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/#requirementsforundergraduatetystudytext) section of the Guide.

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

Requirements Detail

| 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 |
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.

REQUIREMENTS FOR THE MAJOR

The minimum requirement for the major is eight conventionally graded philosophy courses amounting to at least 27 credits. These credits must include:

- PHILOS 211 or PHILOS 511: Symbolic Logic
- PHILOS 430 & PHILOS 432: History of Ancient Philosophy and History of Modern Philosophy (or equivalent; recommended to be taken in the sophomore or junior year)

Select a total of five PHILOS courses, which are 3 credits or more, from any course designated in the Schedule of Classes (Course Guide) as 400 or above

Select at least one course from Category A

Select at least one course from Category B


SERNIEN THESIS

Students who wish to enroll for such work (PHILOS 691 Senior Thesis-PHILOS 692 Senior Thesis) should consult their advisors.

HONORS IN THE MAJOR

Students may declare Honors in the Philosophy Major in consultation with the Philosophy undergraduate advisor.

HONORS IN THE PHILOSOPHY MAJOR REQUIREMENTS

To earn a B.A. or B.S. with Honors in the Major in Philosophy students must satisfy both the requirements for the major (above) and the following additional requirements:

- Earn a 3.300 overall university GPA
- Earn a 3.500 GPA for all PHILOS courses
- Complete an additional course in philosophy from either Category A or Category B (above) with a grade of B or better
- Complete a two-semester Senior Honors Thesis in PHILOS 681 Senior Honors Thesis for 1–3 credits and PHILOS 682 Senior Honors Thesis for 3 credits, with a grade of AB or better.

1 Students will not be permitted to write a Senior Honors Thesis unless they have taken at least one advanced course on the topic on which they will be writing. Credits earned by writing a Senior Honors Thesis will not count toward the minimal number of credits required for Honors in the Major.
UNIVERSITY DEGREE REQUIREMENTS

Requirements Detail

Total Degree: To receive a bachelor’s degree from UW–Madison, students must earn a minimum of 120 degree credits. The requirements for some programs may exceed 120 degree credits. Students should consult with their college or department advisor for information on specific credit requirements.

Residency: Degree candidates are required to earn a minimum of 30 credits in residence at UW–Madison. "In residence" means on the UW–Madison campus with an undergraduate degree classification. "In residence" credit also includes UW–Madison courses offered in distance or online formats and credits earned in UW–Madison Study Abroad/Study Away programs.

Quality of Work: Undergraduate students must maintain the minimum grade point average specified by the school, college, or academic program to remain in good academic standing. Students whose academic performance drops below these minimum thresholds will be placed on academic probation.

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.

ADVISORY 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 L&S Career Services office to help you leverage the academic skills learned in your major 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).

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).

Career Resources:

- Why the liberal arts? (http://ls.wisc.edu/about/why-liberal-arts)
- Set up a Career Advising Appointment (http://careers.ls.wisc.edu/Undergraduate-Advising.htm)
- L&S Career Services (http://careers.ls.wisc.edu/students.htm): We launch our students higher, sooner
- INTER-LS 210 L&S Career Development: Taking Initiative (1 credit, targeted to first- and second-year students)
- Learn how we're transforming career preparation: L&S Career Initiative (http://ls.wisc.edu/about/lsct?p=careerinitiative.html)
- "Why Study" page: http://philosophy.wisc.edu/undergraduate/whystudy

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.