

PHILOSOPHY

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www.mcla.edu/phil/ (<https://www.mcla.edu/phil/>)

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Philosophy Major

The Department of English and Philosophy offers a four-year program leading to a Bachelor of Arts in Philosophy. Through reading, discussing, and writing about philosophical topics of perennial concern, the program invites and prepares students to bring a constructively critical attitude to every aspect of their lives. The intellectual skills and dispositions associated with the concentrated study of philosophy can enrich our students' daily experience and complement any career.

Those graduating with a major in Philosophy will be able to:

- Critically reflect on their own most basic assumptions;
- Become familiar with and competent in several areas of the discipline, including ethics, theories of knowledge and being, aesthetics, logic, and social-political thought;
- Write in a literate, clear, and interesting manner;
- Read actively and fruitfully various sorts of philosophical texts;
- Understand and apply the formal structures of sound reasoning and good argumentation; and
- Engage in respectful and productive conversation and collaborative thinking.

Philosophy Programs

- Philosophy - Law, Ethics, and Society Concentration, B.A. (<https://catalog.mcla.edu/undergraduate/academic-programs-study/philosophy/philosophy-law-ethics-society-concentration-ba/>)
- Philosophy Minor (<https://catalog.mcla.edu/undergraduate/academic-programs-study/philosophy/philosophy-minor/>)
- Philosophy, B.A. (<https://catalog.mcla.edu/undergraduate/academic-programs-study/philosophy/philosophy-ba/>)

Philosophy Courses

PHIL 100 A First Course in Philosophy

3 cr

Engages students in the critical investigation and reflective analysis of such fundamental philosophical questions as freedom and moral responsibility, the nature of being and knowledge, the existence of God and the problem of evil, and individual rights and social justice. Emphasizes the relevance that philosophy has to contemporary problems and encourages students to think, read, write, and speak critically and thoughtfully.

Attributes: Core Human Heritage (CHH)

PHIL 120 Art and Philosophy

3 cr

Adopts a philosophical approach to the experience, understanding and critical assessment of the products and processes of the creative arts. Our inquiries will center on two traditional questions of aesthetic theory: What is art? What is art's special value? This course will be more theoretical than hands-on, though direct, continued experience in the various creative arts will be encouraged and figure prominently in most discussions and assignments.

Attributes: Core Creative Arts (CCA)

PHIL 120H Honors: Art and Philosophy

3 cr

Adopts a philosophical approach to the experience, understanding and critical assessment of the products and processes of the creative arts. Our inquiries will center on two traditional questions of aesthetic theory. What is art? What is art's special value? This course will be more theoretical than hands-on, though direct, continued experience in the various creative arts will be encouraged and figure prominently in most discussions and assignments.

Attributes: Core Creative Arts (CCA), Honors Program (HONR)

PHIL 200 Logic and Critical Reasoning

3 cr

Examines and applies the principles of cogent, sound or critical reasoning and writing, leading to a deeper understanding of language and of the use of logical argumentation. Considers, in the context of real life arguments and claims, (in the rhetoric of philosophy, history and other disciplines) formal and informal principles of clear and systematic thinking and writing.

Attributes: Core Human Heritage (CHH)

PHIL 200H Honors: Logic and Critical Reasoning

3 cr

Examines and applies principles of cogent, sound or critical reasoning and writing, leading to a deeper understanding of language and of the use of logical argumentation. Considers, in the context of real-life arguments and claims (in the rhetoric of philosophy, history, and other disciplines) formal and informal principles of clear and systematic thinking and writing.

Attributes: Core Human Heritage (CHH), Honors Program (HONR)

PHIL 240 Ancient Philosophy

3 cr

Explores the ancient roots of western intellectual history, including contributions of non-European societies, in the context of the politics, economics, language, religion and technology of their times. Students will apply philosophical and historical tools to investigate the development of important ideas and schools of thought in the ancient world and the consequences of those ideas in the present.

Prerequisite: PHIL 100

PHIL 242 Modern Philosophy

3 cr

Explores the roots of western intellectual history since the European Renaissance, including the politics, economics, language, religion and technology in which they arose. Students will apply philosophical and historical tools to investigate the development of important ideas and schools of thought in the modern world and their consequences in the present.

Prerequisite: PHIL 100

<p>PHIL 285 Special Topics in Philosophy 3 cr</p> <p>Challenges students at the sophomore level to understand, construct and criticize both informal (natural language) and formal (categorical and propositional) arguments. The course considers in detail the very notion of argument, argument structure and the criteria for constructing cogent arguments, and distinguishes arguments supported by evidence and reason from mere opinion and belief. Students will learn to apply these logical concepts in their writing, conversing and reading.</p> <p>Prerequisite: PHIL 100, sophomore status</p> <p>Repeatable: Unlimited Credits</p>	<p>PHIL 375H Honors: Ethics and Animals 3 cr</p> <p>Explores the potentially morally significant relationships between humans and various kinds of non-human animals. Explores moral propositions that we, as a society, subscribe to, to see whether they have unacknowledged implications for non-humans.</p> <p>Prerequisite: Junior/senior status</p> <p>Attributes: Honors Program (HONR)</p>
<p>PHIL 300 Epistemology and Metaphysics 3 cr</p> <p>Considers the origins, nature and presuppositions of knowledge, as well as its relation to such concepts as belief, fact, truth, justification and reality. Examines various accounts of the most general features of reality, using categories such as being/becoming, real/apparent, identity/difference, existence, change, time, space and causality.</p> <p>Prerequisite: A 100-level and a 200-level philosophy course</p>	<p>PHIL 385 Special Topics in Philosophy 3 cr</p> <p>Challenges students at the junior level, to understand, construct, and criticize both informal (natural language) and formal (categorical and propositional) arguments. The course considers in detail the very notion of argument, argument structure, and the criteria for constructing cogent arguments, and distinguishes arguments supported by evidence and reason from mere opinion and belief. Students will learn to apply these logical concepts in their writing, conversing, and reading.</p> <p>Prerequisite: A 100-level or 200-level philosophy course, junior status</p> <p>Repeatable: Unlimited Credits</p>
<p>PHIL 322 Business Ethics 3 cr</p> <p>Examines the values of a business society and the ethical dimensions of decision-making in business, with the aim of enabling the student to develop a meaningful set of values by which to live and contribute creatively in a business society.</p> <p>Prerequisite: A 100-level and a 200-level philosophy course</p> <p>Attributes: Cross-Cultural and Social Justice (CCSJ), Leadership Minor (LDRS)</p>	<p>PHIL 400 Contemporary Legal Philosophy 3 cr</p> <p>Examines the nature of law, the logic and sociology of judicial processes and the relationship of law to morality, including a comparison of major legal theories: natural law, legal positivism, legal realism and Marxist legal analysis.</p> <p>Prerequisite: A 100-level and a 200-level philosophy course</p>
<p>PHIL 325 Environmental Ethics 3 cr</p> <p>Addresses recent and historical perspective on the nature and scope of human moral obligations to the natural environment. Discusses the content and merits of competing ethical theories and their implications for both intra-human affairs and our place in nature as one of its creatures.</p> <p>Prerequisite: A 100-level and a 200-level philosophy course</p> <p>Attributes: Cross-Cultural and Social Justice (CCSJ), Environmental Studies (ENVI)</p>	<p>PHIL 410 Constructing Reality 3 cr</p> <p>Focusing on the increasingly popular notion that human beings, individually or corporately, actively construct, in part or in whole, the world. This notion transcends disciplinary boundaries, finding expression in such diverse fields as biology, philosophy, psychology, physics, anthropology, sociology, mathematics, theology, literary theory, cybernetics and linguistics.</p> <p>Prerequisite: A 100 or 200 level philosophy course</p>
<p>PHIL 335 Philosophy of Education 3 cr</p> <p>Seeing education as the principal means to full personhood raises important questions about autonomy, authority, creativity, and knowledge. This course will examine various philosophical perspectives on these questions and their implications for classroom practice.</p> <p>Prerequisite: A 100-level and a 200-level philosophy course</p>	<p>PHIL 410H Honors: Constructing Reality 3 cr</p> <p>Focusing on the increasingly popular notion that human beings, individually or corporately, actively construct, in part or in whole, the world. This notion transcends disciplinary boundaries, finding expression in such diverse fields as biology, philosophy, psychology, physics, anthropology, sociology, mathematics, theology, literary theory, cybernetics and linguistics.</p> <p>Prerequisite: A 100 or 200 level philosophy course</p> <p>Attributes: Honors Program (HONR)</p>
<p>PHIL 350 Contemporary Moral Issues 3 cr</p> <p>Views such issues as war and peace, world poverty, sexual morality and spirituality from the perspectives of traditional and contemporary ethical theories.</p> <p>Prerequisite: A 100-level and a 200-level philosophy course</p> <p>Attributes: Cross-Cultural and Social Justice (CCSJ)</p>	<p>PHIL 485 Special Topics in Philosophy 3 cr</p> <p>A philosophical topics course tailored to changing student needs and interests, each offering focuses on a period in the history of philosophy (e.g. Greek philosophy, medieval philosophy, 20th century American philosophy, etc.), the works of an individual philosopher (e.g., Plato, Hegel, Hume, Kant, Descartes, etc.), or the critical examination of a philosophically challenging concept (e.g., freedom, value, meaning, truth, relativism, rights, justice, etc.)</p> <p>Prerequisite: A 100 level and 200 level philosophy course</p> <p>Repeatable: Unlimited Credits</p>
<p>PHIL 360 Social and Political Philosophy 3 cr</p> <p>Investigates conceptual and moral questions posed by life in community with others. These include justifications of democracy, political freedom, natural rights, political obligation, social justice and the challenge of anarchism.</p> <p>Prerequisite: A 100-level and a 200-level philosophy course</p> <p>Attributes: Cross-Cultural and Social Justice (CCSJ)</p>	<p>PHIL 495 Teaching Assistantship in Philosophy 3 cr</p> <p>Provides assistance to philosophy majors who intend to pursue active teaching careers in the discipline. Students will be assigned to a department member to assist in the teaching of lower-level courses.</p> <p>Prerequisite: Minimum of 18 semester hours in philosophy and department approval</p> <p>Repeatable: Maximum of 6 credits</p>
<p>PHIL 375 Ethics and Animals 3 cr</p> <p>Explores the potentially morally significant relationships between humans and various kinds of non-human animals, applying moral propositions that we, as a society, subscribe to, to see whether they have unacknowledged implications for non-humans.</p> <p>Prerequisite: Junior/senior status</p>	

PHIL 500 Directed Independent Study 1-3 cr

Open to juniors and seniors who wish to read in a given area or to study a topic in depth. Written reports and frequent conferences with the advisor are required.

Prerequisite: A 100-level and a 200-level philosophy course, junior/senior status, department approval

Attributes: Honors Program (HONR)

Repeatable: Maximum of 12 credits

PHIL 540 Philosophy Internship 3-9 cr

Philosophy is applicable to a wide range of professions and activities (e.g. law, business, education, public service). The philosophy internship is designed to allow advanced students with a particular focus or career goal to design and pursue such applications with faculty supervision including a significant component of writing about their experiences. Up to 9 credits per semester, three of which may apply to minimum major requirements.

Prerequisite: Senior status and department approval

Repeatable: Maximum of 15 credits

PHILOSOPHY: TEACHER LICENSURE

Students majoring in philosophy may choose to pursue initial teacher licensure as an early childhood teacher or elementary teacher. These students will complete the philosophy major, education major and a licensure program in education.