

2024/2025

**Institute of Philosophy
University of Bialystok (Poland)**

Course Title	ECTS credits	Hrs	Semester	Course Instructor
Contemporary Issues in the Philosophy of Mind.	4	30	winter or summer	Dr hab. Piotr Kozak
Religion in the Contemporary World	4	30	summer	Prof. Zbigniew Kaźmierczak
Philosophy of Capitalism	4	30	winter or summer	Prof. Bartosz Kuźniarz
Contemporary Social Theory	4	30	winter or summer	Prof. Bartosz Kuźniarz
The Main Bioethical Issues	4	30	winter or summer	Dr Joanna Smakulska
Cognitive Processes in Everyday Life	4	30	summer	Mgr Olgierd Borowiecki
Mind Extended with AI	4	30	summer	Mgr Olgierd Borowiecki
Altered States of Consciousness	4	30	summer	Mgr Olgierd Borowiecki

Courses' short descriptions

Course Title	Course Instructor	Short description	Suggested (selection)	literature
Contemporary Issues in the Philosophy of Mind.	Dr hab. Piotr Kozak	The goal of the course is to discuss selected topics in contemporary philosophy of mind and philosophy of psychology such as the nature of attention, imagination, and perception.		
Religion in the contemporary world	Prof. Zbigniew Kaźmierczak	This course explores the transformation of religion in the contemporary world, with particular focus on the processes of secularization and the privatization of belief. Students will examine how religious individualism is reshaping traditional faith communities and contributing to the rise of personalized spiritual practices. The course addresses critical-historical approaches to sacred texts and their impact on religious authority and interpretation. Special attention will be given to the challenges facing Christianity today, including institutional crises, moral credibility, and the tension between tradition and modernity. Through interdisciplinary readings and discussions, students will engage with key debates on the future of religion in a pluralistic and globalized society.		
Philosophy of Capitalism	Prof. Bartosz Kuźniarz	This course is about capitalism: the social system in which we live. We start with prehistory, reflecting on the significance of the cognitive and the agricultural (agrarian, Neolithic) revolutions for modern economic life. How does the life of hunter-gatherers explain our penchant for chocolate and chips, as well as the content of the first chapters of Genesis? Next, we take a look at the origins and specificity of what Karl Marx called the accumulation of capital. Is capitalism a secular extension of Protestantism or Judaism? What exactly is money? What happened to capitalism after the countercultural revolution of the 1960s – Woodstock and the hippies? Why has the internet changed almost everything in the case of capitalism? Can capitalism be replaced? We end with a journey into the future and the posthumanist dimension of capitalism. Why do we need economic growth? It is possible that contrary to popular belief the ultimate beneficiary of economic growth is not the self-interested individual known as the economic man, but some new, superhuman form of being?		
Contemporary Social Theory	Dr Bartosz Kuźniarz	What has the net and Google done to us? We have reached the stage in which we have access to all information in all places at all times. All you need is a phone with Internet connection. Paradoxically, it didn't make us any wiser. We lack adequate theory – for it is precisely good theory that allows us to extract relevant data and see regularities and structures in the seeming information chaos of the surrounding world. During the course, students learn some of the contemporary social theories (Bataille, Habermas, Bourdieu, Luhmann, Lyotard, Jameson, Boltanski, Flusser), acquiring the sensitivity necessary to understand the complex phenomena		

		and processes that make up the fabric of modern society.	
The Main Bioethical Issues	Dr Joanna Smakulska	The course aims to present the main problems of bioethics which is an interdisciplinary field that borders on biology, medicine, philosophy, sociology and psychology. In a wider perspective, it is a branch of ecological ethics, which in its deliberations covers all forms of life. The lectures will concern issues related to the rights and interests of animals, indicate the differences in approach to nature in shallow and deep ecology. A narrower approach to bioethics is medical ethics, which has practical aims in a situation of increasing divergence between scientific progress and traditional morality. Discussing specific bioethical problems, such as, for example, abortion or transplantation, will illustrate the growing conflict between perceptions of human life in terms of value and quality.	Articles on bioethics in English, e.g.: Gonzalo Villanueva, <i>Against Animal Liberation?</i> Peter Singer <i>and His Critics</i> ; Bobbie Farsides, <i>Is there such a thing as a life not worth living?</i>
Cognitive Processes in Everyday Life	Mgr Olgierd Borowiecki	In this class, we explore philosophically grounded questions that can be informed by relevant findings in neuroscience. Specifically, we discuss our understanding of the world, the body, theory of mind, and the mind itself. The course draws heavily on research from clinical psychology, evolutionary biology, and ecological psychology, as well as insights from computer science. Given its interdisciplinary scope, the course aims to develop a coherent understanding of key concepts in cognitive science. In each meeting, we discuss a topic at the intersection of cognitive science and a student's personal interests. The course promotes respectful dialogue and the sharing of experiences in the search for common understanding of cognitive processes in everyday life.	Basic understanding of the philosophy of mind and epistemology, such as the mind-body problem, extended mind, and representations.
Mind extended with AI	Mgr Olgierd Borowiecki	During this course, we apply theoretical insights from the extended mind thesis (4E cognitive science – embodied, extended, embedded, enactive) to practical applications of computer software and AI tools in everyday life. Specifically, we discuss tools that optimize scientific workflows, time management, and daily routines.	
Altered states of consciousness	Mgr Olgierd Borowiecki	Every being consciously experiences its surroundings in a unique way. During this course, we ponder the nature of conscious experience and how it can be altered during sleep, imagination, psychedelic experiences, or meditation. We consider differences in conscious experience related to neurodiversity, as well as consciousness in non-human subjects. The course is aimed at exploring fundamental questions for which no definitive answers yet exist.	