

Philosophy

College of Arts & Humanities
Department of Philosophy
227 Armstrong Hall • 507-389-2012

Chair: Richard Liebendorfer

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Like no other discipline, through its methodical scrutiny of the entire network of our beliefs, philosophy reveals and clarifies our fundamental ideas and principles. Recognizing that anyone who systematically searches for knowledge may be considered a philosopher, the highest degree in the sciences and humanities which the modern university grants is the Ph.D. - the doctor of philosophy.

Because it engages in a comprehensive analysis of the theoretical foundations of other disciplines, philosophy serves as an excellent pre-professional major. The study of philosophy provides the student with a wealth of analytical skills, making it one of the preferred pre-law and pre-med majors. The insights and perspectives of philosophy prepare leaders of industry, politicians, theologians, and comedians alike. Through philosophy, the continued conversation that constitutes our culture is kept alive.

Minnesota State University's philosophy program provides general education courses, electives, and minors supporting concentrations in other fields. A philosophy major is both for those who want to become professional philosophers and those who want a general liberal education. It traverses other disciplines, providing the ability to deal with such problems as the nature of values and knowledge, and studies the development of ideas and their impact on the arts, religion, and social institutions.

Admission to Major is granted by the department. Minimum university admission requirements are:

- a minimum of 32 earned semester credit hours.
- a minimum cumulative GPA of 2.00 (C).

Contact the department for application procedures.

PHILOSOPHY BA, BS

Required for Major (Core, 12 credits):

- PHIL 110 Logic and Critical Thinking (3) OR
- PHIL 311 Symbolic Logic (3)
- PHIL 334 History of Philosophy: Classical Philosophy (3)
- PHIL 336 History of Philosophy: Renaissance and Modern Philosophy (3)
- PHIL 495 Senior Thesis (2)
- PHIL 496 Senior Thesis (1)

Note: All majors must submit, prior to graduation, a portfolio of three papers, one paper from a history of philosophy class, one from a 400 level class, and one of the student's choosing.

Choose one of the following (Historical Period):

- PHIL 337 19th Century Philosophy (3)
- PHIL 338 American Philosophy (3)
- PHIL 358 Eastern Philosophy (3)
- PHIL 437 Contemporary Philosophy (3)
- PHIL 455 Existentialism and Phenomenology (3)

Choose one of the following (Values):

- PHIL 120 Introduction to Ethics (3)
- PHIL 205 Culture, Identity, and Diversity (3)
- PHIL 222 Medical Ethics (3)
- PHIL 224 Business Ethics (3)
- PHIL 226 Environmental Ethics (3)
- PHIL 240 Law, Justice, and Society (3)
- PHIL 321 Social and Political Philosophy (3)
- PHIL 322 Ethical Theory (3)
- PHIL 440 Philosophy of Law (3)
- PHIL 460 Philosophy of the Arts (3)

Required Electives (18 credits):

Choose 18 credits from the following list. At least 15 credits must be upper division (300- 400 level).

PHIL 100 PHIL 110 PHIL 112 PHIL 115 PHIL 120

PHIL 205 PHIL 222 PHIL 224 PHIL 226 PHIL 240
PHIL 311 PHIL 321 PHIL 322 PHIL 337 PHIL 338
PHIL 358 PHIL 361 PHIL 410 PHIL 437 PHIL 440
PHIL 450 PHIL 455 PHIL 460 PHIL 473 PHIL 474
PHIL 480 PHIL 490 PHIL 491 PHIL 499

Required for Bachelor of Arts (BA) degree ONLY:
Language (8)

Required Minor: Yes. Any.

PHILOSOPHY MINOR

Required for Minor (Core, 9 credits):

- PHIL 334 History of Philosophy: Classical Philosophy (3)
- PHIL 336 History of Philosophy: Renaissance and Modern Philosophy (3)

Choose one course from the following:

- PHIL 337 19th Century Philosophy (3)
- PHIL 338 American Philosophy (3)
- PHIL 358 Eastern Philosophy (3)
- PHIL 437 Contemporary Philosophy (3)
- PHIL 455 Existentialism and Phenomenology (3)

Required Electives (9 credits):

Choose a minimum of 9 additional Philosophy credits from the following:

PHIL 100 PHIL 110 PHIL 112 PHIL 115 PHIL 120
PHIL 205 PHIL 222 PHIL 224 PHIL 226 PHIL 240
PHIL 240 PHIL 311 PHIL 321 PHIL 322 PHIL 337
PHIL 338 PHIL 358 PHIL 361 PHIL 410 PHIL 437
PHIL 440 PHIL 450 PHIL 455 PHIL 460 PHIL 473
PHIL 474 PHIL 480 PHIL 490 PHIL 491 PHIL 499

POLICIES/INFORMATION

GPA Policy. None.

P/N Grading Policy. The P/N grading system applies to all courses, but majors and minors may take 300- or 400-level courses in philosophy for P/N credit only with the consent of the department.

COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

PHIL 100 (3) Introduction to Philosophy

Introduction to the nature of philosophy and specific, basic problems.

F, S
GE-1C, 6

PHIL 110 (3) Logic and Critical Thinking

Traditional syllogistic logic and an introduction to the elements of modern symbolic logic.

F, S
GE-2, 4

PHIL 112 (3) Logic of Scientific Method

Inductive logic, formation of hypotheses, scientific explanation, definition, classification, probability, analogy.

Variable
GE-2, 4

PHIL 115 (3) Race, Class and Gender

To what extent do the differences among races and between genders represent biological differences, and to what extent are they constructed by society? Is racism best conceptualized as an additional burden to sexism or as one different in kind?

Variable
GE-1C, 6, 7 CD-Core

PHIL 120 (3) Introduction to Ethics

Discussion of theories of value and obligation.

Variable

GE-1C, 6, 9 CD-Core

PHIL 205 (3) Culture, Identity, and Diversity

Discussion of the ways that a culture both creates human community and shapes self-identity. Exploration of similarities and differences between and interdependence among cultural traditions, and of vocabularies for assessing traditions.

Variable

GE-1C, 6, 8 CD-Related

PHIL 222 (3) Medical Ethics

Ethical perspectives relevant to issues such as euthanasia, genetic engineering, organ transplant, patients' rights, abortion, etc.

Variable

GE-1C, 6, 9 CD-Related

PHIL 224 (3) Business Ethics

Introduction to ethical theories and concepts and their application to specific cases in the world of business.

Variable

GE-1C, 6, 9 CD-Related

PHIL 226 (3) Environmental Ethics

Questions about human responsibilities to other animals and the environment gain urgency as environmental crises become more prevalent, and animal species continue to be eliminated. Learn about, critique, and apply the principles underlying evaluations of human environmental conduct.

Variable

GE-1C, 9, 10

PHIL 240 (3) Law, Justice & Society

Consideration of the basic philosophical approaches to the idea of justice and how this idea relates to other fundamental ideas in political philosophy, ethics, and law.

Variable

GE-1C, 6, 9

PHIL 311 (3) Symbolic Logic

Study of the elements of first order symbolic logic, i.e., the propositional calculus and the predicate calculus, and its applications to ordinary language and mathematics.

S

GE-2, 4

PHIL 321 (3) Social & Political Philosophy

Human rights and responsibilities in relation to the organization of society and government.

Variable

GE-6, 9 CD-Related

PHIL 322 (3) Ethical Theory

Topics in normative, meta-ethical and applied ethical theory.

GE-1C, 6, 9

PHIL 334 (3) History of Philosophy: Classical Philosophy

Philosophers of Ancient Greece, Rome and the early middle ages: The presocratics, Plato, Aristotle, Hellenistic and Roman philosophers, St. Augustine.

GE-1C, 6

PHIL 336 (3) History of Philosophy: Renaissance and Modern Philosophy

Late Medieval Philosophy and its influence on the Renaissance, Descartes, Spinoza, Leibnitz and Continental Rationalism, Locke, Berkeley, Hume and British Empiricism, and Kant.

GE-1C, 6

PHIL 337 (3) 19th Century Philosophy

Philosophers and philosophies of the 19th century.

Variable

GE-6

PHIL 338 (3) American Philosophy

Colonial times to the present.

Variable

PHIL 358 (3) Eastern Philosophy

Survey of principle philosophical doctrines of ancient Chinese philosophers and a survey of Indian philosophical speculation.

Variable

GE-1C, 6, 8 CD-Related

PHIL 361 (3) Philosophy of Religion

Structure and logic of religious belief. Problems such as the existence of God, evil, immortality, miracles, and religious language.

F

PHIL 410 (3) Philosophy of Language

Theories of meaning, speech acts and semantics, relation of language to the world.

Variable

PHIL 437 (3) Contemporary Philosophy

Major philosophers and philosophies of the late 20th Century.

Variable

PHIL 440 (3) Philosophy of Law

Discussion of philosophical issues in law by way of connecting legal problems to well-developed and traditional problems in philosophy, e.g., in ethics, political philosophy, and epistemology, and investigates the philosophical underpinnings of the development of law. The course takes an analytical approach to law (as opposed to historical sociological, political, or legalistic approaches) and devotes a substantial part of the semester to a major work on law written by a philosopher.

PHIL 450 (3) Special Topics

Intensive study of a single philosopher or topic.

Variable

PHIL 455 (3) Existentialism & Phenomenology

In-depth analysis of major European existentialists such as Kierkegaard, Heidegger, and Sartre.

Variable

PHIL 460 (3) Philosophy of the Arts

Aesthetic principles, theories, and the creative process. Theories of visual arts, music, literature, dance, etc.

S

CD-Related

PHIL 473 (3) Knowledge and Reality

Analysis of the status and justification of claims about the nature and limits of human knowledge and the nature of what may be held to be real.

Variable

PHIL 474 (3) Philosophy of the Mind

The nature of consciousness, mind and body relations, freedom of action.

Variable

PHIL 480 (3) Philosophy of Science

Nature of explanations, causality, theoretical entities, and selected problems.

Variable

PHIL 490 (1-6) Workshop

Special event of less than semester duration.

Variable

PHIL 491 (1-6) In-Service

Variable

PHIL 495 (2) Senior Thesis I

The nature of the topic of the senior thesis is jointly determined by the student and Department of Philosophy faculty members. Philosophy majors should enroll in this course in the first semester of their final year of undergraduate studies. By the end of the first semester of the final year, the student will have completed a substantive draft of their senior thesis. The thesis will be completed during the final semester of the student's undergraduate studies.

PHIL 496 (1) Senior Thesis II

The senior thesis begun in Philosophy 495 will be completed. A core goal of the philosophy major is that students be able to engage in sustained development and analysis of an important philosophical topic. The senior thesis serves as a culminating exercise in a student's undergraduate career that hones those skills central to the subject of philosophy. The senior thesis will also serve as a tool for assessing the major.

PHIL 499 (1-6) Individual Study

Individual study of a philosopher or problem.

Variable