

Philosophy, B.A.

The Major in Philosophy

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Overview

The Major in Philosophy is intended to be flexible and to facilitate additional majors in other fields (including majors with a strong professional focus). It provides students with a broad humanities education and sharpens their analytical skills. We encourage, but do not require, students to choose a thematic concentration through their electives. Sample curricula emphasizing Law and Social Policy, Philosophy of Science, Ethics and Social Philosophy, and Philosophy of Mind are suggested below. However, alternative emphases can be proposed and approved by the Senior Academic Program Manager. The Major in Philosophy is a B.A. degree.

Curriculum

In addition to the general education requirements for the student's college, Philosophy primary majors and additional majors must complete 80-100 Introduction to Philosophy and nine Philosophy courses in the Areas listed below. The 80-100 Introduction to Philosophy requirement must be fulfilled before the first semester of the junior year. Only two of the remaining nine courses may be at the 100-level, and two of the nine courses must be at the 300-level or higher. All ten courses, if taken at CMU, must be taken for a letter grade and passed with a grade of "C" or above. No more than two courses of the ten courses may be taken at another institution. Students are to choose one course out of each of the areas 1-4, two courses out of area 5, and may freely select three courses in area 6. Students may double count any course for the major with another major or minor. As per the requirement of Dietrich College, a student's Grand Challenge First-Year Seminar course may not count toward the fulfillment of the major requirements.

Introduction to Philosophy 9 units

	Units
80-100 Introduction to Philosophy	9

Area 1: Values and Normative Theory 9 units

One of the following:

80-130	Introduction to Ethics	9
80-135	Introduction to Political Philosophy	9
80-136	Social Structure, Public Policy & Ethics	9
80-234	Philosophy of Race and Gender	9
80-244	Environmental Ethics	9
80-245	Medical Ethics	9
80-246	Moral Psychology	9
80-249	AI, Society, and Humanity	9
80-330	Ethical Theory	9
80-335	Social and Political Philosophy	9
80-336	Philosophy of Law	9
80-348	Health, Human Rights, and International Development	9
80-447	Seminar in Global Justice	9

Area 2: Philosophy of Mind/Language/Metaphysics 9 units

One of the following:

80-180	Introduction to Linguistics	9
80-270	Problems of Mind and Body: Meaning and Doing	9
80-271	Mind and Body: The Objective and the Subjective	9
80-276	Philosophy of Religion	9
80-260	Dangerous Ideas in Psychiatry	9
80-280	Linguistic Analysis	9
80-283	It Matters How You Say It	9
80-285	Natural Language Syntax	9
80-381	Meaning in Language	9

80-383	Language in Use	9
80-484	Language and Thought	9

Area 3: Logic/Philosophy of Mathematics 9 units

One of the following:

80-210	Logic and Proofs	9
80-211	Logic and Mathematical Inquiry	9
80-212	Arguments and Logical Analysis	9
80-310	Formal Logic	9
80-311	Undecidability and Incompleteness	9
80-312	Mathematical Revolutions	9
80-315	Logics for Knowledge and Belief	9
80-411	Proof Theory	9
80-413	Category Theory	9
80-419	Interactive Theorem Proving	9
80-514	Categorical Logic	9

Area 4: Epistemology/Methodology 9 units

One of the following:

80-150	Nature of Reason	9
80-201	Knowledge and Justified Belief	9
80-208	Against the Algorithm: Critical Thinking as a Way of Life	9
80-220	Philosophy of Science	9
80-221	Philosophy of Social Science	9
80-222	Measurement and Methodology	9
80-226	The Nature of Scientific Revolutions	9
80-261	Experience, Reason, and Truth	9
80-305	Game Theory After Spring 2023	9
80-306	Decision Theory	9
80-324	Philosophy of Economics	9
80-329	Philosophy and Causation	9
80-325	Foundations of Causation and Machine Learning	9
80-405	Game Theory Prior to Fall 2023	9
80-490	Philosophical and Practical Aspects of AI	9
80-516	Causality and Machine Learning	9
80-521	Seminar on Formal Epistemology: Uncertain Interpretations	9
80-524	Topics in Formal Epistemology: Topological Philosophy of Science	9

Area 5: History of Philosophy 18 units

Two of the following:

80-150	Nature of Reason	9
80-226	The Nature of Scientific Revolutions	9
80-250	Ancient Philosophy	9
80-251	Modern Philosophy	9
80-252	Kant	9
80-253	Continental Philosophy	9
80-254	The History of Analytic Philosophy and Its Influence	9
80-255	Pragmatism: Scientific Approach to Philosophy	9
80-551	Seminar on History of Philosophy: Smith and Hume	9
80-260	Dangerous Ideas in Psychiatry	9
80-261	Experience, Reason, and Truth	9
80-350	Adam Smith	9
80-365	Ramsey	9
80-490	Philosophical and Practical Aspects of AI	9

Area 6: Elective 27 units

Three other philosophy courses, or appropriate courses from other departments, with the permission of the Senior Academic Program Manager.

Sample Curricula

Here are four sample curricula, reflecting different emphases.

1. For an emphasis on Law & Social Policy, a student might take:

Area 1		
80-335	Social and Political Philosophy	9
Area 2		
80-180	Introduction to Linguistics	9
Area 3		
80-211	Logic and Mathematical Inquiry	9
Area 4		
80-208	Against the Algorithm: Critical Thinking as a Way of Life	9
Area 5		
80-150	Nature of Reason	9
80-250	Ancient Philosophy	9
Area 6		
80-336	Philosophy of Law	9
80-348	Health, Human Rights, and International Development	9
80-447	Seminar in Global Justice	9

2. For an emphasis on Philosophy of Science, a student might take:

Area 1		
80-136	Social Structure, Public Policy & Ethics	9
Area 2		
80-270	Problems of Mind and Body: Meaning and Doing	9
Area 3		
80-211	Logic and Mathematical Inquiry	9
Area 4		
80-220	Philosophy of Science	9
or 80-221	Philosophy of Social Science	
Area 5		
80-250	Ancient Philosophy	9
80-226	The Nature of Scientific Revolutions	9
Area 6		
80-150	Nature of Reason	9
80-221	Philosophy of Social Science	9
80-524	Topics in Formal Epistemology: Topological Philosophy of Science	9

3. For an emphasis on Ethics and Social Philosophy, a student might take:

Area 1		
80-130	Introduction to Ethics	9
Area 2		
80-276	Philosophy of Religion	9
Area 3		
80-211	Logic and Mathematical Inquiry	9
Area 4		
80-221	Philosophy of Social Science	9
Area 5		
80-250	Ancient Philosophy	9
80-251	Modern Philosophy	9
Area 6		
80-330	Ethical Theory	9
80-335	Social and Political Philosophy	9
80-348	Health, Human Rights, and International Development	9

4. For an emphasis on Philosophy of Mind, a student might take:

Area 1		
80-130	Introduction to Ethics	9
Area 2		
80-270	Problems of Mind and Body: Meaning and Doing	9
Area 3		
80-211	Logic and Mathematical Inquiry	9

Area 4

80-201	Knowledge and Justified Belief	9
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Area 5

80-251	Modern Philosophy	9
80-252	Kant	9

Area 6

80-521	Seminar on Formal Epistemology: Uncertain Interpretations	9
80-261	Experience, Reason, and Truth	9
80-271	Mind and Body: The Objective and the Subjective	9

Additional Major

Students who wish to pursue an additional major in Philosophy must fulfill the same departmental requirements as primary majors in Philosophy. Students can double count any course for the major with another major or minor.