
PHILOSOPHY BA, BS, CERTIFICATE AND MINORS

Philosophy

College of Arts & Humanities
Department of Philosophy
227 Armstrong Hall • 507-389-2012
Website: mnsu.edu/philosophy

Chair: Brandon Cooke

Faculty: Brandon Cooke, John Humphrey, Richard Liebendorfer, Craig Matarrese, Joshua Preiss, Bekka Williams, Julie Wulpemeyer, Sun Kyeong Yu

Our mission is to promote our students' development as independent and critical thinkers, and to guide their reflective engagement with fundamental questions about the nature of knowledge and reasoning, of ethical and aesthetic values, and of mind and world.

Students in our programs develop strong critical thinking, research, and communication skills, which are essential for success in any career. Those skills provide philosophy majors with the flexibility to adapt and grow as technologies and economic markets change. Our graduates have gone on to careers in higher education, medicine, law, information technology, business, non-profit leadership, publishing, and government.

Academic Map/Degree Plan at www.mnsu.edu/programs/#All

POLICIES/INFORMATION

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.

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.

PHILOSOPHY BA

Degree completion = 120 credits

Major Common Core

PHIL 334W History of Philosophy: Classical Philosophy (3)
PHIL 336W History of Philosophy: Renaissance & Modern Philosophy (3)
Logic Requirement (choose 3 credits)
PHIL 110 Logic and Critical Thinking (3)
PHIL 311 Symbolic Logic (3)

Major Restricted Electives

Cluster 1: History of Philosophy (choose 3 credits)
Each course can fulfill only one cluster requirement.
PHIL 337 19th Century Philosophy (3)
PHIL 338 American Philosophy (3)
PHIL 358W Topics in Asian Philosophy (3)
PHIL 361 Philosophy of Religion (3)
PHIL 400 The Philosophy of Immanuel Kant (3)
PHIL 405 The Philosophy of Ludwig Wittgenstein (3)
PHIL 437 Contemporary Philosophy (3)
PHIL 455 Existentialism and Phenomenology (3)

Cluster 2: Language, Epistemology, Metaphysics, and Mind (choose 6 credits)

Each course can fulfill only one cluster requirement.
PHIL 358W Topics in Asian Philosophy (3)
PHIL 361 Philosophy of Religion (3)
PHIL 410 Philosophy of Language (3)
PHIL 420 Epistemology (3)
PHIL 430 Metaphysics (3)
PHIL 437 Contemporary Philosophy (3)
PHIL 474 Philosophy of the Mind (3)
PHIL 475 Philosophical Issues in Cognitive Science (3)
PHIL 476 Philosophy of Perception (3)
PHIL 477 Animal Minds (3)

Cluster 3: Philosophy of Science (choose 3 credits)

Each course can fulfill only one cluster requirement.
PHIL 112 Logic of Scientific Method (3)
PHIL 475 Philosophical Issues in Cognitive Science (3)
PHIL 480 Philosophy of Science (3)
PHIL 481 Philosophy of Biology (3)
PHIL 482 Philosophy of Social Science (3)

Cluster 4: Ethics and Social and Political Philosophy (choose 6 credits)

At least 3 credits must be 300-400 level. Each course can fulfill only one cluster requirement.
PHIL 115W Philosophy of Race, Class, and Gender (3)
PHIL 120W Introduction to Ethics (3)
PHIL 205W Culture, Identity, and Diversity (3)
PHIL 222W Medical Ethics (3)
PHIL 224W Business Ethics (3)
PHIL 226W Environmental Ethics (3)
PHIL 240W Law, Justice, and Society (3)
PHIL 321W Social and Political Philosophy (3)
PHIL 322W Ethical Theory (3)
PHIL 323W Philosophy of Economics (3)
PHIL 440 Philosophy of Law (3)
PHIL 445 Feminist Philosophy (3)

Cluster 5: Aesthetics (choose 3 credits)

Each course can fulfill only one cluster requirement.
PHIL 460 Philosophy of the Arts (3)
PHIL 465 Philosophy of Film (3)

Major Unrestricted Electives (choose 9 credits)

These courses may not also be counter toward the Major Common Core or the Major Restricted Electives.

PHIL 321W Social and Political Philosophy (3)
PHIL 322W Ethical Theory (3)
PHIL 323W Philosophy of Economics (3)
PHIL 337 19th Century Philosophy (3)
PHIL 338 American Philosophy (3)
PHIL 358W Topics in Asian Philosophy (3)
PHIL 361 Philosophy of Religion (3)
PHIL 400 The Philosophy of Immanuel Kant (3)
PHIL 405 The Philosophy of Ludwig Wittgenstein (3)
PHIL 410 Philosophy of Language (3)
PHIL 420 Epistemology (3)
PHIL 430 Metaphysics (3)
PHIL 437 Contemporary Philosophy (3)
PHIL 440 Philosophy of Law (3)
PHIL 445 Feminist Philosophy (3)
PHIL 450 Special Topics (1-3)
PHIL 455 Existentialism and Phenomenology (3)
PHIL 460 Philosophy of the Arts (3)
PHIL 465 Philosophy of Film (3)
PHIL 474 Philosophy of the Mind (3)
PHIL 475 Philosophical Issues in Cognitive Science (3)
PHIL 476 Philosophy of Perception (3)
PHIL 477 Animal Minds (3)
PHIL 480 Philosophy of Science (3)
PHIL 481 Philosophy of Biology (3)
PHIL 482 Philosophy of Social Science (3)
PHIL 499 Individual Study (1-6)

Other Graduation Requirements

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

Required Minor: Yes. Any minor outside Philosophy (Critical Thinking, Ethics, Philosophy) is acceptable.

PHILOSOPHY BS

Degree completion = 120 credits

Major Common Core

PHIL 311 Symbolic Logic (3)
PHIL 334W History of Philosophy: Classical Philosophy (3)
PHIL 336W History of Philosophy: Renaissance and Modern Philosophy (3)

PHILOSOPHY CONTINUED

Major Restricted Electives

Cluster 1: History of Philosophy (choose 3 credits)

Each course can fulfill only one cluster requirement.

- PHIL 337 19th Century Philosophy (3)
- PHIL 338 American Philosophy (3)
- PHIL 358W Topics in Asian Philosophy (3)
- PHIL 361 Philosophy of Religion (3)
- PHIL 400 The Philosophy of Immanuel Kant (3)
- PHIL 405 The Philosophy of Ludwig Wittgenstein (3)
- PHIL 437 Contemporary Philosophy (3)
- PHIL 455 Existentialism and Phenomenology (3)

Cluster 2: Language, Epistemology, Metaphysics, and Mind (choose 6 credits)

Each course can fulfill only one cluster requirement.

- PHIL 358W Topics in Asian Philosophy (3)
- PHIL 361 Philosophy of Religion (3)
- PHIL 410 Philosophy of Language (3)
- PHIL 420 Epistemology (3)
- PHIL 430 Metaphysics (3)
- PHIL 437 Contemporary Philosophy (3)
- PHIL 474 Philosophy of the Mind (3)
- PHIL 475 Philosophical Issues in Cognitive Science (3)
- PHIL 476 Philosophy of Perception (3)
- PHIL 477 Animal Minds (3)

Cluster 3: Philosophy of Science (choose 6 credits)

Each course can fulfill only one cluster requirement.

- PHIL 112 Logic of Scientific Method (3)
- PHIL 475 Philosophical Issues in Cognitive Science (3)
- PHIL 480 Philosophy of Science (3)
- PHIL 481 Philosophy of Biology (3)
- PHIL 482 Philosophy of Social Science (3)

Cluster 4: Ethics and Social and Political Philosophy (choose 6 credits)

At least 3 credits must be 300-400 level. Each course can fulfill only one cluster requirement.

- PHIL 115W Philosophy of Race, Class, and Gender (3)
- PHIL 120W Introduction to Ethics (3)
- PHIL 205W Culture, Identity, and Diversity (3)
- PHIL 222W Medical Ethics (3)
- PHIL 224W Business Ethics (3)
- PHIL 226W Environmental Ethics (3)
- PHIL 240W Law, Justice, and Society (3)
- PHIL 321W Social and Political Philosophy (3)
- PHIL 322W Ethical Theory (3)
- PHIL 323W Philosophy of Economics (3)
- PHIL 440 Philosophy of Law (3)
- PHIL 445 Feminist Philosophy (3)

Cluster 5: Aesthetics (choose 3 credits)

Each course can fulfill only one cluster requirement.

- PHIL 460 Philosophy of the Arts (3)
- PHIL 465 Philosophy of Film (3)

Major Unrestricted Electives (choose 6 credits)

These courses may not also be counter toward the Major Common Core or the Major Restricted Electives.

- PHIL 321W Social and Political Philosophy (3)
- PHIL 322W Ethical Theory (3)
- PHIL 323W Philosophy of Economics (3)
- PHIL 337 19th Century Philosophy (3)
- PHIL 338 American Philosophy (3)
- PHIL 358W Topics in Asian Philosophy (3)
- PHIL 361 Philosophy of Religion (3)
- PHIL 400 The Philosophy of Immanuel Kant (3)
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- PHIL 410 Philosophy of Language (3)
- PHIL 420 Epistemology (3)
- PHIL 430 Metaphysics (3)
- PHIL 437 Contemporary Philosophy (3)
- PHIL 440 Philosophy of Law (3)
- PHIL 445 Feminist Philosophy (3)

- PHIL 450 Special Topics (1-3)
- PHIL 455 Existentialism and Phenomenology (3)
- PHIL 460 Philosophy of the Arts (3)
- PHIL 465 Philosophy of Film (3)
- PHIL 474 Philosophy of the Mind (3)
- PHIL 475 Philosophical Issues in Cognitive Science (3)
- PHIL 476 Philosophy of Perception (3)
- PHIL 477 Animal Minds (3)
- PHIL 480 Philosophy of Science (3)
- PHIL 481 Philosophy of Biology (3)
- PHIL 482 Philosophy of Social Science (3)
- PHIL 499 Individual Study (1-6)

Other Graduation Requirements

Required Minor: One of Astronomy, Biology, Chemistry, Earth Science, Environmental Science, Geology, Mathematics, Physics, Psychology, Sociology, or Statistics

HONORS IN PHILOSOPHY

The Honors in Philosophy option provides an enriched experience to the most capable Philosophy majors. Students pursuing Honors in Philosophy work closely with a Philosophy faculty member to write a thesis in the final year of study. This option is aimed especially at students who plan on graduate or professional study.

Admission to Honors in Philosophy is granted by the department, and ordinarily happens in the junior year, but no later than the beginning of the final year of study. Participation in the University Honors Program is not required. Admission requirements include a 3.0 cumulative GPA and 3.5 in all PHIL courses taken, with a minimum of 4 PHIL courses completed. In order to graduate with Honors in Philosophy, a student must meet the minimum requirements for graduation with University Honors (3.3 cumulative GPA or better), have a 3.5 or better in all PHIL courses, and complete all program requirements, including the Philosophy Honors Thesis.

Further details and policies on Honors in Philosophy and the Honors Thesis are available from the Department of Philosophy.

Honors in Philosophy (BA) requirements:

Philosophy BA requirements, with 3 credits from the Major Unrestricted Electives list

- PHIL 495 Philosophy Honors Thesis I (3)
- PHIL 496 Philosophy Honors Thesis II (3)

Honors in Philosophy (BS) requirements:

Philosophy BS requirements, with no credits from the Major Unrestricted Electives list

- PHIL 495 Philosophy Honors Thesis I (3)
- PHIL 496 Philosophy Honors Thesis II (3)

COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

PHIL 100W (3) Introduction to Philosophy

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

Fall, Spring

WI, GE-6

PHIL 101W (3) Philosophical Problem: the Mind-Body Problem

This course considers historical and contemporary analyses of the mind in relation to the body and the connection of the mind-body problem to other issues concerning both religion and science.

Fall, Spring

WI, GE-6

PHIL 110 (3) Logic and Critical Thinking

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

Fall, Spring

GE-2, GE-4

PHIL 112 (3) Logic of Scientific Method

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

Variable

GE-2, GE-4

PHILOSOPHY CONTINUED

PHIL 115W (3) Philosophy of 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
WI, GE-6, GE-7

PHIL 120W (3) Introduction to Ethics

Discussion of theories of value and obligation.

Variable
WI, GE-6, GE-9

PHIL 122W (3) Introduction to Asian Philosophy

Survey of Asian philosophical traditions of Hinduism, Jainism, Buddhism, Confucianism, and Daoism.

GE-6, GE-8
Diverse Cultures - Purple

PHIL 205W (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
WI, GE-6, GE-8

PHIL 222W (3) Medical Ethics

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

Variable
WI, GE-6, GE-9

PHIL 224W (3) Business Ethics

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

Variable
WI, GE-6, GE-9

PHIL 226W (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
WI, GE-9, GE-10

PHIL 240W (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
WI, GE-6, GE-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.

Spring
GE-2, GE-4

PHIL 321W (3) Social & Political Philosophy

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

Variable
WI, GE-6, GE-9

PHIL 322W (3) Ethical Theory

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

WI, GE-6, GE-9

PHIL 323W (3) Philosophy of Economics

This course will introduce students to important texts in moral and social philosophy that provide the foundation for modern economics. In addition, we will discuss philosophical accounts of rationality, well being, and freedom and their relevance to economic analysis.

Variable
WI, GE-6, GE-9

PHIL 334W (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.

WI, GE-6

PHIL 336W (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.

WI, GE-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 358W (3) Topics in Asian Philosophy

Critical discussion of the topics chosen from the Asian philosophical traditions of Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism, and Daoism.

Variable
WI, GE-6, GE-8
Diverse Cultures - Purple

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.

Fall

PHIL 400 (3) The Philosophy of Immanuel Kant

This course will undertake a close reading and study of Immanuel Kant's Critique of Pure Reason and other texts.

Variable

PHIL 405 (3) The Philosophy of Ludwig Wittgenstein

A study of the philosophy of Ludwig Wittgenstein.

Variable

PHIL 410 (3) Philosophy of Language

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

Variable

PHIL 420 (3) Epistemology

Theories of knowledge and justification, skeptical attacks on the possibility of knowledge, and anti-skeptical defenses.

Variable

PHIL 430 (3) Metaphysics

An investigation of the most fundamental concepts of reality, including the nature of things, identity over time, modality, causation, free will, space and time, and universals and particulars.

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 445 (3) Feminist Philosophy

Study of philosophy done from a feminist perspective in areas such as metaphysics, epistemology or ethics.

Fall

PHIL 450 (1-3) 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

PHILOSOPHY CONTINUED

PHIL 460 (3) Philosophy of the Arts

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

Spring

PHIL 465 (3) Philosophy of Film

This course investigates some of the central philosophical issues in our thinking about film, including questions about narrative, ontology, ethical criticism of film, the role of artistic intentions in interpretation, artistic medium, and the art/entertainment distinction.

Spring

PHIL 474 (3) Philosophy of the Mind

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

Variable

PHIL 475 (3) Philosophical Issues in Cognitive Science

This course examines the conceptual and philosophical complexities of efforts to understand the mind in science. Topics include the differences and similarities between humans and other animals, the nature of psychological explanation, and reductive strategies for explaining consciousness, intentionality and language.

Fall

PHIL 476 (3) Philosophy of Perception

Cognitive and epistemic issues surrounding sensory perception, including the nature of perception, its immediate objects, and its ability to deliver knowledge of the world.

Variable

PHIL 477 (3) Animal Minds

Philosophical issues concerning the mental lives of non-human animals, with emphasis on consciousness, rationality, language, and implications for non-human animal ethics.

PHIL 480 (3) Philosophy of Science

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

Variable

PHIL 481 (3) Philosophy of Biology

The course examines conceptual and philosophical issues in biology, the nature and scope of biological explanation and conflicts between evolutionary and religious explanations for the origin of life.

PHIL 482 (3) Philosophy of Social Science

Examines the nature and methods of alternative strategies of theory construction in the social sciences and the metaphysical and epistemological assumptions and implications of such strategies. For example can people, their behavior and norms of rationality be understood in naturalistic terms or must they be understood only in culturally local terms?

Variable

PHIL 490 (1-6) Workshop

Special event of less than semester duration.

Variable

PHIL 491 (1-6) In-Service

Variable

PHIL 495 (3) Philosophy Honors Thesis I

Restricted to Philosophy Honors students. Permission of department and instructor required.

PHIL 496 (1) Philosophy Honors Thesis II

Restricted to Philosophy Honors students. Permission of department and instructor required.

Prerequisite: PHIL 495

PHIL 499 (1-6) Individual Study

Individual study of a philosopher or problem.

Variable