Philosophy, B.A.

Philosophy involves reflection upon and understanding of all phases of human activity. Philosophy especially directs itself to the nature of knowledge and the most basic concepts of human understanding and value: morality, society, art and aesthetic experience, as well as science, politics, and religion. Philosophy is thus closely involved with other disciplines because, as human activities and quests for knowledge, they and their findings provide the material for philosophical inquiry. The courses offered by the department are designed to help students develop their own capacities to reflect intelligently on questions of fundamental and lasting significance. The philosophy major is intended to meet the needs of four types of students:

• those who wish to use philosophy as the organizing core of a liberal education;
• those who desire to study philosophy in preparation for graduate work in some other field, such as law, government, or theology;
• those who plan to major jointly in philosophy and one of the social and natural sciences or humanities; and
• those who have a professional interest in philosophy and intend to do graduate work in the subject.

How to Get In

Students should inform the philosophy office of their intention to major and be assigned an advisor within the department. More information can be found at major declaration (http://philosophy.wisc.edu/undergraduate/major_declaration.php).

Requirements

University General Education Requirements

All undergraduate students at the University of Wisconsin–Madison are required to fulfill a minimum set of common university general education requirements to ensure that every graduate acquires the essential core of an undergraduate education. This core establishes a foundation for living a productive life, being a citizen of the world, appreciating aesthetic values, and engaging in lifelong learning in a continually changing world. Various schools and colleges will have requirements in addition to the requirements listed below. Consult your advisor for assistance, as needed. For additional information, see the university Undergraduate General Education Requirements (http://guide.wisc.edu/undergraduate/#requirementsforundergraduatetext) section of the Guide.

General Education

• Breadth—Humanities/Literature/Arts: 6 credits
• Breadth—Natural Science: 4 to 6 credits, consisting of one 4- or 5-credit course with a laboratory component; or two courses providing a total of 6 credits
• Breadth—Social Studies: 3 credits
• Communication Part A & Part B
• Ethnic Studies *
• Quantitative Reasoning Part A & Part B *

* The mortarboard symbol appears before the title of any course that fulfills one of the Communication Part A or Part B, Ethnic Studies, or Quantitative Reasoning Part A or Part B requirements.

College of Letters & Science Breadth and Degree Requirements: Bachelor of Arts (B.A.)

Students pursuing a bachelor of arts degree in the College of Letters & Science must complete all of the requirements below. The College of Letters & Science allows this major to be paired with either a bachelor of arts or a bachelor of science curriculum. View a comparison of the degree requirements here. (https://pubs.wisc.edu/home/archives/ug15/images/babs2009.pdf)

Bachelor of Arts Degree Requirements

Mathematics

Fulfilled with completion of University General Education requirements Quantitative Reasoning a (QR A) and Quantitative Reasoning b (QR B) coursework. Please note that some majors may require students to complete additional math coursework beyond the B.A. mathematics requirement.

Foreign Language

• Complete the fourth unit of a foreign language; OR
• Complete the third unit of a foreign language and the second unit of an additional foreign language

Note: A unit is one year of high school work or one semester/term of college work.

L&S Breadth

• Humanities, 12 credits: 6 of the 12 credits must be in literature
• Social Sciences, 12 credits
• Natural Sciences, 12 credits: must include one 3+ credit course in the biological sciences; must include one 3+ credit course in the physical sciences

Liberal Arts and Science Coursework

108 credits

Depth of Intermediate/Advanced work

60 intermediate or advanced credits

Major

Declare and complete at least one (1) major

Total Credits

120 credits

UW-Madison Experience

30 credits in residence, overall

Experience

30 credits in residence after the 90th credit
Minimum GPAs

- 2.000 in all coursework at UW–Madison
- 2.000 in intermediate/advanced coursework at UW–Madison

**NON–L&S STUDENTS PURSUING AN L&S MAJOR**

Non–L&S students who have permission from their school/college to pursue an additional major within L&S only need to fulfill the major requirements and do not need to complete the L&S breadth and degree requirements above. Please note that the following special degree programs are not considered majors so are not available to non–L&S degree-seeking candidates:

- Applied Mathematics, Engineering and Physics (Bachelor of Science–Applied Mathematics, Engineering and Physics)
- Journalism (Bachelor of Arts–Journalism; Bachelor of Science–Journalism)
- Music (Bachelor of Music)
- Social Work (Bachelor of Social Work)

**REQUIREMENTS FOR THE MAJOR**

**27 CREDITS AND 8 COURSES IN PHILOS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Credits</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PHILOS 211</td>
<td>Elementary Logic (or equivalent; should be taken as early as possible)</td>
<td>3-4</td>
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<tr>
<td>or PHILOS 511</td>
<td>Symbolic Logic</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PHILOS 430</td>
<td>History of Ancient Philosophy</td>
<td>3-4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PHILOS 432</td>
<td>History of Modern Philosophy</td>
<td>3-4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 PHILOS courses of at least 3 credits numbered 400 and above</td>
<td>15</td>
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1. Recommended to be taken in the sophomore or junior year
2. Excluding the following courses: PHILOS/JEWISH 442, PHILOS/MED HIST 505, PHILOS/ED POL 545, PHILOS/MED HIST 558, PHILOS/MATH 571, PHILOS 599, PHILOS 681, PHILOS 682, PHILOS 691, PHILOS 692, and PHILOS 699. Students who wish to enroll for Senior Thesis or Senior Honors Thesis should consult their major advisor prior to doing so.

**DISTRIBUTION**

At least 1 course from each category:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category A Code</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Credits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PHILOS/RELIG ST 501</td>
<td>Philosophy of Religion</td>
<td>3-4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PHILOS 503</td>
<td>Theory of Knowledge</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PHILOS 504</td>
<td>Special Topics in the Theory of Knowledge (Topics that count: &quot;Bayesian Epist&quot; and &quot;Epistemic Ideals&quot;)</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PHILOS 516</td>
<td>Language and Meaning</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PHILOS 520</td>
<td>Philosophy of the Natural Sciences</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PHILOS 530</td>
<td>Freedom Fate and Choice</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PHILOS 551</td>
<td>Philosophy of Mind</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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**Learning Outcomes**

1. Ability to think critically about arguments.
2. Ability to interpret complex texts accurately and analyze them logically.
3. Ability to communicate precisely and concisely in both writing and speech.
4. Familiarity with the history of Western philosophy and the major debates within that tradition.
5. Ability to be engaged citizens who think carefully and well about their responsibilities to others.
6. Ability to exchange reasons about controversial matters respectfully and with the aim of uncovering the truth.
7. Interpretative charity and intellectual honesty, which includes appropriate attribution to others of their ideas, and recognition and frankness about the limitations of one's own ideas.

**Advising and Careers**

The Department of Philosophy encourages our majors to begin working on their career exploration and preparation soon after arriving on campus. We partner with the SuccessWorks at the College of Letters & Science. Philosophy majors develop important and widely marketable skills, like the ability to think critically, communicate clearly, and solve complex problems. This means that getting a degree in philosophy provides excellent preparation for a variety of careers.

Studying philosophy can also help you get into graduate school. Philosophy majors excel on standardized tests like the GRE, GMAT, and LSAT. They rank first among all majors on the verbal and the analytical section of the GRE. Philosophy majors also tend to do better than just about any other major on the LSAT. With a mean score of just over 157, they are second only to physics majors. When it comes to the GMAT, philosophy majors rank in the top five of all majors, and they consistently have higher scores than business majors (including management, finance, accounting, and marketing majors).

**L&S Career Resources**

SuccessWorks at the College of Letters & Science helps students leverage the academic skills learned in their major, certificates, and...
liberal arts degree; explore and try out different career paths; participate in internships; prepare for the job search and/or graduate school applications; and network with professionals in the field (alumni and employers).

SuccessWorks can also assist students in career advising, résumé and cover letter writing, networking opportunities, and interview skills, as well as course offerings for undergraduates to begin their career exploration early in their undergraduate career.

- SuccessWorks (https://careers.ls.wisc.edu)
- Set up a career advising appointment (https://careers.ls.wisc.edu/make-an-appointment)
- INTER-LS 210 L&S Career Development: Taking Initiative (1 credit, targeted to first- and second-year students)—for more information, see Inter-LS 210: Career Development, Taking Initiative (https://careers.ls.wisc.edu/inter-ls-210-career-development-taking-initiative)
- Learn how we’re transforming career preparation: L&S Career Initiative (http://ls.wisc.edu/lsci)

PEOPLE

Professors Bengson, Brighouse, Fletcher, Gibson, Gottlieb, Hausman, Kelleher, Mackay, Masrour, Messina, Nadler, Paul, Schectman, Shafer-Landau, Shapiro, Sidelle, Sober, Southgate, Steinberg, Streiffer, Titlebaum, Vranas

RESOURCES AND SCHOLARSHIPS

UNDERGRADUATE SCHOLARSHIPS

The Department of Philosophy has received generous support in order to fund two scholarships each academic year.

The Charles Manthey Winter Philosophy Scholarship is given to a major in philosophy who will graduate within the next four terms of the award and who has at least a 3.5 grade point average over the past two terms, and who can demonstrate financial need.

The Colonel Jerome Ellis Goodrich, USMC (retired), Scholarship is awarded to an undergraduate major in philosophy with academic merit and financial need, and who is a U.S. citizen.

Applications for these scholarships are typically due in early April and winners are honored at our annual Awards Banquet in May.

We also have an annual paper prize called the Temkin Undergraduate Essay Prize in Value Theory. This prize recognizes an outstanding essay in value theory, where this is construed quite broadly to include topics in political philosophy, philosophy of law, metaethics, applied ethics, etc. Essays are typically submitted in early April and the winner is also honored at our Awards Banquet.

If you have any questions about these scholarships or essay prize, you may send an email to frontoffice@philosophy.wisc.edu.