

PHILOSOPHY

Philosophy comes from two Greek words meaning ‘love of wisdom.’ This may still be the best short definition of philosophy.

ABOUT THE PROGRAM

“Philosophy” is a word that means “love of wisdom.” That might sound broad, and that’s because it is. Every academic discipline was once a part of philosophy, which is why professors in most other disciplines have a “Ph.D.,” an abbreviation for “doctor of philosophy.” Why is philosophy so broad? Because it asks the most fundamental questions behind everything we know. Like Socrates, perhaps the quintessential philosopher, philosophers ask questions like “what is love?,” “what is justice?,” and “what is a person?” Often you’ve already answered those questions by the time you enter a laboratory or a courtroom, but that doesn’t mean you’re right. Because of this, philosophy is often countercultural, because it asks us to think and rethink our assumptions so that we can live more reflective and meaningful lives.

Why study philosophy? Here are three reasons: first, the study of philosophy gives you valuable transferable skills, like critical thinking, that employers expect and generally don’t get. How do we know? Because philosophy-bound students consistently outperform every other major on the Graduate Record Exam (GRE), and every non-STEM field in every other major standardized test, like the GMAT, LSAT, and even MCAT. Second, if you’ve ever felt like a speck of dust in our vast universe, we can relate. Philosophers ask the ultimate questions, questions that never get old and never get boring. Third, every religion, and certainly Christianity, is grounded in a response to these big philosophical questions. If you want to grow in faith, or you just want to know what all the fuss is about, many philosophers through the ages have sought to understand their faith through philosophy.

Hope’s Philosophy Department offers courses in applied ethics, philosophy of law, political philosophy, philosophy of mind, philosophy of religion, philosophy of science, as well as courses in major philosophical movements (such as existentialism and postmodernism), cultures (such as those of India, Tibet, China, and Japan), and time periods (such as ancient, medieval, and modern).

MAJORS

Students can pursue their goals through a concentration in philosophy or through any number of combinations of courses short of a major. Others will want to make the history of philosophical thought and its special fields of inquiry the core around which their overall education is built and will become majors. Still others will want to combine a philosophy major with a major in some other field. Recent fields combined with philosophy in joint majors include:

- Art, Biology, Business, Chemistry, English, History, Mathematics, Political Science, Psychology, Religion, Social Work.

Hope College philosophy majors can be found:

- Doing graduate work in philosophy at major universities
- Practicing pediatric medicine in Grand Rapids
- Practicing law at Southeastern Michigan Poverty Law Center
- Pursuing careers in medicine, law, business and human services
- Teaching philosophy in colleges
- Being a hospital chaplain in Yuma, Arizona
- Teaching in high schools
- Serving as president of a theological seminary
- Engaging in computer science research
- Pastoring churches of various denominations
- Serving as an executive of a major denomination

Philosophy

GENERAL REQUIREMENTS FOR THE MAJOR IN PHILOSOPHY

- PHIL 200 – Informal Logic, 2 credits or Philosophy 201 – Formal Logic, 4 credits
- PHIL 450 – Capstone Seminar in Philosophy
- One course from List II
- One from List III
- One from List IV (see course listings), 12 credits
- At least one other elective, minimum 4 credits

Total Credits Required: 24 minimum in philosophy

Note: Only one cross-listed course (4 credits) offered by another department may count toward the major.

MAJORS IN PHILOSOPHY

Can complement and enrich other areas of study in a way that makes good sense of a student's vocational perspective. Specific examples of courses which might appeal to students with particular interests include the following:

PRE-SEMINARY STUDENTS

- PHIL 230 – Ancient Philosophy
- PHIL 320 – Knowledge and Belief
- PHIL 331 – Philosophy of Religion
- PHIL 345 – Ethics
- PHIL 370 – Metaphysics

PRE-LAW STUDENTS

- PHIL 201 – Logic
- PHIL 341 – Ancient and Medieval Political Thought
- PHIL 342 – Modern Political Thought
- PHIL 343 – Twentieth Century Political Thought
- PHIL 345 – Ethics
- PHIL 375 – Philosophy of Law

PREMEDICAL STUDENTS

- PHIL 245 – Applied Ethics
- PHIL 331 – Philosophy of Religion
- PHIL 345 – Ethics
- PHIL 360 – Philosophy of Science

FUTURE EDUCATORS IN LITERATURE AND THE ARTS

- PHIL 331 – Philosophy of Religion
- PHIL 373 – Aesthetics
- PHIL 380 – Existentialism
- PHIL 385 – Postmodernism

FUTURE SOCIAL SCIENTISTS AND PSYCHOLOGISTS

- PHIL 245 – Applied Ethics
- PHIL 320 – Knowledge and Belief
- PHIL 325 – Philosophy of Mind
- PHIL 341 – Ancient and Medieval Political Thought
- PHIL 342 – Modern Political Thought
- PHIL 360 – Philosophy of Science
- PHIL 373 – Twentieth Century Political Thought

HONORS PROGRAM

The departmental Honors Program challenges majors to go beyond the minimum requirements of the major in order to acquire a deeper and broader philosophical training and is designed to be of special interest to students considering graduate studies in philosophy. The requirement for entry into the Honors Program is a GPA of 3.5 in Philosophy or departmental consent. Graduating with Honors in Philosophy requires completion of 32 credits in the major, attendance at department sponsored events such as the Inquiring Minds Discussion Group and the Philosophy Speaker Series, and completion of two programs of independent reading or an Honors Thesis. Detailed information and application forms are available from the department chairperson.

MINORS

Philosophy

GENERAL REQUIREMENTS FOR THE MINOR IN PHILOSOPHY

A minimum of 16 credits from Department of Philosophy courses, following these guidelines:

- PHIL 200 – Informal Logic
- PHIL 201 – Logic
- COMM 160 – Analytic Skills

Three courses from among List II, List III and List IV (see course listings). Courses must be taken from at least two different Lists, 12 credits.

Total Credits Required: 16 minimum in philosophy

Note: Only one cross-listed course (4 credits) offered by another department may count toward the minor.

MINORS IN PHILOSOPHY can complement and enrich other areas of study in a way that makes good sense of a student's vocational perspective. Specific examples of courses which might appeal to students with particular interests include the following:

PRE-SEMINARY STUDENTS

- PHIL 230 – Ancient Philosophy
- PHIL 320 – Knowledge and Belief
- PHIL 331 – Philosophy of Religion
- PHIL 345 – Ethics
- PHIL 370 – Metaphysics

PRE-LAW STUDENTS

- PHIL 201 – Logic
- PHIL 341 – Ancient and Medieval Political Thought
- PHIL 342 – Modern Political Thought
- PHIL 343 – Twentieth Century Political Thought
- PHIL 345 – Ethics
- PHIL 375 – Philosophy of Law

PREMEDICAL STUDENTS

- PHIL 245 – Applied Ethics
- PHIL 331 – Philosophy of Religion
- PHIL 345 – Ethics
- PHIL 360 – Philosophy of Science

FUTURE EDUCATORS IN LITERATURE AND THE ARTS

- PHIL 331 – Philosophy of Religion
- PHIL 373 – Aesthetics
- PHIL 380 – Existentialism
- PHIL 385 – Postmodernism

FUTURE SOCIAL SCIENTISTS AND PSYCHOLOGISTS

- PHIL 245 – Applied Ethics
- PHIL 320 – Knowledge and Belief
- PHIL 325 – Philosophy of Mind
- PHIL 341 – Ancient and Medieval Political Thought
- PHIL 342 – Modern Political Thought
- PHIL 360 – Philosophy of Science
- PHIL 373 – Twentieth Century Political Thought

COURSES

FUNDAMENTAL PHILOSOPHY COURSES

PHIL 195 - Topics in Philosophy

A half-semester course designed to introduce students to a selected significant topic and to applications of philosophical methods for critical reflection upon it. Recommended as a good introduction to philosophical thinking, but not required nor can it substitute for any of the courses on lists II, III, or IV for the major or minor. Past topics included "Sexual Ethics," "Animal Rights," "Liberal Democracy and Islam," and "Philosophy of Race."

Credits Awarded: 2
Terms Offered: As needed

PHIL 200 - Informal Logic

An introduction to and examination of some of the basic forms of reasoning and argument we use in everyday life, and then an exploration of applications of these kinds of reasoning to current events and philosophical arguments.

Credits Awarded: 2
Terms Offered: Spring

PHIL 201 - Logic

The study of the structure of reasoning. This course will introduce students to techniques for recognizing, formalizing, and evaluating the logical structures of arguments. Students will be taught symbolic languages, how to translate English arguments into those languages, and proof and testing procedures using the languages. This course will, along with introducing students to the rudiments of logic, explain how logic is employed in the articulation and solution of problems in various subdisciplines of philosophy. Not recommended as an introduction to philosophy, but given its usefulness as a basis for many other courses, it should be taken early by philosophy majors and minors.

Credits Awarded: 4
Terms Offered: Fall
Attribute: Mathematics II (MA2)

KNOWLEDGE/REALITY COURSES

PHIL 320 - Knowledge and Belief

"All men by nature desire to know," says Aristotle in his *Metaphysics*. This famous quote raises numerous questions. What is knowledge? Why do we want it? How do we know when we have it? This course will examine these and related questions, such as "Can we be certain of anything?" "What are the sources of knowledge?" "Is scientific knowledge easier to attain than moral or religious knowledge?"

Credits Awarded: 4
Terms Offered: Spring

PHIL 325 - Philosophy of Mind

Philosophy of mind deals with very basic questions of who we are. What is the relation between our minds and our bodies in general and our brains in particular? What are the characteristics of the mind that make us (or seem to make us) unique? The course will explore such issues as dualism and materialism, the problems of sensation and of intentionality, computer models for the mind, the nature of human action, and freedom of the will.

Credits Awarded: 4
Terms Offered: Fall, Spring

PHIL 331 - Philosophy of Religion

A study of the nature and theory of religion, including the following topics: the nature and existence of God; the concept of faith; the nature of religious experience and religious language; and the theory of religious pluralism. Cross-listed with Rel 364.

Credits Awarded: 4
Terms Offered: Spring

PHIL 360 - Philosophy of Science

An examination of several philosophical issues raised by the physical and biological sciences, their history and the technological developments they generate. Topics include: what science is, whether its development is rational and progressive, how the meaning of scientific concepts is to be understood.

Credits Awarded: 4
Terms Offered: Fall, Spring

PHIL 370 - Metaphysics

An examination of foundational philosophical issues about the nature of reality and the subject of ontology or what sorts of things are in the world. Examples of topics to be discussed include necessity and possibility, causation, free-will and determinism, personal identity, the mind-body problem, universals, and the relationship between language and reality.

Credits Awarded: 4
Terms Offered: As Needed

VALUES/HUMAN CONDITION COURSES

PHIL 241 - Philosophies of India and Tibet

An introduction to the philosophical traditions of India and Tibet focusing primarily on the classical texts of these traditions -- the Vedas, Upanishads, Bhagavad-Gita, and the Hindu and Buddhist Sutras -- as well as the systems of thought they produced. Many of the ideas we will consider will have spiritual as well as philosophical significance. Issues to be explored include the nature of the divine, ultimate reality, the self, happiness, ethics, the just society, knowledge, and spiritual liberation. We will also consider more recent representatives of these traditions, such as Mohandas Gandhi of India and the contemporary political and spiritual leader of the Tibetan People, the Dalai Lama. Comparisons to Western philosophical and religious conceptions will be made where appropriate.

Credits Awarded: 4

Terms Offered: As Needed

Attribute: Global Learning International (GLI)

PHIL 242 - Philosophies of China and Japan

An introduction to the philosophical traditions of China and Japan. While these philosophies continue to influence the world view of contemporary East Asia, we will be mostly concerned with the classical thought of these traditions. The philosophies to be considered include Confucianism, Neo-Confucianism, Taoism, Legalism, the Yin-Yang and Five Elements School, and Chinese Buddhism, as well as Shinto and forms of Japanese Buddhism, including Zen Buddhism. Throughout the course, we will consider comparisons to Western philosophical and religious thought where appropriate.

Credits Awarded: 4

Terms Offered: As Needed

Attribute: Global Learning International (GLI)

PHIL 245 - Applied Ethics

An introduction to the application of philosophical theories on ethics to concrete ethical questions. Possible topics include: euthanasia, abortion, professional (e.g., medical or business) ethics, human cloning, just war theory, military ethics, sexual ethics, animal rights, duties to the poor, and so on. Each instance of the course will begin with a brief discussion of philosophical theories on ethics and utilize these theories in the treatment of the topics to be discussed.

Credits Awarded: 4

Terms Offered: Fall, Odd Years

PHIL 343 - Twentieth Century Political Philosophy

The theory of the liberal democratic state in the 20th century. Attention to such central concepts as capitalism, socialism, communism, freedom, equality, justice. Readings from Lenin, Mussolini, Hayek, Rawls, Nozick, Habermas, against the background of Locke and Marx. Cross-listed with Pol 343.

Credits Awarded: 4

Terms Offered: Fall, Spring

PHIL 345 - Ethics

An examination of the nature and point of ethics through a consideration of major classical and contemporary ethical theories and ethical issues. Examples of theories to be considered include the ethics of duty, utilitarianism, divine command theory, natural law theory, virtue ethics and feminist perspectives on ethics. Examples of issues to be considered include the relationship between religion and morality, moral relativism, anti-theory in ethics, and different views of what it is to live a good human life. Attempts to apply different ethical theories to practical moral problems stemming from everyday life will also be examined.

Credits Awarded: 4
Terms Offered: Fall

PHIL 373 - Philosophy of Art

An investigation of some of the philosophical issues raised by the arts: What is art? What is beauty? How is art to be understood, appreciated and evaluated? In what way can works of art be said to possess meaning or truth? What is the role for the arts in our lives? Both historical and contemporary views will be studied and an attempt will be made to explore how philosophical ideas apply to productions drawn from many different artistic fields.

Credits Awarded: 4
Terms Offered: As Needed

PHIL 375 - Philosophy of Law

What is law, and what gives law the obligatory force it has? In this course we will investigate such issues as the nature of law, the relation of law to morality, and problems with interpreting and applying the law, especially the Constitution. Cross-listed with Pol 375.

Credits Awarded: 4
Terms Offered: As Needed

PHIL 377 - Environmental Philosophy

An in-depth study of classic and contemporary texts in environmental philosophy and history, including primary sources by Plato, Aristotle, Descartes, Locke, Thoreau, Berry, Carson, and Leopold, as well as secondary studies by Crosby, Ponting, and Steinberg. Cross-listed with Environmental Studies.

Credits Awarded: 4
Terms Offered: As Needed

PHIL 380 - Existentialism

A study of selected works of Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, Heidegger and Sartre. Themes include: the question of being and human being; faith and reason; subjectivity and objectivity; freedom and responsibility; authenticity and autonomy; and human possibilities.

Credits Awarded: 4
Terms Offered: As Needed

PHIL 385 - Postmodernism

Postmodernism has been characterized more as a "mood" than a set body of doctrine, a "constellation" of concerns that has arisen in the aftermath of World War II and the Holocaust. Postmodern concerns challenge central tenets of Enlightenment rationalism regarding the self, knowledge, language, logic, reality, and power. The "roots" of postmodern thinking in the work of Nietzsche, Freud, and Heidegger will be explored, along with such thinkers as Lyotard, Foucault, Derrida, Rorty, and Habermas and feminist challenges to Enlightenment rationality.

Credits Awarded: 4
Terms Offered: As Needed

HISTORY COURSES

PHIL 230 - Ancient Philosophy

Western philosophy from its beginning to the Middle Ages, including such figures as Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Plotinus, and St. Augustine, through a study of primary texts. Partial fulfillment of the Cultural Heritage requirement.

Credits Awarded: 4

Terms Offered: Fall, Spring

Attribute: Cultural Heritage I (CH1)

PHIL 232 - Modern Philosophy

An introduction to the developments in European philosophy from Descartes to Kant. Authors to be studied include Descartes, Spinoza, and Leibniz, Locke, Berkeley, Hume, and Kant. Issues to be explored include knowledge and skepticism, appearance and reality, the existence of God, and the nature of the human mind. Partial fulfillment of the Cultural Heritage requirement.

Credits Awarded: 4

Terms Offered: Fall, Spring

Attribute: Cultural Heritage II (CH2)

PHIL 237 - World Philosophies I

An introduction to philosophy in a global context. We will consider the classical philosophical traditions of Greece and Rome, India, China, and Japan. We will be mostly concerned with the great texts of these philosophical traditions and what they have to say about humanity's perennial questions: What is real? Who am I? What can I know? What is happiness? What is justice? What is the nature of the Divine? How should I live? We will attempt to understand the answers offered to these questions by the great minds and texts of these traditions with some attention to each tradition's cultural and historical context. We will also compare and contrast the answers provided by each tradition with an eye to what each one has to offer us today for our own quest for wisdom. Partial fulfillment of the Cultural Heritage Requirement.

Credits Awarded: 4

Terms Offered: Spring

Attributes: Cultural Heritage I (CH1), Global Learning International (GLI)

PHIL 341 - Ancient and Medieval Political Thought

We will examine such thinkers as Plato, Aristotle, Cicero, Augustine, Aquinas, Hobbes, Descartes and Machiavelli on such issues as: human nature, the good life, the role of government, the relation between the individual and the government, the meaning of freedom, the need for social order. We will also investigate how modern political thought differs from ancient and medieval views. Cross-listed with Pol 341.

Credits Awarded: 4

Terms Offered: Fall, Odd Years

PHIL 342 - Modern Political Thought

We will examine such thinkers as Machiavelli, Hobbes and Locke on the rise of modern democracy; the ideas surrounding the American and French Revolutions; and the challenges to liberal democracy put forward by Rousseau and Marx on such issues as: human nature, the good life, the role of government, the relation between the individual and the government, the meaning of freedom, the need for social order. We will also investigate how modern political thought differs from ancient and medieval views. Cross-listed with Political Science.

Credits Awarded: 4
Terms Offered: Fall, Even Year

PHIL 393 - Philosophical Greats

This course is devoted to the thought of one great thinker or set of thinkers in the philosophical tradition. Attention will be given to major "canonical" figures (such as Aristotle or Kant) and other figures based on student interest as well as the representation of underrepresented groups in the philosophical tradition. Readings will be drawn from the primary texts as well as the secondary scholarship on each thinker.

Credits Awarded: 4
Terms Offered: As Needed

SPECIAL STUDIES COURSES**PHIL 295 - Studies In Philosophy**

A lecture or seminar class in a special topic of philosophy.

Credits Awarded: 2, 4
Terms Offered: As Needed

PHIL 395 - Studies in Philosophy

A course offered in response to student and instructor interest. Topics are not generally covered in the regular course listings. Course may be taken multiple times if topics are different.

Credits Awarded: 1-4
Terms Offered: As Needed

PHIL 450 - Capstone Seminar in Philosophy

A topical seminar dealing with significant thinkers, issues and approaches within philosophy. For philosophy majors, the seminar serves as a capstone course within the major. Topics of the seminar vary and have included "Philosophies of Affection and Desire," "God and Morality," and "James and Wittgenstein on Religion." It is the goal of the course to provide appropriate opportunities for students to exercise the skills needed for reading philosophy and for thinking, writing and interacting with others philosophically. Philosophy majors will complete their major portfolios as part of the required work for the course.

Credits Awarded: 4
Terms Offered: Fall
Prerequisites: Permission of instructor

PHIL 490 - Independent Study

Such a project might be an internship; but in any case it would include a significant piece of philosophic writing. Refer to General Academic Regulations, statement about Honors Independent Study or Research. A student intending to enroll in this course should plan ahead to study with the professor whose expertise and interests most clearly correspond to the student's interests and intentions. Departmental approval of a student-proposed project is required prior to enrollment in the course.

Credits Awarded: 2-4

Terms Offered: Fall, Spring

Prerequisites: Permission of department

PHIL 495 - Topical Seminars

Seminars in topics not ordinarily offered in the department curriculum, focusing upon philosophic writing and the critique of papers in class.

Credits Awarded: 4

Terms Offered: As Needed

Prerequisites: Permission of instructor

FACULTY & STAFF**Bassett, Greg**

Lecturer in Philosophy (2012)

Dell'Olio, Dr. Andrew

Professor of Philosophy (1993)

Ph.D., Columbia Univ., 1994

MPHI, Columbia Univ., 1991

M.A., Columbia Univ., 1984

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Professor of Philosophy (1998)

Ph.D., Univ of Massachusetts Amherst, 1998

B.A., Franciscan Univ Steubenville, 1991

Mulder, Dr. Jack Jr.

Professor of Philosophy and Department Chair (2004)

Ph.D., Purdue University, 2004

M.A., Purdue University, 2003

B.A., Hope College, 2000