



Philosophy

Megan Zwart, Department Chair
160 Spes Unica Hall
574-284-4547

FACULTY

A. Pierce, P. Sayre, G. Trey, M. Waddell, M. Zwart

DEPARTMENT DESCRIPTION

The program in philosophy introduces students to basic issues concerning knowledge, reality, and values in both classical Western thought and in contemporary critiques of the classical tradition. It attempts to help each student develop her philosophical thought in reflective, independent, and responsible ways.

ADVANCED WRITING PROFICIENCY

At the end of their junior year, philosophy majors intending to fulfill their Advanced Writing Proficiency requirement in philosophy submit a portfolio for evaluation. The Advanced W must be awarded at this time if the student is to pursue the thesis option for her Senior Comprehensive. Those students not awarded the Advanced W on the basis of their portfolios must pursue the exam option and submit an Advanced W paper written under the direction of a faculty advisor. Successful completion of the Advanced W paper along with the comprehensive exam constitutes successful completion of the Advanced W.

SENIOR COMPREHENSIVE/ADVANCED WRITING PROFICIENCY

Majors who do their Senior Comprehensive in philosophy may either write a thesis or take an exam. Those pursuing the thesis option receive three credit hours (PHIL 496) and are eligible for honors. The exam consists of a three hour examination on questions designed specifically for each student on the basis of her course work.

PHILOSOPHY DEPARTMENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

The curriculum and requirements are designed to achieve the following goals:

- To cultivate a community of inquiry that gives careful attention to the examination of our deepest assumptions about the world and our place in it.
- To provide those who join us in this community with an opportunity to explore the history of both our own and of other philosophical traditions, bringing the riches of those traditions to bear in addressing, both compassionately and critically, the pressing needs of the day.
- To support and aid those engaged in this exploration as they develop their capacities to think clearly about complex problems and to communicate those thoughts with precision and style.
- To foster an appreciation for all the unpredictable twists and turns that are part of any genuinely intellectual endeavor—an appreciation that will carry one on meaningfully through life with all its unexpected outcomes.

PROGRAM IN PHILOSOPHY

Bachelor of Arts, Major in Philosophy—PHIL (27 hours)

All of the following: (18 hours)

PHIL 110	Introductory Philosophy	3 hours
or PHIL 233	Philosophy of Gender	3 hours
or PHIL 235	Philosophy of Human Existence	3 hours
or PHIL 245	Philosophy of World Cultures	3 hours
or PHIL 247	Philosophy of Religion	3 hours
or PHIL 252	Philosophy of Art	3 hours
or PHIL 253	Philosophy of Politics	3 hours
PHIL 220	Introduction to Logic	3 hours
PHIL 230	Socrates to Scholasticism	3 hours
PHIL 331	Descartes to Skepticism	3 hours
PHIL 332	Kant and His Critics	3 hours
PHIL 495	Senior Seminar: New Methods in Philosophy	3 hours

Two of the following, must be from two different groups with one being at the 300 level or above:

Metaphysics and Epistemology

PHIL 243	Introduction to Feminist Philosophy	3 hours
PHIL 245	Philosophy of World Cultures	3 hours
PHIL 247	Philosophy of Religion	3 hours
PHIL 340	Jewish, Christian and Islamic Philosophers in Dialogue	3 hours
PHIL 341	Mind, Knowledge, and Reality	3 hours
PHIL 343	20th Century Philosophy	3 hours
PHIL 345	Philosophy of Language	3 hours
PHIL 348	Philosophy of Science	3 hours

Value Theory

PHIL 250	Philosophy and Disabilities	3 hours
PHIL 251	Business Ethics	3 hours
PHIL 252	Philosophy of Art	3 hours
PHIL 253	Philosophy of Politics	3 hours
PHIL 254	Social Justice	3 hours
PHIL 255	Medical Ethics	3 hours
PHIL 354	Ethics	3 hours
PHIL 355	Philosophy of Law	3 hours

One of the following:

PHIL 333	19th Century Philosophy	3 hours
PHIL 334	Philosophy of Thomas Aquinas	3 hours
PHIL 341	Mind, Knowledge, and Reality	3 hours
PHIL 343	20th Century Philosophy	3 hours
PHIL 345	Philosophy of Language	3 hours
PHIL 348	Philosophy of Science	3 hours
PHIL 354	Ethics	3 hours
PHIL 355	Philosophy of Law	3 hours
PHIL 390	Special Topics	3 hours
PHIL 410	Philosophers of Consequence	3 hours
PHIL 496	Senior Thesis	6 hours

Minor in Philosophy—PHIL (15 hours)

All of the following:

PHIL 110	Introductory Philosophy	3 hours
or PHIL 233	Philosophy of Gender	3 hours

or PHIL 235	Philosophy of Human Existence	3 hours
or PHIL 245	Philosophy of World Cultures	3 hours
or PHIL 247	Philosophy of Religion	3 hours
or PHIL 252	Philosophy of Art	3 hours
or PHIL 253	Philosophy of Politics	3 hours
PHIL 220	Introduction to Logic	3 hours

One of the following:

PHIL 230	Socrates to Scholasticism	3 hours
PHIL 331	Descartes to Skepticism	3 hours
PHIL 332	Kant and His Critics	3 hours

Two of the following:

PHIL 233	Philosophy of Gender	3 hours
PHIL 235	Philosophy of Human Existence	3 hours
PHIL 236	American Philosophy	3 hours
PHIL 243	Introduction to Feminist Philosophy	3 hours
PHIL 245	Philosophy of World Cultures	3 hours
PHIL 247	Philosophy of Religion	3 hours
PHIL 250	Philosophy and Disabilities	3 hours
PHIL 251	Business Ethics	3 hours
PHIL 252	Philosophy of Art	3 hours
PHIL 253	Philosophy of Politics	3 hours
PHIL 254	Social Justice	3 hours
PHIL 255	Medical Ethics	3 hours
PHIL 290	Special Topics	3 hours
PHIL 333	19th Century Philosophy	3 hours
PHIL 334	Philosophy of Thomas Aquinas	3 hours
PHIL 341	Mind, Knowledge, and Reality	3 hours
PHIL 343	20th Century Philosophy	3 hours
PHIL 345	Philosophy of Language	3 hours
PHIL 348	Philosophy of Science	3 hours
PHIL 354	Ethics	3 hours
PHIL 355	Philosophy of Law	3 hours
PHIL 390	Special Topics	3 hours
PHIL 410	Philosophers of Consequence	3 hours
PHIL 495	Senior Seminar: New Methods in Philosophy	3 hours

PHILOSOPHY COURSES (PHIL)

INTRODUCTORY COURSES

The following survey courses are offered regularly for students who are fulfilling Sophia requirements or initiating the study of philosophy.

110 Introductory Philosophy (3)

Readings and discussions designed to introduce the student to the major areas and problems of philosophy through a study of the writings of classical and contemporary thinkers. (4 semester hours when taught as writing proficiency). There are no prerequisites for this course.

233 Philosophy of Gender (3)

An investigation of how gender construction has influenced how philosophy has been done and received historically, exploring how past and present thinkers view reality, knowledge and the good through the lens of gender identity (and the intersections of gender and other identities, including race, class and sexuality). There are no prerequisites for this course.

235 Philosophy of Human Existence (3)

A study of important European philosophers from the 19th and 20th centuries who are associated with the existentialist movement. There are no prerequisites to this course.

245 Philosophy of World Cultures (3)

A study of representative selected texts from Asian, African, Native American, or other alternative philosophical traditions. There are no prerequisites for this course.

247 Philosophy of Religion (3)

An investigation of the major philosophical issues in religious thought as posed by both critics and advocates. Special attention is paid to the relation between religious faith and knowledge. There are no prerequisites to this course.

252 Philosophy of Art (3)

A study of both traditional and contemporary philosophical theories concerning beauty, the nature of aesthetic experience, principles of criticism, and the function and character of creativity in the arts. There are no prerequisites to this course.

253 Philosophy of Politics (3)

A study of theories of society and the state which may include classical, contemporary, feminist, or ethnic visions of real and ideal community. There are no pre-requisites to this course.

NOTE: Unless noted otherwise, completion of the Philosophical Worldviews Sophia Program requirement is prerequisite to the courses below.

220 Introduction to Logic (3)

A study of the theories and techniques of formal logic in its traditional and contemporary forms.

230 Socrates to Scholasticism (3)

A study of the Greek origins of Western philosophy, with special attention to Plato and Aristotle and their impact on medieval thought. Class discussions throughout the term are grounded in a close reading of primary source texts.

236 American Philosophy (3)

A study of representative American philosophies, including those emerging from classical European traditions, American women philosophers, and African American and Native American thinkers.

243 Introduction to Feminist Philosophy (3)

An inquiry into the meaning of gender and its philosophical implications. Questions of identity, knowledge, ethics, race, and global responsibility will be considered both from historical and contemporary perspectives.

250 Philosophy and Disabilities (3)

This course explores questions raised by the existence of various kinds of disability. What is it like to experience disabilities? How do we understand disabilities? What ethical problems are raised by disabilities, and how do we respond to these problems? No prerequisite required.

251 Business Ethics (3)

A study of the moral issues raised by contemporary business practices.

254 Social Justice (3)

A philosophical study of problems of justice in the contemporary world.

255 Medical Ethics (3)

A philosophical inquiry into moral issues that arise in modern medicine. Some of the issues to be considered include euthanasia, abortion, care for the dying, patients' rights, limits on medical rights, limits on medical experimentation with human beings, defining death, and the patient-therapist relationship.

256 Environmental Ethics (3)

A focused introduction to ethical thinking organized around themes that pertain to contemporary environmental issues. Prerequisite: PHIL 110.

290/390 Special Topics (1–3)

Topics in Philosophy not covered in regular departmental offerings. May be repeated for credit with a different topic.

291 Dialogue and Civil Discourse (1)

Participants in a democracy should have the skills to identify and evaluate arguments from various perspectives on contemporary social and political issues. They must also be able to articulate their own views clearly and engage with the views of others who disagree. In this course, we will develop skills to engage in constructive dialogue with others who have different views on social and political issues. We will engage a controversial contemporary issue each week (for example: abortion, free speech and safe spaces on campus, immigration, religion in the public space). Background readings will consist of contemporary media articles drawn from a range of sources and viewpoints. Students will investigate their own core assumptions and beliefs about key issues and will listen to the views and experiences of others in the class. Occasional guest speakers will model civil discourse by discussing issues from differing perspectives. Assignments will consist of keeping a journal of the course experience and developing a class-led event to share the skills of dialogue and civil discourse with the broader campus community. There are no pre-requisites to this course.

331 Descartes to Skepticism (3)

A study of major themes in 17th and 18th century Western philosophy beginning with Descartes and tracing the development of modern thought through Hume. Class discussions throughout the term are grounded in a close reading of primary source texts.

332 Kant and His Critics (3)

A careful reading of Kant accompanied by a study of critical responses to his philosophy. The aim is an understanding of Kant's philosophy as a whole and its relevance to contemporary thought. Prerequisite: Sophia Philosophical Worldviews and PHIL 331.

333 19th Century Philosophy (3)

A study of philosophical questions emerging in the wake of the enlightenment, examining the implications for religion, politics, history, and reason.

334 Philosophy of Thomas Aquinas (3)

This course develops the philosophy of Thomas Aquinas both as a dialectical method and with respect to a philosophical issue. The issues, which vary from time to time depending on timeliness and student interest, include Aquinas's theory of natural law, natural theology, and the theory of human nature and knowledge.

340 Jewish, Christian, and Islamic Philosophers in Dialogue (3)

In this course we will study the writings of several important medieval philosophers—Avicenna, al-Ghazali, Averroes, Maimonides, and Thomas Aquinas—on subjects including the existence of God, the attributes of God, creation, providence, the relationship between faith and reason, prophecy, divine naming, and so forth. In addition to striving to understand the content of these philosophers' writings, we will also cultivate an appreciation of 1) ways in which these writers' philosophies were shaped by their faiths and in particular by the scriptures of their respective religions (*viz.*, the Torah, the Qur'an, and the Bible), 2) the historical development of philosophical ideas about the aforementioned subjects throughout this period, and most importantly 3) ways in which philosophical and theological influences extended across faith traditions, creating fruitful exchanges among Islamic, Jewish, and Christian cultures.

341 Mind, Knowledge, and Reality (3)

A critical investigation of traditional and contemporary theories of mind along with questions concerning the origin, nature, and validity of human knowledge.

343 20th Century Philosophy (3)

A study of significant contemporary intellectual movements on the continent of Europe, in Great Britain and America since World War II, e.g., phenomenology, post-structuralism, analytic philosophy, and neo-pragmatism.

345 Philosophy of Language (3)

A critical investigation of both analytic and continental theories of language with an emphasis on questions of meaning, reference, and interpretation.

348 Philosophy of Science (3)

An investigation of the meaning and use of scientific concepts and methods.

354 Ethics (3)

A study and critique of selected ethical theories with some application to current moral issues.

355 Philosophy of Law (3)

The philosophy of law considers the relation of law to justice. This course examines legal positivism, social contract, and natural law as accounts of the links between law and justice, including their role in contemporary understanding of the U.S. Constitution.

410 Philosophers of Consequence (3)

An in-depth study of the work of one or two important philosophers who will be selected on the basis of instructor preference and student interest. Secondary literature may be consulted but the bulk of the reading will be primary sources.

495 Senior Seminar: New Methods in Philosophy (3)

An intensive study of new methods and thinkers in philosophy. Both primary and secondary texts may be consulted.

496 Senior Thesis (3)

An independent study under the supervision of a faculty advisor who guides the writing of a major paper.

497 Independent Study (1–3)