

PHILOSOPHY

Overview

The philosophy major (33 credits) and minor (15 credits) offer Iowa State University students the opportunity to explore fundamental human questions through reflection and argumentation. Do we have free will? Can machines think? What makes actions right or wrong? What is the nature of knowledge and what can we hope to know? What does justice require, politically and economically? Philosophy classes explore answers to deep questions such as these, encouraging each student to develop and rationally defend their own views.

Philosophy offers a structured but flexible program to help students graduate on time while pursuing their interests. 200-level courses introduce students to essential questions and methods of philosophical thought. In 300-level courses, students engage in close examination of central topics in both contemporary thought and the history of philosophy. Seminars at the 400-level offer the opportunity to study topics in-depth alongside a committed team of faculty and students.

Philosophy fosters skills of communication and critical thinking that are valuable across work, family, and civic life. The program equips students to logically analyze and develop new responses to the challenges faced by humanity. It also emphasizes clarity of thought and communication as part of rigorous engagement with both abstract and applied areas of thought. These skills of logical analysis, careful reading, original thought, and clear communication are in high demand across different fields of work and post-graduate study. Philosophy majors typically achieve some of the highest scores on standardized tests such as the LSAT and GRE, and have mid-career salaries higher than many other majors.

Student Learning Outcomes

Upon graduation, students should be able to:

1. Explain central problems in key areas of philosophy, such as metaphysics, epistemology, ethics, logic, political philosophy, philosophy of language, and the philosophy of science.
2. Explain the views of historically important philosophers and place them in the context of significant philosophical movements.
3. Identify and critically evaluate arguments by developing objections and replies.
4. Communicate ideas and arguments, both orally and in writing, with clarity and precision.
5. Engage with different points of view with open-mindedness, intellectual curiosity, and a willingness to learn from the ideas and arguments of others.

Philosophy Degree Requirements

As majors in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, Philosophy students must meet College of Liberal Arts and Sciences (<http://catalog.iastate.edu/previouscatalogs/2023-2024/collegeofliberalartsandsciences/>) and university-wide requirements (<http://catalog.iastate.edu/previouscatalogs/2023-2024/collegescurricula/>) for graduation in addition to those stated below for the major.

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: One course required.

PHIL 207	Introduction to Symbolic Logic	3
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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 advisor 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 world language requirement and LAS career proficiency 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.

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 World Language/Elective	4
World 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	2-3
	LAS 203	1
16		16-17

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

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.

MINOR IN ETHICS

The Department Philosophy and Religious Studies offers a minor in ethics. Ethics is the branch of human thought that addresses questions of human morality. It seeks to define right and wrong at the theoretical level and to guide action across diverse fields of practice. An ethics minor provides opportunities for students to develop an understanding of both the theoretical foundations and the practical applications of ethics. It serves students who wish to understand how ethical thought complements their chosen majors, but also students who have an interest in learning about ethics more generally.

The minor in ethics requires 15 credits; at least 6 credits must be in courses numbered 300 or above. The minor must include at least 9 credits that are not used to meet any other department, college or university requirement.

All students pursuing the minor in ethics must complete either PHIL 230 Moral Theory and Practice or PHIL 330 Ethical Theory. In addition, students must complete 6 credits of courses chosen from a list of core ethics courses (Table A below), as well as 6 credits of courses chosen from a broader list of courses with a significant ethics focus (Table A and Table B combined).

CORE ETHICS COURSES (TABLE A)

PHIL 230	Moral Theory and Practice	3
PHIL 235	Ethical Issues in a Diverse Society	3
PHIL 320	Existentialism	3
PHIL 330	Ethical Theory	3
PHIL 331	Moral Problems in Medicine	3
PHIL 332	Philosophy of Law	3
PHIL 334	Environmental Ethics	3
PHIL 335	Social and Political Philosophy	3
or PHIL 535	Contemporary Political Philosophy	
PHIL 336	Bioethics and Biotechnology	3
PHIL 343	Philosophy of Technology	3
PHIL 430	Value Theory	3
PHIL 450	Agency and Free Will	3

ADDITIONAL ETHICS COURSES (TABLE B)

ACCT 489	Corporate Social Responsibility Reporting	3
A B E 388	Sustainable Engineering and International Development	3
ANTHR 220	Globalization and Sustainability	3
ANTHR 230	Globalization and the Human Condition	3
CPR E 234	Legal, Professional, and Ethical Issues in Cyber Systems	3
ECON 321	Economics of Discrimination	3

ECON 362	Applied Ethics in Agricultural Business	3
EDUC 205	Social Foundations of Education in the United States: Early Childhood and Elementary Education	3
EDUC 405	Social Justice Education and Teaching: Early Childhood and Elementary	3
EDUC 481 or EDUC 581	Philosophy of Education Philosophy of Education	3
ENGR 327	Voices of Public Policy	3
ENTSP 410	Social Entrepreneurship	3
GLOBE 220	Globalization and Sustainability	3
JL MC 462	Media Ethics, Freedom, Responsibility	3
MGMT 372	Ethical and Responsible Management	3
NREM 460	Controversies in Natural Resource Management	3
N S 412	Leadership and Ethics	3
PHIL 338	Feminist Philosophy	3
PHIL 339	Liberty and Law in America	3
POL S 235	Introduction to Ethics and Politics	3
POL S 480	Ethics and Public Policy	3
RELIG 360	Religion and Ethics	3
RELIG 370	Religion and Politics	3
RELIG 380	Catholic Social Thought	3
SOC 334	Politics and Society	3
WGS 160	Gender Justice	1

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 advisor.

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