

PHILOSOPHY (PHIL)

Philosophy has always been at the heart of liberal education, deepening and enriching the lives of those who pursue it. The philosophy major provides students with the opportunity to confront a wide variety of questions, especially those that cannot be dealt with in the framework of other disciplines. Such questions include those about the ultimate nature of reality: Does God exist? Are minds distinct from bodies? Are there more things between heaven and Earth than are dreamed of in science? Other questions probe what it is to know: Do we know that material bodies external to our minds exist? What does it mean to justify a belief? Still other questions are about how we ought to be or act: What is a good person? Are there moral rules? How are they justified? Must we obey them?

Philosophy also concerns itself with other disciplines: What makes something a work of art? What distinguishes a scientific theory from a religious theory or myth? Is capitalism amoral? Is legal authority moral or political?

The Department of Philosophy offers a wide range of courses exposing students to the full scope of philosophical activity. Grappling with major primary texts from the history of philosophy is an important emphasis of the program, for philosophy today is the continuation of a conversation that extends back to the ancient Greeks and the Vedic scriptures. Philosophy also always has wrestled with cutting-edge topics emerging in the current culture. Some recent examples are: What are the prospects for machines with mental lives? What are the implications of new views in cosmology? How do we handle the pressing ethical dilemmas brought on by emerging medical technologies, or by the historically unparalleled rate of destruction of the Earth's environment? Are gender and race socially constructed concepts rather than biological concepts?

Each semester, detailed course descriptions are posted in the department office and on the department web page.

Career Opportunities

Philosophy offers excellent training for a variety of careers by providing a unique combination of lifelong skills: analytic and interpretive skills; critical reasoning skills; the enhanced capacity to detect problems and to solve them; excellence in oral and written presentation and defense of one's ideas; skill at asking probing and central questions about the ideas of others (as well as about one's own ideas); and skill at effectively understanding, organizing, and evaluating complex systems of thought.

Considering these skills, it is not surprising that philosophy majors score in the very top percentiles on the GRE, LSAT, and GMAT standardized exams. For example, in a recent GRE study, philosophy majors were ranked among the very top majors in their mean scores on the verbal, analytic, and quantitative components of the exam; in a recent LSAT study, philosophy majors had a higher mean score than even prelaw majors; and for recent GMAT tests, the mean score for philosophy majors exceeded that of any type of business major. Virtually no other major does this well on such a wide cross-section of standardized exams.

These results reflect the fact that the unique combination of skills acquired in philosophy, along with the breadth of subject matter, provide the philosophy major with an extremely adaptive and resilient mind-set. Philosophy provides superior preparation for a variety of vocational and professional endeavors, and perhaps more importantly, for being a professional.

<https://cola.unh.edu/philosophy>

Programs

- Philosophy Major (B.A.) (<http://catalog.unh.edu/archives/2018-2019/undergraduate/liberal-arts/programs-study/philosophy/philosophy-major-ba>)
- Philosophy Major: Ethics and Social Responsibility Option (B.A.) (<http://catalog.unh.edu/archives/2018-2019/undergraduate/liberal-arts/programs-study/philosophy/philosophy-major-ethics-social-responsibility-option-ba>)
- Philosophy Minor (<http://catalog.unh.edu/archives/2018-2019/undergraduate/liberal-arts/programs-study/philosophy/philosophy-minor>)

Courses

Philosophy (PHIL)

PHIL 401 - Introduction to Philosophy

Credits: 4

This course gives a basic grounding in Philosophy. We explore enduring questions that we have all grappled with: Does God exist? Do we have free will? How can we lead fulfilling lives? No background in philosophy is needed, only an open and inquiring mind.

Attributes: Humanities(Disc)

PHIL 401H - Honors/Introduction to Philosophy

Credits: 4

This course gives a basic grounding in Philosophy. We explore enduring questions that we have all grappled with: Does God exist? Do we have free will? How can we lead fulfilling lives? No background in philosophy is needed, only an open and inquiring mind.

Attributes: Humanities(Disc); Writing Intensive Course

PHIL 401W - Introduction to Philosophy

Credits: 4

This course gives a basic grounding in Philosophy. We explore enduring questions that we have all grappled with: Does God exist? Do we have free will? How can we lead fulfilling lives? No background in philosophy is needed, only an open and inquiring mind. Writing intensive.

Attributes: Humanities(Disc); Writing Intensive Course

PHIL 410 - Happiness, Well-Being, and a Good Life

Credits: 4

A sustained exploration of happiness, well-being, and a good life. Are they the same? If not, do any include the others, and can they conflict? What sorts of things might contribute to or detract from happiness, well-being, and having a good life? Comparing work on these topics in philosophy and psychology will be a key theme in the course.

Attributes: Humanities(Disc); Inquiry (Discovery)

PHIL 412 - Beginning Logic

Credits: 4

Principles of reasoning and development of symbolic techniques for evaluating arguments.

Attributes: Quantitative Reasoning(Disc)

PHIL 412H - Honors/Beginning Logic

Credits: 4

Principles of reasoning and development of symbolic techniques for evaluating arguments.

Attributes: Quantitative Reasoning(Disc)

PHIL 417 - God, Religion, and the Meaning of Life

Credits: 4

An introductory philosophical exploration of the relationship between reason and religious experience, particularly as this relationship has developed in and in response to, the great world religions.

Attributes: Humanities(Disc); Writing Intensive Course

PHIL 421 - Philosophy and the Arts

Credits: 4

Contemporary philosophic concerns and perspectives as reflected in one or more of the arts (literature, theatre, film, music, plastic art). Writing intensive.

Attributes: FinePerformingArts(Discovery); Inquiry (Discovery); Writing Intensive Course

PHIL 421H - Honors/Philosophy and the Arts

Credits: 4

Contemporary philosophic concerns and perspectives as reflected in one or more of the arts (literature, theatre, film, music, plastic art). Writing intensive.

Attributes: FinePerformingArts(Discovery); Inquiry (Discovery); Writing Intensive Course

PHIL 424 - Science, Technology, and Society

Credits: 4

Consideration of the scientific endeavor and its social import from a philosophical perspective.

Attributes: Environment,TechSociety(Disc)

PHIL 424H - Honors/Science, Technology and Society

Credits: 4

Consideration of the scientific endeavor and its social import from a philosophical perspective.

Attributes: Environment,TechSociety(Disc)

PHIL 430 - Ethics and Society

Credits: 4

Critical study of principles and arguments advanced in discussion of current moral and social issues. Possible topics: violence, rules of warfare, sexual morality, human rights, punishment, abortion.

Attributes: Humanities(Disc)

PHIL 430H - Honors/Ethics and Society

Credits: 4

Critical study of principles and arguments advanced in discussion of current moral and social issues. Possible topics: violence, rules of warfare, sexual morality, human rights, punishment, abortion. Writing intensive.

Attributes: Humanities(Disc); Writing Intensive Course

PHIL 430W - Ethics and Society

Credits: 4

Critical study of principles and arguments advanced in discussion of current moral and social issues. Possible topics: violence, rules of warfare, sexual morality, human rights, punishment, abortion. Writing intensive.

Attributes: Humanities(Disc); Writing Intensive Course

PHIL 431 - Business Ethics

Credits: 4

An interdisciplinary study of ethical issues in business. This course, taught collaboratively by business school and philosophy department faculty, applies philosophical perspectives, critical thinking, and analysis to ethical decision-making and implementation in the workplace as well as the broader context of other businesses, customers, society, and the environment.

Attributes: Humanities(Disc)

PHIL 435 - Human Nature and Evolution

Credits: 4

Philosophy of biology and the evolutionary process. Readings of scientists and philosophers' commentary on scientists. Examination of the differences between scientific debate and philosophic debate. Philosophical study of scientific theory stressing humans' place in the natural world and the ethical implication of humans as natural beings in the evolutionary process.

Attributes: Environment,TechSociety(Disc)

PHIL 435H - Honors\Human Nature and Evolution

Credits: 4

Philosophy of biology and the evolutionary process. Readings of scientists and philosophers' commentary on scientists. Examination of the differences between scientific debate and philosophic debate. Philosophical study of scientific theory stressing humans' place in the natural world and the ethical implication of humans as natural beings in the evolutionary process.

Attributes: Environment,TechSociety(Disc)

PHIL 436 - Social and Political Philosophy

Credits: 4

Examines social and political thought that may include texts from ancient through contemporary times, addressing topics such as natural rights, revolution, law, freedom, justice, power. Questions may include: What is a community, and how are individuals related to communities? Can any particular form of government be morally justified, and if so, what kind of government? Can anarchism work? Is there something wrong with a society in which there is private ownership of property? What is oppressive? What is freedom, and are we free? What roles should different forms of power play in a society? Could and should there be a genderless society? Is ethnic diversity valuable?

Attributes: Humanities(Disc); Inquiry (Discovery)

PHIL 436H - Honors/Social and Political Philosophy

Credits: 4

Examines social and political thought that may include texts from ancient through contemporary times, addressing topics such as natural rights, revolution, law, freedom, justice, power. Questions may include: What is a community, and how are individuals related to communities? Can any particular form of government be morally justified, and if so, what kind of government? Can anarchism work? Is there something wrong with a society in which there is private ownership of property? What is oppressive? What is freedom, and are we free? What roles should different forms of power play in a society? Could and should there be a genderless society? Is ethnic diversity valuable? Writing intensive.

Attributes: Humanities(Disc); Inquiry (Discovery); Writing Intensive Course

PHIL 436W - Social and Political Philosophy**Credits: 4**

Examines social and political thought that may include texts from ancient through contemporary times, addressing topics such as natural rights, revolution, law, freedom, justice, power. Questions may include: What is a community, and how are individuals related to communities? Can any particular form of government be morally justified, and if so, what kind of government? Can anarchism work? Is there something wrong with a society in which there is private ownership of property? What is oppressive? What is freedom, and are we free? What roles should different forms of power play in a society? Could and should there be a genderless society? Is ethnic diversity valuable? Writing intensive.

Attributes: Humanities(Disc); Inquiry (Discovery); Writing Intensive Course

PHIL #437 - Social and Political Philosophy**Credits: 4**

This course is the same as PHIL 436 Social and Political Philosophy but without the Inquiry designation. Examines social and political thought that may include texts from ancient through contemporary times, addressing topics such as natural rights, revolution, law, freedom, justice, power. Questions may include: What is a community, and how are individuals related to communities? Can any particular form of government be morally justified, and if so, what kind of government? Can anarchism work? Is there something wrong with a society in which there is private ownership of poverty? What is oppressive? What is freedom, and are we free? What roles should different forms of power play in a society? Could and should there be a genderless society? Is ethnic diversity valuable?.

Attributes: Humanities(Disc)

PHIL 440 - Just Business: The Ethics of Markets and Money**Credits: 4**

Critical study of business ethics and scandals. Questions may include: Is ethics irrelevant in the cutthroat world of money making? How can one be a good person - for example honest, loyal, and caring - while attempting to maximize profits? Must employers treat workers with dignity? Does anything have more value than money? Is money closer to the "root of all evil" or the "root of all good"? Should everything be for sale? To what extent are unregulated markets fair? How should we punish corporate wrongdoers?.

Attributes: Humanities(Disc)

PHIL 440A - Honors/Who Are You? Personal Identity and Humanity**Credits: 4**

What makes you you? Are you the same person over time? What does it mean to be a person? How is being a person related to being a human being? This course is part of an Honors Symposium on the nature of personhood and humanity. We will explore a number of philosophical questions related to personal identity over time, the social construction of the self, and the relationship between being a member of homo sapiens and being a person.

Attributes: Humanities(Disc)

PHIL 440B - Honors/Humanism and Dehumanization**Credits: 4**

When we call someone human or a person, what do we mean, and what are we trying to do? How has the concept of personhood expanded or contracted to include more or fewer beings and why? Are fetuses persons? Are corporations persons? Are chimps persons? Who counts as a person now, and who will count as a person in the future? How and why are human persons subject to dehumanization? Readings and texts will draw from historical sources and contemporary philosophy. No credit if credit earned for PHIL 780.

Attributes: Humanities(Disc)

PHIL 444 - Remaking Nature/The Ethics and Politics of Genetic Engineering**Credits: 4**

Examines the biological, ethical, social, and political issues raised by genetic engineering and by human enhancement techniques. Issues may include: cloning humans, selection of embryos on the basis of lack of genetic defects, genetic modification of plants and animals for food, gene therapy on humans, cognitive and athletic enhancement. Depending on instructor other topics may include human modification of the environment and engineering responses to global warming. Writing intensive.

Attributes: Environment,TechSociety(Disc); Inquiry (Discovery); Writing Intensive Course

PHIL 444A - Who Am I? Concepts of Self**Credits: 4**

An inquiry into the nature of the self and into the conditions under which it may best flourish. Is the self fundamentally biological, spiritual, or social?. Draws on a variety of perspectives in an attempt to answer these questions, including East Asian as well as Western philosophical ideas, feminist theory, Existentialism, and others. Writing intensive.

Attributes: Humanities(Disc); Inquiry (Discovery); Writing Intensive Course

PHIL 447 - Artificial Intelligence, Robots, and People**Credits: 4**

The historical origins of the science of computation. The implications of the nature of information-processing for understanding the mind-body relation. Examines the possible social, economic, and educational consequences of the computer revolution.

Attributes: Environment,TechSociety(Disc)

PHIL 447H - Honors/Artificial Intelligence, Robots, and People**Credits: 4**

The historical origins of the science of computation. The implications of the nature of information-processing for understanding the mind-body relation. Examines the possible social, economic, and educational consequences of the computer revolution.

Attributes: Environment,TechSociety(Disc)

PHIL 450 - Environmental Ethics**Credits: 4**

Thoughtful people cannot help escape considering hard questions about our relationship to the natural world and what it means for the future of life on earth. In this course we think philosophically about these crucial concerns. We try to answer questions about our responsibilities to the environment and to future generations.

Attributes: Environment,TechSociety(Disc)

PHIL 450H - Honors/Environmental Ethics**Credits:** 4

Thoughtful people cannot help escape considering hard questions about our relationship to the natural world and what it means for the future of life on earth. In this course we think philosophically about these crucial concerns. We try to answer questions about our responsibilities to the environment and to future generations.

Attributes: Environment,TechSociety(Disc)**PHIL 495 - Tutorial Reading****Credits:** 1-4

Basic introductory reading under faculty direction on topics of philosophical importance. Books offered for tutorial reading may be in any area the instructor chooses or on independent study basis. May be repeated, but total credits of repetition cannot exceed 8 credits. Prereq: permission.

PHIL 496 - Topics**Credits:** 4

Introductory-level seminar in specific topics or problems considered from a philosophic point of view.

PHIL 500 - Workshop**Credits:** 4

Introduces methods of studying philosophical texts. Emphasizes reading philosophical texts and arguments for comprehension, and on writing philosophically with accuracy and clarity. Open to PHIL majors (PHIL minors may enroll if they receive permission). Writing intensive.

Attributes: Writing Intensive Course**PHIL 510 - Philosophy and Feminism****Credits:** 4

Focuses on philosophical issues in feminism primarily through the work of historical and contemporary philosophers. Topics include the question of the nature of women, feminism as an ethical and political theory, feminism as an exploration and transformation of the self, feminism as a philosophical methodology, and the institutions of marriage and motherhood. Writing intensive.

Attributes: Humanities(Disc); Writing Intensive Course**PHIL 520 - Introduction to Eastern Philosophy****Credits:** 4

Major Eastern traditions of philosophy. Concentration on Indian, Chinese, and Japanese systems may vary from semester to semester.

Attributes: World Cultures(Discovery)**PHIL 525 - Existentialism****Credits:** 4

Readings from existential philosophy and literature. Selections may be drawn from the works of Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, Heidegger, Sartre, Camus, de Beauvoir, Buber, Bultman, Merleau-Ponty, Tillich, Kafka, and others.

Attributes: Humanities(Disc); Inquiry (Discovery)**PHIL 525H - Honors/Existentialism****Credits:** 4

Readings from existential philosophy and literature. Selections may be drawn from the works of Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, Heidegger, Sartre, Camus, de Beauvoir, Buber, Bultman, Merleau-Ponty, Tillich, Kafka, and others.

Attributes: Humanities(Disc); Inquiry (Discovery)**PHIL 530 - Ethics****Credits:** 4

Critical examination of the development of philosophical thinking regarding human values, rights, and duties.

Attributes: Writing Intensive Course**PHIL 560 - Philosophy Through Fiction****Credits:** 4

Philosophical implications of representative literary works, read in tandem with philosophical literature. The content will vary. The literary works explored may be drawn from ancient times through modern times. For examples, the classic Greek tragedy "Antigone" might be explored for its implications regarding moral, political, and feminist philosophy, or the philosophical implications of an anti-utopian contemporary work like "Brave New World" might be explored, or short stories drawn from science fiction and other speculative fiction might be used to explore the possibility of time travel or of machines with mental lives. Writing intensive.

Attributes: Inquiry (Discovery); Writing Intensive Course**PHIL 565 - Philosophy Through Film****Credits:** 4

Philosophical exploration of film as a medium for developing philosophical ideas and for stimulating philosophical thinking about various issues reflected in film, from traditional philosophical issues to the pressing social and cultural issues of our time. The content will vary. Philosophical texts are read in tandem with screenings of a range of movies from Hollywood blockbusters and art house films to films made for TV. Philosophical issues such as the nature of consciousness, appearance and reality, God and evil, the good life, and time and memory might be explored. Film might also be used to examine representations of race and gender or violence in society; and the power of movies to influence society might be explored through documentaries and propaganda films. Required evening film screenings in addition to regular class meetings. Writing intensive.

Attributes: Writing Intensive Course**PHIL 570 - Ancient Philosophy****Credits:** 4

Development of Western philosophy from its beginnings in Greece to the Roman period, with particular emphasis on the thought of Plato and Aristotle. Attention is paid to the historical context and the development of ideas in culture.

Attributes: Humanities(Disc)**PHIL 570H - Honors/Ancient Philosophy****Credits:** 4

Development of Western philosophy from its beginnings in Greece to the Roman period, with particular emphasis on the thought of Plato and Aristotle.

PHIL 580 - Modern Philosophy from Descartes to Kant**Credits:** 4

The birth and development of distinctively modern philosophy in the thought of such creative minds as Galileo, Descartes, Hobbes, Leibniz, Spinoza, Locke, Berkeley, Hume, Rousseau, Reid, Kant, and others. Prereq: PHIL 570 or permission.

PHIL 610 - Topics in History of Philosophy**Credits:** 4

In-depth examination of a major figure or philosophical movement in the history of philosophy. Content will vary. Consult the Time and Room Schedule for topics. Prereq: one course in history of philosophy or permission. Writing intensive.

Attributes: Writing Intensive Course**PHIL 620 - 20th Century European Philosophy****Credits:** 4

Major figures or philosophical movements such as phenomenology, existentialism, critical social theory, and post-modernism. Content will vary. Consult Time and Room Schedule for topics. Writing intensive.

Attributes: Writing Intensive Course**PHIL 630 - Neuroscience and Philosophy****Credits:** 4

This course has a double focus. It investigates theories concerning the nature of the mind/brain relation, especially in light of recent work in the neurosciences. It also considers the particular presuppositions of and methodological challenges endemic to the neurosciences, along with the relations neuroscience bears to neighboring disciplines. Prereq: Sophomore standing or better. Writing intensive.

Attributes: Writing Intensive Course**PHIL 631 - Topics in the Philosophy of Science****Credits:** 4

Philosophical problems raised by the physical, biological, and social sciences. Content will vary. Topics may include the nature of scientific explanation, the role of mathematics in science, the relations of science to common sense, the relation of theory to observation, the nature of historical changes in scientific world view, claim to objectivity in the natural and social sciences, the role of values in scientific research, the relation of the logic of science to the philosophy and history of science. Prereq: Sophomore standing or better or permission. Writing intensive.

Attributes: Writing Intensive Course**PHIL 635 - Philosophy of Law****Credits:** 4

Systematic study of salient features of legal systems. Possible topics: nature of law; concept of legal validity; law and morality; individual liberty and the law; legal punishment; legal responsibility and related concepts (for example, legal cause, harm, mens rea, negligence, strict liability, legal insanity). Writing intensive.

Attributes: Writing Intensive Course**PHIL 660 - Law, Medicine, and Ethics****Credits:** 4

Critical examination of the diverse legal and moral issues facing the profession of health care. Variable topics may include: duty to provide care; nature of informed consent to treatment; problems of allocating limited health-care resources (e.g., withdrawal of life-support systems, quality-of-life decisions, etc.); patient's right to confidentiality. Problems relating to involuntary preventive care (e.g., involuntary sterilization, psycho-surgery, etc.). Writing intensive.

Attributes: Writing Intensive Course**PHIL 701 - Topics in Value Theory****Credits:** 4

Philosophical inquiry into the nature of value. Topics may include the grounds of right and wrong, various conceptions of morality, the nature of good and evil, theories about the meaning of life, the nature of the beautiful. Content will vary. Consult the Time and Room Schedule for topics. Course may be taken twice for credit (a third time with permission of the chair of the department) so long as the topic is different. May not be repeated to improve grade without approval from the department chair. Prereq: PHIL 500 one course in history of philosophy, or permission. Writing intensive. Repeatable with permission.

Attributes: Writing Intensive Course**PHIL 702 - Topics in Metaphysics and Epistemology****Credits:** 4

Advanced study in one or more of the following topics: nature of reality, relationship of thought and reality, nature of knowledge and perception, theories of truth. Content will vary. Consult the Time and Room Schedule for topics. Course may be taken twice for credit (a third time with permission of the chair of the department) so long as the topic is different. May not be repeated to improve grade without approval of the chair of the department. Prereq: PHIL 500 and one course in history of philosophy, or permission. Writing intensive. Repeatable with permission.

Attributes: Writing Intensive Course**PHIL 740 - Advanced Topics in the Philosophy of Law****Credits:** 4

Content variable. In-depth examination of special topics (constitutional law, crime and punishment, international human rights and gender, sexual orientation, race and class in the law) or a major figure in the philosophy of law (Dworkin, Habermas and Rawls). Prereq: PHIL 635 or permission. Writing intensive. Repeatable with permission.

Attributes: Writing Intensive Course**PHIL 780 - Special Topics****Credits:** 4

Advanced study of special topics: a problem, figure, or movement in the history of philosophy, or selected issues, thinkers, or developments in contemporary philosophy. Prereq: PHIL 500 and one course in the history of philosophy, or permission. Writing intensive. Repeatable with permission.

Attributes: Writing Intensive Course**PHIL 795 - Independent Study****Credits:** 1-8

For students who are adequately prepared to do independent, advanced philosophical work; extensive reading and writing. Before registering, students must formulate a project and secure the consent of a department member who will supervise the work. Conferences and/or written work as required by the supervisor. Prereq: permission. May be repeated to a total of 8 credits. Writing intensive.

Attributes: Writing Intensive Course

PHIL 798 - Senior Thesis

Credits: 4

Two-course sequence (798, then 799) open only to senior philosophy majors in the University Honors Program, the philosophy department honors-in-major program, or by special permission from the department. All senior thesis candidates must have a proposal approved in the spring of their junior year and a thesis adviser assigned by the chair of the department before registering for 798. Students must orally defend their theses before the department. (See department guidelines for further details.) Prereq: PHIL 500. Writing intensive.

Attributes: Writing Intensive Course

PHIL 799 - Senior Thesis

Credits: 4

Two-course sequence (798, then 799) open only to senior philosophy majors in the University Honors Program, the philosophy department honors-in-major program, or by special permission from the department. All senior thesis candidates must have a proposal approved in the spring of their junior year and a thesis adviser assigned by the chair of the department before registering for 799. Students must orally defend their theses before the department. (See department guidelines for further details.) Prereq: B- or above in PHIL 798. Writing intensive.

Attributes: Writing Intensive Course

Faculty

<https://cola.unh.edu/philosophy/faculty-staff-directory>