

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 2025-2026

- Entering freshmen are admitted directly into the major.
- Students admitted from other majors must have a 2.0 overall GPA.
- Transfer students with a 2.0 overall GPA are admitted directly into 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 or ENGL 103	Introduction to Composition and Rhetoric and Composition, Rhetoric, and Research 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, College B.A. requirements, major requirements, and electives to total a minimum of 120 hours. For complete details on these requirements, visit the B.A. Degrees tab on the Eberly College of Arts and Sciences page (<http://catalog.wvu.edu/undergraduate/eberlycollegeofartsandsciences/#bachelorofartstext>).

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:

- **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.
- **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.
- **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.
- **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.

Curriculum Requirements

Code	Title	Hours
	University Requirements	84
	ECAS B.A. Requirements	6
	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, and 8	18
PHIL 191	First-Year Seminar	1

General Electives	65
Total Hours	84

ECAS Bachelor of Arts Requirements

Code	Title	Hours
	Fine Arts Requirement	3
	Global Studies and Diversity Requirement	3
	Total Hours	6

Philosophy Major Requirements

Code	Title	Hours
Basic Core Requirements:		9
PHIL 244	History of Ancient Philosophy	
PHIL 248	History of Modern Philosophy	
PHIL 260	Introduction to Symbolic Logic	
Philosophy Upper-Division Courses		6
Select one of the following:		
PHIL 301	Metaphysics	
PHIL 302	Theory of Knowledge	
Select one of the following:		
PHIL 321	Ethical Theory	
PHIL 346	History of Ethics	
Philosophy Upper-Division Electives:		9
Select 9 hours at the 300 level or above in PHIL		
Philosophy General Elective		3
Any PHIL course at the 100-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
PHIL 244 (GEF 5)		3 PHIL 260 (GEF 3)	3
General Elective		3 General Elective	3
General Elective		3 General Elective	3
General Elective		2	
		15	15

Second Year

Fall	Hours	Spring	Hours
ENGL 102 (GEF 1)		3 ECAS Global Studies & Diversity Requirement (GEF 7)	3
GEF 4		3 PHIL 301 (GEF 8)	3
GEF 8		3 General Elective	3
PHIL 248 (GEF 8)		3 General Elective	3
General Elective		3 General Elective	3
		15	15

Third Year

Fall	Hours	Spring	Hours
ECAS Fine Arts Requirement (GEF 6)		3 PHIL Upper Division Elective 2	3
PHIL Ethics Course		3 PHIL Upper Division Elective 3	3
PHIL General Elective		3 General elective	3
PHIL Upper Division Elective 1		3 General Elective	3
General Elective		3 General Elective	3
		15	15

Fourth Year

Fall	Hours	Spring	Hours
General Elective		3 PHIL 480	3
General Elective		3 General Elective	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	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. Contemporary Debates in Philosophy: Students will be familiar with a wide range of debates (about ethics, metaphysics, philosophy of mind, epistemology, etc.) at the center of contemporary philosophy.
3. Logical Reasoning: Students will be able to distinguish valid and invalid forms of reasoning and will be able to formally analyze arguments.
4. Philosophical Writing: Students will be able to criticize arguments, and construct arguments of their own, in clear, well-written prose.
5. Analysis of Philosophical Texts: Students will be able to decipher and summarize complicated philosophical texts and arguments.