DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY (GRAD)

Contact Information
Department of Philosophy
Visit Program Website (http://philosophy.unc.edu)
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The graduate program in philosophy is designed to equip students to engage with both perennial and cutting-edge philosophical enquiry. The program is intended to prepare students for college and university positions in philosophy.

The Department of Philosophy offers a program of study leading to the Ph.D. in philosophy. Prerequisite for admission to graduate work in the department is a B.A. degree or equivalent, typically with a major in philosophy, with a broad range of courses. Students earn an M.A. as part of the Ph.D. program.

The department offers several nonservice fellowships. These include the Graham Kenan Fellowship and the Horace Williams, Mary Taylor Williams, and Bertha Colton Williams Fellowships. The department has available teaching assistantships with stipends of over $15,000. In addition, several kinds of UNC—Chapel Hill fellowships and teaching assistantships are available, some from The Graduate School (https://gradschool.unc.edu/funding/gradschool/fellowshipsandgrants.html) and others from the department. Total financial support per year (including income from summer teaching) currently ranges from $22,300 to $31,000 (for a student who wins The Graduate School’s highly competitive five-year fellowship (https://gradschool.unc.edu/funding/gradschool/roysterfellowship.html)), along with full tuition, student fees, and health insurance. Please refer to the funding section of the department’s Web site (http://philosophy.unc.edu/graduate/funding) for up-to-date information about graduate support.

The department maintains close relations with the Department of Philosophy at Duke University (https://philosophy.duke.edu). Graduate students from either institution may register for credit in graduate courses or seminars at the other institution and may include faculty members from either on their dissertation committees. Library facilities are available to students at each institution.

Candidates for the master’s degree must satisfactorily complete 30 semester hours of graduate work. They are normally required to participate in a first-year program including PHIL 700 and PHIL 455/LING 455; there may be adjustments with the consent of the department. Successfully completing an M.A. thesis is a condition for receiving the degree of master of arts.

Candidates for the doctoral degree must satisfactorily complete 60 semester hours of graduate work, including six hours of Ph.D. dissertation credit.

The candidate for the degree of doctor of philosophy must pass two examinations. First, there is the Admission to Candidacy examination, which itself has two parts: a written general portion and a special oral portion. The written portion, normally taken in the spring term of the third year, is in the student’s field of specialization. The oral portion tests the feasibility of the dissertation proposal and is normally taken in the fall term of the fourth year. Second, there is an oral defense of the completed dissertation. For further details on degree requirements, see The Graduate School Handbook (https://gradschool.unc.edu/handbook).

More information about the philosophy graduate program may be found on the department’s Web site (http://philosophy.unc.edu).

Following the faculty member's name is a section number that students should use when registering for independent studies, reading, research, and thesis and dissertation courses with that particular professor.

Distinguished Professors
Marc Lange (44), Philosophy of Science, Metaphysics, Epistemology C. D. C. Reeve (39), Ancient Philosophy, Metaphysics, Moral Psychology, Ethics
Geoffrey Sayre-McCord (25), Moral Theory, Metaphysics, Epistemology, History of Modern Philosophy
Susan Wolf (40), Moral Theory and Moral Psychology

Distinguished Research Professors
Simon Blackburn (28), Philosophy of Mind, Philosophy of Language, Philosophy of Psychology, Metaethics
Geoffrey Brennan (23), Political Philosophy, Economics, Rationality

Professors
Luc Bovens (52), Philosophy and Public Policy, Rationality, Moral Psychology, Formal Epistemology
Thomas Hofweber (42), Metaphysics, Philosophy of Language, Epistemology, Philosophy of Mathematics
Mariska Leunissen (41), Ancient Philosophy, Philosophy of Science

Douglas MacLean (38), Moral Theory, Social and Political Philosophy
Alan Nelson (36), History of Modern Philosophy
Ram Neta (43), Epistemology, Philosophy of Mind
James Pryor (57), Epistemology, Philosophy of Language, Logic, Philosophy of Mind, Philosophy of Action, Metaphysics
John T. Roberts (37), Philosophy of Science, Philosophy of Physics, Philosophy of Science
Sarah Stroud (54), Moral Theory, Moral Psychology, Metaethics, Philosophy of Action
Rebecca Walker (53), Bioethics, Ethical Theory

Associate Professors
Thomas Dougherty (55), Ethics, Political Philosophy
Markus Kohl (51), History of Modern Philosophy, History of Ancient Philosophy, Moral Psychology, Existentialism
Matthew Kotzen (46), Epistemology, Philosophy of Science
Jennifer Morton (56), Moral Theory, Political Philosophy, Philosophy of Action, Philosophy of Education
Alexander Worsnip (50), Epistemology, Metaethics, Theory of Rationality

Assistant Professor
Carla Merino-Rajme (47), Metaphysics, Philosophy of Mind

Professors Emeriti
Stanley Munsat Gerald J. Postema Michael D. Resnik Robert D. Vance
PHIL 427. Hegel. 3 Credits.  
In-depth study of Hegel’s systematic philosophy emphasizing its roots in Kant’s critical philosophy. Primary focus on Phenomenology of Spirit, supplemented by selections from the Encyclopedia and Philosophy of Right.  
Repeat rules: May be repeated for credit. 6 total credits. 2 total completions.  
Grading status: Letter grade.

PHIL 428. History of American Philosophy. 3 Credits.  
An in-depth study of American contributions to philosophy, including for example the transcendentalists, the pragmatists, Quine, Rorty, and others.  
Repeat rules: May be repeated for credit. 6 total credits. 2 total completions.  
Grading status: Letter grade.

PHIL 432. The Beginnings of Analytic Philosophy. 3 Credits.  
Two courses in philosophy other than PHIL 155 strongly recommended. Frege, Russell, Moore, and Wittgenstein among others are considered.  
Repeat rules: May be repeated for credit. 6 total credits. 2 total completions.  
Grading status: Letter grade.

PHIL 433. Current Issues in Analytic Philosophy. 3 Credits.  
Two courses in philosophy other than PHIL 155 strongly recommended. Recent work in epistemology and metaphysics.  
Repeat rules: May be repeated for credit. 9 total credits. 3 total completions.  
Grading status: Letter grade.

PHIL 440. Philosophy of Mind. 3 Credits.  
At least two courses in philosophy other than PHIL 155, including PHIL 340, strongly recommended. An examination of dualism, behaviorism, the identity theory, and forms of functionalism with special focus on the problems of mental aboutness and the problems of consciousness.  
Repeat rules: May be repeated for credit. 6 total credits. 2 total completions.  
Grading status: Letter grade.

PHIL 445. Advanced Philosophy of Language. 3 Credits.  
At least two courses in philosophy other than PHIL 155, including PHIL 345, strongly recommended. A study of important contemporary contributions in philosophy of language. Topics include meaning, reference, and truth.  
Repeat rules: May be repeated for credit. 6 total credits. 2 total completions.  
Grading status: Letter grade.  
Same as: LING 410, LING 445.

PHIL 450. Philosophy of Natural Sciences. 3 Credits.  
An in-depth survey of general issues in contemporary philosophy of natural science intended for advanced philosophy students. Topics include confirmation, explanation, theory-choice, realism, reduction.  
Gen Ed: PH.  
Repeat rules: May be repeated for credit. 6 total credits. 2 total completions.  
Grading status: Letter grade.

PHIL 451. Philosophy of Physics. 3 Credits.  
Topics may include the nature of space and time, the ontological status of fields and energy, or causation and locality in quantum physics.  
Gen Ed: PL.  
Repeat rules: May be repeated for credit. 6 total credits. 2 total completions.  
Grading status: Letter grade.
PHIL 452. Philosophy of Biology. 3 Credits.
The logical structure of evolutionary theory, fitness, taxonomy, the notion of a living thing, reductionism, evolutionary explanations, teleology.
Repeat rules: May be repeated for credit. 6 total credits. 2 total completions.
Grading status: Letter grade.

PHIL 453. Philosophy of Psychology. 3 Credits.
Topics may include reasoning, the relationship between language and thought, concepts, moral cognition, and emotions.
Gen Ed: SS.
Repeat rules: May be repeated for credit. 6 total credits. 2 total completions.
Grading status: Letter grade.

PHIL 454. Philosophy, History, and the Social Sciences. 3 Credits.
The nature of historical explanation, structural and functional explanation, the weighing of historical testimony, the concept of meaning, normative judgments and predictions in the social sciences.
Repeat rules: May be repeated for credit. 6 total credits. 2 total completions.
Grading status: Letter grade.

PHIL 455. Symbolic Logic. 3 Credits.
Introduction for graduates and advanced undergraduates.
Gen Ed: QR.
Repeat rules: May be repeated for credit. 6 total credits. 2 total completions.
Grading status: Letter grade
Same as: LING 455.

PHIL 456. Advanced Symbolic Logic. 3 Credits.
Presupposes propositional and quantificational logic as a basis of further deductive development with special attention to selected topics: alternative systems, modal and deontic logic, inductive logic, the grammar of formalized languages, paradoxes, and foundations of mathematics.
Requisites: Prerequisite, PHIL 455.
Gen Ed: QI.
Repeat rules: May be repeated for credit. 12 total credits. 4 total completions.
Grading status: Letter grade.

PHIL 457. Set Theory and Logic. 3 Credits.
Natural and real numbers. Infinite cardinal and ordinal numbers. Alternative axiom systems and their consistency problems.
Requisites: Prerequisite, PHIL 455; permission of the instructor for students lacking the prerequisite.
Repeat rules: May be repeated for credit. 6 total credits. 2 total completions.
Grading status: Letter grade.

PHIL 459. Philosophy of Mathematics. 3 Credits.
Philosophical problems concerning logic and the foundation of mathematics.
Repeat rules: May be repeated for credit. 6 total credits. 2 total completions.
Grading status: Letter grade.

PHIL 460. History of Moral Philosophy. 3 Credits.
Examination of classic texts of Plato, Aristotle, Aquinas, Hobbes, Butler, Hume, Kant, and Mill. Selections may vary from year to year.
Requisites: Prerequisite, Two courses in philosophy other than PHIL 155, including PHIL 360, strongly recommended.
Gen Ed: PH.
Repeat rules: May be repeated for credit. 6 total credits. 2 total completions.
Grading status: Letter grade.

PHIL 462. Contemporary Moral Philosophy. 3 Credits.
Advanced discussion of moral issues such as fact and value, reason and morality, the nature of morality.
Requisites: Prerequisite, two courses in philosophy other than PHIL 155, including PHIL 362.
Gen Ed: PH.
Repeat rules: May be repeated for credit. 9 total credits. 3 total completions.
Grading status: Letter grade.

PHIL 463. Contemporary Moral and Social Problems. 3 Credits.
Two courses in philosophy other than PHIL 155 strongly recommended. A detailed examination of one or more of the following contemporary issues: environmental ethics, animal rights, abortion, euthanasia, pornography, racism, sexism, public versus private morality.
Repeat rules: May be repeated for credit. 6 total credits. 2 total completions.
Grading status: Letter grade.

PHIL 465. Justice in Health Care. 3 Credits.
One course in philosophy strongly recommended. Medical students welcome. The course will focus on the question of how scarce health care resources ought to be distributed in order to meet the demands of justice.
Repeat rules: May be repeated for credit. 6 total credits. 2 total completions.
Grading status: Letter grade.

PHIL 468. Risk and Society. 3 Credits.
One additional course in philosophy strongly recommended. The course examines attitudes toward risk and how they affect our preferences for different public policies in the areas of environmental protection, technology regulation, and workplace and product safety.
Requisites: Prerequisite, PHIL 155.
Repeat rules: May be repeated for credit. 6 total credits. 2 total completions.
Grading status: Letter grade.

PHIL 470. Political Philosophy from Hobbes to Rousseau. 3 Credits.
Two courses in philosophy other than PHIL 155, including PHIL 170 or 370, strongly recommended. Explores the foundations of justice and authority in the idea of contract or covenant, the nature of law, rights, liberty, and democracy in the work of Hobbes, Locke, Hume, Rousseau.
Gen Ed: PH.
Repeat rules: May be repeated for credit. 6 total credits. 2 total completions.
Grading status: Letter grade.

PHIL 471. Hegel, Marx, and the Philosophical Critique of Society. 3 Credits.
An examination of central issues in social and political philosophy as they figure in the work of Hegel, Marx, Nietzsche, and others.
Repeat rules: May be repeated for credit. 6 total credits. 2 total completions.
Grading status: Letter grade.
PHIL 473. American Political Philosophy. 3 Credits.
One course in philosophy other than PHIL 155 strongly recommended. Juniors and seniors only. The issue of unity and diversity in America is analyzed through the writings of Jefferson, the Federalists and Anti-Federalists, Calhoun, MacKinnon, DuBois, and Rawls.
Gen Ed: US.
Repeat rules: May be repeated for credit. 6 total credits. 2 total completions.
Grading status: Letter grade.

PHIL 474. Foundations of Modern Political Philosophy. 3 Credits.
This course traces the emergence and development of central themes of modern political philosophy from the 13th through the 17th century.
Requisites: Prerequisite, PHIL 170.
Gen Ed: PH.
Repeat rules: May be repeated for credit. 6 total credits. 2 total completions.
Grading status: Letter grade.

PHIL 475. Philosophical Issues in Gender, Race, and Class. 3 Credits.
Examines in greater depth and complexity one or more of the issues addressed in PHIL 275, investigating issues of gender, race, and class within the dominant theories of philosophy.
Requisites: Prerequisite, PHIL 275 or WGST 101.
Gen Ed: US.
Repeat rules: May be repeated for credit. 6 total credits. 2 total completions.
Grading status: Letter grade
Same as: WGST 475.

PHIL 476. Recent Developments in Political Philosophy. 3 Credits.
Two courses in philosophy other than PHIL 155, including PHIL 370, strongly recommended. Investigation of major contemporary contributors (Rawls, Nozick, Dworkin, Cohen, Waldron, Arrow) to philosophical debate concerning justice, equality, liberty, democracy, public reason, or rights versus community.
Gen Ed: PH.
Repeat rules: May be repeated for credit. 9 total credits. 3 total completions.
Grading status: Letter grade.

PHIL 480. Philosophy of Law. 3 Credits.
An exploration of whether and under what conditions the state has the right to control crime by punishment of past crimes and preventive detention to prevent future crimes.
Gen Ed: PH.
Repeat rules: May be repeated for credit. 6 total credits. 2 total completions.
Grading status: Letter grade.

PHIL 482. Philosophy and Literature. 3 Credits.
Philosophical readings of literary texts, including novels, plays, and poems.
Repeat rules: May be repeated for credit. 6 total credits. 2 total completions.
Grading status: Letter grade
Same as: CMPL 482.

PHIL 485. Philosophy of Art. 3 Credits.
Competing theories of art and art criticism. The relationship between art and emotional expression, the formal character of art, and standards of taste.
Repeat rules: May be repeated for credit. 6 total credits. 2 total completions.
Grading status: Letter grade.

PHIL 491. Health Care, Science, and Philosophy. 3 Credits.
Interdisciplinary course to develop critical thinking capacities through philosophical study of the nature of scientific presuppositions and concepts, including events, causality, and determinism, with specific application to health care issues.
Repeat rules: May be repeated for credit. 6 total credits. 2 total completions.
Grading status: Letter grade.

PHIL 494. Existentialism and Phenomenology. 3 Credits.
A study of one or two major systematic works by Sartre, Heidegger, or Merleau-Ponty.
Repeat rules: May be repeated for credit. 6 total credits. 2 total completions.
Grading status: Letter grade.

PHIL 496. Advanced Directed Studies. 1-3 Credits.
Permission of the director of undergraduate studies. Advanced independent work in philosophy.
Repeat rules: May be repeated for credit. 9 total credits. 3 total completions.
Grading status: Letter grade.

PHIL 562. Ethics, Responsibility, and Justice. 1 Credit.
Ethics explores obligations to act in the interest of others as well as ourselves. Justice explores the ways people should organize and govern themselves. Course addresses such questions as, What principles govern our relationships with other people? What do we owe others and ourselves? How should we treat other people?
Repeat rules: May be repeated for credit. 2 total credits. 2 total completions.
Grading status: Pass/Fail.

PHIL 691H. Courses for Honors. 3 Credits.
Permission of the director of undergraduate studies. See the director of undergraduate studies of the department.
Gen Ed: CI, EE- Mentored Research.
Grading status: Letter grade.

PHIL 692H. Courses for Honors. 3 Credits.
Permission of the director of undergraduate studies. See the director of undergraduate studies of the department.
Gen Ed: EE- Mentored Research.
Grading status: Letter grade.

PHIL 698. Philosophy, Politics, and Economics: Capstone Course. 3 Credits.
Permission of the department. This capstone course advances PHIL 384, focusing on such theoretical and philosophical issues as the analysis of rights or distributive justice and the institutional implications of moral forms.
Requisites: Prerequisite, PHIL 384.
Grading status: Letter grade
Same as: ECON 698, POLI 698.
Graduate-Level Courses
PHIL 700. Proto-Seminar in Philosophy. 3 Credits.
PHIL 705. Advanced Studies in Systematic Philosophy. 3 Credits.
PHIL 710. Advanced Studies in Ancient Philosophy. 3 Credits.
PHIL 715. Advanced Studies in Medieval Philosophy. 3 Credits.
PHIL 720. Advanced Studies in Modern Philosophy. 3 Credits.
PHIL 725. Advanced Studies in 19th-Century Philosophy. 3 Credits.
PHIL 730. Advanced Studies in Metaphysics. 3 Credits.
PHIL 735. Advanced Studies in Epistemology. 3 Credits.
PHIL 740. Advanced Studies in Philosophy of Mind. 3 Credits.
PHIL 745. Advanced Studies in Philosophy of Language. 3 Credits.
PHIL 750. Advanced Studies in Philosophy of Science. 3 Credits.
PHIL 755. Advanced Studies in Philosophy of Logic. 3 Credits.
PHIL 760. Advanced Studies in Moral Theory. 3 Credits.
PHIL 765. Advanced Studies in Value Theory. 3 Credits.
PHIL 770. Advanced Studies in Political Philosophy. 3 Credits.
PHIL 775. Advanced Studies in Feminism. 3 Credits.
PHIL 780. Advanced Studies in Philosophy of Law. 3 Credits.
PHIL 785. Advanced Studies in Philosophy, Politics, and Economics. 3 Credits.
This course provides Philosophy graduate students with the background to teach PPE courses. It covers core ideas in Economics and Political Science, Rationality, the Market, Inequality, Causal Inference, with the aim of analyzing social problems in PPE style.
Grading status: Letter grade.
PHIL 790. Colloquium Series Seminar. 3 Credits.
PHIL 800. Pre-Dissertation Seminar in Philosophy. 3 Credits.
PHIL 805. Research Seminar in Systematic Philosophy. 3 Credits.
PHIL 810. Research Seminar in Ancient Philosophy. 3 Credits.
PHIL 815. Research Seminar in Medieval Philosophy. 3 Credits.
PHIL 820. Research Seminar in Modern Philosophy. 3 Credits.
PHIL 825. Research Seminar in 19-Century Philosophy. 3 Credits.
PHIL 830. Research Seminar in Metaphysics. 3 Credits.
PHIL 835. Research Seminar in Epistemology. 3 Credits.
PHIL 840. Research Seminar in Philosophy of Mind. 3 Credits.
PHIL 845. Research Seminar in Philosophy of Language. 3 Credits.
PHIL 850. Research Seminar in Philosophy of Science. 3 Credits.
PHIL 855. Research Seminar in Philosophy of Logic. 3 Credits.
PHIL 860. Research Seminar in Moral Theory. 3 Credits.
PHIL 865. Research Seminar in Value Theory. 3 Credits.
PHIL 870. Research Seminar in Political Philosophy. 3 Credits.
PHIL 880. Research Seminar in Philosophy of Law. 3 Credits.
PHIL 901. Readings in Philosophy. 3 Credits.
PHIL 990. Current Research Group Seminar. 3 Credits.
PHIL 993. Master's Research and Thesis. 3 Credits.
PHIL 994. Doctoral Research and Dissertation. 3 Credits.