

PHILOSOPHY

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.

Philosophy, B.A.

Freshman

Fall	Credits Spring	Credits
PHIL 201	3 Philosophy Choice	3
ENGL 150	3 Social Science Choice	3
LIB 160	1 Humanities Choice	3
Humanities Choice	3 Math Choice	3
Social Science Choice	3 Foreign Language/Elective	4
Foreign Language/Elective	4	
	17	16

Sophomore

Fall	Credits Spring	Credits
PHIL 310	3 PHIL 207	3
ENGL 250	3 PHIL 314 or 315	3
Philosophy Choice	3 Natural Science Choice	4
Humanities Choice	3 Social Science Choice	3
Natural Science Choice	4 Elective	3
	16	16

Junior

Fall	Credits Spring	Credits
PHIL 330	3 Philosophy Choice - 300/400 Level	3
PHIL 364 or 380	3 Electives	12
Philosophy Choice	3	
Electives	6	
	15	15

Senior

Fall	Credits Spring	Credits
Philosophy Choice - 400 Level	3 PHIL 492	R

Philosophy Choice - 300/400 Level	3 Philosophy Choice - 400 Level	3
Electives	6 Electives	10
	12	13

Students in all ISU majors must complete a three-credit course in U.S. diversity and a three-credit course in international perspectives. Check <http://www.registrar.iastate.edu/courses/div-ip-guide.html> for a list of approved courses. Discuss with your adviser how the two courses that you select can be applied to your graduation plan.

LAS majors require a minimum of 120 credits, **including a minimum of 45 credits at the 300/400 level**. Three of the required 45 300+ level credits must be earned in a general education group outside the group of the major. You must also complete the LAS foreign-language requirement.

According to the university-wide Communication Proficiency Grade Requirement, students must demonstrate their communication proficiency by earning a grade of C or better in ENGL 250.

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 (only 3 credits of which may be in PHIL 490). The minor must include at least 9 credits that are not used to meet any other department, college or university requirement.

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.

Courses primarily for undergraduates:

PHIL 201: Introduction to Philosophy

(3-0) Cr. 3. F.S.SS.

It has been rumored that the unexamined life is not worth living. Philosophy is an attempt to begin examining life by considering such questions as: What makes us human? What is the world ultimately like? How should we relate to other people? Is there a god? How can we know anything about these questions? Understanding questions of this kind and proposed answers to them is what this course is all about.

PHIL 206: Introduction to Logic and Scientific Reasoning

(3-0) Cr. 3. F.

Basic principles of critical reasoning and argument evaluation. A consideration of basic forms of argumentation in science and everyday life. Application to contemporary issues and controversies.

PHIL 207: Introduction to Symbolic Logic

(Cross-listed with LING). (3-0) Cr. 3. F.S.

Introduction to fundamental logical concepts and logical symbolism. Development of natural deduction through first order predicate logic with identity. Applications to arguments in ordinary English and to philosophical issues. Linguistics majors should take LING/PHIL 207 as early as possible.

PHIL 230: Moral Theory and Practice

(3-0) Cr. 3. F.S.SS.

Investigation of moral issues in the context of major ethical theories of value and obligation; e.g., punishment, abortion, economic justice, job discrimination, world hunger, and sexual morality. Emphasis on critical reasoning and argument analysis.

PHIL 235: Ethical Issues in a Diverse Society

(3-0) Cr. 3. F.S.

This course will examine a range of arguments on diversity issues. Topics will include: the social status of women, the moral status of sexuality and homosexuality, the nature and role of racism in contemporary society, the relationship between biology, gender roles and social status, and various proposals for change from a variety of political perspectives. Meets U.S. Diversity Requirement

PHIL 310: Ancient Philosophy

(Cross-listed with CL ST). (3-0) Cr. 3. F.

Prereq: PHIL 201

Survey of ancient Greek philosophy, focusing on the pre-Socratics, Plato, and Aristotle. Questions concerning being, knowledge, language, and the good life are treated in depth.

PHIL 314: 17th Century Philosophy

(3-0) Cr. 3. Alt. S., offered even-numbered years.

Readings from philosophers such as Hobbes, Descartes, Spinoza, Leibniz, and Locke. Changing conceptions of knowledge, self, and deities in response to Galileo's new science and post-reformation challenge to ecclesiastical authority.

PHIL 315: 18th Century Philosophy

(3-0) Cr. 3. Alt. S., offered odd-numbered years.

Readings from philosophers such as Berkeley, Hume, and Kant. Development of Enlightenment thought. Issues include idealism, causation, freedom, and knowledge regarding science, ethics, and deities.

PHIL 316: 19th Century Continental Philosophy

(3-0) Cr. 3. F.

Prereq: PHIL 201

The thought of Hegel, Marx, Nietzsche, and their contemporaries. Various perspectives on the philosophy of history, the nature of reason and subjectivity, the contrast between dialectical and nondialectical philosophy, and the relationship between philosophy and society.

PHIL 317: 20th and 21st Century Continental Philosophy

(3-0) Cr. 3. Alt. F., offered even-numbered years.

Prereq: PHIL 201

Major movements of 20th and 21st century thought, such as Phenomenology, Critical Theory, Post-structuralism, Postmodernism, and Feminism. Issues include the assumptions and limits of Western metaphysics, the nature of reason, the relationship between language and power.

PHIL 318: History of Analytic Philosophy

(3-0) Cr. 3. S.

Prereq: 6 credits in philosophy, including PHIL 201.

Major movements in recent and contemporary philosophy such as realism, logical positivism, ordinary language philosophy, and naturalism. Russell, Wittgenstein, Quine and other leading figures. Topics include knowledge of the material world, mind, language, values, and philosophical method.

PHIL 320: Existentialism

(3-0) Cr. 3. F.

Prereq: PHIL 201

History, development and forms of existential thought. Consciousness, free will, authenticity and bad faith. Readings of major figures in existentialism, such as Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, Dostoevsky, Heidegger, Sartre, and de Beauvoir.

PHIL 330: Ethical Theory

(3-0) Cr. 3. F.

Prereq: PHIL 201 or PHIL 230

Study of major theories of morality and the good life. Includes such topics as moral psychology, practical reasoning, and virtue theory.

PHIL 331: Moral Problems in Medicine

(3-0) Cr. 3. F.

In-depth study of some of the central moral problems arising in medicine, e.g., abortion, euthanasia, patients' rights, health care professionals' duties and responsibilities, allocation of medical resources. Major moral theories will be examined and applied.

PHIL 332: Philosophy of Law

(Cross-listed with CJ ST). (3-0) Cr. 3. F.S.

Prereq: 3 credits in philosophy

Extent of our obligation to obey the law; what constitutes just punishment; how much of the immoral should be made illegal? Relation of these questions to major theories of law and the state. Discussion of such concepts as coercion, equality, and responsibility.

PHIL 334: Environmental Ethics

(Cross-listed with ENV S). (3-0) Cr. 3. F.

Prereq: 3 credits in philosophy

Thorough study of some of the central moral issues arising in connection with human impact on the environment, e.g., human overpopulation, species extinction, forest and wilderness management, pollution. Several world views of the proper relationship between human beings and nature will be explored.

PHIL 335: Social and Political Philosophy

(3-0) Cr. 3. Alt. S., offered even-numbered years.

Prereq: 3 credits in philosophy

Foundations of social and political life. The basis of political organization, the nature of social and political institutions, rights and authority, justice. Original texts.

PHIL 336: Bioethics and Biotechnology

(3-0) Cr. 3.

Prereq: 3 credits in philosophy

In-depth study of some central moral issues in the life sciences, e.g., genetic screening and testing, genetically engineered plants and animals, risk analysis, biotechnology patents, research ethics, biodiversity, the impact of biotechnology on society and the environment. Major moral theories will be discussed and applied.

PHIL 338: Feminist Philosophy

(Cross-listed with WGS). (3-0) Cr. 3. F.

Prereq: 3 credits in philosophy or women's studies recommended

A critical, theoretical examination of the philosophical and intellectual commitments that underlie feminist projects. Questions of identity, knowledge, and ethics will be considered from both historical and contemporary perspectives. Topics will include sex and gender, self and other, nature and nurture, masculinity and femininity, equity and justice, patriarchy, oppression, and intersectionality.

Meets U.S. Diversity Requirement

PHIL 339: Liberty and Law in America

(Cross-listed with CJ ST, POL S). (3-0) Cr. 3. Alt. S., offered irregularly.

Prereq: Sophomore status

Competing conceptions of liberty in American political thought. Debates about how liberty should be protected by the law, in fields such as health care, drugs, property, speech, religion, and sex.

Meets U.S. Diversity Requirement

PHIL 340: Aesthetics

(3-0) Cr. 3. F.

Prereq: PHIL 201 or PHIL 230

Aesthetic theory and applies it to everyday life. Theoretical topics include the nature of aesthetic experience, criticism, and expression. Aesthetic experience of such forms of art as poetry and painting, as well as interactions with nature, sports, architecture, and campus sculpture.

PHIL 343: Philosophy of Technology

(3-0) Cr. 3. F.S.

Moral and other philosophical problems related to developments in technology. Topics may include conditions under which technological innovations contribute to human emancipation, relationship of technology and democracy, utility and limits of technical rationality, and problems of ensuring that benefits of technological advance are communally shared. Topics discussed with reference to such issues as contemporary developments in microelectronics, technology transfer to the Third World, etc.

PHIL 350: Philosophy of Religion

(Cross-listed with RELIG). (3-0) Cr. 3. F.

Prereq: 6 credits in philosophy

The value and truth of religious life and belief. Mystical experience; religious faith and language; arguments for God's existence; the problem of evil; miracles; and religion and morality. Historical and contemporary readings.

PHIL 353: Buddhism

(Cross-listed with RELIG, WLC). (3-0) Cr. 3. S.

Prereq: PHIL 201 or PHIL 230

Central Buddhist positions and arguments on topics such as personal and social ethics, moral psychology, metaphysics, and the relationship between Buddhist thought and the sciences. Differences between Buddhist and Western approaches to philosophy.

Meets International Perspectives Requirement.

PHIL 363: Metaphysics in Science Fiction and Popular Culture

(3-0) Cr. 3.

Prereq: PHIL 201

Examination of metaphysical issues that commonly arise in science fiction and related areas of popular culture, such as the relationship between mind and reality, metaphysical personhood, time, and causation.

PHIL 364: Metaphysics: God, Minds, and Matter

(3-0) Cr. 3. S.

Prereq: 6 credits in philosophy

A survey of classical and contemporary views on some basic metaphysical issues. Issues discussed include: Does God exist? Do you have a mind and, if so, how does it relate to your body? What is the nature of cause and effect? Do objects have any essential properties? How can we account for properties objects have in common?.

PHIL 366: Truth, Belief, and Reason

(3-0) Cr. 3. F.

Prereq: 6 credits in philosophy including PHIL 201

This course focuses on significant topics in theory of knowledge, including the value of true beliefs, the role of sense experience in supporting our theoretical views, and the place of reason in human nature. Historical and contemporary views will be considered.

PHIL 380: Philosophy of Science

(3-0) Cr. 3. F.

Prereq: 3 credits in philosophy or 6 credits in a science

Introduction to the philosophy of science. A variety of basic problems common to the natural and social sciences: the nature of explanation, the structure of theories, the unity of science, and the distinction between science and nonscience.

PHIL 382: History and Philosophy of the Scientific Revolution

(Cross-listed with HIST). (3-0) Cr. 3. Alt. S., offered odd-numbered years.

The emergence of empirical science as the authoritative methodology for production of knowledge about the natural world in the period between Copernicus and Kant. Scientific progress achieved during the period, including the work of Galileo, Descartes, and Newton. The re-shaping of epistemology in the Western intellectual tradition. Implications for philosophy and historiography.

PHIL 389: Philosophy of Psychology and Psychiatry

(3-0) Cr. 3. Alt. F., offered odd-numbered years.

Prereq: 3 credit hours of PHIL courses or 3 credit hours of PSYCH courses

Philosophical foundations of 20th century psychology and psychiatry.

Introduction to competing schools of thought in psychology and their philosophical assumptions. Examination of philosophical assumptions in the study of psychopathology/abnormal psychology.

PHIL 430: Value Theory

(3-0) Cr. 3. S.

Prereq: PHIL 230

Theoretical and normative topics in ethics or political philosophy.

PHIL 450: Agency and Free Will

(3-0) Cr. 3. F.

Prereq: PHIL 207 strongly encouraged

Personal identity, agency, free will, moral responsibility, causation, future contingents, and time will be discussed. What makes a person the same person over time? Do humans have free will? Are we not morally responsible if our actions are inevitable consequences of the past and the laws of nature? What distinguishes causes from non-causes? Are there facts about the future?.

PHIL 465: Brains, Minds, and Computers

(3-0) Cr. 3. F.

Prereq: 6 credits in philosophy

Examination of concepts such as computability, intelligence, programming, and free will; and of arguments about whether any human capacity is forever beyond realization in a machine.

PHIL 466: Topics in Epistemology

(3-0) Cr. 3. S.

Prereq: 6 credits in philosophy including PHIL 201

Topics in epistemology. Possible topics include skepticism about the external world, the extent of a priori knowledge, rival accounts of moral knowledge, feminist perspectives on the theory of knowledge, and the value of true belief. Topics vary each time offered.

PHIL 485: Philosophy of Physics

(3-0) Cr. 3. Alt. S., offered even-numbered years.

Prereq: 3 credits in philosophy or 3 credits in physics

Conceptual and philosophical issues relating to the interpretation of theories in classical and modern physics. May include one or more of the following topics: the relationship between mathematics and the physical world; Newtonian physics (determinism and predictability); thermodynamics and statistical physics (the nature of probability; entropy and the direction of time); relativistic physics (indeterminism; realism and nonlocality; consciousness and the role of the observer).

PHIL 490: Independent Study

Cr. 1-4. Repeatable, maximum of 9 credits.

Prereq: 6 credits in philosophy; permission of instructor, approval of chair.

Guided reading and research on special topics selected to meet needs of advanced students. No more than 9 credits of Phil 490 may be counted toward graduation.

PHIL 490H: Independent Study, Honors

Cr. 1-4. Repeatable, maximum of 9 credits.

Prereq: 6 credits in philosophy; permission of instructor, approval of chair.

Guided reading and research on special topics selected to meet needs of advanced students. No more than 9 credits of Phil 490 may be counted toward graduation.

PHIL 492: Graduating Senior Survey

Cr. R. F.S.

Prereq: Graduating senior

Final presentation for graduation and the future. Outcomes assessment activities. Offered on a satisfactory-fail basis only.

Courses primarily for graduate students, open to qualified undergraduates:**PHIL 535: Contemporary Political Philosophy**

(Cross-listed with POL S). (3-0) Cr. 3. Alt. S., offered odd-numbered years.

Prereq: 6 credits of philosophy or political science

Examination of theories of justice proposed by contemporary political philosophers. Analysis of the philosophical foundations of perspectives such as liberalism, libertarianism, communitarianism, socialism, feminism. Normative assessments of socio-political institutions.

PHIL 590: Special Topics in Philosophy

Cr. 2-4. Repeatable.

*Prereq: Permission of instructor, 9 credits in philosophy***PHIL 590A: Special Topics in Philosophy: History of Philosophy**

Cr. 2-4. Repeatable.

*Prereq: Permission of instructor, 9 credits in philosophy***PHIL 590B: Special Topics in Philosophy: Epistemology and Metaphysics**

Cr. 2-4. Repeatable.

*Prereq: Permission of instructor, 9 credits in philosophy***PHIL 590C: Special Topics in Philosophy: Value Theory**

Cr. 2-4. Repeatable.

*Prereq: Permission of instructor, 9 credits in philosophy***PHIL 590D: Special Topics in Philosophy: Logic and Philosophy of Science**

Cr. 2-4. Repeatable.

*Prereq: Permission of instructor, 9 credits in philosophy***PHIL 593: Summer Bioethics Workshop for Teachers**

(2-0) Cr. 2. SS.

Topics include moral theory, pedagogical issues in teaching bioethics, and substantive current issues in bioethics.