PHILOSOPHY

Undergraduate Program Information

A major in philosophy serves not only as preparation for further graduate study in philosophy but also as an area of concentration in a liberal arts program. A philosophy major is appropriate for students planning to attend medical school as well as for those students interested in a career that requires critical reading and argument analysis. Such careers include business, theology and above all, law. For students who are especially interested in careers in law, politics, or public policy, the Department also offers a major in Justice, Political Philosophy, and Law.

While the course requirements for these majors should meet the ends of the liberal arts student, those students interested in graduate study in philosophy or in a career in law are encouraged to seek advice from a faculty advisor as early in their career as possible.

A minor program in philosophy requiring 18 hours of course work is also offered as well as a minor in Ethics and a minor in Justice, Political Philosophy, and Law. For more information visit the Department of Philosophy’s web page at philos.nmsu.edu.

Degrees for the Department

Philosophy - Bachelor of Arts
Justice, Political Philosophy and Law - Bachelor of Arts

Minors for the Department

Ethics - Undergraduate Minor
Justice, Political Philosophy and Law - Undergraduate Minor

Philosophy - Undergraduate Minor

Timothy Cleveland, Department Head

Professors: Cleveland, Walker; Associate Professors: Keleher, Vessel; Assistant Professor: Klockseim; College Professor: Noonan

Philosophy Courses

PHIL 1115G. Introduction to Philosophy
3 Credits (3)
In this course, students will be introduced to some of the key questions of philosophy through the study of classical and contemporary thinkers. Some of the questions students might consider are: Do we have free will? What is knowledge? What is the mind? What are our moral obligations to others? Students will engage with and learn to critically assess various philosophical approaches to such questions.

PHIL 1120G. Logic, Reasoning, & Critical Thinking
3 Credits (3)
The purpose of this course is to teach students how to analyze, critique, and construct arguments. The course includes an introductory survey of important logical concepts and tools needed for argument analysis. These concepts and tools will be used to examine select philosophical and scholarly texts.

PHIL 1140G. Quest for God
3 Credits (3)
An effort to understand the religious life; a consideration of some of the traditional approaches to God and what it means to be religious.

PHIL 1145G. Philosophy, Law, and Ethics
3 Credits (3)
An introduction to practical problems in moral, social, political, and legal philosophy. Topics to be discussed may include ecology, animal rights, pornography, hate speech on campus, same-sex marriage, justice, abortion, terrorism, treatment of illegal immigrants, and New Mexican Aboriginal Peoples’ land claims.

PHIL 1155G. Philosophy of Music
3 Credits (3)
This is an introductory course in the philosophy of music. This course will survey three questions: What is music? Why is music important? How can we distinguish good music from bad music? We will draw examples from a wide variety of musical genres, from classical music, jazz and blues to punk and rap. Students will be encouraged to apply philosophical theorizing to think about their preferred musical form.

PHIL 2110G. Introduction to Ethics
3 Credits (3)
This course introduces students to the philosophical study of morality and will explore questions concerning our human obligations to others and related issues. Students may be asked to relate various approaches to ethics to present-day ethical debates and their own lives.

PHIL 2230G. Philosophical Thought
3 Credits (3)
In this course, students will grapple with some of the key questions of philosophy through the study of classical and contemporary thinkers. Students will become familiar with the perennial problems in subfields of philosophy such as metaphysics, epistemology, ethics, and aesthetics. They will learn to approach these problems both critically and sympathetically.

PHIL 305. Philosophy and Literature
3 Credits (3)
Examination of philosophical ideas as presented in selected literary works and literary criticism.

PHIL 306. Philosophy Through Film
3 Credits (3)
An exploration of a range of philosophical issues through the use of film. Topics include personal identity and memory, faith and the problem of evil, free will and moral responsibility, and the meaning of life. Films may include The Prestige, Memento, The Third Man, A Clockwork Orange, Fight Club, and Synecdoche, New York.

PHIL 312. Formal Logic
3 Credits (3)
Introduction to symbolic logic and its application in the analysis of arguments in scientific and ordinary discourse.

PHIL 313. Inductive Logic and Probability
3 Credits (3)
A formal introduction to the methods and problems of inductive reasoning and the concept of evidence. The relationship between inductive reasoning and probability calculus will be explored, with an emphasis on the various interpretations of probability theory.

PHIL 315. Philosophy of Language
3 Credits (3)
A critical examination of philosophical inquiries into the syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic dimensions of language.
PHIL 316. Philosophy of Mathematics
3 Credits (3)
Survey of traditional philosophical problems and views concerning the nature of mathematics including such questions as: What is the nature of mathematical knowledge? What is mathematical truth? What is a number? What is proof? What is the relationship between logic and mathematics?

PHIL 320. Social and Political Philosophy
3 Credits (3)
This course critically examines such fundamental concepts as liberty, equality and human rights.

PHIL 321. Biomedical Ethics
3 Credits (3)
Examines ethical dimensions of such issues as abortion, euthanasia, and physician-assisted suicide; informed consent as a condition of treating patients and experimenting on subjects; genetic engineering; and alternative reproductive methods, including surrogate motherhood. Also considers what implications moral theories have for these issues.

PHIL 322. Environmental Ethics
3 Credits (3)
Explores the ethical and topical issues raised by mining and grazing, air and water pollution, factory farming, global warming, and treatment of animals. It also studies some recent ecological movements such as ecofeminism, social ecology, and deep ecology.

PHIL 323V. Engineering Ethics
3 Credits (3)
The moral legal responsibilities of engineers to clients, employers, the public, and the environment. Topics include criteria for judging when risk is acceptable, the duty to safeguard public health and welfare, conflicts of interest, and whistle-blowing.
Prerequisite: Junior standing or higher.

PHIL 328. Applied Ethics
3 Credits (3)
Examines the implications of utilitarianism, Kantian ethics, natural law theory, and other moral theories for controversial moral issues such as the death penalty, euthanasia, abortion, genetic engineering, gay marriage, affirmative action, and pornography.

PHIL 331. Philosophy of Religion
3 Credits (3)
The nature, fundamental concepts, and problems of religion. Emphasis on the significance of religion for creative and practical value.

PHIL 332. Ethics and Global Poverty
3 Credits (3)
Philosophical scrutiny of and moral reflection on various aspects of global poverty and foreign aid. For example: Is poverty fundamentally a lack of income, or can it be understood as a failure to meet basic needs, or as a lack of valuable freedom? Do human rights exist? What, if any, are the moral obligations of rich countries to poor countries? Can foreign aid be immoral? How should the answers to these questions influence public policy? Restricted to: Main campus only.

PHIL 341. Ancient Philosophy
3 Credits (3)
Introduction to the philosophies of the pre-Socratics, Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, with brief discussion of the Epicureans and Stoics.

PHIL 344. Modern Philosophy
3 Credits (3)
Foundations of contemporary thought: introduction to the philosophies of Descartes, Bacon, Spinoza, Leibniz, Locke, Berkeley, Hume, Kant, and Hegel.

PHIL 346. Philosophy of Mind
3 Credits (3)
Examination of some of the most influential accounts of the mind, focusing on such issues as the relation between the mind and the body, mental causation and consciousness.

PHIL 350. Epistemology
3 Credits (3)
Introduction to epistemology. The philosophical critique of alleged ways of knowing. An examination of the nature of truth.

PHIL 351. Philosophy of Science
3 Credits (3)
Philosophical examination of the methodology of science. The logical, metaphysical, epistemological, and ethical critique of science and its impact on human affairs.

PHIL 356. Special Topics
3 Credits (3)
Specific subjects announced in the Schedule of Classes. May be repeated for a maximum of 9 credits.

PHIL 357. Independent Studies
1-3 Credits
For students with some background in philosophy. Independent work in a specific area. May be repeated for a maximum of 6 credits.
Prerequisite: consent of instructor.

PHIL 373. Ethical Theory
3 Credits (3)
The critical examination of the justification of ethical theories with particular attention to the language of moral discourse.

PHIL 376. Philosophy of Law
3 Credits (3)
Ethical, logical, and epistemological implications of law, together with an analysis of the rhetoric of legal practice.

PHIL 380. Metaphysics
3 Credits (3)
Introduction to metaphysics: a treatment of such issues as the meaning of existence, the mind-body problem, the problem of universals, and free will versus determinism.

PHIL 385. Human Nature and the Good Life
3 Credits (3)
An examination of some of the most historically and philosophically influential conceptions of human nature and corresponding accounts of the good life.

PHIL 397. Existentialism
3 Credits (3)
The origins of existentialist thought in philosophy and literature, including the thought of Nietzsche, Kierkegaard, Dostoyevsky, Camus, and Sartre. The course covers topics in ethics and political philosophy, metaphysics, philosophical psychology, philosophy of religion, and other sub-disciplines of philosophy.
PHIL 413. Modal Logic
3 Credits (3)
A formal introduction to the logic of necessity, possibility, and impossibility: the syntactic and semantic aspects of the formal modal systems T, S4, S5, as well as their philosophical implications.

PHIL 448. Writing Philosophy
3 Credits (3)
A workshop on writing philosophy papers. Includes how to read and understand philosophical writing, organize a paper effectively, present a clear and forceful argument, and avoid common mistakes.
Prerequisite(s): completed 18 hours of philosophy credit.

PHIL 463. Independent Studies
1-3 Credits
For students with a strong background in philosophy. Independent work in a specific area. May be repeated for a maximum of 6 credits.
Prerequisite: consent of instructor.

PHIL 505. Advanced Studies in Philosophy and Literature
3 Credits (3)
Examination of philosophical issues (e.g. personal identity, free will, moral dilemmas, the meaning of life) as presented in selected literary works and literary criticism. Consent of Instructor required.

PHIL 532. Advance Studies in Ethics and Global Poverty
3 Credits (3)
Advanced philosophical scrutiny of and moral reflection on various aspects of global poverty and foreign aid. For example: Is poverty fundamentally a lack of income, or can it be understood as a failure to meet basic needs, or as a lack of valuable freedom? Do human rights exist? What, if any, are the moral obligations of rich countries to poor countries? Can foreign aid be immoral? How should the answers to these questions influence public policy? Restricted to: Main campus only.

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