Philosophy

Department of Philosophy

College of Arts and Sciences
1021 Lincoln Hall, Room 207
Phone: (208) 426-3304
Fax: (208) 426-4332
Email: philosophy@boisestate.edu

Chair and Associate Professor: Andrew Cortens. Associate Professor: Roark. Assistant Professors: Crowley, Jackson, Kierland. Lecturers: Pearson, Stockton.

Degrees Offered

• B.A. and Minor in Philosophy

Department Statement

Philosophy involves a reasoned attempt to answer questions that arise from reflection on basic concepts and assumptions about the world and our experience of it. Some of these questions are of obvious practical importance; for example, “How should moral decisions be made?” Others are more abstract; for example, “What is the nature of knowledge (or reality, or goodness)?” Serious philosophical inquiry into such questions is typically grounded in careful study of the efforts of earlier thinkers; thus, an important aspect of the major is the study of the history of philosophy.

The undergraduate major in philosophy does not in itself prepare the student for a specific vocation. For students who aspire to academic careers in philosophy, the major provides the basis for graduate work in the field. For other students, it develops intellectual skills useful in life and in other fields of advanced study, such as law, religion, and public affairs.

The program requirements for a major in philosophy, in addition to the necessary requirements to obtain a bachelor of arts degree from Boise State University, consist of 37 hours of Philosophy Credit at various levels. (See “Degree Requirements”, below, for further details.) Philosophy majors should bear in mind that the university requires the completion of a total of 40 hours of upper-division credit by all graduating seniors.

Degree Requirements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Number and Title</th>
<th>Credits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ENGL 101 Introduction to College Writing</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENGL 102 Intro to College Writing and Research</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UF 100 Intellectual Foundations</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UF 200 Civic and Ethical Foundations</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DLM Mathematics</td>
<td>3-4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DLN Natural, Physical, &amp; Applied Sciences course with lab</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DLN Natural, Physical, and Applied Sciences course</td>
<td>3-4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DLU Visual and Performing Arts</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DLL PHIL 101 Knowledge of Reality or DLL PHIL 102 Classics of Western Philosophy or DLL PHIL 103 Moral Problems</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DLS Social Sciences course in a first field</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DLS Social Sciences course in a second field</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PHIL 209 Logic and Philosophy</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PHIL 210 Philosophical Writing and Methodology</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Two of the following:
- PHIL 305 Ancient Greek Philosophy
- PHIL 307 Medieval Philosophy
- PHIL 309 Modern Philosophy

Electives to total 120 credits

Total 120

Course Offerings

See page 60 for a definition of the course-numbering system.

PHIL—Philosophy

Lower Division

PHIL 101 KNOWLEDGE AND REALITY (3-0-3)(F,S)[DLL]. An introduction to some major issues in metaphysics and epistemology, such as free will, the existence of God, the rationality of religious belief, the mind/body problem, personal identity, skepticism about external world, and the problem of induction.

PHIL 102 CLASSICS OF WESTERN PHILOSOPHY (3-0-3)(F,S)[DLL]. An introduction to the thought of some major figures from the history of western philosophy, such as Plato, Aristotle, Aquinas, Anselm, Locke, Hume, Descartes, Berkeley, Kant, and Marx.

PHIL 103 MORAL PROBLEMS (3-0-3)(F,S)[DLL]. An introduction to philosophical thinking about selected moral problems, such as famine, abortion, euthanasia, the moral status of animals, and whether killing is worse than letting-die.

PHIL 209 LOGIC AND PHILOSOPHY (3-0-3)[F,S]. An introduction to formal techniques relevant to philosophical thinking, covering propositional, quantificational and some modal logic.

PHIL 210 PHILOSOPHICAL WRITING AND METHODOLOGY (3-0-3)[F,S,CID]. Detailed examination of a small number of focused philosophical topics, with an emphasis on improving students as readers and writers of philosophical texts as well as improving their ability to orally communicate philosophical ideas. Will prepare students for upper-division work in philosophy. PREREQ: PHIL 101 or PHIL 102 or PHIL 103.

Upper Division

PHIL 304 SYMBOLIC LOGIC (3-0-3)[Offered as justified]. A study of techniques of validation in propositional and predicate logic, with emphasis on the construction of formal proofs. Some attention will be given to metalogical notions such as consistency and completeness. PREREQ: MATH 187 or PHIL 209.

PHIL 305 ANCIENT GREEK PHILOSOPHY (3-0-3)[F]. An introduction to the origins of Western philosophy in the ancient world, with emphasis on Plato and Aristotle. PREREQ: PHIL 210.

PHIL 307 MEDIEVAL PHILOSOPHY (3-0-3)(Offered as justified). A survey of major developments in Western philosophy from St. Augustine through William of Ockham, with emphasis on selected figures. PREREQ: PHIL 210.

PHIL 308 PHILOSOPHY OF LANGUAGE (3-0-3)(Offered as justified). An investigation of basic philosophical problems concerning language and communication. Topics may include: truth, meaning, reference, proper names, descriptions, the distinction between semantics and pragmatics, and context-sensitivity. PREREQ: PHIL 209 and PHIL 210.

PHIL 309 MODERN PHILOSOPHY (3-0-3)[F]. A survey of developments in Western philosophy from Descartes through Kant, with emphasis on selected figures. PREREQ: PHIL 210.

PHIL 310 PHILOSOPHY OF MIND (3-0-3)(Offered as justified). An examination of various solutions to the mind/body problem, the problem of other minds, as well as related mental concepts. Problems of action theory may be explored. PREREQ: PHIL 209 and PHIL 210.

PHIL 311 MORAL PHILOSOPHY (3-0-3)(Offered as justified). An examination of views and issues in meta-ethics and/or normative theory, such as moral realism vs. anti-realism, moral epistemology, moral motivation, utilitarianism, egalitarianism, libertarianism and contractualism. PREREQ: PHIL 209 and PHIL 210.


PHIL 315 PHENOMENOLOGY AND EXISTENTIALISM (3-0-3)(Offered as justified). An exploration of the nature of conscious experience and the place of dread and choice in human existence, with emphasis on selected figures in the tradition of European philosophy established by Kierkegaard and Husserl. PREREQ: PHIL 101 or PHIL 102 or PHIL 103, and at least one CID course in any discipline.

PHIL 321 EASTERN PHILOSOPHY (3-0-3)(Offered as justified). Philosophical teachings of great Eastern thinkers through a study of classical texts selected from traditions of Hinduism, Confucianism, Taoism, and Buddhism. PREREQ: at least one CID course in any discipline.

PHIL 327 ENVIRONMENTAL ETHICS (3-0-3)(Offered as justified). Examination of environmental problems from an ethical point of view. Topics include population control, pollution, animal liberation, the moral and legal rights of nature, and social ecology. PREREQ: PHIL 101 or PHIL 102 or PHIL 103, and at least one CID course in any discipline.

PHIL 331 PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGION (3-0-3)(Offered as justified). Basic philosophical issues connected with religious belief such as the nature and existence of God, the problem of evil, miracles, and the significance of religious experience. PREREQ: PHIL 209 and PHIL 210.

PHIL 332 METAPHYSICS (3-0-3)[F]. An investigation of basic problems about the nature of reality. Possible topics include personal identity, the nature of mind, freedom and determinism, and the problems of universals. PREREQ: PHIL 209 and PHIL 210.

PHIL 335 EPistemology (3-0-3)(Offered as justified). An investigation of basic problems concerning knowledge and the justification of belief. Possible topics include attempts to define knowledge and related concepts, the problem of skepticism, and the problem of other minds. PREREQ: PHIL 209 and PHIL 210.

PHIL 337 AESTHETICS (3-0-3)(Offered as justified). The philosophy of the fine arts covering such topics as the existence and nature of works of art, aesthetic experience, artistic creativity, the species of aesthetic value, and the nature of beauty. PREREQ: at least one CID course in any discipline.

PHIL 437 ADVANCED PHILOSOPHICAL TOPICS (3-0-3)[F/S]. Detailed examination of a small set of issues within a selected area of philosophy. May be repeated for credit. PREREQ: PHIL 209, PHIL 210 and PERM/INSTR.

PHIL 441 (POLS 441) CLASSICAL POLITICAL THOUGHT (3-0-3)[F](Odd years). Development of political philosophy from Socrates to Machiavelli. May be taken for either POLS or PHIL credit, but not both. PREREQ: POLS 101, 141 or PHIL 101.

PHIL 442 (POLS 442) MODERN POLITICAL THOUGHT (3-0-3)[S](Even years). Development of political thought since Machiavelli. May be taken for either POLS or PHIL credit, but not both. PREREQ: POLS 101, 141 or PHIL 101.

PHIL 443 (POLS 443) CONTEMPORARY POLITICAL THOUGHT (3-0-3)[F](Odd years), (3-0-3)[F](Even years). Major trends in political thought from the post-French Revolutionary era, which may include German idealism, historicism, existentialism, nihilism, and Marxism. May be taken for either POLS or PHIL credit, but not both. PREREQ: POLS 101, 141 or PHIL 101.

PHIL 489 SENIOR RESEARCH (3-0-3)[F]. Directed research culminating in a writing sample, suitable for graduate school applications. PREREQ: Senior standing in philosophy major and PERM/CHAIR.

PHIL 495 SENIOR COMPREHENSIVE ASSESSMENT (1-0-1)[F/S](FF). Capstone experience resulting in a portfolio of student work. PREREQ: Senior standing in philosophy major and PERM/INST.

Physical Education——see Department of Kinesiology

Physical Therapy, Pre-Professional Program——see Department of Community and Environmental Health

Physician Assistant, Pre-Professional Program——see Department of Community and Environmental Health