

College of Charleston

Department of Philosophy



PHILOSOPHY STUDENT HANDBOOK
2013—2014

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What is Philosophy?¹

Philosophy is unlike any other field. It is unique both in its methods and in the nature and breadth of its subject matter. Philosophy pursues questions in every dimension of human life, and its techniques apply to problems in any field of study or endeavor.

Philosophy is not a factual discipline like chemistry or biology. It is, instead, a kind of questioning of world views. Most of us adopt, without realizing that we do, our own society's conventional assumptions about what the world is like. As a result, we tend to take our own picture of the world and our place in it for granted. By asking what reasons there are for accepting one conception of the world over another, philosophy questions conventional wisdom about, for example, the rationality of religion, the nature of morality, the desirability of a capitalist economic system, and the possibility of acquiring knowledge. Philosophy also tries to clarify the meaning of those concepts that are fundamental to our understanding of the world, for example, the concepts of moral and artistic goodness, religious faith, equality, and truth. Philosophy thus helps us develop an understanding of the nature of morality, religion, art, political life, and science.

Because philosophy is learned through questioning, speculation, and rational argumentation, it stresses the importance of being an active seeker of understanding and not a passive recipient of information. And because philosophy involves the critical analysis of such a broad range of issues, including the conceptual starting points of other disciplines, philosophy has a place in every area of human inquiry.



¹Portions of this Handbook are adapted from the [Undergraduate Catalog](#), a publication of The College of Charleston, and [Philosophy: A Brief Guide for Undergraduates](#), a publication of the American Philosophical Association.

Why Study Philosophy?

The study of philosophy strengthens intellectual skills that are crucial for both academic and career success. One of the most important of these is the ability to solve problems in an organized fashion. Philosophy's emphasis on argumentation will help you learn how to construct good arguments and to criticize weak ones. You will learn to develop and defend your own views and to appreciate competing positions. The study of philosophy will develop your capacities to organize ideas and to extract what is essential from masses of information.



As the pace of economic and technological change continues to quicken, these skills will only increase in value. Because few of us can predict how our jobs will change in twenty or thirty years, continued career success depends on the ability to adapt to new tasks and quickly understand what is essential to doing those tasks well. The critical thinking and research techniques you learn in philosophy will allow you to excel in any endeavor which requires you to gather and analyze information. Philosophy majors have been shown to do better than others on graduate admissions tests, and they are accepted in graduate programs, especially at law schools, and a disproportionately high rate.

But the long-range value of philosophical study will go far beyond its contribution to your livelihood. Philosophy broadens your range of understanding and enjoyment. It can give self-knowledge, foresight, and a sense of direction. Through its contribution to your powers of expression and clear thinking, it will nurture your intellectual independence and self-esteem. Through its emphasis on critical exchange, philosophy will make you a better citizen of a democracy and of the world.

Areas of Philosophy

Logic is concerned with providing methods for distinguishing good from bad reasoning. It helps us to assess how well our premises support our conclusions, to see what we are committed to accepting when we take a position and to discover assumptions we did not know we were making. It also helps us understand how to support our own beliefs with reasons and evidence.

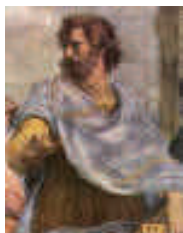


Ethics analyzes the meanings of our moral concepts--such as moral obligation, equality, and justice--and formulates principles to guide our moral decisions. What are our moral obligations to others? Can moral disagreements be rationally settled? Ethics includes a number of important subfields. Business and medical ethics address issues that arise in the business world and the health professions: Is abortion or physician-assisted suicide morally justifiable? Do corporations have obligations to contribute to society? Is preferential hiring just? Political philosophy concerns the justification for--and the limits of--government control over individuals. It also examines the nature of and possible arguments for various competing forms of political organization, such as laissez-faire capitalism, welfare democracy, anarchism, communism, and fascism.

Metaphysics seeks basic criteria for determining what sorts of things are real. Are there mental, physical, and abstract things (such as numbers), for instance, or are there only the physical and the spiritual, or merely matter and energy? Metaphysics includes questions about the relation of the mind to the body (e.g., is the mind merely a complex physical system, or do minds have special non-physical properties?) and questions about the nature and existence of God.

Epistemology concerns the nature and scope of human knowledge. What sorts of things can be known? What is the nature of truth? What are the limits of self-knowledge? Epistemology also includes a subfield (philosophy of science) concerned specifically with the nature of scientific knowledge.

The **History of Philosophy** studies major philosophers and entire periods in the history of philosophy. It includes the study of major movements (e.g., empiricism, idealism and existentialism) as well as the philosophy of particular cultures (e.g., American philosophy) and time periods (e.g., ancient philosophy).



The Philosophy Major & Minor

The College offers both a major and a minor in philosophy. Students can also choose a concentration in Politics, Philosophy, and Law. The philosophy major is quite flexible and can be adapted to your needs and interests. You can, for example, major in philosophy while pursuing a pre-med or pre-law curriculum. It is also possible to combine your study of philosophy with the study of another discipline through a double major or by minoring in another field.



At the time you declare your major, you will have an interview with the Department Chair and choose an advisor. Your advisor will help you develop a course of study that focuses on the areas of philosophy that most interest you. It is important to complete the logic and history of philosophy requirements as soon as possible, because these courses provide essential background and introduce you to the history, methods, and subfields of philosophy. History of Ancient Philosophy (PHIL 201) is offered every fall semester, and History of Modern Philosophy (PHIL 202) is offered every spring semester. The Seminar in Philosophy (PHIL 450) is the capstone of the major and is usually offered every semester. The topic of the Seminar varies; recent Seminars have been held on Personal Identity, Consciousness, Natural Beauty, and David Hume.

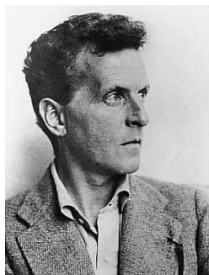


Philosophy Major Requirements

The major in Philosophy requires 33 semester hours in Philosophy, which must include the following:

- Φ Symbolic Logic (120);
- Φ History of Ancient Philosophy (201) & History of Modern Philosophy (202);
- Φ Twenty-one additional hours in philosophy, twelve of which must be taken in courses at or above the 200-level, and at least nine of these hours must be at or above the 300-level. *Note: A maximum of six hours of PHIL 398, 399, or 499 may be taken to satisfy the requirement of nine elective hours at or above the 300-level.*
- Φ Seminar in Philosophy (450).





Concentration in Politics, Philosophy, and Law

Complete all the usual requirements for the Philosophy or Political Science major, taking the new PPLW 400 as your senior seminar. In addition, complete the following 18 credit hours:

Φ Political Philosophy (PHIL 209) or Introduction to Political Thought (POLI 150);

Φ Constitutional Law (POLI 320);

Φ Philosophy of Law (PHIL 270) or Jurisprudence (POLI 380)

Φ Take any two of the following elective courses:

Topics in Law and Morality (PHIL 206); Philosophy, Law, and the Arts (PHIL 210); Topics in Political and Social Philosophy (PHIL 315); Topics in Gender, Theory, and Law (POLI 292); Law and Society (POLI 295); Civil Liberties (POLI 321); Geography of Native Lands/Indian Law (POLI 331); The Judiciary (POLI 332); International Human Rights Law (POLI 360); International Law and Organization (POLI 363); Contemporary Liberalism (POLI 390);. *Additional courses on suitable topics may be approved for credit by the director.*

Φ Seminar in Politics, Philosophy, and Law (PPLW 400).

PPLW 400 will be offered first in Fall 2013. Students planning to graduate with the concentration in 2012 – 13 should arrange an alternative with the chair of their major.

Philosophy Minor Requirements

The minor in Philosophy requires 18 semester hours in Philosophy, which must include the following:

Φ Introduction to Philosophy (101);

Φ Symbolic Logic (120);

Φ One history of philosophy course (201, 202, 304, 305, 306, 307, or 310);

Φ Three additional courses in Philosophy, two of which must be at or above the 200-level.

Faculty

Jennifer Baker (Associate Professor) has a B.A. in Philosophy and Political Theory from Brown University (1995). She received her Ph.D. in Philosophy from the University of Arizona (2003). She works on virtue theory, and her research explores how contemporary ethical theory, applied ethics, and even political theory might be improved if ancient models were taken more seriously.

Deborah Boyle (Associate Professor) has a B.A. in Philosophy from Wellesley College (1989) and a Ph.D. in Philosophy from the University of Pittsburgh (1999). Her main research interests are in the history of modern philosophy. She has published articles on Descartes and Hume, and has recently become interested in the writings of two seventeenth-century women philosophers, Anne Conway and Margaret Cavendish.

Scott Clifton (Visiting Assistant Professor) has a BA in literature from the University of North Carolina-Asheville (2000), a BA in philosophy from Auburn University (2003), an MA in philosophy from Georgia State University (2005), and a Ph.D. in philosophy from the University of Washington-Seattle (2013). His areas of specialization are ethics (especially virtue ethics), aesthetics (especially literature & film), and moral psychology, with strong research interests in the role of empathy & other emotions in moral reasoning, the nature of emotion, and purported connections between art & morality. He also has teaching interests in applied ethics, medical ethics, philosophy of mind, & Nietzsche.

Christian Coseru (Associate Professor) is a graduate of the University of Bucharest (B.A., M.A.) in Philosophy and the Australian National University (Ph.D.). His research interests are fairly broad, ranging from Indian and Buddhist philosophy to Hellenistic philosophy, cross-cultural hermeneutics, and philosophy of mind. His most recent research focuses on classical Indian theories of perception and the contemporary reception of the Dignaga-Dharmakirti school of Buddhist logic and epistemology.

Todd Grantham (Professor and Chair) is a graduate of DePauw University (B.A.) and Northwestern University (M.A., Ph.D.). His research focuses on philosophical issues that arise in relation to evolutionary biology and genetics. His publications address issues such as: the nature of biological species, units of selection, evolutionary psychology, evolutionary epistemology, reductionism/emergence, explanatory pluralism, and phylogeny reconstruction. He received a Professional Development Fellowship from the National Science Foundation and served as an Associate Editor for Philosophy of Science.

Ned Hettinger (Professor) has a B.A. in Economics and Philosophy from Denison University (1975) and Ph.D. in Philosophy from the University of Colorado at Boulder (1985). His area of specialization is environmental philosophy, particularly environmental ethics and aesthetics. He's particularly interested in how environmental aesthetics relates to environmental protection. For a number of years, he coordinated the College's Environmental Studies minor. He has published several dozen papers, including articles on intellectual property, biotechnology, predation, disequilibrium ecology, wilderness value, environmental disobedience, animal beauty, objectivity in environmental aesthetics, nature restoration, and exotic species.

Sheridan Hough (Professor) is a graduate of Trinity University (B.A.) in English and Philosophy and the University of California at Berkeley (Ph.D.) in Philosophy. She is a specialist in Nietzsche scholarship (her book, *Nietzsche's Noontide Friend*, was published in 1997 by Penn State University Press), but she is also very interested in the central preoccupations of 19th and 20th Century Continental thought such as the constitution of the self and the nature of our ethical claims. She also thinks a lot about the kinds of connections between philosophy and the reading and writing of fiction.

Larry Krasnoff (Professor) has a B.A. in History and Mathematics from Williams College (1985) and a Ph.D. in Philosophy from Johns Hopkins University (1992). His main interests are in moral and political philosophy and in the history of philosophy; especially interested in Kant and Hegel. He has recently published *Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit: An Introduction* (Cambridge, 2008). He also is the co-editor of *New Essays on the History of Autonomy* (Cambridge, 2004), and has published papers in the *European Journal of Philosophy*, the *Journal of Philosophy*, and *Kant-Studien*. He is also Associate Director of the Jewish Studies program.

Glenn Lesses (Professor) earned his B.A. from the University of Rochester and his Ph.D. in Philosophy from Indiana University. His principal research interests are in ancient Greek philosophy and especially concern topics in Socrates, Plato, and Hellenistic philosophy. He is currently working on the emotions in Hellenistic and Stoic philosophy. Among his publications are contributions to *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy*, *Apeiron*, and *Phronesis*. He has been a recipient of a National Endowment for the Humanities Fellowship for College Teachers and a Grant-in-Aid from the American Council of Learned Societies.

Thomas Nadelhoffer (Assistant Professor) has a B.A. in Philosophy from the University of Georgia; an M.A. in Philosophy from Georgia State University; and Ph.D. in Philosophy from Florida State University. He specializes in the philosophy of mind and action, moral psychology, and the philosophy of law—which were the focus of his research during his time as a post-doctoral fellow with The MacArthur Foundation Law and Neuroscience Project (2009-2011). His articles have appeared in journals such as *Analysis*, *Philosophy and Phenomenological Reports*, *Mind & Language*, and *Neuroethics*. Professor Nadelhoffer also recently edited *The Future of Punishment and Retribution* (Oxford University Press 2013) and he co-edited (with Eddy Nahmias and Shaun Nichols) *Moral Psychology: Historical and Contemporary Readings* (Wiley-Blackwell 2010). He is presently working on a book manuscript which is tentatively entitled *The Promises and Perils of Bioprediction*.

Jonathan Neufeld (Assistant Professor) has a B.A. in Political Science from the University of Minnesota; an M.A. in Philosophy from King's College, London; and a Ph.D. in Philosophy from the Columbia University. His research interests are in philosophy and music, aesthetics, political philosophy, and philosophy of law. He is particularly interested in the public and deliberative aspects of performance and interpretation and has published articles on the musical performance, the relationship between music and the public sphere, art and politics, and the concept of reasonable disagreement. He is completing two book projects: *Music in Public: How Performance Shapes Democracy* and *Listeners, Critics, and Judges*. He also plays the viola and writes music criticism.

Richard Nunan (Professor) earned his B.A. in Mathematics at Vassar College, and completed his Ph.D. in Philosophy at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill. His research interests are a trifle eclectic, but focus primarily on issues related to philosophy of law and political philosophy. He is working currently on some issues related to same-sex marriage, the concept of gender identity, and legal moralism. He served for a number of years as editor of the *American Philosophical Association's Newsletter on Philosophy and Law*.

Martin Perlmutter (Professor) received his Ph.D. at the University of Illinois in Urbana-Champaign in 1974. He joined the College of Charleston in 1979, after teaching at the University of Texas at Austin and the University of Tennessee at Nashville. A long-time member of the Medical University Hospital's Ethics Committee, his teaching interests include philosophy of religion, ethics, and medical ethics. He is Director of the Jewish Studies Program at the College of Charleston.

Student Research & Independent Study

The Philosophy Department considers independent work a vital part of the undergraduate experience and is committed to helping each student develop a workable, sound, and satisfying program of study tailored to the individual student's interests. Requiring our students to meet regularly with their advisors is one crucial way we help students plan a coherent sequence of courses. In addition, we offer three opportunities for students to conduct research in collaboration with a faculty mentor: the Tutorial, the Bachelor's Essay, and the Student Research Associate program. Students interested in pursuing independent research in philosophy should contact their advisor or the department chair.

Philosophy Tutorial (PHIL 399)

The Philosophy Tutorial is a structured program of reading and research on a specific topic not adequately covered in our curriculum. Tutorials allow students to “fill gaps” in their knowledge, extend the knowledge they already have (e.g., studying Davidson's Philosophy of Language after a general philosophy of language course), or cross the usual lines between disciplines (e.g., examining one aspect of the relationship between Economics and Philosophy). Tutorials usually involve extensive reading, weekly meetings, and at least one substantial paper. However, since the essence of Tutorial method is its flexibility, instructors are free to tailor the requirements to the specific project. In addition, some latitude should be allowed so that the student and the supervising professor can adjust the reading or research, without being held rigidly to the plan of study submitted the previous term. Good tutorials should be allowed to develop as they go along.

Some recent Philosophy Tutorials:

- Spinoza and Leibniz
- Mill's Harm Principle: Critics and Defenders
- Dostoevsky and Existentialism
- Shantideva's Moral Philosophy
- Empirical Research About Virtue Ethics
- The Metaphysics of Personal Identity

Student Research Associate Program (PHIL 398)

The Student Research Associate Program allows strong students to conduct their own research projects under the guidance of a faculty mentor, or to participate in a substantive way in a faculty member's research project. Normally, Student Research Associates present their work at the annual Philosophy Student Research Colloquium.

Bachelor's Essay (PHIL 499)

The Bachelor's Essay is a year-long research and writing project carrying six (6) hours of credit. It is normally taken during the senior year under the close guidance of the supervising professor. The subject of the Bachelor's Essay must be appropriate for a substantial research project. Typically, the essay will be 35-50 pages, though the exact length of the essay will necessarily vary.

Students should begin work on the Bachelor's Essay with a well-defined topic so they can investigate their subject thoroughly. During the Fall semester, the student should meet regularly with the supervisor to discuss their progress and to clarify and refine the topic. Writing should not be postponed until the Spring; rather, students should begin writing early and should submit drafts of sections to the supervisor for critical review periodically throughout the year. A complete draft must be submitted to the tutor by April 10, including a 1-2 page abstract for distribution to department faculty. The final copy must be submitted to the tutor by May 1. The student will present and defend the essay at the annual Philosophy Student Research Colloquium. Bachelor's Essays are catalogued and retained in the collection of the College library.

Some Recent Philosophy Bachelor's Essays

- Alvin Plantinga and Warranted Belief
- Authenticity and Mass Media
- The Recent Political Theory of Martha Nussbaum
- Simone de Beauvoir's Existentialist Ethics
- Neuroscience and Free Will
- Philosophical Hermeneutics: Hans Georg Gadamer
- Knowledge and Faith in Thomas Aquinas

Procedures and Deadlines

1. *Find a supervisor.* Normally, the student initiates the process by proposing a topic to the prospective supervisor. If the supervisor agrees that the topic is appropriate, the student and mentor will work out a plan of study. If you are unsure who might supervise your project, consult with the department chair or your advisor.
2. *Draft the proposal.* Having secured a supervisor, the student, in consultation with the supervisor, will complete an "Application for Individual Enrollment" (available through the tutor). The application asks you to prepare a 1-2 page project description, including:
 - the topic to be studied;
 - the plan of study (How often will the student meet with the supervisor? How will the study be organized?);
 - specification of how the grade will be determined; and
 - tentative reading list.
3. *Meet the deadline.* **Please pay close attention to the application deadlines (listed in the Summary, below).** Although these deadlines may be extended for extenuating circumstances (e.g., study abroad in the preceding semester), understand that a late proposal will bias the department against the project. Independent research requires organization and discipline; if the student is not sufficiently organized to meet the deadline, it is natural to worry that s/he is not sufficiently organized to successfully complete the project.

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4. *Departmental Review.* Applications for all three programs require departmental approval. The department chair will distribute applications to all department faculty members, who review the applications and may recommend revisions or approve them as submitted. After departmental approval, the department chair signs the application and the student is registered. The deadlines are in place to allow sufficient time for this review process before you register in the course.
5. *If you're an Honor's College Student.* Applications for Bachelor's Essays in Philosophy which are being submitted for credit in HONS 499 (Bachelor's Essays for students in the Honors Program) require approval by both the Philosophy Department and the Honors Program Advisory Committee prior to registration for the course.

Summary of Requirements and Deadlines

Student Research Associate (1-3 credit hours; repeatable up to 6 credit hours)

Prerequisites: Junior standing, overall GPA of at least 3.25, and departmental approval

Application: November 15 for spring semester, April 15 for fall semester

Philosophy Student Research Colloquium presentation: Mid-April

Philosophy Tutorial (3 credit hours; repeatable for up to 12)

Prerequisites: Junior standing, 6 credit hours in Phil, plus approval by tutor and department.

Application: November 15 for spring semester, April 15 for fall semester

Bachelor's Essay: PHIL 499 (6 credit hours)

Prerequisites: Senior standing, Philosophy major, overall GPA of at least 3.25, approval by supervisor and department

Application: Due April 15 of student's junior year. (Exception: students who will be away from the College any of the last three semesters or who will be doing clinical practice in education in their final semester should submit their applications by November 15 of their junior year.)

Completion: A complete draft (including with 1-2 page abstract) due early April; present and defend the essay at the Philosophy Student Research Colloquium (Mid-April). Final copy due May 1.

Student Activities and Facilities

The Department sponsors many activities for Philosophy majors and other students at the College. The student-run [Philosophical Society](#) is an excellent way to meet students with common interests outside of class. Each year the club members and officers plan activities of interest to Philosophy students. The club sponsors discussions and films of philosophical interest. They also sponsor a meeting with faculty to discuss graduate school opportunities and an oyster roast in the spring.

Each year the Department sponsors several visiting speakers of interest to students and faculty. Speakers often visit classes during their stay at the College and meet informally with students and faculty. Students can also attend and submit papers for the annual meeting of the South Carolina Society for Philosophy – an interesting way to meet philosophy students and faculty from other colleges, and hear professional presentations

The Department Office and faculty mailboxes are located at 14 Glebe Street. The Administrative Assistant is Kate Kenney-Newhard (14 Glebe, Room 101). The Department Chair is Todd Grantham (14 Glebe, Room 202). They will be able to answer questions you may have about the Department. Most Philosophy faculty offices are in 14 and 16 Glebe.

The Department is housed in historic Charleston single houses with attractive piazzas and gardens. The second floor porches have tables and chairs and are nice places to study. The Department also has a lounge/conference room and a kitchen in 14 Glebe, for use by both students and faculty. Students are encouraged to make use of this space – to peruse papers by our faculty, read *Philosophy Now* and *New York Times*, meet with fellow students for a study group, or as a quiet place to study at off hours.

The Philosophy Department is relatively small and informal. You will find the professors accessible and helpful. Our facilities are intended to serve as an academic “home” for our students, and we hope that you make good use of them.



14 Glebe Street



Students studying in the lounge

What Have Our Philosophy Graduates Done?

Our Philosophy majors seem ready to do just about anything. Many go into business, especially in management and sales. Others work in service positions in the private and public sectors. Some become teachers. Still others go on to graduate and professional school, with recent graduates seeking degrees in philosophy, religious studies, psychology, literature, education, and medicine. The single most common course for our students is law school and the practice of law. Here are some examples:

Pre-Professional (Law and Medicine)

Morgan Arvidson, M.D. ('01) attended the Medical University of South Carolina and now practices medicine in North Carolina.

Edwin Swan ('06) received a JD degree (top 5% of his class) from Georgetown University and is now a junior associate with Baker and McKenzie.

Michael Murza ('11) and **Eric Campbell ('10)** attend law school at University of California (Davis) and the University of South Carolina, respectively.

Graduate School

Justin Halberda ('97) received his Ph.D. from New York University and is now a tenured Associate Professor at Johns Hopkins University.

Andrew Aghapour ('07) completed an M.Phil at Oxford and is now pursuing a doctoral degree in Religious Studies at the University of North Carolina (Chapel Hill).

Daniel Weissglass ('11) entered the doctoral program in Philosophy at the City University of New York.

Public Service

Kristen Steele ('05) is a project manager for the Thunderhead alliance, a national coalition of bike and pedestrian advocacy groups.

Adam Limehouse ('06) and **Joseph Saei ('10)** both served in the Peace Corps.

Leigh Dekle ('10) participated in Teach for America.

Other Interesting Pursuits...

Brad Saville ('02) is an independent filmmaker, playwright, and novelist working in NYC.

Amberjade Taylor ('11) attended the University of Virginia's Summer Intensive Tibetan Language Program, and will pursue field research among the Tibetan Buddhist nuns of the Himalayas.