

Philosophy, BA

Undergraduate courses in philosophy are designed to impart knowledge of fundamental issues and main developments in philosophy while strengthening logical and analytic skills.

The department sponsors an active Philosophy Club that hosts informal discussion meetings, movie nights, outreach events, departmental public lectures and colloquia, and other activities. The department also offers a service-learning course, PHIL:3920 Philosophy in Public.

Learning Outcomes

The goals of philosophical training are:

- to think critically and make well-grounded arguments, both orally and in written work;
- to understand key philosophical problems and major traditions;
- to learn variegated approaches to solving problems;
- to detect problems and puzzles that are not readily apparent;
- to develop critical listening;
- to learn a step-by-step approach to the mastery of public speaking; and
- to read and interpret all forms of text—news reports, books, film, TV, etc.

Department of Philosophy Initiatives

- Applying philosophical concepts to everyday affairs.
- Creating community through movie nights, the philosophy club, public lectures, optional one-hour lab sections for students to work more closely with research faculty, an undergraduate colloquium series, and the undergraduate journal, Labyrinth.
- Outreach and engagement; for example, through the service-learning course, PHIL:3920 Philosophy in Public, the K-12 Iowa Lyceum Summer Philosophy Institute, and outreach with the Johnson County Senior Center.
- The philosophy undergraduate internship program.
- Prompt and helpful advising.
- An annual newsletter that connects students with successful alumni.

Requirements

The Bachelor of Arts with a major in philosophy requires a minimum of 120 s.h., including at least 30 s.h. of work for the major. A minimum of 15 s.h. for the major must be earned at the University of Iowa. Students must maintain a grade-point average of at least 2.00 in all courses for the major and in all UI courses for the major. They also complete the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences GE CLAS Core.

Students should discuss the requirements for the major with an advisor as soon as possible. The advisor can suggest the most effective order for taking courses, based on each student's interests and on the relation of the course topics to each other. See Courses in this section of the catalog for a complete listing of philosophy courses.

Students can only count one of these courses toward the major.

Course #	Title	Hours
PHIL:3902	Workshop: Analytical Skills for the LSAT	3
PHIL:3906	Workshop: Analytical Skills for the MCAT	3
PHIL:3908	Workshop: Analytical Skills for the GRE	3

Of the 30 s.h. of philosophy coursework (prefix PHIL) required for the major, at least two courses must be numbered 3000 or above.

The BA with a major in philosophy requires the following coursework.

Requirements	Hours
Value Theory Courses	6
Metaphysics/Epistemology Courses	6
Ancient Philosophy Course	3
Modern Philosophy Course	3
Introductory Logic Course	3
Philosophy Electives	9

Only 6 s.h. of the total hours required for the major can be taken in coursework numbered 1000–1999 (see the following list for options).

Course #	Title	Hours
May take two courses from these:		
PHIL:1033	The Meaning of Life	3
PHIL:1034	Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness	3
PHIL:1401	Matters of Life and Death	3
PHIL:1636	Principles of Reasoning: Argument and Debate	3
PHIL:1861	Introduction to Philosophy	3

Value Theory

Course #	Title	Hours
At least two of these:		
PHIL:2402	Introduction to Ethics	3
PHIL:2415	Bioethics	3
PHIL:2422	Feminist Ethics	3
PHIL:2425	Sex, Marriage, Friendship, and the Law	3
PHIL:2429	War, Terrorism, and Torture	3
PHIL:2432	Introduction to Political Philosophy	3
PHIL:2435	Philosophy of Law	3
PHIL:2436	The Nature of Evil	3
PHIL:3342	Multiculturalism and Toleration	3
PHIL:3430	Philosophy of Human Rights	3
PHIL:4375	Rawls's Political Philosophy	3
PHIL:4431	Aesthetics	3
PHIL:4480	Analytic Ethics	3
PHIL:4481	Issues in Philosophy of Law	3
PHIL:4482	Early Modern Ethics	3
PHIL:4485	Political Philosophy	3
PHIL:4510	Neuroethics	3
May be taken with permission of the instructor if content is applicable:		

PHIL:3847	Philosophical Issues	3
PHIL:4152	Plato	3
PHIL:4153	Aristotle	3
PHIL:4798	Topics in Philosophy	3
PHIL:6100	Seminar: Ancient Philosophy	3
PHIL:6200	Seminar: Modern Philosophy	3
PHIL:6300	Seminar: Philosophical Analysis	3
PHIL:6400	Seminar: Ethics	3

Metaphysics/Epistemology

Course #	Title	Hours
At least two of these:		
PHIL:2343	Philosophy East and West	3
PHIL:2437	Introduction to Metaphysics	3
PHIL:2442	Knowledge and the Threat of Skepticism	3
PHIL:2480	Language and Its Social Roles	3
PHIL:2534	Philosophy of Religion	3
PHIL:2538	Minds and Machines	3
PHIL:2542	Minds and Brains	3
PHIL:3002	Stoics and Epicureans, or How to Live Like a Roman Sage	3
PHIL:3143	Existentialism	3
PHIL:3318	Twentieth-Century Philosophy	3
PHIL:3604	Introduction to Philosophy of Science	3
PHIL:4258	Descartes	3
PHIL:4260	Spinoza and Leibniz	3
PHIL:4266	Kant	3
PHIL:4346	Frege and Russell	3
PHIL:4373	Heidegger	3
PHIL:4377	Wittgenstein	3
PHIL:4586	Topics in Metaphysics	3
PHIL:4587	Epistemology	3
PHIL:4588	Philosophy of Mind	3
PHIL:4589	Philosophy of Language	3
PHIL:4590	Foundations of Cognitive Science	3
PHIL:4694	Philosophy of Science	3
May be taken with permission of the instructor if content is applicable:		
PHIL:3847	Philosophical Issues	3
PHIL:4152	Plato	3
PHIL:4153	Aristotle	3
PHIL:4798	Topics in Philosophy	3
PHIL:6100	Seminar: Ancient Philosophy	3
PHIL:6200	Seminar: Modern Philosophy	3
PHIL:6300	Seminar: Philosophical Analysis	3
PHIL:6510	Seminar: Metaphysics	3
PHIL:6520	Seminar: Epistemology	3
PHIL:6620	Seminar: Philosophy of Science	3

Ancient Philosophy

Course #	Title	Hours
This course:		
PHIL:2111	Ancient Philosophy	3

Modern Philosophy

Course #	Title	Hours
At least one of these:		
PHIL:2214	Seventeenth-Century Philosophy	3
PHIL:2215	Modern Philosophy	3
PHIL:2216	Eighteenth-Century Philosophy	3

Introductory Logic

Course #	Title	Hours
This course:		
PHIL:2603	Introduction to Symbolic Logic	3

Combined Programs

BA/JD

The Department of Philosophy participates in the 3+3 program with the College of Law which allows students the opportunity to apply for admission during their junior year to the College of Law, and if accepted, to begin work on the Juris Doctor degree during their fourth year of study in the BA degree program.

For more information, see the 3+3 Program for Undergraduates on the College of Law website and the Juris Doctor, JD (College of Law) in the catalog.

Honors

Honors in the Major

Students majoring in philosophy have the opportunity to graduate with honors in the major. In order to be admitted to the departmental honors program, a student must have taken and passed three courses required for the philosophy major. To graduate with honors in the major, students must complete the requirements for the major with a grade-point average (GPA) of at least 3.40 in philosophy coursework and a University of Iowa cumulative GPA of at least 3.33. In addition, they must write an acceptable honors thesis on a significant topic in philosophy of interest to them. Contact the department's director of undergraduate studies for more information.

University of Iowa Honors Program

In addition to honors in the major, students have opportunities for honors study and activities through membership in the University of Iowa Honors Program. Visit Honors at Iowa to learn about the university's honors program.

Membership in the UI Honors Program is not required to earn honors in the philosophy major.

Career Advancement

Philosophy graduates have a variety of career options. Many continue their education by studying law or pursuing graduate work in philosophy or other disciplines. Philosophy graduates also enter into such fields as business, medicine, scientific research, government, consulting, journalism, and K-12 education, among others.

Undergraduates are encouraged to enroll in PHIL:3920 Philosophy in Public at least one time before graduating in order to get a head start on their career trajectory. Students who intend to teach philosophy in a college setting must earn a graduate degree.

Philosophy majors earn among the very highest scores on the Law School Admission Test (LSAT), the Graduate Management Admission Test (GMAT), the Medical College Admission Test (MCAT), and the Graduate College Record Exam (GRE) General Test.

The Pomerantz Career Center offers multiple resources to help students with résumé writing, career exploration, interview skills, finding internships and jobs, and preparing for the University of Iowa job and internship fair.

Academic Plans

Four-Year Graduation Plan

The following checkpoints list the minimum requirements students must complete by certain semesters in order to stay on the university's Four-Year Graduation Plan.

Before the fifth semester begins: at least one course in the major.

Before the seventh semester begins: at least five courses in the major and at least 90 s.h. earned toward the degree.

Before the eighth semester begins: at least six courses in the major.

During the eighth semester: enrollment in all remaining coursework in the major, all remaining GE CLAS Core courses, and a sufficient number of semester hours to graduate.

Sample Plan of Study

Sample plans represent one way to complete a program of study. Actual course selection and sequence will vary and should be discussed with an academic advisor. For additional sample plans, see MyUI.

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Course	Title	Hours
Academic Career		
Any Semester		
A minimum of 15 s.h. for the philosophy major must be earned at the University of Iowa.		
Students can only count one of these courses toward the major: PHIL:3902 Workshop: Analytical Skills for the LSAT, PHIL:3906 Workshop: Analytical Skills for the MCAT, PHIL:3908 Workshop: Analytical Skills for the GRE.		
GE CLAS Core:	Sustainability ^a	
Hours		0

First Year

Fall		
PHIL:1861	Introduction to Philosophy ^{b, c, d}	3
RHET:1030	Rhetoric: Writing and or ENGL:1200 Communication or The Interpretation of Literature	3 - 4
GE CLAS Core:	Understanding Cultural Perspectives ^e	3
GE CLAS Core:	Literary, Visual, and Performing Arts ^e	3
CSI:1600	Success at Iowa	1
Hours		13-14

Spring

PHIL:1636	Principles of Reasoning: Argument and Debate ^{b, f}	3
RHET:1030	Rhetoric: Writing and or ENGL:1200 Communication or The Interpretation of Literature	3 - 4
GE CLAS Core:	Natural Sciences with Lab ^e	4
GE CLAS Core:	Social Sciences ^e	3
Elective course ^g		3
Hours		16-17

Second Year

Fall		
PHIL:2111	Ancient Philosophy	3
PHIL:2603	Introduction to Symbolic Logic	3
GE CLAS Core:	International and Global Issues ^e	3
GE CLAS Core:	World Languages First Level Proficiency or elective course ^h	4 - 5
Elective course ^g		3
Hours		16-17

Spring

PHIL:2216	Eighteenth-Century Philosophy or PHIL:2215 or PHIL:2214 or Modern Philosophy or Seventeenth-Century Philosophy	3
GE CLAS Core:	Historical Perspectives ^e	3
GE CLAS Core:	World Languages Second Level Proficiency or elective course ^h	4 - 5
Elective course ^g		3
Elective course ^g		3
Hours		16-17

Third Year

Fall		
Major:	metaphysics/epistemology course	3
Major:	value theory course	3
GE CLAS Core:	Natural Sciences without Lab ^e	3
GE CLAS Core:	World Languages Third Level Proficiency or elective course ^h	4 - 5
Elective course ^g		3
Hours		16-17

Spring

Major:	metaphysics/epistemology course	3
Major:	value theory course	3
GE CLAS Core:	World Languages Fourth Level Proficiency or elective course ^h	4 - 5
Elective course ^g		3

Elective course ^g	3
Hours	16-17
Fourth Year	
Fall	
Major: upper-level course numbered 3000 or above (prefix PHIL) ⁱ	3
Elective course ^g	3
Hours	15
Spring	
Major: upper-level course numbered 3000 or above (prefix PHIL) ⁱ	3
Elective course ^g	3
Degree Application: apply on MyUI before deadline (typically in February for spring, September for fall) ^j	
Hours	15
Total Hours	123-129

j Please see Academic Calendar, on Office of the Registrar website, for current degree application deadlines. Students should apply for a degree for the session in which all requirements will be met. For any questions on appropriate timing, contact your academic advisor or Degree Services.

- a Sustainability must be completed by choosing a course that has been approved for Sustainability AND for one of these General Education areas: Natural Sciences; Quantitative or Formal Reasoning; Social Sciences; Historical Perspectives; International and Global Issues; Literary, Visual, and Performing Arts; or Values and Society.
- b Students may include no more than 6 s.h. of 1000-level PHIL courses toward the major.
- c PHIL:1861 fulfills a GE requirement. This course may also count as credit toward the major.
- d Students may choose from PHIL:1033, PHIL:1034, PHIL:1401, PHIL:1636, or PHIL:1861. A student is not required to take any 1000-level courses for the major, but a 1000-level course often serves as an important introduction to help a student determine which particular topics they might want to pursue at a more advanced level.
- e GE CLAS Core courses may be completed in any order unless used as a prerequisite for another course. Students should consult with an advisor about the best sequencing of courses.
- f PHIL:1636 is recommended for the GE CLAS Core Quantitative or Formal Reasoning requirement. It is not a major requirement.
- g Students may use elective courses to earn credit towards the total s.h. required for graduation or to complete a double major, minors, or certificates.
- h Students who have completed four levels of a single language or two levels of two different languages in high school or college have satisfied the GE CLAS Core World Languages requirement. Students who have completed three levels of a single language may complete a fourth-level course in the same language or may choose an approved World Language and Cultural Exploration course. Enrollment in world languages courses requires a placement exam, unless enrolling in a first-semester-level course. Contact your academic advisor or CLAS Undergraduate Programs Office with questions concerning the World Languages requirement.
- i Students complete 30 s.h. of philosophy courses (prefix PHIL), of which at least two courses must be numbered 3000 or above.