

# PHILOSOPHY

**Director of undergraduate studies:** Daniel Greco (daniel.greco@yale.edu);  
(daniel.greco@yale.edu)philosophy.yale.edu

The Philosophy major prepares students to reflect critically and creatively on questions concerning the nature of things, the scope and limits of human understanding, and the principles of value and right action. The aim of the major is to address these questions wherever they arise, whether in the philosophical tradition, in other disciplines and practices, or in everyday life. Our courses are designed to encourage depth in thinking, rigor in argument, clarity in writing and speaking, and the widest possible view of whatever subject matter we take up.

## COURSES FOR NONMAJORS AND MAJORS

Introductory philosophy courses, numbered 001–099 are First-Year Seminars and are only open to first-year students. They have no prerequisites. Courses numbered 100–199 are open to all students and have no prerequisites.

## COURSE NUMBERING

Courses numbered 001–199 are introductory and have no prerequisites. Courses numbered 200–299 are intermediate. Some have prerequisites; others do not, and may be taken as a student's first course in philosophy, though such a student should consult the instructor first. In general, it is a good idea to take a broadly based course in any area of philosophy before taking a specialized course. Courses numbered 300–499 are advanced, and are taught as limited enrollment seminars. These courses are intended primarily for juniors and seniors, though other students may be admitted with the instructor's permission. Undergraduates should be sure they have enough background to take such a course, including previous work in the same area of philosophy.

## PREREQUISITES

Prerequisite to the standard major are two introductory or intermediate philosophy courses. Prerequisite to the concentration in psychology are two introductory or intermediate courses in philosophy or psychology.

## REQUIREMENTS OF THE MAJOR

The Philosophy curriculum is divided into three broad groups: history of philosophy; metaphysics and epistemology; and ethics and value theory. The group in which a course belongs is indicated in Yale Course Search (YCS). This information is found in the "course information" section of each course listing. Students can also search for courses satisfying a given group requirement in YCS by clicking the drop-down menu titled, "Any Course Information Attribute." Students have the following choices: YC Phil: Ethics & Value Theory, YC Phil: History of Philosophy, YC Phil: Metaphysics & Epistemology, as well as YC Phil: Logic and YC Phil: Intersectn PSYC/PHIL.

The standard major requires twelve term courses (including the prerequisites and the senior requirement) that collectively expose students to a wide range of philosophy and philosophers. In history of philosophy, majors are required to take (1) either PHIL 125 and 126 or both terms of Directed Studies (DRST 003, 004), and (2) an additional, third course in history of philosophy. Majors are encouraged to take PHIL 125 and

126 as early as possible; these courses may be taken in either order. Majors must also complete two courses in metaphysics and epistemology, two courses in ethics and value theory, and a course in logic (such as PHIL 115), the last preferably by the fall of their junior year. Majors must also take two advanced seminars at the 300+ level (either or both of which can be counted toward one of the group requirements) and satisfy the senior requirement as described below.

All courses in Philosophy count toward the twelve-course requirement. With approval from the director of undergraduate studies (DUS), courses offered by other departments may be counted toward the major requirements, though no more than two such courses will normally be allowed.

Specific regulations for the group requirements are as follows:

1. Some introductory courses do not count toward any group requirement.
2. Courses automatically count toward the group under which they are listed in Yale Course Search (YCS). In rare cases, a course will be designated as counting toward a second group, although no one course can be counted toward two group requirements. Students may petition to have a course count toward a group other than the one under which it is listed, though the presumption will be against such petitions.
3. Courses taken in other departments and applied to the major will not normally count toward a group requirement. Students may petition for credit toward a group requirement, though the presumption will be against such petitions.

**The psychology concentration** The psychology concentration is designed for students interested in both philosophy and psychology. Majors in the concentration must take seven courses in philosophy and five in psychology, for a total of twelve, including the prerequisites and senior requirement. The seven philosophy courses must include (1) two courses in the history of philosophy, usually PHIL 125 and 126 or DRST 003 and 004, (2) a course in logic, such as PHIL 115, preferably by the fall of the junior year, (3) two seminars, one of which may be in the Psychology department, with the approval of the DUS, and (4) at least two courses at the intermediate or advanced level that bear on the intersection of philosophy and psychology, at least one of which must be a philosophy seminar. Courses satisfying (4) must be approved by the DUS. The five psychology courses must include PSYC 110 or its equivalent. Each major must also satisfy the senior requirement as described below.

**Credit/D/Fail** At most one class taken Credit/D/Fail can count towards the philosophy major. Courses taken Credit/D/Fail cannot fulfill any specific distribution requirements within the major—they cannot fulfill the area requirements, or the seminar requirement, or the senior requirement, or (on the psychology track) the intersection requirement. But if all those requirements are fulfilled with classes taken for a letter grade, then one of the remaining 12 total credits may be fulfilled with a class taken Credit/D/Fail.

## SENIOR REQUIREMENT

The senior requirement is normally satisfied by completing a third philosophy seminar. Students taking a seminar to satisfy the senior requirement are expected to produce work superior in argument and articulation to that of a standard seminar paper. To

this end, students taking a seminar for the senior requirement must satisfy additional requirements, which may include (1) additional readings, (2) submission of a complete draft of the final paper by the eighth week of the term that will then be significantly revised, and (3) one-on-one or small-group meetings with the instructor to discuss class material, the additional readings, and drafts in preparation. The specific nature of these additional requirements will vary from seminar to seminar. Students planning to satisfy the requirement with a third seminar should express that intention to the instructor at the beginning of the term, so the instructor can explain the work that will be required.

In special cases, students may meet the senior requirement through either a one-term or a two-term independent project supervised by an instructor (PHIL 490, 491). Students must petition to fulfill the senior requirement through an independent project, and approval is not guaranteed. Applicants must submit a proposal to the DUS, in consultation with an appropriate supervisor, by the end of the term prior to beginning the independent study.

#### ADVISING

By default, advising in the philosophy department is done by the DUS. Juniors have the option of selecting an alternative adviser – which should be done by the first of October in the junior year – but all seniors are advised by the DUS. The adviser aids students in choosing courses.

**Other majors involving philosophy** Majors in Mathematics and Philosophy and in Physics and Philosophy are also available. Students interested in philosophy and psychology should also consider the major in Cognitive Science.

#### SUMMARY OF MAJOR REQUIREMENTS

**Prerequisites** *Standard major* – 2 intro or intermediate phil courses; *Psychology concentration* – any 2 courses in phil or psych

**Number of courses** 12 term courses, incl prereqs and senior req

**Specific courses required** *Standard major* – PHIL 125 and 126, or DRST 003 and 004; *Psychology concentration* – PSYC 110 or equivalent

**Distribution of courses** *Standard major* – 3 courses in hist of phil (incl PHIL 125 and 126, or DRST 003 and 004), 2 in metaphysics and epistemology, 2 in ethics and value theory, and 1 in logic; 2 phil sems at 300+ level; *Psychology concentration* – 7 courses in phil, as specified; 5 courses in psych (incl PSYC 110)

**Substitution permitted** *Standard major* – 2 related courses in other depts, with DUS permission

**Senior requirement** a third sem in phil, or a one- or two-term independent project (PHIL 490, 491)

Philosophy attempts to find highly disciplined, rational ways of dealing with some of the deepest and most difficult issues in human thought and practice – for example, the nature of mind, the possibility or impossibility of knowledge, and fundamental principles of right and wrong. Philosophy thrives on disagreement; even within the Western tradition, no single approach is universally accepted.

Courses numbered 001–199 are introductory and have no prerequisites. Intermediate courses are numbered from 200 to 299; some have prerequisites, while others do not. Students should consult the instructor before taking an intermediate course as their first venture into philosophy. It is a good idea to take a general course in an area of philosophy before taking a specialized one.

One requirement for the major in Philosophy is a two-term introductory sequence in the history of philosophy. Either DRST 003 and DRST 004 (see Directed Studies) or PHIL 125 and PHIL 126 satisfies the requirement. The PHIL 125, PHIL 126 sequence need not be taken in the first year, though it is strongly recommended that the requirement be completed before the end of sophomore year.

The Department of Philosophy offers a wide range of introductory courses.

- PHIL 022 Philosophy of Masculinities
- PHIL 115 First-Order Logic
- PHIL 125 Introduction to Ancient Philosophy
- PHIL 126 Introduction to Modern Philosophy from Descartes to Kant
- PHIL 128 Philosophy, Gender, and Patriarchy
- PHIL 130 Philosophy of Education
- PHIL 175 Introduction to Ethics
- PHIL 178 Introduction to Political Philosophy
- PHIL 179 Life
- PHIL 182 Perspectives on Human Nature

#### FACULTY OF THE DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY

**Professors** David Charles, Stephen Darwall, Michael Della Rocca, Keith DeRose, Paul Franks, Tamar Gendler, Verity Harte, Brad Inwood, Shelly Kagan, Joshua Knobe, LA Paul, Thomas Pogge, Scott Shapiro, Sun-Joo Shin, Steven Smith, Jason Stanley, Zoltán Szabó, Kenneth Winkler, Gideon Yaffe

**Associate Professors** Daniel Greco, Jacob McNulty, John Pittard

**Assistant Professors** Robin Dembroff, Lily Hu

View Courses