

Philosophy

Philosophy - Undergraduate Study

Philosophy tries to make sense of human experience and reality through critical reflection and argument. The questions it treats engage and provoke all of us, and they occupy an important place in our intellectual tradition: Are there objective standards for deciding what is right and wrong, or is morality merely a subjective matter? Is capitalism morally acceptable? Do I have a will, and is it free? How do my words and thoughts come to be about the world? Does God exist? Can machines think? How are mind and body related? Students in philosophy classes will be exposed to arguments on both sides of such questions, and they will be encouraged to develop and rationally defend their own positions.

Philosophy is not an isolated discipline. It enjoys mutually beneficial exchanges with many fields of study within the humanities and sciences. Philosophers develop tools that allow them to examine critically the assumptions and implications of the social and natural sciences, religion, and law.

The study of philosophy provides several benefits. It emphasizes rigorous understanding of problems, together with careful analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the available solutions. It encourages clarity in the presentation of one's own ideas, as well as sensitivity in the consideration of the ideas of others. The study of philosophy therefore encourages one to develop skills and habits that are useful not only in philosophy, but in other areas as well. Philosophy students historically do well, for example, in law and medical schools.

However, one should not think that philosophy is only valuable in academic settings. Philosophical questions arise in many areas of family, business, and civic life. Philosophers strive to face these questions with the kind of intellectual honesty that leads to respect for the views of others, and continual reassessment of their own. In this way, the study of philosophy fosters values and attitudes that are helpful for responding to a lifetime of intellectual challenges.

The degree program in philosophy requires a minimum of 33 credits, plus the zero credit PHIL 492 course. The following courses compose the core program of the major from which 15 credits shall be chosen. Additionally, two courses at the 400 level or above (other than PHIL 490 and PHIL 492) are required.

Ethical theory: One course required.

PHIL 330	Ethical Theory	3
PHIL 335	Social and Political Philosophy	3
PHIL 535	Contemporary Political Philosophy	3

History: Two courses required.

PHIL 310	Ancient Philosophy	3
PHIL 314	17th Century Philosophy	3
or PHIL 315	18th Century Philosophy	

Metaphysics and Epistemology: One course required.

PHIL 364	Metaphysics: God, Minds, and Matter	3
PHIL 366	Truth, Belief and Reason	3
PHIL 380	Philosophy of Science	3

Logic:

PHIL 207 Introduction to Symbolic Logic is required.

Minor in Philosophy

The department offers a minor in philosophy which may be earned by completing a total of 15 credits in philosophy. At least 9 credits must be in courses numbered 300 or above. Students may want to emphasize specific areas by taking 15 hours of courses chosen from the following:

Philosophy of Science:

PHIL 201	Introduction to Philosophy	3
PHIL 206	Introduction to Logic and Scientific Reasoning	3
or PHIL 207	Introduction to Symbolic Logic	
PHIL 314	17th Century Philosophy	3
PHIL 315	18th Century Philosophy	3
PHIL 380	Philosophy of Science	3
PHIL 381	Philosophy of the Social and Behavioral Sciences	3

PHIL 480	Controversies in Science	3
PHIL 483	Philosophy of Biology	3
PHIL 485	Philosophy of Physics	3

History of Philosophy:

PHIL 201	Introduction to Philosophy	3
PHIL 310	Ancient Philosophy	3
PHIL 314	17th Century Philosophy	3
PHIL 315	18th Century Philosophy	3
PHIL 316	19th Century Continental Philosophy	3
PHIL 317	20th and 21st Century Continental Philosophy	3
PHIL 318	20th and 21st Century Anglo-American Philosophy	3
PHIL 460	Epistemology and Metaphysics	3

Law, Social Values and Policy:

PHIL 230	Moral Theory and Practice	3
PHIL 235	Ethical Issues in A Diverse Society	3
PHIL 331	Moral Problems in Medicine	3
PHIL 332	Philosophy of Law	3
PHIL 333	Family Ethics	3
PHIL 335	Social and Political Philosophy	3
PHIL 336	Bioethics and Biotechnology	3
PHIL 338	Feminist Philosophy	3
PHIL 343	Philosophy of Technology	3
PHIL 430	Value Theory	3
PHIL 535	Contemporary Political Philosophy	3

Communication Proficiency requirement: The department requires a grade of C or better in each of ENGL 150 and ENGL 250 (or ENGL 250H), and approval of writing by instructor of any philosophy course 300 level or above, to be designated by the student.

Philosophy - Graduate Study

The department offers work for a graduate minor in philosophy. For those taking the M.A. or M.S., the minor requirement is two courses above 300 (but not PHIL 490 each taken in conjunction with PHIL 590. For those taking the Ph.D., the requirement is four courses above 300, at least one of which is above 400 (but not PHIL 490) each taken in conjunction with PHIL 590. Interested students should ask the chair to assign a minor adviser.

The department participates in the interdepartmental program in general graduate studies.