

Philosophy and Religion

Faculty: Kamber, Chair; Le Morvan, Preti, Ravitsky, Roberts, Sisko, Winston

Philosophy, as a discipline, is the systematic examination of the most fundamental questions that human beings ask. Philosophy explores such matters as the nature of reality, the nature and source of knowledge, the nature and basis of ethics, and the relationship between mind and body. The study of philosophy makes a valuable contribution to one's personal development and is a keystone of a liberal education. The philosophy major combines a thorough study of philosophies that have shaped Western civilization with rigorous training in the analysis of argument and in the development of a systematic set of reasoned philosophical views of one's own.

The design of the philosophy major itself, as well as each course taught, strives to imbue students with those ways of identifying, thinking about and analyzing problems and constructing and assessing theories and counterexamples that can be found within the best that philosophy has to offer. The courses expressly ask students to demonstrate the ability to identify philosophical issues as problems or puzzles with respect to which there exist opposing solutions each of which requires investigation, understanding and assessment. They also emphasize the importance of the student's making a genuine contribution to the discussion that is presented by the assigned and recommended materials for the course in addition to demonstrating mastery of those materials. These courses also place emphasis on the process by which a good piece of philosophy is finally produced.

Philosophy majors and minors may elect to pursue either the general course of study in philosophy or, if they choose, a major or minor concentration either in the area of Law and Philosophy or in the area of Ethics. The general course of study in philosophy is designed for students who have broad interests in philosophy or who wish to prepare for graduate school in philosophy. The concentration in Law and Philosophy is designed for students with an interest in law or in legal and political theory. The concentration in Ethics is designed for students with interests in theoretical or applied ethics, or medicine, nursing, and other professions in the fields of ethics, health care, and biomedical research.

The study of philosophy provides a powerful perspective on other academic subjects ranging from literature and art to biology and mathematics as well as an exceptionally strong background for such diverse professions as teaching, journalism, medicine, ministry, and business as well as law. A major or minor in philosophy can thus be profitably combined with a variety of other majors.

The religion courses explore the phenomenon of religion and its place in human life and provide critical insight into the fundamental tenets and practices of the major religious traditions. The minor in religion allows a sustained and deeper study of these matters. It is a valuable background for careers in social work and counseling as well as for the various religious vocations.

Philosophy Major (PHIA)

Philosophy majors, whether pursuing the general course of study in philosophy or concentrating in Philosophy and Law or in Ethics, are required to complete a total of 10 PHL courses, for a total of 10 course units:

Logic

PHL 120/Introduction to Logic

or

1 course unit

PHL 220/Metalogic

History of Philosophy

2 course units

PHL 301/History of Ancient Philosophy
and

PHL 305/History of Modern Philosophy

Ethics

1 course unit

PHL 350/Ethical Theory

or

PHL 375/Equality in Ethics and the Law

Epistemology or Metaphysics

1 course unit

PHL 410/Theory of Knowledge

or

PHL 420/Metaphysics

Philosophy Electives

4 course units

Four additional philosophy courses including at least three at the 300 or 400 level.

Senior Capstone

1-2 course units*

PHIL 494/ Senior Research

.5 course unit

and

PHL 495/Senior Thesis

1 course unit

or

PHL498/Senior Project

.5 course unit

**Senior Capstone: A "capstone experience" is one in which knowledge and skills developed throughout the program are brought to bear in a unified way on a research or other project presented to the department. Students other than departmental honors candidates must complete a half-unit of Senior Research in the first semester of the senior year and a substantial writing project in the second semester, working independently both semesters under the close direction of a faculty member on a topic to which both agree. Students present and discuss publicly their project toward the end of their final semester. Students will also be given the option of completing a more formal senior thesis, which will include, in addition to selecting an adviser, establishing a committee and defending the thesis orally. Honors candidates in philosophy are required to complete PHL 391 Independent Study on the topic of his or her thesis and PHL 495 Senior Thesis.*

Philosophy Major Concentrations: Law and Philosophy; Ethics

Like the traditional majors, the concentrations in Law and Philosophy and in Ethics require students to complete 10 courses in philosophy as described above. In addition, students who wish to pursue a concentration will be required to select specified courses as options and a senior project or thesis particularly related to the concentration, as follows:

Law and Philosophy

PHL 275/Philosophy of Law

PHL 375/Equality in Ethics and the Law

Senior project or thesis on a topic in the area of law and philosophy.

Ethics

PHL 255/Biomedical Ethics

PHL 350/Ethical Theory

PHL 430/Advanced Ethics

Senior project or thesis on a topic in the area of ethics.

Students interested in pursuing a concentration in Law and Philosophy should contact Professor Roberts or the chair of the department. Students interested in pursuing a concentration in Ethics should contact Professor Winston or the chair of the department.

Philosophy Minor

Philosophy minors may elect to pursue either the general course of study in philosophy or, if they choose, a minor concentration either in the area of Law and Philosophy or in the area of Ethics. All minors, whether pursuing the general course of study in philosophy or concentrating in Law and Philosophy or in Ethics, are required to complete a total of five PHL courses, for a total of 5 course units:

PHL 120/Introduction to Logic
PHL 301/History of Ancient Philosophy *or*
PHL 305/History of Modern Philosophy
Two additional PHL courses at any level.
One additional PHL course at 300 or 400 level.

Philosophy Minor Concentrations: Law and Philosophy; Ethics

Philosophy minors concentrating in Law and Philosophy or in Ethics must insure that, in choosing courses that satisfy the requirements listed above, they also satisfy certain additional requirements of the concentrations. In particular, minors concentrating in Law and Philosophy must complete PHL 275 and PHL 375. Minors concentrating in Ethics must complete either PHL 135 or PHL 255, PHL 350, and PHL 430. Because the philosophy minor may be tailored to any number of specific needs and interests, students who are considering a minor in philosophy may wish to consult with the department before selecting a particular sequence of courses.

Honors in Philosophy

The department awards honors in philosophy at graduation to students who have completed a distinguished undergraduate record in philosophy including a senior thesis of exceptional quality. A typical honors thesis is about 40 to 60 pages in length, although both shorter and longer theses have been the basis for an award of honors. The program takes two semesters, one in which a topic is chosen, supervised research is conducted, and a draft of a portion of the thesis is prepared through Independent Study (PHL 391); and a second, in which additional research is conducted and the full thesis is written under close supervision through Senior Thesis (PHL 495). At the end of the semester, the student meets for 45 minutes with a committee of the department, including the faculty adviser, to present and discuss the thesis.

To apply for the program, students must have completed: 1) at least 6 course units in philosophy with a cumulative average of 3.6 or better for those courses; 2) at least two course units in courses at the 300 and 400 level; and must 3) secure the agreement of a member of the philosophy faculty to serve as supervisor. Application should be made to the department chair; admission will be decided by a vote of the department, based on the quality of the applicant's overall record.

To complete the program and graduate with honors in philosophy, a student must: 1) complete the major in philosophy with a cumulative average in philosophy courses of 3.55 or better; 2) complete Independent Study (PHL 391) on the topic of his or her thesis under the supervisor's guidance; and 3) complete Senior Thesis (PHL 495) with a grade of at least an A-. The grade will be awarded by the examining committee (see above) based on the quality both of the written work and of the oral presentation and discussion.

Course Sequence

Many students who choose to major in philosophy do so late in, or after, their freshman year; and some courses are offered only in alternate years. The program that follows is thus an idealized sequence; the exact semester and particular order in which the courses are taken will probably vary. To ensure that students entering the major in their sophomore or junior year complete the program on a timely basis, specific requirements may be waived for students who have covered pertinent subject matter in other ways. Many courses in the College Honors Program will satisfy one or another philosophy requirement; and where necessary students can complete course requirements on an independent study or special arrangement basis. The substitution of another course for a specific requirement does not reduce the total number of credits required for the major.

Freshman Year

FSP First Seminar	1 course unit
WRI 102/Academic Writing—if required*	1 course unit
Foreign Language *	2 course units
Quantitative Reasoning	1 course unit
PHL 120/Introduction to Logic	
or	
PHL 220/Metalogic	
PHL 301/History of Philosophy	1 course unit
Elective	1 course unit

**It is recommended that students exempted from these courses take other liberal learning courses.*

Sophomore Year

Laboratory Science	1 course unit
Science or Quantitative Reasoning	1 course unit
Art or Literature	1 course unit
Social Science or History	1 course unit
PHL 305/ History of Modern Philosophy	1 course unit
PHL 350/Ethical Theory	
Or	
PHL 375/Equality in Ethics and the Law	1 course unit
One additional philosophy course	1 course unit
One elective	1 course unit

Junior Year

Art or Literature	1 course unit
Social Science or History	2 course units
PHL 410/ Theory of Knowledge	1 course unit
or	
PHL 420/ Metaphysics	
Two additional philosophy courses	2 course units
Two electives	2 course units

Senior Year

PHL 494/ Senior Research	.5 course unit
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and

PHL 495/ Senior Thesis

or

PHL 498/ Senior Project

Two additional philosophy courses

Four-five electives

1-1.5 course units

2 course units

4-5 course units

PHL 100/Basic Philosophical Issues

1 course unit

(every semester)

An introductory-level, problem-based course that includes the fundamentals of philosophical argument, analysis and reasoning, applied to a series of issues in logic, epistemology, metaphysics and ethics. Topics covered may include: logical validity, theories of knowledge and belief, the nature of mind, the nature of reality, arguments for the existence of God, and theories of the nature of right and wrong.

PHL 120/Introduction to Logic

1 course unit

(every semester)

Instruction in the basic principles and techniques of correct reasoning in ordinary life and the sciences. Study of the formal systems of sentence logic and predicate logic. Translation of the natural language and analysis and evaluation of deductive arguments through the construction of proofs. Focus particularly on the power and precision of the natural language with the aim of helping students increase their ability to think and write with creativity, precision, and rigor.

PHL 135/Contemporary Moral Issues

1 course unit

(every semester)

This course provides an introduction to ethics, one of the main branches of philosophy. It aims to familiarize students with basic concepts and theories in ethics, and with how they may be applied to a range of contemporary moral issues. Topics addressed may include racism, sexism, the treatment of the handicapped, abortion, euthanasia, cloning, capital punishment, our obligations to the disadvantaged, the treatment of non-human animals, just war, and the like. Students will be encouraged to learn from great thinkers of the past and of the present, to examine their own moral values and beliefs, and to take reasoned and informed stands on the issues treated.

PHL 215/American Philosophy

1 course unit

(occasionally)

Prerequisite: One course in philosophy or permission of instructor

This course is designed to introduce students to the history of American philosophy and influence that American philosophers have had on the development of philosophy throughout the world. Much of the course will focus on the creation of pragmatism by Pierce, James, and Dewey (1870–1938) and the reworking of pragmatic ideas since 1950 by American philosophers such as Quine, Putnam, and Rorty. In addition, selections will be made from other traditions, movements, and thinkers. These may include: American Indian worldviews and ways of knowing, colonial thinkers such as Jonathan Edwards, transcendentalists such as Emerson and Thoreau, idealists such as Josiah Royce, and recent work by American philosophers using “lenses” of race and gender.

PHL 220/Metalogic

1 course unit

(alternate years)

Prerequisite: PHL 120 or permission of the instructor.

Advanced study of predicate logic, including mixed quantification, relations, identity, and definite descriptions. Soundness and completeness theorems for the sentence and predicate logics. Selected additional topics in logical theory and the philosophy of logic.

PHL 240/Political Philosophy

1 course unit

(annually)

Prerequisite: One course in philosophy or permission of instructor

This course will provide a systematic historical survey of the main issues in political philosophy. The main topics to be discussed include: the justification of political authority, modern social contract theories of the state, conceptions of distributive justice, and contemporary liberal, communitarian, and cosmopolitan theories of political organizations. Significant attention will be given to contemporary debates in political philosophy such as humanitarian intervention, and duties beyond borders.

PHL 245/Existentialism

1 course unit

(alternate years)

Prerequisite: One course in philosophy or permission of instructor

A critical examination of existentialism and the work of philosophers and writers associated with existentialism. Since the name 'existentialism' is a covering term for a diverse group of post-Hegelian, European philosophers, this course emphasizes the distinctive views of individual figures. Among the figures considered are Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, Heidegger, and Sartre, Beauvoir, and Camus.

PHL 246/Aesthetics

1 course unit

(occasionally)

Prerequisite: One course in philosophy or permission of instructor

A critical examination of principal issues and theories in the philosophy of art and beauty. Readings include works by philosophers of historical importance such as Plato and Aristotle as well as the writings of contemporary aestheticians. Consideration is also given to selected issues associated with particular arts such as meaning in music and the interpretation of poetry, and the cinematic in film.

PHL 250/Philosophy of Religion

1 course unit

(same as HON 272)

(annually)

Prerequisite: One course in philosophy or permission of instructor

This course critically examines major issues, views, and positions in the philosophy of religion. Topics treated include the nature of religion and divinity, religious diversity, the problem of evil, philosophical arguments for the existence of God, religious experience, ethics and religion, and science and religion. Students will be encouraged to learn from great thinkers of the past and of the present, to examine their own religious values and beliefs, and to take reasoned and informed stands on the issues treated.

PHL 255/Biomedical Ethics

1 course unit

(same as HON 355)

(annually)

Prerequisite: One course in philosophy or permission of instructor

This course deals with questions concerning the ethical and social policy dimensions of medicine, nursing and other health care professionals. Topics examined include: the professional-patient relationship, abortion, euthanasia, research involving human subjects, justice in health care, and the ethical implications of futuristic possibilities such as eugenics, cloning, and genetic

engineering. Examination of ethical issues arising in connection with medical and nursing practice and research. Topics typically discussed include: abortion, euthanasia, research using human subjects, impact of new technologies, and aspects of the professional-patient relationship.

PHL 265/Environmental Ethics

1 course unit

(same as HON 265)

(occasionally)

This course is designed to provide a comprehensive overview of the key issues and arguments within the field of environmental ethics. The course will begin with an examination of some basic issues in metaethics and normative ethical theory and then go on to analyze several kinds of ethical arguments for animal rights and environmental protection. We will also study major environmental movements, such as deep ecology, social ecology, ecofeminism and the environmental justice movement. Finally we will consider selected public policy issues such as habitat preservation, land-use management, or pollution abatement specifically as they arise in New Jersey.

PHL 275/Philosophy of Law

1 course unit

(annually)

Prerequisite: One course in philosophy or sophomore standing

Aims (i) to provide an understanding of the core debate in philosophy of law regarding the relationship between law and ethics, (ii) to present and make distinctions among the leading theories regarding the nature of law, including classical natural law theory, positivism, formalism, legal realism, the “new naturalism” and legal skepticism, (iii) to identify and understand the problem of indeterminacy in the law and (iv) to give each student the opportunity to articulate his or her own creative solution to that problem.

PHL 301/History of Ancient Philosophy

1 course unit

(annually)

Prerequisite: One course in philosophy or permission of instructor

Traces the development of philosophy in the West from its beginnings in 6th century B.C. Greece through the thought of Plato and Aristotle, especially on questions concerning reality, knowledge, human nature, and the good life. Attention is also given to the influence of the Greek philosophers on the Western tradition to the present day.

PHL 305/History of Modern Philosophy

1 course unit

(annually)

Prerequisite: One course in philosophy or permission of instructor

Traces the development of major philosophical ideas in the West from the beginning of the 17th century to the close of the 18th century. Philosophers whose works are examined typically include some or all of: Descartes, Spinoza, Leibniz, Locke, Berkeley, Hume, and Kant. Special emphasis is placed on the development of epistemology and metaphysics during the Enlightenment.

PHL 306/20th-Century Philosophy

1 course unit

(alternate years)

Prerequisite: One course in logic or permission of instructor

Upper-level course exhibiting a steeply progressive historical treatment of issues and problems characteristic of 20th-century philosophy. The course traces a line from idealist roots of analytic philosophy through the work of Frege, Russell, and Wittgenstein; includes comparison and contrast with continental phenomenology in the work of Husserl and Sartre, and concludes with a critical look at the structuralist analyses of language in the work of Barthes, Foucault, and Derrida.

PHL 347/Philosophy and Literature

1 course unit

(same as HON 346)

(occasionally)

Prerequisites: One course in philosophy and one course in literature or literary theory, or permission of instructor

A study of literary works and the nature of literature from the vantage point of philosophy. Using a variety of literary, critical, and philosophical texts, this course examines similarities and differences between literary works (belles-lettres literature) and other forms of verbal expression.

PHL 350/Ethical Theory

1 course unit

(occasionally)

Prerequisite: One course in philosophy or permission of instructor

Examines major theories in ethics and metaethics such as: utilitarianism, deontology, virtue-oriented ethics, relativism, intuitionism, emotivism, natural law, and theories of justice, rights and duties. Concentrated study of works of major historical and contemporary thinkers.

PHL 370/Special Topics in Philosophy

1 course unit

(occasionally)

Prerequisite: One course in philosophy and permission of instructor

300-level seminar on a problem, text, philosopher, historical period, or other philosophical topic not covered in depth in regular courses. Topics will vary. May be repeated for credit with permission of the department.

PHL 375/Equality in Ethics and the Law

1 course unit

(annually)

Prerequisites: One course in philosophy; two courses strongly recommended

Concentrated investigation of legal and moral issues relating to equality, including issues of the interpretation, application and moral assessment of the constitutional guaranty of “equal protection.” The two basic questions—“What is it that shall be made equal, and for whom?”—will be addressed by way of a discussion of such issues as alternative theories of equality (including theories of equality of resources and equality of welfare); women’s rights of equality; and children’s rights of equality. A number of practical problems related to equality will be considered, including some of: abortion as an issue of equality; liberty and equality; children’s constitutional rights; affirmative action; and equality in the family.

PHL 391/Independent Study in Philosophy

1 course unit

(every semester)

Prerequisite: Two courses in philosophy and permission of instructor

Independent study of a particular philosophical topic, in close consultation with a member of the department.

PHL 410/Theory of Knowledge

1 course unit

(alternate years)

Prerequisite: One course in philosophy or permission of instructor

This course provides an in-depth examination of the central topics of epistemology including truth, belief, epistemic justification, knowledge, perception, skepticism and the responses thereto. Students will be encouraged to learn from great thinkers of the past and of the present, to reflect on their own epistemic values and beliefs, and to take reasoned and informed stands on the issues treated.

PHL 411/Philosophy of Science**1 course unit**

(occasionally)

Prerequisites: One course each in philosophy and a science, or permission of instructor

This course provides an in-depth examination of epistemological, metaphysical, and ethical issues raised by science. Issues addressed may include: scientific realism vs. anti-realism, scientific explanation, the historical development of science, induction, scientific observation, confirmation theory, and the ethical responsibility of scientists. Students will be encouraged to learn from great thinkers of the past and of the present, to reflect on their own values and beliefs concerning science, and to take reasoned and informed stands on the issues treated.

PHL 420/Metaphysics**1 course unit**

(alternate years)

Prerequisite: One course in logic or permission of instructor

Advanced level course promoting deeper understanding of core issues in contemporary metaphysics, including contrast with ancient and modern treatments of these enduring questions. Topics covered include: existence, identity, possible worlds, personal identity, universals and particulars, realism/anti-realism, and causation.

PHL 421/Philosophy of Language**1 course unit**

(occasionally)

Prerequisite: One course in logic or permission of instructor

Advanced level course promoting deeper understanding of core issues in contemporary theories of meaning and truth. Issues and problems are placed in their historical context, and include: the semantic theories of Frege and Russell; Wittgenstein's *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* and *Philosophical Investigations*; logical positivism, Kripke's *Naming and Necessity*, and the consequences of semantic externalism.

PHL 422/Philosophy of Mind**1 course unit**

(occasionally)

Prerequisite: One course in philosophy or permission of instructor

Advanced level course promoting deeper understanding of core issues in contemporary theories of the mind and mental states. Topics covered include: dualist theories, the nature of consciousness, eliminativism, computationalism, the nature of mental content, and the role of content in psychological explanation.

PHL 430/Advanced Ethics**1 course unit**

(occasionally)

Prerequisites: PHL 350, PHL 375 or permission of the instructor

Advanced study of issues in contemporary ethics, bioethics, or philosophy of law. Topics treated will vary, but will involve concentrated study of specific topics in applied ethics or ethical theory or philosophy of law.

PHL 470/Advanced Topics in Philosophy**1 course unit**

(occasionally)

Prerequisites: Two courses in philosophy and permission of instructor

A 400-level seminar on a problem, text, philosopher, historical period, or other philosophical topic not covered in depth in regular courses. Topics will vary. May be repeated for credit with permission of the department.

PHL 494/ Senior Research**.5 course units**

(annually)

Prerequisite: Senior standing as a philosophy major.

Independent research under the guidance of a full-time faculty member on a mutually agreed-on topic. Students will be expected to define a topic suitable for a Senior Thesis or Senior Project, conduct a search of appropriate literature, develop a writing plan, and participate in organized discussions with other students enrolled in Senior Capstone Research.

PHL 495/Senior Thesis

1 course unit

(annually)

Prerequisite: Senior standing as a philosophy major

A very substantial writing project prepared under the advisement of a member of the philosophy faculty in consultation with a committee consisting of at least two additional faculty members and an oral defense before the committee. Students must complete a carefully researched and written, in-depth work in philosophy on a topic of significance in philosophy, selected by the student in consultation with faculty and written under the close supervision of a faculty member who serves as adviser or such adviser and a committee.

PHL 498/Senior Project

.5 course units

(annually)

Prerequisite: Senior standing as a philosophy major

A substantial writing project prepared under the close advisement of a member of the philosophy faculty and a presentation component. Students must complete a carefully researched and written, in-depth work in philosophy on a topic of significance in philosophy, selected by the student in consultation with faculty and written under the close supervision of a faculty member who serves as adviser or such adviser and a committee.

Religion Minor

Five courses are required for the minor in religion. Students are encouraged to choose a sequence of courses in consultation with the department to suit their specific needs. All students are required to take two courses with a REL prefix. The three additional courses may include any courses that have a REL prefix or other courses approved by the department.

(Students should consult the department's religious studies adviser as to whether other religion-oriented courses at the College or elsewhere may be counted toward the minor.)

Total Required

5 course units

REL 100/Basic Issues in Religion

1 course unit

(annually)

Characterization of religious phenomena and their relationship to human understanding of oneself and society. The course is an opportunity to look at religion sympathetically but critically.

REL 110/World Religions

1 course unit

(every semester)

An exploration of the world's major religious traditions. Students will examine and compare the essential teachings, and the historical and cultural context, of most or all of the following: Hinduism, Buddhism, Judaism, Christianity, Islam, and one or more additional non-Western tradition(s).

REL 111/Buddhism and Buddhist Thought**1 course unit**

(annually)

An examination of Buddhism and some of the intellectual traditions that have flourished in conjunction with Buddhism. Students will study the historical origins and essential teachings of a particular religion and explore some of the literary and philosophical traditions that developed from or in close connection with that religion.

REL 112/Hinduism and Hindu Thought**1 course unit**

(annually)

An examination of Hinduism and some of the intellectual traditions that have flourished in conjunction with it. Students will study the historical origins and essential teachings of this religion and explore some of the literary and philosophical traditions that developed from or in close connection with Hinduism.

REL 113/Islam and Islamic Thought**1 course unit**

(annually)

An examination of Islam and some of the intellectual traditions that have flourished in conjunction with it. Students will study the historical origins and essential teachings of this religion and explore some of the literary and philosophical traditions that developed from or in close connection with Islam.

REL 114/Taoism and Taoist Thought**1 course unit**

(annually)

An examination of Taoism and some of the intellectual traditions that flourished in conjunction with it. Students will study the historical origins and essential teachings of this religion and explore some of the literary and philosophical traditions that developed from or in close connection with Taoism.

REL 120/Early Judaism**1 course unit**

(annually)

An examination of the fundamentals, history and development of the Jewish faith and way of life. Students will study the Jewish historical experience and the evolving theological responses to that experience from the beginnings of Judaism until the French Revolution.

REL 121/Modern Judaism**1 course unit**

(annually)

An examination of the fundamentals, history and development of the Jewish faith and way of life. Students will study the Jewish historical experience and the evolving theological responses to that experience from 1492 to the present.

REL 370/Special Topics in Religion**1 course unit**

(occasionally)

Prerequisite: One course in religion or philosophy or permission of the instructor
300-level seminar on a problem, text, religious thinker, historical period or other topic in religion not covered in depth in regular courses. Topics will vary. May be repeated for credit with permission of the department.

REL 391/Independent Study in Religion**1 course unit**

(every semester)

Prerequisite: Permission of the department

Independent study of a particular topic in religion, in close consultation with a member of the department.