PHILOSOPHY

The study of Philosophy is an attempt to understand the world in as unified and general a way as possible. Philosophers want to know what there is, how it works, how we know, how we should live, what is good, what is immoral, whether or not there is a God, and many other things—and, especially, how all these things fit together. One reason the study of philosophy is useful is that the methodology of philosophy—careful reasoning, precise application of logic, and thorough analysis of concepts—is applicable to any subject matter whatsoever.

The Philosophy major may be earned in one of three ways: (1) the traditional major with requirements covering the core areas of the discipline—metaphysics, theory of knowledge, ethical theory, and history of philosophy, (2) the major with a concentration in the Philosophy of Brain and Mind, particularly suited to students with interests in subjects like psychology, neuroscience, cognition, or artificial intelligence, and (3) the major with a concentration in Ethics, Law, and Social/Political philosophy, particularly suited to students with interests in these areas, some of whom intend to earn advanced degrees in Law, Criminal Justice, Sustainability, or other related fields. The Philosophy minor offers options for electives suited to nearly any companion major. The interdisciplinary Ethics minor enhances and complements most other degrees.

Other Information

All coursework taken for the Philosophy major or minor must be completed with a grade of "C-" or better.

Residency Requirement

A maximum of three credit hours can be transferred from another university to count towards the Philosophy Major, unless the chair agrees to additional credit transfer.

Student Groups

Philosophy Club; Platonic Society

Contact

Arts and Sciences Hall, Room 205
402-554-2628

Website (http://www.unomaha.edu/college-of-arts-and-sciences/philosophy)

Writing in the Discipline

All students are required to take a writing in the discipline course within their major. For the Philosophy major this is PHIL 4000.

Degrees Offered

• Philosophy, Bachelor of Arts (http://catalog.unomaha.edu/undergraduate/college-arts-sciences/philosophy/philosophy-ba)
• Philosophy, Bachelor of Arts Concentration in the Philosophy of Brain and Mind (http://catalog.unomaha.edu/undergraduate/college-arts-sciences/philosophy/concentration-philosophy-mind-and-brain)
• Philosophy, Bachelor of Arts Concentration in Ethics, Law and Social-Political Philosophy (http://catalog.unomaha.edu/undergraduate/college-arts-sciences/philosophy/concentration-ethics-law-social-political-philosophy)

Minors Offered

• Philosophy Minor (http://catalog.unomaha.edu/undergraduate/college-arts-sciences/philosophy/philosophy-minor)
• Ethics Minor (http://catalog.unomaha.edu/undergraduate/college-arts-sciences/philosophy/ethics-minor)

PHIL 1010 INTRODUCTION TO PHILOSOPHY (3 credits)

A first course in philosophy designed to introduce students to the major philosophic positions.

Distribution: Humanities and Fine Arts General Education course

PHIL 1020 CONTEMPORARY MORAL PROBLEMS (3 credits)

Introduction to the application of basic moral concepts and theories to contemporary moral issues. Discussion topics will vary and may include: distribution of wealth and resources, environmental ethics and sustainability, animal rights, capital punishment, torture, euthanasia, abortion, cloning, genetic engineering, privacy rights, drug laws, marriage and sexuality, gun control, and affirmative action.

Distribution: Humanities and Fine Arts General Education course

PHIL 1210 CRITICAL REASONING (3 credits)

A study of the principles of correct reasoning: induction, deduction, formal and informal fallacies. Critical reasoning is excellent preparation for the LSAT and the reasoning portions of other examinations for graduate study.

Distribution: Humanities and Fine Arts General Education course

PHIL 2010 SYMBOLIC LOGIC (3 credits)

A first course in symbolic logic designed to introduce students to formal systems of propositional and predicate logic. Logic is excellent preparation for the LSAT and the reasoning portions of other examinations for graduate study.

PHIL 2020 INTRODUCTION TO PHILOSOPHY OF MIND (3 credits)

This course is an introductory overview of fundamental issues in the study of mind, thinking and consciousness. Provides a forum for students to explore these philosophical issues from the perspective of current research in psychology, neuroscience, linguistics and computer science.

Prerequisite(s)/Corequisite(s): 3 hours in philosophy or permission of instructor.

PHIL 2030 INTRODUCTION TO ETHICS (3 credits)

A critical study of basic moral concepts and problems contained in ethical theories of important western philosophers: relativism, egoism, happiness, obligation, justice, freedom, conscience, love, religious precepts, moral rules, moral attitudes and moral language.

Distribution: Humanities and Fine Arts General Education course

PHIL 2040 INTRODUCTION TO EAST ASIAN PHILOSOPHY (3 credits)

This course makes a critical and philosophical inquiry into the fundamental questions raised in East Asian Philosophy, typically including a critical evaluation of the traditional theories in Confucianism, Buddhism, and Taoism of China, Korea, and Japan, as well as contemporary responses to those theories, e.g., Kyoto School or Maoism.

Distribution: Humanities and Fine Arts General Education course and Global Diversity General Education course

PHIL 2300 HUMAN VALUES IN MEDICINE (3 credits)

An opportunity for pre-medical students and students preparing for other health professions to confront questions of meaning and value that arise in the context of medical research and practice.

PHIL 3010 PHILOSOPHY OF JUSTICE (3 credits)

An examination of the concept of justice from Greek moral philosophy to modern moral philosophy with focus on the problems of modern moral philosophy and the application of those ideas in government and society.

Prerequisite(s)/Corequisite(s): Junior or 3 credits in philosophy.

PHIL 3020 THE JUSTIFICATION OF PUNISHMENT (3 credits)

The course examines the major philosophical arguments concerning the conditions under which punishment is justifiable, and provides a background of ethical theory in order to make these arguments comprehensible.

Prerequisite(s)/Corequisite(s): Junior, or 3 credits in philosophy, or 1 course in criminology & criminal justice.
PHIL 3040 PHILOSOPHY OF LAW (3 credits)
An overview of central issues in the philosophy of law, including the nature, source, and legitimacy of law, the relationship between law and morality, competing theories of legal reasoning and interpretation, the sources and structure of rights and responsibilities, and theories of punishment.
Prerequisite(s)/Corequisite(s): Junior standing or 6 hours in Philosophy.

PHIL 3050 ETHICAL THEORY (3 credits)
A detailed examination of selected topics in normative ethics and/or metaethics. Normative ethical questions to consider may include: Is the morally right thing to do always the thing that has the best consequences, as so-called "consequentialists" believe? What sorts of things are intrinsically good, i.e., good in themselves, regardless of their effects? Metaethical questions to be considered may include: Are there any objective moral facts? If so, where do they come from?
Prerequisite(s)/Corequisite(s): PHIL 2030 or 6 hours in philosophy or permission of instructor.

PHIL 3060 VALUES AND VIRTUES (3 credits)
This course explores advanced topics in ethics with particular emphasis on value theory and virtue ethics. Topics to be considered include the meaning and status of value claims, sources of value, intrinsic goods, agent-relative goods, practical reason, moral development, happiness, moral ambiguity, moral luck, the identification of virtues, and relationships of care, trust, and responsibility. This course supports the Ethics and Values concentration in the Master of Arts in Critical and Creative Thinking. (Cross-listed with CACT 8215)

PHIL 3110 HISTORY OF ANCIENT PHILOSOPHY (3 credits)
A survey of philosophy from its beginning to the Middle Ages: pre-Socratics, Plato, Aristotle, Cynics, Epicureans, Stoics, Skeptics, Neo-Platonists.

PHIL 3130 HISTORY OF MODERN PHILOSOPHY (3 credits)
An examination of the leading philosophical ideas of the 17th and 18th centuries: Descartes, Spinoza, Leibniz, Locke, Berkeley, Hume and Kant. This course also fulfills the writing requirements for philosophy majors.
Prerequisite(s)/Corequisite(s): 6 hours in Philosophy or permission.

PHIL 3140 NINETEENTH CENTURY PHILOSOPHY (3 credits)
An examination of major views in 19th century philosophy including the development of German idealism, British empiricism and Marxism. Special attention will be paid to the origins of existentialism, pragmatism and modern empiricism as reactions to 19th century positions.
Prerequisite(s)/Corequisite(s): Junior or permission of instructor.

PHIL 3150 PHILOSOPHY OF HISTORY (3 credits)
An introduction to representative problems of historical interpretation including theories of historical facts, history and values, periodization of history, history and political actions. The course will emphasize certain major philosophies of history such as Christianity, idealism, positivism and Marxism.
Prerequisite(s)/Corequisite(s): Junior or 3 credits in philosophy.

PHIL 3170 ETHICS IN BUSINESS (3 credits)

PHIL 3180 ENVIRONMENTAL ETHICS (3 credits)
Analysis and evaluation, from ethical viewpoints, of such topics as: animal rights, intrinsic value of animals, plants and ecosystems; pollutions of nature; preservation of historic structures and rare species; environmental law and politics; obligations to future generations; cost/benefit analysis of natural resources; agribusiness; hazardous technologies and wastes; and the worth of wilderness.
Prerequisite(s)/Corequisite(s): Junior or 3 hours in philosophy.

PHIL 3200 PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGION (3 credits)
A study of the major arguments for and against the existence of God, religious knowledge, miracles, morality without religion and immortality.
Prerequisite(s)/Corequisite(s): Junior or 3 credits in philosophy.

PHIL 3210 SOCIAL PHILOSOPHY (3 credits)
An examination of the problems and concepts of social and political philosophy.
Prerequisite(s)/Corequisite(s): 3 credits in philosophy or junior or permission of instructor.

PHIL 3220 PHILOSOPHY OF ART (3 credits)
An inquiry into historical and contemporary philosophical perspectives on the making, interpreting and criticizing of works of art, including relations of the arts to other dimensions of culture. (Cross-listed with PHIL 8225)
Prerequisite(s)/Corequisite(s): Junior or 3 credits in philosophy.

PHIL 3250 LIMITS OF CONSCIOUSNESS (3 credits)
A course focusing on the scientific study of the psychology, neurology, and philosophy of the mind. This course is designed for students who are interested in thinking about thinking. (Cross-listed with PSYC 4250, PSYC 8256)
Prerequisite(s)/Corequisite(s): PSYC 1010; or 6 hours in Philosophy.

PHIL 3260 HISTORY OF AMERICAN PHILOSOPHY: 20TH CENTURY (3 credits)
A study of the thinkers and movements in 20th century American thought: pragmatism, critical realism, new realism; along with selected readings from contemporary American thinkers.
Prerequisite(s)/Corequisite(s): Junior or 3 credits in philosophy.

PHIL 3300 ANALYTIC PHILOSOPHY (3 credits)
This course studies a number of fundamental issues in the philosophy of language and the philosophy of logic by considering some of the classic papers of Gottlob Frege and Bertrand Russell and the Tractatus of Ludwig Wittgenstein. It will provide a foundation for the study of many of the central works of 20th century philosophy.
Prerequisite(s)/Corequisite(s): 3 credits in philosophy or permission of instructor.

PHIL 3370 CONCEPTS OF NATURE (3 credits)
An examination of key philosophical conceptions of nature from the Greeks through the 20th century.

PHIL 3400 PHILOSOPHY OF NATURAL SCIENCE (3 credits)
An examination of the philosophical problems associated with the methods of the natural sciences, the presuppositions of scientific inquiry, and the nature of scientific laws and theories.
Prerequisite(s)/Corequisite(s): 6 credits in philosophy and junior, or permission of instructor.

PHIL 3410 PHILOSOPHY OF SOCIAL SCIENCE (3 credits)
An examination of the history and nature of the goals and methods of social science in general and certain social science disciplines in particular.
Prerequisite(s)/Corequisite(s): 3 credits in philosophy and junior, or permission of instructor.

PHIL 3430 PHILOSOPHY OF BIOLOGY (3 credits)
An examination and evaluation of contrasting views on philosophical issues in the biological sciences, including explanation, observation, reduction, units of description analysis and the role of values. Attention will be paid to ways in which the study of biology has produced a new understanding of the nature of scientific inquiry.
Prerequisite(s)/Corequisite(s): 6 hours in philosophy or biology or permission of instructor.

PHIL 3490 GENDER AND PHILOSOPHY (3 credits)
This course examines philosophical arguments concerning gender and sexual difference, gender issues and women in the history of philosophy, and major views in feminist theory. (Cross-listed with WGST 3490).
Prerequisite(s)/Corequisite(s): Junior or 6 hours in PHIL or 6 hours in WGST.

PHIL 3500 PROBLEMS IN PHILOSOPHY (3 credits)
Seminar on specialized topics in philosophy. Topics to be arranged.
Prerequisite(s)/Corequisite(s): Junior or 6 hours in philosophy.
PHIL 3510 PHENOMENOLOGY AND EXISTENTIALISM (3 credits)
A critical examination of phenomenology and existentialism as historical and philosophical movements. Course focus includes such thinkers as Edmund Husserl, Martin Heidegger, Jean-Paul Sartre, and Simone De Beauvoir.
Prerequisite(s)/Corequisite(s): Junior or 3 credits in philosophy.

PHIL 3520 HERMENEUTICS IN PHILOSOPHY (3 credits)
Introduction to hermeneutics or the notion of interpretation in certain thinkers and philosophy movements since the late 19thC. Focus includes Nietzsche, pragmatism, Peirce, James, Dewey, Gadamer, Frankfurt School, and Derrida. Course to exclude topics or things covered in PHIL3510.
Prerequisite(s)/Corequisite(s): 3 hours in philosophy, junior or permission of instructor.

PHIL 3570 UNDERSTANDING SELF-DECEPTION (3 credits)
This course is designed to introduce students to a variety of problems associated with the special issue of self-deception. Conceptual and linguistic issues concerning the paradox of self-deception, as well as epistemological issues concerning self-deception are considered.
Prerequisite(s)/Corequisite(s): Junior or 6 hours in philosophy or permission.

PHIL 3600 THEORY OF KNOWLEDGE (3 credits)
An examination of the nature and limits of human knowledge and related issues such as skepticism, certainty, rationality and perception, and the problem of other minds.
Prerequisite(s)/Corequisite(s): 6 hours of philosophy or permission of instructor.

PHIL 3610 PHILOSOPHY OF LANGUAGE (3 credits)
A course dealing with classical philosophical problems about language such as meaning and reference as well as with conceptual issues raised by contemporary linguistics and psycholinguistics.
Prerequisite(s)/Corequisite(s): 6 hours philosophy or background in linguistics or psycholinguistics or permission of instructor.

PHIL 3650 PHILOSOPHY OF MIND (3 credits)
A discussion of various accounts of the nature of minds which focuses upon philosophical problems such as whether the mind is identical with the brain, the extent of similarities between human minds and computers, the nature of personal identity, and the relationship of mental activity to behavior. (Cross-listed with PHIL 8655)
Prerequisite(s)/Corequisite(s): 6 hours of philosophy or permission of instructor.

PHIL 3700 METAPHYSICS (3 credits)
This course introduces students to the critical study of selected philosophical theories of reality. Some representative views from the history of philosophy will be covered as well as contemporary debates. The course includes examination of the relation of metaphysical positions to other areas of knowledge and belief and the critical evaluation of metaphysics as an intellectual enterprise.
Prerequisite(s)/Corequisite(s): 6 hours of philosophy or permission of instructor.

PHIL 3960 READINGS IN PHILOSOPHY (1-3 credits)
Readings in specialized areas or individual problems in philosophy.
Prerequisite(s)/Corequisite(s): Permission of instructor.

PHIL 4000 ADVANCED PHILOSOPHY WRITING SEMINAR (3 credits)
This is the capstone course of the philosophy major, designed to teach students to write at an advanced level. Students will present their own writing and critique the writing of others, under close guidance of the instructor. By the end of the seminar, each student will have produced a professional-length (approximately 20-page) paper on a philosophical topic, and gained extensive experience in revising a paper and editing the work of others.
Prerequisite(s)/Corequisite(s): Junior standing and 15 hours in philosophy including 9 hours consisting of 3000-level courses, or instructor permission. Not open to non-degree graduate students.