

Philosophy, B.A.

Degree Offered

- Bachelor of Arts

Nature of the Program

The Department of Philosophy is a small, academically vibrant, student-centered, undergraduate program. Our mission is to provide an outstanding liberal arts education with all the advantages of a large research university.

Philosophy students are trained to understand and to respond both critically and creatively to philosophical problems, theories, and arguments. Philosophy students investigate fundamental questions that have puzzled human beings for ages. Philosophy deals with questions such as: What do we know and how do we know it? What is morally right and how should we live? What is the nature of the human mind and self? Is there a God and how might human beings know about God? What is the ideal form of government? What is the ultimate nature of reality? Are human beings responsible for their actions, and if so, why? Philosophy also deals with gripping issues in contemporary society, such as questions about social justice, race and racism; sex and gender; research ethics; appropriate uses of science, medicine, and technology; privacy; access to affordable healthcare; environmental and animal welfare; quality of life; and much more.

The areas in which students receive instruction include logic, ethics, social-political philosophy, philosophy of law, theory of knowledge, philosophy of science, continental philosophy, metaphysics, history of philosophy, philosophy of sex and gender, philosophy of race, philosophy of language, and philosophy of religion.

Because of the vigorous critical thinking students enjoy in a philosophy class, the study of philosophy provides an ideal preparation for a wide range of interesting careers including law, business, medicine, higher education, library science, and journalism. Those who desire a career teaching philosophy in college will need the Ph.D. degree.

Philosophy is an especially strong major for students going to law school. We offer a pre-law area of emphasis within the philosophy major.

Along with coursework in the natural sciences, philosophy is an outstanding major for students going to medical school.

For students without any definite career plans, philosophy is an excellent major in that it provides skills essential for any career that requires clear communication, analytical thinking, problem solving, strong writing, evaluation and/or creation of policies and procedures, comfort with complexity and disagreement, attention to logical detail, imagination, and careful and creative thinking.

Students who earn a degree in the Eberly College of Arts and Sciences must complete the University requirements, the College requirements for their specific degree program, and their major requirements.

Nature of the Program

The study of the humanities is the study of our effort to understand ourselves through history, literature, religion, philosophy, and fine arts. It is also the study of our effort to comprehend the masterpieces of the past and present as we seek to deepen our understanding of ourselves and our culture: what we are, why we are, and what our options for a significant life are.

Although we do not offer a major or a minor in the humanities, many students enjoy our courses as part of their General Education Foundations.

Minors

All students have the possibility of earning one or more minors; view a list of all available minors and their requirements (<http://catalog.wvu.edu/undergraduate/minors/>) here. Please note that students may not earn a minor in their major field.

3+3 Program

The Department of Philosophy participates in the 3+3 Program with WVU's College of Law, which is an opportunity for qualified undergraduate students to earn their bachelor's degree and law degree in six years instead of seven years. Students accepted into the 3+3 program begin taking classes at WVU Law in what would be their senior year of college. Students participating in this program must meet certain eligibility criteria and progress benchmarks. For questions regarding your eligibility, please contact your department advisor.

FACULTY

CHAIR

- Sharon Ryan - Ph.D. (University of Rochester)

PROFESSORS

- David Cerbone - Ph.D. (University of California, Berkeley)
Regular Graduate Faculty; Continental Philosophy (esp. Heidegger), Wittgenstein, History of Analytic Philosophy
- Scott Davidson - Ph.D. (Duquesne University)
Regular Graduate Faculty; Continental Philosophy, Social and Political Philosophy
- Sharon Ryan - Ph.D. (University of Rochester)
Regular Graduate Faculty; Epistemology, Philosophy of Religion, Metaphysics
- Matthew Talbert - Ph.D. (University of California, Riverside)
Regular Graduate Faculty; Moral Psychology, Ethics

ASSOCIATE PROFESSORS

- Aaron Gale - Ph.D. (Northwestern University)
Regular Graduate Faculty; Introduction to World Religions, History of Christianity, Studies in Christian Scriptures, God and Evil in the Biblical World, Biblical History and Archaeology
- Geoff Georgi - Ph.D. (University of Southern California)
Regular Graduate Faculty; Philosophy of Language, Metaphysics, Logic
- David Hoinski - Ph.D. (Duquesne University)
History of Philosophy
- Alex Snow - Ph.D. (Syracuse University)
Asian Religion and Philosophy

ASSISTANT PROFESSORS

- Alyssa Beall - Ph.D. (Syracuse University)
Religion and Popular Culture
- Devin Curry - Ph.D. (University of Pennsylvania)
Philosophy of Mind, Philosophy of Science, Philosophy of Race, History of Philosophy
- Daniel Miller - Ph.D. (Florida State University)
Regular Graduate Faculty; Normative and Applied Ethics
- Ariane Nommikos - Ph.D. (University at Buffalo)
Regular Graduate Faculty; Aesthetics, Ethics, Environmental Philosophy

PROFESSORS EMERITI

- Ralph W. Clark - Ph.D. (University of Colorado)
- Theodore M. Drange - Ph.D. (Cornell University)
- Henry Ruf - Ph.D. (Emory University)
- Daniel Shapiro - Ph.D. (University of Minnesota)
- Mark Wicclair - Ph.D. (Columbia University)

Admissions for 2026-2027

- First Time Freshmen are admitted directly to the major.
- Students transferring from other majors or another institution with at least a 2.0 overall GPA are admitted directly to the major.

Major Code: 1461

[Click here to view the Suggested Plan of Study \(p. 4\)](#)

General Education Foundations

Please use this link to view a list of courses that meet each GEF requirement. (<http://registrar.wvu.edu/gef/>)

NOTE: Some major requirements will fulfill specific GEF requirements. Please see the curriculum requirements listed below for details on which GEFs you will need to select.

Code	Title	Hours
General Education Foundations		
F1 - Composition & Rhetoric		3-6
ENGL 101 & ENGL 102	Introduction to Composition and Rhetoric and Composition, Rhetoric, and Research	

or ENGL 103	Accelerated Academic Writing	
F2A/F2B - Science & Technology		4-6
F3 - Math & Quantitative Reasoning		3-4
F4 - Society & Connections		3
F5 - Human Inquiry & the Past		3
F6 - The Arts & Creativity		3
F7 - Global Studies & Diversity		3
F8 - Focus (may be satisfied by completion of a minor, double major, or dual degree)		9
Total Hours		31-37

Please note that not all of the GEF courses are offered at all campuses. Students should consult with their advisor or academic department regarding the GEF course offerings available at their campus.

Degree Requirements

Students must complete WVU General Education Foundations requirements, the Eberly Edge Program requirements, major requirements, and electives to total a minimum of 120 hours.

Departmental Requirements for the B.A. in Philosophy

A degree in philosophy requires thirty hours in Philosophy, including three credits at any level, and 18 hours of work at the 300 level or above. All students wishing to obtain a degree in Philosophy must comply with the following:

- **Calculation of the Major GPA:** A minimum grade of a C- is required in all courses applied to major requirements. If a course is repeated, all attempts will be included in the calculation of the GPA, unless the course is eligible for a D/F repeat.
- **Writing and Communication Skills Requirement:** The Philosophy Bachelor of Arts is a **SpeakWrite Certified Program™**. SpeakWrite Certified programs incorporate and develop students' written, verbal, visual, and mediated communication skills across the curriculum.
- **Optional Area of Emphasis:** Students in the Philosophy program have the option of completing the area of emphasis in Pre-Law. A minimum grade of C- is required in all courses applied to the Area of Emphasis.
- **Capstone Requirement:** The university requires the successful completion of a Capstone course. Students in Philosophy usually take PHIL 480. In some instances, with special permission from the department, students can write a thesis to fulfill the Capstone requirements. These students must take PHIL 496, and should make arrangements with a faculty member during the semester preceding the one in which they plan to write the thesis. Only students who have a 3.7 average or higher in Philosophy courses are eligible to write the senior thesis. Ability to enroll in PHIL 496 will depend upon the availability of a faculty member who is able to work with the student, the student's level of preparation for successful completion of a thesis, and the student's submission of an appropriate proposal for the thesis.

Curriculum Requirements

Code	Title	Hours
University Requirements		72
Eberly Edge Requirements		18
Philosophy Major Requirements		30
Total Hours		120

University Requirements

Code	Title	Hours
General Education Foundations (GEF) 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8 (31-37 Credits)		
Outstanding GEF Requirements 1, 2, 4, 6, 7 and 8		27
PHIL 191	First-Year Seminar	1
General Electives		44
Total Hours		72

Eberly Edge Program Requirements

Code	Title	Hours
EDG 1: Data in Society		3
EDG 2: Effective and Civil Communication		3
EDG 3: Ethics and Civil Responsibility		3

EDG 4: Global and Regional Awareness	3
EDG 5: Practicing Arts and Sciences (ARSC 380)	3
EDG: 6: High Impact Experience	3
Total Hours	18

Philosophy Major Requirements

Code	Title	Hours
CORE COURSES		9
PHIL 244	History of Ancient Philosophy	
PHIL 248	History of Modern Philosophy	
PHIL 260	Introduction to Symbolic Logic	
ETHICS, LAW and VALUE		6
Select two of the following:		
PHIL 313	Philosophy of Race	
PHIL 314	Philosophy of Sex and Gender	
PHIL 315	Free Will and Moral Responsibility	
PHIL 320	Aesthetics and Philosophy of Art	
PHIL 321	Ethical Theory	
PHIL 323	Social and Political Philosophy	
PHIL 325	Philosophy of Law	
PHIL 331	Health Care Ethics	
PHIL 332	Environmental Ethics	
PHIL 355	Existentialism	
MIND, LANGUAGE and REALITY		6
Select two of the following:		
PHIL 301	Metaphysics	
PHIL 302	Theory of Knowledge	
PHIL 303	Brains, Minds, and Experiments	
PHIL 306	Philosophy of Mind	
PHIL 308	Philosophy of Religion	
PHIL 309	Asian Philosophy	
PHIL 310	Philosophy of Science	
PHIL 312	Philosophy of Language	
PHIL 341	Philosophy and Death	
PHIL 354	Themes in Continental Philosophy	
PHIL 360	Truth, Proof, and Possibility	
PHILOSOPHY ELECTIVES:		6
One PHIL course at the 100-level or above		
One PHIL course at the 300-level or above		
CAPSTONE EXPERIENCE:		3
Select one of the following:		
PHIL 480	Capstone Seminar	
PHIL 496	Senior Thesis	
Total Hours		30

Suggested Plan of Study

First Year			
Fall	Hours	Spring	Hours
PHIL 191		1 ENGL 101 (GEF 1)	3
GEF 2		3 GEF 2	3
Philosophy General Elective		3 PHIL 244 (GEF 5)	3
EDG 1: Data and Society		3 PHIL 260 (GEF 3)	3

General Elective		3 EDG 2: Effective and Civil Communication	3
General Elective		2	
		15	15
Second Year			
Fall	Hours	Spring	Hours
PHIL 248 (GEF 8)		3 EDG 4: Global and Regional Perspectives	3
ENGL 102 (GEF 1)		3 PHIL 301	3
EDG 3: Ethics and Civic Responsibility		3 PHIL 321	3
GEF 4		3 GEF 7	3
General Elective		3 GEF 8 (course 2)	3
		15	15
Third Year			
Fall	Hours	Spring	Hours
GEF 6		3 PHIL Upper Division Elective	3
GEF 8 (course 3)		3 ARSC 380 (EDG 5)	3
General Elective		3 General Elective	3
PHIL 306		3 General Elective	3
PHIL 323		3 General Elective	3
		15	15
Fourth Year			
Fall	Hours	Spring	Hours
General Elective		3 PHIL 480	3
General Elective		3 EDG 6: High Impact Experience	3
General Elective		3 General Elective	3
General Elective		3 General Elective	3
General Elective		3 General Elective	3
		15	15

Total credit hours: 120

3+3 Suggested Plan of Study

First Year			
Fall	Hours	Spring	Hours
PHIL 191		1 ENGL 101 (GEF 1)	3
PHIL 130 (GEF 8; AoE Course 1)		3 PHIL 260 (GEF 3)	3
PHIL 244 (GEF 5)		3 Foreign Language 102	3
Foreign Language 101		3 General Elective	3
General Elective		3 GEF 2A	3
General Elective		2	
		15	15
Second Year			
Fall	Hours	Spring	Hours
PHIL 248 (GEF 8)		3 ENGL 102 (GEF 1)	3
PHIL 321 or 346 (GEF 8)		3 PHIL 301 or 302 (GEF 8)	3
GEF 2A		3 ECAS Gl. St. and Div. Requirement (GEF 7)	3
GEF 4		3 Foreign Language 204	3
Foreign Language 203		3 General Elective	3
		15	15
Third Year			
Fall	Hours	Spring	Hours
PHIL 323 (Upper Div. Ele. 1; AoE Course 2)		3 PHIL 480 or 496 (Capstone & Writing)	3
PHIL 325 (Upper-Div Ele. 2; AoE Course 3)		3 PHIL Upper Division Elective 3	3
ECAS Fine Arts Requirement (GEF 6)		3 General Elective	3

General Elective		3 General Elective		3
General Elective		3 General Elective		3
		15	15	
Fourth Year				
Fall	Hours	Spring		Hours
LAW 641		1 LAW 675		1
LAW 686		4 LAW 703		4
LAW 700		3 LAW 707		4
LAW 705		3 LAW 711		2
LAW 709		4 LAW 725		4
		15	15	

Total credit hours: 120

Degree Progress

- By the third semester into the major, students should have completed 3 classes in the major with the requisite grade.
- All majors must meet with a Philosophy department adviser each semester.

Students who do not meet these benchmarks may be removed from the major.

Major Learning Outcomes

PHILOSOPHY

Upon successful completion of the B.A. degree, **Philosophy** majors will be able to meet learning outcomes for each of the following categories:

1. History of Philosophy: Students will be able to trace the development of major themes in the history of philosophy and will be familiar with the positions of major figures within this history.
2. Logical Reasoning: Students will be able to distinguish valid and invalid forms of reasoning and will be able to formally analyze arguments.
3. Practical Philosophy: Students will be familiar with debates at the center of contemporary ethics, jurisprudence, political philosophy, social philosophy, and aesthetics.
4. Theoretical Philosophy: Students will be familiar with debates at the center of contemporary metaphysics, epistemology, philosophy of mind, philosophy of language, and philosophy of science.
5. Integrative Philosophical Analysis: Students will be able to decipher and criticize complicated philosophical texts and arguments, and will be able to construct cogent arguments of their own in clear prose.