

PHILOSOPHY, BA

REQUIREMENTS

UNIVERSITY REQUIREMENTS

All undergraduate students must complete both the following Core General Education (Core GenEd) and University Degree and Quality of Work requirements. The requirements below apply to students whose first term at UW-Madison or whose earliest post-high school college attendance at any institution is Summer 2026 or later.

Students whose first term at UW-Madison or whose earliest post-high school college attendance at any institution occurred before Summer 2026 should refer to the archived Guide (<https://guide.wisc.edu/archive/>) for the requirements that apply to them.

CORE GENERAL EDUCATION (CORE GENED) REQUIREMENTS

Civics & Perspectives 3 credits of Civics & Perspectives coursework.

Communication & Literacy 6 credits of Communication & Literacy coursework. This requirement may be partially satisfied by a qualifying placement test score. More information: <https://go.wisc.edu/qualifyingenglishplacement> (<https://go.wisc.edu/qualifyingenglishplacement/>)

Humanities & Arts 6 credits of Humanities & Arts coursework.

Mathematics & Quantitative Reasoning 6 credits of Mathematics & Quantitative Reasoning coursework. This requirement may be partially satisfied by a qualifying placement test score. More information: <https://go.wisc.edu/qualifyingmathplacement> (<https://go.wisc.edu/qualifyingmathplacement/>)

Natural Science & Wellness Complete both:

- 6 credits of Natural Science & Wellness or Natural Science & Wellness + Laboratory coursework.
- one course must be in Natural Science & Wellness + Laboratory coursework.

Social & Behavioral Science 3 credits of Social & Behavioral Science coursework.

Total Credits 30 credits.

For more information see the policy (<https://policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1095/>).

UNIVERSITY DEGREE AND QUALITY OF WORK REQUIREMENTS

All undergraduate degree recipients must complete the following minimum requirements. Requirements for some programs will exceed these requirements; see program requirements for additional information.

Total Degree 120 degree credits.

Residency Complete 30 credits in residence. A course is considered "in residence" if it is taken when in undergraduate degree-seeking status and:

- is offered by UW-Madison and completed on the UW-Madison campus or at an approved off-site location, or
- is offered by UW-Madison in an online or distance format, or is completed during participation in a UW-Madison study abroad/study away program.

Quality of Work Achieve at least the minimum grade point average specified by the school, college, and/or academic program.

Math Demonstrate minimal mathematics competence by:

- placing above MATH 96, or
- successfully completing MATH 96, or
- successfully completing a more advanced mathematics course such as MATH 112, MATH 113, MATH 114, MATH 141, MATH 211, or MATH 221.

English Language If required to take the UW-Madison English as a Second Language Assessment Test (MSN-ESLAT), demonstrate minimal English language competence by:

- earning credit for ESL 118, or
- achieving a qualifying MSN-ESLAT placement test score.

Language Complete one:

- 2 high school units of a single language other than English, or
- one course with the second semester Language designation.

Major Declaration Declare and complete the requirements for at least one major.

COLLEGE OF LETTERS & SCIENCE DEGREE REQUIREMENTS: BACHELOR OF ARTS (BA)

Students pursuing a Bachelor of Arts degree in the College of Letters & Science must complete all of the requirements below. Some courses satisfy more than one L&S degree requirement (visit College of Letters & Science: Requirements (<https://guide.wisc.edu/undergraduate/letters-science/#requirementstext>) for details).

This major can be paired with either the Bachelor of Arts or Bachelor of Science degree requirements.

BACHELOR OF ARTS DEGREE REQUIREMENTS

Communication Complete both:

- Part A: one course with the Communication A designation or eligible UW Placement Score; and
- Part B: one course with the Communication B designation

Quantitative Reasoning	Complete both: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Part A: one course with the Quantitative Reasoning A designation or eligible UW Placement Score; and Part B: one course with the Quantitative Reasoning B designation
Ethnic Studies	one 3+ credit course with the Ethnic Studies designation
Language	Complete either: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the fourth unit of one language other than English; or the third unit of one language other than English and the second unit of an additional language.
L&S Breadth: Humanities	Complete 12 credits with the Humanities or Literature designation, which must include at least 6 credits with the Literature designation.
L&S Breadth: Social Sciences	Complete 12 credits with the Social Science designation.
L&S Breadth: Natural Sciences	Complete 12 credits with the Natural Science, Biological Science, or Physical Science designations, which must include both: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> one 3+ credit course with the Biological Science designation, and one 3+ credit course with the Physical Science designation.
Liberal Arts and Science (LAS) Coursework	at least 108 credits
Depth of Intermediate/Advanced work	at least 60 credits at the Intermediate or Advanced level
Major	Declare and complete at least one major.
Total Credits	at least 120 credits
UW-Madison Experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 30 credits in residence, overall; and 30 credits in residence after the 86th credit
Quality of Work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2.000 in all coursework at UW-Madison 2.000 in Intermediate/Advanced level 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. They do not need to complete the L&S Degree Requirements above.

REQUIREMENTS FOR THE MAJOR 27 CREDITS AND 8 COURSES IN PHILOS ([HTTPS://GUIDE.WISC.EDU/COURSES/PHILOS/](https://guide.wisc.edu/courses/philos/))

Code	Title	Credits
Required Courses		
PHILOS 211 or PHILOS 511	Elementary Logic Symbolic Logic	3-4
PHILOS 430	History of Ancient Philosophy	3-4
PHILOS 432	History of Modern Philosophy	3-4
5 advanced PHILOS courses of at least 3 credits from below:		15
PHILOS 430	History of Ancient Philosophy	
PHILOS 432	History of Modern Philosophy	
PHILOS 440	Existentialism	
PHILOS/ ENVIR ST 441	Environmental Ethics	
PHILOS 454	Classical Philosophers	
PHILOS/ RELIG ST 501	Philosophy of Religion	
PHILOS 503	Theory of Knowledge	
PHILOS 504	Special Topics in the Theory of Knowledge	
PHILOS 506	Study Abroad in Philosophy	
PHILOS 511	Symbolic Logic	
PHILOS 512	Methods of Logic	
PHILOS 516	Language and Meaning	
PHILOS 520	Philosophy of the Natural Sciences	
PHILOS 522	Special Topic	
PHILOS/ ENVIR ST 523	Philosophical Problems of the Biological Sciences	
PHILOS/ ECON 524	Philosophy and Economics	
PHILOS 530	Freedom Fate and Choice	
PHILOS 541	Modern Ethical Theories	
PHILOS 543	Special Topics in Ethics	
PHILOS 549	Great Moral Philosophers	
PHILOS/ ED POL 550	Philosophy of Moral Education	
PHILOS 551	Philosophy of Mind	
PHILOS 553	Aesthetics	
PHILOS 555	Political Philosophy	
PHILOS/ GEN&WS 556	Topics in Feminism and Philosophy	
PHILOS 557	Issues in Social Philosophy	
PHILOS 560	Metaphysics	
PHILOS 562	Special Topics in Metaphysics	
PHILOS 567	Topics in Contemporary Philosophy	
PHILOS/ MATH 571	Mathematical Logic	

Additional credits—if necessary—to achieve 27 for the major **3**

Total Credits **27**

DISTRIBUTION

Of the 27 credits, at least 1 course is required from each category ('Metaphysics and Epistemology' and 'Value Theory'):

Category 'Metaphysics and Epistemology'

Complete one course:

Code	Title	Credits
PHILOS/ RELIG ST 501	Philosophy of Religion	3-4
PHILOS 503	Theory of Knowledge	3
PHILOS 504	Special Topics in the Theory of Knowledge (Bayesian Epistemology)	3
PHILOS 504	Special Topics in the Theory of Knowledge (Epistemic Ideals)	3
PHILOS 516	Language and Meaning	3
PHILOS 520	Philosophy of the Natural Sciences	3
PHILOS 530	Freedom Fate and Choice	3
PHILOS 551	Philosophy of Mind	3
PHILOS 560	Metaphysics	3
PHILOS 562	Special Topics in Metaphysics (Consciousness)	3
PHILOS 567	Topics in Contemporary Philosophy	3

Category 'Value Theory'

Complete one course:

Code	Title	Credits
PHILOS 241	Introductory Ethics	3-4
PHILOS 454	Classical Philosophers (Aristotle's Ethics)	3
PHILOS 541	Modern Ethical Theories	3
PHILOS 549	Great Moral Philosophers	3
PHILOS 555	Political Philosophy	3

RESIDENCE AND QUALITY OF WORK

- 2.000 GPA in all PHILOS courses and courses that count for the major
- 2.000 GPA on 15 upper-level credits in the major, taken in residence¹
- 15 credits in PHILOS, taken on campus

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 Honors in the Major in Philosophy, students must satisfy both the requirements for the major (above) and the following additional requirements:

- Minimum 3.300 University GPA
- Minimum a 3.500 GPA for all PHILOS and major courses
- One *additional* course from either the Metaphysics and Epistemology or Value Theory categories with a grade of B or better
- PHILOS 681 (for 1-3 credits) and PHILOS 682 (for 3 credits) with a grade of AB or better.²

FOOTNOTES

¹ Courses between PHILOS 400–699 are considered upper-level in the major.

² 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 27 minimum credits required for the major.