

PHILOSOPHY, BACHELOR OF ARTS

Philosophy Major Requirements

(Also see Requirements for a Bachelor's Degree (<https://e-catalogue.jhu.edu/ksas-wse/undergraduate-policies/academic-policies/requirements-bachelors-degree/>).)

Philosophy poses such fundamental questions as: What can we know? How should we live? and How do the results of human inquiry, obtained so far, hang together? It is an excellent preparation for professional studies such as law and medicine; it provides perspective on other disciplines such as psychology, mathematics, literature, and political science; and it centers on a set of questions that thinking people cannot avoid. At Hopkins it can be studied in a variety of ways.

A number of our courses are designed to provide broad introductions to the subject. Both AS.150.111 Philosophic Classics and AS.150.112 Philosophical Problems cover a wide range of topics, the former through the study of some of the major texts of Western thought, the latter by more systematic examination of representative issues. Either one will show a student a variety of approaches to philosophical problems. The courses AS.150.201 and AS.150.205 offer historically oriented introductions to the subject, giving the student a basic grasp of the development of philosophy in two of its major periods. Other courses, such as AS.150.118 Introduction to Formal Logic, AS.150.223 Formal Methods of Philosophy, and AS.150.220 Introduction to Moral Philosophy, are designed for students with an interest in the particular areas they cover. All of these courses are readily available without prior study of philosophy.

The 400-level courses are open to graduate students as well as to undergraduates. Some require no previous course work in philosophy. Others presuppose some familiarity with philosophy, such as would be provided by one of the introductory courses. Still others require more specific preparation. A student with questions about whether they have the background for a particular 400-level course should consult either the instructor or the director of undergraduate studies.

A student who wants to study an area of philosophy not provided for in the regular curriculum or to undertake a special project of writing and research should consult with a faculty member about taking AS.150.511 Directed Study-AS.150.512 Directed Study. An undergraduate who has the proper background may enroll in a graduate seminar if the instructor approves.

Requirements

Philosophy majors must take 11 departmental courses. A minimum of six courses must be at the 300-level or higher. Of the two general introductory courses, AS.150.111 Philosophic Classics and AS.150.112 Philosophical Problems, only one may count toward the major, and two total 100-level courses may count toward the major. Majors are required to take the Undergraduate Seminar, preferably in the junior year. Courses in which a grade of D is received may not count toward the major, nor may courses taken satisfactory/unsatisfactory.

Other courses must be distributed by taking at least one course in each of the five following categories:

- Ancient philosophy
- Modern philosophy
- Logic, philosophy of science, or philosophy of mathematics
- Philosophy of mind, theory of knowledge, philosophy of language, or metaphysics
- Ethics, aesthetics, or political philosophy

The first two categories are normally satisfied by taking AS.150.201 (<http://e-catalog.jhu.edu/search/?P=AS.150.201>) Introduction To Greek Philosophy and AS.150.205 (<http://e-catalog.jhu.edu/search/?P=AS.150.205>) Introduction to the History of Modern Philosophy. The student thus has four or five additional electives after satisfying the category requirements.

Well-qualified majors may be admitted to a graduate seminar during their senior year. They should consult their major advisor.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding these requirements, please contact the director of undergraduate studies.

Writing and Communication in the Major

Students must complete at least 6 credits of Writing and Communication foundational ability coursework in one major. For this major, students would be able to fulfill this requirement by selecting 6 credits of elective courses in the major that are designated as Writing and Communications courses.

Code	Title	Credits
Major Requirements		
One course in ancient philosophy (PHIL-ANCIEN)		3
One course in modern philosophy (PHIL-MODERN)		3
One course in logic, philosophy of science, or philosophy of mathematics (PHIL-LOGSCI)		3
One course in philosophy of mind, theory of knowledge, philosophy of language, or metaphysics (PHIL-MIND)		3
One course in ethics, aesthetics, or political philosophy (PHIL-ETHICS)		3
One undergraduate seminar (PHIL-SEM; 300-level; ideally in junior year)		3
Five additional courses taken in the Philosophy Department (150) or cross-listed with Philosophy		15
Total Credits		33

Sample Program of Study

First Year			
First Semester	Credits	Second Semester	Credits
AS.150.1xx-2xx: elective	3	AS.150.2xx-4xx: Course in Modern Philosophy	3
	3		3
Second Year			
First Semester	Credits	Second Semester	Credits
AS.150.2xx-4xx: Course in Ancient Philosophy	3	AS.150.3xx-4xx: elective	3
	3		3

Third Year

First Semester	Credits	Second Semester	Credits
AS.150.3xx: Undergraduate Seminar	3	AS.150.2xx-4xx: Course in Ethics	3
AS.150.3xx-4xx: elective	3	AS.150.2xx-4xx: Course in Phil of Mind	3
6		6	

Fourth Year

First Semester	Credits	Second Semester	Credits
AS.150.2xx-4xx: Course in Logic	3	AS.150.3xx-4xx: elective	3
AS.150.3xx-4xx: elective	3	AS.150.3xx-4xx: elective (if needed to have six 300 level or higher courses)	3
6		3	

Total Credits 33**Examples of Courses in Each Required Area**

Code	Title	Credits
Ancient Philosophy		
AS.150.201	Introduction To Greek Philosophy	3
AS.150.401	Greek Philosophy: Plato and His Predecessors	3
AS.150.402	Aristotle	3
AS.150.403	Hellenistic Philosophy	3
Modern Philosophy		
AS.150.205	Introduction to the History of Modern Philosophy	3
AS.150.417	Kant's 'Critique Of Pure Reason'	3
Logic, Philosophy of Science, or Philosophy of Mathematics		
AS.150.118	Introduction to Formal Logic	3
AS.150.420	Mathematical Logic I	3
AS.150.421	Mathematical Logic II	3
AS.150.422	Axiomatic Set Theory	3
AS.150.433	Philosophy of Space & Time	3
AS.150.434	Formal Methods of Philosophy	3
Philosophy of Mind, Theory of Knowledge, Philosophy of Language, or Metaphysics		
AS.150.245	Philosophy of Mind	3
AS.150.476	Philosophy and Cognitive Science	3
Ethics, Aesthetics, or Political Philosophy		
AS.150.219	Introduction to Bioethics	3
AS.150.220	Introduction to Moral Philosophy	3
AS.150.240	Introduction to Political Philosophy	3
AS.150.452	Freedom of Will & Moral Responsibility	3

Double Majors

The department encourages linking the study of philosophy with the study of other disciplines. For example, the subject matter and course requirements of the philosophy and psychology departments are such as to make a double major both practical and intriguing. Similarly, knowledge of literature or the history of art is pertinent to the study of aesthetics; a solid understanding of science is valuable for those interested in the philosophy of science; and students of ethics benefit considerably by combining their work with study of political theory and of the political realities in which morality must function. Members of the

department are available to assist students in planning double majors tailored to their interests.

Honors Program in Philosophy

Students with an overall GPA of 3.0 and a Philosophy GPA of 3.5 or higher (or outstanding recommendations from three department members) are eligible for the Senior Honors Thesis Program. In addition to the 11 courses required for the major, successful applicants take AS.150.551 Honors Project and AS.150.552 Honors Project, to write a thesis of about 50 pages under the supervision of a faculty member. The thesis must be completed prior to spring vacation of senior year. If the student withdraws prior to completion of a thesis, a satisfactory/unsatisfactory grade will be awarded.

The grade for the thesis will depend on the thesis itself and an oral examination about it, conducted by the thesis adviser and two other faculty members. Graduation Honors will be awarded to those whose work receives an A- or better. For more information about the Honors Program, contact the department's director of undergraduate studies.

Code	Title	Credits
Honors Thesis Program		
AS.150.551	Honors Project	3
AS.150.552	Honors Project	3

BA/MA Program

The department offers an accelerated BA/MA program. See the BA/MA Program page for more information.

Learning Outcomes

A student who graduates with a BA in philosophy will be able to demonstrate:

- A broad understanding of the work of major figures in the history of philosophy, both ancient (especially Plato and Aristotle) and modern (especially the period of Descartes through Kant)
- Familiarity with the most important topics in a range of areas that are typically regarded as lying at the center of contemporary philosophical thought, including metaphysics, theory of knowledge, philosophy of mind, and philosophy of language
- Familiarity with the most important topics in ethics and political philosophy
- Familiarity with formal logic, including the ability to understand the logical symbolism used in many contemporary philosophical texts
- The capacity to think analytically and creatively about philosophical texts and issues
- The capacity to express philosophical ideas and support them effectively in argument, both in writing and orally.