

Mission Statement:
Department of Philosophy/Religious Studies

Philosophy

General Mission

The mission of the undergraduate degree program in Philosophy is to enable the students to understand the role and importance of philosophical inquiry, and to develop skills in its use. The program is designed to provide exposure to the philosophical perspectives of great thinkers, past and present, and to help students increase their abilities to think clearly, logically, and critically both about philosophical issues and about issues in other fields of learning. It will prepare students for careers in teaching, law, government service, business, medicine and cultural exchange.

Curricular Program

The core of the program includes courses in the history of philosophy, logic, theory of knowledge, metaphysics, and ethics. A range of upper level elective courses covers more specialized areas of philosophy, as well as philosophical examinations of other fields. Because our department faces east as well as west, we also offer a series of courses in Asian and Comparative Philosophy, including Indian Philosophy, Chinese Philosophy, Buddhism, Taoism, and Zen.

Program Goals

- 1) Develop the ability to think critically about philosophical issues and to express philosophical ideas in an articulate and well reasoned manner.
- 2) Develop the ability to recognize valid and invalid inferences expressed in ordinary language, and to recognize a range of formal and informal fallacies of reason.
- 3) Acquaint students with essential theoretical and practical knowledge of traditional as well as contemporary Western Philosophy.
- 4) Acquaint students with essential theoretical and practical knowledge of traditional as well as contemporary Eastern Philosophy.

Student Outcomes

By the time of graduation, Philosophy Majors will be expected to:

1) Be able to think critically about philosophical issues and express philosophical ideas in an articulate and well reasoned manner. Possible tests: a) Given a short paragraph of philosophical reasoning, describe ways in which the reasoning might be criticized and ways in which it might be better supported. b) Given a named philosophical position. write a short paragraph defining the position.

2) Be able to recognize valid and invalid inferences expressed in ordinary language, and to recognize a range of formal and informal fallacies of reason. Possible tests: Multiple choice instruments.

3) Be familiar with the range of philosophical ideas within traditional as well as contemporary Western Philosophy. Possible tests: Multiple choice instruments.

4) Be familiar with the range of philosophical ideas within traditional as well as contemporary Eastern Philosophy. Possible tests: Multiple choice instruments.