Major in Philosophy

Philosophy is the oldest form of systematic, scholarly inquiry. It is the study of the most basic moral, legal, aesthetic, religious, and metaphysical ideas by which we quest for understanding and develop principles of conduct. Philosophers seek to establish standards of evidence, provide rational methods of conflict resolution, establish criteria for just social orders, and create techniques for evaluating ideas and arguments.

The study of philosophy broadens and intensifies liberal education while enhancing interpretive abilities in many fields. The curriculum encourages a broad liberal arts background, including courses in foreign languages and a plan for graduate school and teaching careers in philosophy. The broad relevance of philosophy to other fields permits most students to work toward goals such as professional training in law, medicine, business, or theology. There are three concentrations available to Philosophy majors: General Philosophy; Philosophy and Religion; and Philosophy, Science and Technology. It is not unusual for philosophy majors to also major in other disciplines, and these concentrations combine easily with other majors in the University.

Learning Outcomes

Philosophy students will:

- Recognize and analyze arguments; reconstruct arguments from major texts in both the history of philosophy and in significant contemporary philosophical work; evaluate these arguments for the validity of argument structures and the truth of premises (soundness); and construct valid and sound arguments of their own in a fashion that is as clear and concise as possible.
- Demonstrate in their senior year knowledge of the works of major figures in the history of philosophy as well as significant current issues from the major sub-disciplines of philosophy, including particularly ethics, metaphysics, and epistemology.
- Demonstrate in their senior year skills in written and oral presentation, engaging in fruitful oral discussion, debate, and formal presentations that are logically coherent, clearly and concisely stated, and accessible to their peers in philosophy.

Potential Occupations

A major in Philosophy prepares students for a wide variety of professional aspirations, including graduate study in philosophy or other disciplines; training in law, computer technology, social work, health care, the ministry, business; and general intellectual flexibility in a changing world. The high level of skill that Philosophy majors acquire in communication, writing, and analytical and critical thinking enables them to secure jobs in a variety of private and public sector professions and to become leaders in their field.

Depending on the major concentration that a student pursues, available career opportunities include, but are not limited to, public policy analyst, business manager, public administrator, computer programmer, intelligence officer, legislator, teacher, foreign diplomat, social worker, community developer, philanthropic organizer, physician, lawyer, researcher, writer, theologian, human resources manager, publisher, and ethics consultant, in a variety of fields, e.g., in medicine, business, law, public administration, non-profit administration, engineering, and the sciences.

Concentrations

- General Philosophy Concentration
- Philosophy and Religion Concentration
- Philosophy, Science, and Technology Concentration