research, problems, exercises, and case studies. Requirements will include class participation and short written weekly reflection papers (2 to 3 pages) on the assigned readings. The class will be capped at 50 students.

Same as: PUBLPOL 111

ETHICSOC 121. History of Political Philosophy. 4 Units.

Nation-states issue legal commands, and wield overwhelming power to coercively enforce them. On one hand, this allows states to protect people from each other. On the other hand, what protects people from the state, even if it is democratic, when it facilitates domination and oppression of some citizens by others? In this course we are introduced to authors grappling with these issues in the evolving canon of Western political philosophy from ancient Greece to the 20th century. This takes us through questions about obligation, the state, consent, rights, democracy, property, free speech, socialism, gender, race. Authors whose arguments we will study and scrutinize include Plato, Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau, Marx, Mill, Wollstonecraft, Douglass, and Rawls, along with critics and commentators.

Same as: PHIL 121, PHIL 221

ETHICSOC 121N. Ethics of Sports. 3 Units.

This seminar will be focused on the ethical challenges that are encountered in sport. We will focus on the moral and political issues that affect the world of sport and which athletes, coaches, sports commentators and fans are faced with. For instance, we will ask questions such as: what is a fair game (the ethics of effort, merit, success)? Is it ethical to train people to use violence (the ethics of martial arts)? Are divisions by gender categories justified and what should we think about gender testing? Is the use of animals in sport ever justified? Which forms of performance enhancements are acceptable in sport (the ethics of drug use and enhancements through technologies)? Should we ban sports that damage the players' health? Does society owe social support to people who hurt themselves while practicing extreme sports? The class will be structured around small group discussions and exercises as well as brief lectures to introduce key moral and political concepts (such as fairness, equality, freedom, justice, exploitation, etc.). I will also bring guests speakers who are involved in a sport activity at Stanford or who have worked on sports as part of their academic careers.

By the end of the seminar, students will have a good understanding of the various ethical challenges that surround the world of sport. They will be able to critically discuss sport activities, norms, modes of assessments and policies (on campus and beyond). They will also be prepared to apply the critical ethical thinking that they will have deployed onto other topics than sports. They will have been introduced to the normative approach to social issues, which consists in asking how things should be rather than describing how things are. They will be prepared to take more advanced classes in ethics, political theory, as well as moral and political philosophy.

Same as: PHIL 21N

ETHICSOC 124G. Introduction to Animal Ethics. 2 Units.

In this introductory course we will engage in an interdisciplinary discussion about the theoretical and applied aspects of animal rights and the ethical treatment of animals. This course will be of interest to a wide range of students: philosophers, political scientists, ecologists, environmental scientists, and biologists. Throughout the course we will focus on the following questions: Do non-human animals have moral status and do we have moral obligations toward them? If so, what grounds the moral status of animals? Are some animals ‘persons’? Do we have the right to eat and farm animals, use them in scientific and environmental testing, display them in zoos and circuses, and keep them as pets? Under what circumstances would these actions be permissible, if at all? Was animal domestication a mistake? Basic familiarity with ethical theory (such as covered by PHIL 2) is recommended.

Same as: PHIL 24G

ETHICSOC 130. 20th Century Political Theory: Liberalism and its Critics. 5 Units.

In this course, students learn and engage with the debates that have animated political theory since the early 20th century. What is the proper relationship between the individual, the community, and the state? Are liberty and equality in conflict, and, if so, which should take priority? What does justice mean in a large and diverse modern society? The subtitle of the course, borrowed from a book by Michael Sandel, is "Liberalism and its Critics" because the questions we discuss in this class center around the meaning of, and alternatives to, the liberal idea that the basic goal of society should be the protection of individual rights. Readings include selections from works by John Rawls, Hannah Arendt, Robert Nozick, Michael Sandel, Iris Marion Young, and Martha Nussbaum. No prior experience with political theory is necessary.

Same as: PHIL 171 FPOLISCI 130
ETHICSOC 130A. Classical Seminar: Origins of Political Thought. 3-5 Units.
Political philosophy in classical antiquity, centered on reading canonical works of Thucydides, Plato, Aristotle against other texts and against the political and historical background. Topics include: interdependence, legitimacy; justice; political obligation, citizenship, and leadership; origins and development of democracy; law, civic strife, and constitutional change.
Same as: CLASSICS 181, CLASSICS 381, PHIL 176A, PHIL 276A, POLISCI 230A, POLISCI 330A

ETHICSOC 131S. Modern Political Thought: Machiavelli to Marx and Mill. 5 Units.
This course offers an introduction to the history of Western political thought from the late fifteenth through the nineteenth centuries. We will consider the development of ideas like individual rights, government by consent, and the protection of private property. We will also explore the ways in which these ideas continue to animate contemporary political debates. Thinkers covered will include: Niccolò Machiavelli, Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Edmund Burke, John Stuart Mill, and Karl Marx.
Same as: POLISCI 131L

ETHICSOC 131X. Ethics in Bioengineering. 3 Units.
Bioengineering focuses on the development and application of new technologies in the biology and medicine. These technologies often have powerful effects on living systems at the microscopic and macroscopic level. They can provide great benefit to society, but they also can be used in dangerous or damaging ways. These effects may be positive or negative, and so it is critical that bioengineers understand the basic principles of ethics when thinking about how the technologies they develop can and should be applied. On a personal level, every bioengineer should understand the basic principles of ethical behavior in the professional setting. This course will involve substantial writing, and will use case-study methodology to introduce both societal and personal ethical principles, with a focus on practical applications.
Same as: BIOE 131

ETHICSOC 133. Ethics and Politics of Public Service. 3-5 Units.
Ethical and political questions in public service work, including volunteering, service learning, humanitarian assistance, and public service professions such as medicine and teaching. Motives and outcomes in service work. Connections between service work and justice. Is mandatory service an oxymoron? History of public service in the U.S. Issues in crosscultural service work. Integration with the Haas Center for Public Service to connect service activities and public service aspirations with academic experiences at Stanford.
Same as: CSRE 178, PHIL 175A, PHIL 275A, POLISCI 133, PUBLPOL 103D, URBANST 122

ETHICSOC 134. Ethics for Activists. 5 Units.
Activists devote sustained effort and attention toward achieving particular goals of social and political change. Do we have an ethical obligation to be activists? And how should those who do choose to be activists (for whatever reason) understand the ethics of that role? Questions discussed in this course may include: When is civil disobedience appropriate, and what does it entail? Should activists feel constrained by obligations of fairness, honesty, or civility toward those with whom we disagree? Are there special ethical considerations in activism on behalf of those who cannot advocate for themselves? What is solidarity and what does it require of us? Students in this course will develop skills in analyzing, evaluating, and constructing logical arguments about ethical concerns related to activism, but class discussions will also address the potential limitations of logical argument in ethical and political reasoning.
Same as: POLISCI 134

ETHICSOC 134R. The Ethics of Elections. 5 Units.
Do you have a duty to vote? Should immigrants be allowed to vote? Should we make voting mandatory? How (if at all) should we regulate campaign finance? Should we even have elections at all? In this course, we will explore these and other ethical questions related to electoral participation and the design of electoral institutions. We will evaluate arguments from political philosophers, political scientists, and politicians to better understand how electoral systems promote important democratic values and how this affects citizens’ and political leaders’ ethical obligations. We will focus, in particular, on issues in electoral design that have been relevant in recent US elections (e.g. gerrymandering), though many of the ethical issues we will discuss in this course will be relevant in any electoral democracy.
Same as: POLISCI 132A

ETHICSOC 135. Citizenship. 5 Units.
This course begins from the core definition of citizenship as membership in a political community and explores the many debates about what that membership means. Who is (or ought to be) a citizen? Who gets to decide? What responsibilities come with citizenship? Is being a citizen analogous to being a friend, a family member, a business partner? How can citizenship be gained, and can it ever be lost? These debates figure in the earliest recorded political philosophy but also animate contemporary political debates. This class uses ancient, medieval, and modern texts to examine these questions and different answers given over time. We'll pay particular attention to understandings of democratic citizenship but look at non-democratic citizenship as well. Students will develop and defend their own views on these questions, using the class texts as foundations. No experience with political philosophy is required or expected, and students can expect to learn or hone the skills (writing / reading / analysis) of political philosophy.
Same as: PHIL 135X, POLISCI 135

ETHICSOC 135F. Deliberative Democracy and its Critics. 3-5 Units.
This course examines the theory and practice of deliberative democracy and engages both in a dialogue with critics. Can a democracy which emphasizes people thinking and talking together on the basis of good information be made practical in the modern age? What kinds of distortions arise when people try to discuss politics or policy together? The course draws on ideas of deliberation from Madison and Mill to Rawls and Habermas as well as criticisms from the jury literature, from the psychology of group processes and from the most recent normative and empirical literature on deliberative forums. Deliberative Polling, its applications, defenders and critics, both normative and empirical, will provide a key case for discussion.
Same as: AMSTUD 135, COMM 135, COMM 235, COMM 335, POLISCI 234P, POLISCI 334P

ETHICSOC 135R. The Ethics of Democratic Citizenship. 5 Units.
We usually think about democratic citizenship in terms of rights and opportunities, but are these benefits of democracy accompanied by special obligations? Do citizens of a democracy have an obligation to take an interest in politics and to actively influence political decision making? How should citizens respond when a democracy’s laws become especially burdensome? Do citizens of a democracy have a special obligation to obey the law? In this course, we will read classical and contemporary political philosophy including Plato’s Crito and King’s “Letter from a Birmingham Jail” to explore how political thinkers have understood and argued for the ethics of citizenship. Students in this course will draw on these materials to construct their own arguments, and to identify and assess implicit appeals to the ethics of citizenship in popular culture and contemporary public discourse, from The Simpsons to President Obama’s speeches.
Same as: POLISCI 135D
ETHICSOC 136R. Introduction to Global Justice. 4 Units.
This course explores the normative demands and definitions of justice that transcend the nation-state and its borders, through the lenses of political justice, economic justice, and human rights. What are our duties (if any) towards those who live in other countries? Should we be held morally responsible for their suffering? What if we have contributed to it? Should we be asked to remedy it? At what cost? These are some of the questions driving the course. Although rooted in political theory and philosophy, the course will examine contemporary problems that have been addressed by other scholarly disciplines, public debates, and popular media, such as immigration and open borders, climate change refugees, and the morality of global capitalism (from exploitative labor to blood diamonds). As such, readings will combine canonical pieces of political theory and philosophy with readings from other scholarly disciplines, newspaper articles, and popular media.
Same as: INTNLREL 136R, PHIL 76, POLISCI 136R, POLISCI 336

ETHICSOC 145. The Ethics of Migration. 4 Units.
How should states treat immigrants and would-be immigrants? On what grounds can immigration be justified strictly, and through what means? This module engages with these complex questions by offering a broad overview of key issues in the ethics of migration and their relation to public policy. Guided by the tools of contemporary political philosophy, you will reflect closely upon a series of pressing issues including the basis of the state¿s right to exclude non-citizens, the prospect of open borders, the rights of refugees and undocumented migrants.

ETHICSOC 151. The First Amendment: Freedom of Speech and Press. 4-5 Units.
Introduction to the constitutional protections for freedom of speech, press, and expressive association. All the major Supreme Court cases dealing with issues such as incitement, libel, hate speech, obscenity, commercial speech, and campaign finance. There are no prerequisites, but a basic understanding of American government would be useful. In addition to a final and midterm exam, students participate in a moot court on a hypothetical case. (Grad students register for COMM 251). Same as: COMM 151, COMM 251, POLISCI 125P

ETHICSOC 155. The Ethics And Politics of Effective Altruism. 4-5 Units.
What should I do? How should I live? These are the central questions that practical ethics seeks to answer. "Effective altruism" (EA), a growing school of thought and popular social movement, offers a clear and attractive response. It holds that we should try to do the best that we can for the world, and that we should do so on the basis of careful reasoning and reliable evidence. In a short amount of time, effective altruism has become a popular theoretical framework for thinking about our duties to others, and for navigating difficult practical questions. How much do I owe to others? To whom do I have obligations? How should I choose amongst different strategies for discharging these obligations? The course examines the theoretical assumptions behind effective altruism, its internal debates, external criticisms, and rival alternatives. We explore these questions in part by focusing on certain case studies that highlight different elements of the EA approach: organ donation, career choice, animal treatment, and global poverty. Guest lecturers, representing prominent advocates and critics of effective altruism, may also be added to the schedule, pending availability.

ETHICSOC 170. Ethical Theory. 4 Units.
This course serves as a rigorous introduction to moral philosophy for students with little or no background. We will examine ideas from four important figures in moral thought: Plato, David Hume, Immanuel Kant, and John Stuart Mill. Each of these philosophers played an integral role in the development of moral philosophy, because each offers thoughtful, compelling answers to some of the discipline¿s most central questions. These questions include: What is involved in being a good person or living a good life? What should we value, and why? How are we motivated by morality? How (if at all) is morality a matter of what is customary or conventional? How (much) do the consequences of our actions matter? Importantly, this course is not only about learning what others have thought about the answers to these (and related) questions. By considering and criticizing the ideas and arguments of these philosophers, the aim is to cultivate our own ability to think systematically, rationally, and reflectively, and to make up our own minds about how to answer these kinds of questions.
Same as: PHIL 170, PHIL 270

ETHICSOC 171. Justice. 4-5 Units.
In this course, we explore three sets of questions relating to justice and the meaning of a just society. (1) Liberty: What is liberty, and why is it important? Which liberties must a just society protect? (2) Equality: What is equality, and why is it important? What sorts of equality should a just society ensure? (3) Reconciliation: Are liberty and equality in conflict? If so, how should we respond to the conflict between them? We approach these topics by examining competing theories of justice including utilitarianism, libertarianism/classical liberalism, and egalitarian liberalism. The class also serves as an introduction to how to do political philosophy, and students approaching these topics for the first time are welcome. Political Science majors taking this course to fulfill the WIM requirement should enroll in POLISCI 103.
Same as: PHIL 171, POLISCI 103, POLISCI 336, PUBLPOL 103C, PUBLPOL 307

ETHICSOC 172. History of Moral Philosophy. 4 Units.
prerequisites: Phil 2 and Phil 80. Not for graduate students.
Same as: PHIL 172

ETHICSOC 172C. The Ethics of Care. 4 Units.
Since the 1970s, a number of feminists, socialists, and virtue theorists have directed their attention to the importance of care in practical philosophy. In this class, we will focus on the ambition to employ the notion of care in systematic political ethics. We will address the relationship between care and integrity, care and community, care and justice, and the role of care in thinking about the ethics of economics. Students will be evaluated on the basis of three essays. There will be no final exam. All readings will be available online; no books required.
Same as: PHIL 172C

ETHICSOC 173. Introduction to Feminist Philosophy. 4 Units.
If feminism is a political practice aimed at ending patriarchy, what is the point of feminist philosophy? This course provides an introduction to feminist philosophy by exploring how important theoretical questions about sex and gender bear on practical ethical and political debates. The first part of the course will examine some of the broader theoretical questions in feminist philosophy, including: the metaphysics of gender, the demands of intersectionality, and feminist critiques of capitalism and liberalism. Questions will include: How should we understand the category ‘woman’? How does gender intersect with other axes of oppression? Is capitalism inherently patriarchal? The second part of the course will address more applied topics of ethical and political debate, such as: objectification, pornography, consent, markets in women¿s sexual and reproductive labor, and the institution of marriage.
Same as: FEMGEN 173R, PHIL 90R

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ETHICSOC 174. Ethics in a Human Life. 4 Units.
Ethical questions pervade a human life from before a person is conceived until after she dies, and at every point in between. This course raises a series of ethical questions, following along the path of a person’s life—questions that arise before, during, and after she lives it. We will explore distinctive questions that a life presents at each of several familiar stages: prior to birth, childhood, adulthood, death, and even beyond. We will consider how some philosophers have tried to answer these questions, and we will think about how answering them might help us form a better understanding of the ethical shape of a human life as a whole.
Same as: HUMBIO 174A, PHIL 74A

ETHICSOC 174B. Universal Basic Income: the philosophy behind the proposal. 4 Units.
Universal basic income (or UBI) is a regular cash allowance given to all members of a community without means test, regardless of personal desert, and with no strings attached. Once a utopian proposal, the policy is now discussed and piloted throughout the world. The growth of income and wealth inequalities, the precariousness of labor, and the persistence of abject poverty have all been important drivers of renewed interest in UBI in the United States. But it is without a doubt the fear that automation may displace workers from the labor market at unprecedented rates that explains the revival of the policy in recent years, including by many in or around Silicon Valley. Among the various objections to the proposal, one concerns its moral adequacy. Isn’t it fundamentally unjust to give cash to all indiscriminately rather than to those who need it and deserve it? Over the years, a variety of scholars have defended the policy on moral grounds, arguing that UBI is a tool of equality, liberal freedom, republican freedom, gender equity, or racial equity. Many others have attacked UBI on those very same grounds, making the case that alternative policy proposals like the job guarantee, means-tested benefits, conditional benefits, or reparations should be preferred. Students will learn a great deal about political theory and ethics in general but always through the specific angle of the policy proposal, and they will become experts on the philosophy, politics, and economics of UBI. The seminar is open to undergraduate and graduate students in all departments. There are no pre-requisites.
Same as: ETHICSOC 274B, PHIL 174B, PHIL 274B, POLISCI 134E, POLISCI 338

ETHICSOC 174E. Egalitarianism: A course on the history and theory of egalitarianism and anti-egalitarianism. 4 Units.
Egalitarianism is a conception of justice that takes the value of equality to be of primary political and moral importance. There are many different ways to be an egalitarian - it all depends on what we take to be the currency of egalitarian justice. Are we trying to equalize basic rights and liberties, or resources, opportunities, positions, status, respect, welfare, or capabilities? Is equality really what we should try to achieve in a just society? Or should we just make sure everyone has enough? Why do egalitarians think that such society would still be unjust; and how do they proceed to argue for equality? This class will introduce students to egalitarian and anti-egalitarian thought by looking both at the history of egalitarian thinking and at contemporary accounts in defense of equality. It will provide an in-depth introduction to the concepts that are used when inequalities are discussed by philosophers, economists, scientists and politicians. The class will attest of the varieties of approaches and perspectives to equality. For instance, we will learn from the 19th century debate on racial inequalities to understand how anti-egalitarian discourses are constructed; we will look into Rousseau’s conception of social equality in the Second Discourse and the Social Contract; and we will engage with contemporary egalitarian theories by studying Rawlsian and post-Rawlsian forms of egalitarianism.
Same as: PHIL 174E, PHIL 274E, POLISCI 138E

ETHICSOC 174L. Betrayal and Loyalty, Treason and Trust. 2 Units.
The main topic of the seminar is Betrayal: its meaning as well as its moral, legal and political implications. We shall discuss various notions of betrayal: Political (military) betrayal such as treason, Religious betrayal with Judas as its emblem, but also apostasy (converting one's religion) which is regarded both as a basic human right and also as an act of betrayal, social betrayal - betraying class solidarity as well as ideological betrayal - betraying a cause. On top of political betrayal we shall deal with personal betrayal, especially in the form of infidelity and in the form of financial betrayal of the kind performed by Madoff. The contrasting notions to betrayal, especially loyalty and trust, will get special consideration so as to shed light or cast shadow, as the case may be, on the idea of betrayal. The seminar will focus not only on the normative aspect of betrayal - moral or legal, but also on the psychological motivations for betraying others. The seminar will revolve around glaring historical examples of betrayal but also use informed fictional novels, plays and movies from Shakespeare and Pinter, to John Le Carre. SAME AS LAW 520.
Same as: ETHICSOC 274L, PHIL 174L, PHIL 274L

ETHICSOC 175B. Philosophy of Law. 4 Units.
This course will explore foundational issues about the nature of law and its relation to morality, and about legal responsibility and criminal punishment. Prerequisite: graduate student standing in philosophy or, for others, prior course work in philosophy that includes Philosophy 80.
Same as: PHIL 175, PHIL 275

ETHICSOC 175W. Law and Philosophy. 4 Units.
In this course, we will examine some of the central questions in philosophy of law, including: What is law? How do we determine the content of laws? What is the proper role of judges in interpreting the law? Do laws have moral content? What is authority? What gives laws its authority? Must we obey the law at all times, or only when we think it is right to obey the law? How should we understand and respond to unjust laws? What is punishment? What is punishment for? What, if anything, justifies punishment by the state? What is enough punishment? What is too much punishment? What does justice require under non-ideal conditions?}
Same as: PHIL 175W, PHIL 275W

ETHICSOC 175X. Philosophy of Public Policy. 4 Units.
From healthcare to voting reforms, social protection and educational policies, public policies are underpinned by moral values. When we debate those policies, we typically appeal to values like justice, fairness, equality, freedom, privacy, and safety. A proper understanding of those values, what they mean, how they may conflict, and how they can be weighed against each other is essential to developing a competent and critical eye on our complex political world. We will ask questions such as: Is compulsory voting justified? Should children have the right to vote? Is affirmative action just? What is wrong with racial profiling? What are the duties of citizens of affluent countries towards migrants? Do we have a right to privacy? Is giving cash to all unconditionally fair? This class will introduce students to a number of methods and frameworks coming out of ethics and political philosophy and will give students a lot of time to practice ethically informed debates on public policies. At the end of this class, students should have the skills to critically examine a wide range of diverse policy proposals from the perspective of ethics, moral and political philosophy. There are no prerequisites. Undergraduates and graduates from all departments are welcome to attend.
Same as: PHIL 175B, PHIL 275B, POLISCI 135E, POLISCI 235E, PUBLPOL 177

ETHICSOC 176. Political Philosophy: The Social Contract Tradition. 4 Units.
(Graduate students register for 276.) Why and under what conditions do human beings need political institutions? What makes them legitimate or illegitimate? What is the nature, source, and extent of the obligation to obey the legitimate ones, and how should people alter or overthrow the others? Study of the answers given to such questions by major political theorists of the early modern period: Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau, and Kant.
Same as: PHIL 176, PHIL 276, POLISCI 137A, POLISCI 337A
ETHICSOC 178M. Introduction to Environmental Ethics. 4-5 Units.
How should human beings relate to the natural world? Do we have moral obligations toward non-human animals and other parts of nature? And what do we owe to other human beings, including future generations, with respect to the environment? The first part of this course will examine such questions in light of some of our current ethical theories: considering what those theories suggest regarding the extent and nature of our environmental obligations; and also whether reflection on such obligations can prove informative about the adequacy of our ethical theories. In the second part of the course, we will use the tools that we have acquired to tackle various ethical questions that confront us in our dealings with the natural world, looking at subjects such as: animal rights; conservation; economic approaches to the environment; access to and control over natural resources; environmental justice and pollution; climate change; technology and the environment; and environmental activism.
Same as: ETHICSOC 278M, PHIL 178M, PHIL 278M, POLISCI 134L

ETHICSOC 179W. Du Bois and Democracy. 4 Units.
In this course, we will work together to develop a detailed and comprehensive understanding of the political philosophy of W. E. B. Du Bois, giving special attention to the development of his democratic theory. We will do so by reading a number of key texts by Du Bois as well as contemporary scholarship from philosophy and cognate fields.
Same as: CSRE 179W, PHIL 179W, PHIL 279W

ETHICSOC 181. Architecture, Space, and Politics. 4-5 Units.
We spend most of our lives in buildings and cities that are planned by architects and urbanists. What are the normative considerations that should guide how these spaces are designed? What social role should architecture aim to play? and what criteria should we use to assess whether an architectural intervention is successful or not? This course seeks to address these questions by bringing architecture in conversation with contemporary normative political theory. It examines both how political theory can inform our thinking about architecture, and how the work of architects – with its attention to the specificities of the built environment – can advance our thinking about politics.

ETHICSOC 182. Ethics, Public Policy, and Technological Change. 5 Units.
Examination of recent developments in computing technology and platforms through the lenses of philosophy, public policy, social science, and engineering. Course is organized around four main units: algorithmic decision-making and bias; data privacy and civil liberties; artificial intelligence and autonomous systems; and the power of private computing platforms. Each unit considers the promise, perils, rights, and responsibilities at play in technological developments. Prerequisite: CS106A.
Same as: COMM 180, CS 182, PHIL 82, POLISCI 182, PUBLPOL 182

ETHICSOC 185M. Contemporary Moral Problems. 4-5 Units.
This course is an introduction to contemporary ethical thought with a focus on the morality of harming others and saving others from harm. It aims to develop students' ability to think carefully and rationally about moral issues, to acquaint them with modern moral theory, and to encourage them to develop their own considered positions about important real-world issues. In the first part of the course, we will explore fundamental topics in the ethics of harm. Among other questions, we will ask: How extensive are one’s moral duties to improve the lives of the less fortunate? When is it permissible to inflict harm on others for the sake of the greater good? Does the moral permissibility of a person’s action depend on her intentions? Can a person be harmed by being brought into existence? In the second part of the course, we will turn to practical questions. Some of these will be familiar; for example: Is abortion morally permissible? What obligations do we have to protect the planet for the sake of future generations? Other questions we will ask are newer and less well-trodden. These will include: How does the availability of new technology, in particular artificial intelligence, change the moral landscape of the ethics of war? What moral principles should govern the programming and operation of autonomous vehicles?
Same as: PHIL 72, POLISCI 134P

ETHICSOC 190. Ethics in Society Honors Seminar. 4 Units.
For students planning honors in Ethics in Society. Methods of research. Students present issues of public and personal morality; topics chosen with advice of instructor.
Same as: PHIL 178

ETHICSOC 195. Ethics in Society Workshop. 1 Unit.
Workshop for Ethics in Society seniors completing their honors thesis.

May be repeated for credit.

ETHICSOC 20. Introduction to Moral Philosophy. 5 Units.
What should I do with my life? What kind of person should I be? How should we treat others? What makes actions right or wrong? What is good and what is bad? What should we value? How should we organize society? Is there any reason to be moral? Is morality relative or subjective? How, if at all, can such questions be answered? Intensive introduction to theories and techniques in contemporary moral philosophy.
Same as: PHIL 2

ETHICSOC 200A. Ethics in Society Honors Thesis. 1-5 Unit.
Limited to Ethics in Society honors students, who must enroll once in 200A, once in 200B, and once in 200C in their senior year. Students enrolling in 200A for less than 3 units must get approval from the faculty director.

ETHICSOC 200B. Ethics in Society Honors Thesis. 1-5 Unit.
Limited to Ethics in Society honors students, who must enroll once in 200A, once in 200B, and once in 200C in their senior year. Students enrolling in 200B for less than 3 units must get approval from the faculty director.

ETHICSOC 200C. Ethics in Society Honors Thesis. 1-5 Unit.
Limited to Ethics in Society honors students, who must enroll once in 200A, once in 200B, and once in 200C in their senior year. Students enrolling in 200C for less than 3 units must get approval from the faculty director.

ETHICSOC 202. EMOTIONS: MORALITY AND LAW. 2 Units.
If emotions are the stuff of life, some emotions are the stuff of our moral and legal life. Emotions such as: guilt, shame, revenge, indignation, resentment, disgust, envy, jealousy and humiliation, along with forgiveness, compassion, pity, mercy and patriotism, play a central role in our moral and legal life. The course is about these emotions, their meaning and role in morality and law. Issues such as the relationship between punishment and revenge, or between envy and equality, or St. Paul’s contrast between law and love, or Nietzsche’s idea that resentment is what feeds morality, will be discussed alongside other intriguing topics.
Same as: ETHICSOC 302, PHIL 177B, PHIL 277B

ETHICSOC 203R. Ethics in Real Life: How Philosophy Can Make Us Better People. 4 Units.
Socrates thought that philosophy was supposed to be practical, but most of the philosophy we do today is anything but. This course will convince you that philosophy actually is useful outside of the classroom—and can have a real impact on your everyday decisions and how to live your life. We’ll grapple with tough practical questions such as: ‘Is it selfish if I choose to have biological children instead of adopting kids who need homes?’ ‘Am I behaving badly if I don’t wear a helmet when I ride my bike?’ ‘Should I major in a subject that will help me make a lot of money so I can then donate most of it to overseas aid instead of choosing a major that will make me happy?’ Throughout the course, we will discuss philosophical questions about blame, impartiality, the force of different ‘shoulds,’ and whether there are such things as universal moral rules that apply to everyone.
ETHICSOC 204. Introduction to Philosophy of Education. 3 Units.
How to think philosophically about educational problems. Recent influential scholarship in philosophy of education. No previous study in philosophy required.
Same as: EDUC 204, PHIL 231
ETHICSOC 205R. JUST AND UNJUST WARS. 2 Units.
War is violent, but also a means by which political communities pursue collective interests. When, in light of these features, is the recourse to armed force justified? Pacifists argue that because war is so violent it is never justified, and that there is no such thing as a just war. Realists, in contrast, argue that war is simply a fact of life and not a proper subject for moral judgment, any more than we would judge an attack by a pack of wolves in moral terms. In between is just war theory, which claims that some wars, but not all, are morally justified. We will explore these theories, and will consider how just war theory comports with international law rules governing recourse to force. We will also explore justice in war, that is, the moral and legal rules governing the conduct of war, such as the requirement to avoid targeting non-combatants. Finally, we will consider how war should be terminated; what should be the nature of justified peace? We will critically evaluate the application of just war theory in the context of contemporary security problems, including: (1) transnational conflicts between states and nonstate groups and the so-called “war on terrorism”; (2) civil wars; (3) demands for military intervention to halt humanitarian atrocities taking place in another state. Same as LAW 75?
Same as: ETHICSOC 305R, PHIL 205R, PHIL 305R
ETHICSOC 207R. Democratic Accountability and Transparency. 5 Units.
This course critically examines two related democratic values, accountability and transparency. We begin with historical perspectives on accountability, tracing its centrality to democratic politics to ancient Athens and early modern debates about the nature and function of political representation. But the bulk of the course deals with contemporary issues and problems: how should we conceive of accountability, both conceptually and normatively, and what is its relationship to other values such as transparency and publicity? What forms of accountability are appropriate for modern democratic politics? Is accountability only for elites, or should ordinary citizens be accountable to one another? In what contexts are transparency and publicity valuable, and when might we instead find their operation counter-productive and troubling? Readings draw from canonical texts as well as contemporary political theory, philosophy, and political science.
ETHICSOC 217X. Free Speech, Academic Freedom, and Democracy. 3 Units.
The course explores connected ideas of free speech, academic freedom, and democratic legitimacy that are still widely shared by many of us but have been subject to skeptical pressures both outside and inside the academy in recent years. The course explores the principled basis of these ideas, how well they might (or might not) be defended against skeptical challenge, and how they might be applied in particular controversies about the rights of students, instructors, and researchers. Same as: EDUC 217, PHIL 278C
ETHICSOC 220T. Theories and Practices of Civil Society, Philanthropy, and the Nonprofit Sector. 5 Units.
What is the basis of private action for public good? How are charitable dollars distributed and what role do nonprofit organizations and philanthropic dollars play in civil society and modern democracy? In the “Philanthropy Lab” component of this course, students will award $100,000 in grants to local nonprofits. Students will explore how nonprofit organizations operate domestically and globally as well as the historical development and modern structure of civil society and philanthropy. Readings in political philosophy, history, political sociology, and public policy. Political Science majors who are taking this course to fulfill the WIM requirement should enroll in POLISCI 236S.
Same as: POLISCI 236, POLISCI 236S
ETHICSOC 233R. The Ethics of Religious Politics. 5 Units.
Is it possible for a deeply committed religious person to be a good citizen in a liberal, pluralistic democracy? Is it morally inappropriate for religious citizens to appeal to the teachings of their tradition when they support and vote for laws that coerce fellow citizens? Must the religiously committed be prepared to defend their arguments by appealing to “secular reasons” ostensibly accessible to all “reasonable” citizens? What is so special about religious claims of conscience and expression that they warrant special protection in the constitution of most liberal democracies? Is freedom of religion an illusion when it is left to ostensibly secular courts to decide what counts as religion? Exploration of the debates surrounding the public role of religion in a religiously pluralistic American democracy through the writings of scholars on all sides of the issue from the fields of law, political science, philosophy, and religious studies.
ETHICSOC 234. Democratic Theory. 5 Units.
Most people agree that democracy is a good thing, but do we agree on what democracy is? This course will examine the concept of democracy in political philosophy. We will address the following questions: What reason(s), if any, do we have for valuing democracy? What does it mean to treat people as political equals? When does a group of individuals constitute “a people,” and how can a people make genuinely collective decisions? Can democracy really be compatible with social inequality? With an entrenched constitution? With representation?.
Same as: PHIL 176R POLISCI 234
ETHICSOC 237. Civil Society and Democracy in Comparative Perspective. 5 Units.
A cross-national approach to the study of civil societies and their role in democracy. The concept of civil society—historical, normative, and empirical. Is civil society a universal or culturally relative concept? Does civil society provide a supportive platform for democracy or defend a protected realm of private action against the state? How are the norms of individual rights, the common good, and tolerance balanced in diverse civil societies? Results of theoretical exploration applied to student-conducted empirical research projects on civil societies in eight countries. Summary comparative discussions. Prerequisite: a course on civil society or political theory. Students will conduct original research in teams of two on the selected nations. Enrollment limited to 18. Enrollment preference given to students who have taken Polisci 236S/EthicSoc 232T.
Same as: POLISCI 237S
ETHICSOC 241S. Deliberative Discussions. 1 Unit.
As America has polarized so too has Stanford. In response, Deliberative Discussions - spurred at the initiative of the ASSU Undergraduate Senate - aims to help depolarize our campus by offering the opportunity for students of different backgrounds, beliefs, and experiences to meet regularly over weekly dinners and share in a process of mutual exchange. Deliberative Discussions is unique in its recognition that six essential elements - community, conversation, continuity, inclusion, equality, and accountability - are vital for fostering meaningful dialogue and impactful respectful discourse about difficult campus and global topics. Rooted in the understanding that polarization can consist of both ideological and social distance, Deliberative Discussions strives to reduce social distance between communities at Stanford and build the sort of understanding that separates dislike from disagreement. Participants will learn about and from one another as they acquire skills and tools that will help them to transform contentious debates into meaningful exchange. Enrolled students will be split into two deliberative groups of ten students each meeting once per week for dinner over Spring Quarter, limiting total enrollment to twenty students. To apply, email Matthew Wigler (mwigler@stanford.edu) before March 26, 2019 at 5:00PST.
Same as: POLISCI 241S
ETHICSOC 274B. Universal Basic Income: the philosophy behind the proposal. 4 Units.
Universal basic income (or UBI) is a regular cash allowance given to all members of a community without means test, regardless of personal desert, and with no strings attached. Once a utopian proposal, the policy is now discussed and piloted throughout the world. The growth of income and wealth inequalities, the precariously of labor, and the persistence of abject poverty have all been important drivers of renewed interest in UBI in the United States. But it is without a doubt the fear that automation may displace workers from the labor market at unprecedented rates that explains the revival of the policy in recent years, including by many in or around Silicon Valley. Among the various objections to the proposal, one concerns its moral adequacy: Isn’t it fundamentally unjust to give cash to all indiscriminately rather than to those who need it and deserve it? Over the years, a variety of scholars have defended the policy on moral grounds, arguing that UBI is a tool of equality, liberal freedom, republican freedom, gender equity, or racial equity. Many others have attacked UBI on those very same grounds, making the case that alternative policy proposals like the job guarantee, means-tested benefits, conditional benefits, or reparations should be preferred. Students will learn a great deal about political theory and ethics in general but always through the specific angle of the policy proposal, and they will become experts on the philosophy, politics and economics of UBI. The seminar is open to undergraduate and graduate students in all departments. There are no pre-requisites.
Same as: ETHICSOC 174B, PHIL 174B, PHIL 274B, POLISCI 134E, POLISCI 338

ETHICSOC 274L. Betrayal and Loyalty, Treason and Trust. 2 Units.
The main topic of the seminar is Betrayal: its meaning as well as its moral, legal and political implications. We shall discuss various notions of betrayal: Political (military) betrayal such as treason, Religious betrayal with Judas as its emblem, but also apostasy (converting one’s religion) which is regarded both as a basic human right and also as an act of betrayal, social betrayal - betraying class solidarity as well as Ideological betrayal - betraying a cause. On top of political betrayal we shall deal with personal betrayal, especially in the form of infidelity and in the form of financial betrayal of the kind performed by Madoff. The contrasting notions to betrayal, especially loyalty and trust, will get special consideration so as to shed light or cast shadow, as the case may be, on the idea of betrayal. The seminar will focus not only on the normative aspect of betrayal - moral or legal, but also on the psychological motivations for betraying others. The seminar will revolve around glaring historical examples of betrayal but also use informed fictional novels, plays and movies from Shakespeare and Pinter, to John Le Carre. SAME AS LAW 520.
Same as: ETHICSOC 174L, PHIL 174L, PHIL 274L

ETHICSOC 278M. Introduction to Environmental Ethics. 4-5 Units.
How should human beings relate to the natural world? Do we have moral obligations toward non-human animals and other parts of nature? And what do we owe to other human beings, including future generations, with respect to the environment? The first part of this course will examine such questions in light of some of our current ethical theories: considering what those theories suggest regarding the extent and nature of our environmental obligations; and also whether reflection on such obligations can prove informative about the adequacy of our ethical theories. In the second part of the course, we will use the tools that we have acquired to tackle various ethical questions that confront us in our dealings with the natural world, looking at subjects such as: animal rights; conservation; economic approaches to the environment; access to and control over natural resources; environmental justice and pollution; climate change; technology and the environment; and environmental activism.
Same as: ETHICSOC 178M, PHIL 178M, PHIL 278M, POLISCI 134L

ETHICSOC 280. Transitional Justice, Human Rights, and International Criminal Tribunals. 3-5 Units.
(Formerly IPS 280) Historical backdrop of the Nuremberg and Tokyo Tribunals. The creation and operation of the Yugoslav and Rwanda Tribunals (ICTY and ICTR). The development of hybrid tribunals in East Timor, Sierra Leone, and Cambodia, including evaluation of their success in addressing perceived shortcomings of the ICTY and ICTR. Examination of the role of the International Criminal Court and the extent to which it will succeed in supplanting all other ad hoc international justice mechanisms and fulfill its goals. Analysis focuses on the politics of creating such courts, their interaction with the states in which the conflicts took place, the process of establishing prosecutorial priorities, the body of law they have produced, and their effectiveness in addressing the needs of victims in post-conflict societies.
Same as: HUMRTS 103, INTLPOL 280, INTNLREL 180A

ETHICSOC 301. Conflicts, Ethics, and the Academy. 1-3 Unit.
(Formerly LAW 684) This course looks at conflicts of interest and ethical issues as they arise within academic work. The participants will be drawn from schools and departments across the University so that the discussion will prompt different examples of, and perspectives on, the issues we discuss. Topics will include the conflicts that arise from sponsored research, including choices of topics, shaping of conclusions, and nondisclosure agreements; issues of informed consent with respect to human subjects research, and the special issues raised by research conducted outside the United States; peer review, co-authorship, and other policies connected to scholarly publication; and the ethics of the classroom and conflicts of interest implicating professor-student relationships. Representative readings will include Marcia Angell’s work, Drug Companies and Doctors: A Story of Corruption, N.Y. Rev. Books, Jan. 15, 2009, and Is Academic Medicine for Sale? 342 N. Engl. J. Med. 1516 (2000) (and responses); William R. Freudenburg, Seeding Science, Courting Conclusions: Reexamining the Intersection of Science, Corporate Cash, and the Law, 20 Sociological Forum 3 (2005); Max Weber, Science as a Vocation; legal cases; and conflict-of-interest policies adopted by various universities and professional organizations. The course will include an informal dinner at the end of each session. The goal of the course is to have students across disciplines think about the ethical issues they will confront in an academic or research career. Non-law students should enroll in ETHICSOC 301.

ETHICSOC 302. EMOTIONS: MORALITY AND LAW. 2 Units.
If emotions are the stuff of life, some emotions are the stuff of our moral and legal life. Emotions such as: guilt, shame, revenge, indignation, resentment, disgust, envy, jealousy and humiliation, along with forgiveness, compassion, pity, mercy and patriotism, play a central role in our moral and legal life. The course is about these emotions, their meaning and role in morality and law. Issues such as the relationship between punishment and revenge, or between envy and equality, or St. Paul’s contrast between love and law, or Nietzsche’s idea that resentment is what feeds morality, will be discussed alongside other intriguing topics.
Same as: ETHICSOC 202, PHIL 177B, PHIL 277B
ETHICSOC 303R. Ethics, Economics and the Market. 4 Units.
Economic analysis inevitably raises moral questions. Getting clear on those moral questions, and the competing answers to them, can help improve both economic analysis and our understanding of the values involved in alternative social policies. This course focuses on a central economic institution: the market. How have the benefits and costs of using markets been understood? For example, is it often claimed that markets are good for welfare, but how is welfare to be understood? What is the connection between markets and different values such as equality and autonomy? What, if anything is wrong with markets in everything? Are there moral considerations that allow us to distinguish different markets? This course examines competing answers to these questions, drawing on historical and contemporary literature. Readings include Adam Smith, JS Mill, Karl Marx, Michael Walzer, Dan Hausman and Michael McPherson and Debra Satz among others. For graduate students only.
Same as: PHIL 375, POLISCI 434A

ETHICSOC 305R. JUST AND UNJUST WARS. 2 Units.
War is violent, but also a means by which political communities pursue collective interests. When, in light of these features, is the recourse to armed force justified? Pacifists argue that because war is so violent it is never justified, and that there is no such thing as a just war. Realists, in contrast, argue that war is simply a fact of life and not a proper subject for moral judgment, any more than we would judge an attack by a pack of wolves in moral terms. In between is just war theory, which claims that some wars, but not all, are morally justified. We will explore these theories, and will consider how just war theory comports with international law rules governing recourse to force. We will also explore justice in war; that is, the moral and legal rules governing the conduct of war, such as the requirement to avoid targeting non-combatants. Finally, we will consider how war should be terminated; what should be the nature of justified peace? We will critically evaluate the application of just war theory in the context of contemporary security problems, including: (1) transnational conflicts between states and nonstate groups and the so-called “war on terrorism”; (2) civil wars; (3) demands for military intervention to halt humanitarian atrocities taking place in another state. Same as LAW 751.
Same as: ETHICSOC 205R, PHIL 205R, PHIL 305R

ETHICSOC 36X. Dangerous Ideas. 1 Unit.
Idea matter. Concepts such as race, progress, and equality have inspired social movements, shaped political systems, and dramatically influenced the lives of individuals. Others, like gender identity, universal basic income, and historical memory play an important role in contemporary debates in the United States. All of these ideas are contested, and they have a real power to change lives, for better and for worse. In this one-unit class we will examine these dangerous ideas. Each week, a faculty member from a different department in the humanities and arts will explore a concept that has shaped human experience across time and space. Some weeks will have short reading assignments, but you are not required to purchase any materials.
Same as: ARTHIST 36, COMPLIT 36A, EALC 36, ENGLISH 71, FRENCH 36, HISTORY 3D, MUSIC 36H, PHIL 36, POLISCI 70, SLAVIC 36

ETHICSOC 371R. INEQUALITY: Economic and Philosophical Perspectives. 5 Units.
The nature of and problem of inequality is central to both economics and philosophy. Economists study the causes of inequality, design tools to measure it and track it over time, and examine its consequences. Philosophers are centrally concerned with the justification of inequality and the reasons why various types of inequality are or are not objectionable. nThis class we bring both of these approaches together. Our course explores the different meanings of and measurements for understanding inequality, our best understandings of how much inequality there is, its causes, its consequences, and whether we ought to reduce it, and if so, how. nThis is an interdisciplinary graduate seminar. We propose some familiarity with basic ideas in economics and basic ideas in contemporary political philosophy; we will explain and learn about more complex ideas as we proceed. The class will be capped at 20 students.
Same as: PHIL 371D, POLISCI 431L

ETHICSOC 372R. Ending Wars: A Just Peace or Just a Peace. 2 Units.
Much of just war theory focuses on the justifications for resorting to armed force and the conduct of hostilities. But what are the ethical and legal principles that govern ending wars and making peace? This course will explore the theory of “just peace,” including such problems as when a party to war may demand the unconditional surrender of its adversary and what kinds of compromises are ethically permissible in order to end j or to avoid j armed conflict. We will also consider the terms and practices the winning party in war may impose on the loser, such as reparations and occupation (particularly transformative occupation). In addition, we will examine the topic of transitional justice, including issues related to amnesty, forgiveness, criminal and other forms of accountability, and reconciliation. Elements used in grading: Class Participation, Written Assignments, Final Exam.
Same as: PHIL 372M

ETHICSOC 374R. Science, Religion, and Democracy. 3-5 Units.
How should conflicts between citizens with science-based and religion-based beliefs be handled in modern liberal democracies? Are religion-based beliefs as suitable for discussion within the public sphere as science-based beliefs? Are there still important conflicts between science and religion, e.g., Darwinian evolution versus creationism or intelligent design? How have philosophy and recent theology been engaged with such conflicts and how should they be engaged now? What are the political ramifications? This is a graduate-level seminar; undergraduates must obtain permission of the instructors.
Same as: PHIL 374F, RELIGST 374F
ETHICSOC 378B. Unequal Relationships. 2-4 Units.
Over the past three decades, a relational egalitarian conception of equality has emerged in political philosophy. Proponents of the view argue that the point of equality is to establish communities where people are able to stand and relate as equals. This entails building societies free from a variety of modes of relating that are thought to be detrimental to our status as moral equals. The list of those inegalitarian relationships is long and includes oppression, domination, exploitation, marginalization, objectification, demonization, infantilization, and stigmatization. The relational approach to equality departs from the more distributive conceptions of equality that were offered in the 70s and after. The theories of justice proposed in response are still comparatively underdeveloped and need further elaboration, but they all concur in rejecting both the overly distributive paradigm and the preoccupation with individual responsibility central to most other egalitarian accounts. This graduate seminar will introduce students to the rich literature on equality in contemporary political philosophy, with a special focus on identifying and scrutinizing unequal relationships. Each week will be centered on a specific type of such unequal relationship, trying to understand how it operates, what social function it serves, and what makes it specifically harmful or wrongful to groups and individuals. Although there are no formal pre-requisites, this class is primarily designed for students considering writing a thesis in political or moral theory as well as for students in other disciplines who want to advance their understanding of equality as a moral value. Seniors in philosophy and political science with a substantial training in political theory will also be considered and should email the PI to communicate their interest. 2 unit option only for Phil PhDs beyond the second year.
Same as: PHIL 378B, POLISCI 338B

ETHICSOC 432X. Selections in Modern Political Thought. 3-5 Units.
This graduate-level seminar explores selections from the canon of Western political thought from the late fifteenth through nineteenth centuries. Throughout the course, we will engage in close textual readings of individual thinkers and consider some of the larger questions raised by political modernity. This offering of the course will focus on the three modern social contract thinkers: Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, and Jean-Jacques Rousseau.
Same as: POLISCI 432R

ETHICSOC 79. Ethics and Leadership in Public Service. 3-4 Units.
This course explores ethical questions that arise in public service work, as well as leadership theory and skills relevant to public service work. Through readings, discussions, in-class activities, assignments, and guest lectures, students will develop a foundation and vision for a future of ethical and effective service leadership. Offered through the Haas Center for Public Service.
Same as: CSRE 126C, EDUC 126A, URBANST 126A