

PHILOSOPHY (PHIL)

The Philosophy Minor provides students with an understanding of the history of philosophy, an exploration of diverse worldviews, and the tools to examine the complex, unexamined assumptions underlying contemporary society. The Philosophy Minor emphasizes development of logical and analytical skills, affording students the intellectual ability to theorize, articulate, and support sophisticated philosophical perspectives.

Program Goals

- Students will develop an understanding of the history of philosophy and its relationship to the unexamined assumptions underlying contemporary society.
- Students will develop logical and analytical skills.
- Students will develop an understanding of the importance of philosophical discursive practices.
- Students will engage and participate in broader analytical and ethical discussions in the spirit of philosophical community.
- Ethics and Critical Thinking Certificate (<https://catalog.western.edu/undergraduate/programs/philosophy/ethics-critical-thinking-certificate/>)
- Philosophy Minor (<https://catalog.western.edu/undergraduate/programs/philosophy/philosophy-minor/>)

Philosophy Courses

PHIL 100. Critical Thinking. (3 Credits)

Develops students' capacity for critical, independent thought. Teaches students to analyze, critique, and respond to a wide variety of arguments, both formal and informal, in various media. Introduces students to the basics of logic and to techniques for identifying logical fallacies and invalid evidence. Encourages the practice of civil, reasoned debate.

PHIL 101. Introduction to Philosophy (GT-AH3). (3 Credits)

An introduction to the central philosophical questions that have historically spanned and conceptually founded Western civilization. The course surveys key thinkers, philosophical movements, and academic fields of the discipline. Questions regarding the meaning of existence, the freedom of the self, the nature of a just society, and the workings of human knowledge expose students to the pursuits of metaphysics, ontology, epistemology, philosophy of science, moral and political philosophy, and ethics. GT-AH3

PHIL 135. Introduction to Ethics. (3 Credits)

Introduces students to the study of ethics by surveying key ethical theories, by teaching basic principles of moral reasoning and evaluation, and by identifying and examining contemporary moral problems. Emphasizes practical ethics - the application of ethical theories and principles to real-life personal, professional, and public moral dilemmas.

PHIL 197. Special Topics. (1-6 Credits)

PHIL 200. Symbolic Logic. (3 Credits)

Introduces students to the systematic study of the form of arguments, including inductive reasoning, syllogistic logic, sentential logic, the logic of quantification, and modal logic. Teaches the basic conventions of propositional notation and acquaints students with the concerns of metalogic and philosophy of logic.

PHIL 297. Special Topics. (1-6 Credits)

PHIL 315. Eastern Philosophy. (3 Credits)

An introduction to the central philosophical questions which have conceptually founded Eastern philosophy. This course surveys primary texts, intellectual movements, and cultural traditions that inform and influence Eastern philosophy while investigating the theoretical spaces that exist between philosophical assumptions of the East and West. Prerequisite: PHIL 101 or instructor permission.

PHIL 325. Women and Gender in Philosophy. (3 Credits)

A discussion of the significance of women and gender in the development of philosophy. This course questions how the philosophical canon has appropriated, incorporated, and sometimes erased women's contributions. Drawing upon a variety of discourses in and outside of philosophy itself (including feminist and queer theory), students will assess how the philosophical endeavor changes in light of previously overlooked and currently influential gender studies work. Students will use gender and sexuality as a framework that enriches and interrogates philosophical fields ranging from cultural theory to epistemology. Prerequisite: PHIL 101 or instructor permission.

PHIL 335. Advanced Ethics. (3 Credits)

An exploration of the historical development of - and current similarities and differences between - scientific methods and globally diverse ways of knowing. An examination of the role of philosophy in scientific revolutions, and of the role of philosophy in a multi-cultural, potentially "post-human" society negotiating issues such as climate injustice, pandemics, and artificial intelligence. Prerequisite: PHIL 101 or instructor permission.

PHIL 345. Philosophy of Religion. (3 Credits)

An exploration of the significance of faith in our human worldview. Through a comparative approach to major world religions, students investigate the underlying assumptions behind the ways of knowing God and participating in the divine, and how those assumptions diversely manifest themselves culturally, metaphorically, and psychologically. Prerequisite: PHIL 101 or instructor permission.

PHIL 355. Philosophy of Science and Epistemology. (3 Credits)

An exploration of the ongoing relationship between philosophy and science, and an examination of how philosophical movements have informed some of the major shifts in scientific paradigms throughout history. The course concludes with an examination of how scientific revolutions potentially de-center humans, and reorient the relationship between the self and the world. Prerequisite: PHIL 101 or instructor permission.

PHIL 375. Postcolonial Philosophy. (3 Credits)

A global examination of the role of philosophers in the historical and current development of, resistance to, and reimagining beyond colonialist ideology. An analysis of the role of cross-cultural philosophers in movement calling for justice on a global (and trans-local) scale. Course concludes with student-driven, theoretically-informed attempts to decolonize philosophy and to build inclusivity into the subfields of epistemology, metaphysics, ethics, and ontology. Prerequisite: PHIL 101 or instructor permission.

PHIL 397. Special Topics. (1-6 Credits)

PHIL 401. Reality and Representation. (3 Credits)

This course analyzes, and provides students the opportunity to more deeply investigate, the philosophical foundations of spoken and written representation through a broad survey of theoretical readings in aesthetics, authorship, interpretation, realism, and subjectivity. Examining a diverse range of classic and contemporary thinkers in philosophy and cultural studies, the course explores the ways representation frames the experiences of being in the world, and asks such questions as: How do ideas become the words we speak?; Do the words we speak mean the same when written?; and What makes the narrative possible? The answers to these questions have broad philosophical, political, and cultural implications. Prerequisite: Phil 201 or PHIL 335; or ENG 371; or instructor permission.

PHIL 492. Independent Study. (1-6 Credits)

PHIL 497. Special Topics. (1-6 Credits)