Twin Cities Campus

Philosophy B.A.

Philosophy Department

College of Liberal Arts

- Program Type: Baccalaureate
- Requirements for this program are current for Spring 2021
- Required credits to graduate with this degree: 120
- Required credits within the major: 30
- Degree: Bachelor of Arts

If you have ever pondered, "Why am I here?" or "What is the meaning of life?" then you have already thought about philosophy. Philosophy poses questions about human endeavors and examines our basic assumptions about everything we think we know. It takes on challenging issues that sometimes defy resolution and trains the brain to think in a rigorous and analytic way about all the possible answers and what's at stake. Philosophy is not just a subject matter but a way of thinking.

In your philosophy courses, you will learn about the way that people throughout history have engaged in this kind of thinking with questions such as "Can I really trust my senses to tell me about reality?", "Is anything really morally right or wrong or is it all just relative?", "Do scientific theories tell us the truth about the world or are they tools that are useful for certain purposes?" and "Are some societies more just than others?". You will discover that thinking about these questions with an open mind is deeply satisfying. Philosophical thinking also contributes to a worthwhile life; in the words of Socrates "the unexamined life is not worth living".

Of course, life isn't all about having fun thinking. Philosophy is also much more practical than you might think! Because philosophy is so far-reaching, the method it uses for study enhances the study of other fields such as art, math, science, language, and law with tremendous success. It is a great complement to other majors as a second major or a minor. You can find details about good combinations on our website. Also, studying philosophy is a fantastic way to hone your critical thinking and analytic writing skills. You'll learn two types of critical thinking: First, a method for rigorous analysis of arguments. Second, a habit of asking penetrating questions about the hidden assumptions of any position, ideology, or practice. You will develop your capacities to conceive of alternative assumptions, evaluate which ones are best and determine where they lead. You'll learn to write papers that clearly demonstrate these skills.

And finally, you can reassure your parents about your choice of philosophy with the fact that the skills of critical thinking and analytic writing are highly desirable and sought by graduate programs and employers. Evidence of this includes:
PHIL majors rank first among all majors in law school acceptance rate: 82.4%.
PHIL majors rank first among all majors in verbal and analytic sections of the GRE (and first among humanities majors in the quantitative section)
PHIL majors score higher on the Graduate Management Admissions Test (the test that most MBA programs require) than students in any business major (management, finance, accounting, marketing, etc.)
PHIL majors' salaries increase more over 10 years than most other majors, including marketing and accounting (The Wall Street Journal).
"The present value of the extra earnings that graduates in humanities majors can expect over their lifetime is $444,700 for English majors, $537,800 for history majors, and $658,900 for philosophy majors" (Forbes).

For more information, visit: http://www.philosophy.umn.edu/

Program Delivery

This program is available:

- via classroom (the majority of instruction is face-to-face)

Admission Requirements

For information about University of Minnesota admission requirements, visit the Office of Admissions website.

General Requirements

All students are required to complete general University and college requirements including writing and liberal education courses. For more information about University-wide requirements, see the liberal education requirements.Required courses for the major or minor in which a student receives a D grade (with or without plus or minus) do not count toward the major or minor (including transfer courses).

Program Requirements

Students are required to take 4 semester(s) of any second language.

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CLA BA degrees require 18 upper-division (3xxx-level or higher) credits outside the major designator. These credits must be taken in designators different from the major designator and cannot include courses that are cross-listed with the major designator. The major designator for the Philosophy BA is PHIL.

No more than 8 credits of PHIL 1xxx may count toward the degree. At least two 3-or-more-credit courses must be PHIL 4xxx or higher.

At least 11 upper-division credits in the major must be taken at the University of Minnesota Twin Cities campus.

Students may earn a BA or a minor in philosophy, but not both.

All incoming CLA freshmen must complete the First-Year Experience course sequence.

All students must complete a capstone in at least one CLA major. The requirements for double majors completing the capstone in a different CLA major will be clearly stated. Students must also complete all major requirements in both majors to allow the additional capstone to be waived. Student completing an addition degree must complete the capstone in each degree area.

Core Courses

Take exactly 4 course(s) totaling 14 - 16 credit(s) from the following:

History of Philosophy

Take exactly 1 course(s) totaling 4 or more credit(s) from the following:

- PHIL 3001W - General History of Western Philosophy: Ancient Period [AH, WI] (4.0 cr)
- PHIL 3005W - General History of Western Philosophy: Modern Period [AH, WI] (4.0 cr)

•Logic

Take exactly 1 course(s) totaling 4 or more credit(s) from the following:

- PHIL 5201 - Symbolic Logic I (4.0 cr)
- PHIL 1001 - Introduction to Logic [MATH] (4.0 cr)

or PHIL 1001H *{Inactive}*[MATH] (4.0 cr)

•ELMS (Epistemology/Philosophy of Language/Metaphysics/Philosophy of Science)

Take exactly 1 course(s) totaling 3 - 4 credit(s) from the following:

- PHIL 3234 - Knowledge and Society (3.0 cr)
- PHIL 3601W - Scientific Thought [WI] (4.0 cr)
- PHIL 4101 - Metaphysics (3.0 cr)
- PHIL 4105W - Epistemology [WI] (3.0 cr)
- PHIL 4231 - Philosophy of Language (3.0 cr)
- PHIL 4607 - Philosophy of the Biological Sciences (3.0 cr)
- PHIL 4605 - Space and Time (3.0 cr)

or PHIL 5605 - Space and Time (3.0 cr)

•Value Theory

Take exactly 1 course(s) totaling 3 - 4 credit(s) from the following:

- PHIL 3311W - Introduction to Ethical Theory [WI] (4.0 cr)
- PHIL 4311W - History of Moral Theories [WI] (3.0 cr)
- PHIL 4320 - Intensive Study of a Historical Moral Theory (3.0 cr)
- PHIL 4331 - Contemporary Moral Theories (3.0 cr)
- PHIL 4414 - Political Philosophy (3.0 cr)

Electives

Students can choose any combination of courses from the Philosophy Electives to reach the 30-credit minimum for the major.

Take 13 - 16 credit(s) from the following:

Lower-division Courses

No more than 8 credits of PHIL 1xxx may count toward the major.

Take 0 - 8 credit(s) from the following:

- PHIL 1003W - Introduction to Ethics [CIV, WI] (4.0 cr)
- PHIL 1004W - Introduction to Political Philosophy [AH, CIV, WI] (4.0 cr)
- PHIL 1005 - Scientific Reasoning (4.0 cr)
- PHIL 1001 - Introduction to Logic [MATH] (4.0 cr)

or PHIL 1001H *{Inactive}*[MATH] (4.0 cr)

•Upper-division Courses

Take 0 or more course(s) from the following:

- PHIL 3001W - General History of Western Philosophy: Ancient Period [AH, WI] (4.0 cr)
- PHIL 3005W - General History of Western Philosophy: Modern Period [AH, WI] (4.0 cr)
- PHIL 3231 *{Inactive}*(4.0 cr)
- PHIL 3234 - Knowledge and Society (3.0 cr)
- PHIL 3301 - Environmental Ethics [ENV] (4.0 cr)
- PHIL 3304 - Law and Morality (3.0 cr)

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- PHIL 3305 - Medical Ethics (4.0 cr)
- PHIL 3311W - Introduction to Ethical Theory [WI] (4.0 cr)
- PHIL 3601W - Scientific Thought [WI] (4.0 cr)
- PHIL 3600 *{Inactive}*(3.0 cr)
- PHIL 3607 - Philosophy of Psychology (4.0 cr)
- PHIL 4055 - Kant (3.0 cr)
- PHIL 4101 - Metaphysics (3.0 cr)
- PHIL 4105W - Epistemology [WI] (3.0 cr)
- PHIL 4231 - Philosophy of Language (3.0 cr)
- PHIL 4311W - History of Moral Theories [WI] (3.0 cr)
- PHIL 4320 - Intensive Study of a Historical Moral Theory (3.0 cr)
- PHIL 4326 - Lives Worth Living: Questions of Self, Vocation, and Community [CIV, AH] (4.0 cr)
- PHIL 4331 - Contemporary Moral Theories (3.0 cr)
- PHIL 4414 - Political Philosophy (3.0 cr)
- PHIL 4607 - Philosophy of the Biological Sciences (3.0 cr)
- PHIL 4615 *{Inactive}*(3.0 cr)
- PHIL 5201 - Symbolic Logic I (4.0 cr)
- PHIL 5202 - Symbolic Logic II (4.0 cr)
- PHIL 5211 - Modal Logic (4.0 cr)
- PHIL 5222 - Philosophy of Mathematics (3.0 cr)
- PHIL 5415 - Philosophy of Law (3.0 cr)
- PHIL 5601 - History of the Philosophy of Science (3.0 cr)
- PHIL 5602 *{Inactive}*(3.0 cr)
- PHIL 5603 - Scientific Inquiry (3.0 cr)
- PHIL 5606 - Philosophy of Quantum Mechanics (3.0 cr)
- PHIL 3302W - Moral Problems of Contemporary Society [CIV, WI] (4.0 cr)
  or PHIL 3322W - Moral Problems of Contemporary Society [CIV, WI] (3.0 cr)
- PHIL 4010 - Ancient Philosophers (3.0 cr)
  or PHIL 5010 - Ancient Philosophers (3.0 cr)
- PHIL 4085 - Wittgenstein (3.0 cr)
  or PHIL 5085 *{Inactive}*(3.0 cr)
- PHIL 4510 - Philosophy of the Individual Arts (3.0 cr)
  or PHIL 5510 - Philosophy of the Individual Arts (3.0 cr)
- PHIL 4605 - Space and Time (3.0 cr)
  or PHIL 5605 - Space and Time (3.0 cr)

Capstone

The Philosophy capstone culminates students' work in the major. It offers the opportunity to engage and combine skills in analysis, critical thought and clear and cogent expression developed throughout the course of undergraduate work in philosophy. All options require instructor permission and enrollment in PHIL 4995 or PHIL 4995H. Some options require additional enrollment.
Take 1 - 2 course(s) totaling 1 or more credit(s) from the following:
Students who double major and choose to complete the capstone requirement in their other major may waive the Philosophy capstone, but are still responsible for taking the 30 credits required for the Philosophy BA.

- **Capstone Paper**

  through independent research

  Complete an independent research paper (of roughly 15 pages) under supervision of a faculty advisor. Capstone papers should be written in drafts with some revision in response to feedback from your supervisor.

  PHIL 4893 - Capstone: Directed Studies (1.0 cr)

  or **in conjunction with a philosophy course**

  Complete the capstone paper (of roughly 15 pages) concurrently with a philosophy course taught by a faculty member. The capstone paper can be an elaboration of an assignment for the class, but it must be roughly 15 pages and it should be revised in response to feedback from your supervisor. The capstone paper cannot be identical to a paper submitted as part of the regular course requirements some additional work is required. Instructor permission and registration in PHIL 4995 required.

  PHIL 4893 - Capstone: Directed Studies (1.0 cr)

- **8xxx-level options**

  Graduate seminar

  Complete all the required work for an 8xxx-level graduate seminar. Students must register for PHIL 5993 (generally 3 credits), PHIL 4995, and attend the seminar. Do not register for the 8xxx-level seminar.

  PHIL 4893 - Capstone: Directed Studies (1.0 cr)
  PHIL 5993 - Directed Studies (1.0 - 3.0 cr)

  or **Graduate workshop**

  Complete all the required work for an 8xxx-level graduate workshop, which must include one written assignment beyond what is required by the associated 4xxx-level course. Students must take the associated 4xxx-level class, register for PHIL 4995, and attend the workshop meetings. Do not register for the 8xxx-level workshop. Workshop meeting times are usually arranged the first day of class.

  PHIL 4893 - Capstone: Directed Studies (1.0 cr)

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PHIL 4xxx that is cross-listed with a PHIL 8xxx-level graduate workshop

•**Non-traditional capstone project**

Complete a non-traditional philosophy project with guidance from a faculty supervisor. Examples of such projects include: editing the undergraduate philosophy journal, creating a prototype for a philosophy magazine, or conducting a semester-long philosophy reading group. Not all faculty members are willing to supervise non-traditional projects. If you want to take this option it is important to get to know your professors and find someone who is willing to work with you.

•PHIL 4893 - Capstone: Directed Studies (1.0 cr)

Upper Division Writing Intensive within the major

Students are required to take one upper division writing intensive course within the major. If that requirement has not been satisfied within the core major requirements, students must choose one course from the following list. Some of these courses may also fulfill other major requirements.

Take 0 - 1 course(s) from the following:

•PHIL 3001W - General History of Western Philosophy: Ancient Period [AH, WI] (4.0 cr)
•PHIL 3005W - General History of Western Philosophy: Modern Period [AH, WI] (4.0 cr)
•PHIL 3311W - Introduction to Ethical Theory [WI] (4.0 cr)
•PHIL 3601W - Scientific Thought [WI] (4.0 cr)
•PHIL 4105W - Epistemology [WI] (3.0 cr)
•PHIL 4311W - History of Moral Theories [WI] (3.0 cr)
•PHIL 4320 - Intensive Study of a Historical Moral Theory (3.0 cr)
•PHIL 3302W - Moral Problems of Contemporary Society [CIV, WI] (4.0 cr)
or PHIL 3322W - Moral Problems of Contemporary Society [CIV, WI] (3.0 cr)

Program Sub-plans

A sub-plan is not required for this program.

Ethics and Civic Life

The Department of Philosophy's optional concentration in ethics and civic life is an opportunity for students who are interested in ethics and community service to relate their experiences in the classroom to their work in the community and vice versa. Students who complete the concentration will receive acknowledgment on their transcripts.

Ethics and Civic Life Concentration Courses

Ethics and Civic Life Concentration Courses also count towards the Philosophy Electives in within the major.

Take 3 or more course(s) from the following:

•PHIL 1004W - Introduction to Political Philosophy [AH, CIV, WI] (4.0 cr)
•PHIL 1006W - Philosophy and Cultural Diversity [AH, DSJ, WI] (4.0 cr)
•PHIL 3301 - Environmental Ethics [ENV] (4.0 cr)
•PHIL 3304 - Law and Morality (3.0 cr)
•PHIL 3305 - Medical Ethics (4.0 cr)
•PHIL 3600 *{Inactive}*(3.0 cr)
•PHIL 4326 - Lives Worth Living: Questions of Self, Vocation, and Community [CIV, AH] (4.0 cr)
•PHIL 4414 - Political Philosophy (3.0 cr)
•PHIL 3302W - Moral Problems of Contemporary Society [CIV, WI] (4.0 cr)
or PHIL 3322W - Moral Problems of Contemporary Society [CIV, WI] (3.0 cr)

Community Service

The community service component may be completed by taking a practicum course in philosophy (for example, PHIL 1007 in conjunction with 1004W); a community service component of one of the above courses; or a directed study in philosophy with a community service component.

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