

PHILOSOPHY

UNDERGRADUATE FACT SHEET

Philosophy may sound dauntingly remote from daily concerns, but its basic questions – What can I know? What may I hope? What must I do? – actually pose themselves throughout any thinking person's journey. The skills philosophy teaches – close reading, careful thinking, and the critique of ideas – apply to most areas of human endeavor. A background in philosophy is thus excellent training for many careers and matchless preparation for life itself.

The Department of Philosophy provides a core curriculum that addresses the perennial need to spark intellectual curiosity, broaden perspective, and think carefully and critically about the practical and personal challenges that face the United States and the global community in the 21st century. Philosophy works to maintain continuity between the innovative thought that addresses timely and pressing questions with the history of thought and belief in the great philosophical and religious traditions of the world. Even as the world changes, these traditions continue to pose and respond to the same basic questions about the meaning and significance of human existence. Through the careful examination of logical reasoning, ethics, and aesthetics, and through the historical study of philosophical ideas, courses in philosophy introduce students to great thinkers and thought-provoking critiques, from the ancient to the present, opening minds to both timely and timeless ideas.

Career Opportunities

As a philosophy major you will develop valuable skills for any life and career: the ability to think clearly, analyze questionable claims, and simultaneously nurture both rational and creative thinking. If the rate of technological change today is any indication of the future, most jobs awaiting you in the coming decades have not been invented yet. The skills needed for success in the 21st century involve the development of intellectual flexibility, creative ethical problem solving, and pluralistic thinking essential for forming the sorts of communities that cherish rather than erode diversity.

Philosophy opens the way to a wide range of careers, including those in business, industry, education, and government; it offers training in the abilities necessary for an ever-changing world. The philosophy major is recommended as the basic foundation for graduate work in law, religion, and the humanities generally. Graduates of the West Chester University philosophy program now serve as executives, attorneys, clergy, physicians, editors, computer specialists, teachers, college professors, and in many other capacities.

Graduates of the bachelor of arts program have entered advanced degree programs at the following schools, among others:

Duquesne University
Harvard University

Michigan State University
Oxford University
Princeton Theological Seminary
Quinnipiac University School of Law
Temple University
University of Connecticut
University of Georgia
University of Maryland
University of Memphis
University of Missouri
University of Pennsylvania
University of Virginia

Undergraduate Majors

Bachelor of Arts in Philosophy. This degree explores basic philosophical themes even as it encourages you to develop personal interests. Six required courses provide a strong foundation for the major, and one course must be completed from a selection of classes focused on diversity. You may then choose three electives needed to complete the concentration from a variety of other philosophy courses, all taught by experts in the field.

Bachelor of Arts in Philosophy – Religious Studies Concentration. This degree explores the individual and social expression of Western and non-Western philosophic and religious traditions, and relationships to other disciplines in the arts and sciences. Five required courses serve as the foundation for the major; you may choose five electives from a wide array of offerings, depending on your areas of interest and career plans. See the separate religious studies fact sheet for details.

Both degrees have the advantage of allowing a maximum number of electives, permitting a fuller personal choice than is often available in other programs. Many of our students are double majors, taking advantage of our flexible curriculum to enhance their background or focus their preparation for some particular career goal.

Undergraduate Minors

Applied Ethics

Peace and Conflict Studies (an interdisciplinary program administered by the Department of Philosophy)

Philosophy

Religious Studies

A minor provides transcript recognition of proficiency in a supplementary field. It can serve to strengthen a major or to broaden your interests.

Typical Courses

19th Century Philosophy
American Philosophies
Contemporary Moral Issues

Learn More

UNDERGRADUATE FACT SHEET

Creating Meaning: An Introduction to Existentialism
Ethical Theories
Existentialism
Feminist Theory
History of Ancient Philosophy
History of Medieval Philosophy
History of Modern Philosophy
Introduction to Ethics
Introduction to Meaning
Introduction to Philosophy
Logic
Philosophical Concepts and Systems (seminar-style)
Philosophical Topics: 20th Century and Beyond
Philosophies and Religions of India
Philosophies and Religions of the Far East
Philosophies of Nonviolence
Philosophy of Human Rights
Philosophy of Law
Philosophy of Religion
Philosophy of Science
Principles of the Arts
Social Philosophy

Advanced Degrees

Master of Arts in Philosophy
Master of Arts in Philosophy: Applied Ethics

West Chester University is the only institution in the Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education to offer a master's degree in philosophy. The master of arts is a stepping stone for many to a range of career possibilities, including admission to doctoral degree programs and college teaching positions.

Special Study Opportunities

Study abroad opportunities are readily available.

Related Student Activities

The WCU Philosophical Society, a forum for discussions, panels, and social activities, is open to all majors, minors, and graduate students. Phi Sigma Tau, the international honor society in philosophy, holds inductee ceremonies every other year for qualified students.

In addition to these activities, the Department of Philosophy sometimes presents nationally known philosophers who visit the campus and speak on various issues. One recent guest lecturer was Joseph Margolis, distinguished Temple University philosophy professor.

West Chester University is also a member of the Greater Philadelphia Philosophy Consortium (GPPC), a cooperative effort of leading colleges

and universities in the area. Most recently, West Chester University hosted a GPPC conference on Buddhist ethics, which brought speakers of international repute, as well as students and faculty from the other schools in the consortium, to the campus. All majors have the opportunity to participate in consortium discussions, forums, contests, and other activities.

Faculty

The current philosophy faculty actively publish books, as well as articles in journals and anthologies, and participate in national and international philosophy conferences. Department members have contributed to programs at universities such as Cornell, Harvard, Stanford, Vanderbilt, and Yale.

Most recently, faculty have presented papers nationally at scholarly conferences in Asheville, N.C.; Chicago, Cincinnati, Honolulu, Milwaukee, Nashville, Philadelphia; Portland, Ore.; Washington, D.C.; and elsewhere. On an international level, they have delivered papers in Basel, several locations in China, Helsinki, Prague, Sydney, Toronto, and University of West Indies (Barbados).

You can obtain a complete listing of faculty and their academic qualifications from the Department of Philosophy at the address and telephone number listed below, or on our website, www.wcupa.edu/_academics/sch_cas.phil/.

For More Information

Department of Philosophy
West Chester University
108 Anderson Hall
West Chester, PA 19383
610-436-2841

Web page: www.wcupa.edu/_academics/sch_cas.phil/

Undergraduate Catalog: http://www.wcupa.edu/_information/official_documents/undergrad.catalog/

Information on Admission

Office of Admissions

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WCU home page: www.wcupa.edu

Facebook: www.facebook.com/wcupa

