

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 A3 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

Fall Semester (15 Units)	Spring Semester (15 Units)
PHIL 101 (A3) or	ENGL 101 (3)
ENGL 101 (A2) (3)	PHIL 102 or PHIL 101 (3)
PHIL 102 (A3) (3)	GE (6)
GE (6)	Electives (3)
Electives (3)	

SOPHOMORE YEAR:: 30 Units

Fall Semester (15 Units)	Spring Semester (15 Units)
PHIL 202 (3)	PHIL 295 (3)
PHIL 290 (3)	GE (6)
HUMS 200 (3)	Electives (6)
GE (3)	
Electives (3)	

JUNIOR YEAR:: 33 Units

Fall Semester (15 Units)	Spring Semester (18 Units)
PHIL 305 (3)	PHIL 310 (3)
PHIL 302 (C3) (3)	Philosophy Electives (6)
Philosophy Elective (3)	GE (6)
GE (6)	Electives (3)

SENIOR YEAR:: 27 Units

Fall Semester (15 Units)	Spring Semester (12 Units)
PHIL 400 (3)	Philosophy Electives (6)
Philosophy Elective (3)	Electives (6)
GE (3)	
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 12 remaining units must be upper division courses offered by the Philosophy Department. Course substitutions must be approved by the Department Chair. All courses must be taken for a grade to count toward the minor. 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.