

# PHILOSOPHY

<https://liberalarts.pacific.edu/liberalarts/academics/departments-and-programs/philosophy>  
Phone: (209) 946-2281  
Lou Matz, Chair

## Degrees Offered

Bachelor of Arts

## Majors Offered

Philosophy  
Philosophy with Departmental Honors

## Minors Offered

Philosophy

The study of philosophy is at the core of a liberal arts education. The ideal of a liberal arts education is not simply to prepare students for a specific career but to prepare them for a meaningful personal life and for intelligent participation in their workplace and communities. There are issues that all human beings confront regardless of what career they choose or community they live in, such as the nature of knowledge, the principles of right and wrong, the truth and religious claims, and the meaning of life. Philosophers raise critical questions about these issues, and some attempt to construct comprehensive systems that explain how all human activities fit together in a unified way. Moreover, through the exposure to some of the great minds in human history and the discussion of their ideas with their professors and peers, students develop the reading, writing, and critical thinking skills that are essential to personal and professional well-being.

Philosophy majors are also prepared to enter the workforce. As the American Philosophical Association notes,

*Employers want—and reward—many of the capacities that the study of philosophy develops: for instance, the ability to solve problems, to communicate, to organize ideas and issues, to assess pros and cons, and to boil down complex data. These capacities represent transferable skills. They are transferable not only from philosophy to non-philosophy areas, but from one non-philosophical field to another. For this reason, people trained in philosophy are not only prepared to do many kinds of tasks; they are particularly well prepared to cope with change in their chosen career field, or even move into new careers...there are people trained in philosophy in just about every field. They have gone not only into such professions as teaching (at all levels), medicine, law, computer science, management, publishing, sales, criminal justice, public relations, and many other fields*

At Pacific, philosophy majors have enjoyed the interactive and personalized teaching methods of the faculty and the intellectually challenging and personally transformative nature of philosophical thinking. Many philosophy majors complete second majors in disciplines such as Psychology, Economics, Political Science, English, and Mathematics. The Department of Philosophy offers a variety of courses in the area of Value Theory, such as Fundamentals of Ethics, Moral Problems, Digital Well-Being, Philosophy of Law, and the Philosophy of Sport, and the area of Metaphysics & Epistemology, such as Introduction to Cognitive Science, Philosophy of Science, and God, Faith & Reason. The philosophy major consists of ten courses totaling a minimum of 33 units:

Introduction to Philosophy

1 History of Philosophy Course

1 Formal Logic Course

1 Value Theory Course

1 Metaphysics & Epistemology Course

1 Career Search Essentials Course

4 Additional Courses

### 1. Philosophical Content

- Demonstrate understanding of concepts, positions and reasoning in course material
- Contextualize and evaluate arguments relative to major movements and developments in philosophy

### 2. Critical Thinking

- Identify reasoning in arguments
- Assess the logical quality of reasoning in arguments
- Apply course concepts and reasoning to new situations
- Develop one's own reasoned position on issues
- Recognize counterarguments to one's reasoned positions

### 3. Written Communication

- State organizing idea(s)
- Develop reasoning
- Organize reasoning
- Write with clarity

### 4. Oral Communication

- State organizing idea(s)
- Develop reasoning
- Organize reasoning
- Deliver communication in a way to keep audience attention

## Bachelor of Arts Major in Philosophy

Students must complete a minimum of 120 units with a Pacific cumulative and major/program grade point average of 2.0 in order to earn the bachelor of arts degree with a major in philosophy.

### I. General Education Requirements

For more details, see General Education (<https://catalog.pacific.edu/uop/generalinformation/generaleducation/>)

Minimum 28 units and 9 courses that include:

#### A. CORE Seminars (2 courses)

CORE 001	Problem Solving & Oral Comm	3
CORE 002	Writing and Critical Thinking	4

**Note:** 1) CORE Seminars cannot be taken for Pass/No Credit. 2) Transfer students with 28 or more transfer credits taken after high school are exempt from both CORE seminars.

#### B. Breadth Requirement (7 courses, at least 3 units each)

At least one course from each of the following areas:

Artistic Process & Creation

Civic & Global Responsibility

Language & Narratives

Quantitative Reasoning

Scientific Inquiry

Social Inquiry

World Perspectives & Ethics

**Note: 1)** No more than 2 courses from a single discipline can be used to meet the Breadth Requirement.

### C. Diversity and Inclusion Requirement

All students must complete Diversity and Inclusion coursework (at least 3 units)

**Note: 1)** Diversity and Inclusion courses can also be used to meet the breadth category requirements, or major or minor requirements.

### D. Fundamental Skills

Students must demonstrate competence in:

Writing

Quantitative Analysis (Math)

**Note: 1)** Failure to satisfy the fundamental skills requirements by the end of four semesters of full-time study at the University is grounds for academic disqualification.

## II. College of the Pacific BA Requirement

Students must complete one year of college instruction or equivalent training in a language other than English.

**Note: 1)** Transfer students with sophomore standing are exempt from this requirement.

## III. Breadth Requirements

Students must complete 60 units outside the primary discipline of the first major, regardless of the department who offers the course(s) in that discipline. (Courses include general education courses, transfer courses, CPCE/EXTN units, internships, etc.)

## IV. Major Requirements

Minimum 32 units and 9 courses. Two of the nine philosophy courses must be 100 level.

PHIL 011 Introduction to Philosophy

PHIL 037 Symbolic Logic

Select one course from the History of Philosophy category:

PHIL 053 Ancient Greek & Roman Philosophy

PHIL 055 Modern and Contemporary Philosophy

Select at least one course from the Value Theory category:

PHIL 021 Moral Problems

PHIL 025 The Meaning of Life

PHIL 027 Fundamentals of Ethics

PHIL 035 Environmental Ethics

PHIL 044 Philosophy of Sex and Love

PHIL 106 Philosophy of Law

PHIL 126 Digital Well-Being

PHIL 127 Philosophy of Sport

PHIL 142 Business Ethics

PHIL 145 Biomedical Ethics

POLS 021 Introduction to Political Theory

POLS 130 Ancient to Medieval Political Theory

POLS 132 Modern to Contemporary Political Theory

Select at least one course from the Metaphysics and Epistemology category:

PHIL 015 Introduction to Cognitive Science

PHIL 061 Philosophy of Science

PHIL 079 Sensation and Perception

PHIL 124 God, Faith, and Reason

PSYC 017 Abnormal and Clinical Psychology

Select any other four courses from any category

Additional courses:

PHIL 089A Writing for The Pacifican

PHIL 187 Internship/Experiential Learning

PHIL 191 Independent Study

PHIL 193 Special Topics

PHIL 197 Undergraduate Research

Note: 1) 5 of the Philosophy courses must be completed at Pacific.

## Bachelor of Arts Major in Philosophy with Departmental Honors

Students must complete a minimum of 120 units with a Pacific cumulative grade point average of 3.5 and a major/program grade point average of 3.8 in order to earn the bachelor of arts degree with a major in philosophy with departmental honors.

## I. General Education Requirements

For more details, see General Education (<https://catalog.pacific.edu/uop/generalinformation/generaleducation/>)

Minimum 28 units and 9 courses that include:

### A. CORE Seminars (2 courses)

CORE 001 Problem Solving & Oral Comm 3

CORE 002 Writing and Critical Thinking 4

**Note: 1)** CORE Seminars cannot be taken for Pass/No Credit. **2)** Transfer students with 28 or more transfer credits taken after high school are exempt from both CORE seminars.

### B. Breadth Requirement (7 courses, at least 3 units each)

At least one course from each of the following areas:

Artistic Process & Creation

Civic & Global Responsibility

Language & Narratives

Quantitative Reasoning

Scientific Inquiry

Social Inquiry

World Perspectives & Ethics

**Note: 1)** No more than 2 courses from a single discipline can be used to meet the Breadth Requirement.

### C. Diversity and Inclusion Requirement

All students must complete Diversity and Inclusion coursework (at least 3 units)

**Note: 1)** Diversity and Inclusion courses can also be used to meet the breadth category requirements, or major or minor requirements.

## D. Fundamental Skills

Students must demonstrate competence in:

Writing

Quantitative Analysis (Math)

**Note: 1)** Failure to satisfy the fundamental skills requirements by the end of four semesters of full-time study at the University is grounds for academic disqualification.

## II. College of the Pacific BA Requirement

Students must complete one year of college instruction or equivalent training in a language other than English.

**Note: 1)** Transfer students with sophomore standing are exempt from this requirement.

## III. Breadth Requirements

Students must complete 60 units outside the primary discipline of the first major, regardless of the department who offers the course(s) in that discipline. (Courses include general education courses, transfer courses, CPCE/EXTN units, internships, etc.)

## IV. Major Requirements

Minimum 32 units and 9 courses. Two of the nine philosophy courses must be 100 level.

PHIL 011 Introduction to Philosophy

PHIL 037 Symbolic Logic

Select one course from the History of Philosophy category:

PHIL 053 Ancient Greek & Roman Philosophy

PHIL 055 Modern and Contemporary Philosophy

Select at least one course from the Value Theory category:

PHIL 021 Moral Problems

PHIL 025 The Meaning of Life

PHIL 027 Fundamentals of Ethics

PHIL 035 Environmental Ethics

PHIL 044 Philosophy of Sex and Love

PHIL 106 Philosophy of Law

PHIL 126 Digital Well-Being

PHIL 127 Philosophy of Sport

PHIL 142 Business Ethics

PHIL 145 Biomedical Ethics

POLS 021 Introduction to Political Theory

POLS 130 Ancient to Medieval Political Theory

POLS 132 Modern to Contemporary Political Theory

Select at least one course from the Metaphysics and Epistemology category:

PHIL 015 Introduction to Cognitive Science

PHIL 061 Philosophy of Science

PHIL 079 Sensation and Perception

PHIL 124 God, Faith, and Reason

PSYC 017 Abnormal and Clinical Psychology

Select any other four courses from any category

Additional courses:

PHIL 089A Writing for The Pacifican

PHIL 187 Internship/Experiential Learning

PHIL 191 Independent Study

PHIL 193 Special Topics

PHIL 197 Undergraduate Research

Note: 1) 5 of the Philosophy courses must be completed at Pacific.

## Philosophy Courses

### PHIL 011. Introduction to Philosophy. 4 Units.

This course is an introduction to the fundamental questions and methods in philosophy. Through contemporary and historical readings, students will examine some of the most enduring questions in philosophy:

What are effective methods of critical thinking? What is the nature of knowledge? What is the relationship between the physical and the mental? Do we have free will? Does a divine being exist? What is the relationship between reason and religious faith? What are the origin and standards of morality? Is belief in God or religion necessary for morality? Is death bad? And what gives human life meaning? (GE2B, GEWE)

### PHIL 015. Introduction to Cognitive Science. 4 Units.

Cognitive science is an exciting cross-disciplinary field devoted to understanding how the mind works. It draws on research done in a wide variety of disciplines, including philosophy, psychology, artificial intelligence, linguistics, and neuroscience. This course examines some of the main assumptions, concepts, methods, applications, and limits of the cognitive scientific approach to the mind. Questions include: Is the mind a computer and, if so, what kind of computer? What are the prospects for genuine artificial intelligence? How is the mind organized? Does the mind have innate structures? Can we explain memory, action, perception, reasoning, and social cognition? What can the brain tell us about the mind, and what can we learn from damaged brains? How did minds evolve? To what extent does cognition depend on the body and the environment? (GE3C, GESO)

### PHIL 021. Moral Problems. 4 Units.

One of the goals of philosophy is to apply ethical theories and concepts to difficult and significant moral problems about which people can rationally disagree. Through primary philosophical writings, legal decisions, film and online class discussion, students will come to understand the nature and complexities of the significant moral problems, such as the moral standing of non-human beings, abortion, doctor-assisted suicide, the limits of free speech, illegal immigration, affirmative action, sexual morality, civil disobedience, and the distribution of wealth. The best philosophical arguments on the issues are examined so that each student can decide which positions are most rationally compelling. (GE2B, GEWE, PLAW)

### PHIL 025. The Meaning of Life. 4 Units.

This course is an exploration of one overall question - Do human lives have meaning? - and the answers provided by philosophers, both ancient and modern, across the world. Subsidiary questions include: Is meaning found in this life or in life after death? What makes a life meaningful - is it what we achieve, or the experiences we have, or our relationships, or something else? Is the meaning of life something we make for ourselves or is it provided by some other source, such as God?

### PHIL 027. Fundamentals of Ethics. 4 Units.

This course is an inquiry into the question "How should we lead our lives?" Each student is asked to reflect on her/his own moral commitments and how she/he makes morally difficult decisions, and then to consider whether there is any coherent, unifying system or procedure underlying this. The course then explores several of the most durable and influential philosophical approaches to moral decision making which include the strengths and weaknesses of each approach and how each might apply to various real-life situations. Additional issues might include: why we ought to take morality's demands seriously; whether moral judgments are mere opinions; and whether it is legitimate to criticize morally the practices of other cultures. (GE2B, GEWE, PLAW)

**PHIL 035. Environmental Ethics. 4 Units.**

This course considers various environmental problems and ethical approaches to them. Topics will include: humanity's place in nature, the relationship between the natural and the moral, the moral standing of nonhuman individuals and groups, and human responsibility in relation to the nonhuman. Students will engage multiple perspectives in philosophy, as well as conversation partners from other fields (e.g., religion, law, health sciences, history, literature, and film). (GE2B, GEWE)

**PHIL 037. Symbolic Logic. 4 Units.**

This course is an introduction to the basic concepts and methods employed in the analysis of arguments. The course begins with some of the basic concepts of logic, such as truth, probability, validity, soundness, proof, and consistency. Students learn how to translate arguments into symbolic languages (categorical, sentential, and predicate logics) and evaluate them using various formal techniques. Time may also be spent examining the notion of probability and the character of inductive inference, as well as detecting and explaining common fallacies. (GE3B, GEQR, PLAW)

**PHIL 041. Yoga Philosophy & Practice. 4 Units.**

This course will guide students through the philosophical tenets and practice of yoga. An essential aim of the philosophical system of yoga is to shift the view of self as separate and to realize the unitive state, the inherent interconnectedness with each other, and the responsibility towards individual and collective peace, happiness, and freedom. Students will be exposed to the language and root texts on yoga which emerged from the classical period of Indian history and that are foundational to the practice of yoga in contemporary society. Through engagement, deep reflection and application, students will have the rare opportunity to immerse themselves in the inspiring philosophy, rich history, study and practice of yoga. (GEWE)

**PHIL 044. Philosophy of Sex and Love. 4 Units.**

This course will consider philosophical perspectives on human sexuality and love. We will discuss what selected historic and contemporary thinkers say and engage in critical analysis. Course materials will include multiple perspectives in philosophy, as well as conversation partners from other fields (e.g., religion, law, health sciences, history, literature, and film). (GEWE)

**PHIL 053. Ancient Greek & Roman Philosophy. 4 Units.**

A survey of influential philosophers and philosophical traditions from the ancient Greek and Roman periods—pre-Socratics, Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Stoics, Epicureans and Sceptics. Some of the central questions of the course are the following: What is happiness and the best ways to achieve it? What is the difference between knowledge and opinion? What is the nature of things in the world? What is the nature of the mind or soul? What is the origin and nature of morality and justice? What is the best form of government? Does a divine being exist? Does the mind or soul survive death? (GE2B, GEWE)

**PHIL 055. Modern and Contemporary Philosophy. 4 Units.**

This course is a survey of some of the most significant philosophers and philosophical questions from the 16th century to the present day. Course topics include the source and limits of knowledge, the nature of the mind, the truth and value of religious beliefs, the origin and principles of ethics, and the nature of a just social and political order. Some of the philosophers studied include Descartes, Locke, Hume, Kant, Mill, James, Nietzsche, and Sartre. The course satisfies GE World Perspectives and Ethics. (GE2B, GEWE)

**PHIL 061. Philosophy of Science. 4 Units.**

Students examine the main philosophical issues regarding the nature and methods of science. Among the questions to be considered are: Can we clearly distinguish science and non-science? Is there such a thing as a scientific method? What counts as sufficient evidence for a scientific law? In what sense are new theories better than old ones? Is science converging on the ultimate truth about the natural world? What is it to say that electrons, black holes, or genes really exist? What are scientific explanations and how do they differ from descriptions and predictions? Examples are drawn from the natural and social sciences. No background in science is needed though science majors are especially welcome. (GE3C, GESO)

**PHIL 079. Sensation and Perception. 4 Units.**

This course is an introduction to human sensory systems and perception. Building upon a detailed analysis of visual processing, students explore through lecture, readings, demonstrations, case studies, and investigations how scientists research the various sensory systems and how they shape our experience of, and interaction with the world. This draws on diverse fields such as biology, physics, philosophy and art in addition to psychology. This course is open to all students. (GE3C, GESO)

**PHIL 087. Internship. 1-4 Units.****PHIL 089. Practicum. 1-4 Units.**

The practicum offers non-classroom experiences in activities related to the curriculum under conditions that is determined by the appropriate faculty member. Students may register for only one course listed below in any semester and may receive no more than four units of credit for any of these courses. Pass/no credit is the only grading.

**PHIL 106. Philosophy of Law. 4 Units.**

This course is an analysis of the nature and function of law. More specific topics in the course might include: the idea of law as an instrument of social control; whether democratically decided laws can ever be illegitimate; the extent to which we are obligated to obey the law; the justification for punishment, and its permissible forms; the relationship between law, morality, and justice; the appropriate role of legislators, lawyers, and judges; and the role of interpretation, coherence, and precedent in judicial reasoning. Readings draw from legal and political philosophy, social sciences, and judicial opinions. Not recommended for first-year students. (PLAW)

**PHIL 124. God, Faith, and Reason. 4 Units.**

Students examine various fundamental questions in the philosophy of religion, such as the following: What is the nature of religion? Does God exist? What are its attributes? What is the relationship between faith and reason? Do science and religion make competing claims? Does the existence of evil in the world show that God is either not all-powerful or not wholly good? Do we ever have reason to believe in miracles? Do we have souls that survive our bodily death? Does the very existence of morality depend on God? What are the philosophical implications of religious diversity? (GE2B, GEWE)

**PHIL 126. Digital Well-Being. 4 Units.**

In the last two decades, our use of information technology has expanded dramatically while changing fundamental aspects of our daily lives. In this course, we will investigate ethical questions that arise due to these changes. We will begin by considering classical 20th century texts on the philosophy of technology, texts that identify ways in which technology can undermine our possibilities for living authentic and fulfilling lives. In the second part of the course, we will focus on new forms of information technology. We will cover ethical questions arising with technological developments such as social media, virtual reality, file sharing, MMORPGs, and artificial intelligence. We will also consider the claim that we are very likely living in a computer simulation. Some general questions that we will consider are as follows: How should we use information technology? How might technology alter our minds? What, if anything, would be an ethical strategy for technological innovation? What would it mean to use technology in a virtuous way? (GEWE)

**PHIL 127. Philosophy of Sport. 4 Units.**

Sporting activity raises various kinds of philosophical questions: What defines a "sport"? What should be the purpose of sports? Do sports develop moral character? What is cheating in sports? What is sportsmanship? What is performance enhancement and what is wrong with it? Should violent sports be banned? Are university sports compatible with a university's mission? Are students-athletes exploited? What is the role of sports in a meaningful life? The philosophy of sport analyzes these and other philosophical questions that arise in sports and that have practical applications for athletes, coaches, sports organizations, fans, and society at large. (GE2B, GEWE)

**PHIL 142. Business Ethics. 4 Units.**

This course critically examines some of the social, ethical, economic, and religious foundations of business activity, and considers some of the contemporary problems with, and possibilities for, business practice. Course topics may include: an historical analysis of the rise of capitalism; religious views of economics and responses to capitalism; the role of business in the larger society; the relationship between the individual and the organization; and prospects for human community in a capitalist system. (GE2B, GEWE)

**PHIL 145. Biomedical Ethics. 4 Units.**

Students examine the ethical theories, principles, and concepts that justify decisions in health care and medical science. Topics covered may include: physician-assisted suicide, termination or refusal of life-sustaining treatment, abortion, reproductive technologies such as cloning, in vitro fertilization, and surrogacy, the allocation of scarce medical resources (including transplant organs) genetic manipulation, and experimentation on humans and animals. Not recommended for first-year students. (GE2B, GEWE)

**PHIL 181. Metaphysics and Epistemology. 4 Units.**

Metaphysics and epistemology are the two main areas of theoretical philosophy. Metaphysics refers to the study of the fundamental nature of the whole of reality. Epistemology refers to the study of knowledge itself. This course will cover some of the main topics in these two sub-disciplines from the perspective of the Western philosophical tradition. We will begin by considering the philosophical systems of highly influential historical thinkers, such as Aristotle and Immanuel Kant. In the second half of the course, we will turn mostly to recent and contemporary work in analytic metaphysics and epistemology. Typical topics in metaphysics include: the existence (or not) of immaterial entities, material constitution, and identity. In epistemology, typical topics are as follows: a priori knowledge, skepticism, the justification of knowledge, and self-knowledge. Prerequisites: One course in philosophy or instructor approval.

**PHIL 187. Internship/Experiential Learning. 1-4 Units.**

Permission of the instructor. This class may be used to reflect philosophically on one's employment, internship or practicum experiences. Students interested in sustained reflection on their professional or pre-professional experiences should meet with the faculty member with whom they would like to work before the term in which they plan to do the reflection. The reflection plan should focus on a particular philosophical issue, and include regular written reflection, research in the relevant philosophical literature, and result in a work product to be shared with other philosophy majors and minors. Proposals and Individualized Study Requests are due before the end of the semester before the term the reflection is planned.

**PHIL 189. Practicum. 1-4 Units.**

The practicum offers non-classroom experiences in activities related to the curriculum under conditions that is determined by the appropriate faculty member. Students may register for only one course listed below in any semester and may receive no more than four units of credit for any of these courses. Pass/no credit is the only grading.

**PHIL 191. Independent Study. 1-4 Units.**

Permission of the instructor. The department welcomes proposals from students for single-term individual study projects. These courses are designed to allow students to pursue topics not covered in currently offered courses. Students interested in pursuing an individual study should meet with the faculty member with whom they would like to work before the term in which they plan to do the independent study. The precise requirements of the independent study in any individual case will be determined by the instructor in consultation with the student.

**PHIL 193. Special Topics. 4 Units.**

The department welcomes proposals from groups of students for single-term courses on topics not covered in currently offered courses. Students interested in pursuing the study of a topic or figure in the history of philosophy should meet with the faculty member with whom they would like to work before the term in which they plan to do the course. The precise requirements of the course in any individual case will be determined by the instructor.

**PHIL 197. Senior Project: Undergraduate Research. 2 Units.**

Permission of the department. The department invites students who have demonstrated strengths in philosophy to pursue a senior thesis under the guidance of one or more faculty members. Questions addressed might include: Which moral principles should guide stem-cell research? Are there any universal human rights? Can we reliably know our own intentions? Are political conflicts moral disagreements? Are there different ways of believing a claim is true? Applications due April 1 of a student's Junior year.