

DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY

<https://www.uvm.edu/cas/philosophy>

The Philosophy Department offers undergraduate instruction in all major areas of philosophy, including historical and contemporary approaches to the discipline. In addition to an understanding of substantive philosophical issues, a philosophy education provides a student with strong analytical skills, the ability to read complex material critically, and the ability to express oneself clearly, both orally and in writing.

Philosophy is a quest to understand the fundamental truths of life, such as the nature of right and wrong and the relationship between the mental and the physical. The University's Philosophy faculty consistently rates among the nation's top six in schools that do not offer graduate studies in the discipline, according to the Philosophical Gourmet Report, the preeminent ranking of philosophy programs in the English-speaking world.

The Department's strengths include faculty outstanding in their fields; small, discussion-based classes taught by these faculty members; close interactions between students and their professors; and a diverse range of courses and research opportunities. Faculty interests range from metaphysics, medical ethics, feminism, and philosophy of law to free will and determinism, Chinese philosophy, and metaethics. Philosophy majors develop skills applicable to professions such as law, medicine, public policy, teaching, business, journalism, politics, and many other fields.

MAJORS

PHILOSOPHY MAJOR

Philosophy B.A.

MINORS

PHILOSOPHY MINOR

Philosophy

Courses

PHIL 1010. Topics In: First-Year Seminar. 3 Credits.

Intensive first-year seminar focused on specific themes and/or disciplinary perspectives. Emphasis on developing critical reading and writing skills, substantive revision, information literacy, and analytical thinking. First-year seminars are frequently organized to meet one of the disciplinary Catamount Core requirements. Topics vary by offering; periodic offering at intervals that may exceed four years. Catamount Core: AH3, WIL1.

PHIL 1012. Topics in: FYS: Div Human Exp. 3 Credits.

Intensive first-year seminar focused on specific themes and/or disciplinary perspectives. Emphasis on developing critical reading and writing skills, substantive revision, information literacy, and analytical thinking. First-year seminars are frequently organized to meet one of the disciplinary Catamount Core requirements. Topics vary by offering; periodic offering at intervals that may exceed four years. Catamount Core: D2, GC2, WIL1.

PHIL 1020. Topics In: LASP Writing. 3 Credits.

Intensive course in a broad disciplinary area (humanities, social sciences, arts, or natural sciences). Part of an integrated first-year experience in which students take 2-4 classes exploring aesthetic, humanistic, social, linguistic, environmental, or scientific issues. May repeat for credit with different content. Topics vary by offering; periodic offering at intervals that may exceed four years. Co-requisite: Enrollment in the appropriate Liberal Arts Scholars Program. Catamount Core: AH3, WIL1.

PHIL 1025. Topics In: LASP Seminar. 3 Credits.

Intensive course in a broad disciplinary area (humanities, social sciences, arts, or natural sciences). Part of an integrated first-year experience in which students take 2-4 classes exploring aesthetic, humanistic, social, linguistic, environmental, or scientific issues. May repeat for credit with different content. Topics vary by offering; periodic offering at intervals that may exceed four years. Co-requisite: Enrollment in the appropriate Liberal Arts Scholars Program. Catamount Core: AH3.

PHIL 1105. Introduction to Skepticism. 3 Credits.

An introduction to philosophy via several questions in ethics, theory of knowledge, and philosophy of religion, all related broadly to skepticism. Credit not awarded for both PHIL 1105 and versions of the course offered as PHIL 1010 to 1029. Catamount Core: AH3, GC2.

PHIL 1110. God, Morality, Mind. 3 Credits.

Explores three major topics in philosophy using the tools of philosophical argument and analysis. Content, readings, and assignments vary by section and instructor. Credit not awarded for both PHIL 1110 and versions of the course offered as PHIL 1010 to 1029. Catamount Core: AH3, GC2.

PHIL 1120. The Good Place. 3 Credits.

An introduction to philosophy through The Good Place, Michael Schur's TV show about the afterlife. We will take up only a few of the many philosophical topics the show discusses, such as what a good life is and whether we can meet morality's demands. Catamount Core: AH3.

PHIL 1400. Introduction to Logic. 3 Credits.

Study of the basic principles of deductive inference. Catamount Core: MA, QR.

PHIL 1520. Art & Aesthetics. 3 Credits.

Explores issues concerning art, such as the meaning of artworks and their significance, using the tools of philosophical argument and analysis. Content, readings and assignments vary by section and instructor. Credit not awarded for both PHIL 1520 and versions of the course offered as PHIL 1010 to 1029. Catamount Core: AH3.

PHIL 1548. Marginalized Ident & Priv. 3 Credits.

Teaches students to harness the power of theoretical scholarship on social marginalization, oppression, and privilege in both understanding and challenging the intersecting systems of social hierarchy operative in contemporary American society. Credit not awarded for both PHIL 1548 and versions of the course offered as PHIL 1010 to 1029. Catamount Core: AH3, D1, GC2.

PHIL 1600. Ethics. 3 Credits.

Explores central themes in ethics, such as what our most fundamental obligations are, using the tools of philosophical argument and analysis. Content, readings, and assignments vary by section and instructor. Credit not awarded for both PHIL 1600 and versions of the course offered as PHIL 1010 to 1029. Catamount Core: AH3, GC2.

PHIL 1630. Environmental Ethics. 3 Credits.

Explores questions about the moral status of the environment, including our obligations regarding it, using the tools of philosophical argument and analysis. Content, readings, and assignments vary by section and instructor. Credit not awarded for both PHIL 1630 and versions of the course offered as PHIL 1010 to 1029. Catamount Core: AH3.

PHIL 1635. Ethics of Eating. 3 Credits.

Explores topics concerning the ethical dimensions of eating, such as the ethical status of contemporary food-production techniques, using the tools of philosophical argument and analysis. Content, readings, and assignments vary by section and instructor. Credit not awarded for both PHIL 1635 and versions of the course offered as PHIL 1010 to 1029. Catamount Core: AH3, GC2, SU.

PHIL 1675. Death and Dying. 3 Credits.

Explores explores issues concerning death and dying, such as whether it makes sense to fear death, using the tools of philosophical argument and analysis. Content, readings, and assignments vary by section and instructor. Credit not awarded for both PHIL 1675 and versions of the course offered as PHIL 1010 to 1029. Catamount Core: AH3.

PHIL 1750. Philosophy East & West. 3 Credits.

Explores ways in which Eastern and Western philosophical traditions both differ and overlap. Uses the tools of philosophical argument and analysis. Content, readings, and assignments vary by section and instructor. Credit not awarded for both PHIL 1750 and versions of the course offered as PHIL 1010 to 1029. Catamount Core: AH3, D2, GC2.

PHIL 1990. Special Topics. 1-18 Credits.

See Schedule of Courses for specific titles.

PHIL 2050. Philosophical Reading & Writing. 3 Credits.

By engaging a diverse range of philosophical topics, students will work on carefully and responsibly interpreting philosophical texts and critically engaging with the ideas and arguments presented therein. Students will develop their ability to clearly, concisely, and accurately explaining philosophical ideas and arguments, both in speech and in writing. Prerequisite: One course in Philosophy. Catamount Core: AH3, WIL2.

PHIL 2200. Topics in Metaphysics. 3 Credits.

Exploration of topics in metaphysics, such as vagueness, the nature of time, persistence of objects and people through change, and whether numbers or properties exist. May repeat for credit with different content. Topics vary by offering; periodic offering at intervals that may exceed four years. Prerequisite: One course in Philosophy. Catamount Core: AH3.

PHIL 2220. Topics in Philosophy of Mind. 3 Credits.

Exploration of topics in the philosophy of mind such as consciousness, the relation between the mental (beliefs, sensations, etc.) and the physical (chemicals, neurons, etc.), and how minds represent things. May repeat for credit with different content. Topics vary by offering; periodic offering at intervals that may exceed four years. Prerequisite: One course in Philosophy. Catamount Core: AH3.

PHIL 2240. Philosophy of Science. 3 Credits.

Introduction to major philosophical problems raised by science. Typical topics: the nature of scientific inference, the structure of theories, causation, explanation, and scientific change. Prerequisite: One course in Philosophy.

PHIL 2300. Topics in Epistemology. 3 Credits.

Exploration of topics in epistemology, such as the nature of knowledge and the justification for our beliefs. May repeat for credit with different content. Topics vary by offering; periodic offering at intervals that may exceed four years. Prerequisite: One course in Philosophy. Catamount Core: AH3.

PHIL 2400. Intermediate Logic. 3 Credits.

Study of philosophically interesting systems of symbolic logic and their applications. Prerequisite: PHIL 1400. Catamount Core: MA.

PHIL 2470. Topics in Phil of Language. 3 Credits.

Exploration of central problems concerning the nature of language and linguistic representation. PHIL 1400 recommended. May repeat for credit with different content. Topics vary by offering; periodic offering at intervals that may exceed four years. Prerequisite: One course in Philosophy.

PHIL 2545. Topics in Feminist Philosophy. 3 Credits.

Exploration of aspects of feminism, such as theories of libertarianism, liberalism, and egalitarianism; application to the analysis and evaluation of social issues of contemporary interest, such as abortion and affirmative action. May repeat for credit with different content. Topics vary by offering; periodic offering at intervals that may exceed four years. Prerequisite: One course in Philosophy. Cross-listed with: GSWS 2685.

PHIL 2560. Topics in Philosophy of Law. 3 Credits.

Exploration of topics in philosophy of law, such as analysis of the nature of law, the relation between law and morality, legal obligation, and the judicial decision. May repeat for credit with different content. Topics vary by offering; periodic offering at intervals that may exceed four years. Prerequisite: One course in Philosophy, POLS 1200, or POLS 1012. Catamount Core: AH3, GC2.

PHIL 2630. Topics in Environmental Ethics. 3 Credits.

Exploration of topics in environmental ethics, such as the ethical crisis of climate change and human obligations to non-human animals and ecosystems. May repeat for credit with different content. Topics vary by offering; periodic offering at intervals that may exceed four years. Prerequisite: One course in Philosophy or Environmental Studies. Cross-listed with: ENV5 2250.

PHIL 2670. Medical Ethics. 3 Credits.

Exploration of medical ethics, including topics such as Genetic engineering and manipulation, with an emphasis on emerging CRISPR technology and its uses; some issues in beginning of life decision-making; Physician Assisted Suicide vs. Active forms of euthanasia; the ethics of health care provision and the notion of health care as a human right; informed consent, and the ethics of pandemics. Prerequisite: One course in Philosophy.

PHIL 2705. History of Ancient Philosophy. 3 Credits.

Study of the works of the Pre-Socratics, Plato, Aristotle, and their successors. Prerequisite: One course in Philosophy. Catamount Core: AH3.

PHIL 2725. History of Modern Philosophy. 3 Credits.

Study of works of the major philosophers of the 17th and 18th centuries: Descartes, Spinoza, Leibniz, Locke, Berkeley, Hume, Kant, and others. Prerequisite: One course in Philosophy.

PHIL 2760. Chinese Philosophy. 3 Credits.

Study of the Classical Schools of Chinese thought, including Confucianism, Taoism, Mohism, and Legalism. Prerequisite: One course in Philosophy, Religion, or Asian Studies. Catamount Core: D2.

PHIL 2990. Special Topics. 1-18 Credits.

See Schedule of Courses for specific titles.

PHIL 2993. Independent Study. 1-18 Credits.

A course which is tailored to fit the interests of a specific student, which occurs outside the traditional classroom/laboratory setting under the supervision of a faculty member, for which credit is awarded. Offered at department discretion.

PHIL 2994. Teaching Assistantship. 1-3 Credits.

Undergraduate student service as a teaching assistant, usually in an introductory level course in the discipline, for which credit is awarded. Offered at department discretion.

PHIL 3200. Topics in Metaphysics. 3 Credits.

In-depth study of such topics as vagueness, the nature of time, persistence of objects and people through change, and whether numbers or properties exist. May be repeated for credit with different content. Topics vary by offering; periodic offering at intervals that may exceed four years. Prerequisite: One course in Philosophy at the 2000-level.

PHIL 3220. Topics in Philosophy of Mind. 3 Credits.

In-depth study of topics like consciousness, the relation between the mental (belief, sensations, etc.) and the physical (chemicals, neurons, etc.) and how minds represent things. May repeat for credit with different content. Topics vary by offering; periodic offering at intervals that may exceed four years. Prerequisite: One course in Philosophy at the 2000-level.

PHIL 3230. Emotions. 3 Credits.

Study of the nature of emotions and related philosophical issues. Prerequisite: One course in Philosophy at the 2000-level.

PHIL 3280. Topics in Phil of Religion. 3 Credits.

Advanced study of such issues as the metaphysics of religion, the epistemology of religious belief, philosophy and faith, religion and science, and religion and ethics. May be repeated for credit with different content. Topics vary by offering; periodic offering at intervals that may exceed four years. Prerequisite: One course in Philosophy at the 2000-level.

PHIL 3300. Topics in Epistemology. 3 Credits.

In-depth study of select topics concerning theories of knowledge and related concepts such as belief, truth, rationality, evidence, perception, and memory. May be repeated for credit with different content. Topics vary by offering; periodic offering at intervals that may exceed four years. Prerequisite: One course in Philosophy at the 2000-level.

PHIL 3470. Topics in Phil of Language. 3 Credits.

In-depth philosophical study of the nature of language. PHIL 1400 recommended. May repeat for credit with different content. Topics vary by offering; periodic offering at intervals that may exceed four years. Prerequisite: One course in Philosophy at the 2000-level.

PHIL 3605. Topics in Ethical Theory. 3 Credits.

In-depth study of metaethics, emphasizing recent work. Representative topics: moral objectivity, moral language, moral epistemology, and the relationship between morality and reasons. May be repeated for credit with different content. Topics vary by offering; periodic offering at intervals that may exceed four years. Prerequisite: One course in Philosophy at the 2000-level.

PHIL 3730. Kant. 3 Credits.

An examination of issues in the philosophy of Immanuel Kant. Prerequisite: One Philosophy course at the 2000-level.

PHIL 3990. Special Topics. 1-18 Credits.

See Schedule of Courses for specific titles.

PHIL 3991. Internship. 1-18 Credits.

On-site supervised work experience combined with a structured academic learning plan directed by a faculty member or a faculty-staff team in which a faculty member is the instructor of record, for which academic credit is awarded. Offered at department discretion.

PHIL 3993. Independent Study. 1-18 Credits.

A course which is tailored to fit the interests of a specific student, which occurs outside the traditional classroom/laboratory setting under the supervision of a faculty member, for which credit is awarded. Offered at department discretion.

PHIL 3995. Undergraduate Research. 1-18 Credits.

Undergraduate student work on individual or small team research projects under the supervision of a faculty member, for which credit is awarded. Offered at department discretion. Prerequisite: an appropriate 3000-level course in Philosophy.

PHIL 4990. Special Topics. 1-18 Credits.

See Schedule of Courses for specific titles.

PHIL 4996. Honors. 1-6 Credits.

College honors thesis or other department/program honors, under the supervision of a faculty member. Offered at department discretion.