

Erasmus+ Course Catalog

2025/2026

Faculty of Philosophy and Cognitive Science
University of Białystok, Poland

Course Overview

Course Title	ECTS	Hrs	Semester
Contemporary Issues in the Philosophy of Mind	4	30	winter or summer
Religion in the Contemporary World	4	30	summer
Philosophy of Capitalism	4	30	winter or summer
Contemporary Social Theory	4	30	winter or summer
Animal Minds	4	30	summer
Animal Psychiatry and Psychology	4	30	winter or summer
Conspiracy Theories and Delusions	4	30	winter or summer
The Main Bioethical Issues	4	30	winter or summer
Philosophy, Neuroscience, and the Limits of Scientific Explanation	4	30	winter or summer
The Bio-Cognitive Concept of the Person in the Age of Algorithms	4	30	winter or summer
Philosophical Anthropology: Key Problems and Concepts	4	30	winter or summer
Cognitive Processes in Everyday Life	4	30	winter or summer
Mind Extended with AI	4	30	winter or summer
Altered States of Consciousness	4	30	winter or summer

Cognitive Neuroscience	4	30	winter or summer
Academic Writing	2	15	winter or summer
Academic Presentations	2	15	winter or summer
Close Reading of Zygmunt Bauman's Liquid Times: Living in an Age of Uncertainty	3	30	winter

Course Descriptions

Contemporary Issues in the Philosophy of Mind

4 ECTS | 30 hours | winter or summer | 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

4 ECTS | 30 hours | summer | 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

4 ECTS | 30 hours | winter or summer | 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

4 ECTS | 30 hours | winter or summer | Prof. 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.

Animal Minds

4 ECTS | 30 hours | summer | Dr Maja Kittel

This course examines philosophical and empirical questions about animal cognition, consciousness, and mental life. We explore how animals perceive, learn, and communicate, drawing on comparative psychology, ethology, and philosophy of mind.

Animal Psychiatry and Psychology

4 ECTS | 30 hours | winter or summer | Dr Maja Kittel

An interdisciplinary exploration of mental health and psychological phenomena in non-human animals. Topics include animal emotions, stress, abnormal behavior, and the ethical implications of applying psychiatric categories across species.

Conspiracy Theories and Delusions

4 ECTS | 30 hours | winter or summer | Dr Maja Kittel

Why do people believe in conspiracy theories? This course investigates the psychology and epistemology of conspiratorial thinking, examining the boundaries between reasonable skepticism, irrational belief, and clinical delusion.

The Main Bioethical Issues

4 ECTS | 30 hours | winter or summer | Dr Joanna Smakulska

The course introduces students to key contemporary problems in bioethics as an interdisciplinary field at the intersection of biology, medicine, philosophy, and the social sciences. Bioethics is approached not only as medical ethics, but also as critical reflection on emerging biotechnologies and their moral, conceptual, and social consequences. The course focuses on ethical challenges generated by recent developments in biomedicine and neuroscience, including reproductive technologies, genetic engineering, organ transplantation, criteria of death, brain research, and the moral status of non-human animals. Special attention is given to questions of personhood, autonomy, vulnerability, identity, and moral responsibility. Rather than presenting bioethics as a set of fixed rules, the course treats it as a space of moral uncertainty and conceptual conflict, where scientific innovation reshapes the boundaries of life, agency, and ethical responsibility.

Philosophy, Neuroscience, and the Limits of Scientific Explanation

4 ECTS | 30 hours | winter or summer | Dr Joanna Smakulska

This course explores philosophical issues that arise from contemporary neuroscience and cognitive science research, particularly the limitations of scientific explanations when it comes to understanding human behaviour, morality, and responsibility. The course involves discussions of selected books and articles. Students will critically analyse how neuroscientific and biological explanations are used to interpret complex human phenomena, identifying areas where these explanations require philosophical clarification. Topics include the distinction between explanation and interpretation, the role of values in science and the ethical implications of neurobiological models in medicine and society.

The Bio-Cognitive Concept of the Person in the Age of Algorithms

4 ECTS | 30 hours | winter or summer | Dr Joanna Smakulska

This course analyses contemporary debates surrounding the concept of the human person within the context of neuroscience, cognitive science, and algorithmic technologies. Rather than proposing a single theoretical model, the course presents competing philosophical approaches to personality and human agency. Particular attention is paid to critical perspectives that warn against reductionism and more optimistic views that emphasise the explanatory and practical value of neuroscientific and computational models. This discussion-based course focuses on the careful reading of selected books and articles, encouraging students to compare different philosophical responses to current scientific and technological advances.

Philosophical Anthropology: Key Problems and Concepts

4 ECTS | 30 hours | winter or summer | Dr Joanna Smakulska

This course introduces students to philosophical anthropology through a problem-based approach, focusing on the question of what it means to be human. Key anthropological issues such as personality, embodiment, consciousness, agency, identity, and human existence in extreme and normatively ambiguous conditions are examined. Classical philosophical perspectives are discussed alongside modern and contemporary debates, demonstrating how questions about human nature recur across changing theoretical and practical contexts. Particular attention is paid to the ethical dimensions of the human condition, especially in situations that challenge established understandings of the self, responsibility, and moral status.

Cognitive Processes in Everyday Life

4 ECTS | 30 hours | winter or summer | 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.

Mind Extended with AI

4 ECTS | 30 hours | winter or summer | 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

4 ECTS | 30 hours | winter or summer | 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.

Cognitive Neuroscience

4 ECTS | 30 hours | winter or summer | Mgr Olgierd Borowiecki

This course provides an introduction to cognitive neuroscience, exploring how brain structures and neural processes give rise to mental functions. Topics include perception, memory, attention, language, and decision-making, examined through the lens of contemporary neuroimaging and experimental methods. Students will learn to critically evaluate neuroscientific evidence and understand the possibilities and limitations of mapping mind to brain. The course bridges philosophical questions about cognition with empirical findings from neuroscience research.

Academic Writing

2 ECTS | 15 hours | winter or summer | Mgr Olgierd Borowiecki

Develop essential skills for academic communication in English. Focus on essay structure, argumentation, citation practices, and clear scholarly writing. Practical exercises with feedback.

Academic Presentations

2 ECTS | 15 hours | winter or summer | Mgr Olgierd Borowiecki

Learn to design and deliver compelling academic presentations. This course covers structuring arguments for oral delivery, creating effective visual aids, engaging diverse audiences, and handling Q&A sessions. Through practice presentations and peer feedback, students develop confidence and clarity in communicating research findings and complex ideas in academic and professional settings.

Close Reading of Zygmunt Bauman's Liquid Times: Living in an Age of Uncertainty

3 ECTS | 30 hours | winter | Dr Anton Marczyński

This course offers a semester-long close reading of Zygmunt Bauman's *Liquid Times: Living in an Age of Uncertainty*, a reflection on the condition of "liquid modernity." Together we will examine Bauman's analysis of insecurity, fear, and the erosion of stable social bonds in a globalized world, as well as his discussions of individualization, consumerism, migration, precarious labor, and the tension between freedom and security. By working through the book chapter by chapter, students will practice deep, critical reading and engage in seminar discussions that connect Bauman's insights to contemporary cultural and political challenges, cultivating both interpretive skills and philosophical reflection on the dilemmas of modernity.

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