Twin Cities Campus

Philosophy B.A.

Philosophy Department

College of Liberal Arts

- Program Type: Baccalaureate
- Requirements for this program are current for Fall 2017
- Required credits to graduate with this degree: 120
- Required credits within the major: 30 to 39
- 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 4 semesters or the equivalent of a second language.

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.

A philosophy major program requires 30 credits, at least 11 of which must be upper division philosophy credits completed at the University of Minnesota - Twin Cities campus. No more than 8 credits of PHIL 1xxx may count toward the degree, and at least two 3-or-more-credit courses must be PHIL 4xxx or higher. Students who double-major and choose to complete the senior project in their other major are still responsible for taking 30 total PHIL credits. 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.

Required 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 1001 - Introduction to Logic [MATH] (4.0 cr)
- PHIL 5201 - Symbolic Logic I (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 3502W *{Inactive}*[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 4321W - Theories of Justice [WI] (3.0 cr)
- PHIL 4331 - Contemporary Moral Theories (3.0 cr)
- PHIL 4414 - Political Philosophy (3.0 cr)

Philosophy Electives

Students can choose any combination of courses from the Philosophy Electives to reach the 30-credit minimum for the major. Depending on the credit value of the courses taken to fulfill the Required Courses requirement, students will need to take 13-16 credits of electives. Note: No more than 8 credits of PHIL 1xxx can count towards the major.

Aesthetics

Aesthetics is the philosophical study of the arts, especially in regard to such questions as: What is art, and how is it connected to the world? What is the role of beauty in art? Are there objective truths about artistic value? Are there situations in which artistic activity should be restricted or suppressed? Study of aesthetics pairs well with majors in the arts and in art history, as well as in literature and such subjects as sociology, anthropology, psychology and education.

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

- PHIL 3502W *{Inactive}*[WI] (3.0 cr)
- PHIL 4501 *{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)

Practical/Applied Ethics

Many of the questions we confront in our personal, professional, and civic lives are questions of ethics. Should I buy organically produced food in order to minimize harms to the environment? Should I support affirmative action policies in education or the workplace? Is mass incarceration unjust? Why? Study of ethics pairs well with students who anticipate pursuing professions such as business, education, human resources, law, and medicine.

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

- 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 3302W - Moral Problems of Contemporary Society [CIV, WI] (4.0 cr)
or PHIL 3322W - Moral Problems of Contemporary Society [CIV, WI] (3.0 cr)

Ethics and Moral Philosophy

In these courses you will explore questions such as: What it is to be a good person? Are there universal principles that distinguish right from wrong? What are our moral obligations? Is morality relative or absolute? Consider taking courses in this area if you are heading for business, law, or medical school, in combination with some courses from the practical ethics group to give you some theoretical background. Ethics courses also pair well with a major in psychology or political science.

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

•PHIL 1003W - Introduction to Ethics [CIV, WI] (4.0 cr)
•PHIL 3311W - Introduction to Ethical Theory [WI] (4.0 cr)
•PHIL 3302W - Moral Problems of Contemporary Society [CIV, 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)

ELM (Epistemology, Language, Metaphysics, Mind)

These courses cover a wide ranging set of issues in contemporary philosophy. In Epistemology, philosophers explore questions such as: What is knowledge? How is knowledge shaped by society and culture? In Metaphysics: Does God exist? Are we free to act the way we choose? In Philosophy of Mind: What is the relationship between the mind and body? What is thinking? In Philosophy of Language: How does language work? What is the relationship between thought and language?

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

•PHIL 3231 *{Inactive}*(4.0 cr)
•PHIL 3234 - Knowledge and Society (3.0 cr)
•PHIL 3607 - Philosophy of Psychology (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 4615 *{Inactive}*(3.0 cr)
•PHIL 4085 - Wittgenstein (3.0 cr)
or PHIL 5085 *{Inactive}*(3.0 cr)

History of Philosophy

In these courses you will reflect on writings by philosophers of the past that explore questions such as: What makes a life worth living? How can I tell if I am doing the right thing? Can a contradictory statement be true? Could I be wrong about most everything I believe? You will find that some authors have ideas different from yours, while others share familiar ideas. Comparing the different with the familiar gives you the opportunity to notice, understand, and evaluate your own assumptions.

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 4055 - Kant (3.0 cr)
•PHIL 5601 - History of the Philosophy of Science (3.0 cr)
•PHIL 4010 - Ancient Philosophers (3.0 cr)
or PHIL 5010 - Ancient Philosophers (3.0 cr)

Philosophy of Logic and Mathematics

Logic (and its philosophy) studies the differences between truth and falsity, good and bad arguments, correct and incorrect reasoning, necessity and possibility, and the finite and the infinite. In logic courses we introduce precise symbolic methods for representing various kinds of reasoning, and we develop systematic tools for differentiating the good arguments from the bad. The study of logic pairs especially well with mathematics, statistics, economics, and physics.

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

•PHIL 1001 - Introduction to Logic [MATH] (4.0 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 5221 - Philosophy of Logic (3.0 cr)
•PHIL 5222 - Philosophy of Mathematics (3.0 cr)

Political Philosophy and Philosophy of Law

What is justice? What is the purpose of the state? What obligations does the state have to its citizens and vice versa? What is law? What may or must citizens do in the face of unjust laws? These are some of the questions addressed in courses in political philosophy and philosophy of law. These questions prepare you for a career in law, politics, or public service. Courses in these areas compliment majors in political science, history or economics, as well as any major that focuses on justice.

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

•PHIL 1004W - Introduction to Political Philosophy [AH, CIV, WI] (4.0 cr)
•PHIL 3304 - Law and Morality (3.0 cr)
•PHIL 4321W - Theories of Justice [WI] (3.0 cr)
•PHIL 4414 - Political Philosophy (3.0 cr)
•PHIL 5415 - Philosophy of Law (3.0 cr)

Philosophy of Science

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What makes a claim "scientific"? How do scientists know when they have a good theory? How can we make informed evaluations of scientific claims in order to participate knowledgeably in society and make good choices in everyday life? Philosophy of science courses address these and other questions about the nature of scientific reasoning. This includes exploring characteristics of hypotheses in case studies from scientific research, as well as analyzing ideas that have emerged in modern science.
Take 0 or more course(s) from the following:
•PHIL 3601W - Scientific Thought [WI] (4.0 cr)
•PHIL 3600 *{Inactive}*(3.0 cr)
•PHIL 4605 - Space and Time (3.0 cr)
•PHIL 4607 - Philosophy of the Biological Sciences (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 5605 - Space and Time (3.0 cr)
•PHIL 5606 - Philosophy of Quantum Mechanics (3.0 cr)
•PHIL 1005 - Scientific Reasoning (4.0 cr)
or PHIL 1005H *{Inactive}*(4.0 cr)

Senior Project
A senior project is required and is typically a paper.
PHIL 4893 - Capstone: Directed Studies (1.0 cr)
or PHIL 4995H *{Inactive}*(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 3502W *{Inactive}*[WI] (3.0 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 4321W - Theories of Justice [WI] (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.

Core Courses
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 3307 *{Inactive}*[AH, CIV] (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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