PHIL 401.03/04: Introduction to Philosophy (HUMA)
University of New Hampshire, Fall 2016
Professor William Seeley

401.01: MWF/8:10-9:00, NESM 119
401.02: MWF/9:10-10:00, NESM 119

This course provides an introduction to the unique way that philosophers have tried to answer a range of questions that each of us has taken time at moments in our lives wonder about: “What is real?”; “What can I know?”; “What is the basis of moral judgments?”; and “How do I know what kind of moral person to be?” The course employs a hybrid approach that uses both historical and contemporary texts to address a range of topical issues in metaphysics (what is there, what exists, and what is it like), epistemology (how do we know and what counts as evidence to justify us in thinking that we do), and ethics (how do I determine the right thing to do, the right person to be, and more generally, the right reasons to value some things over others). Along the way we will explore issues in critical reasoning, the philosopher’s method of inquiry, the nature of arguments, and various strategies we use when we give reasons to support and sustain our basic beliefs about the world. An understanding of the fundamental principles of critical reasoning is a transportable skill. It provides a lens through which to engage and analyze texts more generally across the curriculum.