

Philosophy, Religion, and Classical Studies

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Philosophy

Philosophy is the systematic examination of some of the most fundamental questions that human beings ask: What is real? What is true? What can we know? What is right or wrong? What is consciousness? How do the mind and body interact? What is language? What is art? What are justice and social justice? What makes a good society? What makes a life meaningful? The study of philosophy is not only fundamental to personal development but also to the development of an individual taking their place in society. It is at the foundation of a deeply inclusive and diverse educational approach.

The philosophy major combines a thorough study of philosophies that have shaped a wide variety of world-views with rigorous training in the analysis of argument. Philosophy majors learn how to identify, analyze and critique arguments, argue effectively for their own opinions, make reasoned decisions about ethical and political issues, actively engage in the debates that have shaped the history of human thought, and develop reasoned philosophical views of their own on a range of central philosophical issues.

The design of the philosophy major and the interrelation of the courses in the major provides students with significant critical thinking skills: identifying, thinking about and analyzing problems and issues, as well as constructing and assessing theories and counterexamples that represent the best that human logical thinking has to offer. Both lower and upper level courses in philosophy explicitly require students to develop crucial cognitive skills: (i) the ability to identify philosophical issues as problems or puzzles and (ii) formulating and contrasting opposing solutions and approaches. This requires logical investigation, understanding and assessment, a key characteristic of the best and most effective critical thinking. Courses in philosophy at every level also emphasize the importance of the student engaging deeply with the assigned and recommended materials for the course as well as demonstrating mastery of those materials. The senior capstone courses, in addition, emphasize mastery of the process by which good philosophical research is produced and communicated.

Philosophy majors and minors may elect to pursue either the general course of study in philosophy or a major or minor specialization either in the area of Law and Philosophy or in the area of Ethics. The general course of study in philosophy is designed for students who have broad interests in philosophy or who wish to prepare for graduate school not only in philosophy but in law, medicine, public policy, politics, and business. The specialization in Law and Philosophy is designed for students with a specific interest in law or in legal and political theory. The specialization in Ethics is designed for students with specific interests in theoretical or applied ethics, medicine, nursing, and other professions.

The study of philosophy provides a powerful critical perspective on other academic subjects ranging from literature and art to biology and mathematics as well as an exceptionally strong foundation for many diverse professions such as law, teaching, journalism, medicine, ministry, and business. Philosophy majors may also participate in the 7 year Medical Program at TCNJ: (<https://biology.tcnj.edu/academics/medical-careers/7-year-medical-program/>). A major or minor in philosophy is easily combined with a variety of other majors. More information about the practical value of the study of philosophy can be found on the department website <http://philos.tcnj.edu>.

Religion

Religion courses explore religious matters and their place in human life. They provide critical insight into the fundamental tenets and practices of the major religious traditions. The minor and self-designed major in religion offer a sustained and probing study of these matters and provide a valuable background for religious vocations and for a number of careers including social work, teaching, and counseling. Students at TCNJ interested in religion may pursue a five course minor in religion or a self-designed major in religious studies. Information on the minor in religion may be found below. Information concerning the self-designed major in religion may be found at <https://religion.tcnj.edu/>

Classical Studies

The Classical Studies Program offers students an opportunity to explore the exciting worlds of classical Greece and Rome—the history, art, archaeology, literature, philosophy, science, religion, politics, and languages. Courses in all these aspects of Greek and Roman history and culture are offered by specialists from the relevant departments. Students may take individual courses or work towards a self-designed major, a minor, or an interdisciplinary concentration in classical studies. Information on the classical studies program may be found elsewhere in this bulletin and online at <https://classicalstudies.tcnj.edu/>

Requirements for the Philosophy Major

Philosophy majors, whether pursuing the general course of study in philosophy or specializing in Philosophy and Law or in Ethics, are required to complete a total of 10 PHL courses for a total of 10 course units. Students must maintain a minimum 2.0 GPA for retention in the major, and must make consistent progress in the major. Specifically, any student not registered for major classes for two consecutive semesters may be considered for dismissal from the major barring extenuating circumstances. Students interested in declaring a Philosophy Major need to submit a Change of Major form to the department; there are no other entrance requirements.

Required Courses

Logic PHL 120/Introduction to Logic <i>or</i> PHL 220/Metalogic	1 course unit
History of Philosophy PHL 201/History of Ancient Philosophy <i>and</i> PHL 205/History of Modern Philosophy	2 course units
Ethics PHL 350/Ethical Theory <i>or</i> PHL 375/Law and Ethics	1 course unit
Epistemology or Metaphysics PHL 410/Theory of Knowledge <i>or</i> PHL 420/Metaphysics	1 course unit
Philosophy Electives Four additional philosophy courses including at least two at the 300 or 400 level.	4 course units
Senior Capstone* PHL 493/Senior Project <i>or</i> PHL 495/Senior Thesis Research <i>and</i> PHL 496 Senior Thesis	1 course unit 2 course units

**The senior capstone is independent work guided by an advisor with whom the student will be working closely on a mutually agreed-on topic. The goal of the senior capstone is to give students the opportunity to unify the skills and knowledge they have previously gained in the major. Prior to registering for either PHL 493 or PHL 495, students must consult with the department faculty member they wish to work with on the capstone, and registration can take place only with the permission of that faculty member. For students completing the Senior Thesis, PHL 495 is normally completed during the fall term of the senior year and PHL 496 during the spring term. Significant work as determined by the advisor should be completed for each of the research and writing portions of the Senior Thesis.*

Philosophy Major Specializations: Law and Philosophy; Ethics

Like the traditional major, the specializations in Law and Philosophy and in Ethics require students to complete 10 course units in philosophy as described above. As part of their 10 course units, students who wish to pursue a specialization will be required to select specified courses as options and a senior project or thesis particularly related to the specialization, as follows:

Law and Philosophy

PHL 275/Philosophy of Law

PHL 375/Law and Ethics

Senior project or thesis on a topic in the area of law and philosophy.

Ethics

PHL 255/Biomedical Ethics

PHL 350/Ethical Theory

PHL 430/Advanced Ethics

Senior project or thesis on a topic in the area of ethics. Students interested in pursuing a specialization in Law and Philosophy should contact Professor Roberts. Students interested in pursuing a specialization in Ethics should contact Professor Roberts.

Double-Counting of Philosophy and Criminology Courses

For Philosophy majors also majoring in Criminology, the following CRI courses will be counted toward elective credit in the Philosophy major (maximum of two courses):

- CRI 201/Judicature
- CRI 202/Penology
- CRI 256/Women in the Criminal Justice System
- CRI 301/Criminal Law and Procedure
- CRI 352/Race, Crime, and Justice

Requirements for the Philosophy Minor

Philosophy minors may elect to pursue either the general course of study in philosophy or, if they choose, a minor specialization either in the area of Law and Philosophy or in Ethics. All minors, whether pursuing the general course of study in philosophy or specializing in Law and Philosophy or in Ethics, are required to complete a total of five PHL courses:

PHL 120/Introduction to Logic

PHL 201/History of Ancient Philosophy

or

PHL 205/History of Modern Philosophy

One additional PHL course at any level.

Two additional PHL courses at 300 or 400 level.

Philosophy Minor Specializations: Law and Philosophy; Ethics

Philosophy minors specializing in Law and Philosophy or in Ethics must ensure that, in choosing courses that satisfy the requirements listed above, they also satisfy certain additional requirements of the specializations. In particular, minors specializing in Law and Philosophy must complete PHL 275 and PHL 375. Minors specializing in Ethics must complete either PHL 135 or PHL 255, PHL 350, and PHL 430. Because the philosophy minor may be tailored to any number of specific needs and interests, students who are considering a minor in philosophy may wish to consult with the chair of the department before selecting a particular sequence of courses.

Honors in Philosophy and Capstone Honors

The Department awards *honors in philosophy* at graduation to students who have completed a distinguished undergraduate record in philosophy. Rising seniors are admitted to the honors program in philosophy by a vote of the philosophy faculty and provided they have completed at least six courses in philosophy with a GPA of 3.6 or better in those courses. By a vote of the philosophy faculty, students who then complete the major with a 3.6 GPA or better in their philosophy courses will be awarded *honors in philosophy* upon graduation. The department may also designate still other students as having achieved *honors in philosophy* in exceptional cases (to be determined by vote of the whole department). The award of *honors in thesis* will be given to students who have completed PHL 496/Senior Thesis with distinction, as follows. All thesis students will have, in addition to their capstone advisor who will serve as first reader, a second reader. If both readers judge the thesis to meet the standard for *honors in thesis*, the student will be invited to defend the thesis orally. The two faculty readers will then determine whether the thesis, in the light of the oral defense, merits *honors in thesis*. The grading of the thesis itself, however, will remain the responsibility of the original capstone advisor. Students completing PHL 496/Senior Thesis do so in conjunction with completing PHL 495/Senior Thesis Research. Normally, PHL 495 is completed during the fall term of the senior year and PHL 496 during the spring term. The two semester sequence of PHL 495 and PHL 496 is independent work guided by an advisor with whom the student will be working closely on a mutually agreed upon topic. The goal of this senior capstone is to give students the opportunity to unify skills and knowledge they have previously gained in the major. Prior to registering for PHL 495, students must consult with, and seek the permission of, the department faculty member they wish to work with on the capstone. Registration for PHL 495 can take place only after that faculty member has notified the student of this permission. Significant work as determined by the advisor should be completed for each of PHL 495 and 496.

The award of *honors in project* will be given to students who have completed PHL 493/Senior Project with distinction, as follows. Project students whose capstone advisor recommends their project for distinction will have a second reader. If both readers judge the project to meet the standard for *honors in project*, the project will receive this award. The grading of the project itself, however, will remain the responsibility of the original advisor. PHL 493/Senior Project is independent work guided by an advisor with whom the student will be working closely on a mutually agreed upon topic over the course of one semester. The goal of this senior capstone is to give students the opportunity to unify skills and knowledge they have previously gained in the major. Prior to registering for PHL 493, students must consult with, and seek the permission of, the department faculty member they wish to work with on the capstone. Registration for PHL 493 can take place only after that faculty member has notified the student of this permission. Significant work as determined by the advisor should be completed for PHL 493. Students who do not enroll in PHL 495 and PHL 496, must enroll in PHL 493 as a requirement for graduating with the philosophy major.

Honors in philosophy, honors in project, and honors in thesis are determined in significant part by student work that meets in exemplary fashion the goals of the philosophy program as they relate to (among other things) philosophical analysis, sustained critique, the articulation of competing points of view, an understanding of the respective virtues and deficiencies of those points of view, and the clear and cogent formulation and defense of one's own philosophical positions.

Note:

Because of the size of the department, only two faculty members are required for the *honors in thesis* or *honors in project* committees.

Any student completing a senior thesis or project is eligible for consideration for the award of *honors in thesis* or *honors in project*, and will be informed of this by their capstone advisor. There is no application process for the award, and students will be selected for the award as specified by the processes above.

Course Sequence

Many students who choose to major in philosophy do so in their sophomore year or even early in their junior year; and some courses are offered only in alternate years. The program that follows is thus an idealized sequence; the exact semester and particular order in which the courses are taken will probably vary. To ensure that students entering the major in their sophomore or junior year complete the program on a timely basis, specific requirements may be waived for students who have covered pertinent subject matter in other ways. The substitution of another course for a specific requirement does not reduce the total number of units required for the major.

To graduate, students must complete, in addition to the courses required for the major, a number of College Core requirements. Some of the requirements (in, for example, language, laboratory science and quantitative reasoning) are noted in the idealized sequence that follows. Others include courses, programs, or sustained experiences in (1) community engaged learning, (2) gender, (3) global perspectives and (4) race and ethnicity. In order to participate in the 7-year Medical Program, students must complete the three-year undergraduate curriculum at TCNJ and earn a 3.5 (B+) cumulative and science average GPA EACH semester, and:

- Earn a B or better in each of the basic science courses required by the Medical School (Foundations of Biological Inquiry, General Chemistry I/II, Organic Chemistry I/II, and Physics I/II);
- Earn no grade below a C in any course;
- Take the Medical College Admissions Test (MCAT) no later than the SPRING of the third (and last) year at TCNJ. There is no minimum score required; and
- If you are not a U.S. citizen or permanent resident, you must obtain U.S. citizenship or permanent resident status by the time you ENTER NJMS.

Freshman Year

FYS First Year Seminar	1 course unit
HSS 99/ Orientation to Humanities and Social Sciences	0 course units
FYW 102/Academic Writing—if required*	1 course unit
World Language **	2 course units
Quantitative Reasoning	1 course unit
Two electives in Philosophy (at any level)	2 course units
One elective	1 course unit

**It is recommended that students exempted from this course take another College Core course.*

***Students must determine whether or not they can be exempted from language courses (by examination or other means); otherwise three courses are required. It is recommended that students exempted from these courses take other College Core courses.*

Sophomore Year

World Language	1 course unit
Laboratory Science	2 course units
Literature	1 course unit
PHL 120 Introduction to Logic	
<i>or</i>	
PHL 220/Metalogic	1 course unit
PHL 201/History of Ancient Philosophy	1 course unit
PHL 205/History of Modern Philosophy	1 course unit
One Elective	1 course unit

Junior Year

Social Science/History	3 course units
PHL 350/Ethical Theory	
<i>or</i>	
PHL 375/Law and Ethics	1 course unit
PHL 410/Theory of Knowledge	
<i>or</i>	
PHL 420/Metaphysics	1 course unit
One elective in philosophy (300-400 level)	1 course unit
Two electives	2 course units

Senior Year

Art	1 course unit
PHL 493/Senior Project	1 course unit
<i>or</i>	
PHL 495/Senior Thesis Research <i>and</i> 496/Senior Thesis	2 course units
One elective in philosophy (300-400 level)	1 course unit
Five electives	5 course units