Philosophy

Daniela Vallega-Neu, Department Head
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1295 University of Oregon
Eugene, Oregon 97403-1295

Philosophy asks fundamental questions about human identity, the nature of knowledge and reality, moral virtue and responsibility, the nature of community and political authority, aesthetic judgments and values, and other concepts central to the meaning and value of human existence. Through the study of primary texts and concrete issues, drawn from various historical periods and cultures, philosophy provides a means for reflection on actions, beliefs, and values while developing critical thinking, reading, and writing skills. Philosophy also strengthens the ability to reason, enlarges the imagination, and refines aesthetic sensitivity. A philosophical education thus offers excellent preparation for a broad range of careers that require critical intelligence and creative problem-solving as well as oral and written communication skills.

Faculty


Emeriti

William E. Davie, associate professor emeritus. BA, 1964, Washington (Seattle); PhD, 1969, California, Irvine. (1968)


Arnulf Zweig, professor emeritus. BA, 1952, Rochester; PhD, 1960, Stanford. (1956)

The date in parentheses at the end of each entry is the first year on the University of Oregon faculty.

Participating

Joyce Cheng, history of art and architecture

Michael Hames-García, ethnic studies

Jeffrey S. Librett, German and Scandinavian

Lisa Mazzei, education studies

Jerry L. Rosiek, education studies

Steven Shankman, English

Michael Stern, German and Scandinavian

Mark T. Unno, religious studies

Malcolm Wilson, classics

- Bachelor of Arts
- Bachelor of Science
- Minor

Undergraduate Studies

The department offers bachelor of arts (BA) and bachelor of science (BS) degree programs. University degree requirements are listed in the Bachelor’s Degree Requirements section of this catalog and in the schedule of classes. Declaration of a major may be accomplished online by completing a form available on the department website.

Major Requirements

Course work for the major in philosophy must be passed with grades of C– or better or P (pass). No more than 8 credits may be taken pass/no pass.

Bachelor of Arts Degree Requirements

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<tr>
<th>Code</th>
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<tr>
<td>PHIL 310–312</td>
<td>History of Philosophy</td>
<td>12</td>
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PHIL 325  Logic, Inquiry, and Argumentation  4  
Select two of the following:  8  
PHIL 421  Ancient Philosophers: [Topic]  
PHIL 433  17th- and 18th-Century Philosophers: [Topic]  
PHIL 453  19th-Century Philosophers: [Topic]  
PHIL 463  20th-Century Philosophers: [Topic]  
Select one of the following:  4  
PHIL 213  Asian Philosophy  
PHIL 216  Philosophy and Cultural Diversity  
PHIL 315  Introduction to Feminist Philosophy  
PHIL 342  Introduction to Latin American Philosophy  
PHIL 443  Feminist Philosophy: [Topic]  
PHIL 451  Native American Philosophy  
PHIL 452  Philosophy and Race  
Additional upper-division philosophy courses  24  
Total Credits  52  

Bachelor of Science Degree Requirements

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<td>Additional upper-division philosophy courses  24</td>
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<td>Total Credits  52</td>
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Honors in Philosophy

The philosophy honors program is designed to provide outstanding, highly motivated philosophy majors with the opportunity to develop their skills during the senior year through the independent exploration of a special topic of their own choosing under the guidance of a faculty mentor. To be eligible for admission to the honors program, students must have completed at least 24 credits in philosophy, at least 12 of which have been taken at the University of Oregon. The honors candidate’s grade point average (GPA) in philosophy must be at least 3.50, maintained through graduation. To graduate with honors, the candidate must fulfill the following requirements:

Courses

Besides the courses required of majors, a candidate for departmental honors must take at least 16 of the 52 credits in philosophy at the 400 level.

Senior Thesis

The candidate must write an honors thesis under the guidance of a member of the philosophy faculty chosen as thesis advisor. The thesis must demonstrate the student’s ability to formulate a significant research problem, research primary resources, interpret sources with imagination and technical skill, and present the finished work in a form meeting professional standards in philosophy. The thesis must be approved by a thesis committee consisting of two faculty members from the philosophy department. Approval of the thesis depends in part on a public defense attended by the committee.

Upon fulfilling these requirements, the candidate is approved to receive a bachelor’s degree with honors in philosophy.

Minor Requirements

Minor in Philosophy

PHIL 310–312  History of Philosophy  12
Course on the work of a specific philosopher  4
Upper-division course  4
Additional philosophy course  4
Total Credits  24

Courses must be passed with grades of C– or better or P (pass). No more than 8 credits may be taken pass/no pass.

Minor in Ethics

PHIL 102  Ethics  4
or PHIL 323  Moral Theory
Five ethics-related courses chosen from the following (or from additional rotating topics courses):
PHIL 102  Ethics
PHIL 120  Ethics of Enterprise and Exchange
PHIL 123  Internet, Society, and Philosophy
PHIL 130  Philosophy and Popular Culture
PHIL 170  Love and Sex
PHIL 216  Philosophy and Cultural Diversity
PHIL 220  Food Ethics
PHIL 307  Social and Political Philosophy
PHIL 308  Social and Political Philosophy
PHIL 309  Global Justice
PHIL 315  Introduction to Feminist Philosophy
PHIL 323  Moral Theory
PHIL 330  Philosophy and Disaster
PHIL 335  Medical Ethics
PHIL 340  Environmental Philosophy
PHIL 342  Introduction to Latin American Philosophy
PHIL 343  Critical Theory
PHIL 344  Introduction to Philosophy of Law
ENVS 345  Environmental Ethics
PHIL 443  Feminist Philosophy: [Topic]
Courses must be passed with grades of C– or better or P (pass). No more than 8 credits may be taken pass/no pass. Twelve credits must be taken at the upper-division level, 4 credits of which must be at the 400 level.

A minimum of 12 upper-division credits must be taken in residence at the University of Oregon.

Students with a major in philosophy may not earn a minor in ethics (although minoring in both ethics and philosophy is permitted).

The minor will be awarded beginning fall 2015; students with course work earned prior to fall 2015 will be permitted to use that course work toward the requirements for the minor.

**Four-Year Degree Plan**

*The degree plan shown is only a sample of how students may complete their degrees in four years. There are alternative ways. Students should consult their advisor to determine the best path for them.*

### Bachelor of Arts in Philosophy

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General-education arts and letters course 4
General-education social science course 4

Credits 16

Spring
300- or 400-level PHIL course 4
General-education science course 4
Elective course 4

Credits 12

Total Credits 44

Course Title Credits Milestones

Fourth Year

Fall
300- or 400-level PHIL course 4
Elective courses 8

Credits 12

Winter
Elective courses 16

Credits 16

Spring
300- or 400-level PHIL course 4
Elective courses 8

Credits 12

Total Credits 40

• Master of Arts: Distribution (p. 5)
• Master of Arts: Thesis (p. 6)
• Doctor of Philosophy

Graduate Studies

The department offers a graduate program leading to the master of arts (MA) and the doctor of philosophy (PhD) degrees. The program, which is pluralistic in orientation, requires students to develop a broad knowledge of the history of philosophy, major fields, and various approaches and methods. Students are urged to concentrate in a specific area at the advanced level. Specializations are supported in American philosophy, Continental philosophy, feminist philosophy, Latin American philosophy, philosophy of race, philosophical psychology, and environmental philosophy.

Each student designs a program in consultation with the graduate advisor. Two or more years are typically required for completing the MA degree, and five or more years are typically required for completing the PhD degree. A complete and detailed list of the university and department requirements for graduate degrees is available online through the department website.

Master of Arts Degree Requirements

The master’s program is designed to prepare students for PhD research or other professional pursuits through providing a broad background in the history of philosophy and recent developments in the areas of philosophy that are strengths of the department.

There are two paths to earning a master’s degree. The first requires completion of the second-language requirement and 48 credit hours of graduate course work including the distribution requirements (listed below). The second requires satisfaction of the second-language requirement, completing 45 credits of graduate course work—9 of which are taken in Thesis (PHIL 503)—and the writing of a master’s thesis under the direction of a thesis advisor with a second faculty reader.

The distribution requirements may be satisfied by receiving a mid-B or better in

• two courses in each of three subdisciplinary fields: society and value; knowledge, rationality, and inquiry; and metaphysics
• one course from each of three out of the four historical periods: ancient and medieval, modern (16th–18th centuries), 19th century, and 20th and 21st centuries
• two courses from each of the four philosophical traditions—continental, analytic, American, and feminist—that ground the diverse philosophical perspectives of the department, one of which is a proseminar taken within the first two years of graduate study
• one course in one of four requirement areas: Asian philosophy, philosophy of race, Native American philosophy, and Latin American philosophy

A single course may count toward each of two categories, but no more than once in a single category. For example, a course may count in a subdisciplinary field such as metaphysics, and, at the same time, apply to the history requirement or the traditions requirement.

Master of Arts: Distribution

Subdisciplinary Requirements
Two courses about society and value 8
Two courses about knowledge, rationality, and inquiry 8
Two courses about metaphysics 8

History Requirements
Select three of the following: 12
Course from ancient and medieval period
Course from modern (16th-18th centuries) period
Course from 19th century
Course from 20th and 21st centuries

Traditions Requirements
Two courses about continental philosophical traditions 8
Two courses about analytic philosophical traditions 8
Two courses about American philosophical traditions 8
Two courses about feminist philosophical traditions 8

Requirements Areas
Select one of the following: 4
Course in Asian philosophy
Course in philosophy of race
Course in Native American philosophy
Course in Latin American philosophy

Total Credits 72

1 One philosophical tradition course must be a proseminar taken within the first two years of graduate study.

For the thesis requirement, the student asks two faculty members to serve as his or her master’s committee, with one agreeing to serve as chair. The student prepares a short (maximum five pages) description of the proposed thesis topic. Once both committee members have approved
the thesis proposal, the student registers for as many as 9 credits of
Thesis (PHIL 503) during the one or two terms over which the thesis
is written. Typically, the committee chair meets periodically with the
student to assess progress and to oversee the writing of the thesis.
When both members of the thesis committee agree that the thesis is
suitable for a final defense, the candidate schedules a one-hour oral
examination, during which the committee members ask questions about
the argument and make suggestions for further revision, if necessary.
The thesis is completed when it is given final approval by both members
of the committee and is accepted by the Graduate School as satisfying its
requirements for thesis preparation.

Master of Arts: Thesis

PHIL 503 Thesis 9
Additional graduate-level philosophy courses 36
Total Credits 45

Additional Requirement

Students must complete the second-language requirement.

The student asks two faculty members to serve as his or her master’s
committee, with one agreeing to serve as chair. The student prepares
a short (maximum five pages) description of the proposed thesis topic.
Once both committee members have approved the thesis proposal,
the student registers for Thesis (PHIL 503) during the one or two terms
over which the thesis is written. Typically, the committee chair meets
periodically with the student to assess progress and to oversee the
writing of the thesis. When both members of the thesis committee agree
that the thesis is suitable for a final defense, the candidate schedules a
one-hour oral examination, during which the committee members ask
questions about the argument and make suggestions for further revision,
if necessary. The thesis is completed when it is given final approval by both members
of the committee and is accepted by the Graduate School as satisfying its
requirements for thesis preparation.

Doctor of Philosophy

The PhD degree requires a minimum of 81 credits of graduate-level
course work, of which 18 must be in Dissertation (PHIL 603). Students
must complete a logic requirement, demonstrate proficiency in a second
language, complete the four course distribution requirements, and pass
two comprehensive examinations—extensive research projects, one
in history (a paper) and one in the student’s area of specialization (a
literature review). Most students finish their doctoral degrees within five
to six years. The Graduate School imposes a limit of seven years for
completion of the PhD degree.

The distribution requirements may be satisfied by receiving a mid-B or
better in

- two courses in each of three subdisciplinary fields: society and value;
knowledge, rationality, and inquiry; and metaphysics
- one course from each of the four historical periods: ancient and
medieval, modern (16th–18th centuries), 19th century, and 20th and
21st centuries
- two courses from each of the four philosophical traditions—
continental, analytic, American, and feminist—that ground the diverse
philosophical perspectives of the department, one of which is a
proseminar taken within the first two years of graduate study
- one course in one of four requirement areas: Asian philosophy,
philosophy of race, Native American philosophy, and Latin American
philosophy

A single course may count toward each of two categories, but no more
than once in a single category.

Subdisciplinary Requirements
Two courses about society and value 8
Two courses about knowledge, rationality, and inquiry 8
Two courses about metaphysics 8

History Requirements
Select three of the following: 12
Course from ancient and medieval period
Course from modern (16th-18th centuries) period
Course from 19th century
Course from 20th and 21st centuries

Traditions Requirements
Two courses about continental philosophical traditions 1 8
Two courses about analytic philosophic traditions 1 8
Two courses about American philosophical traditions 1 8
Two courses about feminist philosophical traditions 1 8

Requirements Areas
Select one of the following: 4
Course in Asian philosophy
Course in philosophy of race
Course in Native American philosophy
Course in Latin American philosophy

Dissertation
PHIL 603 Dissertation 18
Total Credits 90

1 One philosophical tradition course must be a proseminar taken within
the first two years of graduate study.

Additional Requirements

The comprehensive examinations are passed by completing
two substantial research papers under the supervision of faculty
members. Students are advanced to candidacy upon completion of the
comprehensives. A dissertation prospectus must be accepted by the
candidate’s committee after a preliminary oral examination. The written
dissertation must receive the approval of the dissertation committee after
a final oral examination.

Admission

Applicants for admission to graduate studies are asked to write a
brief letter explaining their philosophical background and their specific
philosophical interests. This helps the department’s admissions
committee decide whether this is an appropriate philosophy department
for the applicant’s goals. They should also submit a writing sample, a
college transcript, and a notification of their scores on the Graduate
Record Examinations (GRE). International students must provide proof
of competence in English. A score of at least 500 on the Test of Spoken
English (TSE), 26 on the Internet-based Test of English as a Foreign
Language (TOEFL), or 7 on the International English Language Testing
System (IELTS) is required of international students unless their native
language is English.
In addition to general university regulations governing graduate admission (see the Graduate School section of this catalog), the Department of Philosophy requires applicants to submit three confidential report forms completed by teachers (preferably philosophy teachers) familiar with the applicant’s academic background.

The application process is exclusively online; a link to the application guidelines is posted on the department website. Applicants who are unable to make the application fee payment online with Visa, Discover, or MasterCard may now pay online with a check. This application and one complete set of transcripts, together with the $50 application fee, should be sent to the Office of Admissions, 1217 University of Oregon, Eugene OR 97403-1217. A second set of transcripts should be forwarded to the Department of Philosophy. Confidential report forms should be sent directly to the department by the faculty members recommending the applicant if they are unable to upload their letters of recommendation.

Graduate teaching fellowships are the only form of financial aid available in the philosophy department; the application deadline is January 15 for the following academic year. An application form is provided upon request.