

# PHILOSOPHY (BA)

Chair: Philip Reed, PhD

## Introduction

Philosophy probes into some of the deepest questions of human life. What is the nature of reality? What is truth? What is happiness? What is justice? The philosophy curriculum explores these — and many other — fundamental questions and helps students to formulate reasonable answers to these questions.

## A Cornerstone of Jesuit Education

Philosophy has been a cornerstone of Jesuit education since the founding of the first Jesuit colleges and universities in 17th century Europe. Educators at Jesuit colleges and universities in the United States continue to recognize the special province of philosophy to: Embrace our human powers to think abstractly and thus to cultivate models of mental discipline and to broaden our capacities to understand and to enjoy living. Raise critical questions and use reasoned argumentation to develop normative standards for guiding a person's relationship to his/her community. Promote reasoning about human nature and human values to help provide bridges between religious belief and contemporary intellectual directions. Value integrity, commitment to truth, excellence and understanding with an aim to enhance our expressive powers, our knowledge, foresight and sense of direction. Philosophy is an especially ennobling discipline since it elevates what is common in being human while also nurturing individuality and self-esteem. Studying philosophy helps to cultivate responsible citizenship by promoting thoughtful reflection on contemporary cultural and intellectual currents, by critically assessing the discourse of public officials, and by identifying unfounded assertions and biased opinions with an aim to replace them with responsibly reasoned argumentation. Consequently, philosophy holds a special place in a liberal arts curriculum at a Jesuit college or university just in its capacity to objectify the human condition and to contribute to our becoming more fully human.

## Department Mission

To fulfill its Ignatian mission, the Philosophy faculty provides programs of instruction to cultivate an abiding sense of responsibility as men and women for and with others by focusing on the service of faith and the promotion of justice. The faculty considers it crucially important that a good education addressing such concerns has a firm foundation in the history of philosophy and its principal branches, and the issues of moral philosophy, together with special attention to examining argumentation. Equally important is the Philosophy faculty's interest cultivating discussion about the notions of the common good and social justice.

## Qualifications

Students must maintain an overall 2.0 GPA in their undergraduate studies and a 2.0 average in their philosophy program to graduate with a degree in Philosophy.

## Advisement

All students should have an advisor in the major and should contact the department directly to have an advisor assigned if they do not already have one. Meetings with academic advisors are required prior to students receiving their PIN for course registration each semester. All majors should work closely with their advisor in discussing career expectations,

choosing their major electives, developing their entire academic program and planning their co-curricular or supplemental academic experiences.

## Curricular Components of a Philosophy Major

Students desiring to major in philosophy might have scholarly interests to pursue graduate study in philosophy or to acquire competence in philosophy for a diversity of reasons including advanced study in other disciplines. To help students satisfy these interests, the Philosophy faculty offers a major program that maintains intellectual and academic rigor while promoting the mission to educate for others with attention to the principle of *cura personalis*. The curriculum combines a historical, a topic, and a fields approach to construct a unified program of instruction. Since our mission emphasizes concern with critical examination of values and principles of ethics and justice, the major curriculum requires one course in study and analysis of argumentation and two courses in the study of ethics, one of which is theoretical.

## Supplemental Study

The Philosophy faculty encourages each philosophy major to supplement his/her course of study by taking advantage of the large number of free electives available. We recommend that students advance their study of classical and modern languages, and to complement their history of philosophy sequence with appropriate history courses. There is a wide array of fine liberal arts courses in the various departments of the College of Arts and Sciences. Philosophy requires a breadth of knowledge in many disciplines.

## Double Majors

Students who wish to expand their educational opportunities may decide to declare a double major. This decision may be based on career goals, planned graduate studies, and/or other student interests. Before a student declares a double major, it is important to meet with the appropriate academic departments for advisement. In order to declare a double major, the student must complete the Major/Minor Declaration form. This form will be submitted electronically and reviewed and approved by each department chairperson as well as the appropriate associate dean.

Per university policy, each additional major requires a minimum of 15 credits that do not apply to the student's first or subsequent major. Some double major combinations can be completed within the minimum 120 credit hour degree requirement, but in other cases additional course work may be required. Please note that students will receive only one degree unless completing the dual degree (<https://catalog.canisius.edu/undergraduate/academics/curricular-information/>) requirement including at least 150 undergraduate credit hours, regardless of the number of majors they complete. Both (all) majors appear on a student's transcript.

## Minors in Other Disciplines

Minors provide students the opportunity to pursue additional interests but generally do not require as many courses as a major. Minors generally range from five to eight required courses. To receive a minor, the student must complete at least 9 credit hours of coursework distinct from their other credentials (i.e., majors, other minors). The complete list of minors is available on the Canisius website (<https://www.canisius.edu/academics/programs/undergraduate/?type%5B%5D=17>) and in the catalog (<https://catalog.canisius.edu/undergraduate/minors/>) and provides links to each minor. Some majors and minors can be completed within the minimum 120 credit hour degree requirement, but in some cases additional coursework

may be required. Students must complete the appropriate minor request form.

## Co-Curricular Activities

The Philosophy faculty encourages majors and minors to participate in the on-going activities of the Department. Students are invited to the regular colloquia. Students are invited to make presentations to try out the results of their research. In addition there are the Philosophy Club and the Philosophy Honors Society, Phi Sigma Tau.

## Curriculum

### An Ignatian Foundation

All undergraduate students must complete either the Canisius Core Curriculum (<http://catalog.canisius.edu/undergraduate/academics/curricular-information/core-curriculum/>) or the All-College Honors Curriculum (<http://catalog.canisius.edu/undergraduate/academics/curricular-information/all-college-honors-program/>). Many schools refer to their college-wide undergraduate requirements as "general education" requirements. We believe that the core curriculum and the honors curriculum are more than a series of required classes; they provide the basis for a Jesuit education both with content and with required knowledge and skills attributes that are central to our mission.

### Free Electives

Students may graduate with a bachelor's degree with more but not less than 120 credit hours. Free electives are courses in addition to the Canisius Core Curriculum or All-College Honors Curriculum and major requirements sufficient to reach the minimum number of credits required for graduation. The number of credits required to complete a bachelor's degree may vary depending on the student's major(s) and minor(s).

### Major Requirements

Code	Title	Credits
PHI 225	Logic	3
PHI 300	History of Philosophy I	3
PHI 310	History of Philosophy II	3
Ethical Theory - Select one of the following:		3
PHI 240	Justice	
PHI 241	Ethics: Traditions in Moral Reasoning	
PHI 252	Happiness, Virtue and the Good Life	
PHI 261	Philosophy of Law	
Applied Ethics - Select one of the following:		3
PHI 242	Ethical Issues in Business	
PHI 243	Bio-Medical Ethics	
PHI 244	Environmental Ethics	
PHI 245	Animal Ethics	
PHI 246	Ethics of Technology	
PHI 247	Food and Agricultural Ethics	
Philosophy Elective		3
Philosophy Elective		3
Philosophy Elective		3
Philosophy Elective		3
Philosophy Elective at the 400 level		3
<b>Total Credits</b>		<b>30</b>

Students who intend to study philosophy in graduate school are strongly encouraged to take PHI 451.

## Roadmap

### Recommended Semester Schedule for Major Course Requirements

The following four-year schedule maps out a course of study that a philosophy major may pursue. However, this schedule is provided only to suggest one way among many that a student might design his/her program of undergraduate philosophy study.

#### Freshman

Fall	Spring
PHI 101	PHI Elective

#### Sophomore

Fall	Spring
PHI 225	PHI Applied Ethics
PHI Ethics Theory	PHI Elective

#### Junior

Fall	Spring
PHI 300	PHI 310

#### PHI Elective

#### Senior

Spring  
PHI 400 Elective

PHI 451 (optional, but strongly recommended for students planning to attend graduate school in philosophy)

## Learning Goals and Objectives

### Student Learning Goal 1

Majors will acquire a broad knowledge of major figures, branches, and terminologies in Western philosophy.

- **Objective A:** Demonstrate knowledge of major figures in Western Philosophy.
- **Objective B:** Demonstrate knowledge of major branches in Western Philosophy.
- **Objective C:** Demonstrate knowledge of terminology particular to a branch or tradition within philosophy.

### Student Learning Goal 2

Majors will develop a capacity for communicating philosophical ideas and arguments.

- **Objective A:** Write cogent prose to communicate philosophical ideas effectively.
- **Objective B:** Construct philosophical arguments.

### Student Learning Goal 3

Majors will develop a capacity for thinking critically and for effectively assessing arguments.

- **Objective A:** Analyze arguments in philosophical discourse.
- **Objective B:** Identify underlying presuppositions of a philosopher's argumentative discourse.

- **Objective C:** Raise questions and frame philosophical problems introduced by texts.

## Student Learning Goal 4

Majors will become information literate as this applies to philosophical study and research.

- **Objective A:** Cite properly and work effectively with both primary and secondary sources.

## Minor

### Curriculum Requirements for a Philosophy Minor

A minor in philosophy consists of five (5) courses beyond PHI 101 that might complement another major or provide personal intellectual satisfaction.

Code	Title	Credits
PHI 300	History of Philosophy I	3
PHI 310	History of Philosophy II	3
Philosophy Elective		3
Philosophy Elective		3
Philosophy Elective		3
<b>Total Credits</b>		<b>15</b>

Minors are an important part of the undergraduate curriculum. If students declare a minor by sophomore year, they can usually complete it in a timely manner. Students should work with their advisor to determine if it is possible that the minor can be completed by graduation.

To receive a minor, a student must complete at least 9 credit hours of coursework distinct from their major(s) and from other minors, and students must complete more than 50% of the coursework required for the minor at Canisius. Please note that “ancillary/supporting” courses required for a major may still count as distinct courses as long as the remaining coursework still meets the 30 credit-hours required for a major. For more information about minor policies, please see the Declaring Majors and Minors (<http://catalog.canisius.edu/undergraduate/academics/student-records/declaring-majors-minors/>) page in the catalog.

## Combined Degree Programs

- 3+3 Philosophy BA/JD (<http://catalog.canisius.edu/undergraduate/college-arts-sciences/philosophy/3-3-philosophy-jd/>) (University at Buffalo)

## Courses

**PHI 101 Introduction to Philosophy** **3 Credits**  
Core Curriculum Foundation Course. A study of the major eras in the history of philosophy: Ancient, Medieval, Modern, and Contemporary and also of principal branches in philosophy: Aesthetics, Epistemology, Theories of Ethics, Logic, Metaphysics, and Theories of Justice. Students study the Catholic/Jesuit tradition and become able to identify the elements of rational argumentation. PHI 101 is a prerequisite for PHI 200 courses.

**PHI 211 Philosophy of Religion** **3 Credits**  
A study of principal contemporary and classical discussions about the existence and nature of God, God's relationship to the world, the individual and society.  
**Prerequisite:** PHI 101 or HON 102/HON 110.  
**Fulfills College Core:** Field 2 (Philosophy), Global Awareness  
**Offered:** occasionally.

**PHI 225 Logic** **3 Credits**  
An introductory study of logic treating such topics as: deduction, techniques for evaluating reasoning, language and meaning, various formal and informal fallacies, and the notion of implication.  
**Prerequisite:** PHI 101 or HON 102/110.  
**Fulfills College Core:** Field 2 (Philosophy)  
**Offered:** once a year.

**PHI 240 Justice** **3 Credits**  
A study of enduring questions such as: What does it take to be a just person and to create a just society? Includes investigations of (1) theories of justice and (2) problems of justice relating to injustice and oppression due to race, class, species, and gender.  
**Prerequisite:** PHI 101 or HON 102/110.  
**Fulfills College Core:** Field 2 (Philosophy), Justice  
**Offered:** once a year.

**PHI 241 Ethics: Traditions in Moral Reasoning** **3 Credits**  
A survey of principal traditions in moral reasoning with attention to moral principles inclusive of utility, deontology and virtue, and their applications to contemporary social realities.  
**Prerequisite:** PHI 101 or HON 102/110.  
**Fulfills College Core:** Ethics, Field 2 (Philosophy)  
**Offered:** every fall & spring.

**PHI 242 Ethical Issues in Business** **3 Credits**  
A study of important concerns in business and market realities with special concern to applying moral principles in decision making.  
**Prerequisite:** PHI 101 or HON 102/110.  
**Fulfills College Core:** Ethics, Field 2 (Philosophy)  
**Offered:** every fall & spring.

**PHI 243 Bio-Medical Ethics** **3 Credits**  
A study of important moral issues in relation to current concerns in medicine, medical technology, and the life sciences.  
**Prerequisite:** PHI 101 or HON 102/110.  
**Fulfills College Core:** Ethics, Field 2 (Philosophy)  
**Offered:** once a year.

**PHI 244 Environmental Ethics** **3 Credits**  
A study of classical and contemporary moral theories concerning the relationship of human beings to the manifold of their natural surroundings.  
**Prerequisite:** PHI 101 or HON 102/110.  
**Fulfills College Core:** Ethics, Field 2 (Philosophy)  
**Offered:** occasionally.

**PHI 245 Animal Ethics** **3 Credits**  
What do we mean by classifying together all non-human animals as 'animals'? This course critically examines the traditional notion that animals are commodities or resources for human use. It questions whether all sentient beings have intrinsic value and should be respected and what form that 'respect' should take.  
**Prerequisite:** PHI 101 or HON 102.  
**Fulfills College Core:** Ethics, Field 2 (Philosophy)  
**Offered:** every fall & spring.

**PHI 246 Ethics of Technology** **3 Credits**  
A study of how prominent technologies such as television, cellular phones, and medical breakthroughs affect individual persons and our society, and in what ways technological innovations make us better or worse. Utilizes movies and/or episodes of Black Mirror.  
**Prerequisite:** PHI 101 or HON 102.  
**Fulfills College Core:** Ethics, Field 2 (Philosophy)  
**Offered:** occasionally.

**PHI 247 Food and Agricultural Ethics 3 Credits**

A study of the moral implications of the current food system in connection with the production, distribution, and consumption of food and aims to examine what might constitute a reasonable position regarding the ethics of what we eat and what each of us can do to help bring about a more just food system.

**Prerequisite:** PHI 101 or HON 102/110.

**Fulfills College Core:** Ethics, Field 2 (Philosophy)

**Offered:** occasionally.

**PHI 252 Happiness, Virtue and the Good Life 3 Credits**

A study of the role of virtue and vice in the moral life, how they emerge from developments of personal character and relate to meaningful human happiness, fulfillment, and the good life.

**Prerequisite:** PHI 101 or HON 102/110.

**Fulfills College Core:** Ethics, Field 2 (Philosophy)

**Offered:** occasionally.

**PHI 258 Minor Service 0 Credits**

Required course for specific minors. This course requires 20 hours of direct service. Students pursuing the ethics minor will register for 258E and students pursuing the justice minor will register for 258J.

**Offered:** every fall & spring.

**PHI 261 Philosophy of Law 3 Credits**

A study of the nature, sources and sanctions of law and legal theory, treating concerns of legal positivism, natural law theory, rights and justice, and the relationship between law and morality.

**Prerequisite:** PHI 101 or HON 102/110.

**Fulfills College Core:** Field 2 (Philosophy), Justice

**Offered:** every fall & spring.

**PHI 267 Faith, Reason, and Justice Catholic Social Thought 3 Credits**

A study of the philosophical foundations of Catholic social teaching, articulated from the time of Pope Leo XIII through present day, and those features that make it unique, both as compared to other contemporary accounts of justice and in identifying and rectifying current injustices.

**Prerequisite:** PHI 101 or HON 102/110.

**Fulfills College Core:** Field 2 (Philosophy), Justice

**Offered:** occasionally.

**PHI 271 Philosophy of Human Rights 3 Credits**

A study of various issues of human rights in global perspective to ask if human rights transcend political orders, whether they are universally applicable to all human beings, or determined to be culturally relative.

**Prerequisite:** PHI 101 or HON 102/110.

**Fulfills College Core:** Field 2 (Philosophy), Justice

**Offered:** every fall & spring.

**PHI 272 Gender and Philosophy 3 Credits**

An investigation into feminist theories that analyzes the role that gender plays in society and in the formation of the masculine and feminine subjects; an examination of notions of power, structure and work; and gender as performance and representation.

**Prerequisite:** PHI 101 or HON 102/110.

**Fulfills College Core:** Field 2 (Philosophy), Justice

**Offered:** once a year.

**PHI 273 Race and Philosophy 3 Credits**

A study of philosophical assumptions underlying concepts of race that treats designations of racial identities, the political effects of racial classification, the ethics of race and the metaphysical legitimacy and social reality of racial designations.

**Prerequisite:** PHI 101 or HON 102/110.

**Fulfills College Core:** Field 2 (Philosophy), Justice

**Offered:** once a year.

**PHI 274 Social and Political Philosophy 3 Credits**

A study of foundational philosophical theories on how to organize the collective and social life of individual human beings, examining justifications for state authority, establishing citizen's rights and allocating resources for human well-being.

**Prerequisite:** PHI 101 or HON 102/110.

**Fulfills College Core:** Field 2 (Philosophy), Justice

**Offered:** occasionally.

**PHI 275 Global Feminisms 3 Credits**

This course studies feminist philosophy and feminist theories of justice in global contexts, including Indigenous America, Latin America, Africa, and Asia. This course will compare feminist theory from Western contexts (European and American) with its global counterparts, with special focus on the way gender, sex, and sexuality operate differently in different global contexts.

**Prerequisite:** PHI 101 or HON 102/110.

**Fulfills College Core:** Field 2 (Philosophy), Justice

**Offered:** occasionally.

**PHI 280 Philosophy of Mind 3 Credits**

A study of contemporary views concerning the philosophy of mind and consciousness. Topics may include the mind-body problem, the nature of the mental and mental content, problems in intentionality, perception, language, artificial intelligence and the nature of consciousness.

**Prerequisite:** PHI 101 or HON 102.

**Fulfills College Core:** Field 2 (Philosophy)

**Offered:** occasionally.

**PHI 285 Black Philosophy 3 Credits**

A study of philosophical trends within the black diaspora with attention to the contributions of prominent black philosophers and social activists.

**Prerequisite:** PHI 101 or HON 102/110.

**Fulfills College Core:** Field 2 (Philosophy), Justice

**Offered:** occasionally.

**PHI 291 Philosophy of Art 3 Credits**

A study of various approaches to thinking philosophically about art and covering the history of aesthetics with special emphasis on contemporary arts including film and music.

**Prerequisite:** PHI 101 or HON 102/110.

**Fulfills College Core:** Field 2 (Philosophy)

**Offered:** occasionally.

**PHI 292 Philosophy of Beauty 3 Credits**

A study of various approaches to thinking philosophically about beauty and covering the concept in the history of aesthetics with special emphasis on the problems of beauty in contemporary culture.

**Prerequisite:** PHI 101 or HON 102/110.

**Fulfills College Core:** Diversity, Field 2 (Philosophy)

**Offered:** occasionally.

**PHI 293 Philosophy of Film 3 Credits**

This course is an introduction to the philosophical analyses of film, and the growing literature on philosophy of film. With some variation, courses tend to focus on topics such as film realism, the nature of documentary film, auteur theory, cognitivist or psycho-dynamic theories of spectating, the nature of horror or comedy films, etc.

**Prerequisite:** PHI 101 or HON 102.

**Fulfills College Core:** Field 2 (Philosophy)

**Offered:** occasionally.

**PHI 300 History of Philosophy I 3 Credits**

This course covers major figures and movements in western philosophy in the ancient, medieval and early modern periods. Students will be introduced to major figures such as Plato, Aristotle, Augustine, Aquinas, Descartes, Hume and Kant.

**Prerequisite:** PHI 101 or HON 102/110 and one Field 2 course.

**Offered:** every fall.

**PHI 310 History of Philosophy II 3 Credits**

A course that covers major figures and movements in western philosophy from the 19th to the 21st Century. Movements include German Idealism, Marxism, Utilitarianism, and Phenomenology. The course then considers developments in Continental and Anglo-American traditions.

**Prerequisite:** PHI 101 or HON 102/110 and one Field 2 course.

**Offered:** every spring.

**PHI 401 Topics in Philosophy 3 Credits**

A seminar style course offered by faculty in the Department of Philosophy on a rotating basis and focusing on a different topic each time it is offered. Check with the department to find out what will be offered in any given academic year.

**Prerequisite:** PHI 101 or HON 102 and any upper level Philosophy course.

**Offered:** every spring.

**PHI 451 Senior Thesis 3 Credits**

Philosophy majors who plan to attend graduate school in philosophy should complete a senior thesis. This is a culminating experience in which a student expresses mature habits of self-directed study and critical analysis, with an ability to integrate knowledge beyond the expectations of a seminar paper. A senior thesis addresses a select philosophic topic and is especially concerned with philosophic argumentation. A philosophy major who writes a senior thesis demonstrates ability to exercise appropriate research methods, to provide critical assessment of issues, to assess theoretical presuppositions underlying a discourse and to advance well-constructed argumentation. A senior thesis ought to exhibit the values of the department mission.

**Prerequisite:** PHI 101 & at least two 300-level philosophy courses.

**Offered:** every fall.

**PHI 499 Independent Study 1-3 Credits**

A tutorial style course on a topic approved by the department and agreed upon between the student and a professor. Independent studies require an application and approval by the associate dean.

**Prerequisite:** PHI 101 & at least two 300-level philosophy courses.