

UMBC UGC Change in Existing Course: PHIL 472: Advanced Topics in the Philosophy of Science

Date Submitted: 11/07/15

Proposed Effective Date: immediately

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COURSE INFORMATION: (please provide all information in the “current” column, and only the information changing in the “proposed” column)

change		current	proposed
<input type="checkbox"/>	Course Number(s)	472	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Formal Title	Advanced Topics in the Philosophy of Science	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Transcript Title (≤30c)		
X <input type="checkbox"/>	Recommended Course Preparation	PHIL 372 or PHIL 394, PHIL 395 and one other philosophy course, or permission of the instructor	One 300 level course in philosophy with a grade of C or better, especially PHIL 372, PHIL 394, PHIL 395, or a background in some particular science
X <input type="checkbox"/>	Prerequisite NOTE: Unless otherwise indicated, a prerequisite is assumed to be passed with a “D” or better.		One course in philosophy with a grade of C or better
<input type="checkbox"/>	Credits		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Repeatable?	X <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
<input type="checkbox"/>	Max. Total Credits	6	Max. Total Credits: This should be equal to the number of credits for courses that cannot be repeated for credit. For courses that may be repeated for credit, enter the maximum total number of credits a student can receive from this course. E.g., enter 6 credits for a 3 credit course that may be taken a second time for credit, but not for a third time. Please note that this does NOT refer to how many times a class may be retaken for a higher grade.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Grading Method(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> Reg (A-F) <input type="checkbox"/> Audit <input type="checkbox"/> Pass-Fail	<input type="checkbox"/> Reg (A-F) <input type="checkbox"/> Audit <input type="checkbox"/> Pass-Fail

CURRENT CATALOG DESCRIPTION:

An intensive study of an advanced topic in the philosophy of science, biology, physics or probability. Representative topics include scientific realism, explanation, causation, laws, units of biological selection, species and natural kinds, quantum mechanics and quantum paradoxes, interpretations of probability and sociological explanation. This course is repeatable for a maximum of 6 credits.

PROPOSED CATALOG DESCRIPTION (no longer than 75 words): leave blank if no changes are being proposed to the catalog description. NOTE: information about prerequisites should NOT appear in the catalog description.)

An advanced examination of a topic in the philosophy of science, biology, physics, or probability. This course is repeatable with different topics for a maximum of 6 credits.

RATIONALE FOR CHANGE:

1. Possible topics needn't be included in description since they're independently listed in the catalog description. The proposed description also clarified that the course can be repeated only with different topics.

2. Recommended Preparation change: The proposed change would capture the key point that PHIL 472 is at a higher level than 300 level courses, and so we are recommending that students have taken at least one 300 level course before taking PHIL 472. And PHIL 372, PHIL 394, and PHIL 395 are especially useful preparations for PHIL 452 because they are all philosophy of science courses. As with all our 400 level courses, we are making two distinct recommendations: first, that because the course will be conducted at a more advanced level than 300 level courses, it would be a good idea to have taken at least one 300 level course; second, that given the content of this course, specific 300 level courses are especially useful as preparation because of their content. In the case of PHIL 472, we also want students who have backgrounds in some science to know that this background is also especially useful as preparation for PHIL 472, and that having such background will serve a similar function as having taking a 300 level philosophy course: preparing the student for a course conducted at a more advanced level.

3. Prerequisite change: Currently this course had no prerequisites at all, but it is at a higher level (400 level) than our 300 level courses, yet all of our 300s require one course in philosophy with a grade of C or better or permission of the instructor. This makes little sense. We are altering the prerequisites for all of our 400 level courses in this way in order to encourage enrollment (by not requiring two courses in philosophy, at least one of which is at the 300 level, as we had previously in some 400 level courses) but still require some philosophy background.