Philosophy, B.S.

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.

Colleges of Letters & Science Breadth and Degree Requirements: Bachelor of Science (B.S.)

Students pursuing a bachelor of science 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 Science Degree Requirements

Mathematics

Two (2) 3+ credits of intermediate/advanced level MATH, COMP SCI, STAT

Limit one each: COMP SCI, STAT

Foreign Language

Complete the third unit of a 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 6 credits in biological science; and must include 6 credits in physical science

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

30 credits in residence after the 90th credit

Minimum

2,000 in all coursework at UW–Madison

GPAs

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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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PHILOS 211</td>
<td>Elementary Logic</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>
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5 PHILOS courses of at least 3 credits from below: 15

- PHILOS 433 19th Century Philosophers
- PHILOS/JEWISH/ RELIG ST 435 Jewish Philosophy from Antiquity to the Seventeenth Century
- PHILOS 440 Existentialism
- PHILOS/ ENVIR ST 441 Environmental Ethics
- PHILOS 454 Classical Philosophers
- PHILOS 464 Classical Philosophers
- PHILOS 481 Junior Honors Seminar
- PHILOS 482 Junior Honors Seminar
- PHILOS/ RELIG ST 501 Philosophy of Religion
- PHILOS/ RELIG ST 502 Special Topics in 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/ MED HIST 515 Public Health Ethics
- PHILOS 516 Language and Meaning
- PHILOS 520 Philosophy of the Natural Sciences
- PHILOS 521 Philosophy of the Social Sciences
- PHILOS 522 Special Topic
- PHILOS/ ENVIR ST 523 Philosophical Problems of the Biological Sciences
- PHILOS/ ECON 524 Philosophy and Economics
- PHILOS 526 Philosophy and Literature
- PHILOS 530 Freedom Fate and Choice
- PHILOS 541 Modern Ethical Theories
- PHILOS 543 Special Topics in Ethics
- PHILOS 549 Great Moral Philosophers

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

Total Credits 27-30

1 Recommended to be taken in the sophomore or junior year
2 The following courses do not count as part of the 8 courses and 27 required credits: 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**

Of the 27 credits, at least 1 course is required from each category (A and B):

**Category A (complete one course):**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Credits</th>
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<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 (Bayesian Epistemology)</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PHILOS 504</td>
<td>Special Topics in the Theory of Knowledge (Epistemic Ideals)</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>
<tr>
<td>PHILOS 560</td>
<td>Metaphysics</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PHILOS 562</td>
<td>Special Topics in Metaphysics (Consciousness)</td>
<td>3</td>
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**Category B (complete one course):**

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<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Credits</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PHILOS 241</td>
<td>Introductory Ethics</td>
<td>3-4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PHILOS 253</td>
<td>Philosophy of the Arts</td>
<td>3-4</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
PHILOS 454  Classical Philosophers (Aristotle’s Ethics)  3
PHILOS 541  Modern Ethical Theories  3
PHILOS 549  Great Moral Philosophers  3
PHILOS 553  Aesthetics  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 residence
- 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 Category A or Category B 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.

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.

FOUR-YEAR PLAN

First Year

Fall | Credits | Spring | Credits
--- | --- | --- | ---
Communications A | 3 | Ethnic Sudies | 3
PHILOS 101 | 3-4 | Foreign Language (if needed) | 4
PHILOS 210 | 3-4 | I/A MATH, STAT or COMP SCI (for B.S. degree) | 3
PHILOS 241 | 3 | Physical Science Breadth | 3-4
PHILOS 430 | 3-4 | PHILOS 211 (Quantitative Reasoning B) | 3-4

Second Year

Fall | Credits | Spring | Credits
--- | --- | --- | ---
PHILOS 430 | 3-4 | Communication B | 4
PHILOS 432 | 3 | Literature Breadth | 3-4
PHILOS 432 | 3 | Social Science Breadth | 3
INTER-LS 210 | 1 | Social Science Breadth | 4
PHILOS 430 | 3 | Biological Science Breadth | 3

Third Year

Fall | Credits | Spring | Credits
--- | --- | --- | ---
PHILOS Category A course | 3-4 | PHILOS Category B course | 3-4

UNIVERSITY DEGREE REQUIREMENTS

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.
Advising and Careers

Advising

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). In short, SuccessWorks helps students in the College of Letters & Science discover themselves, find opportunities, and develop the skills they need for success after graduation.

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.

Students should set up their profiles in Handshake (https://careers.ls.wisc.edu/handshake) to take care of everything they need to explore career events, manage their campus interviews, and apply to jobs and internships from 200,000+ employers around the country.

- 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)
- INTER-LS 215 Communicating About Careers (3 credits, fulfills Com B General Education Requirement)
- Handshake (https://careers.ls.wisc.edu/handshake)
- 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.