

DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY

Introduction

The principal goal of the study of philosophy is to enable students to think more clearly, deeply, and appreciatively about themselves and their world. Study of philosophy enhances analytical, critical, and interpretive capacities that are applicable to any subject matter in almost any context. It provides many opportunities for expressing oneself, for reflecting on questions that human beings have pondered for millennia, for exchanging reasoned beliefs and engaging in focused debate, and for learning how to come to terms with problems for which there are no easy answers. A good philosophical education also helps to prepare students for responsible and intelligent participation in political and community affairs.

The most important outcome of philosophical study is the ability to engage in thinking that is at once disciplined and imaginatively creative. While such thinking lies at the heart of the philosophical enterprise, it is also needed for success in any complex intellectual or practical endeavor. Philosophy's attention to critical thought, rigorous argument, and articulate expression makes the philosophical curriculum absolutely central to a liberal education and valuable as a basis for further training in a variety of pursuits.

Examples of philosophical questions are:

- How should we understand truth, existence, validity, fact, value, and free will?
- What are the principles or presuppositions of science, language, political systems, and religious and moral views?
- What is the nature of a person, of space and time, of a work of art?
- What is the wisdom of the past on these enduring questions? How do Western traditions differ from Eastern ones on these questions? And how do these historical approaches relate to our own, contemporary ones?

Students are encouraged to view philosophy not as a specialized, esoteric discipline, but instead as an activity integral to a liberal arts education, helping students to think more cogently and appreciatively about themselves and their world.

PHIL 101, PHIL 110, or PHIL 112 is recommended as a first course for those interested in philosophical issues and their cultural significance and for those who wish to examine a broad range of philosophical topics, problems, or historical figures. Other good starting points are PHIL 155, which deals with logic and the analysis of argument; PHIL 160, which deals with moral thought and experience; and PHIL 150, which deals with the concepts, methods, and foundations of the biological and physical sciences.

PHIL 155 is recommended for all students who major or minor in philosophy.

Advising

All majors and minors have a primary academic advisor from the Academic Advising Program (<https://advising.unc.edu/>). Students are strongly encouraged to meet regularly with their advisor and review their Tar Heel Tracker each semester. The department's director of undergraduate studies works with current and prospective majors

by appointment (see contact information above). Departmental academic advising is particularly important for those majors who are considering going on to graduate school. Further information on courses, undergraduate research opportunities, the honors program, careers, and graduate schools may be obtained from the department's website (<https://philosophy.unc.edu/>). A brief video with information about the philosophy major is available here (<https://philosophy.unc.edu/undergraduate/the-major/why-major-in-philosophy/>).

Graduate School and Career Opportunities

A major in philosophy offers excellent preparation for many careers in which clear thinking and analytical ability are valued. Some majors choose to pursue graduate work in philosophy in preparation for college or university teaching (Ph.D. normally required), but the philosophy major also provides the form of rigorous and systematic intellectual training that is of crucial importance in law, medicine, business, and other fields.

Major

- Philosophy Major, B.A. (<https://catalog.unc.edu/undergraduate/programs-study/philosophy-major-ba/>)

Minors

- Philosophy Minor (<https://catalog.unc.edu/undergraduate/programs-study/philosophy-minor/>)
- Philosophy, Politics, and Economics (PPE) Minor (<https://catalog.unc.edu/undergraduate/programs-study/philosophy-politics-economics-minor/>)

Graduate Programs

- M.A. in Philosophy (<https://catalog.unc.edu/graduate/schools-departments/philosophy/>)
- Ph.D. in Philosophy (<https://catalog.unc.edu/graduate/schools-departments/philosophy/>)

Courses

- Philosophy (PHIL) (<https://catalog.unc.edu/courses/phil/>)

Distinguished Professors

Thomas Hofweber, Marc Lange, C.D.C. Reeve, Geoffrey Sayre-McCord.

Professors

Luc Bovens, Thomas Dougherty, Markus Kohl, Matthew Kotzen, Mariska Leunissen, Ram Neta, James Pryor, John T. Roberts, Sarah Stroud, Rebecca Walker, Alexander Worsnip.

Associate Professors

Jessica Keiser, Patricia Marechal.

Assistant Professors

Rosalind Chaplin, Pietro Cibinel, Daniel Herrmann, Harry Lloyd, Daniel Muñoz, Margaret Shea.

Teaching Assistant Professors

William Conner, Katie Deaven, Samuel Fullhart, Paul Garofalo, Rory Hanlon, Michael Vazquez.

Professors Emeriti

Bernard Boxill, Thomas E. Hill Jr., William G. Lycan, Douglas MacLean, Stanley Munsat, Alan Nelson, Gerald J. Postema, Michael D. Resnik, Robert D. Vance, Susan Wolf.

Contact Information

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