

PHILOSOPHY

DEPARTMENT OFFICE

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Programs Offered

Bachelor of Arts in Philosophy

Minor in Philosophy

The Philosophical Life

The value of a philosophy degree stems from the richness of the perennial themes that are addressed in philosophical texts and discussions. Majors in this department balance their studies of the great classical themes of philosophy with a focus on the particular philosophical issues that are of paramount importance to them. In designing the department major, care has been taken to emphasize both the historical and analytical dimensions of philosophy, as well as its theoretical and practical dimensions. In this regard, the Department of Philosophy believes that the Socratic dictum "Know thyself!" requires the exercise of both theoretical and practical reason. The design of the major expresses this fundamental belief.

In its historical dimensions, an education in philosophy gives the student a nuanced appreciation of the wide array of conceptual systems that human beings have employed to deal with questions concerning reality, justice, truth, morality, and the meaning of life. In its analytical and critical dimensions, philosophy trains one to detect and avoid errors in thinking. Such training involves special emphasis on the logical use of language, the analysis of concepts, and the ability to critique and construct extended arguments.

Philosophy's emphasis on both the imaginative and critical use of rationality helps prepare one for a wide variety of careers that require finely honed reasoning and communication skills. Such fields include law, medicine, social and political advocacy, counseling, teaching, print and electronic media, and research and writing in both academic and nonacademic fields.

Faculty and Curriculum

At the heart of the philosophy program is the faculty: dedicated teachers and scholars who represent key approaches to philosophy, and who are actively engaged in ongoing research. We have designed the curriculum to provide the major with a balanced historical and contemporary understanding of philosophy.

Advising

Advising begins with an initial advising interview with the department chair. During the following semester the student will choose a regular faculty advisor.

Bachelor of Arts in Philosophy

A major in philosophy involves a core of courses required of all majors, one senior seminar, and 18 elective units in philosophy chosen by the student. Core courses provide overviews of the major areas of philosophy, whereas elective courses may be more specialized or experimental in content and method.

Degree Requirements	Units
General education	51
Major requirements: Core (24), Electives (18)	42
General electives	27
Total units needed for graduation	120

Major Core Requirements

PHIL 101 Critical Thinking (these GE C1 units do not count for the major) (3)	
PHIL 102 Introduction to Logic	3
PHIL 120 Introduction to Philosophy	3
PHIL 202 Proseminar	3
PHIL 302 Ethics and Value Theory (these GE C3 units do not count for the major) (3)	
PHIL 290 Studies in Ancient Philosophy	3
PHIL 295 Studies in Modern Philosophy	3
PHIL 305 Truth	3
PHIL 310 Being	3
PHIL 400 Senior Seminar	3

Total units in the major core 24

Teaching of senior seminars rotates among full-time department members, and at least one is offered each semester. PHIL 400 may be repeated twice for credit when the subject matter and instructor are not repeated.

In exceptional cases, the Philosophy Department permits the design of an individual major. A proposal for an individual major must be approved by three members of the full-time faculty selected by the applicant. These three faculty members shall constitute the student's major committee.

The major requirement is thus 42 units: 24 core units and 18 units of electives. Students may petition for elective units to be transferred in from outside the department.

Sample Four-year Program for Bachelor of Arts in Philosophy

FRESHMAN YEAR:: 30 Units	
<i>Fall Semester (15 Units)</i>	<i>Spring Semester (15 Units)</i>
PHIL 101 (A3) or ENGL 101 (A2) (3) PHIL 102 (A3) (3) GE (6), Electives (3)	ENGL 101 (3) PHIL 102 or PHIL 101 (3) GE (6) Electives (3)
SOPHOMORE YEAR:: 30 Units	
<i>Fall Semester (15 Units)</i>	<i>Spring Semester (15 Units)</i>
PHIL 202 (3) PHIL 290 (3) HUMS 200 (3) GE (3) Electives (3)	PHIL 295 (3) GE (6) Electives (6)
JUNIOR YEAR:: 33 Units	
<i>Fall Semester (15 Units)</i>	<i>Spring Semester (18 Units)</i>
PHIL 305 (3) PHIL 302 (C3) (3) Philosophy Elective (3) GE (6)	PHIL 310 (3) Philosophy Electives (6) GE (6) Electives (3)
SENIOR YEAR:: 27 Units	
<i>Fall Semester (15 Units)</i>	<i>Spring Semester (12 Units)</i>
PHIL 400 (3) Philosophy Elective (3) GE (3) Electives (6)	Philosophy Electives (6) Electives (6)
TOTAL UNITS:: 120	

Minor in Philosophy

The minor in philosophy consists of 18 units chosen by the student in consultation with a department advisor. No more than 6 of these 18 units may be lower-division GE courses. The minor track in philosophy may be designed to emphasize pre-law, pre-med, pre-business, critical thinking, and other applied areas and/or pre-professional programs. Consult the department chair for further information.

Philosophy Courses (PHIL)

Classes are offered in the semesters indicated. Please see the Schedule of Classes for most current information and faculty teaching assignments.

Lower-division courses are designed to provide the student with fundamental background information and skills. Non-majors who wish to take upper-division electives are encouraged to take 6 units

of lower-division course work in philosophy before taking upper-division courses.

101 CRITICAL THINKING (3) FALL, SPRING

Critical thinking is the best defense against intellectual trickery and self-delusion. It provides specific techniques and tools whereby we can avoid basic fallacies in our own thinking and detect them in the thought of others. Reasoning is a highly complicated human activity and cannot be satisfactorily studied in an intellectual vacuum. Hence, in this course, critical and uncritical thought are contrasted in the context of the world of human interests and activities—social, political, and scientific. All of the basic “tricks” for persuading people to accept false premises and conclusions as true are systematically laid out and their detection practiced. Satisfies GE, category A3 (Critical Thinking).

102 INTRODUCTION TO LOGIC (3) FALL, SPRING

An introduction to the nature of contemporary systems of logic and their application. Students will learn how to abbreviate arguments in ordinary language, to deduce conclusions, and to locate fallacies. Recommended for students of the sciences, computer programming, or mathematics, and the general student interested in the structure of arguments. Satisfies GE, category A3 (Critical Thinking). CAN PHIL 6.

120 INTRODUCTION TO PHILOSOPHY (3) FALL, SPRING

This course provides an introduction to some of the enduring questions of thinking: What is the nature of knowledge, of morality, of justice, of the self, of religion, of the search for wisdom, of reality? Topics and approaches may vary from section to section. Consult the department office for current information. Satisfies GE, category C3 (Philosophy and Values).

200 PHILOSOPHICAL ISSUES (3)

Students practice the techniques of reading and thinking critically, of expository writing, and of oral expression as they reflect together on philosophical issues. Recent topics have included Human Consciousness, Foundations of Greek and Chinese Thought, and Philosophical Issues in Global Climate Change. As students read and discuss the semester’s topic, they will reflect consciously on the principles of thinking, speaking, and writing. This skills-oriented course reflects the assumption that we master skills more thoroughly when we are working on an interesting set of issues that are significant and relevant to our lives. Prerequisites: completion of GE categories A2 and A3.

202 PROSEMINAR (3) FALL

This course is designed as an in-depth orientation to the academic discipline of philosophy. The central question of the course is as simple as it is profound: What is philosophy? Students will study an eclectic sampling of answers to this question from historical and contemporary sources. Students are encouraged to appreciate the merits of different philosophical perspectives. In addition, the course emphasizes acquisition of the requisite skills for an intellectually rewarding course of study in the philosophy department. These skills include being able to make oral presentations, participate in seminar discussions, listen to what others have to say and respond appropriately, write expository prose essays, evaluate philosophical arguments, and synthesize complex information. Reading assignments are subject to the interests of the faculty.

290 STUDIES IN ANCIENT PHILOSOPHY (3)

This course treats topics relating to philosophy in the pre-Modern period. Readings may be drawn from the ancient Greek, Hellenistic, Medieval, and non-Western ancient traditions, and may include subsequent studies thereof. Emphasis will vary from semester to semester.

295 STUDIES IN MODERN PHILOSOPHY (3)

This course treats topics relating to philosophy in the Modern period. Readings may be drawn from the period spanning the 16th through the 20th centuries in Europe, and may include subsequent studies thereof. Emphasis will vary from semester to semester.

302 ETHICS AND VALUE THEORY (3) FALL AND SPRING

An introduction to the philosophical analysis of ethics, morality, and values, and a survey of the various systems of moral philosophy. The course covers such issues as: What is the good life? What considerations are relevant to making moral decisions? Are moral principles universal, or relative to a given society? How, if at all, can moral judgments be justified or moral disagreements resolved? Satisfies GE, category C3 (Philosophy and Values). Consult Schedule of Classes for topic to be studied. May be repeated (with a different focus) for credit.

303 SOCIAL AND POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY (3)

A philosophical examination of the Western tradition of social and political thought. The course will discuss topics such as justice and the ideal society; the question of justified revolution; the role of private property; freedom, individual rights, and social welfare; different forms of government; and the role of values in political deliberation.

305 TRUTH (3) FALL

The aim of this course is to examine a wide sampling of answers to one of the great perennial questions of philosophy: What is truth? Depending on the interests of the faculty, possible readings may address, but are not limited to, the following thematic areas of interest: debates over truth from Socrates to Nietzsche and beyond; the meaning of truth in science, technology, religion, and art; truth and power; non-Western approaches to truth; universal versus particular truth. This course is required of all students who are majoring in philosophy.

310 BEING (3) SPRING

The aim of this course is to examine a wide sampling of answers to one of the most fascinating questions of philosophy: What is the nature of reality? Depending on the interests of the faculty, readings can address, but are not limited to, the following thematic areas of interest: scientific and technological conceptions of reality, religious conceptions of reality, differences/similarities between human and nonhuman reality, non-Western approaches to reality, the reality of history, and the history of reality. This course is required of all students who are majoring in philosophy.

311 ROBOTICS AND THE TRANSHUMAN FUTURE (3)

The field of cognitive robotics presents us with profound philosophical questions. Can robots be used to model or replicate human cognitive functions? How would robust robotic artificial intelligence change the world we live in? What would it mean to be human in a fully automated world? To begin to answer these questions we will create simple mechanical reasoning devices and discuss their relevance to philosophical theories of life and mind. We will use LEGO beams, plates, gears, motors, and a RCX micro controller board programmed in the LEGO or NQC (Not Quite C) language along with various sensors and motors to construct small autonomous robots. These robots will be used to try to re-create and explore the strengths and weaknesses of some recent experiments in the field of cognitive robotics.

313 ETHICS IN SCIENCE, ENGINEERING, AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (3)

Advanced sciences and high technologies constantly challenge our notions of ethics and morality. In this class we will look at ethical theories that seek to give guidance to scientists, engineers, and other technologists whose work is not only changing the way we live our lives but also our very understanding of life and our place in the universe. Students will look at case studies on topics such as: biotechnology, ethical decision-making in the technological design process, engineering disaster analysis, ethics and information technology, technology design and its impact on the traditional social contract.

315 EXISTENTIALISM (3)

Existentialism points to the philosophical significance of human existence itself: to do philosophy means to take oneself seriously as an embodied, finite subject, existing in the world and relating to other subjects. Existentialist thought is both a historical movement in philosophy and a methodology of philosophy. In this class, we will read several prominent existentialist philosophers and examine relevant

themes such as the ethics of ambiguity, anxiety and dread, passion and desire, subjectivity and intersubjectivity, finitude and the divine, freedom and choice.

325 ENVIRONMENTAL PHILOSOPHY (3)

This course examines the philosophical problems that emerge with sustained reflection on environmental issues. These problems include: the moral standing of non-human entities, the status of "value" in nature, and the status of "nature" itself as something other than human, and vice versa.

338 PHILOSOPHY OF EMOTION (3)

A philosophical study of emotion, raising definitional, epistemological, metaphysical, and value questions about emotion. The course includes the study of particular emotions, such as love, compassion, fear, and pride, and makes use of information about emotions from the sciences and social sciences.

340 BUDDHISM AND PHILOSOPHY (3)

From its historical beginnings in India to Japanese Zen and its eventual introduction to the West, Buddhism has had a distinctive and important impact on philosophical thought. The course will focus on the metaphysical, psychological, ethical, aesthetic, and practical dimensions of Buddhist teachings. Course content and historical emphasis will vary.

350 TOPICS IN MORAL PHILOSOPHY (3)

The aim of this course is to examine recent research and scholarship dealing with a wide range of problems and issues of concern to philosophers who are working in the area of practical philosophy. Some possible topics include: the roles of reason and emotion in moral motivation and judgment, the objectivity of value, the nature of moral identity, social dimensions to moral experience, advanced work in the theory of justice, the scope and limits of morality, the relationship between morality and self-interest, and the character of rational action.

355 AMERICAN PHILOSOPHY (3)

This course surveys major themes and thinkers that define America's distinct philosophical tradition. Stress will be on the origins of "Pragmatism" as a philosophical movement. Our focus will be on the classical thinkers: Emerson, Thoreau, Peirce, James, Dewey, and Mead, and extend to cover the "Neo-Pragmatism" of Richard Rorty, Hilary Putnam, Cornell West, Stanley Cavell, and others. Course content and emphasis may vary.

360 PHILOSOPHY OF ART AND LITERATURE (3)

An inquiry into the nature of art and literature. This course includes consideration of such topics as: The Possibility of Defining "Art," Artistic Imagination, Creativity and Genius, the Purpose of Art, The Interpretation, and Critical Evaluation of Artworks and Works of Literature, Art and Literature in Everyday Life, and The Intriguing Relationship between Philosophy and Literature.

368 PHILOSOPHY AND FILM (3)

A turn to film and film studies in search of contemporary culture's handling of philosophical themes. The course will develop strategies to study the hidden philosophical significance found within selections from film genres. Such study is indebted to the work of Stanley Cavell and his project to find in film the voices of a repressed American philosophy. Work from throughout critical theory will be considered.

370 ADVANCED LOGIC (3)

This course is designed for students who have taken an introductory course in logic. The goal of this course is twofold. First, to consider some more complex logical languages and systems, and second, to consider some of the more properly philosophical issues raised by discussion of those systems. Possible topics of discussion include: modality and modal propositional languages, the probability calculus and its application to problems of induction and confirmation, decision theory and some of the paradoxes of rationality that it seems to give rise to, and game theory and its relation to economic and moral reasoning.

378 FEMINIST PHILOSOPHY (3)

This course is an introduction to feminist philosophy. In this class, we will see how the meaning of concepts such as the body, identity, gender, sexuality, and race have changed throughout the past two centuries by looking at central debates within feminist thought. Questions may include: How is it that we come to expect behavior, appearance, and actions to be essentially gendered? What are the implications of gender for how we understand sexuality and race? Where can we find resources for changing such expectations? How do we decide when such transformation is necessary and worth pursuing?

383 PHILOSOPHY OF LANGUAGE (3)

A study of classical and current theories about the nature and functions of language, and about truth and meaning. Analysis of the relevance of philosophy of language to other branches of philosophy, linguistics, psychology, and the social sciences. Analysis of philosophical issues in the language of fiction and poetry.

390 TOPICS IN PHILOSOPHY (1-6)

Topics courses are intended to cover some particular aspect of a philosophical problem, a particular philosopher, or some philosophical issue not normally explored in detail in any of the standard course offerings.

399 STUDENT-INSTRUCTED COURSE (1-3)

An introductory or advanced course designed by a senior or graduate student and taught under the supervision of faculty sponsor(s).

Advanced Courses

400 SENIOR SEMINAR (3)

A seminar for students in their senior year. Topics vary from semester to semester. May be repeated for credit.

450, 452 SENIOR THESIS (3, 3)

Writing of a paper deemed acceptable by a faculty director and reader. Superior papers nominated for distinction will be defended before the philosophy faculty. Students wishing to be candidates for graduation "with distinction" are urged to write a thesis. Prerequisite to PHIL 452: PHIL 450. Prerequisites: advanced standing and instructor consent.

462 RESEARCH ASSISTANT IN PHILOSOPHY (1-6)

Intended to give selected students experience in participating in the construction of a professor's research project. Prerequisites: advanced standing and a faculty invitation.

470 TEACHING ASSISTANT IN PHILOSOPHY (1-6)

Intended to give students experience in assisting the instructor in a philosophy course by doing research and tutoring students in the class. Prerequisites: advanced standing and consent of the instructor.

495 SPECIAL STUDIES (1-3)

Advanced individualized instruction and research with one or more members of the philosophy faculty. The course is designed to provide advanced students with an opportunity to do specialized research and study under strict faculty supervision. Prerequisite: consent of the instructor.

499 INTERNSHIP (1-4)

Supervised training and experience in applied philosophy for advanced students in community organizations. Internship contracts are required. Cr/NC only. Prerequisite: consent of the instructor.

Graduate Courses

The Philosophy Department does not offer a master's program. However, a number of students have received graduate credit for work in philosophy under the auspices of the interdisciplinary M.A. Interested students should consult the chair of the Philosophy Department and the special major advisor.

595 SPECIAL STUDIES IN PHILOSOPHY (1-6)

Advanced research and writing. Students work under close supervision of faculty members. Subject matter variable. May be repeated for credit.